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Abstract

Father Andrew Mullen 1790-1818

A Study in Early Nineteenth Century Spirituality

by

William Dempsey

This thesis is laid out in three parts:

Part I. The life and death of Andrew Mullen. The life is based, to a large extent, on a long letter to his mother, Catherine Mullen, dated 7 January 1810. The letter gives a definite insight into his spirituality based on his membership of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. There is a hint that he had a premonition of an early death.

Part II. The burial of Andrew Mullen and the immediate cult to him. This is based on documentary evidence.

Part III. Most of this part is a catalogue of testimonies taken from 1993 onwards. Then there is the conclusion on the popular devotion to Andrew Mullen stressing the theological aspect of the subject.

In the course of writing the thesis it was decided to separate the documentary evidence from the oral tradition. This was advantageous in developing the thesis, and the documents provided a secure basis for the oral tradition.

Two pieces of information were found in March 1997. They are death notices: 2 January 1819, *The Leinster Journal* and 7 January 1819, *The Carlow Morning Post*. There is a slight discrepancy between the two on the date of his death. Also this discrepancy shows a slight difference from the date of the tombstone.

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Declaration

The material contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree in this or any university.

In accordance with Regulation 8 of the General Regulations for the M.Phil. Degree (one-year course). I declare that this thesis is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and duly acknowledged in the text and bibliography.

Signed..... 10/6/98

FATHER ANDREW MULLEN
1790-1818

A STUDY IN EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY IRISH SPIRITUALITY.

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William Dempsey

- 1 DEC 1998

INTRODUCTION

"That he'll be kept in memory until judgement day". (*The Elegy*)[1]

This is a study of an oral tradition and a religious cult which have lasted for two hundred years, built around a young priest, Father Andrew Mullen (1790 - 1818), and which continue to be strong today. The object of the study is to tell the story and decide as far as possible its authenticity. The beginning of the story, of course, predates any formal schooling in Ireland. Is it then possible to give full credence to what has been passed down the generations by recitation, ballads and conversation by the fireside? We can begin with a quotation from William Shaw Mason:[2]

> The manner of preserving the accuracy of tradition [in Irish folklore] is singular and worthy of notice. In the winter evenings a number of senachies frequently meet together and recite alternately the traditionary stories. If anyone repeats a passage that appears to another to be incorrect he is immediately stopped. Each gives a reason for his way of reciting the passage. The dispute is then referred to a vote of the meeting and the decision of the majority is imperative on the subject for the future.

We notice here the exercise of memory among the participants. Also clusters of families are involved, and in the case of Father Mullen, groups of families some sixty miles apart - Clonmore, Carlow and Daingean, Offaly - which allows for comparisons and possible differences in attitudes and interpretations. So part of the research is based in the main on information gathered from families that have occupied

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[1]. Author unknown, *The Rifle Brigade. An Elegy on the late Reverend Father Mullen, Curate of the parish of Clonmore* (S. B. Goggin: Limerick, c1820)

[2]. William Shaw Mason, *A Statistical Account of Parochial Surveys of Kildare and Leighlin, 1814-19.* Extract from *The Journal of Folklore*, vol. I pp. 317-18 (Folklore Society: London, 1883-89).

homesteads over many generations reaching back to the early 1800s. In both localities some people gained a reputation for being very well-acquainted with the story and could be relied upon for accuracy. A few would be regarded as local historians. In 1937 the Irish Department of Education sponsored a project in which they asked the headteachers of primary schools to involve the children in collecting stories from their grandparents and to write them down. Father Mullen is mentioned at length in Clonmore. In the late fifties the County Historical Societies were formed which gathered up this folklore and family trees. This is now a thriving enterprise in Ireland and very much resorted to by emigrant families from America and Australia. Subsequently what was handed down has now been recorded on microfilm.

The religious cult to Father Mullen has remained strong even to the present time. If it can be shown that this cult has been constant and consistent over a long period of time, then there would be sufficient grounds for promoting the cause of the young priest towards beatification and canonisation. But the oral tradition and the veneration of his memory would have to be supported by documentary evidence, especially information on his holiness. On this aspect there is not a great deal of written material. The best that can be done is to draw out from the extant writings and where he fits into the spirituality of his time.

Our study is laid out in three sections. The first part of the thesis is based on the letter of Andrew Mullen as set out below; also his life, education, spirituality and ministry. The second part of the thesis is the cult and its constancy in the nineteenth century: most of this is based on the death notice in the Carlow Morning Post, the inscription on the gravestone of Father Mullen, the poem written around 1820 and the Binns Report of 1835. This is a summary of the written evidence.

The third part of the thesis addresses the attempt of the people to introduce the cause of Andrew Mullen and have him beatified. In order to introduce a cause it has to be

shown that the person lived, that he or she has not been confused with anybody else, there has to be a reputation for holiness and that the cult has gone on uninterrupted since the time of the death of the person. We introduce here the oral tradition which is largely based on testimonies taken over the past four years. A number of these testimonies were given by people who signed them and swore on the Bible that they were telling the truth as it had been handed down to them. This does not necessarily guarantee authenticity. There is a problem here. We can give an example of a person testifying that some sixty years ago they received a story from a teacher. The person would just accept the word of the teacher and would be too deferential to ask questions. The problem in the main lies at the source. There was an absence of skills in verification. The most that could be done was to examine each story. In some cases the stories can be put on a more secure basis by using them in conjunction with the documentary evidence. This enables us to argue, for example, that the cult is based on the spirituality of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. Consequently we carve out a distinctive niche for the oral tradition. The small pamphlet published by the local parish priest of Daingean, Fr. Edward Kinsella[3] in 1977, was an important contribution to this movement and can be regarded as an attempt to get Father Mullen's story recognised by the official church. As far as we know this was the first endeavour by a priest to become involved in this way. The pamphlet is just a popular presentation of the story, but does not rest on any rigorous research. However, there was a definite endeavour to verify stories told by the local people.

We shall postulate that there is a renewal of interest in the incorrupt body and whether or not it may still be incorrupt. This interest arises from the many miracles that are supposed to have happened at the grave.

[3]. Fr. Edward Kinsella (1897-1979) was parish priest of Daingean from 1950-79. His work is the *Story of Andrew Mullen* (Offaly Historical Society, 1985).

Finally, in addition to what was said and written about him, did Andrew Mullen express anything of himself?

The letter printed below is the only piece of writing we have from his own hand. There can be no doubt about the authenticity of this letter. It still exists, although faded and almost illegible. Copies were made of this letter in 1933 and 1964. The copies were made by different people, but there is no discrepancy between them. The copy that was made in 1964 is the text that we include in this thesis. The letter itself is not a treatise but a simple statement to his mother, Mrs Catherine Mullen. It was written from Carlow College on 7th January 1810 and written in a hurry before going back to a study period. He almost showed some irritation at the anxieties of his mother over his health getting in the way of his studies. He wanted to reassure her. He put a most important reference in Latin to be read by the parish priest. By putting it in Latin he gives the impression of wanting it to be private. As he was at this stage only four months at the college, we can infer that he was fluent in Latin before he went there.

Andrew had just turned nineteen years old when he wrote this letter to his mother. Therefore it provides evidence of his life. This makes it most important information on his growing up, information for the most part not included in the oral tradition. The references to his pious practices are vital to the story especially as they reflect the spirituality of the early nineteenth century. This spirituality promoted steadfastness.

The actual letter is in the possession of a lady, Mrs Elizabeth Cassidy. She was born in 1907 just outside Daingean. Although now some 90 years old, she is very clear in her vast knowledge of the story of Andrew Mullen because of her life-long interest in him. As a very young girl she claims to have been cured at the priest's tomb. She received the letter from a Mrs Costigan, whom she nursed and who died in 1931 at the age of 86 years. Mrs Costigan would have therefore been born in either 1844 or 1845 and

being the niece of the housekeeper of the Presbytery in which Fr. Mullen died would have had heard the first hand oral evidence from her aunt about the life and times of Andrew Mullen. Mrs Costigan originated from Clonmore (Carlow) where Fr. Mullen served as a curate and where he died. Her maiden name was Tallant which was also the name of the housekeeper. We cannot say if she had other letters written by the young priest, although from the text of the letter he must have written many other letters. Unfortunately, not one of the letters has survived except for the one printed below. Mrs Costigan had other memorabilia belonging to Fr. Mullen: his biretta, prayer book, a wardrobe and some of his clothes. Mrs Costigan was a primary school teacher in Daingean and therefore was well known to the local people. To add substance to what information Mrs Costigan passed onto Mrs Cassidy, in a statement dated 23 February 1993 she was able to say that Father Mullen died after a very short illness. This was later confirmed in the death notice which was only discovered in March 1997. Mrs Cassidy is well respected by the local people. When the parish priest Father Kinsella was writing the pamphlet on Father Mullen, he visited her and noted down her testimony. She said in her later statement that Father Kinsella was an old man at that stage and was rather cranky. She also observed that had he been a younger man more information would have been found. She expresses herself in a very direct manner but always with respect and kindness. Also she is very devout, and has been constant in the practice of her faith throughout her life. She trained as a nurse for a short time, and was able to do so because of the restoration of movement in her right arm due to the intercession of Fr. Mullen.

This is a copy of the letter written by Father Andrew Mullen to his mother. [4]

Carlow

7 January 1810

My dear Mother,

I received your favour of the 7th ult. and with conformity to your demands (before study commences) I write a few lines. That you forgot me, you mentioned, I might have thought, the case is not so, for I am too imprinted in your heart to be forgotten I know well, but I really was astonished that no letter from either Mr. O'Reilly or you was appearing, and from a thousand foolish thoughts I could not protect myself. You mentioned about health, that I was extremely well I told my aunt already and I now reiterate that I was never better in my life. The smart of the winter I do not at all feel, the sockets I indeed put on one day and no longer: that I am too fat I must acknowledge and I must use discipline to pull myself down: that you will think this an exaggeration I well know and that you will say, as the fool sayed to the steward, the devil himself would not fatten him I am convinced but I assure you that it's true. From Mr O'Reilly's[5] letter I learned that you were fretting at my long silence but am surprised that you would fret at all for that, I cant write when I please you ought to know, and therefore when you see no letter from me you should say he is rather busy. My dear Mother, dont be perplexing yourself about me for that if I ever fall sick I will write to you be convinced, indeed I know full well the various thoughts that will occur to you when you dont hear from me, but banish them, and rest satisfied that I am well. It gives me some trouble when I hear you do be fretting, whereas I tell you so frequently that I enjoy good health, now sure you wont say - I thought to go home at Christmas but am now very much obliged to the superior for preventing me, such a mad thing to go so long a journey for (I may say) nothing and very likely Mr O'Reilly would be displeased with me, and then what comfort could I have, no my

[4]. The punctuation throughout the letter was very difficult to decipher.
[5]. Fr. [Mr] O'Reilly was the Parish priest in Daingean.

dear but the time is fast approaching when I will go home to you with flying colours, but sure if you wont be continually fretting I would not have you before me and then what I do - but cry. I know that a thousand - a thousand foolish thoughts will (as I said before) occur to you, but I told you before what you ought to do. We had a most elegant solemn High Mass on Our Lords Nativity and on yesterday, and the Benediction of the Most Bl. S. at Vespers. You will scarcely believe that about 46 candles were lighting around the altar, besides 4 lustrums in each of which there was a multitude. On the 17th March we will, have another: dont let my aunt forget her promise if you think it proper.

I congratulate you all on the addition of goodness you have received recently, I mean the Benediction. Give my love and humble regards to Mr. O'Reilly and tell him I am following his counsel punctually, I hope he will not be uneasy, for sure he knows that remenebo semper quod sum deo adjuvante[6]*. Oh sure he would not lose a moments thought on me. I will of course write to him, please God in the course of a month, I repeat that he will not be uneasy. Oh that I could impress on his mind my sentiments, and I vouch that he would be at rest and tranquillity. Oh how it kills me to hear of any of you being in trouble concerning me. Present my love to Mr. Earl Boyce, Peter, I hope he will excuse me for deferring to write to him: to Thomas Molloy, James Dunn and to all the Confraternity both of Philipstown and of Kill and all the Chapter, Mr and Mrs Heigherty and family, I will not be forgetting poor James: give my love to that dear boy Mr. N, and the widow Luke and Betty Dunn, Ned and Mr Hart and in short to all enquiring friends: the reason I did not mention my dear Aunt was because she known(s) when I speak to you I speak to her too lest it would not be enough give her my most ardent love: she knows that I have her always present as well as you. My dear and loving Mother I will conclude by wishing you the compliments of the season past and many happy returns by saying I remain your ever affectionate child. And. Mullen*

[6]. Translation: I will always remain what I am with the help of God.

P. S. Please write as soon as possible and let me know what will become of Tom, and whether Peter[7] *will come to this beautiful place next September or sooner. Excuse the scroll for I do be in such haste that I cant help it.* [8]

[7]. There is no record of Peter (Mullen) having gone to Carlow College then or later (Fr. Kinsella's footnotes).

[8]. The original letter (now almost illegible) was given by the late Mrs Costigan (Margaret) to the kind person who nursed her in her last illness. (The above copy was taken in 1964). The dear aunt mentioned above might have been Ann Graham who lived with Catherine Mullen (Fr. Kinsella's footnotes).

CHAPTER ONE.

THE LIFE, SPIRITUALITY AND MINISTRY OF FATHER ANDREW MULLEN

BIRTHPLACE AND FAMILY

Great bog of Allen swallowed down
The odious heap called Philipstown
and if thy man can swallow more
Pray take and welcome Tullamore.
Ancient Rhyme

Andrew Mullen was born in 1790 in Philipstown. Until the 1820s it was the capital of the county which was King's County. In the early 1920s Philipstown was renamed Daingean and the name of the county became Offaly. For our general purposes in following the life and cult of Andrew Mullen it is convenient to drop Philipstown and King's County and insert Daingean and Offaly. As we are spanning some two hundred years and the main object of the exercise is to examine the cult that has remained constant up to the present day, Daingean has to be given prominence. We say this because we are endeavouring to promote the Cause of this young priest towards beatification and canonisation, and for the pilgrims visiting his place of burial they would only know Daingean on the map. However, a good deal will be said on the town itself in the time Andrew was a boy growing up, and what may have influenced him in his spiritual formation and growth.

According to the Maynooth College records Andrew was born and baptised in November 1790. The fact that he is named Andrew suggests that he may have been baptised on 30 November, the feast of St Andrew. It is a widespread custom in Ireland and, especially in those days, to use the name of the Saint of the day. In many cases this was a form of dating. We only have the Maynooth records to rely on for the evidence of Baptism. They also include a reference to his confirmation, but for this no year or date is given. The conferring of these Sacraments plus Holy Communion (not mentioned) were essential requirements for him to go forward as a candidate for

the priesthood. Although he entered Carlow College a year before his admission to Maynooth for theology, there is no record of the detail already mentioned in Carlow. The Maynooth Records give the spelling of the name as Mullen. On the tombstone it is spelt as Mullen. This is the more common spelling, although we can add a third - Mullens.

The only records at the time were the Catholic Parish Register. Daingean had records going back to 1742, but unfortunately the first volume which would have contained the details under discussion is missing. A number of enquiries have been made and as many answers have been advanced. My own enquiries began with Father Kieron Byrne, who was Parish Priest of Daingean from the death of Father Kinsella in 1979 to 1986 and who later moved to Carragh, Co. Kildare. He expressed great surprise that the volume was missing. However, when Father Kinsella wrote the pamphlet on Andrew Mullen in 1977, he makes no mention of the details of birth and baptism. It would seem that the first volume was not there in 1977. We can also add that Father Kinsella did enter notes in the margin of the second volume, but among these notes there is no reference to the first volume. Father Byrne had the baptismal Registers indexed but this index only mentioned the name of the child and the parents. The godparents are not catalogued and so my research into the Mullen family required looking at the old Register. This yielded some information.

The fact that the first volume is missing means we have no knowledge of the name of Andrew's father or of his godparents. On the gravestone over his grandparents in Killaderry Cemetery the name of the grandfather is given as James Delahide who died 25 February 1781 aged 50 years and Catherine (Delahide) who died 20 February 1797 aged 60 years. The headstone was erected by their daughter, Catherine Mullen.

The second volume of the Parochial records begins in the year 1795, and stops on 5 October 1798. It begins again in 1820. The omission is of some importance as it

corresponds with the 1798 Rebellion. Priests' houses were raided by the yeomanry in search of registers for names and addresses with the definite purpose of hunting down those who may have taken part in the Rebellion. There is nothing handed down of any ferocious battles at the time in Daingean, but such battles did occur in Kildare some twenty miles away.

Local people have thought that Andrew's father may have been in the militia, yeomanry or the British army. I have looked through the Public Records Office in London, all to no avail. I checked out the widows of soldiers' pensions. Catherine Mullen is not among them, although there is a record of a Mrs Murray for this period from Daingean.

Some people have suggested that Andrew's father came to Daingean from elsewhere. However there is a James Mullen, a baker, given in the Griffith valuation for 1854. Also in the Baptismal Register the name of James Mullen and Bridget Mullen are given as godparents for a baptism on the 11 May 1796. Andrew Mullen mentions in his letter "*poor James*", but this would not necessarily denote any relationship to James Mullen. These details do not amount to any certainty, but point to the possibility that the name Mullen belonged to Daingean. However if Andrew's father did belong to the militia he would not have served in Daingean. He would have been posted elsewhere and at some distance from Daingean. Against a possibility of his having been a member of the militia - a Protestant force - was the popularity of both Andrew and his mother in the town. Conversely he could have died very young. However the silence about him raises certain questions.

That Catherine Mullen belonged to Daingean from the time of her parents is certain. That the name Delahide did not survive in Daingean is evident from the local tradition and records. One must assume that their children were a daughter or daughters. From the 1823 and 1854 valuation lists Mrs Mullen is entered as the owner of the public

house and the house on the opposite side of the street. The description I was given of the house was that there was a store for flax and living accommodation above it. (Flax was grown in Daingean and a coarse linen was produced. I was told this in connection with a stabbing incident by the Whiteboys in c 1785. The knife did not penetrate very far because of the tough linen dressing-gown the woman was wearing - a Mrs Cuskelly).

The house and the ale house were in Mrs Mullen's name, according to the lists already mentioned and this indicates that she inherited these properties from her parents. Did she have a sister? The Baptismal Register has entries for 11 March 1796, 27 March and 26 May of the same year. There is a fourth entry for 10 February 1797. In these entries Maria Delahide is given as a godparent. It would seem that Maria was a spinster and there is little doubt that she was devout and popular. We could even say that she was generous as on such occasions there would be presents. Andrew Mullen in his letter to his mother mentions "*my dear aunt*". It seems probable that this aunt was Maria Delahide. Father Kinsella in his footnotes to Andrew's letter suggests that Ann Graham was the aunt. Again in the Baptismal Register there is an entry for 16 October 1797 and the parents of the child are given as Richard Maughan and Ann Graham. This would have been her maiden name. So it is not likely that she was the "*dear aunt*" although a close friend of Mrs Mullen. Father Kinsella correctly states that she is registered with Mrs Mullen for the house and garden in the valuation list for 1854. Unless other information becomes available this ends the speculation that the Mullens came from outside Daingean. There is a record dated 11 September 1798 of a baptism and Catherine Mullen is listed as a godparent. This is all we know of the Delahides. Maria disappears from the scene after the dates given above. She may have died quite young. We have given a good deal of attention to the few details on the Mullen family. There is a definite purpose in doing this. The family did not survive beyond Mrs Mullen. Andrew mentions Peter in his letter and Father Kinsella put *Mullen* in brackets after Peter. But from the general tone of the letter there is no

suggestion that Peter was the brother of Andrew. Was Andrew an only child then?[9] It seems almost certain that he was. According to Mrs O'Grady of Mount Lucas and her cousin, Mrs Cassidy,[10] Mrs Mullen always spoke of her son as "*Andy Jewel*". The status of the family plus the perpetuation of that family would be an important element of what was known of any priest within the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, but the Mullen family died out.

EARLY EDUCATION OF ANDREW MULLEN

Andrew Mullen was born in 1790. We take his early education up to 1809, being the year he entered Carlow College. This period is most interesting and both religion and education go together in his growing-up. It was about this time that most of the Penal Laws ended. There was freedom of worship and the state and number of schools were improving. Catholics were becoming more prosperous and organising themselves politically.

Something must be said about the sectarian divisions among the people of Ireland at this time. There are good reasons to suppose that Andrew, both as a boy, and later as a priest, was most tolerant and never became embroiled in hostility. He was neither a rebel nor a patriot. For him reparation and reconciliation were important.

As a summary of the times Theobald Wolfe Tone [11] wrote:

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[9]. *Leinster Journal* 2 January 1819: " Died: On the 12th ult of a typhus fever at Killenure, near Tullow, Co. Carlow, the reverend Andrew Mullen, aged 27 years, deeply regretted by an afflicted, sorrowful Mother and Aunt; also by a large and numerous circle of friends".

[10]. Both women are still alive and are related to the Cuskelly family of the Little Island, Daingean. This family helped Mrs Mullen a great deal and is mentioned in the 1823 valuation list.

[11]. Theobald Wolfe Tone was a Protestant and founder of the United Irishmen. See William Wolfe Tone, *Theobald Wolfe Tone, founder of the United Irishmen* , 2 vols (Tone: Washington, 1826), vol. I, pp. 44ff.

... as I came about this period [1791] rather more forward than I had hitherto done, it is necessary for understanding my history to take a rapid survey of the state of the parties in Ireland, that is to say, of the members of the established religion, the Dissenters and the Catholics. The first part, whom for distinctions sake, I call the Protestants, though not above a tenth of the population, were in possession of the whole of the government, and of five sixths of the landed property of the nation; they were and had been, for above a century, in the quiet enjoyment of the church, the law, the revenue, the army, the navy, the magistracy, the corporations, in a word, of the whole patronage of Ireland, with properties whose title was founded in massacre and plunder, and being, as it were, but a colony of usurpers in the land, they saw no security for their possessions and estates, but in a close connection with England, who profited of their fears, and as the price of their protection, exacted the implicit surrender of the commerce and liberties of Ireland. Different events, particularly the revolution in America, had enabled and emboldened the other two parties, of whom I am about to speak, to hurry the Protestants into measures highly disagreeable to England and beneficial to their country ... they [the Protestants] dreaded and abhorred the principles of the French Revolution, and were in one word, an aristocracy, in the fullest and most odious extent of the term.

The Dissenters, the Presbyterians who formed the second party, were at least twice as numerous as the first. Like them they were a colony of foreigners in their origin, but, being mostly engaged in trade and manufactures, with few overgrown landed proprietors among them, they did not, like them, feel that a slavish dependence on England was essential to their very existence. Strong in their numbers and their courage, they felt that they were able to defend themselves, and they soon ceased to consider themselves as any other Irishman. It was the Dissenters who composed the

> flower of the famous volunteer army of 1782 who extorted from the English Minister the restoration of what is affected to be called the constitution of Ireland; it was they who first promoted and continued the demand of parliamentary reform, in which, however, they were baffled by the superior address and chicanery of the aristocracy; and it was they, finally, who were the first to stand forward, in the most decided, and qualified manner, in support of the principles of the French Revolution.
>
> The Catholics, who composed the third party, were above two thirds of the nation, and formed, perhaps, a still greater proportion. They embraced the entire peasantry of three provinces, they constituted a considerable portion of the mercantile interest, but, from the tyranny of the laws enacted at different periods against them, they possessed but a very small proportion of the landed property, perhaps not a fiftieth part of the whole! .. suffice it to say, there was no injustice, no disgrace, no disqualification, moral, political or religious, civil or military, that was not heaped upon them.

Although this is a summary of the whole of Ireland there were some regional variations and Daingean could be considered one of them.

From the excerpt we pick out the most volatile factor that brought conflict between the Catholic Church and the movement headed by Wolfe Tone - the United Irishmen. This highlighted the French factor in the movement. That factor was anathema to most of the Catholic bishops, and especially to Archbishop Troy and Bishop Daniel Delaney - many others too. These made up another group bearing the label Castle Bishops - the Castle being in Dublin and the main seat of political control. Both bishops had been educated in France and would have been well aware of the intellectual thrust of the French Revolution. They hated every facet of the French Revolution and all it stood for. In no way did they want that upheaval in Ireland. This meant that, unlike Wolfe

Tone and the United Irishmen who drew their political inspiration from the ideals of Revolutionary France, they accepted the Protestant Ascendancy as an obstacle to revolution. They wished to keep obedient to the British Government in London which over some ten years or so had reduced the powers of the Ascendancy which was concentrated in the Irish Parliament. Whilst Wolfe Tone and others were advocating political *rights* which the bishops foresaw would not be granted they, through their own conniving, sought *concessions*. In 1793 Carlow College was opened to meet the educational needs of aspirants for the priesthood who could no longer set out for the Continent of Europe. This happened under the episcopate of Bishop Delaney. Likewise in 1795 Maynooth College was established through the good offices of Archbishop Troy of Dublin. In creating these two colleges they turned their backs on the United Ireland movement. Andrew Mullen would eventually be a student in these two colleges. It would also seem apparent that the local schools in Daingean, although Protestant, nevertheless did have many Catholic children in them. Their admission to these schools depended upon how rigorously enforced was the teaching of the bible - the Authorised Version of course. Out of the four schools two of them insisted on the King James version which was not accepted by Catholics and the protest would come from the local Parish priest. However, the other two schools were different. The scriptures were not mentioned, in which case Catholic parents could seek an education for their children. [12]

Furthermore according to the chronicler of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Dr Comerford[13], writes that while the Catholic Church in Daingean was being built in 1806-7 the Catholics were allowed to assemble for mass in the old courthouse in the town. These two concessions had what we now regard as an ecumenical aspect to

[12]. Martin Brenan, *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin* (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1935), p. 26.
[13]. Michael Comerford MRIA, *Collections relating to the Dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin* (James Duffy and Sons: Dublin, 1884), p. 301.

them. No doubt this had an effect on Andrew in his tender years and he carried it with him into his priestly ministry. *"The rich and the poor he won".*[14]

Father Kinsella in his pamphlet gives details of the purchase of the land for the new church. The land secured consisted of a lease for two hundred years at the yearly rent of sixpence to Thomas Smyth and others - 22 June 1793. (We notice that it is leasehold and not held in fee simple. Furthermore the lease was not awarded to the Parish priest because, being a celibate with no family, the land would become ecclesiastical property, again forbidden at this time.) The lease was granted by the Right Honourable Viscount Molesworth[15]. On 1 June 1814 another lease was granted by the Right Honourable Louise, Dowager Baroness Ponsonby, nee Molesworth.

Although we have no records of roll calls etc. it is certain that Andrew received his early education in one of the local schools, where he would have received a good grounding in the three Rs. It is certain too that he was very intelligent.

