



Ladies AOH

Division 5, "Mary of the Gael"

Division Happenings



Volume I, Issue 10 Division 5, Orange County, NY, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians January 2010

President

Gail Edmonds

Editor

Gail Cane

A Message from the President...

Happy New Year to all!

I hope we all have a healthy and prosperous year and our division continues on its remarkable course. We have a great year planned, I hope to see many new members share in our unity!

Each year, when January rolls around, I feel the urge to get organized. Get things put away, filed, cleaned out, etc. I try to de-clutter.... a few weeks ago I thought of all of this "STUFF" we all have in our lives. And I have been focused on a nagging thought of our ancestors, thinking, did they have all this STUFF we have now? No. I have been thinking of the people that died in The Great Hunger. They had little, if anything. They had no food. Think about it, no food. What would you do to put food on the table for your starving children? I have been reading accounts of what happened during the famine and it is startling. Patty Ryan has written a great piece this month as well about the Hunger. People were left to die, then piled on top of each other – at times left on the roadside for the dogs to eat. How lucky we are that we will hopefully never experience anything like this.

Our ancestors moved to the US and Canada to escape this Hunger and look for a better life and they started with nothing. They were one of the most discriminated groups in the history of the US – NINA. Yet, they had each other and their faith. They had their Friendship and their Unity. And even though they had little if nothing, they always supported their Catholic church with their Christian Charity – and here we are today, carrying these same qualities for our children.

We would like to propose an event for next January called "Strike for Hunger" - which will be a bowlathon, with sponsors, to raise money in memory of the people who died in the Great Hunger. I would love for the whole division to be very involved and excited for this event, we have plenty of time to organize this and make it grand. We owe it to our ancestors, and the people who have perished due to Hunger. Many volunteers will be needed to plan this event.

We will be celebrating our first year in February, where has the time gone? We have accomplished so much this year, thanks to all of our members. March will soon be upon us – there are many activities coming up for us to support and have some fun! All events are posted on the website calendar. Special mention should go to Mary Luciana and Donna Goff, both on the Mid Hudson Parade Committee Board, and Janice Boyle, our director, for all of their hard work and time that goes into planning these events. We need to support our heritage and culture for our children and the generations to come

In Friendship, Unity & Christian Charity,

Gail

Upcoming Events

Friday, January 22
LAOH Mtg., 8 pm

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Friday, January 22 –
Right to Life March in
Washington, DC

Sunday, January 31
Feast of St. Brigid,
12 Noon Mass
Sacred Heart, Monroe
Followed by the
Orange County LAOH
Meeting at
Birchwood Caterers,
Monroe Country Club

Ongoing Events

Traditional Irish
Music Seisiun
Monroe Irish Center
Sunday afternoon, 2- 5
pm

Irish Set Dancing
Monday nights, 7-9pm
Monroe Irish Center

GOODWILL & WELFARE

- *Get well wishes are extended to Briega DeBold and Evelyn Lynch, who recently underwent surgery. May God's healing grace be with them both.*
- *Congratulations to Janice Boyle, Division 5 Sentinel (and our division's parade representative) and Keith Reynolds on the birth of their daughter, Keira Marie, born on December 14. What a happy Christmas it was in that family as they received the greatest gift of all!*
- *Please keep in your prayers Lorraine O'Dowd's sister, Caroline; she is fighting the final stages of her battle with cancer. Lorraine is in England with her now.*

Member Recruitment Drive

January and February will be our membership drive. We are actively seeking new members. Please ask your parish office to put in a "blurb" in the church bulletin if it hasn't been done so already.

"LAOH Division 5, Mary of the Gael, is seeking new members to join our division. If you are a practicing Catholic, of Irish descent, and would like to join our group, please contact Erin Higgins by email at dehiggs@optonline.net for information concerning membership."

January Meeting

2010 Membership Dues - \$35

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2lb Auction – will replace the 50-50  
Please bring a wrapped item that weighs approximately 2 pounds for auction.

**February Meeting**

Don't forget to "get your act together" for the February meeting, when we will play the "Gong Show".

**Irish Rose Contest**

*The Mid-Hudson St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee will be sponsoring the Irish Rose contest. This year, Div. 5 member Donna Goff is chairing this event. Applications are being accepted for single girls, aged 18-25. Please see Donna for an application if you know of a girl who may be interested. Application deadline is February 20. Interviews will be held February 27/snow date, February 28, at the Monroe Irish Center. The crowning will be held on Sunday, March 7 at Irish Day, which will be held at the Greenwood Lake American Legion Hall.*

**JUNIOR DIVISION**

Congratulations to Peggy Walsh, who will lead our newly forming Junior Division girls. Please contact Peggy if you have a daughter, or if you know of a worthy candidate, a practicing Catholic, of Irish birth or descent, who would be interested. She can be reached at [peggygriffin@frontiernet.net](mailto:peggygriffin@frontiernet.net). Their next meeting will be held at the home of Peggy Walsh, 40 North Main St., Monroe, at 1:15 pm

**Save the Date - April 17**

*Fundraiser at the Monroe Irish Center to support of Siobhan Higgins for the People to People Cause*

**Mid Hudson Parade Committee**

Volunteers are needed to help with the preparations for the parade. Please contact Janice Boyle by email at [janiceboyle@aol.com](mailto:janiceboyle@aol.com) for further info.

