

Spring 2016 Public Lecture

207 DeBartolo Hall

Tuesday,
March 29
4:30 P.M.

MISSIONARY SISTERS In Ireland's Spiritual Empire

Colin Barr, University of Aberdeen

Thousands of Irish Catholic sisters traveled to foreign lands throughout the 19th century, founding convents, asylums, refuges, schools, and hospitals around the globe. Collectively, they made possible the creation of an Irish spiritual empire that helped to preserve a distinctively Irish Catholic identity across the English-speaking world.

This lecture examines the recruitment, training, deployment, and impact of these Irish imperial women between 1830 and 1914.

Colin Barr is senior lecturer in the School of Divinity, History, and Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen. He is the author of *The European Culture Wars in Ireland: The Callan Schools Affair, 1868-1881* (2010) and *Paul Cullen, John Henry Newman, and the Catholic University of Ireland, 1845-1865* (2003).



CUSHWA CENTER
for the Study of American Catholics

AN IRISH SCHOOL FOR MISSIONARY NUNS.

In Callan, County Kilkenny, Ireland, is situated a missionary school, St. Bridget's, which is intended to do for missionary nuns what All Hallows' College is doing for missionary priests. It is a foundation of the Sisters of Mercy, but it supplies possible subjects to many religious communities abroad, who although most anxious for postulants, do not wish to bring them out direct from their homes at the risk of having to send them back again in the case of failure. A kind of preliminary novitiate at home is needed to meet such cases. This want the Callan Missionary School undertakes to supply. It will test the vocation of those girls, ascertain their aptitude for various religious orders, supply deficiencies in their education, train them in the art of teaching, and furnish a good solid foundation for the religious life.

In the last report at the close of the year 1908, it was recorded that since the founding of St. Bridget's in 1884, four hundred and forty-three young girls had gone forth to Convents from this school. Four hundred and fifty-eight is the figure now reached. The postulants of 1909 are now laboring in Australia, New Zealand, and North and South America, while others selected missions in Holland, England and Ireland.

This year St. Bridget's Missionary School celebrated its silver jubilee in the presence of the Bishop of Oserly, and a great number of clergy, both from the Diocese of Oserly and from different parts of the English-speaking world.

The earliest traceable occupiers of what is known as St. Bridget's Missionary School are the Smith family, who had residences at Danmogh, Callan Lodge, Ballywalter, and Carrick-on-Suir. They were secretaries and agents to the Ormonde family. One of the

Smiths was custodian for a time of that relic of the True Cross, an heirloom of the Ormondes, which is now in the Ursuline Convent, Blackbrook, Co. Cork. There is a tradition that this relic was at one time in Callan Lodge. The Smyth occupancy ceased about 1814, when Callan Lodge became the residence of the late Dr. Abraham Cronyn, whose family held it down to the year 1866. During that time it had the repute among the Catholics of the district of being the meeting place or lodge of the Freemasons and Orangemen of the surrounding district. It was purchased by the Bishop of Oserly, Dr. Moran, in 1870, and for two years was used as a sister's residence. In 1873 the Sisters of Mercy came to Callan, and St. Bridget's was used as a convent until 1884, when the present beautiful convent was opened. The Most Rev. Dr. Moran (now Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney) suggested that the old convent should be used as a missionary school to train young girls with religious vocations for the foreign missions. This suggestion was at once acted upon by the Rev. Mother, and thus St. Bridget's Missionary School was founded in the year 1884.

WHAT CHINESE DO WITH PROTESTANT BIBLES.

In Father Bertram Wilder's long expostured work, "The Catholic Church in China," following light is thrown upon the Chinese Bibles so abundant upon them. Above all, it is a large proportion being used for making the sales of Chinese books and other. That the receiving ten