LATER EDUCATION

We are less certain of how Andrew Mullen gained his further education up to 1809. After only one year in Carlow College he matriculated which qualified him for entry into Maynooth to commence his theological studies. Obviously he must have received a great deal of tuition up to 1809. This tuition would have been in Latin and Greek as well as in English and possibly French. As regards the subjects he was taught we can gain a summary from a comparison with a fellow student of Andrew both in Maynooth College and Dunboyne House. The name of the student was Charles McNally. We draw this information from an article written in 1981 by Professor Donal Kerr SM in

[14]. See footnote 1 on poem.
[15]. The present Viscount Molesworth still rejoices in the title Baron of Philipstown.

the Clogher Record. He quotes the submission by Charles to a Royal Commission in 1826 the first real enquiry into the background and studies of the students:

> 'I read classics for a time under a master who lived with three or four families.'

He then speaks of attending other schools in Monaghan and Tyrone. Charles continues:

> ... inadequate though these schools were they provided me in addition to a grounding in the three Rs with some knowledge of the classics. " Later in life he described the Longford school as "a mud wall cabin without desks or seats, with fifteen or sixteen pupils seated on boxes of turf around the wall. The teacher, a deformed, unwashed and bad tempered little man lay most of the day on his back on the floor with a sod of turf for a pillow. He used no text book but was able to quote an author accurately and at great length. Lazy students he subjected to a running fire of invective in Greek, Latin and Irish ... [16]

Charles arrived [in Maynooth] with a copy of Cicero's *Offices*, Augustine's *Confessions*, the *New Testament* and Dr Hay's *Devout Christian.*

First of all Longford is some distance from Daingean where school buildings and the conditions of studies would possibly have been better; although the grim description given by McNally would fit the school in Mountrath which Dr. Delaney may have attended as a young boy. Daingean at this time was the capital town of the County and had a courthouse. Court proceedings would have to be recorded and therefore handwriting would have to be special. Andrew Mullen's handwriting is exceptionally

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[16]. Donal Kerr SM, *Charles MacNally, Maynooth Professor and Bishop of Clogher, Clogher Record*, 1981, pp. 364 - 91.

good, is well spaced and has a good consistency and even a flourish in its style. He seems to have had training as a scribe. He shows great self confidence

Also Daingean was a garrison town from 1771 and the particular task of the regiment was to draw up ordinance survey maps. We can take a snippet from the play *Translations* written by Brian Friel[17] set in 1833, recounting how the soldiers (British army) frequently visited the hedge schools. A character named Owen says: "Me a soldier? I'm employed as a part-time, underpaid, civilian interpreter. My job is to translate the quaint archaic tongue you people persist in speaking into the King's good English. " It would have been the task of some scholar in the hedge school to assist the interpreter with the King's English; which we suggest would be someone like Andrew Mullen.

This attempt to find clues to his more formal education and character formation is, at best, speculation. As regards character formation we would look to the influence the hedge masters had on their students. Going back to Charles McNally there is a reference to his erratic behaviour in the sacristy described by John Healy[18]. So some of the irascibility of his teacher seemed to rub off on him, whereas Andrew Mullen appeared to be more gentle and accommodating. Further, when Charles McNally came to the point of being chosen as a Bishop, the Archbishop of Dublin objected to his nomination "because he was too patriotic". There is no trace of patriotism in Andrew Mullen.

We are now left with the possibility that Andrew may have been educated by the local priests. Father O'Reilly, Andrew's Parish priest, was twenty four years old when he trained for the priesthood and he was already ordained before he started his training in Carlow College in 1793. We can safely assume that he received his later education on

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[17]. Translations by Brian Friel (Faber and Faber: 1981), Act 1 p.39.
[18]. John Healy DD, LLD, MRIA, Bishop of Clonfert, *History of Maynooth* (Brown and Nolan: Dublin, 1895), p. 559.

the continent. Therefore he would have considerable knowledge of the subjects required for theological studies. He was a zealous Parish priest. Furthermore Andrew Mullen mentions in the letter to his mother: *"Present my love to Mr Earl Boyce".* This man was a curate in Daingean and left to become Parish priest of Carbury - some fifteen miles away, in Kildare. Two things can be noted here. Andrew appeared to have related to him very well and he must have been a close friend of the Mullen family. The chronicler Dr. Comerford mentions this curate as the Reverend Mr Edward Earl ~, so why the dash? Andrew does not mention the first name which we take to mean that he did not indulge in any form of familiarity - likewise with Father O'Reilly. We could also add that as he mentions Boyce it may be a sign that he was fastidious in his courtesy. Consequently if these two priests helped with his education then it is clear that Andrew was regarded as an aspirant for the priesthood from a very early age. It is also obvious from the letter that Andrew Mullen was a kind young man. This may have been the influence of Earl Boyce. In 1824 he [Earl Boyce] described the people among whom he worked in the following words:

They are proud and naked and distressed, laborious and industrious to excess. Their endurance is great. But their fortitude and public spirit is greater. They neither murmur nor complain though often reduced to nearly the last extremity for the necessities of poor human nature.[19]

This excerpt shows a man of great sympathy and an ability to discover human qualities of a superlative nature, even in rags and close to being naked. Such perception too was part of Andrew's kindly eye and sympathetic nature.

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[19]. Brenan, p. 207,

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

We read in Mullen's letter *"Present my love. . . to all the confraternity both of Philipstown and of Kill (Killclonfert) and all the chapter".* Killclonfert and Philipstown are four miles apart and in the same parish. The chapter referred to the Third Order of St Dominic. The existence of the two archconfraternities and the Third Order of St Dominic are listed in the parish returns to the bishop c1820. The Dominicans in Dublin (Father Hugh Fenning) filled in the details of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary being special in the Third Order and also the teaching of catechism. The recitation of the rosary was special. Also the Office of the Blessed Virgin was recited on a daily basis. There are no records extant to help us but there were junior groups. Also the local Parish priest would have been spiritual director and in this instance would have been Father Matthew O'Reilly. It is obvious from the letter that he gave spiritual direction to Andrew in a special way.

At this point we turn to the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament as an important contribution to the early nineteenth century spirituality in Ireland. Bishop Delaney,[20] Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, used it for a pastoral purpose. Here we draw upon the Annals of the Brigidine nuns in Tullow.

[20]. Daniel Delaney (1747-1814) was the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and one of the first Irish Bishops to introduce the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in his own Diocese. He was educated in France and sojourned with the Visitation nuns - founded by St Francis de Sales (1567-1623) - in Paris as a student. This is given as the reason for his special devotion to St Francis de Sales and there is in the Brigidine convent in Mountrath a relic of this Saint which belonged to the Bishop. Further confirmation of Delaney modelling himself on St Francis is the motto on his coat of arms - Fortiter et Suaviter. The Suaviter reflects the gentleness of St. Francis de Sales. The writings of St Francis de Sales were intended for people living in the cloister and in the world. These were an inspiration to him. Unfortunately most of his [Bishop Delaney] notes were lost in 1812 when he moved from his house to the Brigidine convent in Tullow, the Order which he founded together with the Patrician Brothers. He instructed them to have a special devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Brigidine Annals are for the most part a record of Bishop Delaney's life and ministry. The manuscript is unpublished. Delaney was already coadjutor or even Bishop of the Diocese, and travelled to an outlying area for Sunday Mass, but was unable to celebrate it because not one person in the assembled congregation could make the responses. The Brigidine Annals continue with an account of the Bishop's efforts to reform his flock. He disbanded crowds assembled for faction fights or gaming sessions. He travelled into every part of the Parish to prevent sin and outrage, and to repair their ravages. Fortunately for himself, for Tullow and for future generations, he had not neglected prayer. He began to pay more particular attention to the young. It all began with his teaching a few hymns to a very few children. Soon he had a choir, then a very simple band. Religious instruction and prayer entered the programme. As numbers grew, and there was little else for the children to do, except beg, he found one or two people to help him. Finally he had a regular Sunday school in the chapel in Mill Street, Tullow. Eventually the catechists were formed into a Catechetical Association and special instruction provided for them. The work of the day began with morning prayer and ended with vespers. In later years when the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament had been formed in the Parish, the teachers for the school were invariably drawn from its members. About 1788 the Catechetical Association became the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. This Confraternity not only taught the catechism but was the beginning of the school system in Kildare and Leighlin.

Dr. Brenan[21] states:

> The teachers in the new Confraternity were specially selected from the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. A very high standard was exacted for the post of teacher in the chapel. He quotes from the Annals: Such of the members of the Confraternity as had been for a considerable time remarkable in the parish for exemplary conduct, and were considered

[21]. Brenan, p.26.

> in other respects competent, were appointed to teach in the chapel; the other members were allowed to teach only in their own families or in private ... On Sunday mornings the people flocked to the chapel at an early hour. The Blessed Sacrament being kept in the Chapel, they began the devotions of the day by singing on their knees the O Salutaris in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, and to invoke the light of the Holy Ghost in the schools, they sang the Veni Creator; then standing they sang the hymn of the time (proprium tempore) in English. Immediately afterwards they said morning prayer and read a lecture from Challoner's Meditations. They commenced the schools and continued them until Mass. At two o'clock in the afternoon the schools were resumed, and the teaching was continued till vespers at four, at which all assisted and returned home.

The spiritual formation of the confraternity was, therefore, focused on the Blessed Sacrament. Such devotion would be quiet and meditative. It could be cultivated and shared in by all. In many ways it was meant to sanctify the laity. Dr. Delaney's first intention was to form lay groups in each parish gathered round the Blessed Sacrament and then, with some skills in teaching, to instruct the parishioners. Brenan gives the figure of 370 members of confraternities in Daingean and by comparison with other parishes this was high. This number was for the years 1820-1829 - a little later than Andrew Mullen but still in the lifetime of Father Matthew O'Reilly. Also for Daingean, the number of parish library volumes is given as 200 - again an impressive number. So we have a strong connection between Bishop Delaney's apostolate and Daingean. Mention has already been made of the *Meditations* by the English Catholic Bishop, Richard Challoner. If we are to guess what books Andrew Mullen entered college with - prompted by the list that Charles McNally had - we could include Challoner among them.

For the rules and objects of the Archconfraternity we quote from Bishop Lanigan of Ossory (1789-1812) who was also educated in France. We can give a brief summary of the Objects of the Confraternity:

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament gave the members a special opportunity of making reparation for the sins and outrages of many through ingratitude. In every parish where it is established are not the people more enlightened in the ways of God? Are they not better instructed in their religion? Is not devotion more common? Are not injustices, disputes and quarrels less common? I know from my own experience that all these advantages I have mentioned, and more than I think it necessary to specify, have been known to result from its establishment in several parishes.

Our sanctification and final perseverance is confirmed by experience of all ages and places, that the members of this Confraternity receive the Blessed Sacrament oftener, and are better prepared for it, than any other body or society whatsoever.

Bishop Lanigan mentions St. Aloysius and St. Philip Neri. This may be a reason why the latter saint was chosen for Daingean as Patron of the new church (1807)

Rules

1. The Brothers and Sisters of the Venerable Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament will endeavour to have themselves, and inspire others with great devotion and profound veneration for the Precious Blood of Our Lord, contained in this august Sacrament.

2. They are obliged, if not sick or absent from town, to appear in the dress of the order, and receive the Holy Communion on the following days viz. Christmas Day,

Easter Sunday, Ascension Thursday, Pentecost Sunday, Corpus Christi, and All Saints Day, and to assist at the procession of Corpus Christi.

3. They are to confess and receive at least once a month.

4. They are to hear Mass every day especially on Thursday, as the day is peculiarly dedicated to the commemoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This rule comprehends those who are sick or lawfully hindered.

5. Such as can read, and are bound to no other office, are obliged to say, daily, the office of the Blessed Sacrament. Those who cannot read are bound, instead of the office, to say three Paters and Aves daily for the intention publicly declared to them. Those who can read, and are before engaged, are required to say, daily, the Pange lingua and the oration.

6. The brothers and sisters, on their entering any chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament is reposed, will profoundly adore the Blessed Sacrament, before they begin any prayer.

7. They are bound, in a most special manner, never to pronounce without great respect, the sacred name of God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost, as also the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ.

8. Those who conveniently can, should visit the Blessed Sacrament every day.

9. Those who can read should apply themselves in a very particular manner, to instruct children to receive worthily their first Communion.

10. The sick brothers and sisters should be visited and read to, by persons of their own sex. It is strongly recommended, and devoutly to be wished, that the brothers and

sisters, in their respective neighbourhoods, should visit and read to all the sick, though not of the Confraternity; those who have contagious diseases excepted.

11. At the decease of a brother or sister, if he, or she were an inhabitant of this city, or of its suburbs, all the brethren and sisters of the city and suburbs, who can conveniently assist, should attend at the Bishop's Mass, to pray for the soul of such deceased brother or sister. Also, each brother or sister, whether in town or country, should offer, on the first Sunday following, the plenary indulgence they then obtain, for the repose of the soul of such brother or sister.

12. Irregular members should be expelled.

In addition to the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, Dr. Delaney established the Corpus Christi procession in Tullow. The children gathered to do the singing. Delaney may have intended to introduce these processions as an antidote to the allegedly disorderly gatherings elsewhere in the name of religion. The impression given is that the devotion of the Blessed Sacrament was a reforming process. After doing so well in Tullow, he set about putting things to rights in his native Mountrath where every priest appointed to that area complained that they could get no good of the people. " ... after weighing this up for a length of time, and wishing the Almighty God to direct him, he [Dr. Delaney] for that intention, had the Blessed Sacrament exposed for adoration day and night during the Octave of Corpus Christi, and every person going to adore was reminded to recommend his intention. At the close of the adoration he selected six young women and sent them to Mountrath, where they remained nine months, during which time religion and good practices went on improving there". (Brigidine Annals). Bishop Delaney makes reference to the admiration and attention given to these young lady teachers in their spiritual lectures by Protestants, Methodists and Quakers. The Bishop would have found great delight in this apostolate as it is right across the sectarian divide and the best was brought out in everyone. Bishop Delaney's spirituality can be regarded as a leaven which can be

contrasted to the lava of his successor Bishop Doyle. Bishop Delaney started a quiet revolution in education and spirituality. He had a perception of the interior life of sanctity as is shown in his letter to Archbishop Troy on the death of Mary Dawson who was one of the six ladies he sent to Mountrath[22]. The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in the form of the Corpus Christi procession brought people together in a more orderly way. He appealed to people across the sectarian divide. He won concessions from Protestant landlords in the shape of parcels of land to build schools and churches. For the most part he turned his back on politics. He wrote to Dr Moylan, Bishop of Cork, in December 1809:

> To the deuce with these secular manoeuvres the kingdom of our master is not of this world. Away with politics, with committees with conventions and addresses and petitions, and the Plague knows what. Applications and diplomatic negotiations at ye seat of Empire within or out, ministers and professional speechifiers. The trials of bishops, Archbishops, and Primates are in future, it seems, to be adjudicated on and disposed of here at the Bar of a Gifford, or some orthodox Editor of an Orange Journal. Bravo! Talk of the once-boasted liberties of the Gallican Church.[23]

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[22]. The letter, from Dr Delaney to Dr Moylan, is contained in the Brigidine Annals and is important as it is the Bishop's personal testimony to the holiness of Mary Dawson and written to Archbishop Troy. It is recorded in the Brigidine Annals and the nuns see Dr Delaney as a follower of St Francis de Sales, the spiritual director of Philothea the beloved. The text of the letter is as follows: "She [Mary Dawson] slept in the Lord the night before, her end being quite comfortable to the whole tenor of her most edifying and saintly life. Indeed, it was always of the most pure and immaculate kind, but for several years before her happy death she verily ran, in my eye, a giant's pace in the career of the most sublime Christian perfection. To me, at least, she seemed to practise in an heroic degree, every virtue proportioned to her condition. I have read in ascetic works - such tender and vivid, yet uniform and persevering piety - and above all, such glowing, melting ardours of divine love as she was unceasingly burned with and perfectly dissolved in, particularly in Communion during Mass, at which precious seasons she was latterly, for some years, always favoured with the most extraordinary delights, all faculties of her soul and senses not infrequently wholly absorbed and suspended in God."

[23]. Brigidine Annals (unpublished), Tullow Convent, Co. Carlow, p.29.

This quote sums up the Bishop's vehement opposition to giving the British government a veto over the appointment of Catholic bishops in Ireland which would seem to have had some support from the Holy See.

If we are to place Andrew Mullen in the ethos of his time we can argue that he was a true disciple of Daniel Delaney. He brought some of this from his birthplace in his membership of the two Confraternities (in Daingean and Killclonfort) of the Blessed Sacrament.

We have attempted to provide a background for Andrew Mullen's spiritual formation. The question has to be raised as to how young he was in joining the arch confraternities. In order to throw some light on this we introduce Brother Paul O'Connor[24], one of the early Patrician Brothers who were founded by Bishop Delaney. He entered the Congregation after the Bishop's death in 1814 and would have been around the age of 30 years. He held the Bishop in very high esteem and seems to have been attracted towards the society through the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as practised in the Archconfraternity. In age and background he was similar to Andrew Mullen. He told the story of the great distress of the Bishop when there was no one present in the church to make the responses at Mass. The Bishop said on that occasion recalling the words of Lamentations 1:12. "Oh all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Douay version). But he saw this as the moment of inspiration for the Bishop and the beginning of his work. It is not difficult to surmise that the Bishop's first intention was to recruit altar servers, and of course at that time boys only! These boys had to be able to pronounce the Latin responses. It would also be the case that the Bishop insisted on a deep piety in these youths, further evidence of internalising both ritual and doctrine. In 1828 Brother O'Connor formed the Association of St. Aloysius in the boys' school in Galway. This saint was prominent in the Archconfraternity for his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament

[24]. Author unknown, *A life of Brother Paul J. O'Connor* (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1886).

and a model for youth. Although this is again some years after Andrew Mullen we can assume that this devotion began in the early years of Brother O'Connor's life and was an extension of the spirituality of Dr. Delaney. O'Connor formalised what was already in his own boyhood life. A definite aspect of spirituality at this time was saints as role-models with mottoes and favourite prayers.

There is sufficient evidence in what we know of Brother O'Connor's lectures to suggest that his ideal of youth is drawn from the exhortations of the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament since he makes a number of quotations from these books, for example the following give an insight into his thinking : "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1); "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God will give to thee" (Exodus 20:12). "If thou see a man of understanding, go to him early in the morning, and let thy foot wear the steps of his door" (Ecclesiastes 8:36).

From Brother O'Connor's young life and his endeavours in the education of youth we have evidence of the juvenile membership, the devotion to St. Aloysius and the special texts from the Old Testament as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. For further information on juvenile spirituality we can include another book by Guy Carron. [25]

This book can be included in the literature of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and was a collection of talks given by this French émigré priest in 1811 at a church he built and dedicated to St. Aloysius in 1808 in Euston, London. There are similarities in the contents of the two books and the quotations from the Old Testament books are almost identical: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy

[25]. Guy Carron, *Pious Biography for Young Men or the Virtuous Scholars* translated from Les Ecoliers Verteuex of M. L'Abbe Carron (C. M. Warren: Dublin, 1875). Guy Carron was born at Rennes 23 February 1760. At thirteen, already a tonsured cleric, he was acting as catechist to children in a local village. In 1783 he was ordained priest and was appointed vicaire at St Germain. After the French Revolution he became an emigre and came to London.

Youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1); "Oh how good it is for a man when he has borne the yoke of the Lord from his youth". (Lamentations 3). Carron says in the preface: "From this multitude of fervent and courageous disciples of Christ [St. Aloysius and others] I have selected the youngest in years that you [the boys] may behold in them not wisdom in its imperfect state, but wisdom in perfection, and adorned in all its charms, even in the very childhood of life. "Further down the page he exclaims "My resolution is formed. By the assistance of the Father of Mercies, I will not be satisfied with admiring these excellent models: with my eyes constantly fixed on them to guide my steps, in the paths which they have trod before me." In the final talk called 'Reflections' he presses home the point "Tell me if there is one [the young saints] you will not wish to resemble, when (and you know not how soon it may be) you will be summoned to appear before the tribunal of the great Decider of your eternal lot? Oh! Why not then, my dear adopted family, the unceasing object of my love, why not begin immediately, from this very hour, to walk in their footsteps."

This preparation for an early death is also stressed by Brother Paul O'Connor. The premonition of an early death was centred on St. Aloysius who had a special devotion to the Crucifix. Juvenile innocence is given particular prominence too. These two authors further embellish the motto given to Andrew Mullen by Father Matthew O'Reilly and his reaffirming that motto in the letter at the age of nineteen.

Obviously, we are assuming that because Bishops Delaney and Lanigan had been educated in France there was a strong French influence in Irish spirituality at this time. Bishop Delaney had been a curate in Tullow before becoming Bishop. As a young priest he was involved in instructing the young in a way similar to Guy Carron. Even more so was Andrew Mullen and at an even younger age. Of course his Parish Priest was Fr. Matthew O'Reilly who had been a student in France too. We suggest that Fr O'Reilly may have influenced Andrew Mullen in a manner similar to that of Guy Carron in his talks to the boys at Euston.

We can assume then that Andrew Mullen joined the Confraternities and the Third Order of St. Dominic at possibly the age of ten and attention must be drawn to his walking four miles to fulfil his spiritual exercises.

It can be argued that Andrew Mullen had received a sound spiritual formation before he entered Carlow College. If we cannot reach this conclusion then a full understanding of how he expresses himself in the letter to his mother is difficult to grasp, especially *remanebo semper quod sum deo adjuvante* and he followed this counsel punctually.

It can now be seen that the motto is the kernel of the spirituality of Andrew Mullen and the Archconfraternity is the shell, providing a model of holiness. The motto itself fits into Lamentations 3:27 - "Oh! It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke of the Lord from his youth." The motto expresses both devotion and dedication. The natural presumption is that Andrew obeyed every rule, said every prayer, did every deed as laid down in the rules of the Confraternity. It is a resolution of steadfastness, the equivalent of a vow proposed by his spiritual director and faithfully adhered to by Andrew. That being the case is it surprising that the Diocese did not have the inclination to investigate his holiness? This is generally more suited to a religious congregation.

In the course of the research one man asked if Father Mullen was a Dominican. He was a tertiary of the Dominican Order. He had spiritual direction. Brother O'Connor at one stage thought seriously of embracing the contemplative life of the Cistercians in Mount Melleray. Bishop Doyle persuaded him to remain with the Patrician Order. In the case of Andrew Mullen was the motto a form of private vow? On this question

Father Fenning[26] was not too sure. However, it must be seen as a pledge of stability which may indicate that in his early spiritual formation he was more suited to the religious life. Against this, the impression given is that he was very close to the people in his priestly ministry. Many priests in the early nineteenth century were close to their flocks. Some of them showed this by giving leadership in local disputes and even in battles. They were admired and remembered for their patriotism. Internal holiness did not receive the same acclaim among the local historians. This era tested many priests in their loyalties to God, not infrequently the bishop, and the people. We postulate that Andrew Mullen had no such internal turmoil. What seems to emerge is that a priest was perceived by his fellow diocesan clergy as heroic if he was involved in agitation. It would also be true to say that the memory of some priests was perpetuated among the body of clergy because they condemned their flock for iniquitous practices. In some ways one might ask: were the diocesan clergy open to the influence of a number of their colleagues who practised the ascetic virtues, whose inner holiness did not express itself in popular movements or establishing institutions? This attitude of course, would suggest some indifference to holy priests even if they had a reputation for healing. In the case of a love for the poor and caring for them this would signify a closeness to the people which did not draw great recognition among the clergy. Such an attitude would not help in perceiving holiness, much less promoting the cause of a holy priest.

Given that Andrew fulfilled all that has been said then the question may be asked: was this resolution ever put to the test? Did he turn his back on the world to live with God alone, like St Aloysius who relinquished a dukedom to his brother? Young Andrew sallied forth from an alehouse and transformed the stench of liquor into the odour of sanctity. We cannot say in doing so that there was a moment of great conversion because as far as we know he never tasted strong drink. The Wisdom literature of the

[26]. Fr. Hugh Fenning OP, St Mary's Priory, Dublin, is in possession of the literature on the Third Order of St Dominic in Ireland.

Old Testament portrays human nature as Divinely endowed and especially if that same human nature has not lost childhood innocence or indulged in debauchery. There is no smudge on the window to block out the Divine light.

Was the resolution ever tested in his late teens? One way it was apparently tested was his frail health. From the letter there is evidence of this to be assessed and the indomitable spirit it produced.

At the beginning of the letter Andrew endeavours to reassure his mother that he is in perfect health:

> Dont be perplexing yourself about me for that if ever I fall sick I will write to you be convinced ... that I am too fat I must acknowledge and I must discipline to pull myself down: that you will think this an exaggeration I well know as the fool said to the steward: 'The devil himself will not fatten him'.

Andrew had gone from being very thin to being bloated. There is a strong suggestion here of the early onset of tuberculosis where the body produces a considerable amount of fluid to counteract the bacillus. I asked a doctor [27] for an opinion and he put forward the diagnosis of tubercular peritonitis. If this were the case then his resistance would be greatly diminished and he would have succumbed to the chill that brought about his death. All doctors I spoke to said that this opinion was about as good as could be expected. It has to be understood that it is speculative. At the same time there is sufficient information in the letter to raise it as a serious issue. The sceptic would have to admit that to dismiss it would mean that either his mother starved him while at home or that he had too much turkey and plum pudding over the Christmas in the college. Both would be an absurdity. Andrew speaks of having to discipline

[27]. Dr Stanley Solomons, M.A. B.M. BCH. MRC GP (London).

himself to reduce the bloatedness so he does not enjoy his predicament. He even abandons the woollen footwear provided by his mother. He chooses penance. There is strength of willpower. One might have to express surprise that if this were the moment of the onset of consumption then how did he survive the subsequent eight years before he died? There is no evidence that his studies were interrupted or that his ministry was impaired. Father Kinsella raises this question. However there are no medical records from the infirmary extant in Maynooth. According to Monsignor Corish[28] none of these have survived. At the time of writing the letter is it possible that Andrew had a premonition that his life would be short? For example why does he renew the pledge to the Parish priest ? As the letter is written in haste why is it stated at all?

THE COLLEGES OF CARLOW AND MAYNOOTH

Carlow

Carlow College catered for lay students as well as clerical students. Later in the century the lay college was moved to Knockbeg and still enjoyed the status of a Diocesan college. In 1948 the centenary book was published and included in it are all the names of students both clerical and lay dating back to 1793, being the year the College opened and is often called the Douay of Ireland. The record of Andrew Mullen in the list is very short:

Mullen, Mr Andrew, Philipstown 9 September 1809 - 1 July 1810.

