



Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

Pearl River, NY

December, 2013



Brother Hibernians, _____



I wish you and your families a merry Christmas and blessed New Year. Our next meeting will be held on Friday, December 20th at 8m. Many thanks to Jack O'Connor, Larry DeGennaro and all the volunteers for once again running a superb Senior Citizen's Thanksgiving Luncheon. The O'Hara family benefit was a huge success and many thanks are due to all the division members who were so generous and especially to those who volunteered to work at the event. Congrats to all the division officers on their reelection and to Neil Cosgrove on his election as Aide to Grand Marshal for the 2014 NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade. Our Christmas parties are on December 15th. The party for children with special needs is from 10 am to noon and our family party starts at 1pm. We need volunteers before during and after so please let Frank McDonagh know if you can help out. December 22nd is the final drawing of our Pot O'Gold raffle drawing so don't miss out on a chance to win 10 grand for Christmas, get your ticket now.

Dan Callanan reports the following Good and Welfare News... Please say a prayer for the repose of the souls of Frank Motta, Joe Mulroe's brother John, and Charlie Murphy's sister Maureen. Warren Hennessey's bride Mary has resumed

Chemo treatment and Tom Slattery is starting his, Pete Dunne is recovering well enough with his knee that he is considering trying out for our renowned Limbo team, Bob Farrelly is on his way to Florida to make arrangements to permanently relocate to Orangetown, and Larry McKeever is doing as well as can be expected and we need additional volunteers to replace those snowbirds who will be leaving for the sunshine state. Congrats to Larry Dolan who walked his youngest sister Shiela down the aisle to become Mrs. Kevin Kieran, to John Callanan whose oldest son Daniel is the U10 North American Irish step dancing champ and who came in 2nd in the World Championships in Scotland, and to Neil Cosgrove on the birth of his grandson Sean to his daughter Kara and her husband Brendan. Sincere thanks go out to all the volunteers at our 20th annual Seniors' Thanksgiving luncheon as well as to those at the Freeze Your Arse Off Golf Outing, especially to chefs Bill Ford and Russ Pogewit and our gracious host Joe Wrafter.

As always, please remember in your prayers our wounded warriors and their families.

Yours in Friendship, Unity & Christian Charity,
Dermot O'Connor Moore, President.



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VINCE TYER

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KEVIN DONOHUE

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WILLIAM LEE

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JACK O'CONNOR

Chaplain
REV. MSGR. JOHN O'KEEFE

HIBERNIAN HOUSE

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FRANK McDONAGH

Vice President
PETER DUNNE

Treasurer
PHIL SHERIDAN

Recording Secretary
JOHN GANNON

CALENDAR _____

Dec. 15 Christmas Parties

Dec. 17 County Meeting

Dec. 20 Division Meeting

**Dec. 22 Final Pot O'Gold
Drawing Party**

Feb. 8 Valentine's Dance

Pearl River, N.Y. 10965
28 Railroad Avenue

Ancient Order of Hibernians



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HIBERNIAN HOUSE

Please support the Adopt a Family Fund Christmas Drive at the pub to make a Merry Christmas a reality for several local needy families.

Stop by the pub and drop off whatever donation you can in the envelopes provided. It's amazing how good it will make you feel!

Don't forget to weigh in for the 10th anniversary fat-off on Jan. 1 from 1pm to 3pm. Entrance fee is \$60.00 with all proceeds going to the Adopt a family Fund.

Pete Dunne



Pot of Gold

Once again our Annual Pot of Gold raffle has begun and we are seeking your support. Each year demand for these tickets increases and yet our space remains somewhat limited. It is for this reason that we ask, if you are considering attending our parties, please secure your tickets as soon as possible.

This year we are once again keeping the cost for our tickets at \$100.00. Not only will you be helping us to continue to support our numerous charitable endeavors, you and a guest will be entitled to attend both of our parties and also have an opportunity at winning numerous prizes.

