

THIS IS YOUR LIFE
The Inside Story
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Bishop Murphy praised the high level of participation in Ballineaspaig Parish, saying it was becoming a model of Parish renewal. And he spoke for all - in his words about Fr. Denis - a good, hard-working, sincere and unselfish priest, he said.

The 'For He's A Jolly Good Fellow' was sung, the candles on the cake were blown out, all the photos were taken, and on went the fun.

The 350 who packed Jury's ballroom had a night to remember and Father Denis was launched on the road to his Golden Jubilee With the traditional wish ringing in his ears - "AD MULTOS ANNOS"!

PHOTO COURTESY OF CORK EXAMINER



BISHOP MURPHY pays tribute to Canon Denis - "the man I always go to when I want good advice."

PHOTO COURTESY OF CORK EXAMINER



THE FAMOUS WORDS: "Father Denis, Canon Denis and now Dean Denis - THIS IS YOUR LIFE"! Master of ceremonies David McInerney presents the 'red book' to Fr. Denis.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CORK EXAMINER

Thank You

A warm 'thank you' to all who helped make the Parish Social of 1988 a success - especially those who gave 'spot prizes'.

Thanks, too, to all whose cooperation made the 'This-Is-Your-Life' possible, and to Fr. Denis' family, priest friends and to Bishop Murphy, for dignifying the occasion by their presence.

Finally, we thank CASEY TRAVEL, who gave an airline ticket to London, to enable Fr. Denis to visit his brother in England.



BALLINEASPAIG PARISH BULLETIN

No. 121

24th April, 1988.

FATHER DENIS THIS IS YOUR LIFE!



CELEBRATING FORTY YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD: Bishop Michael Murphy joins in paying tribute to Fr. Denis O'Connor P.P., at a surprise 'This-Is-Your-Life' event, in the course of the Parish Social, held at Jury's Hotel on Tuesday 19th April.

PICTURE INCLUDES Fr. Denis' sisters Kitty (O'Leary, Bantry), Julia (Sr. Eucharistia, Fermoy), Mary (Sr. Dominica, Bon Secours), Eileen (O'Mahony, Bendemeer Park), Margaret (O'Sullivan, Dromore), his sister-in-law Mary O'Connor, The Orchard, Farranlea Park, and his nephews and nieces and their spouses.

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The Inside Story:
IT ALL began in early March. Hidden away in No. 1 Woodlawn, the ad-hoc group met each Saturday morning. David McInerney, superb professional and parishioner was our boss, with the Parish Team (minus Fr. Denis) and Benny Collins helping out.

We even had our own secret password - the famous typists' test - "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."! We had just two aims - to honour Fr. Denis' 40th anniversary with a 'This-Is-Your-Life' style event (knowing he did not want a presentation) AND to keep the secret from him!

PHOTO COURTESY OF CORK EXAMINER

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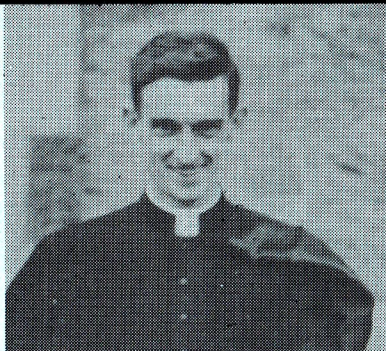
Dave delegated a task to each member. Sister Brendan clocked up hundreds of miles speeding through West Cork. Trips were made to Fermoy and Middleton. And letters went to the Bishop's house, to the Cardinal in Armagh, and to classmates Jim Good in Kenya and Bishop James Lennon in Drogheda.

"It'll be alright on the night", we consoled ourselves. It nearly wasn't. By 9.00 P.M. on the night of the Social his family and friends were all hidden away in hotel bedrooms, near Jury's ballroom.

But where was the Dean? Had he forgotten? A sick call? Then at 9.30 (1½ hours late!) he coolly strolled in - and told Sister Frances he had to go away again to get the Parish chequebook, to pay for the night. Thank God, she was able to use her charms to change his mind.

He walked to the stage for his 'few words', innocent of what was to follow. It was then that David sprung the surprise - "Tonight, Father Denis, This is your life"! Caught totally unawares, he confided to Dave - "If I'd known about all this, I'd have shaved before I came!"

His family, all 24 of them, really moved him. Then came Jerry Harrington, another son of Dromore in West Cork, bringing memories of childhood days.



20TH JUNE, 1948: Fr. Denis on his Ordination Day, at Maynooth. Ordained with him were the late Fr. Peter Lucey R.I.P., Fr. Jim Good (Turkana, Kenya), Fr. Jerry Hyde (P.P. Kinsale), Fr. Michael Murphy (P.P. Drimoleague), and Fr. Gerard Collins (P.P. Passage West)

Fr. Jerry Hyde, his life-long and dear friend, reminisced drolly. Fr. Gerard Collins, another classmate, did the same. Fr. Good's taped tribute, all the way from Turkana in Kenya was particularly touching. Canon Twohig recalled Fr. Denis' days in his first parish, Youghal.

Parishioner Paddy Duggan spoke for the Scouts. Embarrassingly glowing tributes came from Bishop Lennon and Cardinal O Fiach. The evening was crowned with the personal appearance of the Bishop of Cork and Ross, Most Rev. Michael Murphy.

"I wouldn't have come for anyone else", he said truthfully. And he shared a secret, telling us how our pastor was very nearly made a Bishop. But, as he humourously went on, "God spared him!"

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Ara Coeli
Ard Mhacha/Armagh

It's hard to realise that it is now nearly forty-seven years since I first met Denis O'Connor as a young, shy, lanky Cork student in Maynooth. For a few months I didn't understand a word he spoke - and I am sure he was equally ignorant of the Armagh pronunciation and accent.

I remember Denis O'Connor well on the hurling field. I remember him also in Junior Chapel. He was always a great man for the prayers and gave us all a great example which we didn't always succeed in living up to.

I still remember Denis' warm welcome and greatest hospitality to me in 1980 when I preached at your great Corpus Christi procession. On that occasion I asked a little Cork boy why I was wearing a red soutane and white rochet, and he said it was because red and white were the Cork colours!

A GREAT DAY FOR CORK -
Cardinal Tomas
O Fiach
attends the
Eucharistic
Procession of 1980.
PHOTO SHOWS:
Rev. Denis O'Connor,
then Adm. Cathedral,
the late Bishop Lucey,
Cardinal O Fiach and
Bishop Michael Murphy.



Now that the 40th anniversary of his ordination in 1948 is approaching, I take this opportunity to wish him great blessings from God in his pastoral work, and every happiness and fulfilment in his priestly life.

Mar sin, a Dhonncha dhil, cuireann sé áthas ar mo chroí bheith i bpáirt leat ar an ócáid stairiúil seo.

Tá Baile an Easpaig agus m'áit dhúchais ceangailte le chéile cheana, mar bhí foireann peile Chrois Mhig Fhloinn ar cuairt againn ansin, agus bhí gasúir Bhaile an Easpaig ar cuairt againn in Ard Mhacha. Chuir mé d'fhiacha orthu 'The Banks' a chanadh, agus d'fhág siad bratach na foirne again!

Go raibh rath Dé agus coimirce Muire agat, aois deValera, sláinte an bhradáin agus bás naoimh.

+ Tomás Ó Fiach

+ Tomás Ó Fiach
Cardinal archbishop of Armagh