[28]. Mgr. Patrick Corish, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Maynooth College . 1947-1975 and of Modern History 1975-1988. Author of *Maynooth College 1795-1995* (Gill and Macmillan: Dublin, 1995).

Nothing further is mentioned, and from this scant insertion it would be difficult to discern whether Andrew was a lay student or a clerical student. Most of the other students, especially those who became priests, have a follow-up on their priesthood until they died. But at least the entry in the list could have included the salient fact that he matriculated in that year and gained admission to Maynooth to study theology. In the letter Andrew gives an ecstatic account of the Benediction of the most Blessed Sacrament at vespers; he even counted the candles! The only other entry is in the Accounts book the fees that were paid, twenty eight pounds, eight shillings and ninepence. Two points can be mentioned here. The fees are marked *contra Philipstown* which means they were not paid by Andrew himself or his mother but by some donor in the town. In all probability the donor was the Parish Priest. The other point is that the single entry places beyond doubt that Andrew spent only one year in Carlow College. In order to gain admission to the College Andrew would have to be recommended by his Parish Priest and accepted by Bishop Delaney. There is little else we can say about his time in Carlow College except that Andrew's letter to his mother from the College is the only letter of a student that is known to exist from the time.

Maynooth

The date of admission to Maynooth is registered as 30 September 1810. Again, Bishop Delaney would have had to sanction the transfer to Maynooth.

At this stage it is possible to sketch in the student life in Maynooth around 1810, the year Andrew Mullen entered the College. According to the Bicentenary History of Maynooth 1995 written by Mgr. Corish the rules of the college were drawn up on similar lines to that of the Irish College, Rome, and Archbishop Troy 1739-1823 was the principal author. The prospective student presenting himself in the College, for the first few years in mid-September, brought with him certificates of his age, parents

and baptism, a letter of nomination from his Bishop, and a duly attested declaration that he had taken the *Oath of Allegiance to the Crown.* He was examined in the Classics and, if admitted, paid the entrance fee imposed in 1799 and signed the undertaking to keep the College rules. The horarium was rigorous.

Summer (March to October)	Winter (November to February)
5. 00 Rising	6. 00 Rising
5. 30 Prayer	6. 30 Prayer
6. 00 Study	7. 00 Study
7. 30 Mass	8. 30 Mass
8. 00 Breakfast/ Recreation	9. 00 Breakfast/ Recreation
9. 00 Study	

10-11. 30	Class
11. 30	Recreation
12. 00	Study
1. 30-3. 00	Class
3. 00	Dinner
5. 00	Class for modern languages
6. 00	Study
7. 00	Conference [Perhaps not every day]
8. 00	Supper, recreation
9. 00	Night prayer
9. 30	All retire

On Sundays High Mass at 10. 00 and Vespers at 3. 00. Evening study at 6. 00.

The students for the most part were under the watchful eye of the Dean who was expected to "constantly imbue the students with precepts of piety and modesty". In forming the students heavy emphasis was placed on the observance of the rule, the routine of prayer, study and silence, which would tame the heedlessness of youth and

allow virtue and good habits to flourish. Bishop Plunkett of Meath asked for more "*spiritual direction*" to balance the book learning. There was confession once a fortnight, the staff acting as confessors; communion once a fortnight, and on the greater feasts; retreats at stated times and an hour's catechism for first year students on Sunday evenings. The Vice-President at the time was Father Peter Kenny SJ. [29] He introduced the Ignatian spirituality and devotion to the Sacred Heart into Maynooth and especially the method of meditation.

The picture of student life presented by Monsignor Corish is grim and impersonal. Many reasons can be advanced for this. The reporting on the College was surely hostile. The internal situation was for many years one of chaos and overcrowding, with undernourished students, instability among the professorial staff and the frequent change of Presidents. Then there was the patriotic element. The British Government had its spies in the College and was more concerned over students that had left the College in case they were exchanging a pen for a pike.

There is a suggestion in the oral tradition that Andrew Mullen could have been rigorist and therefore reflecting the Jansenism associated with Maynooth at this time and for a number of years afterwards. Mgr. Corish writes under the heading of "French heritage, Irish heritage:"

> It will be recalled that one result of the application to Rome to confer degrees in 1817 had been the college had got the reputation there of 'French', 'Jansenistic' and 'Gallican'[30].

The accusation of rigorism is also taken up by Father Thomas Morrisey SJ, in his book about Peter Kenny.. Fr Kenny had been Vice-President of Maynooth College

[29]. Thomas Morrissey SJ, *Peter Kenny S J (1779-1841), As One Sent* (Four Courts Press: Dublin, 1996).
[30]. Corish, *Maynooth*, p. 122.

between 1812-13. Being a Jesuit he was regarded by some of the professors, in particular Dr Anglade, as a laxist 'yielding to the passions of men' . . . :

> The tone of the moral teaching in the college's first sixty years . . . necessarily contributed to that spirit of repression and scrupulosity in Irish Spirituality which moved Patrick Kavanagh more than 100 years later to mourn on how the green tree of humanity:
>
> The Sharp knife of Jansen
> Cuts all the green branches ...
> Not sunlight comes in,
> but the hot iron sin
> branding the shame of a beast
> in the name of Christ[31]
>
> . . . and yet there were those in the true spirit of Ireland managed to joke through the death mask

There is an implication here that what the professors taught may not have been taken seriously by the students. Mgr Corish stresses that the students were a very robust body and they often rebelled. One ex-student remarked on the long fast from 5 am to 3 pm and existing on a "sorry breakfast". It must be asked as to how a student like Andrew Mullen would fit into this ethos? I can be argued that his pastoral ministry was based on compassion. Rigorism leans heavily on those who fall into temptation but it would seem Andrew Mullen did his best to remove temptation. Andrew Mullen was always materially poor. One can read into this that his life of poverty could be an act of reparation. He took this upon himself and therefore he did not ask others to do what he was not prepared to do himself. He would have accepted the long fast and

[31]. Morrissey, pp. 93-4.

the "sorry breakfast" in a penitential way. He speaks of mortification in his letter. Holiness and the pursuit of it belong to the process of internalising the will of God in difficult circumstances.

Fr Kenny was spiritual director to the students. He used piety both as an emetic and as a stimulant. He introduced Ignatian spirituality in the form of teaching the methods of mental prayer. It is not too difficult to see Andrew Mullen absorbing this well programmed spirituality. We have argued, drawing from the letter, that he had received a spiritual formation in Daingean and put into practice the counsel of the parish priest: 'I shall always remain what I am, by the grace of God'. On the basis of this, and in support of it, Andrew Mullen can be seen as being chosen to study in Dunboyne House. That decision, made by his superiors, would be reached on their observations of him and they looked for the highest standards in their selection of students for Dunboyne House.

Dunboyne House - Senior Students

It is difficult to assess accurately the organisation of Dunboyne House from 1812 to 1815. It was at this time that Andrew Mullen was one of the senior students. The students did not have a full time prefect. Although they may have been left to their own devices we do know from Healy that they were selected for their exceptional intellectual ability and good moral conduct:

> The relative merits of the candidates for the Dunboyne were ascertained by the previous examinations they may have made during their ordinary course, by the distinctions and premiums they may have got, but more particularly by their getting three distinctions, i. e. premiums or accessits, in the last year of their Divinity [course]. They were ordained priests at the end of their second year [Divinity] and then appointed to Dunboyne.

> The third years Divines, especially, were commonly anxious to obtain the distinctions that would qualify them for the Dunboyne establishment. This is only natural because as Dr Slevin very truly said: "To have studied on the Dunboyne was a thing which elevated the students very much both in the eyes of their bishops and fellow-priests". To have been 'on the Dunboyne' was, he [Slevin] says always 'considered a great honour' and was regarded as the equivalent of taking a degree in other countries. As a matter of fact the priests who had been 'on the Dunboyne' were commonly regarded as Doctors of Divinity on the mission, and were generally addressed as such.[32]

Healy also said that the senior students required a knowledge of Hebrew and they discussed Divinity, Canon Law and Ecclesiastical History.

Apart from the entries of tonsure and minor orders which Andrew received on 22 May 1812, subdiaconate on the [following] Saturday, ordination 1813 but no date, and entry to Dunboyne in the same year, there is no other information on Andrew Mullen. There is nothing to say that he had been ill or became involved in any affrays in the College. We can only assume that he fully conformed. He was a bright student and as he was chosen to enter Dunboyne House for further studies his *moral excellence* was accompanied by *intellectual brilliance.* For Dunboyne, as we know from Healey above, he needed to have a knowledge of Hebrew. He was among the first of six students to be admitted into Dunboyne. Again this new foundation took some time to take shape. In Andrew's time the students, to a large extent, were left to their own devices although they had to write weekly dissertations. Unfortunately there is no trace of these dissertations.

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[32]. Healy, pp. 307-8.

In order to enter Dunboyne House Andrew would have to be an ordained priest. There is no record of his diaconate in the College which had to be conferred before being ordained priest. Monsignor Corish says that as the date of his ordination is missing, he was not ordained in the College. That particular year he was the only student from his native Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. The supposition is that he was ordained by his Bishop, Dr. Delaney, and probably in the community room of the Brigidine Convent, Tullow. The reason for stating this is that there is a record of an ordination carried out by Dr Delaney in the community room for 8 December 1813. The name of the ordinand was Thomas Clancy. Why is this recorded? This Thomas Clancy became chaplain both to the nuns and the brothers in Tullow and assisted the Bishop in the celebration of Mass up to the time of the Bishop's death.

A final comment on Maynooth. There was a fire in Maynooth College in 1940 and records were destroyed, especially the matriculation lists. However we stress Andrew Mullen's exemplary character as corroboration of the steadfastness that he pledged himself to and renewed that pledge in the letter to his mother. This is as much as we can state because it was not common practice in Ireland, unlike the Continent, to keep diaries or spiritual thoughts, and certainly Maynooth was no exception either among the students or the professors.

Father Mullen left Dunboyne House in the summer of 1815. We have no way of knowing why he left at the end of the second year. He may have been called away by the bishop to fill a particular vacancy as a curate. Also he may have yearned to be closer to the people in a parish. We suggest this because a colleague of his, Fr Richard Gibbons, left Dunboyne to return to his native Archdiocese of Tuam because he felt he wanted to work among his people. Regarding Fr Gibbons,[33] Healy says that he "quit the college". There would also be the possibility that Andrew Mullen felt he had only a short time to live.

[33]. *Ibid.*, p. 326.

ARRIVAL IN CLONMORE

Father Mullen went to Clonmore in the late summer of 1815. Clonmore is a country area at the foot of the Wicklow Hills. We have no definite information as to why he was appointed to that Parish or even who was responsible for sending him there. Bishop Delaney died on July 9th 1814 and he was succeeded by Bishop Corcoran who was very old and feeble at the time he was elected. There are no records left of his episcopate. The rural dean for Tullow area which included Clonmore was Father Condon, Parish Priest of Ballon, who may have made the decision on Father Mullen's appointment, but again there are no records. Certainly Father Condon, although a well-beloved Parish priest, kept no records apart from the Baptismal Records. It would appear that he did everything by word of mouth.

Clonmore suffered a great deal during the 1798 rebellion. There was almost a scorched-earth destruction, so there was great poverty in the area. The local Church has been burned down and the priests were hunted down, so there was an enormous task to be tackled so that there could be reconciliation.

DEATH OF FATHER MULLEN

The following death notice appeared in the *Carlow Morning Post* [34] on 7 January 1819:

> DIED - A few days since, after a short illness, at Killenure, Co. Wicklow, of bilious fever combined with jaundice, The Reverend Andrew Mullen,

[34]. This was a provincial paper, an Empire paper, detailing trade and commerce. The paper was published in Dublin. This particular copy was only discovered recently but from what we know of other copies over a period of time notices of this kind, especially about the death of a priest, were not reported.

aged 27 years. In the death of this young Champion of Christ, a bright ornament of the Catholic Church, Religion and the lovers of virtue have lost a true and steady friend in the way of Salvation[35].

This notice presents us with a few slight problems. In the first place the year given is 1819 but not the particular date. The second point is that he died at the age of 27 years. These dates do not accord with the dates on the tombstone in Daingean. There it is recorded that he died on 15 January 1818. The difference between the two is just about one year. In both cases of recording Kalends dating was used. This would place his death in December. So in the case of the notice in the paper the year would be 1818, whereas on the tombstone it would be 1817. The publication in the paper gives his age as 27 years but it should be his 29th year. The tombstone records the 28th year. Dr. Comerford, in his background notes, states the date and year of his death as 17 December 1818. This would confirm the accuracy of the *Carlow Morning Post* except that he was one year older. However, Dr. Comerford did not seem to advocate a change to the date on the tombstone.

The death notice itself shows a great respect for the young priest and extols him in very flowery language. This epitaph prompts a comparison with other death notices and we compare it with the announcement of the death of Bishop Delaney. "*The following quaintly worded obituary notice,*" as described by Mother Margaret Dunne[36] in 1936 of its appearance in an Irish magazine in August 1814.

Died on the 9th ult. [July] the Right Rev. Doctor Delaney, titular Bishop of the combined Dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin. For thirty years he performed his pastoral duty with such pious care and anxious solicitude for the welfare of his people and the

[35]. This obituary notice only came to light in March 1997. A comment from Dr Solomons: "The diagnosis of tubercular peritonitis would still hold but would possibly not lead to a sudden death. This was probably caused by the chill and no resistance to the chill."
[36]. Mother General of the Brigidine Nuns, *Watching for the Dawn. A pamphlet on Dr. Delaney* (Unpublished, written in 1936), Brigidine Annals.

salvation of souls that morality wept and piety swooned away at his tomb. His remains were attended to the grave by the Archbishop [Troy of Dublin] and seventy priests together with the immense concourse of five thousand persons overwhelmed with the most afflicting and poignant grief for the irreparable loss of so beloved, pious and exemplary a Prelate.

It can be said that the obituary of Father Mullen stresses his reputation for holiness and steadfastness, that he prayed with others and gave them a great example of virtue. He was some thirty seven years younger than the Bishop and being so young makes his sanctity all the more remarkable. He never built a church, he never wrote a book, he never blessed a well, there is no record of any of his sermons. In that way he was not a public figure and were it not for his reputation for holiness and his appeal across the sectarian divide, he would not have commanded such attention from an Establishment and Protestant paper.

The obituary fits in with the prayer for The Mass of St Francis de Sales on 24 January being the date of the feast. The prayer is: "Father, you gave Francis de Sales the spirit of compassion to befriend all men on the way to salvation. By his example, lead us all to show gentle love in the service of our fellow men."

PART TWO

THE CULT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"I was very struck by the fact that many people were instinctively moved by the fact that this [Father Mullen] was a holy man. "[37]

Cardinal Basil Hume - 5 February 1993

Catholic theologians distinguish three kinds of cults. Latria or supreme worship is due to God alone, and cannot be transferred to any creature without the horrible sin of idolatry.

Dulia is that second veneration which Catholics give to saints and angels as the servants and special friends of God. The same idea is expressed by Cyril of Alexandria when he speaks of the "relative veneration and cultus of honour".

Lastly, hyperdulia which is only a subdivision of dulia is that higher veneration we give to the Blessed Virgin as the most exalted of mere creatures, though of course infinitely inferior to God and incomparably superior to Christ in his human nature. [38]

These distinctions were made because of accusations against Christians, going back to the early centuries of the Church, where the veneration of the Saints, in particular the martyrs, was confused with worship of God and Christ. A martyr is regarded as one who undergoes death as a witness to the Resurrection; the Confessor as one who perseveres in the faith despite torture and persecution but is not put to death. Then there are the Saints who sanctify themselves through battling with inner desires such as temptation of the flesh or turning their backs on worldly possessions in order to devote themselves entirely to God. Heroism is common to them all, and that is a special grace given by God. Another feature is the special power some have of performing miracles, again a gift from God, perceived by the people as a sign of Divine Grace. The performance of miracles can carry on after the death of the holy person which are

[37]. This comment was made by Cardinal Hume after reading the booklet written by Father Kinsella.
[38]. W. E. Addis and T. Arnold (eds) revised by T. B. Scannell, "Canonisation", *Catholic Dictionary* (Virtue and Co. Ltd.: London, 1916), pp. 113-4.

attributed to his intercession before the heavenly throne. None of these people can be regarded as being greater than Jesus. They imitate his sufferings or imitate his virtues and in this, each may be generally referred to as an "alter Christus".

Posthumous miracles are often attributed to the relics of these saints buried in a tomb. Some relics are placed in the altar where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered. This practice came under the authority of the Bishop and in post medieval times the authentication of miracles and relics was centred in Rome under the authority of the Pope. There were abuses and mistaken devotion and the Church dealt with it by introducing procedures to establish the authenticity of the alleged sanctity of individuals. Identifying martyrs was a simpler scrutiny than other groups because of the closeness of the one witnessing by his death to the Resurrection and of course of anyone offering to face death rather than apostatise. [39]

The Cardinal uses the phrase "that many people were instinctively moved". In many cases such people would be devout Christians, or the ordinary faithful. Obviously this movement would rest on a reputation (fama) for holiness practised during the life of the holy person and occurrences of miracles, usually of healing, after death. Even though in death the soul leaves the body and enjoys the beatific vision, the body surviving in a special way the process of decomposition gave that body a special significance. To illustrate this is the inscription on a tomb such as that of St. Martin de Tours. "Here lies Martin the Bishop, of holy memory whose soul is in the hands of God, but he is fully here present and made plain in miracles of every kind. "

Being instinctively moved the people would intuit some special signs of divine favour, very often at the time of death. Occasionally there have been cases where very little was known of the person. For example, there is the story of Bishop Thaddeus McCarthy (1455-1492) who had made his way on foot to Rome to present his case

[39]. Kenneth Woodward, *Making Saints* (Chatto and Windus: London 1990), p. 57.

over a dispute about his appointment to the diocese of Ross in Cork. He stayed at a hospice in the Piedmontese city of Ivrea. During the late hours of the night, 23 or 24 October 1492, Thaddeus died, aged thirty-seven years. The attendants in the hospice witnessed a peculiar radiance around the bed. At first they thought it was a fire but the corpse lay tranquil and unharmed. The Bishop of Ivrea had a sleepless night. Apparently, at the same time when Thaddeus gave up his spirit, the local bishop had a vision of a holy man dressed in the robes of a bishop encapsulated in a great light, ascending to heaven. The populace kept the body in Ivrea and immediately a popular cult commenced and many cures were reported. [40] There are two points here. In the first place there was the body of the bishop. Secondly there was *coincidence* - the dream - which is an important feature of the "instinctive grasp".

The instinctive grasp is the beginning of the cult, but it excludes for the most part apparitions and stigmata in the lives of holy people around whom a cult is built. These would be subjected to a more protracted scrutiny. There may be something special in a local culture that sharpens the intuition. In the case of Bishop McCarthy there was the cult in Ivrea but it never really built up in Cork.

One could include another group in the instinctive grasp. Many Catholics in France revered a great number of priests calling them *les Bons Cures.* The high regard for these priests was due to their poor backgrounds which would have excluded them from becoming bishops,[41] possibly because of the rivalry and ambition among the upper echelons of the clergy and the luxurious life led by some bishops. There may have been a semblance of this in Ireland too; based not so much on wealth but the importance of family background and political affiliations.

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[40]. The story is written up by Father Laurence John Wrenne and it is drawn from the archives of the Diocese of Cork. Bishop McCarthy was beatified by Pope Leo XIII in September 1896.

[41]. Dom Aidan Bellenger, editor, *The Great Return* (English Benedictine History Commission and the South Western Catholic History Society: Downside, Bath, 1994), p.10. With this perspective we can fit in the Curé D'Ars, 1786-1854, the only parish priest to be canonised in the western church.

We may have overstretched the phrase of Cardinal Hume but his insight does provide us with a definite focal point in examining the cult to Father Mullen. Certainly no bishop became involved, no records in the Diocese and also no priest made public statements on the cult. Father Kinsella was the first to produce a booklet some one hundred and seventy years later. There will be more precise details on this point to be discussed later. However, it must be stated straightaway, that a culture may change, as may the attitudes to local veneration among the bishops. This is a strong point in the case of the cult to Father Mullen. The saving grace here is that despite change the cult continued over the generations. So the instinctive grasp endures which cannot be ignored.

THE BURIAL OF FATHER MULLEN AND THE BEGINNING OF THE CULT

This section sets out the beginning of the cult of Father Mullen and throughout it we will make reference to four sources of evidence which establish the foundations of our knowledge of Fr Mullen and the cult which has arisen around him.[42] These written sources are:

1. Dr Comerford's *Chronicles of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin* (background notes - unpublished);
2. The inscription on the gravestone over Father Mullen in Killaderry, Daingean;
3. The Elegy of Father Andrew Mullen, curate of Clonmore;[43]
4. The Binns Report for 1836;[44]
5. Dr Comerford, Second Series: *The Parishes of the Diocese of Kildare*, p. 300;

[42]. The archives of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin - to which Father Mullen belonged as a student and a priest - have been fully researched and there was no further information on him. This is also the case with the archives of the Dublin archdiocese and the Vatican archives.
[43]. See elegy below.
[44]. Jonathan Binns from Lancaster, England was appointed by Her Majesty's government as Assistant Commissioner for the Irish Poor Law Enquiry in 1835. He paid a visit to Ireland in order to report to the English authorities and help the Irish Poor Law Enquiry. He visited Ireland from 3 July to 28 November 1835. Part of his report is entitled *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland*, 2 vols (Longman, Orme, Brown and Co: London, 1837).

This evidence will be used to establish the beginning of the cult, the nature of the cult, and its development throughout the nineteenth century. The evidence will be used to develop a coherent picture of the foundation of the cult and this will be further augmented in Section 3 where we will draw on the oral tradition surrounding Fr Mullen.

Father Mullen was a curate in Clonmore and died in the presbytery there. Normally a curate was taken to his native place to be buried, whereas a parish priest was buried in the parish where he ministered. According to Dr Comerford's background notes (unpublished), Father Mullen was buried outside the main door of the church on the gospel side of the church in Clonmore. There are no definite details of the funeral.

In the light of subsequent events we can put forward two possibilities about the strong desire on the part of the people to have Father Mullen's body buried in Clonmore. His reputation for sanctity was of prime importance. Also there was the monastic tradition in Clonmore that if a monk travelled to Clonmore from another monastery and died whilst sojourning there, he would be buried in Clonmore.

Father Mullen's reputation for holiness was well entrenched in the minds of the people. The obituary notice gives full testimony to that fact. Also there may have been special signs from heaven at the time of his death. When the body was moved five weeks later and the coffin opened the body was found to be incorrupt and flexible. These details are given on the gravestone inscription (set out below). These special signs would have been observable at the time of death. Rigor mortis would not have taken place. It would be inconceivable if the people did not respond to these special signs which they would regard as signs of holiness about which they would have known in abundance during his ministry in the parish. Therefore it is safe to surmise that the cult

began with the burial in the churchyard on the gospel side of the church; a location which has to be regarded as special.

The body was removed from Clonmore to Daingean in January 1819. According to Verse 8 of the Elegy (see below) Fr Mullen's friends in King's County (Offaly) came in disguise, stole the body and took it to Daingean. (The oral tradition gives a full account of the removal). James Warren Doyle became Bishop of the Diocese later in the year. Nothing has been discovered in his correspondence or diary regarding the removal of the body. The diocesan chronicler, Dr Comerford, simply states that the body was transferred and therefore he regarded the removal as an orderly procedure.

THE HEADSTONE OVER FATHER MULLEN'S TOMB

The grave in Daingean has a gravestone with an inscription on it. This inscription is of paramount importance as it was recorded by Jonathan Binns 1834-5.

According to the full inscription there are five priests buried in the grave. The inscription is in Latin except for the last one, that of Father Matthew O'Reilly. The English translation is as follows:

Here lie the remains of the priests
Laurence Delahunty 1766-1778
Matthew Walsh died 1794
John Murray 1778-1805
Andrew Mullen. . .
Father Matthew O'Reilly 1805-1825
died on Good Friday.

The stone is flat and is placed on four supports at each corner. There is no crack in the stone whereas some of the adjacent stones of similar size and age are fractured in the centre. There are two types of dating. Kalends is used in the Latin text.
Good Friday, a special day, is used in the English text recording Father Matthew O'Reilly.

The Latin inscription begins with *Hic jacent...* Most inscriptions begin with *Pray for the soul[s] of...* This is open to two interpretations. There was an unwritten law prohibiting the use of *Pray for the soul.* In the minds of Protestants this would point to Purgatory and Catholic doctrine and devotion that were anathema to them[45].

Another possible interpretation can be discussed. In the case of the other names of priests, dates of their deaths and the length of pastoral service are only given. There is just the extra detail given for Father O'Reilly - esteemed for his virtues. In the case of Andrew Mullen an amount of important detail is given:

A youth
Outstanding both in form of body
And endowment of mind
He died in the Diocese of Carlow
His body transferred hither
In the fifth week thereafter
Wondrously remaining still incorrupt
And flexible.

[45]. Samuel Lover (1797-1868) who wrote at this time tells the story of a graveyard attached to a Protestant church where a Catholic had been buried and inscribed on the tombstone was *"Pray for the soul of..."*. A relative of the deceased wanted this changed because he thought his dear one would be regarded as a medieval man. He approached a mason about changing the lettering. The mason said: "I shall have this done for you by next Sunday". The man, astonished that it could be done so quickly, asked how it was going to be done. The mason answered: "Very simple sir, I shall chisel in the words *'don't pray for the soul of...'"* A.M. Sullivan (ed) *Irish Readings*, 3 vols (M. H. Gill and Son Ltd.;Dublin, 1904), vol. II, pp. 236-9.

In the 28th year of his age
on the 15th day before Kalends
of January 1818, he died. [46]

The body was incorrupt and flexible. This would be taken as a sign that he went straight to Heaven and his soul would not have passed through Purgatory. The flexibility of the body would be regarded as more important and less controversial than just the state of incorruption.

It is important to know when the stone was erected over the grave and the inscription chiselled on it. As it is in Latin the text of the inscription must have been at the dictation of a priest. There is some difference between the more skilled Latin text and the cruder crafting of the English memorial to Father O'Reilly. One assumes that the English text was added after the Latin text. The English text was paid for by Mrs Catherine Mullen. The assumption must be that the Latin text was in place before the death of Father O'Reilly in which case he commissioned the work himself. If this be so and there is little doubt that it was so, then it becomes the personal testimony of the one who knew Andrew Mullen very intimately even from the time of his childhood. It becomes an eyewitness account and a very important factor in promoting the cause.

Certainly, the gravestone was in place, and the inscription, before 1834-35. At that time the grave was visited by Jonathan Binns and he records, *Andrew Mullen Juvenit.* Obviously he misread the *s* for a *t*.