Our 1st party was held on November 10th and we awarded \$2000.00 The second party (drawing #2) will be held on Sunday December 22nd at the Hibernian House and we will award \$12,000.00 including our grand prize of \$10,000.00.

Tickets can be secured by contacting Bill Lee at mr.williamplee@gmail.com or by calling 845-558-4148.

Tickets can also be obtained at the Hibernian House, please ask the bartender on duty for the tickets.

Merry Christmas



LAOH

Hi Ladies,

Where has this year gone? It has been an exciting, busy and successful year. As the Year comes to an end I would like to welcome all of our new members and thank all of you who helped make it so successful.

Congratulations to all the newly elected officers in all the Divisions. Be assured I will be around to help you with any problems or questions.

A reminder for all that our end of the year reports are coming due, so start collecting the information. As soon as I have any information on them I will pass it on.

We have been asked to put together several Baskets for the AOH Div. 3 Pot-of-Gold party to be raffled off. Proceeds go to the LAOH County so if you want to help, donate or make a basket, please get in touch with me. The party will be held on Sunday, December 22nd, 2013.

Congratulations to Colette Curry and her sister Leslie Murtagh on being named Business People for the 2014 Emerald Ball.

Wishing all of you a very Blessed and Holy Christmas.

Keep our service men and women in your prayers.
Have a wonderful Happy New Year. See you all next year at our Division 3 meeting on January 14th or the County meeting on January 28th. New members welcome.

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,
Joan Moore, *President*
845-735-8793 (h) • 845-536-2742 (Cell)
or email: joan55mmoore@msn.com



VALENTINE'S DANCE

The Valentine's/Mid-Winter Dance

will be

February 8th

with the Roddy Harrington Band

\$30 per person

Food 7:30, band starts at 8:30



Fr. Peter Whelan, Angel of Andersonville

At this joyous time of year, our hearts are filled with the thoughts of “Peace on Earth” and “Good Will to Men” that inspire us to acts of charity and kindness. However, of how many people can it be said that they maintained in their hearts true “Good Will to Men” when “Peace on Earth” was replaced by the insanity of war, even going so far as to “Love thy neighbor” irrespective of what uniform they were wearing? Such a unique individual was Fr. Peter Whelan.

Peter Whelan was born in 1802 in Loughnageer, County Wexford. Little is known of his early life prior to his attending Birchfield College in Kilkenny, where he received an education in the classics and mathematics before deciding to emigrate to America hearing God’s call in an appeal for priests to support the new Archdiocese of Charleston where he was ordained in 1830.

Over the next thirty years Fr. Whelan was a tireless shepherd of a flock which, as a result of the waves of Irish immigration caused by the Great Hunger, was growing exponentially. He helped build the first Catholic Church in Charlestown and also the first in Georgia. In 1854, Fr. Whelan was transferred to the newly formed Archdiocese of Savannah to minister to that city’s growing Irish Catholic population. With only eleven priests, the archdiocese covered all of Georgia and Florida.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Confederacy established a garrison at Fort Pulaski located at the mouth of the Savannah River. Among the units assigned to the garrison were the Montgomery Rifles, which was almost entirely composed of Irish Catholic immigrants. Fr. Whelan quickly embraced the men of that remote and isolated outpost looking after both their spiritual and physical well-being; he quickly became a favorite of the entire garrison. Fr. Whelan had the misfortune of being in Fort Pulaski when the Union forces isolated it and commenced a heavy shelling of the fort resulting in its surrender. While offered his liberty, like the good Sheppard, Fr. Whelan would not abandon his flock and went into captivity with them as a prisoner of war and was transferred to Governor’s Island, New York.

