SEPTEMBER BEGINNINGS

Observing the movement of students since the beginning of the week as they return to school, or begin their primary or secondary careers, it was noticeable how most carried a sense of excitement about being in uniform, meeting up with friends or resisting the coaxing of parents and teachers as I witnessed in the primary school! All part of the cycle of life and the years that define our youth!

I don’t recall experiencing the nerves or outright resistance that some children seem to go through on first stepping into ‘big school’. My mother, God bless her, didn’t share those stories with me, though I imagine I was overawed by the prospect of entering into the red bricked building of the Infant School in Larkhill. I had a lovely teacher, Mrs Kennedy to begin with. And as with Infant teachers she must have had a wonderful personality as I only have fond memories of her.

I do recall the smells of the freshly cleaned terrazzo flooring, the tall doors with the window in them. I also recall the cupboard which contained all manner of things stored in them, such as pencils, rubbers (erasers), boxes of sweets. To add to this wonderment, there was the cailc (chalk), an clár dubh (blackboard) and the glántóir (duster). The desks were designed to accommodate small children, and on a subsequent visit in my capacity as an Adviser in Religious Education, I marvelled at the size of them. At the age of 4 they were adequate. As an adult they looked so tiny!

Secondary School was a whole new world. In first year there were 6 classes, and some had to be accommodated in a Nissan hut in the school yard. Corporal punishment was still in vogue and the some of the teachers carried reputations that put the fear of God in some and for others they responded by putting up resistance. The end was usually in the favour of the teacher.

My Seminary training began in September 1971, and I found each September a new beginning as I moved through the various stages of preparation, culminating in my Ordination in June 1977.

As with all these moments in life, September is the time for new beginnings in the academic world. In the Diocese, too, it is the time when priests begin their new assignments. And so for me. This weekend marks my last weekend in Sutton. The removers will transport my furniture to my new residence in Dalkey on Wednesday 8th, and so begins another chapter in my life. I began in Sutton on August 31st 2010 and will commence my new pastoral role on the weekend of 11th/12th September.

So, I bid farewell. This may or may not be my last blog, but I have to say that I have enjoyed doing it and I am delighted that it has kept people connected with the parish during these difficult times. With the gradual relaxation of restrictions, I hope that more people will feel comfortable returning to community worship in St. Fintan’s and in other churches as well.

Slán

Fr. Liam