The word *Juvenis* arouses some curiosity as it is not a word that would have a popular local usage or connotation. At the time of the death of Andrew Mullen he was in his twenty-ninth year. One can only surmise that the priest who scripted the text must have had in mind that in death Andrew displayed all that was perfect in youth; great

[46]The discrepancy in the date has already been discussed in Part I.

intellectual ability and juvenile innocence. The obituary notice extols Andrew Mullen as 'the young champion of Christ'. This, of course, is from the *Carlow Morning Post* reporting on his death in Clonmore which is sixty miles from Daingean. Therefore it is not likely to be the inspiration dictating the inscription on the gravestone in Daingean. The proper context for *Juvenis* would be the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and therefore drawn from the Wisdom literature in the Old Testament. In stating this, we are persuaded by the talks given by Brother Paul O'Connor and Guy Carron. We have already linked these two together although we have to admit that the link is tenuous. However, the thoughts and aspirations of both on his youth are substantially the same. The French connection is strong in the Archconfraternity. St. Aloysius was the model of youth and Andrew Mullen was exemplary in this mould. It would appear from the personal testimony as expressed in the Latin text, this was uppermost in the mind of Father O'Reilly. [47]

In normal circumstances it would be the duty of the Bishop of the Diocese to record the evidence given on the incorrupt body. This record does not exist in the archives of the Diocese. It is possible that there was some agreement between Bishop Doyle and Father O'Reilly that what was written on the stone was the best way of recording the special circumstances surrounding the death of Andrew Mullen. We have the correspondence of Bishop Doyle for this period and there is no reference either to the death of Andrew Mullen or the inscription on the stone. In 1820 Bishop Doyle appointed Father Philip Healy[48] as a curate in Daingean and after the death of Father O'Reilly in 1825 the Bishop appointed Father Patrick Rigney to take his place. It would appear that Father Rigney and the Bishop were friends. Again the Bishop appointed Father Healy as parish priest of Clonmore upon the death of Father John Kelly on 28 September 1828. Father Healy would have been well acquainted with the

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[47]. Father O'Reilly was a keen Latinist. There still exist in Daingean two chalices inscribed by him in Latin.

[48]. Father Philip Healy was a classmate of Father Mullen in Maynooth but he was not chosen to study in the Dunboyne institute.

story of Andrew Mullen and would have known that Father Mullen had been a curate in Clonmore. But the people of Clonmore, as far as we know, showed no opposition to Father Healy, even though he came from Daingean. He must have had the full co-operation of the people as he built the church in Ballyconnell, a village within the Clonmore parish.

Our exploration is, so far, on two points. Firstly, is the inscription on the tomb the personal testimony of Father O'Reilly? As possible evidence of that the word *Juvenis* comes from the Archconfraternity. Also that Father Rigney would not have done the inscription as the memorial to Father O'Reilly was commissioned by Mrs Catherine Mullen. Secondly, is the inscription on the tomb an official record in the sense that it was agreed by the Bishop? It is hardly likely that the reference to the incorrupt body was put on the stone without the Bishop knowing about it. Certainly if Bishop Doyle disapproved of it he would have denounced it, even in public.

The question has often been asked by the local populace about the number of priests in the grave. Are they all in the one grave, one on top of the other? The general consensus is that this is not so. Each priest would be in a separate grave and Father Mullen is the only one interred in the grave beneath the stone. There is some evidence for this. Mathew Walsh who was a Franciscan friar and ministered in the parish is inscribed on the tombstone. But very close to the gravestone is another flat stone erected to the memory of Mathew Walsh. The inscription is in English and reads as follows:

> This tombstone is erected by Dr [Doctor] Walsh and Mathew Walsh, as a grateful monument to the memory of their Dr [dear] uncle, the Revd. Mathew Walsh, who departed this life on the 25th day of Decr [December] in the year of Our Lord 1793, and the 56th year of his age. R. O. P. [Full

stops after each letter, and the O should be I]. The prayers of the faithful are requested for him.

We notice here the correct translation of Kalends on the big tombstone of the 8th January 1794. Although the monument erected to Father Walsh is very close to the main stone, there is no absolute certainty that it was always in that position. It is a flat stone and is not mounted on any supports. So it could have been moved but in all probability not very far from its present position.

One other relevant fact is that Father Mathew O'Reilly is buried there and would have been the last priest to be interred in the grave. Father O'Reilly had built the church in Daingean (1807) and the usual practice should have been to have laid him to rest in the church or in its precincts. Certainly, his successor Father Rigney was buried in the church grounds as were a number of his successors. The only possible explanation to this is that Father O'Reilly had requested to be buried in the Killaderry graveyard over or beside Father Mullen. In Clonmore, Father John Kelly was buried in the empty grave of Father Mullen. Very possibly he requested this too. The wishes of both parish priests to be buried close to Father Mullen would fit in with the not uncommon practice of being buried in the vicinity of a saint's tomb. This has to be seen as part of the early cult. In early Christian times this was known as 'ad sanctos'. If this proposition be true it becomes further evidence of the sanctity of Father Mullen.

THE CULT AT THE GRAVE OF FATHER MULLEN

The first written evidence of the stone and the early cult is in 1834. This was provided by Jonathan Binns, an agent of the British Government who was gathering data, throughout the country for the Poor Law Enquiry. Some of what he recorded was not part of his official enquiry. It would seem he had a general interest in Irish life and he

wrote a book - *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland*[49]. His interest in going to Father Mullen's grave was because the veneration by the people was an essential part of Irish Roman Catholicism and there was no way it could be changed even if it were regarded as superstitious:

> I was informed at Phillipstown [Daingean] that he [Father Mullen] was a most benevolent and charitable man, and sacrificed even his own comfort and health to the good of others. He has been known to strip off his coat and shirt, and give them to those who had none. His death was occasioned by a cold taken in consequence of a charitable act of this sort. His grave is held in great veneration and is resorted to by the lame and diseased, who frequently lie all night on the ground, under the tombstone, and mix milk, which they bring in a bottle, with the soil of the grave, and drink it. Many shreds of garments of those who had visited the tomb were hung on small bent sticks at the front of the grave, in commemoration of their having been cured.

Binns relates the practices at the grave to the benevolence and charity of Father Mullen. These virtues would, in common parlance, be regarded as the natural virtues. Binns does not relate these to his holiness, which would be expected from a Protestant, even though well disposed to Catholic practices. In no way does he denigrate the practices. In a short paragraph he tries to present a full picture of the cult. He went on to see Mrs Mullen 'who was also held in profound veneration'. She mentioned the chill that caused her son's death. Also, she had his clothes cut into small pieces and given away as relics[50]. These clothes were special because Father Mullen had worn them, they had touched his body. The clay on the grave would

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[49]. Jonathan Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland,* 2 vols (Longman, Orme, Brown and Co: London 1837), vol. II, p.69.

[50]. Binns thought there was some speculation in this but he does not say that Mrs Mullen indulged in this. If he did, it would conflict with his other statements of her.

have similar significance. In the grave there was the incorrupt body. Obviously the clay surrounding the coffin would disappear with the frequent visits of the people. Apparently, the custom developed that people brought clay to the grave and this would replace the clay they would take away. This in itself would suggest a special presence, the incorrupt body, held in that state by some special act of God. Thus the cult was ongoing, a living cult.

There were a number of cults at the graves of priests throughout Ireland. Dr S. J. Connolly mentions them in general, but in particular that of Father Power[51] in Waterford. This cult lasted up to 1850, but probably did not end too abruptly. The practice was to take clay from the grave. No details are given of the actual ritual in using the clay. Where such cults fell into abeyance this was taken as a change in the patterns of the faith among the people. 'People had great faith in those days' was a frequent comment among ordinary folk. In many cases it can be presumed that the cessation of such practices would have been caused by mass emigration.

Binns mentions that people lay on the grave of Father Mullen. Lying on the grave is unique to the tombs of the saints. This practice lasted throughout the middle ages. It was called 'incubation' or spending the night in shrines to gain the saint's protection. St Kevin's bed in Glendalough can be put into this category. Another is recounted by Gary Hogg, an English traveller in Donegal[52]. I came across another one recounted in a book called *Turf under my Feet* by Gary Hogg, an English traveller in Donegal, and was published in 1952. The extract is from page 206.

> Here in Glencolumbkille are the saint's bed, the saint's oratory, and the saint's holy well. In the oratory is a much worn stone, on which countless pilgrims have laid on their faces in order to have their sight restored.

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51. Connolly, p. 138.
52. Gary Hogg, *Turf under my feet* (1952), p. 206.

> Here (a local resident) said, pointing with a long dark finger, here is where he slept [St Columbkille] when his labours were over for the day.

Sleeping on the bed of stone was an act of penance, presumably in imitation of the saint. This element was also important in the cult of Father Mullen. There was a definite awareness of the penance done by Father Mullen. The Binn's statement supports this. Many people gathered at local shrines, in many cases a holy well, and performed acts of penance such as moving around the shrine on their knees even to the point of incurring bruises and bleeding.

People made their own choice of the day for penitential acts and prayers. The day chosen would reflect the importance of the holy person in the minds of the people. Obviously individuals visited the shrine in times of special need, very often in search of a cure. In the case of Father Mullen's tomb, Holy Thursday was the special night for lying on the grave. This was the night Our Lord instituted the Blessed Eucharist, central to the spirituality of the Archconfraternity. Thursday was always a special day for the members. They were encouraged to receive the Eucharist on Thursday. So it is possible that this custom of lying on the grave on Holy Thursday night could have arisen from the Archconfraternity.

Good Friday was the day set aside for visiting the grave and doing the station. Andrew Mullen had a devotion to the crucifix, again part of the spirituality of the Archconfraternity. The station consisted of walking around the grave clockwise and at each corner reciting three Our Fathers, three Hail Mary's and three Glorias. Again this form of prayer was common practice in the Archconfraternity for those unable to read the office. So there are strong possibilities that Andrew was honoured by the people in the devout way he had lived among them as a boy. He gave an example of devotion that was imitated by the people.

Around 1880 the chronicler, Dr Comerford, stated "the veneration [of Father Mullen] is still going on". It would seem from this statement that Comerford made some study of the veneration. For the chronicles he gathered most of his material from information received from parish priests. The information he received from Daingean was provided by Father Bergin, and he only gave a list of the parish priests of Daingean. Dr Comerford must have had another source. Also he was reporting on the veneration of the grave in Daingean.

CLONMORE

The empty grave in Clonmore was visited by many people over the years and there was the usual practice of taking clay from it. The evidence for this is that to prevent that practice there was a high iron railing with no gate erected around the grave and a thick crust of mortar over it. A cross was made of pebbles giving the impression of sorrow. All this must have been done before 1870-80 as it was recorded by Dr Comerford.

The interesting thing is that apart from the cross there is nothing to indicate that it is the grave of Father Mullen. The remains of Father John Kelly were interred in the grave in late September 1828. Yet there is no headstone to his memory, although there is a memorial to him on the wall inside the church, consisting of an effigy of him and mentioning his virtues. The erection of this memorial away from the grave may indicate that it was the strong wish among the people that it should be remembered as Father Mullen's grave. But it all remains shrouded in silence. No cures are reported as having occurred at the grave.

THE ELEGY

An elegy on the late Revd. Father Mullen Curate of the parish of Clonmore:

1. Draw nigh my good people and with me bewail
   and join me in this tragedy it is a sad detail.
   It is of a noble clergyman alas! he is no more
   his name was Father Mullen the curate of Clonmore.

2. His loss with my pen I'm not able to indite.
   If Homer and Virgil, together would combine
   they might state the grievance that spread this country o'er
   since they lost their Father Mullen, the curate of Clonmore.

3. He is well regretted, by this nation at large
   he was a steady pilot unto St. Peter's barge.
   he is torn from our helm, she may now run on shore
   she has lost her darling Mullen, the curate of Clonmore.

4. As for worthy Father Kelly, he has reason to lament
   on the duty of his parish out day and night he went
   and in execution of the same, great slavery he bore
   he may be sore lamented in Kilquiggan and Clonmore.

5. As for his worthy Mother, that reared such a son
   the hearts of all both great and small
   the rich and poor he won; the [they] may be well contented
   for to have him gone before, and I hope he will open Heaven
   for the people of Clonmore.

6. The Deaf, the Dumb, the Lame, the Blind
It's now they may complain likewise the debilitated that feel an inward pain
And those th [with] other wounds and scars
now l ... rs in their gore
Since they lost their skilful Doctor, the Curate of Clonmore.

7. Those that were afflicted he instantly cured
he fed the weak and hungry, that went from door to door
Those that were blind for many years
their sight he did restore
that wonders through this nation, enquiring for Clonmore.

8. But his friends in the King's County they came in disguise.
Stole away his remains unto our sad surprise
Where the people mustered for to make their sad groans
they may now weep at his [h] allowed graces
at the Chapel of Clonmore.

9. Now to conclude and put an end, all you good people pray,
He should be kept in memory, until the judgement day,
Where you will see him face to face as often as before;
If you follow his examples, he has left you in Clonmore.

Published in Limerick c1820 by S. B. Goggin (Publisher).
Found in the British Library, London.

The original is not laid out in stanzas. It is in a bound volume and called the Light Brigade, but this is not in the military sense.

BACKGROUND TO THE ELEGY

This poem is treated as an important documentary testimony because it was written shortly after the priest's death. It contains a great deal of information on his ministry in Clonmore. We ask why this eulogy is in the form of a poem rather than prose?

Our answer is that as a poem it would be recited and memorised by the people in their homes and round the fireside. Even with a low level of literacy the recitation would have had a wider appeal and would more easily be passed down from one generation to the next. This in itself would contribute to the living quality of the popular cult.

A second question would be about the composition of the poem and the language and imagery used. Many people might be inclined to regard a poem as an over-embellishment of the facts and incidents of the young man's life and ministry. To answer this point we shall try to cast the poem in a special mould. In order to do this we consider the special tradition in Clonmore and we can begin by quoting Dr Comerford, the chronicler of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. Comerford was a professional historian, a member of the Royal Irish Academy and would have made his enquiries around 1870 and published in 1886. About the same time there was another professional historian, Rev John O'Hanlon (1821-1903), who produced ten volumes on the Lives of the Irish Saints. This was a work of encyclopaedic proportions. The two writers were like minded. They had a high regard for the local devotion to saints which was a particular feature of earlier Irish Christianity and at the time of their studies and writings the local devotions were on the wane which was regretted. O'Hanlon's works were serious excursions, and a comparison can be made between these two scholars and Alban Butler of

England who again wrote the still famous *Lives of the Saints* . Butler wrote to stimulate popular devotion to the saints as did Comerford and O'Hanlon; the latter concentrated a good deal on ancient manuscripts and provided a scriptural base for hagiography. Later we shall quote him in support of contributions from folklore and how accurate, or otherwise, were these contributions in the form of stories. For our immediate purpose it is sufficient to say that Comerford drew material from O'Hanlon on Clonmore and with this material he corrected some mistakes made by other authors.

To begin with, Comerford separated the Clonmore in Carlow (the parish in which Father Mullen served) and the Clonmore in Wexford and the saints associated with each of them. He wrote:[53] "Clonmore or Cluain-mor-Maedhoc i.e. the great meadow of Maedhoc is among the most hallowed places connected with the lives and the labours of several of our Irish saints. Clonmore in Leinster, formerly a very celebrated monastery, in which many saints are buried, and are venerated. St Maedhoc whose feast was celebrated on 11 April, St Finian Lobhair on 16 March, St Stephen on 23 May, St Ternoc on 2 June, St Lassa on 15 September, St Dinertach on 9 October and St Cumin on 18 September (A. A. S. S. 597). The monastery of Clonmore was founded by St Maedhoc in the sixth century. The important one for us is St Finian surnamed LOBHAIR, or the leper, connected by the annalists, and is said to be interred there. This writer further states that St Finian remained as the head of this monastery [for] thirty years. If a metrical work on Clonmore, attributed to St Moling, be the composition of that saint, it proves that St Finian must have died before the year 694, as St Moling's death took place in that year, and in his poem he indicates the resting place of St Finian. The surname Lobhair, though it literally signifies a leper, yet has been applied by the Irish writers to persons suffering a chronic infirmity of body especially scrofulous, or ulcerous nature. It is related in the acts of this saint that a certain person came

53. Comerford, vol. III (1886), pp. 178ff.

to him bringing a boy who had been blind, dumb and afflicted with leprosy from birth. The saint supplicated God for his cure but received for answer that if he wished the child to be healed he himself must bear the leprosy; the saint readily accepted the condition. St Finian's feast was celebrated on 16 March.[54]

The poem on Father Mullen mentions "... the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the blind may very well complain. Twas these he liberated from every dreadful pain". This language must surely come from the local veneration of St Finian. Father Mullen did penance to heal people and in a way took on their diseases.

We have listed the feast days of the above saints so as to emphasise the veneration of their memory. They are buried in Clonmore and their remains are regarded as relics in the Angelic Cemetery of Cluin-mor Maedhoc a "delightful place of resurrection according to St Brogan's log of the graves in the Book of Leinster. The poem goes on: "I ask of all you good people to pray that he'll [Father Mullen] be kept in memory until the Judgement Day[55], and then we'll meet him face to face as we've done before, the much regretted Father Mullen, the curate of Clonmore".

In the ancient metrical tract on Clonmore by St Moling we read: "At the place where the tree falls it is not easy to carry off its top". It would appear that St Moling adjudged to the place of the monk's demise. That was to settle the dispute about the burial of monks who perhaps had spent some time in other monasteries or died whilst travelling between monasteries. The bodies of such monks were regarded as relics which hallowed the ground and awaited resurrection day. So this is a local tradition and can be regarded as unique. Hence we can understand

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54. John O'Hanlon, *Lives of the Irish Saints*, .. vols (Duffy and Son: Dublin, 1875).

55. According to Helen Concannon MA, D.Litt, author of *The Blessed Eucharist in Irish History* (Brown and Nolan: Dublin, 1932), Judgement Day goes back to St Patrick: "At this time [the Penal Days] they carried the name of the Mass so deep in the place names on the map of Ireland that until the great sea comes over Eire, seven years before the Judgement Day as promised by the angel to our apostle of Croagh Patrick - the record shall never be erased." (p. xv).

the great sorrow among the people when the body of Father Mullen had been removed.

We have attempted to show that the Clonmore people place Father Mullen among the ancient saints, so in their hearts they had canonised him. We can add a few sentences from O'Hanlon on this type of special veneration. He speaks about wells and crosses that were resorted to during the year as spots specially suitable for devotions and penitential exercises. There they recited prayers or performed stations, after a prescribed form. Then they prepared for a reception of the Sacraments, before departing for their respective homes. The ancient Irish Church approved of such devotions, which under the direction and sanction of pious and enlightened ecclesiastics, were found from the number of humble votive offerings affixed to the branches of the trees immediately near the wells, that many miraculous cures, both of soul and body, were popularly held to have been effected as a result of such pilgrimages[56]. The Almighty could as easily make those waters instrumental in exhibiting His powers and mercies towards fallen man, as when the withered, the blind, the lame and the sick were healed by him through a visit to Pobatica or Bethsaida at Jerusalem. The grave of Father Mullen was venerated in Clonmore and that veneration increased in Philipstown. There was no well but there was the incorrupt body of the young priest which the people accepted as a special sign of God's favour. This acceptance can best be explained that in the case of saints the resting place was the reminder of the Resurrection and Judgement Day. There can be no doubt that the Resurrection was central to these popular cults. Popular belief in miracles and the seeking of miracles rested on this deep conviction. The chief mystery of the Christian religion was localised in these places of pilgrimage and firmly established that Christ was a healer and continued to heal through his saints.

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[56]. This description is also mentioned in the Binns statement on visiting Father Mullen's grave.

O'Hanlon regrets the passing of these beliefs and pilgrimages. "Hence owing to a degeneracy and demoralisation, consequent on abhorrent laws and prevailing ignorance, the pastors and priests of Ireland prohibited these open-air devotions. Thus very generally discouraged, especially since the commencement of the last century. [He wrote in 1875]. The patrons at holy wells, for the most part, ceased or had been prohibited. However necessary it may have been found to forbid their continuance under the circumstances, yet we must deeply regret, that with the proscription of such popular assemblages, our Catholic peasantry, in the course of a few generations, lost all recollection of those days, when their former local patron saints had been venerated. Had such a tradition even survived, in the absence of written accounts, we might still be able to connect many saints, mentioned in our calendars with their exact places, and thus clear away much of the obscurity in which our early hagiology is at present involved. "

Further on he wrote: "By fortunate accident, and from the accounts of old persons in rustic lore, some information bearing on those subjects has been preserved." The writer [O'Hanlon] often obtained such valuable matter, for his purpose, by entering into confidential conversation with the simple minded and religious peasantry, noted at the time, may usually be found embedded in the following pages.[57]

Has something been lost? Already we have pointed to the strong sense of resurrection in this popular cult to Father Mullen. Built into this is the strong instinctive grasp of the miracle. The scientist Alexis Carrell spent most of his time in the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. In 1935 he published a book *Man the Unknown.* Carrell had a deep interest in the miracles of Lourdes. He began this study in 1902, at a time when the documents were scarce, when it was difficult for a young doctor, and dangerous for his future career to become

57. O'Hanlon, Preface, vol. I.

interested in such a subject (a footnote on page 144). He goes on "In all countries people have believed in the existence of miracles, in the more or less rapid healing of the sick at places of pilgrimage, at certain sanctuaries. But after the great impetus of science during the nineteenth century, such belief has completely disappeared. Physiological laws oppose miracles. Such is the attitude of most physiologists and physicians. However, in the view of the facts observed during the past fifty years this attitude cannot be sustained. Our present conception of the influence of prayer upon pathological lesions is based upon the observation of patients who have been cured almost instantaneously of various afflictions such as peritoneal tuberculosis, cold abscesses, suppurating wounds, lupus, cancer etc. The miracle is chiefly characterised by an extreme acceleration of the progress of organic repair. The only condition indispensable to the occurrence of the phenomenon is prayer". While this extract from a scientist raises esteem for a cult that in its own time was regarded as gross superstition indulged in by the poor and the ignorant, at the same time it is best not to use the cult as some kind of polemic. In the case of Father Mullen our task is to show that the alleged miracles through his intercession arise from his holiness and the reputation for holiness (fama). However, it is fair enough to complain that because of sneering attitudes towards the cult insufficient attention was given to his holiness. This should have been the task of the diocesan priests and the bishops. It has been said that the neglect was due in large measure to strong Protestant domination both in Ireland and elsewhere. Something has to be corrected here and the best way to remedy it is to promote the Cause. This proceeds along definite lines laid down by the Church so that sanctity is recognised and adorns the Church. In this study we find it regrettable that the devotion to Father Mullen has gone on for nearly two hundred years and it was not until 1976 that a diocesan priest wrote on this "remarkable young priest".

A final comment has to be made on the line in the elegy: "He was sturdy pilot of St Peter's barge". Maynooth from it earliest days excelled in patrology and logic so as to equip the students to combat their counterparts among Protestants. It is not unlikely that Father Mullen engaged in debates of this kind. "The rich and the poor he won" and would take the rich to mean some Protestants. It is more likely to refer to the style and the content of his preaching. Unfortunately, we have not got any specimens of his dissertations in Maynooth or of his sermons in Clonmore. Furthermore he was only a curate and exercised no authority. But he would have the gifts of persuasion and example, gifts that attracted rather than repelled. The phrase definitely suggests his total commitment to the Church and full submission to the authority Christ gave to St. Peter. In this he was exemplary. The obituary notice sums up this very well. As such it supplements the elegy.

A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TOWARDS POPULAR CULTS

The general consensus is that there was a parting of the ways in the early nineteenth century between the old (Catholic) Church and the modern Irish Church. We can take another quote from William Shaw Mason (1814-1819):

> Rosenallis, Queen's County [Laois]. Old superstitions are going out of use, even the funeral cry [keening] is laid aside. The people of Rearymore parish annually assemble on the 12th December St Finian's well to celebrate the festival of their patron saint. The well consists of three or four holes, always full of water, and is surrounded by old hawthorns, which are religiously preserved by the natives. It is also customary for the common people to go round this well on their bare knees by way of penance and mortification. On the return of the festival of St Manman. which is

attended by those who are to be interred into the burying ground of the parish. [58]

Doing penance was a strong element in those local venerations. People who had committed grave sins were often given as a penance to visit those shrines and carry out the harsh ritual there. Around this time the bishops discouraged their clergy from imposing these penances. Some complained about their clergy, and possibly the bishops as well, that condemnation of assemblies at local shrines was plainly leaning towards Protestantism. Dr Connolly says:[59]

> "The tone of society in Ireland is becoming more and more 'Protestant' every year; the literature is a Protestant one, and even the priests are becoming more Protestant in their conversations and manners. They have condemned all the holy wells and resorts of pilgrims, with the single exception of Lough Degree, and of this they are ashamed; for whenever a Protestant goes upon the island, the ceremonies are stopped. The charge made by the Protestants was that such practices were superstitious". There was the weekly gazette called the 'Protestant', the editor, being, William Gain. A series of essays in one volume drawn from the gazette bears the title 'THE PROTESTANT', in which are discussed at length . . .

"Those subjects which form the distinguishing features between true and false religion, between the Christianity of the New Testament and the Papal superstition which has usurped the name". A great deal of the collection is culled from practices in Ireland. It is a diatribe. First of all the ignorance of the people and then the repressive control of the ecclesiastics over their Roman Catholic flocks. It is a battering ram and includes England and Scotland as well as Ireland. Obviously the whole ensemble reached saturation point and therefore the extreme bias can be

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58. This period of change is discussed at length by Monsignor Patrick Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience: A historical survey* (Gill and Macmillan: Dublin, 1985), ch. 6.
59. Connolly, *Priests and People*, p. 113.

dismissed. However, the editor did give priests an opportunity of replying in the form of letters. On particular and learned one was dated 21st October 1820 and signed 'Juvenis'. This letter is greatly admired by the editor, especially from one so young. It shows a scholarly acquaintance with patrology which was a forte of Dunboyne. It shows a new type of priest. There is 'Juvenis' on Father Mullen's gravestone. We would not want to suggest that it was actually Andrew Mullen but he has to be regarded as among a new breed of priests, "A faithful pilot of Peter's barge". It would seem that the 'Protestant' displayed an excellent polemic or apologetic of thrust and counter-thrust that gave great impetus to the revival of the Roman Catholic Church in these lands. Therefore it must stand as an argument against the alleged trend of Protestant influence and succumbing to that influence by the bishops and clergy in the preparation for the introduction of national education in Ireland around this time.