Neither side in the Civil War had given much thought to the capture and care of the large number of prisoners that were

to result. While in New York officers were treated with a measure of professional courtesy by their Union counterparts, the enlisted men suffered terribly in improvised prisons with scant rations and clothing. Fr. Whelan immediately began putting out appeals to his fellow priests and organized aid for his men. When Rev. William Quinn became aware of Fr. Whelan’s confinement in the cold damp prison he feared for the aged priest’s health and launched a successful appeal to have Fr. Whelan paroled. However, except for occasional trips to the city to secure supplies, Fr. Whelan still insisted on staying with his men and sharing their privations while saying Mass and tending to the sick. The Confederate officers were so impressed with Fr. Whelan’s ministrations to their men and, noting that the one suit of clothing he possessed was terribly threadbare, arranged the purchase of a new suit for the priest. A few days later, the senior officer noted that Fr. Whelan was still wearing his old clothes. Where was the new suit he asked? Fr. Whelan replied that he had given it to a newly arrived prisoner who had arrived almost naked. The Confederate officer attempted to reprimand him saying he should have kept the new suit and given the man the old one. Fr. Whelan replied, “When I give for Christ’s sake, I give the best.”

Fr. Whelan and his men would eventually be exchanged for Union prisoners, and the priest would return to his civilian religious duties in Savannah. However, new and disturbing reports were soon received about a Confederate prison camp: Andersonville. Prior to WW II, no prison camp was more infamous. Hastily built for 6,000, it would hold 45,000 Union POWs with no shelter, sanitation or clean water. It was literally a hell on earth for Union Prisoners and a place where 13,000 of them would die. Aware that many of the Union prisoners were likely to be Irish Catholics, and despite himself having been confined in the North as a Confederate POW, Fr. Whelan volunteered to go to the prison and tend to the men’s needs. Those needs were staggering with scores dying every day from starvation and disease. Several fellow priests attempted to assist Fr. Whelan, but none could stand the physical and emotional strain and each left within a few weeks. Yet, 62 year old Fr. Whelan stayed and his impact was noted in later years by surviving prisoners:

“By coming here he exposed himself to great danger of infection...His services were sought by all, for, in his kind and sympathizing looks, his meek but earnest appearance, the despairing prisoners read that all humanity had not forsaken mankind.” Another remarked that, “Of all the ministers in Georgia accessible to Andersonville, only one could hear this sentence, ‘I was sick and in prison and you visited me,’ and that one is a Catholic.”

Fr. Whelan’s selfless sacrifice came with a price; he soon contracted ‘Congestion of the Lungs’, likely tuberculosis. With Georgia falling to the advancing forces of Union General Sherman, the Andersonville prisoners were transferred and Fr. Whelan would have to leave them. However, before they left he arranged a loan of \$400 in gold to buy flour and have it baked into hundreds of loaves that became known to the prisoners as “Whelan’s bread”; it provided the men with rations for several months. One former prisoner later wrote, “Without a doubt (*Fr. Whelan*) was the means of saving hundreds of lives.”

After the war, his health permanently broken from his service to his fellow man, Fr. Whelan petitioned Union Secretary of War Stanton for the \$400 that Fr. Whelan had borrowed so that the Union Prisoners could be fed. In an unmitigated display of callousness, ignoring the living evidence of hundreds of soldiers who had survived because of “Whelan bread,” Stanton asked the aged priest to provide receipts! Outraged, Fr. Whelan informed the callous Stanton to keep his money because he had, “Neither the health nor the strength to run over Georgia to hunt up vouchers and bills of purchase.” Instead the proud priest made one further sacrifice. Knowing of his ill health, friends of Fr. Whelan had raised funds to send the priest to a better climate where he might recover. Instead of using the funds to aid in recovering his health, Fr. Whelan used the money to repay the loan. After several years of ill health, Fr. Whelan died in 1872. His was the largest funeral that Savannah had ever seen.

While Fr. Whelan is little remembered today, let us at this joyous time of year remember and be inspired by an Irish American who was the embodiment of the true meaning of Christmas in giving of himself to the betterment of others.

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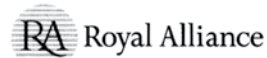
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