



Comhairle Ceantair  
an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin  
Newry, Mourne  
and Down  
District Council



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# ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS CARROLL S.M.A. D.D. D.PH.

## MISSIONARY, DIPLOMAT, ACHIEVER. A PROUD NEWRY MAN.

FRANCIS CARROLL WAS A MEMBER OF AN OLD ESTABLISHED, AND HIGHLY RESPECTED, NEWRY FAMILY. HIS RELIGIOUS VOCATION WITH THE SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSIONS (SMA) SAW HIM ENGAGE IN MISSIONARY WORK IN LIBERIA FOR A PERIOD OF 42 YEARS. A SKILLED DIPLOMAT, HE ROSE TO HIGH OFFICE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WHILST DELIVERING SEISMIC CHANGE IN HIS IMPOVERISHED ADOPTED COUNTRY.



COMPILED BY JAMES MC AREVEY.



This was recognised by no less a personage than James Larkin when he addressed Newry Dockers at the Steampacket during the Dock Strike of 1907 which was led locally by Killeavy man, James Fearon. NMA unveiled a plaque commemorating the strike on Merchants Quay in 2015.

# FRANK CARROLL.

## THE FORMATIVE YEARS, SUCCESS AND SORROW.

Frank attended the Christian Brothers schools in Newry from 1916 until 1927 when he answered his vocation to become a Missionary priest. He left Newry CBS and entered the SMA junior secondary school, The Sacred Heart College, Ballinafad, Co Mayo, and a year later he was promoted to the senior school, St Josephs College, Wilton, Cork, where he graduated in June 1931. In the Autumn of that year he entered the Society's Novitiate and House of Philosophy at Kilcolgan, Co. Galway.

**Frank was admitted as a member of the Society on July 2 1933 and studied Theology in the major seminary at Dromantine until June 1937.**

**He was ordained to the priesthood in Newry Cathedral on 20th December 1936 by Dr Edward Mulhern, Bishop of Dromore, one of a group of 18 from Dromantine that day.**

At that time, it was customary for a student to provide a chalice for his ordination with the cost then being around £25, a prohibitive sum for a working class man with a large family to support, but Paddy Carroll faced the challenge.

Joseph Fisher & Sons were a staple of the Port as major coal and timber importers and ship owners. Fishers were a staunch Unionist family and Frank Fisher assumed control when his Father passed away in 1902 making the firm second only to Kellys of Belfast as coal importers. Mr Fisher was also the Kings Deputy Lieutenant for Co Down. Paddy went to see him and explained his predicament, asking if he could borrow the money and make weekly repayments. Knowing Paddy to be a reputable man of integrity, Mr Fisher readily agreed.

Weeks later, Paddy made his final payment and called into Mr Fishers office to inform him. Mr Fisher thanked him and enquired about his newly ordained son. Paddy informed him that he was finishing his studies in Dromantine and then he was being assigned to Liberia. Frank extended his best wishes for the future to Fr. Carroll and as Paddy was leaving the office, Mr Fisher called him back, opened a drawer in his desk and took out an envelope which he gave to Paddy.

**"For your son, with my best wishes, Paddy". The envelope contained £25 !!!**

The euphoria of the ordination was short lived as a terrible tragedy was visited on the family shortly afterwards. On 17th February 1937 Paddy Carroll and his eldest son, Hugh, were engaged with other dockers discharging a load of coal from the Glasgow registered vessel, "SS Marion". In those days, this was a labour-intensive job with the coal being shovelled into large wooden tubs and then hoisted from the hold by a steam winch. It was whilst a tub was being winched up that a large lump of coal fell out and struck Hugh Carroll on the head. The young married man, seriously injured, was conveyed to Newry General Hospital where he died that evening. Living in Mary Street, he was survived by his wife, Rosanna (nee Fullerton) whom he had married on 28th March 1932 in Newry Cathedral. They had 2 young sons, Rodney and Teave. The latter became a priest and was ordained by his Uncle, Archbishop Carroll, in Newry Cathedral in 1975.