The most prominent bishop in Ireland in the early nineteenth century was James Warren Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin (1819 - 1834). Doyle before his death was accused of being a Protestant. He certainly suppressed the holy wells and other local venerations. It has been said that he would not approve of the veneration of Father Mullen's grave. He was a workaholic, gifted preacher and writer. In many ways he was like a contemporary, Augustus Pugin, the architect, and possibly ended his days from a similar mental strain. Doyle had to be regarded as a political animal. In 1824 he had to give evidence to the Royal Commission on miracles and superstitions. He was closely questioned on miracles because of a special incident which he contrived and he wrote a pastoral letter on the incident and called for a day of prayer. The story is well known and referred to in the 'Protestant', as well as by Dr Connolly. There was a German priest Alexander Emmerich, Prince of Hohenloe. On 18th June 1825 Maria Lawlor, who had been unable to speak since an illness six years before, attended mass at Maryborough, Queen's County at exactly the time that Emmerich in Germany celebrated mass for her recovery. The bishop even calculated the difference in time between the two places. Speech was restored to Miss Lawlor at the moment

she received Holy Communion. A similar cure was affected in Dublin some time later. Again Archbishop Daniel Murray published a pastoral letter. Both bishops were accused of pandering to popular superstition. The miracles that happened are not being questioned here. A question can be raised on the involvement of the two bishops. Was this pandering to popular superstition? Did the accusers get it wrong? A comment can be made: this priest, a Prince in Germany, and therefore far removed from Ireland, not known to the people could be seen as special in the eye of the Established Church and the British Government. He did not belong to the ordinary rabble. It can be seen as used in a political context. This was a clear case of non-popular superstition. Bishop Doyle had discerned as much. He was close enough to Daingean and Clonmore to know of the miraculous cures at Father Mullen's grave and surely he was acquainted with the great zeal of the priest and his reputation for holiness. But he was, in this case, highly selective and we might ask for what purpose? It was his duty as a bishop to make a record of the events and reputation surrounding Andrew Mullen. Yet there is not even a whisper. It would be no exaggeration to say that if the bishop did not want to hear it, it could not be brought to his notice.

Bishop Doyle assured a Parliamentary Committee in 1825 that the clergy of his province did all they could to restrain the practice of making such pilgrimages to holy wells etc. but added regretfully "It is hard, however, to root out prejudices'. A summary can be made. Popular religion among the people was piety without respectability. Ecclesiastical or official religion was respectability without piety. It was a time of polarities.

The Irish language came under threat at this time too. Brian Friel puts words into the mouth of one of his character's: 'The cow that delivered the golden calf is about to be killed'. This is a reference, not to the replacement of Gaelic by the English language but to the Greek and Latin taught in the hedge school. The culture was being totally

fragmented. There was a lack of esteem for the poor scholars and this produced a lack of confidence among the people.

We can draw some comparison between Bishop Doyle and his predecessor, Bishop Delaney. There was a Bishop between them, Dr Corcoran who reigned for four years - 1814-1819. This Bishop was old and feeble and scarcely anything happened in his time as Bishop. Bishop Corcoran was not the first choice to succeed Dr Delaney. The parish priest of Kilcock refused the invitation to take over the Diocese. There is very little discussion on his refusal. Furthermore, during the short reign of Corcoran there was mention of the possibility of a Jesuit being appointed to replace him on his death. Certainly, Corcoran favoured James Doyle as his successor. There was some unease in the Diocese at this time but in the end Doyle was the popular choice. The four years of inaction took its toll on the Diocese. It would appear that Bishop Delaney had been looked upon as an inept Diocesan Bishop, and even blamed for the parlous state of the four years of Dr Corcoran. Dr Connolly quotes Fitzpatrick (the official biographer of Bishop Doyle 1880) that readers of the first edition of his biography objected to comments on Delaney. Fitzpatrick quotes in his defence a letter from a priest, a relative of the Bishop, who tells him that there is nothing in his account "that could offend the most fastidious admirer of Dr Delaney". The offending remark was "he was [Dr Delaney] somewhat dilatory in performing the various arduous duties of Episcopal life. Passionately fond of the society of intellectual and sincere friends he often forgot, in the charm of their presence, to execute some long-advertised visitation". There is some confusion as to the cause of death of Dr Delaney. There is the possibility that he had gout, which is generally brought about by overindulging in fat bacon and brandy. The more common opinion is that he was crippled with arthritis. In private Dr Delaney had what is known as the discipline. This is a small whip made of cords with which he flagellated himself. The usual custom was for this to be done on a Friday morning and for the length it would take to recite the *miserere* and the *de profundis*. the whip is still preserved in the

Generalate house of the Patrician Brothers. All the indications are that he was a very charitable and compassionate man. One could raise the question as to why a proper biography of him was not produced between the brothers and the Brigidine nuns. Possibly the explanation lies in the subjugation of the nuns and brothers by the local Bishop. Dr Delaney was not a political figure. As he was in the mould of St Francis de Sales, he thought he could catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a barrel of vinegar.

A question can be raised: Bishop O'Reilly was coadjutor to Bishop O'Keefe. When he left for Armagh, Dr Delaney was appointed coadjutor. But Delaney had no coadjutor in his declining years. Certainly Dr Corcoran needed assistance too. Later Bishop Doyle required a coadjutor, but he did not get the assistant of his choice. Did Delaney want a Coadjutor? Corcoran felt he was only keeping the see warm for Dr Doyle. What concerns us here is that the Diocese went through a crisis in this period and it was during this time that Andrew Mullen finished his studies in Maynooth, was assigned to Clonmore and, after some three years of indefatigable ministry, died there without anything being properly recorded. There was a lack of sensitivity. We can explain some of this by the presence of ailing bishops. The structure of the clergy bordered on a caste system. A number of them had been in Maynooth. Patrology and logic had pride of place in Maynooth. It is no exaggeration to say that the logic deteriorated into some kind of hard-nosed cuteness. The spiritual flavour was lost. Spirituality was shrouded in the mists of the ancient church with its saints and monasteries. All the churches in the Diocese had for their patrons the ancient Irish saints, St Joseph and Our Lady. No church had for its patron post Reformation saints with the exception of Daingean. This was St Philip Neri, a saint of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, but he was removed when the new church was built in Daingean in the nineteen sixties. There was no updating of Dr Comerford's chronicles. It is generally held that he got very little co-operation from the clergy in assembling the chronicles. The celebration of past and present events in

a Diocese would be regarded as moments of recall and, as such, would bind those events together. This should augment the chronicles.

At the end of the century the Convent of Perpetual Adoration was founded in Graigue Cullen, Carlow. The Bishop of the time asked the question: "Who is going to pay for the candles?" The Mother Abbess persuaded him to make an act of faith in the Lord. It would have been the right moment to recall the work of Bishop Delaney, the first Bishop in Ireland to introduce the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. He placed devotion to the Blessed Sacrament at the centre of the lives of the Patrician brothers and the Brigidine nuns. He must have introduced the forty hours of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in Carlow College. It has been known for Bishops to approve of the foundation of enclosed religious and lay it down that prayers would be offered constantly for the Diocesan students preparing for the priesthood. Father Andrew Mullen had his early formation in the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. As a student at Carlow College he wrote to his mother of his great delight before the Blessed Sacrament. He even counted the candles.

It would seem legitimate to postulate that a sense of holiness in a Diocese would bring many things together on various occasions and a renewal of dedication to holiness. Sadly, we conclude that there is no evidence of this in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. We have tried to show that there was a breakdown of continuity between the two best known Bishops in the history of the Diocese. A new awareness of this may develop and then Andrew Mullen will be given his proper place.

CONCLUSION

Our examination of the cult to Father Mullen in the nineteenth century brings together a number of strands, perhaps, in many instances, accompanied by only a degree of probability. Throughout there is an awareness of the popular religion and the attempt

over the century to establish the official religion. On the question of official religion it can be seen that the Bishops endeavoured to introduce the edicts of the Council of Trent. Accompanying this there was a political bias and it bore down heavily on the popular religion. There would be no justification for saying that Bishop Delaney favoured popular cults. In the first instance, if we are to attach any political significance to his Episcopate, he tried to educate the people and, in turn, they would speak for themselves in the councils of government, local and central. He tried to provide a different focus and venue for populous assemblies: devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Corpus Christi processions. Side by side with this we have attempted to cast the cult to Father Mullen in the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. We have suggested that prayers and practices were drawn from the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. In doing this we place the cult in the tradition of the Church and this provides an argument against superstition. O'Hanlon points out that the practices of local venerations were not detrimental to the sacramental life of the Church. Prayer and penance were, in many cases, a preparation for the Sacraments. With this summary we can enter the twentieth century and show the attempt among the people to have Father Mullen's Cause introduced.

PART 3

THE CULT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

'I am delighted to welcome a move to have the cause of one of our innumerable priests of heroic sanctity and dedication - especially I would say in the last century - introduced as I learn now for the first time from your letter and enclosure. Father Andrew Mullen is certainly one of those [judging] by the few details given in your enclosed card.'

Dominic Conway, Bishop Emeritus, Elphin. 26 April 1996

This letter has a direct bearing on the cult to Father Andrew Mullen. In the first instance, he (Andrew Mullen) is one of the innumerable priests of heroic sanctity and dedication. Among priests of today there are some who would say that because there were so many holy priests, why single out one of them? If Andrew Mullen belonged to a group of holy priests then what is there that is so special about him and that his cause should be introduced? This argument can be refuted by the large number of martyrs, especially in the early church. Even though there were so many martyrs at a particular period, yet each one was venerated both locally and, in many cases, universally for witnessing to the Resurrection of Jesus by accepting death at the hands of the persecutors of the Christian faith.

In the second instance there has been an unbroken cult to Father Mullen for nearly two hundred years, interspersed with miraculous occurrences at his tomb. People lie on his grave in order to obtain a cure and this practice usually takes place on Holy Thursday night. People visit the tomb on Good Friday in large numbers. Then there is the written evidence on the life, death and cult of Father Mullen. Although the evidence is sparse, at the same time there is sufficient to distinguish Andrew Mullen from other priests and persons both in his native Daingean and the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin to which he belonged. There is an overlap between the written evidence and the oral tradition but each has its own distinctive character.

There is the documentary evidence, and from this, areas of his life can be assessed beyond reasonable doubt. There is evidence of a holy life from boyhood and steadfastness in his life both as a student and as a priest. His early death was reported in the local Protestant paper, and this obituary highlights his example of devotion that was recognised and followed by others. There are, of course, gaps in our knowledge of him and this is especially the case with his student days in Carlow and Maynooth Colleges. Monsignor Corish, as already stated in Part I, makes the comment that nothing could be known about his spiritual life as a student because such matters were never put in the records of students. The only way information might possibly come to light would be if a contemporary student wrote some comment on this particular aspect of his life. Every effort has been made to find such information but to no avail. However there is room for conjecture. The period of five years in Maynooth cannot be regarded as a kind of spiritual plateau. For example he was chosen to go forward for higher studies in the Dunboyne Institute. His selection by the President and the staff was based on his moral excellence and intellectual and academic abilities. So he conformed fully to the rules of the College and never became involved in any affray or disturbance in the College, of which there were many. However the internal conformity is of more importance to building up a picture of his holiness. Although it is reasonable to presume that a form of internalisation did take place there is no letter from Andrew to express this. There is good reason to suggest that Andrew did write letters during the period he spent in Maynooth and Dunboyne. There is also a further probability that a number of these letters would have been written to his parish priest, Father Matthew O'Reilly. Unfortunately, none of these supposed letters has survived.

The definite weakness in the oral tradition is the very few details that are known on Father O'Reilly, but it is beyond reasonable doubt that he did dictate the inscription on the tombstone. He extols Andrew as a youth perfect in mind and body. This

can only be understood to mean the total integrity of the person and being of Andrew. Such an interpretation of the inscription is supported by the obituary in the Carlow Morning Post. The paper does not merely report his sudden death but also describes him as 'the young champion of Christ'. The eulogy comes from Clonmore, some sixty miles from Daingean and therefore can be regarded as an independent report from the one on the tombstone. The obituary points to Father Mullen as a holy man. Also Andrew showed an example of holiness - 'lovers of virtue and religion have lost a true friend'.

How much of the written evidence enters into the oral tradition? The only evidence that is common to both is the letter to his mother and the poem which was recited by the people at the fireside. The poem is published in the pamphlet written by Father Edward Kinsella in 1977. This version of the poem leaves out the reference to the body of Andrew Mullen being *stolen* by the Daingean people from its resting place in Clonmore churchyard. One can only see this as evidence of reconciliation between the communities of Clonmore and Daingean, which adds lustre to the cult and its development.

The inscription on the tomb is written in Latin except for the commemoration of Father Matthew O'Reilly which is in English and was commissioned by Mrs Mullen. However the words on Father Mullen were translated into English for many years. This is inscribed on a piece of metal sheeting erected on a stand and placed at the end of the tomb facing the west. There is mention of the incorrupt body of Andrew Mullen. So the ordinary folk visiting the tomb would have this knowledge available to them and consequently contributed to their devotion to him. Although there are other priests' names engraved on the stone, the people have always spoken of the grave as that of Father Andrew Mullen.

The poem and the inscription on the tomb form part of the oral and written tradition. The Binns Report and the obituary notice in the Carlow morning post were not known to the people either in Clonmore or Daingean. The Binns Report was discovered in the British Library in London in April 1993. The existence of the excerpt was first made known to me in April 1993 by John Kearney, the managing editor of the Offaly Historical Society in Tullamore. But there was no copy of the volume which contained the excerpt in the library belonging to the Historical Society. Father Edward Kinsella makes no mention of this passage in his pamphlet. It would appear that up to 1993 the main elements of the oral tradition were the bringing back of the incorrupt body from Clonmore to Daingean by a small number of men from Daingean. Then, of course, there is also the number of miraculous occurrences at the tomb that are reported in the oral tradition as handed down.

A wider background to the cult can be attempted. It can be said that Binns regarded the veneration at Father Mullen's grave as an integral part of Irish Catholicism, and no power on earth was going to change that even if such veneration was regarded as superstitious.

Why did Binns go to Father Mullen's grave whilst he was making a survey of the applications of the Poor Law in Daingean? One must suppose that he was told of the existence of the grave by Protestants because he would have mixed among them in Daingean. Also he went to see Mrs Catherine Mullen, Father Mullen's mother. Obviously, he had an interest in the cult. The cult would have illustrated to Binns the character of Irish Catholicism. If that be the case then Father Mullen and the cult to him would indicate that the people had looked upon Andrew Mullen as a contemporary saint who bore a resemblance to the ancient saints of Ireland. Thus the Daingean people shared the same sentiments regarding Father Mullen as the people of Clonmore. 'That he be kept in memory until Resurrection day' as

given in the poem would construe that he was a saint and that his body was a local presence of the Resurrection. The bones and other parts of his body were regarded as relics and therefore would bring about miraculous cures. Binns does not call Father Mullen a saint because, being an English Protestant, he would not have a devotion to saints. He must have only wanted to emphasise that the cult was an example of Irish Christianity.

The official Roman Catholic Church in Ireland at this time had discouraged such cults. As well as the survey on the Poor Law, there was at the same time an enquiry into the National School Education Act which was finally implemented in 1839. Anything such as a cult like that to Father Mullen, was disapproved of because of the accusation of superstition. The Catholic Bishops, in collaboration with the Protestant British Government to introduce the National School Education Act, would have been embarrassed by the cult. This was certainly the case with pilgrimages to Lough Derg. [60] The British Government raised many questions about the practices in Lough Derg. Bishop Doyle, who was the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin between 1819-1834, said in his evidence before the Commission in 1825 that he knew nothing about the practices of pilgrims at Lough Derg. On that occasion he would have been under oath. Did he lack fortitude? So the reporting on the cult to Father Mullen by Jonathan Binns may have been an attempt to influence the debate on Irish Catholicism at this time and possibly to influence it favourably. The cult was an acknowledgement of a man renowned for his charity towards the poor. This was the very subject that Binns was gathering information on in his own survey, and the cult should be noted in the wider debate. Andrew Mullen was a highly educated man and so he combined in himself and in his ministry, an excellence that should not be overlooked.

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[60]. Connolly, p.114.

With regard to a cult of this kind, Ireland can be numbered among some of the European countries where there was a strong Protestant domination. Cults were ignored by the official Roman Catholic Church because of the Protestant accusation of superstition. An attempt is being made here to explain the lack of involvement of the official Catholic Church in the cult of Father Mullen. The cult is preserved and perpetuated by the people; their devotion is private. Even the reporting of miracles was not widespread. So there is no documentation of the miracles. The most that can be said is that they are authenticated by tradition.

The written documents have a definite message for their own time. The Binns Report describes the reputation of Andrew Mullen as a contribution to the care of the poor and the sick. Therefore his work is of importance in its own time and demonstrates that all is not bad in the general character of Irish Catholicism. The poem was published in Limerick which is about one hundred miles from Daingean and Clonmore. It is in the form of a eulogy that could be appreciated by Catholic and Protestant alike.

Apart from the short reference Dr Comerford makes to the continuance of the veneration at Andrew Mullen's grave in 1883, the Binns Report of 1834 is the last document in the written tradition. The oral tradition preserves the stories and the special one is from Clonmore and is recorded by the local headteacher in 1937. This takes us up to the Second World War. I began my research in 1993 and the people I interviewed would have been in their late teens and early twenties in 1939. They are now in their late seventies and early eighties. At the time of giving their testimonies to the cult they and their families had enjoyed a degree of prosperity after the war. They were grateful for this prosperity. They had to work hard for their share in this wealth but then their philosophy was - no cross, no crown. They told the children the story of Father Mullen. There was a general conviction, as expressed by them, that Father Mullen should have been canonised many years

before. That conviction rested on two things: the body of Father Mullen was found to be incorrupt and the number of miracles that took place at his tomb. Many people wonder if the body is still incorrupt because of the many miracles. Some even suggest the exhumation of the body. I was often asked the question: if the body were no longer incorrupt could Father Mullen be still regarded as a saint? I answered in the affirmative. The Roman Catholic Church, in processing the causes of holy persons, pays little attention to incorruption unless the body has remained incorrupt for a long period, for example fifty to one hundred years. This preservation of the body would then be regarded as a first class miracle. One can add that the tradition in the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches still recognises the state of incorruption as a sign of special favour from God.

New insights developed in the minds of the people. One insight is in the form of a dream given in a testimony. However, the main assertion in the oral tradition, and it is of definite significance, was that the cult was a spontaneous response to the holiness of Father Mullen and began immediately after his death. To explore this assertion forms the basis of the research.

There is no conflict between the written evidence and the oral tradition; one complements the other. The written evidence provides an historical basis for the oral tradition. An historical basis would be required because sources can be checked. Quotations and statements in papers and books show the importance and recognition of the holy person under scrutiny. Neither the written nor the oral tradition included any archival material. The Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin has never promoted the cause of any candidate with a reputation for holiness. Andrew Mullen died as a curate and his family did not survive beyond his mother. To many bishops and priests he would have been a non-person. Even though Carlow College published a magazine for many years containing articles on diocesan affairs and events, there was never a reference to the life and work of Andrew Mullen.

There has to be a theological interpretation of the cult which would attempt to remove the element of superstition. Also it would be necessary to establish the closeness of the holy person to Jesus Christ in his love of the sacraments and his love for his neighbour. An example of this theological interpretation occurs in Father Kinsella's pamphlet on page eight. 'As if somehow aware that his priestly life would be short, his labours were unceasing. Through his [Andrew] dedication to duty and sanctifying labours he advanced in sanctity himself'. This perception is of considerable importance as it interprets his life and informs the tradition. The interpretation would embrace the letter to his mother in which he tries to allay her anxiety about his health. The bloatedness he speaks of in the letter is a sign of the onset, even the progress of tuberculosis. This factor would certainly enter into his spiritual life and the burgeoning period of suffering. This is the case with the youth-saints and in particular St Aloysius Gonzaga (1568-1591), a prominent saint in the Archconfraternity. The life of Aloysius is part of the Archconfraternity literature. For this reason the use of Guy Carron and Paul O'Connor is apposite. They both put Aloysius into the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament which had not been done before. Both contributed to the literature of the Archconfraternity as mentioned in Part I. In particular they mention the devotion Aloysius had to the Crucifix. This devotion to the crucifix was strong among the purgatorians who were established in Daingean shortly after 1800. The devotion was used to assist the dying and add dignity to wakes. Andrew would have grown up with this devotion.

Brother Paul O'Connor also had a special devotion to St Aloysius from a very young age, and he was also a member of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. In his talks to the boys in Galway, Brother Paul spoke about the need to be prepared for death. Binns does mention the number of graves he visited in Galway, graves of young people with ribbons hanging out of sticks with the

petition 'pray for the soul of...'. In 1817 there was an outbreak of typhus which caused the deaths of many young people, more than among older folk. The ribbons attached to the hazel sticks would express a lament for these young victims of plague. The soul of the nation had been greatly wounded in this terrible loss. At this time death was a dark shadow even in the lives of the young. A special devotion based upon the full acceptance of God's will as made manifest in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ would be promoted to give a spiritual uplift in this appalling human situation. Andrew Mullen would have had this devotion.

SUMMARY - A METHODOLOGY

There is a convergence in the whole story and cult of Father Andrew Mullen.
There is the written evidence and the oral tradition.
There is the motto and resolution which Andrew expressed at the age of nineteen years: Remanebo semper quod sum deo adjuvante. This gives us a before/after continuum.

Before. The spiritual formation in the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. Andrew belonged to two branches of the Archconfraternity, Daingean and Kilclonfert. He also belonged to the Third Order of St Dominic. He taught catechism. He was close to the two priests, Fathers Matthew O'Reilly and Earl Boyce. His vocation to the priesthood was formed in these associations.

After. The development in the spiritual life after the age of nineteen years continued in Carlow College with a deep love of the Blessed Sacrament. In Maynooth College he was introduced to the method of meditation of St Ignatius of Loyola. There is steadfastness in that he was chosen to go to Dunboyne House for higher studies.

The poem eulogises his heroic priestly ministry. The obituary expresses the deep appreciation of Father Mullen's spirituality. A holiness that is shared is a holiness that is perfected. 'And anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy man will have a holy man's reward'. (Matthew chapter 10 verse 41. The Jerusalem Bible.)

THE MILNER PAPERS

Henry William Milner was a native of Walsh Island, Geashill, Co. Offaly, about five miles from Daingean. He took a special interest in politics, local affairs and especially in local history. His interest in the Father Mullen story started in the early 1960's. Harry sought authority for the story and for what he had written on the story. We must acknowledge his total dedication. He could have published a pamphlet himself, but uppermost in his mind was to promote the Cause of Father Mullen, and therefore he involved the local parish priest as the best way of drawing popular attention to the Cause. That aspiration pervades the whole work. Without him, in all probability, very little would have been passed on to future generations on Father Mullen. The veneration would carry on as it had done down the years: private visits, considerable privacy on cures but nothing in writing. His papers also show that others were enthusiastic about this too. People said that Father Mullen was a saint in the 'special' sense.

In the early post war period there was mass emigration from Ireland and by the early sixties whole areas had lost most of their young people to England and America. It was this factor that threatened many local traditions and especially those handed down by the fireside. Education in schools was improving and there was less reliance on memory. Irish folklore was based on 'recitation'; with the increase of literacy memorising was less necessary.

We can begin then by making points on the Milner Papers:

1. Harry brings together the background information from Clonmore as well as Daingean. This is especially helpful as the two places are some sixty miles apart and a comparison can be made between the two traditions.

   Harry records his information from both places and common to both is the poem. This poem was well known in Daingean but originated in Clonmore. Again common to both is the endeavour to point out the reconciliation of the two communities on the removal of the body of Father Mullen from Clonmore by the Daingean people.

2. Of special significance is the correspondence between Harry and Bridget McCaul of Clonmore as given below.

3. Harry highlights the strong sense of the miraculous making the tradition a holy one. The removal of the body was regarded as an heroic effort on the part of the men who executed it and were assisted in doing so by the light shining from the grave. [61]

4. Harry Milner was a great cyclist and journeyed from Daingean to Clonmore on his bicycle. On one occasion in the summer of 1964 he addressed the congregation as they emerged from the church in Clonmore and this was not approved of by the local clergy.

   I was made aware of this incident by a local resident, Mrs Anastasia Doyle, whilst I was rubbing a tombstone in the churchyard. She told me the story of the man who came from Offaly in the early sixties and spoke to the people about

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[61]. This remarkable occurrence also happened shortly after the death of St. Charbel who was born in 1828 and died in 1898. He was a monk of the monastery of St. Maron at Annaya, Lebanon.

Father Mullen as they were coming out from Mass. Whilst he was speaking the curate came out of the church and said: "Wait till the big man hears this!" (This was the parish priest). 6 August 1993.

5. The whole Milner family has a great devotion to Father Mullen. I was impressed with the sons and nephews. They claim a relationship to Charles Dunne who was cured by Father Mullen around 1850.

6. Harry worked arduously for the canonisation of Father Mullen, gathering up, information on the reported cures and attributing these cures to the incorrupt body of Father Mullen as the chief sign of his saintly life. This conviction was shared by both Father Kinsella and Father Kieron Byrne.

Annroi Milner has provided me with a list of the articles written by his father in the local paper, the *Offaly Independent.*

Dates on which the articles appeared:

1st.	23rd May 1964	(Description of burial grounds)
2nd.	6th June 1964	(Historical places in Offaly)
3rd.	27th June 1964	(Father Mullen)
4th.	11th July 1964	(Father Mullen)
5th.	25th July 1964	(Father Mullen)
6th.	6th August 1964	(Father Mullen)
7th.	8th August 1964	(Father Mullen)
8th.	15th August 1964	(Father Mullen)
9th.	27th February 1965	(Father Mullen)
10th.	6th March 1965	(Father Mullen)

11th. 17th April 1965 (Father Mullen)

These publications were written at the time of the establishment of the Offaly Historical Society. I have copies of all these articles and I shall attempt a summary of them. To begin with this is the first published material on the story of Father Mullen that we know of. Most of the information contained in the articles is included in Father Kinsella's pamphlet.

There is a delay of some twelve years between the publication of the articles and the written work of Father Kinsella. In this time Father Kinsella built the new church and the schools in the parish. So he was a busy man and was quite old when he prepared and published his booklet. We can safely assume that Father Kinsella drew most of his material from the articles. There is ample evidence that Harry and Father Kinsella were close. There is at least one letter written by Father Kinsella to Harry. Many folk in the town say that both were seen together quite frequently. There is a great deal of repetition in the articles written by Harry. He often began an article by saying "Just in case our readers have not seen last week's edition of the paper, I repeat ...". The enduring characteristic is to make the story known and Harry can be regarded as a populariser. The main thrust of the articles was the incorrupt body. Was the body still incorrupt? He was asked this many times. He believed himself that it was. Then there were the many cures. As regards the state of incorruption being a sign of sanctity, this has been a long established tradition among believers in the Church throughout many countries. In most cases it is the local populace that attaches great importance to it. But the Church authorities processing Causes show some scepticism and require much more proof. It would seem that more importance is attached to the *flexibility* of a corpse than the incorruption. The state of incorruption may have many scientific reasons for its cause such as climatic conditions, the nature of the soil and also the grave being airtight, in particular the coffin. In general one could say that while a body may remain incorrupt for hundreds of years the skin is found to be leathery. So, the

flexibility would indicate that rigor mortis had not taken place; which is explained by the fact that the special fluid which resides in the muscles has not drained away. I have to confess that I am no expert on this matter apart from having done some basic reading. The sweet perfume also adds to the phenomenon and is taken as a special sign of heavenly grace.

