

FATHER LUKE WADDING
IRISHMAN & FRANCISCAN
BY FR. LUCIUS McCLEAN O.F.M.



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A Tercentenary Tribute



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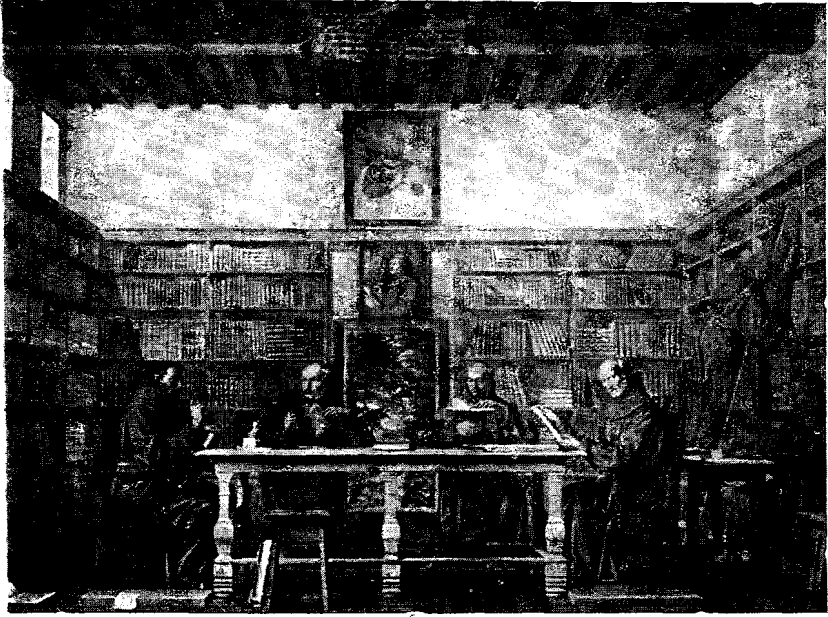


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FRESCO BY EMANUELE DA COMO SHOWING FATHER WADDING
AND HIS COMPANIONS ENGAGED IN THEIR LITERARY LABOURS



FATHER LUKE WADDING

1588 - 1657

FATHER LUKE WADDING
IRISHMAN AND FRANCISCAN

TERCENTENARY OF AN
EMIGRANT

IT WAS POPE PIUS XI who paid the tribute to our nation of saying that Irishmen were like God's fresh air ; they are everywhere. Driven from home by necessity or lured abroad by the green hills of far-off places, urged on by apostolic zeal or compelled by an inner need for travel and adventure, we are a nation of wanderers. To leave our native land is traditional with us; to return to it is a desire no Irishman ever loses.

Over three hundred years ago a young boy left Waterford, never to return to the country for which he lived and which, in the coming year, will honour him as one of its most outstanding and loyal sons, perhaps one of its most influential representatives and its greatest emigrant and exile. Necessity forced him to go abroad; the needs of his country kept him away from it but claimed his services in a life completely devoted to his faith and his fatherland.

Another Irishman, Franciscan Brother Michael O'Cleary, chief of the Four Masters, summed up the inspiration of his life and work in a motto that has become national: *Do chum glóire Dé agus onóra na hEireann*, For the glory of God and the honour of Ireland. Such a motto could well have served Father Luke Wadding, the Irish Franciscan who was born in Waterford in 1588 and who died in Rome in 1657.

THE WATERFORD FAMILY

LUKE WADDING was born in Waterford in 1588, son of a rich merchant father and of Anastasia Lombard, through whom he was related to Peter Lombard, Archbishop of Armagh, whom he was to meet later in Rome and with whom he would claim not only kinship but deep and valuable friendship.

Educational facilities in Ireland were not such as his parents would have wished for him, so, with his elder brother, he left his home in 1602. He was only fourteen years of age then. Studying in Portugal, he entered the Irish College at Lisbon, leaving it six months later to enter the Franciscan Order, into which he was received at Matozinhos, near Oporto, in 1605.

