

Stab victim 'innocent bystander'

By CATHAL O'SHEA

A YOUNG Galwayman who was brutally stabbed to death near the city's centre early last month was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The shattered friends of Kieran Cunningham believe if it wasn't him who was subjected to the savage attack, it would have been someone else.

They say they simply cannot understand how a fun night out in a disco off Eyre Square could end in the death of the popular 20-year-old supermarket worker.

Kieran had been socialising with friends in the city's Karma nightclub on June 3 before leaving on his own shortly after 2.00am.

Less than ten minutes later he was found lying on the ground on a nearby street, critically injured.

The dead youth's friends have told gardai that



VICTIM: Socialising

positively nothing untoward happened in the club that could have sparked off the vicious attack. They say there was no contact between him and his alleged assailant, a Polish man in his twenties, while they were inside.

Gardai have since described the attack as "random and unprovoked."

Detectives believe that the unnamed suspect, who fled his rented Galway home in the immediate aftermath of the attack, may still be in the country.

He is now the subject of a nationwide search and Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, has also been asked to assist.

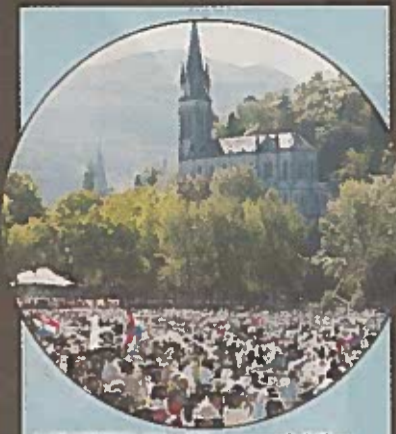
Ireland's Polish community have pledged their full co-operation in helping trace the whereabouts of the man who was caught on CCTV cameras in the vicinity of the fatal attack.

Two days after the death, he booked a flight to Poland, but never showed up at Dublin Airport where Gardai were lying in wait for him.

DOLE DEAL FOR CIRCUS

FOSSETT'S Circus is letting unemployed people into shows free, along with their kids. All they have to do is produce their dole cards at the box-office.

A spokesman said: "The circus survived a few recessions because people kept coming to see our shows. We want to put something back into the community."



LOURDES: Most famous sighting

VIRGIN'S FOURTH COMING

THIS is the third time in 24 years that Our Lady is believed to have appeared in Ireland.

Pilgrims flocked to Millstreet, Co Cork, three years ago, after the Blessed Virgin was reported to have appeared in a holy well.

But the most sensational sighting was at Ballinspittle, also in Co Cork, in 1985, when thousands of people reported having seen a statue of the Virgin Mary moving.

Tens of thousands of people from all over the world descended on the tiny West Cork village to see the statue in a grotto.

Many claimed to have seen it shake and even hover above the ground.

Some reported having seen the Virgin shed tears and wave her hand.

Among those who swore that the statue had floated in mid-air was local garda sergeant John Murray. He said he was ridiculed by other gardai in his station but stuck to his story.

Sergeant Murray told a BBC crew: "I was so convinced it was a fraud that I climbed up into the grotto the next morning and tried to shake the statue, but it wouldn't budge. I checked the back, the sides of it for any trip wires, but I couldn't find anything."

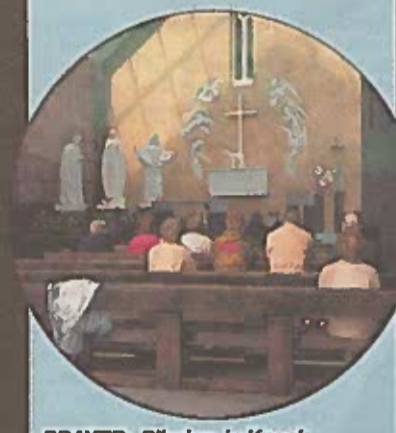
Local mum Cathy O'Mahony saw the statue temporarily disappear, to be replaced by a "luminous figure".

She and another local woman, Patricia Bowen, told RTE's Would You Believe they were still seeing visions more than 20 years later.

But the most famous apparition in Ireland was at Knock in 1879, where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared, along with St Joseph, St John the Evangelist and the Lamb of God. 15 witnesses gave testimony to the church.

The church has officially recognised the vision and built a basilica on the site which now attracts pilgrims from all over the world.

Sceptics say that the latest 'vision' in Rathkeale and the one at Ballinspittle have this in common: both happened during a deep economic recession.



PRAYER: Pilgrims in Knock

EXCLUSIVE / STUMPED LOCALS SAY PARISH

'We are here standing vigil 24-7 just in case the priest gets rid of Our Lady...but he can't see what we can see... he thinks it's just a tree!'