Harry Milner makes one thing clear that is somewhat confused in Father Kinsella's story. Harry states in one of his accounts that Holy Thursday night has long been considered to be the night to sleep on Father Mullen's grave. He gives this personal account:

> Since I made the pilgrimage to Clonmore (Carlow) on the anniversary of Father Mullen's death, (January 15th), I had been planning to make the pilgrimage to Killaderry (Daingean). Holy Thursday was 'one of those days for me', nothing seemed to go right, so I gave up the idea. Whilst in the church for the ceremonies, the thought kept recurring so forcefully that I felt compelled to go. After the ceremonies the idea got such a douche of cold water, I again decided to give up, but I could not rid myself of the thought. At ten minutes to ten (pm), without another word, I jumped up and went to Mr J.A. Doyle and asked him to leave me at Killaderry. We arrived at 10.40 pm. I got off at the road and J.A. remarked 'I don't envy you'. I admitted that I had a slightly funny feeling facing in among the dead. I took my rugs and cover, and walked along the short lane to the cemetery. As I approached the gate, I felt a slight sensation; I stepped over the stile and glanced to the left and the right to make sure there were no ghosts standing around. I saw none, and without breaking my step I made for Father Mullen's grave. At that moment, every strange feeling seemed to vanish. I reached Father Mullen's grave and threw my rugs and cover on the flat stone. I then said ten decades of the Rosary. Whilst

> kneeling on the tombstone I had a wonderful sense of security. After that I walked outside the gate and to my surprise I found the atmosphere inside [the graveyard] was much better than outside. I returned to the tombstone to say... [62] .

The remainder of the statement is lost.

This document gives us a fair insight into the character and personality of Harry Milner, and of course his total dedication to the Cause in hand. Driven on at all times by an inner impulse and this was combined with prayer - reciting ten decades of the Rosary whilst kneeling on the tombstone. Father Mullen did inspire people to pray. Father Edward Whelan, for many years a curate in Daingean, told me that on one Holy Thursday, well into the night, he went to the tomb to say some prayers. On the way out he met a man coming into the graveyard. The man looked 'upset' and said that he was going to spend the night on the grave. Father Whelan said 'it is a very cold night for staying out'. The priest did not know the man and he never heard anything of him afterwards.

In the sixties big social changes were taking place around Daingean. There was the development of Bord na Mona, a nationalised industry, set up to manage the national resource of the Irish peat bogs. A large number of people had come from many parts of Ireland to settle in the midlands. They would have known nothing of Father Mullen and they would have been wearied with information like the remark that was frequently made in Cleary's pub, Cloneygown "as cold as the stone over Father Mullen's grave". There was a serious undertone to this; namely that many people lay on the stone in the most inclement weather.

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[62]This is taken from Milner's own manuscript noted and was never formally published. I have retained in my possession a photocopy of the relevant pages.

BROTHER AHERNE

Among the papers, I found a letter addressed to Brother Aherne who worked in the Reformatory for many years as one of the Oblate Community who ran the Reformatory in Daingean. Brother Aherne gave the letter to Harry to be copied and it is written by a Hilda Kathleen Whitmarsh, care of the Matron, St. Edmundsbury, Lucan, Co. Dublin dated 27 November 1966. The background to this letter appears to be that this lady was receiving rest and treatment at the same time as Brother Aherne. At this time he was well on in years and became exhausted as a result of his arduous labours at the Reformatory in Daingean. The letter comprises notes taken by Mrs Whitmarsh of a talk given by Brother Aherne to the other guests. The letter is as follows:

> Dear Brother Aherne
>
> It is with grateful thanks that I am returning the precious paper cuttings, the poem and letter etc.
>
> It was so good of you to lend them to me. I have made copies of all of them in a special notebook and I must pray hard with you and others that Father Mullen's Cause may be promoted without undue delay.
>
> When you so kindly and so ably addressed us all in the sitting room at St. Edmundsbury you told us that on one occasion during his [Father Mullen] time at the seminary Father Mullen wrote a long letter to his holy mother, and that he asserted that he would die poor and that his mother would always be poor ... [The letter goes on:]
>
> ...It is plain to me that it is due to your inspiration that the many facts pertaining to that saintly priest have come to light, and the miraculous happenings during his life and after his death.
>
> It would not surprise me if you told me that you had seen Father Mullen! but such things are better unrevealed, except at the right time and in the right place.

In this hectic modern age of superficialities and topsy-turvy values, how soon is the memory of a saint and a miracle worker obliterated from peoples' minds? So many of them are taken up with trivialities and the debasing effects of 'mass media'. In an unobtrusive way, you have done a wonderful work. May God reward you. I shall pray that you receive many blessings. "

The only other letter of this kind was received by Harry from a Mrs Fitzsimons, Curriglass, Newtown, Shandrum, Charleville, Co. Cork:

16 May 1973

My Dear Sir

I have seen your account in the Sunday Irish Catholic [paper]. I would love to know if there is any little book on his [Father Mullen] life, or any more on his canonisation. I will gladly pay for any little book or anything belonging to him. [Here again there is mention of canonisation.]

Harry Milner had a long correspondence with Bridget McCaul of Clonmore. I can give a summary which are her replies to Harry Milner:

26 June 1964

I've never yet got to make my trip to Daingean, as we all got the 'flu and no one is up to the journey so far, but DV I shall get there later on. I have nothing further to report but I feel sure that if it's God's will something will turn up soon to place Father Mullen's Cause before everyone's notice.

13 July 1964

"There is very little else I can tell you of good Father Mullens. But for that old song we'd not even know so much. Years ago as children we loved to hear an old neighbour sing it and got it written down.

My mother - God rest her - showed us where his grave had been; she also told us that the carriage wheels and horses' feet were muffled by sacks or other material and not one ever heard a sound or knew what had taken place until next morn: also she said the clay from the empty grave cured many ills. Yes, I've often wondered how such a journey was accomplished in these times but have no idea what road was travelled. Would it be that Father Mullens expressed a wish to be buried at home? These were poor times for Catholics in every way (Emancipation not till 1829). These people must have taken an awful risk in what they did breaking the law etc. Or else they were helped miraculously.

Clonmore chapel which still serves the district for mass and all Devotions was burned down by the Redcoats in 1798. It then had a thatched roof. There are three priests' graves near that of Father Mullen's [empty grave]. Some of these date from early 1700 and I think one is back to 1670. ...It is a special wish of mine now that someone would offer a wee prayer at Father Mullen's grave for my intention. I've had a heavy cross to bear this year.

Yes, I'd dearly love to know more about Father Mullen and arouse interest in his Cause. At the time I wrote to you last I expected you'd have several letters about him from the parish and I am disappointed people did not take it up.

18 August 1964

I was waiting to see if I'd have something definite to report on the pilgrimage etc. We are all in a country parish here - no town - and it's hard

to get in touch with people: especially during fine weather past, all so busy at hay etc.

I shall know more after next Sunday DV and am praying our efforts will be successful. The Cause of Father Mullen never leaves my mind.

23 August 1964

Much regret *organised* pilgrimage not possible from here.

Some private visits may be paid. Must Father Mullen's Cause end? I feel sure if it be the will of God something shall happen to further his Cause and I pray it may be so. That's all we can do now. We have done all we can in face of difficulties - so long gone by and so hard to get further information. Wishing you every success and thanks for all your prayers offered at his grave.

8 September 1964

I was very pleased to rec. your letter today, many thanks. The news it contained was great.

To my mind no point in giving my name yet. I think as regards the pilgrimage the P.P. of Daingean would have to give authority for same, also our P.P. (whose add. I enclose).

Should this happen I shall do all I can at this side to help on pilgrimage as far as I am able. Wouldn't it be wonderful should permission be got to open Father Mullen's grave and find his body still preserved.

All this shall happen if it's God's will.

Bridget McCaul gives the address:

Rev T. McDonald P. P.

Killinure, Coolkenno,

Tullow, Co. Carlow.

She ends the letter:

Shall write you again. At the moment no point in publishing names. Should permission be got for pilgrimage, then is the time.

The correspondence between Harry Milner and Bridget McCaul reveals a good deal. They share the desire to promote the Cause of Father Mullen and to have him canonised. They are anxious to arrange a Pilgrimage to Father Mullen's grave in Daingean and Bridget meets with the disapproval of the local parish priest in Clonmore. Only private visits to the grave were in order. When I started in Clonmore seeing various people and the local historians I quickly formed the impression that for many years the local clergy remained silent on Father Mullen. I spoke to some of the clergy that had served in Clonmore from the late fifties onwards, and with the exception of one they said they never heard anything said about Father Mullen in Clonmore. I then checked with two men now in their forties but were altar servers from 1958-62 and they said there was a great deal of talk about Father Mullen. More and more I sensed that there was a meek anger in the people in both places that Father Mullen had been neglected.

Again Harry Milner makes no reference to Father Mullen's parish priest, Father John Kelly, being buried in the empty grave. In the course of the research I found the Clonmore parish magazine for 1994. There was an article in it by James Tallon (see also the testimonies below) on the succession of pastors in the parish. He has a note the Rev John Kelly:

...lived in Brown's Walls and was the first to occupy the old Parochial House. His father and mother lived with him. They are buried across the walk from his grave in Clonmore. He is buried in Fr Mullen's Grave. His curate was Fr Mullens. He [Fr Mullen] had attained a remarkable degree of holiness. He died very young, and the people [Clonmore] used to lie on his grave to get cured. This gave it a rough appearance and when his mother visited it, she was disappointed at the uncared appearance of the grave. The body was exhumed and re interred in the priests' grave in Killaderry in the parish of Daingean. The Daingean people came to exhume the body with a pony and cart, equipped with spades, shovels, carpenter and blacksmith and put sacks over the wheels. His remains were placed in the church in Daingean over night and buried the next day. The grave in Killaderry is marked by a tombstone. His name is in Latin, Fr Andrew Mullens.

FATHER KINSELLA'S PAMPHLET

Father Kinsella's pamphlet is twenty six pages and was published in 1977. The factual basis for the pamphlet are the two valuation lists (Piggotts 1823 and Griffiths 1854) and Mrs Mullen's name is listed in both. Both valuation lists give Mrs Mullen as the proprietor of the pub which was on the west side of the main street. According to the 1854 valuation there was a house on the opposite side of the street This house was held in two names, Catherine Mullen and Ann Graham. Fr Kinsella makes no mention of Andrew prevailing upon his mother to abandon the public house. If the story is true then this plea would have been made by Andrew before 1818, being the year he died. Fr Kinsella mentions Andrew's early education and states that he received his

primary education in one of the four schools[63]. (Most of the information that Fr Kinsella gives on the schools is drawn from Martin Brenan: Schools of Kildare and Leighlin already given in Part I). As regards Andrew's later education, Fr Kinsella can only base his remarks on the single entry in the centenary book of St Mary's College, Knockbeg (1948). The entry is 9 September 1809 to July 1810. He speculates that Andrew may have spent more than one year in Carlow College. This speculation is an attempt to explain how Andrew matriculated at Carlow College. The Bursar's Ledger is complete and certainly no student would have been at the College without paying fees. Fr Kinsella gives the 30 September as the date Andrew entered Maynooth College and apart from this fact he says there is no further entry. Further details on Maynooth students were collected and published after 1948. So Fr Kinsella has little to go on. He shows great concern about the year of ordination of Andrew. He concludes that his studies for the priesthood would have ended in 1813 which is correct. He suggests that his ordination would have followed most likely in Carlow with other Diocesans. Carlow College did not have a list of ordinations until 1864. So there is no definite proof that Andrew was ordained in Carlow College. Father Kinsella became a bit confused at this stage and queries the year Andrew sent the letter to his mother dated 7th January 1810 because the nought is not closed. He surmised that it could be 1810 or 1816. To suggest 1816 the letter would have been written from Maynooth College whereas Carlow is given at the top of the letter. Fr Kinsella added to the confusion by quoting from Andrew's letter which said that "the time is fast approaching when I shall be home with flying colours". Father Kinsella interpreted this to mean his ordination. The attempt to elucidate all this is discussed in Chapter 1.

Fr Kinsella then moves on to the story of bringing back Fr Mullen's body from Clonmore to Daingean which is based on the Milner papers. As evidence of this he

[63]. Kinsella, p.7. Most of the information that Fr Kinsella gives on the schools is drawn from Martin Brenan, already given in Part I.

gives the names of the men which correspond to what Harry Milner wrote in the local paper, 'The *Offaly Independent*'. Fr Kinsella checked this and he had a conversation with Tommy Dunne of the Little Island who was the chief informant of Harry Milner. Fr Kinsella also gives the account of the body waked in the church for thirty six hours and the incorrupt state of the body. Again he gives the witness of an ancestor in the Dunne family. Also he gives the story of the disturbance at the grave and even mentions the episode of the Clonmore Group who made an attempt to bring Father Mullen back to Clonmore.

Fr Kinsella then becomes puzzled about Mr O'Reilly[64]. He seems to suggest that Mr O'Reilly could have been Andrew's teacher. At that time parish priests were addressed as Mister. There is further speculation on the death and burial of Fr O'Reilly on Good Friday 1825. He linked the burial with the beginning of the cult of Fr Mullen because of the custom of visiting the grave on Good Friday.

With regard to miracles Fr Kinsella gives an account of the cures of Henry Dunne in 1850. He also gives the details of the cure of Teresa Moore of Garr, a townland about three miles from Daingean. Teresa was born in 1844 and died in 1934. She became a nun in the Presentation Convent, Lucan, Co. Dublin and dedicated her whole life to the poor. (See testimony of P.J. Moore given below.) At the age of twelve years Teresa suffered a hip fracture as a result of a collision with a heifer in the farmyard. The hip became tubercular and all medical treatment failed.

In his pamphlet Fr Kinsella also writes about the coins, rosaries, and medals which may be seen on the tomb slabs at the present time. He makes the comments: "by visiting and caring for his grave, (and the ancient cemetery in which it is located) and by constant prayer that the church may, one day, put the finishing touches to the sanctifying labours of one so great in virtue and so rich in miracles by numbering him

[64]. Kinsella, p. 17.

among the saints of God. There is a saying - if we do what we can, God will do what we cannot"[65].

I met Monsignor Patrick Brophy, President of Carlow College on 11 August 1994. He knew Fr Kinsella very well and he said of him that "he was never one to go over the top. He was a man of balanced judgement".

The sketch and outline set out here on the pamphlet scarcely does justice to it. More will be revealed in the testimonies given by the people from 1993 onwards in order to avoid unnecessary repetition. However, Fr Kinsella in writing the pamphlet did not just give a memento. He felt that no further information would be found and it was essential to set down in writing what had been known on Father Mullen. He gave the added impetus expressing the hope that one day Father Mullen would be canonised.

Father Kinsella's pamphlet incorporates all the writings of Harry Milner in the local paper the *Offaly Independent*. It is from these two sources we rely for the description of what happened at the time of Father Mullen's death and burial and subsequent events. They also form the basis on which the oral tradition rests.

THE REMOVAL OF THE BODY

Local tradition (as recorded by Fr Kinsella and Harry Milner) has it that Mrs Mullen, on her return to Daingean from Clonmore, pleaded with people to assist in bringing back home the body of her son. She was inconsolable. The plan to take Fr Mullen's body back to Daingean was organised and, according to local tradition, the plan was not executed in secrecy. The men who took part were well known in Daingean. The local estimate is that some five to six men and a woman, Ann Graham, took part. Particular mention is made of a local Protestant farmer, a Mr Elder from Clonad, a

[65]. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

townland on the edge of the town. He loaned a horse and even said that a second one was available from his farm. Others included a carpenter named Gallagher and a farrier and a local miller called James Mulligan. The principal figure was John Dunne who had a pony and cart and he drew flour from Portarlington to Daingean a few days a week. All who took part may not have gone the full distance - some sixty miles - but instead there were staging posts. The whole episode would have taken a week, going and coming. These men have been regarded as folk heroes even to the present time. They faced great danger in their venture and if they had encountered the militia they would have been very likely to have raised suspicion and there was also the possibility that the horses might have been confiscated. So, the men had to consider the possibility of having to pull the cart bearing the coffin without a horse. That consideration would have meant recruiting some extra men. Again if they were all together a further suspicion would have been aroused in the minds of the militia. The route the men took is not certain but the general understanding is that they travelled the 'backroads' - near enough dirt tracks. They travelled in early January, and it is very likely that the weather conditions would have been horrendous. The story is handed down that approaching Clonmore they put hay ropes round the cartwheels and on the hooves of the horse to reduce the chances of attracting the attention of the local people.

On reaching the churchyard there was dismay. It was arranged that a man named Tallent, the father or brother of Father Kelly's housekeeper, would be there to meet them and point out the whereabouts of the grave. It was understood that he would be guarding the grave on that particular night. In the absence of the guide the men looked around the churchyard presumably to find a grave that had been recently dug and filled in. In their search they suddenly noticed one grave from which a light was shining. A strong sense of the miraculous became evident. This occurrence put a stamp of Divine favour rewarding the men for their excursion and gave a supernatural significance to Father Mullen. Could the men have been deceived? Was the light artificial? It can be

assumed that the men present in the churchyard would distinguish very quickly if the light was something like a storm lantern or a carbide lamp. They decided to dig and very soon the man Tallent arrived and confirmed that they were working on the right grave. He then left the churchyard very quickly. There was a carpenter among the men and presumably he was there to open the coffin to ensure they had Father Mullen's body. At this moment they witnessed the condition of the body. They must have been awe-struck but a paralysing fear did not overcome them. Was it just what they expected? If that were the case then they would have been strengthened in their courage. All this presupposes what they may have been told in Daingean when making preparations to set out on their journey. Such a briefing could only come from the parish priest, Father Matthew O'Reilly. Also, that Mrs Mullen had already been informed of the signs and wonders surrounding her son's death and the wake in the presbytery.

In a very short time the coffin was placed in the cart together with the other effects and they made a quick exit. Ann Graham heard voices in the distance and, thinking the local people had been alerted, said: "Get going quickly, and don't spare the jinnet!" [the pony]. The housekeeper accompanied the body, sitting on top of the coffin and thereby giving the impression that she was about to get married and was bringing her goods and chattels to her marital home. Miss Tallent remained in Daingean with Mrs Mullen. Mrs Costigan, Miss Tallent's niece, later came to Daingean as a teacher. There is a story told that the Tallents had to leave Clonmore because the people felt they had been betrayed by them.

ARRIVAL IN DAINGEAN

The journey was uneventful. They arrived early in the morning and the parish priest opened the church and received the body. The coffin was placed in the sanctuary and opened. The body was flexible and the right arm was rested on the altar rail. Huge crowds gathered and filed past the coffin and kissed the hand. There was awe but no

fear. Obviously the parish priest explained to the people that the incorruption of the body was a sign of the remarkable holiness of the young priest. Father O'Reilly had known him since he was a boy; he had been his spiritual director. So he was in a position to testify. According to tradition there was a sweet perfume that filled the church.

The body of Father Mullen, after lying in the church for thirty-six hours, was buried in Killaderry Cemetery, a mile from the town. The cemetery, at one time, had a church in it and was the parish church. It was plundered and knocked down by Cromwellian soldiers and the stones were used to build the local fort. In recent years some of the stones were returned to the cemetery and with them the open-air altar was built.

REFLECTIONS ON THE STORY

This completes the story of bringing back Father Mullen's body to Daingean from Clonmore. How was it reflected upon by the people? The question has often been asked among the people: was the law broken and a crime committed? The basic issue here is: was it a respectable and dignified thing to do? Most of the discussion would be about who took part - were they just desperadoes?[66] Laws on cemeteries were not enacted until 1850 when the municipal cemeteries were founded. Body-snatching had

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.[66]. There was similar occurence of a conflict between two communites over a burial of a priest near Thurles, Co Tipperary in 1817. Father John Hickey was a native of Knockgraffon or perhaps near Thurles. He was ordained c1800; curate in Holy Cross 1801 - 1804; curate in Thurles 1804 - 1811. He complained that his predecessors kept no registers. He ran away from Kockainy in 1814 and went back to Thurles where he again became administrator. He was parish priest in Borrisoleigh in 1816 but his term was short, as he died of a fever 20 April 1817. A day long struggle took place for his remains between the people of Thurles and Borrisoleigh. After some unruly scenes he was interred in the grounds of the old chapel in Borrisoleigh. Apparently the people fought fiercely with sticks and stones and the matter was finally resolved when a local person came forward and said he had a dream in which Fr Hickey appeared to him and said he was perfectly happy in his grave. Source: The Skehan Index, preserved in St Patrick's College, Thurles. Two small points can be drawn from this. The fracas between the two localities is recorded in the raw. This can be seen as a difference between the Chronicler of the Archdiocese of Cashel - Father Skehan, who would be a little more folksy, and Dr Comerford of Kildare and Leighlin, a professional historian. Dr Comerford would probably have thought such episodes too distasteful to commit to writing. The second point is that reconciliation was quickly reached, if not a bit comically. Reconciliation is a feature of the Father Mullen story too.

become common. The Burke and Hare trial in Edinburgh which led to the execution of Burke happened around this time (1828)[67]. But body-snatching, otherwise known as resurrectionism, often involved murder and was perpetrated for money on the part of the snatchers and the research units in hospitals paid the money and asked no questions. Laws were introduced to make such trading a crime. There was a special interest in the bodies of young persons. Father Mullen's grave was guarded in Clonmore, but all the indications are that this precaution was taken against the possible threat from Daingean. Certainly there is no suggestion that the group who took the body back to Daingean received any remuneration.

There were two parish priests involved and one would normally presume that they made their intentions known to each other. The people would not become engaged in the foray if there was disapproval from the parish priests. In the case of Clonmore, Father John Kelly, would have full control over the burial ground as it was a churchyard and the church was not a ruin but fully used for saying Mass. If, as was reported, large crowds were gathering in the churchyard and took part in the practices of picking clay off the grave and lying on the grave, then all this may have been embarrassing to him and he might have been called to account by the Fitzwilliams on whose estate the churchyard was situated. Good relations may have been strained. Did the housekeeper pester him anyway? Was she inconsolable after the death of Father Mullen? She does become the heroine. It is quite conceivable that Fr Kelly communicated with Father O'Reilly of Daingean and agreement was reached to remove the body. It is hardly likely that Father O'Reilly was not acquainted with the planning among the people in Daingean. He cannot have been taken by surprise when the men arrived back in Daingean. He opened the church. He allowed the lid to be taken off the coffin.

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[67]. Owen Dudley Edwards, *Burke and Hare* (Mercat Press, Edinburgh, 1980).

It would also be true to say that the goodwill of the Protestant, Mr Elders, the farmer from Clonad, enhanced the dignity of the removal of the body from Clonmore. The Elders's homestead had stone out-offices in the yard which would have placed them in the £10 valuation band, this being a qualification to be a member of the grand jury. If there were anything illegal in the translation then Mr Elders would not have taken part.

THE DISTURBANCE AT THE GRAVE OF FATHER MULLEN

A short time after the funeral and burial of Father Mullen a man named Whitfield died and was buried over Father Mullen. This episode is also recounted in Fr Kinsella's booklet.

The man was a Protestant and therefore, in being buried over Father Mullen, caused great offence to the local Catholics[68]. Apparently, some men in the dead of night dug up the coffin of this man and left it on the ground a small distance from the grave. The local police had the coffin put back in the grave and placed a guard on the grave. In some strange manner the men returned, dug up the coffin and this time left it on the roadside. The policemen guarding the grave were supposed to have received drink in the local pub and the publican put some special narcotic substance in the drink and, upon taking up their positions back at the grave, they fell asleep. The police moved Whitfield's remains to another graveyard.

This story is still in the memory of the townsfolk and has been passed down as fact. There are some slight variations. According to some, this Whitfield was a captain of the yeomanry and fought in a fierce battle in Kildare in 1798. I checked the public records in London and there was no trace of a Whitfield for the Daingean area. There was a Whitfield in Dublin Castle and others bearing that name had English addresses. There was a family of Whitfields in Daingean who produced candles, but so far as is known they had no military connections. There is a Whitfield plot close to the priest's grave and the last recorded burial was in 1792. Another variation is the story that this Whitfield was considered to be a holy man too and someone is supposed to have said:

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[68]. Thomas Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation 1690-1830* (Gill and MacMillan; Dublin, 1992) p.313. "In the same year [1814] in Belfast at Friars Bush Cemetery, which is common for all sects but mostly papists, a Protestant who was both a yeoman and and Orangeman was interred. That night his coffin was dug up and was smashed, and the corpse was mutilated and left in the middle of a bridge about a half a mile away. Almost certainly Catholics had been responsible for this resistance to a Protestant 'invasion ". This story lends credence to the fracas at Fr Mullen's grave in Daingean.

"let the two saints lie together". A further story (only told by one person) describes how the man buried in the priests' grave was an old tramp found dead near Edenderry some ten miles away. He was not buried over Father Mullen but beside the priest's grave. There was a custom that no one would walk over a grave and this was to stop the people walking round the grave in the course of venerating the remains of Father Mullen.

According to local tradition the police arrested a man for a disturbance at the grave, and brought him to Dublin for trial.[69] He was convicted and was about to be hanged. John Dunne, who was responsible for bringing Father Mullen's body back to Daingean, appealed to the local MP, William Magann.

The encounter with William Magann was interesting. When John approached him Magann berated him for the awful incident, "and you were involved too". John Dunne replied "that man should never have been buried there in the first place". Strangely enough Magann agreed with him, and intervened on behalf of the condemned man and he was released. A search was made among the Outrage Papers in the Dublin Archives but nothing was found. The question can be asked as to why the suspected criminal was taken to Dublin for trial when there was a court in Tullamore? According to the *Freeman's Journal*, a national publication, there was a protracted court martial hearing being held in Tullamore courthouse during 1818 - 1819. So it is possible that another

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[69]Two issues arise when attempting to research legal proceedings in Ireland. Firstly, given the extensive damage caused to Irish records in the 1922 civil war period, police records (which were held at Dublin Castle) are very incomplete. No record could be found of this incident in the Irish records and it was suggested by the Irish National Archives (Kildare Street, Dublin) that such records could well have been destoryed in the Irish civil war. They also suggested that it would not be surprising if we found no record of the trial since the records of the Dublin Four Courts were also extensively damaged in the civil war period.
Secondly, despite the nature of the trial appearing serious at first sight (carrying the death penalty) it does not follow that there would have been a verbatim record of the proceedings. The best we could expect would be a record by the trial judge of the proceedings (in so far as they record the finding of the court and the sentence passed). There is nothing to suggest that the case raised any new or important points of law, or any grounds for appeal, thus giving rise to a referrral to a higher appeal court or the House of Lords. Had this been so, then a record in the published Law Reports would have been available. However, no written record of the trial could be found.

hearing was not viable in Tullamore. Of course, the decision to go to Dublin may have been taken because of the danger of an attempt to rescue the man from Tullamore jail. The gallows were in Daingean and to hang him there would have made matters worse, but we cannot elaborate any further. As the case was quashed by the Dublin court this may explain why there is no transcription or law report of it.