Eight years later he was ordained, after his clerical studies at Salamanca. All during his courses he had shown the ability he used so well, and after ordination he was appointed as a professor of Theology at the Franciscan College of Leon and later at his own *alma mater*, Salamanca.

A PRIEST IN PROMINENCE

PERSONAL CHARM allied itself with his ability, winning always for him the favourable friendship of influential and discerning people; such advantage he never used for personal gain, devoting it always rather to the Church and to the country he so ably served.

At this time Antonio a Trejo was Archbishop of Cartagena. When King Philip III of Spain appointed this prelate to lead a royal commission to Rome, to promote there the cause of the doctrine of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception, the Archbishop chose Father Luke Wadding as theologian to the commission. In both Ireland and Spain the doctrine had always been held in honour, while the Franciscan Order had everywhere taught and defended it; to an Irish friar in Spain no work could have been more acceptable.

The Commission reached Rome on 17th December, 1618. Its official theologian was still a young priest of only thirty years. This fact is in itself tribute to and proof of his ability. The fact that he was a foreigner makes all the more striking his appointment on a Spanish Royal Commission of such great importance. Eighteen months later, in May 1620, the Commission returned to Spain, leaving the young Irishman to look after and to carry on the work it had come to do.

IRISHMAN IN ROME

WHEN THE FIRST Irish Franciscan Pilgrimage was in Rome in the Holy Year, a visit was made to an old friary-church, S. Pietro in Montorio, where a wreath was laid on the tomb of the Irish Princes, O'Neill and O'Donnell, for it is here their bodies rest. This friary was the first Franciscan dwelling-place of Father Luke Wadding in Rome, as it belonged to the Spanish friars. His labours there give San Pietro in Montorio a further link with our land.

Already prominent as theologian to the Spanish Royal Commission, and brought further into contact with eminent churchmen through his continued labours in the cause of the Immaculate Conception, Father Luke Wadding became the friend and confidant of many prominent people. The Princes Barberini and Ludovisi, of old Roman nobility, were among his close associates, and it was between their palaces he finally found a Roman home that has become the famous College of St. Isidore. For thirty years he lived in the Eternal City, working constantly for Ireland, but never able to return to it.

CARDINALS AND POPES

POPE PAUL V, to whose Court the Royal Commission had been sent by King Philip III, appointed Fr. Luke Wadding as Consultor to the Holy Office. The Pope's nephew, Cardinal Scipio Borghese, became as intimately his friend as Archbishop Lombard, his kinsman ; the names of his other friends who were Princes of the Church form a high-sounding litany of high-ranking people: Cardinal Mellini, Vicar of Rome, Cardinal Belluzio, confidant of the future Pope Urban VIII, Cardinals Francesco and Antonio Barberini, Cardinals Ludovico and Nicolao Ludovisi.

His friendship and influence with princes and cardinals was completed by that with the popes who reigned during his life in Rome. There was Pope Paul V, Vicar of Christ at the time of his arrival in the Eternal City. There was Pope Urban VIII, who, in 1625, gave Fr. Luke Wadding the Bull of Foundation for St. Isidore's College. And there were Pope

Gregory XV, Pope Innocent X and Pope Alexander VII, in whose reign the life of the great Irishman came to its close.

ROMAN COMMISSIONS

THAT AN EXILE should have reached such prominence, at an early age, in Spain was sufficient proof of the excellence of the man ; this too was in turn completed by his influence in Rome. The popes appointed him to work on various commissions, including the Commission for the Reform of the Breviary (1619, under Pope Paul V) and the Commission for the Reform of the Missal, in 1631, on which latter committee there were only three members.

In 1652 Pope Innocent X appointed Father Luke Wadding to the Commission set up to examine five propositions of Cornelius Jansenius. As Consultor to the Holy Office, he was in constant touch with ecclesiastical affairs. The Congregation of Propaganda was established in March, 1622, but only in stages did it take over its full scope of work ; as Consultor to the Holy Office Fr. Wadding was therefore adviser on all Irish affairs. Again this was a prominence and influence which he used for no personal ambition but for the welfare of the Church and country he loved so much.