# The Ministry of Francis Carroll S.M.A.



EXPLORING  
LIVING  
MEMORY  
Part 4 - Nov. 1997

26. Castle Street from Abbey Yard  
(Reproduced with kind permission of Michael Mallon and Francis O'Hagan R.L.P.)

C.C.G.  
Ballybot House  
28 Cornmarket  
Newry BT35 8BG

**Having completed his studies at Dromantine in the Summer of 1937, the newly ordained Fr. Carroll was assigned to the S.M.A. Mission in Liberia, West Africa. When he arrived in Liberia, in October 1937, Bishop John Collins appointed him to the Monrovia district. There had been 4 previous attempts to establish the Church in Monrovia before roots were set down in 1921.**

Frank joined a missionary staff of 5 serving the main station at Monrovia, a second residential station at Kekru, and 5 outstations. There was a mammoth task to be addressed but the young priest from Castle Street wasn't fazed and manfully faced the stern challenges before him. His was to be a dual role, combining religious and secular duties for the common good. Liberia was an impoverished country, hampered by poor communication and infrastructure. Most of his jurisdiction was accessible only by sea and was the least developed area of this fledgling state.

**Factor in the geographical location, a few degrees from the Equator, the lack of medical facilities and the isolation and one can understand why the area was known as "The Whiteman's Grave". Sadly it became the resting place of many members of the Society with others ravaged by ill health and disease.**

**I would suspect that Frank drew heavily from his working class roots in Castle Street where problems were just irritants to be dealt with. His colleagues, like himself, were young and inexperienced but Frank had a vision and the ability to deliver. A very charismatic young man, he endeared himself to the indigenous population as he set about improving their basic standard of living. His primary focus was on education and he cultivated a strong relationship with the Government education department and leading officials. At the same time he promoted the Faith and tended to the spiritual needs of the locals. Frank's efforts didn't go unnoticed. He won a reputation as a man of honesty, integrity and commitment. Frank Carroll was making a difference in Missionary and Secular circles and his ever growing list of important contacts ensured progress across the board.**

Major recognition first came Frank's way in 1946 when President Tubman conferred him with the "Star of Africa" award and over the next 3 decades Frank received every major Civic Recognition from the Government of Liberia. His ability to deliver and cement relations between Church and State was also noted by his peers in religion. In October 1946, Bishop Collins appointed Frank as Superior of Bassa district, about 70 miles East of Monrovia.

# Promotion and Sadness.

In 1950 the Holy See decided to divide the Vicariate of Liberia into 2 separate jurisdictions, namely the Vicariate of Monrovia and the Prefecture of Cape Palmas. On 18th November 1950, Francis Carroll was appointed Prefect Apostolic and established his headquarters in the town of Cape Palmas where he was to serve for the next decade. Sadly, his Father Paddy, passed away on 29th October 1959 and the following year Frank was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Monrovia in December 1960.

Just 2 months later in February 1961, Frank was devastated by the passing of his beloved Mother, Mary. He had just returned to Liberia weeks earlier after a holiday at home. In March his good friend and mentor, Bishop Collins, passed away after a period of ill health. Francis was consecrated a Bishop on 21st May 1961 in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome by Pope John XXIII and he was also named Apostolic Inter Nuncio to Liberia on 9th November that same year. Just 24 years after his arrival as a newly ordained priest in Liberia, Frank Carroll had proved his worth and had, quite rightly, received due recognition.

Dr Carroll was the second Bishop from our district to be consecrated by Pope John within a year. Warrenpoint born Dominican, Eusebius John Crawford O.P., was consecrated Bishop of the Western Solomon Islands on 8th May 1960.



Just over a year after the elevation of Francis to the Bishopric, in June 1962, the Carroll family were devastated by a tragic bereavement. Their sister, Ellen, was married to a foreign going seaman, Edward O'Hare (55) from Cecil Street, where she lived with her 80 years old mother in law, Margaret. Edward, like so many of our local sailors, had commenced his seafaring career with Joseph Fisher & Sons at the age of 14 and then graduated to deep sea vessels travelling the world. He received an award for bravery in 1952 for rescuing 2 men who were in danger of suffocation in a gas filled tank on board the Esso tanker, "SS Wallowa".

In June 1962 he joined the bulk carrier, "MV Hudson Point" in Liverpool ahead of a voyage to the USA. Just 2 days after his arrival, as the ship was being readied for sea, Edward was tragically killed when he accidentally fell into the ship's hold. His Father, Michael lost his life when "SS Inniscarra" was torpedoed off Cork in 1918 and a brother, James, was one of 17 who perished when the "SS Osworth" was lost in a storm in the Mid Atlantic.

Those of a certain vintage will recall the other two Carroll sisters who ran a thriving confectionary shop in the family home in Castle Street. Some called it Smiths shop and others, Carrolls. This was because Winnie was married (Mrs Smith) and Peg (Margaret) wasn't. Either way, the sisters enjoyed great footfall from the pupils attending the 4 schools run by the Christian Brothers and the Poor Clare Nuns.