There are two difficulties with assessing the story of the incident. Firstly, every effort was made to find Father Kinsella's background notes. Father Ned Whelan, now parish priest of Ballan, outside Carlow town, was executor to Father Kinsella's will. He took some of the papers and correspondence with him when he left Daingean. We looked through these and nothing has been found relating to Father Mullen. Father Whelan did leave a box of miscellaneous papers behind in the presbytery. This box was possibly dumped in an outshed. There was a suggestion that the box was finally put in the attic of the school but there was no trace of it there.

Secondly, there was no information handed down on Father Matthew O'Reilly and this is a serious drawback. From all the enquiries made there is nothing definite on where he was born or brought up. Johnny Dunne told Dennis Reddy, a native of Daingean, that he thought Father O'Reilly came from Westmeath, the neighbouring county, in the Diocese of Meath. This lead was fully explored. According to Bishop Plunkett's diary of parish visitations (1778-1827), he approved of two nephews of the Reverend Laurence O'Reilly, parish priest outside Kells (Kildalkey) to be admitted to the Irish College in Lille, France. The two young men were Eugene and Mathew O'Reilly. It is something of a coincidence that two students bearing the names of Mathew and Eugene O'Reilly entered Carlow College, and both had been already ordained. There is a good deal of information on Eugene as he went on to Maynooth for his theological studies and was appointed to Navan where he founded St Finian's College around

1802. But according to the chronicler of the Diocese of Meath[70], Mathew became an eminent solicitor. From all the enquiries that were made, there is no evidence of this. It is not even certain that the two nephews were brothers. There was one year of difference in their ages. They may have been cousins. It is recorded that Bishop Plunkett took an interest in the two young men. In fact he ordained Eugene in Navan 2 April 1793 with four other students, but there is no mention of Mathew. Eugene only spent a few months in Carlow College before going on to Maynooth. There was some difficulty in having his entrance fee returned to him and Bishop Delaney did oblige the college to give back the fee. The intervention of Bishop Delaney is interesting. Dr Delaney was appointed in succession to Bishop O'Reilly, coadjutor to Bishop O'Keeffe of Kildare and Leighlin. Bishop Richard O'Reilly originated from Kildangan outside Monasterevin, Co. Laois or Queen's County. When Bishop O'Reilly was appointed Archbishop of Armagh71 he received the Pallium, the cloth insignia of office, from Bishop Plunkett in Navan. This might indicate a connection between the Archbishop and the O'Reillys of Navan. There might be a niche here for Mathew O'Reilly and the possibility that Bishop Delaney ordained Mathew which would account for his presence in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. The Navan O'Reilly's were keen on the prefix O to Reilly as in the case with Mathew O'Reilly from the inscription on a chalice in Daingean dated 1821. The name Mathew would carry on for generations within the family. There was a Mathew O'Reilly buried in Rathwire Cemetery, Co. Westmeath, in 1943. There is no more information despite a wide search.

One final note. Father O'Reilly may have lost favour with the Protestants in Daingean after the alleged fracas at the grave. It is hardly likely that he did not become involved. As Father O'Reilly did not belong to a local family then the possible hostility would have been greater. It would seem that his successor, Father Patrick Rigney, had no

70. Rev A. Cogan, Dean of the Diocesan Seminary, Navan, *The Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern* (Joseph Dollard, Dublin, 1867), vol. II p.195.
71. Comerford, vol. 1, p.55. Most of his [O'Reilly's] papers were stolen and never recovered.

interest in perpetuating Father O'Reilly's memory. Rigney was a local man and had a sizeable plot of land and it would have been in his own interests to assuage the Protestants.

CURES AT THE GRAVE IN DAINGEAN

The major cures that took place at the grave in Daingean are given in Father Kinsella's booklet. The cure of Charles Dunne, around 1850, is listed. This eighteen year old man had seriously damaged his spine and his mother took him to the grave and placed him there overnight. He walked away from the grave, his health fully restored and he left his crutches behind.

Other cures have been attested to and for the sake of convenience they are included in the section dealing with the testimonies surrounding the Cult of Father Mullen. See below.

THE CURE OF FATHER MULLEN IN CLONMORE

Again most of the cures will be referred to in the testimonies. There is one cure recorded in the 1937 folklore as assembled by Seamus Leahy, the local headmaster:

> The present 'doctor' who has the cure is Johnny Byrne of Clonmore. To effect a cure he prays over the patient and breathes over the sore. (It is not absolutely necessary to breathe on the sores). This has to be repeated three times on three different days. The prayers said are a secret in possession of one Byrne. The secret prayers are given to the next member of the family when the existing one is on his or her deathbed and the order of succession is that of a man to a woman, and a woman to a man but no one but a Byrne can inherit the secret prayers. The secret prayers need not be handed down to the same family. [This last part seems unclear].

The local historians, said the cure was that of Father Mullen. But this revelation was only recent. According to Mrs Ciss Byrne, the widow of James Byrne, it was another

James Byrne of Gould, again no relation, who told her that the cure was given by Father Mullen when he stayed overnight in the house. James Byrne died in 1990 aged 90 years, and he was regarded as very truthful in his statements. I asked Mrs Ciss Byrne about the secret prayers. She said she could not tell me. I then asked her if there was a saint mentioned in the prayers. She said "no". At this time I was told that there was a dispute as to Mrs Ciss Byrne having the cure. She was not a Byrne and therefore would not qualify. Mrs Flaherty, a cousin of the Byrne family, claimed to have the cure. I spoke to Mrs Molly Flaherty about the prayer, making it clear that it would be necessary to establish from the evidence available the prayerful life of Father Mullen so that we could regard him as a holy man. Eventually, Mrs Flaherty did volunteer some information. I did not want to press her for all the details. The structure of the prayer is interesting:

The Lord is addressed. [This must be the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.]
The intercession of Our Lady is sought.
The last part of the prayer focuses on the crucifix.

Whatever may be said on the authenticity of the prayer, one thing is certain that its structure brings together the whole of the spirituality of Father Andrew Mullen. In the first and third parts it refers back to the Archconfraternity. In the second part it points to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the Third Order of St Dominic. A further comment will be made on this cure in the Testimony of Eamonn Guilfoyle.

THE TESTIMONIES TO THE CULT

21 February 1993

I am Father Kieron O'Byrne, Parish Priest of Cara, Prosperous, Co. Kildare.

I was Parish Priest of Daingean from 1979 in succession to Fr. Kinsella. I left Daingean in 1987.

Fr Kinsella was a studious man and was interested in history, especially Irish history in the period of 1916 onwards to 1932. He had a devotion to Fr. Mullen and spoke frequently from the pulpit. He urged people to take an interest in the Killaderry cemetery because a great deal of work was needed and this should be done in honour of Fr Mullen.

I took upon myself to get the work done in the cemetery. This work to start with was a matter of clearing bushes away and cutting long grass. There was a pathway to Fr Mullen's grave, but it was narrow and just a dirt track. Tommy Reddy of Main Street, Daingean had, with others, erected a Calvary, made of bricks and beside it placed a metal plaque.

I found the people more than co-operative. This was definitely a community interest. They worked like slaves.

We decided that the tombstone over Fr. Mullen's grave needed renovation. We made a proper path into the grave with cement flag stones which came from Killeshan Concrete at a very low charge and possibly free. This work was greatly expedited by Edward Smyth, Killaderry. I had the stone cleaned and re-lettered. I was present all

the time that this work was being carried out so as to ensure that there was no alteration to the original text.

I was responsible for raising the stone eighteen inches. The stone was tilted and it was difficult to get underneath the stone. I was aware of the practice of people prostrating under the stone: very often throughout the night. I put fresh soil on the top of the grave underneath the stone as the hens from the nearby farm yard used it as a dusting bowl. I removed various articles of devotion, bandages, broken rosary beads, scapulars, children' playthings. I was aware of the practice that people left tokens to show gratitude for spiritual and material favours granted through the intercession of Fr. Mullen.

Hundreds - even thousands - of people visited the grave while we were working there. Also I frequently walked up to the cemetery and I would find lots of people visiting the grave. Some had come a distance.

Holy Mass

I said to the people that as soon as the work was done on the cemetery that we would have Mass in the cemetery. I concelebrated the mass with Fr. Edward Whelan, Fr. William Mahon, parish priest, Stradbally, Fr. Neilus Crowley, parish priest, Mountmellick and Fr. Michael Smith. I did invite the parish priest and curate of Clonmore but they wrote back and said they were unable to come. However some people did come from Clonmore.

There was a vast attendance and the people gathered in the adjacent field which is roughly four acres in area. The field was more than half full. Fr. Mahon said to me: "I never thought I would see that large number of people in Daingean". After the mass Thomas Dunne, St. Mary's Road, recited the poem on Fr Mullen. The people

were invited to visit Fr. Mullen's grave. It was a fine evening and after the Mass the visits to the grave took up to one hour or more. We did the Mass the second year and the response was similar.

I felt that in order to facilitate the saying of Mass in the cemetery that an altar was required. We erected a temporary altar. Later we built a permanent altar. The stones used for the construction of the altar were brought back from the Fort Field. The people always understood that the Fort was erected from the stones of the old church in Killaderry. Frank Harte was the foreman. Nicholas Keating, Coologue, laid the stones (he is a stone mason and inscribed the front of it with a cross and used ochre paint.) I always regarded Killdaderry as a place of pilgrimage to Fr. Mullen's tomb. I never doubted the holiness of Fr. Mullen. I always regarded him as a saint. I often prayed at his grave.

Signed: K. O'Byrne P.P.

Mrs. Rose Roe, Housewife, Cruith, Kilclonfert.

21 February 1993

The Big Mass - 1981

They lowered the hedge dividing Walsh's field from the graveyard. Cars were parked to the left side of the field. A large number of cars, possibly one hundred to a hundred and fifty. I had the definite feeling that the Mass was in honour of Fr. Mullen. I would say about seven hundred people were present. My impression was that there was an atmosphere of great devotion. No chatting even among those standing at a distance from the graveyard. There were loud speakers and we could hear every word. Fr O'Byrne spoke about Fr. Mullen.

My recollection is that Harry Milner started the interest in Fr. Mullen in the sixties. He did approach Fr. Kinsella.

I remember when I lived at Dunne's of the Little Island. Sunday nights were great nights. We had Jim O'Brien, Joe Grace and his brother John. At that time there were three Dunne's - Jimmy, Tommy and John. Jimmy and Tommy were the 'historians'. John had no interest. Frequently they spoke of Fr. Mullen.

Most of the conversation focused on the story of bringing Fr. Mullen back to Daingean. The Connemara pony used for the journey to Clonmore belonged to John Dunne (John Dunne was the grandfather of Matt Dunne who lived in a small thatched house in Cuskelly's lane, Little Island). John Dunne used to draw flour from Portarlington to Daingean and he was picked as the one to go to Clonmore. I feel that the men must have spoken to the parish priest because on arrival back with the coffin the parish priest allowed the coffin to be brought into the church. Fr. Mullen

was dead and buried some time before it was known in Daingean. Somebody - it was said - wrote to Fr. Mullen's mother. Possibly this was Miss Tallant, who originated from Clonmore may have told the mother (Fr. Mullen's) of Fr. Andrew's death and burial. This is just my impression.

Miss Tallant's brother was supposed to meet the men from Daingean and show them the grave in Clonmore. Miss Tallant sat on the coffin on its return journey to Daingean. Miss Tallant brought Fr. Mullen's hat back to Daingean with her. It was thought that Miss Tallant sat on the coffin as a decoy giving the impression that she was getting married and had her goods and chattels with her in the cart. The Tallant family had to leave Clonmore because of the hostility of the local people to their involvement in the removal of the coffin.

Mrs Dunne (Rose Smith) mother of the Dunne brothers often told the story of her grandmother kissing the hand of Fr. Mullen. She talked about the sweet smell of roses in the church and in the cemetery at the burial of Fr. Mullen and also that the church was full of white butterflies. The men were regarded as heroes for removing Fr. Mullen's body from Clonmore. It was never considered a shocking thing to do.

I visited Clonmore about 1980. I went to the graveyard to see the grave of Fr. Mullen. I remember going into the old church and I met an oldish man and asked him where Fr. Mullen's grave was. "Its out there somewhere" he said. He gave me the impression that he did not want to talk about it. He kept on walking. When I eventually found Fr. Mullen's grave it was just a 'dip' in the ground and full of leaves. The grave was under a tree beside a wall. I said a prayer for the men who brought him back to Daingean.

Signed: Rose Roe. [Aged 68years]

23 February 1993

My name is Elizabeth Cassidy. I was born in Tubberona, Daingean in November 1907. My mother was Catherine Gorman (Walsh Island). My grandmother was Bridget Cuskelly of the Little Island, Daingean.

I knew Mrs. Costigan when I was a young girl and I remained close to her throughout her life. Mrs. Costigan was a Tallant and came from Clonmore. She was a school teacher in Daingean. It was thought that there was hostility to the Tallant family and possibly her coming to Daingean could have been brought about by the parish priest of Daingean.

I think Fr Mullen's housekeeper was an aunt of Mrs. Costigan. She was also a Tallant. Possibly it was the father of the housekeeper that met the men from Daingean when they arrived to raise the coffin and take it back to Daingean. Mrs. Costigan was about eighty six years old when she died. As far as I can remember she died at Easter 1931.

Mrs. Costigan was frail in physique but a very determined woman. She was a great teacher. She had a loud commanding voice. She was an exemplary Catholic. In her later years Mrs. Costigan and her husband, Lawrence, went to visit the Cuskellys on Sunday evenings. A sort of ritual took place. It took the form of a reading from the Bible and recalling Fr. Mullen and also Catherine Mullen, mother of Andrew Mullen.

My memory is that the aunt of Mrs. Costigan, housekeeper to Fr. Mullen, lived with Mrs. Catherine Mullen. (Mrs. Costigan told me this).

Mrs. Costigan told me that Mrs Mullen was very poor in her latter days. The Cuskellys often visited Mrs. Mullen and brought her some nourishment. This

hospitality was given by the young children of the Cuskelly family when they were going to school early in the morning. The parents (Cuskellys) would visit in the evening and bring bags of turf and timber. All the neighbours were charitable to Mrs. Mullen. She was loved by all her neighbours.

Mrs. Costigan did tell me that on one of Fr.Mullen's visits to his mother he did say: "Mother, you will die in poverty if you continue to sell drink." His mother replied: "Andy Jewel, you should not say that to your mother".

Mrs.Costigan told me that Mrs. Mullen approached the Bishop to have the coffin brought back to Daingean and to have the lid taken off the coffin in the Church of St. Philip Neri, Daingean. I cannot confirm the story that Fr.Mullen was dead and buried before they knew in Daingean. I do believe Fr Mullen died very suddenly. I also believe that the Bishop did want the people to pay their respects and show their love and affection for Fr. Mullen. I do feel that the Bishop thought that Fr. Mullen was a very holy man.

I have no knowledge of the funeral of Fr. Mullen in Clonmore. Also, I never heard that any families such as the Dunne's and the Cuskellys went to the funeral in Clonmore. I cannot confirm that Mrs. Mullen visited the grave in Clonmore.

Mrs. Costigan told me that Fr. Mullen's grave was guarded in Clonmore. The point I can confirm is that Miss Tallant, the housekeeper, did sit on the coffin on its homecoming to Daingean. I cannot say yes or no to the observation that there were white butterflies in the church while Fr. Mullen's body was lying in the church. I surmise that Fr. Mullen's remains arrived in the early morning and the church was open all day. Mrs. Costigan did not say anything about the Mass. But she did tell me about the right hand of Fr. Mullen being placed on the altar rail and the sweet odour of roses. I would prefer to say "a lovely odour". The grave was constantly visited by

many people. The Good Friday pilgrimage to the grave took place after the Stations of the Cross in the Church of St. Philip Neri. I myself nearly always went on Good Friday except for the times I was away from the area.

Cures

As a child about six or seven years [1913/1914] old I developed an oozing near the elbow of my left arm. This happened as a result of jumping over a stile and striking the elbow against a large stone which formed part of the stile. My father took me to Dr. Barry the local doctor in Daingean. He examined the arm and said that it was tuberculosis of the joint. He advised that I should go to the Mercer's Hospital in Dublin. They admitted me to the hospital and I remained about one week in the hospital under observation. They put a steel splint on the arm extending from the shoulder joint to the wrist flexing the arm across the chest. They bandaged over the steel splint and placed the arm in a sling. This kept the arm immobile for three months. My mother started bringing me to Fr.Mullen's grave. My mother prayed for a long time (half an hour) then she rubbed the clay on my arm. She did this on a Sunday evening and continued this practice for several Sundays. Eventually the bandage was removed and the wound had closed. I could move the arm freely and I worked hard ever afterwards. I attributed my recovery to Fr.Mullen's intervention which led me to have a great faith in his intercession and I encouraged others with ailments to visit the tomb and pray for his intercession.

Patrick Mulpeter, a boy of about six or seven years old, developed what was considered to be tuberculosis. (I cannot say this was diagnosed by a doctor). He had increasing difficulty in walking and had to use crutches. He was rapidly deteriorating. His aunt took him to Fr. Mullen's grave. She took the crutches from Paddy and told him to have confidence in Fr.Mullen, pray to him and lie on the grave. Paddy cried "Fr Mullen, cure me." He repeated this several times. His aunt took him out - he was

actually lying under the stone - and she told Paddy to leave the crutches behind. Paddy got into the cart (ass's cart) without help. Paddy was quite happy. When they got home Paddy's mother came out to lift him down from the cart. He jumped down himself and said "Mammy, Fr. Mullen cured me." There was great joy and celebration. He remained in perfect health and mobility. Later he joined the Irish Army and became a great soldier, fully mobile and no recurrence of the malady. He was wounded in battle in the same leg but recovered completely. He always continued to have a great devotion to Fr. Mullen.

I can only report this as I never met the young girl or the family. I cannot say what her name was but she came from Clonaslee, Co. Laois. She was afflicted with an eye condition that caused blindness. She was brought to Fr. Mullen's grave and was cured. I think Mrs. Costigan told me about this but I cannot fully verify it.

My mother was Catherine Pilkington. She suffered from varicose veins extending from the ankle to the groin. There were ulcers in the groin. She went to the doctor, Dr Barry, and he told her to rest and that there was no medical cure for her condition. She went to Fr. Mullen's grave twice a week and prayed at the graveside. In a short time she was completely cured and there was no recurrence. She attributed her cure to the intercession of Fr. Mullen.

I have spent most of my life in the vicinity of Daingean. For a short time I was in Mullengar doing mental nursing. I spent a little while in Dublin. Around the Daingean area I nursed elderly people in their own homes. I gave special and constant attention to Mrs. Costigan. I was asked to submit a bill for my services to Mrs. Costigan when she died but I declined the request from her executors.

With my hand on the bible I can honestly say that I have expressed myself truthfully.
Signed: Elizabeth Cassidy.

My name is Josephine Nolan of Killaderry, Daingean. I was born on the 22nd of May 1929. I lived with my mother Mary Paisley who died on the 29th of March 1975 at the age of 84 years. She always spoke to me about Fr. Mullen and frequently visited the tomb with my father.

26 February 1993

My involvement in caring for the tomb of Fr. Mullen began with the coming to Daingean of Fr.Kieron O'Byrne (1979). We scrubbed the tombstone with bleach and wire brushes. We planted flowers and painted the figure of the crucifix. My daughter put black paint on the lettering of the tombstone and also did the writing on the metal plaque. I continued doing this work over the years and even to this day.

I live close to the cemetery of Killaderry and right down the years I have seen people coming to the tomb of Fr. Mullen. I would say that there were many strangers as well as local people.

There is the annual pilgrimage to the tomb on Good Friday, all day long. There is a practice of praying at the four corners of the tombstone moving clockwise. This was done by many people. I cannot explain how this practice arose. My husband and myself always visited the tomb every Friday - sometimes as late as midnight. On some occasions we met people at the tomb but I felt it would be impertinent to ask them any questions. They did not volunteer any information either. They appeared to be family groups. If they arrived at a time when I was working on the tomb I would move away and let them say their prayers. The prayers were said in silence. Very often there was straw under the tomb on Good Friday. Over the years there were crutches, walking sticks and articles of clothing, many medals, rosary beads and small

sums of money were left. The monies were collected, taken to the parish church and candles were lit in the parish church.

No damage was ever done to the tomb and as far as I know there was no disrespect and no 'courting couples'. I think they would be much too afraid.

All down the years I heard of people being cured of rheumatism, arthritis, sciatica, headaches etc.

Cures

1. I can tell the story of John McCabe of Croghan. I knew John all my life from the time I was a child until his death around forty years ago. I remember as a teenager, myself, seeing him going up to the cemetery in a pony cart. He used to kneel in the cart because he was not able to sit. He was always on his own but the old pony was very quiet and gave me the impression that he, the pony, knew his way to the cemetery.

   I noticed the way John got out of the cart. There was no tail board on the cart because he had to drag himself on to the cart. He would slip from the cart, 'till the cart would heel up. The belly band was not on the cart. All this would happen at the arch and he would creep on his hands and knees to the tomb. He did this on a Friday. I did notice the clay on the tomb was scratched. Eventually John was able to walk and for a long time he walked up to the cemetery - a journey of about three miles. He lived to a ripe old age.

2. This was my own cure. One day I stepped down from a table onto a chair in the hallway where I was hanging paper. I nearly fell to the ground and in an instant I suffered a stabbing pain at the lower end of my back. This incapacitated me

for a few days. On the Friday I went to Father Mullen's grave as usual and I prayed. My husband said: "You should make the sign of the Cross on your back with the clay". I did this and I walked away a couple of feet. Suddenly I had a stabbing pain in my back. I could hear a kind of cracking noise in my back. My husband said: " The bone, or bones, have gone back into place. Did I not tell you Father Mullen would cure you?".

3. I have a niece in America, she is now in her fifties. Around 1979 the niece wrote to me and said her husband was going blind. I sent her a small package of clay from the grave of Father Mullen. I can only say that the blindness did not develop any further and he has partial sight to this day. Apparently in the case of the husband, blindness is hereditary. The next time I write to my niece I shall ask her for details of medical attention and ask for the opinion of the doctor if the halting of the blindness is special.

With my hand on the bible I have truthfully stated the information contained in this statement.

Signed: Josephine Nolan

Witnessed: W. Dempsey

Statement by Joseph Seery, Daingean.

26 February 1993

I once mentioned to Father Kinsella: "Was it peculiar that they stole the body [Father Mullen]? Father Kinsella replied: "Anyone would steal a saint."

I remember a story told by Bob Lynch. The story would go back about sixty years. Bob and his father were asked by people who were coming from England (Mocklars) to do some work on a grave and a headstone (this was not Father Mullen's grave). The day before the visitors came Bob and his father went up to Killaderry cemetery early in the morning around five o'clock. They heard voices. As they went further into the graveyard one or two people approached them and asked where Father Mullen's grave was. They said they had walked from the Hill of Down, Mullengar, approximately thirty miles from Daingean and they had been in the graveyard all night.

Signed: Joseph Seery

I confirm this story. Signed Bob Lynch.

Statement by Edward McDonald.

2 March 1993

My name is Edward McDonald, Oldtown, Clonmore, Co. Carlow. My age is fifty nine years and I am one of the fifth generation living in Oldtown. I have been interested in local history for a number of years with a special interest in Father Mullen. My parents often spoke about him. They said he was a most saintly priest. He was very generous to the poor. My father (and also Mrs McCaul) told me that Father Mullen took off his shoes and gave them to a poor person. He distributed food to the poor and even gave his clothes to the poor. Father Mullen left a cure to the Byrne family which has been handed down to the present day. The cure takes the form of a prayer. Not only local people but people from all over Ireland ask to be cured. Also many people have written from many parts of the world asking for the prayer-cure to be said.

I learned the ballad (poem) myself and recited it many times.

I visited the grave in Killaderry a few times.

I was cured myself of shingles when I was nine years old. I was very sick for a whole week. My mother went down to Miss Byrne, she said the prayer and I had instant relief.

Signed: Eddie McDonald.

Statement by Margaret McDonald.

My name is Margaret McDonald, wife of Eddie McDonald.

2 March 1993

I want to confirm the statement by Eddie, especially about the cure. There was a telephone call from my sister Jane in Boston. She was very ill with shingles. I told her that I would ring Mrs O'Flaherty (Molly) which I did. Molly has to have the Christian name, surname and the ailment. She then goes into a room and prays in secret. Jane wrote me a letter and said that within fifteen minutes of the telephone call to me the pain of the shingles had gone.

Three weeks ago I went to the doctor about an eye infection. He diagnosed my condition and told me that I would have to go to Waterford to the Eye and Ear Clinic. I rang Molly and asked her to say the prayer. I found relief immediately. I have had no problem since.

Signed: Margaret McDonald.

Conversation with James Tallon, Ballyshane, Hacketstown.

Age 74 years. Local historian. Has had a lifelong interest in Father Andrew Mullen.

My impression of Jim is that he is a very knowledgeable man on local history and expressed himself in a very balanced way. Also he is a daily Mass - goer and very friendly with Father Noel Dunphy, the present parish priest.

Jim and myself spent the morning walking in the Clonmore area. He showed me where Father Mullen's house was. On this spot we had a special conversation.

Father Dempsey: "Jim, I have been asked if anyone could say that Father Mullen spent an hour or so in meditation before Mass?"

Jim: Look Father, where we are standing now is three miles from Clonmore. Father Mullen, in all probability, walked to the church in Clonmore. I would be the last man in the world to say that he did not make his meditation over the three mile trek. That would have taken at least one hour.

Father, I am going to tell you something that is not generally known in this area. The priest before Father Mullen here in Clonmore was Father Nolan. This priest absconded with the daughter of the most bigoted Protestant landlord in the area. This left a dark cloud over Clonmore. The turmoil was further aggravated by the fact that the girl survived Father Nolan, returned to Clonmore and married the local Protestant minister". The story is remembered in the form of a rhyme: "Captain Nixon's daughter, Father Nolan's widow, wife of the vicar of Mullenacuffe".