NEW COLLEGES

IN 1625 Father Luke Wadding acquired an old Spanish friary in what later was named the Via degli Artisti. He set about making this a college for

the training of Irish Franciscan clerics, and such it has remained, as St. Isidore's, for the past three hundred years. It would be altogether outside the scope of this brochure to name the prominent scholars trained in his college, but by the end of his life St. Isidore's had trained sixty professors for various colleges and universities in Europe. It had become a place of astounding literary activity. Many Irish bishops were chosen from its staff and former students.

Four years after the foundation of the Irish Franciscan College, Father Luke Wadding set about supplying another need, a college for the education of Irish secular priests. With the aid of Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi, who had been appointed as Cardinal Protector of the Kingdom of Ireland, he founded the Ludovisian College, now world-famous as the Irish College, of which he was president and which was under the care of his Order.

A third need had yet to be met. Young Irishmen anxious to join the Order had no novitiate in their own land; a reception centre and first training place would have to be found. Father Luke Wadding established this in a friary he acquired for the Province, at Capranica, a town thirty miles north of Rome. Although in these better days for our country, the early training of the Franciscan cleric is accomplished in Killarney and Galway, Capranica has remained part of the Irish Province. Along with St. Isidore's, it was renovated completely by the present Provincial of the Irish Franciscans, Very Rev. Father Hubert Quinn, eighteen years Guardian of St. Isidore's and worthy successor to its illustrious founder.

SAINT PATRICK

IN THE RULE for his Order Saint Francis laid it down that the friars were to ask the Holy Father for a Cardinal as Protector of the Order. In the days of Father Luke Wadding there was a Cardinal Protector of the Kingdom of Ireland. It was as Cardinal Protector that Cardinal Ludovisi co-operated with him in the foundation of the Irish College. In Saint Isidore's College a plaque commemorates a ceremony there on St. Patrick's Day, 1737, when Cardinal Corsini took office as Cardinal Protector of Ireland.

When founding Saint Isidore's College, Father Luke Wadding chose Saint Patrick as secondary Patron. Another plaque, in the portico of the church, recalls the dictum of the National Apostle: "Any difficulties arising in this island should be brought to the Apostolic See; as you would be Christians you must also be children of Rome."

It was the influence of Father Luke Wadding which had the feast of St. Patrick extended to the Universal Church; today there are more churches in the world dedicated to Saint Patrick than there are to any other saint. Here again the wise zeal of the Waterfordman has lived and been an inspiration.

A MONUMENT IN BOOKS

SAINT ISIDORE'S COLLEGE in Rome is universally recognised as the outstanding Wadding memorial. A mural in the *Aula Maxima* there shows Father Luke Wadding and his companions engaged in

their literary labours in the library of their day. The tremendous activity of the man matched his outstanding ability.

In addition to all his work on ecclesiastical commissions and in church affairs, and added to his work for his own country, there are the numerous letters he wrote on all-important matters. Two years ago Rev. Father Brendan Jennings, O.F.M., published a volume of the Wadding Papers from 1614 to 1638 ; these deal with matters listed in a nine-page index, while the volume itself itself runs to over six hundred pages.

From the foundation of Saint Isidore's its founder set to work on the history of the Franciscan Order, which is now famous as his *Annales Minorum*. In 1639 he set out on an edition of the works of John Duns Scotus, the Subtle Doctor, whose enthusiasm and work for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception were an inspiration to him. These two great achievements were in themselves the work of an ordinary man's lifetime.

FOR THE HONOUR OF IRELAND

THE SACK of the Franciscan Church in Cook Street, Dublin, on the feast of Saint Stephen in 1629, is evidence of the difficulties under which Irish people were living. It was the signal for the necessity of further precautions and for the introduction of additional difficulties. With all the conditions and affairs at home in Ireland Father Luke Wadding was expertly conversant. To help against difficulties



ST. ISIDORE'S: THE PORTICO



SAINT ISIDORE'S : THE THEOLOGICAL HALL.

which he could not alleviate he had worked incessantly in Rome.