# Honours and Elevation.

Bishop Carroll forged ahead with his Missionary work and oversaw countless projects across the fields of education, medicine and social development whilst endearing himself to the local populace as "Fr. Carroll". On 14th January 1964 he was consecrated an Archbishop and on 7th March 1966 Pope Paul VI appointed him Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Liberia, the Papal Ambassador. Over the years he had promoted good relations between Church and State and now he was a key member of the Vatican Diplomatic Corps.

Sunday 17th August 1975 was a red letter day for the Carroll family. Francis travelled home to ordain his nephew, Teave, a priest in Newry Cathedral. Teave, whose Father, Hugh, was tragically killed at the Albert Basin in 1937 was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Westminster and later became Parish Priest of Holloway in London.

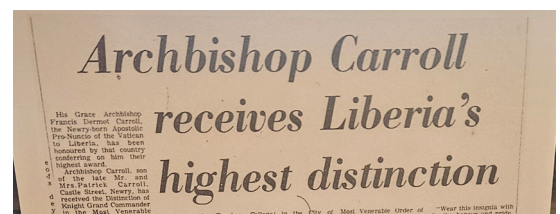
Major secular recognition came his way in 1975 when the highest honour of Liberia was conferred on him by the President, William R Tolbert Jnr. Dr Carroll was admitted into membership of The Most Venerable Order of Knighthood of The Pioneers with the grade of, Knight High Commander. The President in his address said, "In 1937 you journeyed to Liberia to begin what only can be rated as a most impressive career as one of the greatest Missionaries within the territorial confines of Liberia" He then went on to give an overview of the career of the Archbishop in Liberia.

"Your eminently remarkable and enduring achievements as head of the Diocese of Monrovia include leading roles in bringing into fruition, a medical school, The Dogliotti College of Medicine of the University of Liberia, and the establishment of the Catholic Hospital of Congotown, the founding of Carroll High School in Grassfield Nimbo County. St. Marys High School in Saniquellie, St. Pauls Seminary and College in Gbarnga as well as Church edifices to the glory of God such as the Cathedral in Monrovia and Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Sinkor"

He continued,

"For 38 unbroken years of kindness, patience and perseverance among the people of Liberia, during which you rendered exemplary self sacrificial service, For the monuments of which today stand in living testimony in those areas of this country which have come under your inspiring influence, Monuments not only of Church edifices, schools and social institutions, but perhaps the greatest of all, The innumerable people whose lives have been deeply touched by your genuine friendship and fatherly guidance and who appreciatively and affectionately until now continue to refer to you as "Father Carroll", For your efforts in solidifying the already cordial and friendly relations between the Republic of Liberia and the Vatican State.

**What an accolade for the man from Castle Street !!! This was the pinnacle of recognition from the Government of Liberia. Previously, he had been decorated three times for outstanding services to the nation across Education, Health, Social Welfare and Evangelism. He had enacted transformative change across the board.**



# Farewell.

Although still a relatively young man, the years of a heavy workload, delivered in a hostile climate were taking their toll and in February 1976 Frank tendered his resignation as Archbishop whilst continuing in his role as Pro-Nuncio.

In April 1979 Pope John Paul II accepted his resignation from this role also. Dr Carroll then retired to the SMA house at Tenafly, New Jersey, United States but within months he suffered a heart attack. Following convalescence, he decided to return home to Newry.

Sadly, he had a further heart attack and passed away in the family home on 10th October 1980, aged just 68.

Francis had a brief sojourn after a career spanning over 42 years of dedicated service. Over 100 clergy presided at his funeral Mass in Newry Cathedral and he was interred in the family grave in St. Marys Cemetery.



36 - Newry Reporter, Thursday, 15th October, 1980



## Final tributes to Newry born Archbishop Francis Carroll

Distinguished churchmen and members of the public gathered in Newry Cathedral on Tuesday to pay a final and farewell to Archbishop Francis Carroll, S.M.A., D.D., D.Ph.

His remains were removed to the Cathedral where he was laid out, served as an altar boy and was interred in the family grave. Over one hundred guests came to pay tribute at the funeral.

A second attack of illness occurred at his home, 21, Castle Street, Newry, on Friday.