*AOH Christmas Party....*

*A Bit of Irish History....The Great Hunger - "An Gort Mor"*  
*By Patty Ryan*

Most of Europe was affected by the potato blight, but no country more than Ireland. The Irish depended on the potato to feed their families. They had to first farm their land to pay their high rents to the English landowners. Whatever was left over was for them. During the famine there was nothing leftover. The potato blight, a fungus that rots the potato, started in Ireland in 1845; still Ireland remained the net exporter of food for England from 1845 to 1849. Ireland was starving as a nation! England did not send aid to Ireland in the form of "soup kitchens" until March of 1847. A person needed to obtain a ticket for the soup kitchen and this ticket only entitled you to two meals per week. This aid only lasted for six months. In towns' like Skibbereen, which is located far from Cork, the aid that was sent was too little and much too late. A clergyman of Skibbereen, Mr. Townsend, did his best to help the locals. He worked with a Dr. Donovan, and together they brought bread and sometimes medicine to town. The two men had witnessed all kinds of suffering. When the tenants throughout Ireland couldn't pay their rents, they were thrown off their land and their house was razed to insure they would not come back. As they wandered from town to town, starved and feverish, they would die on the side of the road. Sometimes one, but most times, many people. The dogs and rats would come to feed on them. A Mr. Boyle from Oxford, England, heard about the situation in Ireland from Dr. Donovan. Mr. Boyle went to Skibbereen to see for himself if the stories of starvation were true. In a letter dated March 1, 1847, he wrote, "We have found everything but too true; the accounts are not exaggerated--they cannot be exaggerated--nothing more frightful can be conceived. The scenes we have witnessed during our short stay at Skibbereen, equal anything that has been recorded by history, or could be conceived by the imagination. Famine, typhus fever, dysentery, and a disease hitherto unknown (cholera), are sweeping away the whole population." Over one million people died due to starvation and disease and two million others left their homes for the distant and unknown shores of America and Canada. It took many generations of Irish to recover from this horrifying time.

*January is "Right to Life Month"...An article by Lorraine O'Dowd, Catholic Action Officer.....*

Do you believe in life after death? Most of the world religions do. We believe that after we die, we still have life. We are pronounced dead when we are beyond the point of functioning: We no longer need anesthesia, all our organs have shut down, and we have no need for life sustaining oxygen, because our heart has stopped pumping. We are then committed to the earth in glorious religious rites worthy of eternity. Despite all the evidence of our demise, we overwhelmingly reject that our lives have ended. Why? Because we believe in the unseen: We believe that our souls, which we nurture during our short lives, will merit Heaven. We profess as much at every Sunday Mass. Why? Because God came to show, that for us, life exists after death. So why then, when the majority of earth's inhabitants believe in the unseen, do some believers refuse to accept what is seen?

How can so many believe that life exists after we have died, yet deny that life exists before we are born, when we are clearly living? The evidence is irrefutable: The baby's organs are functioning as per God's design. The heart is definitely pumping, you don't need fancy machines to know this, you can hear it through a funnel. Modern technology also reveals that the baby feels; doctors who perform operations in utero anesthetize both mother and baby, so neither will feel pain. And as much as the aforementioned deceased no longer needs to breathe, pre-birth babies, not only need but have a steady life sustaining supply of oxygen, giving credence to their status as living beings. Now let's consider the spiritual: Jeremiah 1-4: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." God has pre-ordained every one of us into existence before time began. The Catholic Church teaches that at conception, we have souls, in fact we are told by Jeremiah that we are souls first, who are then given bodies. These bodies are human temples for the soul. Matthew 18: Douay Rheims "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven".

What is it about children that God exhorts? I have children, so I asked them, "Do you think it's okay for a mother to kill her baby before it is born?" My son is seven. He didn't ask for any extenuating circumstances to muddy the waters as adults would. He turned to me, incredulous, and said, "That's terrible." Simple. It is terrible. My five year old responded in the same way. With children, it is black or white; right or wrong. We should be so direct. If children ran things, apart from all the extra candy, there would be no need for an annual vigil in which we testify for the unborn. But we 'muddy water' adults are in charge. And so, on Sunday October 4<sup>th</sup>, many of us joined the throngs of witnesses on Rte. 211 in Middletown, for this year's Life Chain Event. We gathered at 2 PM under an eager sun. Over one hundred different regional parishes from various denominations were present for the one-hour observance. Many were joined in private prayer along the entire route, and God told us, "Where two or more are gathered in my name, there will I also be." For those of you who participated, isn't it something to know that God also came? I could see Him in the integrity of my child, who held his banner higher than his head at times. He knows the gravity of this cruelty. He knows what is wrong. If we asked an unborn child if we could kill him, I'd imagine he'd say "No, that's terrible." When the child is trying to escape the poisoned needle, he is saying just that. It is time we listened to children. It is time to admit that what we see in the womb is a real living and oxygen-using human being. Maybe then our Souls will be worthy of the unseen: Heaven.

**Editor's Note: If you aren't able to make it to the Right to Life March in Washington, please join with your church on Friday, January 22 as many parishes will gather in support of life. Check with your parish office for a schedule of events.**