When the Confederation of Kilkenny met in 1642, it appointed Father Luke Wadding as its Accredited Agent in Rome, thus making him first Ambassador of the Irish Provisional Government. It is of interest that the first Ambassador to the established Irish Government in these days of national resurgence was Most Rev. Doctor Paschal Robinson, a Franciscan who had close associations with Saint Isidore's College.

The work of Father Wadding as Accredited Agent was to solicit the help of Europe for the Irish cause, to seek for men and money to help in the national struggle. It merely gave him official recognition and status as the country's most able and loyal exile. In 1643 he had Father Scarampi sent as Papal Envoy to Ireland; two years later he achieved the appointment of Archbishop Rinuccini.

In ecclesiastical matters there is evidence of his work and influence, all during his life in Rome, in the appointment of bishops to Irish sees that had long been vacant. In 1618 Bishop Rothe was appointed to Ossory; in 1620 Bishop Arthur to Limerick and Bishop Hurley to Emly; in 1622 Bishop Tirry to Cork; in 1624 Bishop Roche to Ferns; in 1625 Bishops to Down and Connor, Raphoe, Kilmore and Elphin. And so the list might go indefinitely on; what his confreres were doing at home to keep the faithful worthy of that high title, Fr. Luke

Wadding was doing in Rome to consolidate their efforts and to ensure pastors for a harassed flock.

SUPPRESSION OF A LETTER

THE VALUE of his work was so well known in Ireland that the Confederate Chiefs addressed to Rome a letter requesting for him the Cardinal's hat. They had not reckoned with the fact of his unselfish motives. The letter had to pass through his hands, as he was their agent, but having passed into those hands it did not pass out of them. He sought no honour for himself.

To assess completely and fairly the stature of Father Luke Wadding and the extent of his services to his own country, one would have to take into account all the conditions in the Ireland of that day. Tragic as they were, they would have been doubly so if, having left his native land as a boy, he had been completely lost to it. His life would seem rather an example of how good can be drawn from evil, for serving his country in accordance with his great love for it, he served it effectively.

Two colleges are lasting monuments to his wisdom and good sense, as the work of Irish Franciscans and of the secular priests trained at the Irish College perpetuate his spirit. Heavy tomes are the proof of his scholarly achievements. The definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, a century ago, was the glorious completion of his work. But beyond the things that can be dated or measured, his character

and his work for Ireland must remain unmeasured and not completely realised.

TERCENTENARY TRIBUTE

FATHER LUKE WADDING died in the November of 1657, three centuries ago. The present Provincial of the Irish Franciscans, Very Rev. Father Hubert Quinn, proclaimed some time ago the centenary year. His predecessor as Guardian of St. Isidore's will be honoured. Working along with the Irish Government, the Church and the Universities, a Wadding Committee, under the chairmanship of Very Rev. Father Cormac Daly, Guardian of Adam and Eve Friary, Dublin, will plan the Tercentenary celebrations. The City of Waterford will honour its greatest son. In Rome, Dublin, Waterford, Gormans-ton (where the new college will be dedicated to his memory), and throughout Ireland the Church, the State and the Order will celebrate his memory.

Plaques and statues will be erected, scholarly works will be published, the people will be told of the man we so honour. Boys and young men will be inspired by his example and may be led by it into the Order he chose and loved. The nation will recall the name of this Irishman of whom the whole world may well be proud. In these encouraging days of national progress, it is good and wise to think of such men as Father Luke Wadding and to realise and recognise the fact that but for them we could not have attained to our present status as a Christian and intensely patriotic nation.

When 1957 has passed, Father Luke Wadding will not be forgotten. His story will be better known and his work more highly and widely appreciated. That the scholars should recognise its worth is important and gratifying, but far more important is it that Irishmen everywhere should realise their debt to him.

Friend of the O'Neills and the O'Donnells, Ireland's representative in Europe, scholar and administrator, the Waterford friar will receive the tributes of a grateful nation, whose patron saint and apostle he gave to the whole world.



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