His remains were removed to the Cathedral where he was laid out, served as an altar boy and was interred in the family grave. Over one hundred guests came to pay tribute at the funeral.

was one of wry's most serious sons

and girls of the Newry Cathedral sang the words of the entrance. The congregation who had come to pay tribute to the late Archbishop, who died last week, were filled with feelings of grief and sadness.

As reflected in the words beautifully sung by the young chorists, the Archbishop's life was one of service and sacrifice.

"We had his heart in our hearts," said one of the young chorists, "and we will miss him very much."

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# Newry Reporter

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Price 16p (Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper)

Thursday, 16th October, 1980.

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## House building cuts - disheartening outlook for home seekers

Visions of the once familiar scenes of young married couples and the children being forced to reside with parents and in some cases, have liquidated property, must be considered as a foreboding prospect for many Councils on Monday as the latest report from the Housing Executive is published. The report, which was submitted to the Housing Executive by the Councils, shows that the situation for home seekers is bleak.

The Housing Executive has announced that it will be cutting back on its house building programme. This means that there will be a shortage of new houses available for sale. The report also states that the Housing Executive will be cutting back on its rental programme. This means that there will be a shortage of new rental properties available.

The Housing Executive has also announced that it will be cutting back on its social housing programme. This means that there will be a shortage of new social housing properties available. The report also states that the Housing Executive will be cutting back on its private housing programme. This means that there will be a shortage of new private housing properties available.

## Policemen had narrow escape

Four policemen had a narrow escape on Tuesday morning when a land mine exploded in the street near the Newry Police Station. The explosion was caused by a land mine which had been planted by the IRA. The policemen were not injured, but the explosion caused considerable damage to the street.

## Protest at rise in driving test fee

A protest was held in Newry on Tuesday to mark the increase in the driving test fee. The protesters claimed that the increase was unfair and that it would make it more difficult for people to pass the driving test.

## Councillor deplors destruction of new trees

Councillor Jim McGinnis has deplored the destruction of new trees in the Newry area. He claimed that the destruction of the trees was a disgrace and that it would have a negative impact on the environment.

## Police to replace soldiers at Newry next month

Soldiers are to be replaced by police at Newry next month. The decision was made by the British Army, who have decided that the situation in Newry is now stable enough for police to take over the security duties.

## GRANTS UNAFFECTED

Improvement grants will not be affected by the cuts in the Housing Executive's budget. The Housing Executive has announced that it will continue to provide improvement grants for the next year.

## NO KIDDING! HALF LAMB £10.00

Don't miss out on this great offer! Half a lamb for only £10.00. This is a fantastic deal and you won't want to miss it.

## RING NEWRY 485 THE CONTINENTAL SHELF

Maureen Street, Newry (Between Victoria and the Post Office)

# The Legacy of Francis Carroll

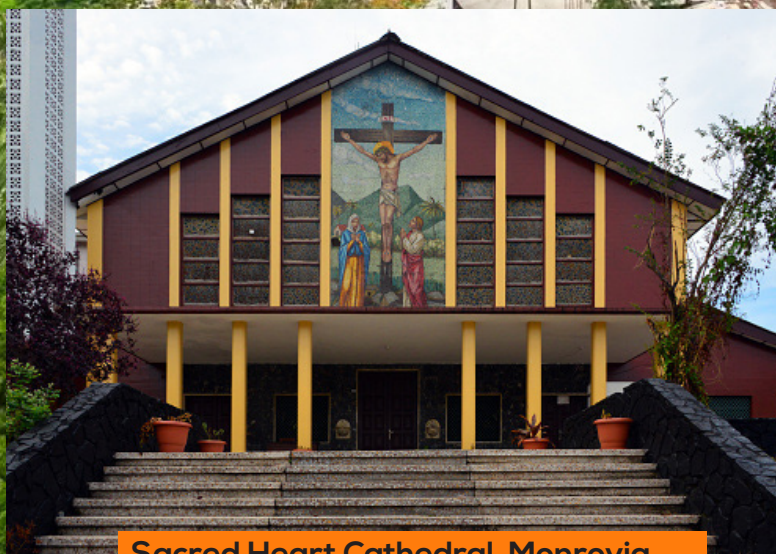
## Education, Medicine, Religion



Carroll High School, Yekepa



St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital



Sacred Heart Cathedral, Monrovia

# Sincere thanks to,

Sincere thanks to everyone who assisted with this project, especially,

Mr Tony Carroll and the extended Carroll family.  
Canon Francis Brown and the team in Newry Parish Centre.  
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Kathy Mc Caughey and The Choir Studio.  
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