Jim also said that he heard the story from a cousin of P.J. McCaul, who belonged to a local family who were in Clonmore for many generations. I did approach Canon

Stutgart, Church of Ireland vicar of Tullow and Clonmore, and asked about old marriage registers. He said that these registers were destroyed in the Fire in the Four Courts in Dublin in 1922.

Signed: James Tallon (4 March 1993)

Statement by Paddy Seery, Little Island, Daingean.

12 March 1993

I tell the story that happened at the funeral of Dan Brien's grandfather, in Killaderry cemetery, which happened years after the burial of Father Mullen. At the burial a group of men came from Clonmore and wanted to take back Father Mullen's remains. The parish priest intervened and said to the men: "If you can answer the De Profundis you can have Father Mullen back". The men could not answer the De Profundis and so they left.

Tommy Dunne of Ballinagar, John Grace and Tommy Dunne both of the Little Island, were called in by Father Kinsella one evening. Father Kinsella produced a bottle of whiskey - the dust was still on it! - and they all talked into the early hours of the morning about Father Mullen.

Someone asked Father Kinsella if the body of Father Mullen could still be incorrupt. He said: "Six strong men could deal with that".

Signed: Paddy Seery.

Statement of Andrew Byrne, Gould, Coolkenno, Tullow.

5 August 1993

Date of birth: 18 April 1920.

My father was James Byrne and he died on the 7 February 1962 aged 84 years. He lived at Killalongford. My grandfather was John Byrne who also died at the age of 84 years.

James Byrne had a great interest in Father Mullen. I am not able to say for definite but I think he heard the following story from his father, John Byrne. He said Father Mullen was buried in Clonmore and gave the story of the removal of the body in the middle of the night by the Daingean men. I do accept that this operation had to take place in the middle of the night because if it had taken place in the day time there would have been a disturbance in Clonmore. I also agree that there may have been contact between the parish priests of Daingean (Phillipstown) and Clonmore before the removal of the body.

I do know from people before me that the people of Clonmore and further afield were taking clay from the grave of Father Mullen and also lying on the grave. All this happened in order to obtain cures. People thought that Father Mullen had done so much penance that he got into bad health and died. I understand that he left a cure in the form of a prayer to the Byrne family in Clonmore. This cure was generally for shingles, skin diseases and headaches.

I agree with the probable idea that they erected no headstone over Father Kelly; buried in Father Mullen's grave (1828) because the people wished that the grave would continue to be known as Father Mullen's grave.

The story I want to tell is as follows. A few people came with a man who was disturbed in the head and, as I understand, they were taking this poor man to Father Mullen. They had strapped the man down in the cart. Father Mullen met them at the gate of the church. Father Mullen went to the cart and ordered the men to release the disturbed man. They were frightened to do so in case he might get away from them. Father Mullen insisted that the man be unbounded. The mentally disturbed man ran straight into the church in front of Father Mullen and went up onto the altar. The people went up after him in case he might break something in the sanctuary. Father Mullen stopped them going any further.

The disturbed man opened the Mass Book and started reading, shouting out loud: "Mullens, can you do that?". Father Mullen knelt down in the church and did not interfere with the man. After some time the man quietened down and came back down from the sanctuary and knelt beside Father Mullen. Father Mullen then told the people that they could take the good man home because he was cured. The man walked out of the church to the horse and cart and returned home cured and completely calm. I have never been told the name of the disturbed person for reasons I can understand.

With my hand on the bible I state that this story is the one told to me by my father.

Signed: Andrew Byrne

Witnessed: William Dempsey

Postscript.

This is the first story from Father Mullen's priestly ministry.

Statement by Patrick Gerard Moore, Ballyshane, Rathangan, Co. Kildare.

3 October 1993

Date of birth: 18 December 1902.

Sister Teresa Moore was my aunt.

My father told me the story [in 1927] of the cure Teresa had at Father Mullen's grave.

I can confirm that it was Tony Daly, a workman at Moore's, who took Teresa to Killaderry. He took her in a pony and cart.

Teresa lay on the grave for a short time and fell fast asleep. Father Mullen approached her and told her to get up and he took her by the hand.

I confirm the story that a few years later Teresa was playing with some other children and she heard a voice. Teresa said to the others that Father Mullen had just spoken to her and that she was going to be a nun.

With my hand on the Bible I have told the truth.

Signed: Patrick G Moore

Witnessed: William Dempsey
Mona Quinn

Statement by Christina Morrissey, Daingean.

11 October 1993

Date of birth: 10 December 1910.

My father was from Edenderry - seven miles away. He died fifty-two years ago in 1941.

My brother was Patrick Joseph McGuinness who broke his leg... I (William Dempsey) stopped talking to Christina because I thought she was getting tired. I told her to go to bed and have a good sleep. I told Christina that I would return in the morning and we would talk a bit more.

On the Monday morning when I returned Christina was much brighter. She remembered me from the night before.

11 October 1993

I called back on the Monday evening at about 8.30. Christina was in good form.

Christina told me she had a dream and that Father Mullen was beatified. (I think this was the first time in her life she used the word 'beatified'.) "But that was only a dream". The dream made me happy. (The dream was during Sunday night.)

...He was, I think, about ten or eleven years old. He was playing football on the green when he broke his leg 'across'. Mick McGuiness and my mother took him to Father Mullen's grave. He was a bit restless and did not sleep the first night but he did fall asleep on the second night. He woke up and he walked away.

Patrick Joseph had a dream while asleep on Father Mullen's grave. He saw a young man saying Mass. "Anything special about the Mass?" I asked. "Well I don't know Father". Patrick Joseph left the crutches behind on the grave of Father Mullen.

Patrick Joseph was just a labourer. He was a bit cross. He always went back to his parent's grave.

I know the story of bringing Father Mullen's body back to Daingean. "Did they steal Father Mullen's body?" I asked. She replied: "I think they *claimed* the body".

Father Mullen was always spoken of as a saintly priest.

I never heard the story of Andrew Mullen as a young man.

I have lived in Phillipstown all my life, in this house.

My husband Nicholas Morrissey was a soldier.

Signed: Christina Morrissey

Statement by Fintan and Philomena Dooley, Shinrone (fifty miles from Daingean).

11 October 1993

On 29 June last I drove in my minibus to Daingean to Father Mullen's grave (Killaderry). I had thirteen passengers, all women. My wife, Philomena, knew the story of Father Mullen and she asked her friends in the locality if they would like to come to the tomb. I did not know Denis Coonan, a neighbour, who had been to Father Mullen's grave and he had great relief from severe pain in his hips.

We all joined in the Mass and it was a wonderful experience. Joe Seery gave me a pamphlet on Father Mullen.

My name is Philomena Dooley. I want to add to what my husband, Fintan, has already said. After the Mass I and others noticed a beautiful sweet perfume all over the graveyard. I cannot actually describe the perfume. It was not even like the smell of roses. All my friends experienced the same pleasant sensation.

On a private visit to Father Mullen's grave on a previous occasion I placed my big rosary beads, which I had received from Fatima, under the clay on the grave. My thought at that moment was that Father Mullen would bless the rosary. I do feel the body of Father Mullen is still there and that the body is still incorrupt.

Signed: Philomena Dooley
Fintan Dooley

Witnessed W. Dempsey

15 September 1994

I visited Father Edward Daly on 14 March 1994, parish priest of Kilcormac. He had served a number of years as a curate in Daingean during the 1950s and 1960s and was seconded to the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin from the Meath Diocese. He made a few points:

1. Father Kinsella was a desk man. He did not move out much among the people. He was a 'good chat'.

2. Father Mullen was mentioned very much and people went the grave in good numbers, especially on Good Friday. The devotion was there.

3. The people of Daingean are as solid as you would get. No way would they go for a fictional Mullen.

4. A curate is generally brought back to his native place to be buried.

5. We have to go back to the roots for 'real' history - meaning that only the people can tell.

6. We priests are the worst in the world for judging one another.

Postscript: A similar remark was made by a senior priest of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, who was supportive of promoting the cause. "Don't be disappointed if you are defeated. They [the priests] would not do it for one of their own.

A statement from Fr Edmund Dobson P.P. Saffron Walden, Essex.

14 April 1994

I was born in Daingean in 1921 and educated at Knockbeg College. I pick up on Fr Edward Daly's remark "no way would they" [the Daingean people] go along with a fictional Mullen. I was brought up among the Daingean people.

The historical background to Daingean is that since the 17th century (Queen Mary and Phillip) Daingean was solidly Protestant 'the planted town and county'. The Catholic were the workers for the Protestant owners. They were poor. The land they worked was poor, mostly bogland.

The level of education among the Protestants was of a good standard. The Catholics did attend the Protestant schools. The Catholic Parish Priest in the early 1800's was not opposed by the Protestants. I cannot recall any stories of bigotry. There was trouble politically which spread from Tullamore, not many stories about evictions.

People formed religious groups. There would be a mission by for example a Dominican who would preach a devotion to the rosary. These kind of groups did keep and promote the Catholic Religion. This was typical of Daingean. In my young days the rosary was recited during mass in May and in October. Could have been the only form of prayer people knew.

The piety in Daingean was solid, not over sentimental or emotional. No kissing of Statues. I remember when I was ordained, the Parish Priest, Fr Kavanagh said that:" I was the first Priest from Daingean for a long time. There was a saying in Daingean that no family lasted for more than three generations, both Catholic and Protestant. Quite a number of Protestants converted.

My interest in Fr Mullen goes back to my childhood. In a Protestant house I remember the people saying, "I don't see any reason when we know someone in this holy life why we cannot ask them to help us." "Yes", I agree with that said another Protestant, if that person was cured after praying to Fr. Mullen. As only God can cure, then God approved of Fr Mullen". I went home and asked my mother who was Fr Mullen. This was around the time I made my first holy communion in 1929. A number of Non-Catholics believed in Fr. Mullen and had a devotion to him. In the 1930's one would hear of more people going to Fr Mullen's grave. Old People said that he was very good growing up. He was deeply religious: (a) very kind and considerate, (b) always willing to help and well known among the people - close to the people.

The impression remains with me that the people thought that his Holiness was expressed in his caring and serving of those people in need of help.

The Parish Priest of Daingean in the early days was Fr. Kearney who was a very holy man; was saying ejaculations. I remember him speaking about Fr Mullen in church. He did regard him as a holy man. He said it was good to pray and ask for Fr Mullens help. But he did try to discourage the people. He did not think that it was becoming. Later on he said: "We must remember that the church has not declared him a Saint." Later on again I heard people discussing Fr Kearney's words about sleeping under the tombstone and why he disapproved of it. Someone said that he was not disapproving of Fr Mullen but he did not like married people sleeping under the stone in the hope of having child; I mean childless married couples.

Signed: Edward F Dobson PP

A statement from Teresa Mc Cabe

27 May 1994

Date of Birth: 9th November 1914.

I was born in Croghan and heard of Fr Mullen from my mother. She had a great devotion to him. Very frequently she went to the grave and lay under the tombstone. I remember the old stable lamp that she carried with her. Croghan is about three miles away from Killaderry and my mother walked the whole distance. She used to make requests to Fr Mullen for people who are ill. For example, my cousin who lived in Dublin. She even lost her voice but got it back. My mother went and prayed at Fr Mullen's grave to pray that May would recover. She would sleep on the grave and my mother definitely told me that around midnight, in her dream, she saw Fr.Mullen come up and say mass. She was very moved by this experience.

My mother belonged to the Third Order. When she died she was laid out in a black and white habit. She had this habit for years and years before she died.

I would say that Fr Mullen is a saint and he should have been canonised years ago.

Signed: Teresa McCabe.

Witness: Fr Dempsey.

A statement by Sister Carmel Mc Loughlin B.D. Presentation Covent, Portlaoise.

31 May 1994

I have heard the story of Fr Mullen and of the many cures that were supposed to have happened at his grave. I remember in particular being told of the light shining from the grave. I thought of this as an indication of the man's sanctity. I share the faith of the people who said they saw it.

I am very impressed at the way that the tradition has survived and the veneration at his grave.

Intelligent people who are aware of the immanence of God are not surprised at such manifestations of His presence among His people.

Signed: Carmen McLoughlin. [Aged 71 years]

A statement from Eamonn Guilfoyle aged 22 years, a graduate in Architecture.

13 November 1994

We arrived at Fr Mullen's tomb at 3 pm. It was raining and very cold. With me were Barbara Murphy, Lawrence Murphy and Ceithre Murphy (my girlfriend). They remained in the car outside the grave yard. An uncle of my girlfriend, Peter, had been told the week before that he had cancer. This was the purpose of my visit, to pray for his recovery. I had read the pamphlet about the story of Fr Mullen. I went up to the grave on my own and lay under the flat stone. I found it uncomfortable but I was contented. I wrapped myself in oil skins. I became drowsy and drifted of to sleep.

The people with me came up individually. They seemed a bit afraid and I was going to stay there all night. Barbara Murphy said that I remained still for about forty minutes. The priest appeared to the left of the crucifix. The priest was wearing green vestments generally described as fiddleback in design. The Priest was tall - about 6 feet. His face was oval but emaciated. He was older than myself. His hair was thin on the forehead. His face was pinky red. I did not notice his eyes. His head was bowed. He looked solemn. His left had appeared to be holding something: it could have been a small book. He blessed himself very quickly and pronounced father son and holy ghost. It was as if he was not speaking to me but to others around me. He started the Hail Mary. The image faded quickly but I continued saying the Hail Mary. I felt happy. Possibly, I could say that for a short time that I was in a trance. I felt that I was praying with the priest rather than praying to him. I did feel that it was Fr.Mullen. I did not feel afraid but really happy.

I was told that I spent one and a half hours lying on the grave. Beside Fr Mullen, I saw Peter Gilman standing hands down by his side. He gave me the impression that, at that moment, he was being examined by a doctor. I did know that the cancer was

in the upper part of his body. He had a tumour on the brain and a scatter of secondaries in the lungs. He had his head bowed and was stripped to the waist.

I took some clay away with me.

Fr Mullen looked serious but not stern. He looked approachable and I felt he took the whole episode seriously.

I did not expect to go to sleep.

I felt that I was standing up but higher than my normal height.

I was at the end of my gravestone facing the crucifix. This was the opposite end from where Fr Mullen was standing.

Signed: Eamonn Guilfoyle

Witnessed: W Dempsey.

Comment: This statement makes clear that Father Mullen led Eamonn in prayer which helps to understand the prayer cure that he gave the Byrne family in Clonmore. Eamonn's form teacer in the Christian Brothers' school in Tullamore vouched for his mental stability. The 'Hail Mary' is also part of the prayer.

98 Marquis Street
Annerley
Brisbane
AUSTRALIA

10 April 1975

Extract from letter:

"One more story mum told us often was having slept - as a child - one night on the tomb of a saint, whom according to tradition performed miracles by this custom. She used to suffer from headaches, and in the hopes of obtaining a cure, her father and brother took her to this saint's tomb, settled her in for the night, left, and were to return for her the following morning. During the night she was awakened by the sound of footsteps. An old man approached and said 'I did not know the tomb was to be slept on into the night. Do not be afraid my child, I will return another night.'

Well Gretta - you may have the awful shivers we youngsters would get down our spines. 'Weren't you scared, mum?' 'No' said stalwart mum 'I was not afraid of ghosts or anything. 'Tis only the living will hurt you - not the dead.'"

The person who wrote this letter was a first cousin of Willie Gallagher, the father of Gretta Walton, nee Gallagher, who showed me (W.D.) the letter. The woman called "mum" in the letter was Roseanne Martin born in Ballycommon in January 1865 and emigrated to Australia in 1887. She married Peter Shaffery, Moynalty, Co. Meath on 1 January 1889. Roseanne died in January 1948 aged 83 years.

The person who wrote the letter to Gretta was Kate Holyoak - daughter of Roseanne. She died three years ago.

Gretta's statement:

"I asked my father, Willie Gallagher, who was the saint and where was the tomb? He told me it was Father Mullen's whose grave is in Killaderry cemetery."

Address: Gretta Walton
6 Hillview Crescent
Killeigh
Co. Offaly

8 February 1996

Comment: This letter shows the continued devotion to Father Mullen in the late 1800s.

Brothers of Charity - Borders Region
Administration Headquarters
Gattonside
Melrose
Roxburghshire
TD6 9NW
Tel: 01896 822159

16 Sept. 1996

Dear Fr. Dempsey

Just a few lines concerning Fr. Andrew Mullen and the Spiritual Healing I myself have obtained through his intercession and how he brought me closed to God through Christ.

I first went up to the Old Cemetery when I was in the Youth Club during Fr. S. Conlons time with us. I went into to visit his grave anytime I passed by. Then Fr. Byrne created an interest for the people.

When I was home this Summer I had a wonderful experience. I went over to visit the tomb. While I was there I got an urge to get down under the slab. Which I did for the first time. I lay under the slab for about 10 minutes. While I was there the face of Christ appeared to me. I came home about 9 pm and went to bed. At about 2.30 am I awoke, dressed and walked over to his grave, lay under the slab for the duration of the Rosary. I felt a great peace come over me. That was on my Birthday and I will always remember it. May God bless you with your work. I will pray that others may obtain what I, through Fr. Andrew have received.

I remain, yours in Christ,

Frank Brennan. [Aged 51 years]

Comment: This experience of Frank Brennan shows the closeness of Christ to Fr. Mullen.

28 September 1996

My name is Barbara Murphy and Peter Gilman was my brother-in-law. On 27 October 1994 Peter was diagnosed as having carcinoma (cancer) in the brain and lungs. Having been told that he was terminally ill he became extremely distressed and distraught. (At this time he was 54 years old). He would cry a great deal and for long periods. He was not keen on receiving visitors. He spent a short time in hospital (Beaumont). Before the diagnosis and being told of the seriousness of it, Peter had always been very active, played golf and was very ambitious. He had just completed a six months course in computer information technology. He was always able to take hard knocks. But alas now he was in the depths of despair. He was so low in himself that he found life impossible, and did not wish to see a priest.

I saw him shortly after he had been told of the diagnosis, on his return from America where he had been on a two week holiday and suddenly became ill. I mentioned to him about visiting Fr. Mullen's grave but he felt he was too weak for the journey etc. I then said that we would visit the grave and pray for him.

After visiting the grave I went to see Peter, I found him much more serene and resigned. He tended to take each day as it came for the six weeks prior to his death. He took part in an evening prayer with his family. He attended mass on Sundays and only missed when he was too feeble.

He was admitted to hospital on Christmas Day because of increasing difficulty with breathing. I thought it rather special that a priest, a family friend, who was on holiday from America, called to the house. We had not seen him for some time. He arrived at the house as Peter was being placed in the ambulance. He accompanied Peter to the hospital and remained with him for most of the day. He gave him the Sacrament of the Sick and said many prayers.

Peter died in the early hours of the morning of the 27th. He was very peaceful.

B.M. Murphy.

POPULAR DEVOTION TO ANDREW MULLEN

It is clear from the testimonies that immediately after Fr Mullen's death a great cult arose around the tomb of Andrew Mullen and this was connected with many cures and healings.

The veneration of Andrew Mullen has its roots not only in his deep spirituality but also in the history of Clonmore itself. According to the testimony given by James Tallon, a local historian (4 March 1993), there was a curate before Fr Mullen in Clonmore called Fr Nolan. This priest absconded with the daughter of the most bigoted Protestant landowner in the area which left a dark cloud over the locality. The turmoil was further aggravated by the fact that the girl survived Fr Nolan, returned to Clonmore and married the local Protestant minister. Because of the scandal Clonmore had become a 'hot spot'. It would seem that the Bishop would choose a special priest for the parish, one who was in contrast, holy and zealous. In all probability he saw those qualities in Fr Mullen. Many stories are told about his gift of healing. Above all he healed the local community, still suffering from the scars of the scandal. Some significance has been ascribed to the strong desire of the Clonmore parishioners to have Fr Mullen buried in Clonmore in a special place, being to the left of the main door of the Church, on the gospel side.

The practice of lying on the grave began in Clonmore and continued in Killaderry, Daingean, where Fr Mullen was reinterred. Lying on the grave overnight would seem to be a form of penance. In other words, if you wanted a cure you would have to do penance for it. This understanding came from great faith deeply rooted in the local people. Fr Mullen left no instructions that people had to lie on the grave in order to obtain a cure though he did instruct the Byrne family in a series of prayers which would obtain a cure for them. This form of penance is the enduring characteristic of the unbroken veneration to Fr Mullen down the years.

The relationship of penance and cure was not something alien to the people of Clonmore, as it finds it roots in Celtic spirituality. It would have been only natural to act in this way in response to the death of a priest who had shone brightly among them.

The penance many people performed at Fr Mullen's grave was linked not only to healing themselves or their loved ones but also of the local community - a continuation of the healing ministry of Fr Mullen. Fr Mullen had overworked, he had been a great healer of souls, he undid all the harm of the scandal created by Fr Nolan by his exemplary and holy life. Above all Fr Mullen atoned by his death for all the harm that had happened before him. For Fr Mullen himself, reparation was a definite part of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament to which he belonged.

The removal of the body of Fr Mullen from Clonmore to Daingean caused a great stir. It seems clear that from the time of his interrment at Clonmore people had begun visiting his tomb and seeking his intercession. The removal of the earth from the grave greatly disfigured it. It was this that disturbed Andrew Mullen's mother. Naturally she would have wished for the grave of her son to be near to her, but maybe there was more. It may well have been that the people of Daingean wished to pray frequently at his tomb and seek his healing. In order to do so they would have encouraged the removal of his body. It may be that the people of Clonmore expected that his body might be removed and this would account for Mrs Cassidy's claim that the grave was guarded. Why the people of Clonmore did not yield to the usual practice that the body of a departed curate should be taken home for his burial, we cannot tell, but only assume that they had wanted to hold onto the body seeing it as a focal point for prayer and healing.

On the body's return to Daingean it was waked in the church for thirty six hours. Mrs Dunne (Rose Smith), grandmother of the Dunne brothers often told the story of her

mother kissing the hand of Fr Mullen. She talked about the sweet smell of roses in the church and the cemetery at his burial and also that the church was full of white butterflies. When the coffin was opened his body was also seen to be incorrupt. This accords with the testimony of Josephine Nolan (25 February 1993). Jim Tallon saw the removal of the body as something providential: "If it had not been removed, the incorrupt state and the flexibility would not have been known". There are those who today continue to say that his body is incorrupt. (The evidence taken from the Shinrone group on 29 June 1994). The marvel of the incorrupt body healed the hurt felt by the people of Clonmore.

The men who removed the body were regarded as heroes. It was never considered an evil or shocking thing to do. When Rose Roe visited the grave in Clonmore in 1980 she said a prayer for those who had brought him back to Daingean - no doubt the continuation of a tradition.

Popular devotion to Andrew Mullen soon found its roots in poetry. The oral tradition of a ballad was strong and within a few years this was written down as an Elegy to him and published c1820. It speaks of Fr Mullen as a priest of great sanctity, but also of his great healing ministry. It points to its provenance in Clonmore. The people of Clonmore did not forget Fr Mullen and hoped that in good time his body might be returned to them. Despite the removal of the body the people continued to collect soil from the grave so much that a hard surface was put on to it and a large cross marked out in marble chippings. Also a high iron railing was erected around the grave but there was no gate on it.

It is interesting to note that Fr O'Reilly, the parish priest of Daingean, who died in 1825 chose to be buried in the same tomb as Andrew Mullen and that Fr Kelly of Clonmore chose to be buried in 1828 in the same grave. Both were devotees of

Andrew Mullen and chose to be near him in their final resting place. This accords with the *sub umbra* devotion to many saints.

In Daingean devotion to Fr Mullen continued as strong as ever. This found a focal point on Good Friday. The testimony of Josephine Nolan (25 February 1993) gives us some insight into this practice. In the late 1970's, pilgrimages were still taking place, and an interest had been revived by Fr O'Byrne the parish priest. The pilgrimage took place after the Liturgy of the Day and it seems as if people stayed until midnight. There was a practice of praying the four corners of the tombstone moving clockwise. Mrs Cassidy confirms this statement of Mrs Nolan saying that at each corner of the tombstone a pilgrim would say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys and three Glorias and would have been repeated four times. This was done by many people, especially family groups. It may well be that Good Friday was seen as a special day in which to do penance and that they linked it closely to the offering of Fr Mullen's life.

This practice is supported by Paddy Seery who said that on Good Friday a lot of people would say: "We are going to Fr Mullen's grave". The oral tradition remains very strong about Fr Mullen. The deeds that he did were passed down over several generations as if they were a treasured jewel. Yet devotion to Andrew Mullen was not confined to Catholics alone. Fr Dobson claims that many Protestants believed in Fr Mullen and venerated him. He remembers in his childhood being in a Protestant house and people saying: "I don't see any reason when we know someone in life who was very holy and good why we cannot ask them to help us". "Yes, I agree with that" said another Protestant.

The practice of lying on the grave still remains strong, as does the practice of taking clay from around the grave. There were those who even testify to the tradition as

having seen a light shining from Fr Mullen's grave (Sr. Carmel McLoughlin - May 1994). Many of the statements and testimonies bear witness to this.

As far back as the 1930's people were still going to Fr Mullen's grave and the old people would talk of his early years in growing up, of his faith - "He grew in holiness". He was said to be kind and considerate, always willing to help and well known among and close to the people. Over 170 years after the death of Fr Mullen interest was reawakened and the oral tradition was collected by Fr Kinsella, the parish priest of Phillipstown (Daingean) for twenty-five years.

Father Mullen was spoken of often in the years and decades after his death. Today there are those who remember as far back as Fr Kearney speaking about him in church. (Testimony of Fr Dobson). He regarded him as a holy man and that it was good to pray and ask for his help. He was keen that he should not yet be called a saint as the church had not officially recognised him. In addition to lying on the grave was a practice that should be reserved for those who had been raised to the alters of the church. Despite this those from both Daingean and Clonmore continued to hail him and give him praise. Many of the local people called Fr Mullen: "A holy man", "Fr Mullen is a saint" (James Tallon); "I pray to Fr Mullen every morning (Joe Hogan)' "I have never doubted the holiness of Fr Mullen. I have always regarded him as a saint." (Fr O'Byrne).

Today the grave is visited by those who know Fr Mullen, of his saintly life and they regard his grave as a place where God can be found for "Intelligent people who are aware of the immanence of God are not surprised at such manifestations of his presence among his people (Sr. Carmel McLoughlin - Testimony - May 1994). Also Frank Brennan saw the face of Christ at the tomb. Christ approved of Father Mullen.

FATHER ANDREW MULLEN 1790-1818

A STUDY IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY IRISH SPIRITUALITY

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