

**10th October 2009**



The village of Churchtown in north County Cork hosted a ceremony to unveil a plaque on a Pillar of Honour commemorating three members of the Tierney family who were born at nearby Mountbridget in the mid-1800s. The Tierney Memorial Committee comprised of Denis Hickey, Noel Linehan, and Gerry Murphy, erected the pillar bearing inscriptions outlining the achievements of Fr. Michael and Fr. Jerry Tierney, and their sister, Mother St. Urban.

Gerry Murphy, Chairman of Churchtown Village Renewal Trust welcomed a large audience to the public ceremony including relations of the Tierneys. He said that he was “hugely positive about the great work of the religious communities represented here today. Despite the deluge of exaggerated negativity from our mass media, I am resolved to be positive and celebrate what is good. I ask you to do the same.

Continuing he said: “Therefore, today in Churchtown we are all going to be positive and celebrate the work of three members of the Tierney family who departed from our parish and left an indelible mark on a wider world.



“As part of our positive approach to life, earlier this year we decided we would erect a Pillar of Honour in the village to celebrate those people from Churchtown who have inspired others beyond our parish. We identified 8 people whom we felt deserved to be honoured in their own place.

”Today is the day for celebrating the Tierneys, and five other Churchtown people will also be honoured in the future:

- From the world of poetry -Sean Clarach MacDhomhnaill
- From the equine world - international race horse trainer - Vincent O’Brien, and Johnny Moylan - Irish Champion Jockey 1926 (Eddery)
- From the world of agriculture - Robert A. Anderson, and

- Also from the religious world: Ina Bowe / Sr. Celeste MBE

But today is the day we have set aside to honour three members of the Tierney family - Catherine Tierney / Mother St. Urban, and her brothers, Fr Jeremiah and Fr Michael Tierney”



**Unveiling of Plaque**

The plaque was blessed by Fr. Stephen O'Mahony, PP, Liscarroll, and was unveiled by Fr. Pat Courtney, Provincial of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – the congregation to which Fr. Michael and Fr. Jerry belonged – and by Sr. Margaret Mary Hanifin, Provincial of the Bon Secours Sisters – the congregation of Mother St. Urban.

### **Messages of Solidarity**

Messages of solidarity were received from Cardinal Sean Brady, the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Giuseppe Leanza, the parish priests of Randwick in Australia and St. Alban's in England where Fr. Michael Tierney had ministered, the Bon Secours Sisters in Baltimore and the Bishop of Baltimore where Mother St. Urban built the first Bon Secours hospital in the USA. The messages were read by students from St. Mary's N.S., Churchtown, Nagle Rice Secondary School and the Presentation primary school, Doneraile, and St. Mary's Secondary School, Charleville.



**MSC Provincial**

Fr. Pat Courtney said that Fr. Michael Tierney was a man of great vision and was endowed with tremendous leadership abilities and qualities. “After 13 years of ministry in Sydney, followed by 10 further years in England he returned to Ireland convinced that his native county would prove to be a fertile soil for vocations to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Having acquired Dyke House on the Western Road in early 1909, he had a minor seminary up and running a few months later in September with twelve boys in attendance and also had established the first community of the Society in Ireland”. You can read his full speech [here](#).

### **Provincial of Bons Secour**

Sr. Margaret Mary Hanifin said that Mother St. Urban Tierney was **far seeing in vision**. “Throughout her life she kept focused on her vision and the needs of the day ... to help the sick and the dying. Among her many achievements, she organised the building of a hospital in Baltimore to care for the sick and the poor. She was a courageous woman willing to face any situation no matter how difficult”. You can read her full speech [here](#).

### **Influence of North Cork**

North Cork featured prominently in the early development of MSCs in Ireland with many of our students and priests coming from the area. It was Fr. John Mary Neenan from the parish of Castlemagner who was the first Irish man to enter the MSC Society in France, and it was he who recruited the young Michael Tierney to study for the priesthood in France. Fr. Neenan died in his early 30s whilst ministering in the USA.

### **Booklet on Fr. Michael Tierney**

Master of Ceremonies at the unveiling was well known author and historian, Denis Hickey who is currently researching a short history on Fr. Michael Tierney.

The photo below show the group of relations of the Tierney family who had gathered for the occasion.

