



# THE HOUSE OF

# 'THE AGENT OF

From GERALDINE COMISKEY on Achill Island

**CHRISTINA GALLAGHER'S** House of Prayer organisation has described the *Sunday World* as "the work of demons" and our reporter Jim Gallagher "an agent of the Devil".

It followed our expose of the riches of its founder Christina Gallagher.

The astonishingly unchristian attack was made by Fr Gerard McGinnity during a sermon in the House of Prayer, Achill on Saturday of last week.

And our undercover reporter Geraldine Comiskey was there to hear his uncharitable words after the Rosary session in the Prayer Chapel.

This is being held every Saturday until April 26 to "crush evil attacks" on Christina Gallagher, her House of Prayer on Achill Island and the seven "chain houses" in the worldwide organisation.

### Remarks

Fr McGinnity made the remarks just hours before last week's *Sunday World* hit the shops to reveal that Christina Gallagher was living in a €4million house in Dublin.

Referring to our expose on January 6, he said it was "a defamatory article" and that the allegations in it were "not true". He said Christina "does not own a big house in Dublin" and that she does not own the seven Prayer Houses worldwide.

"They belong to charity." He admitted that a priest had indeed collected money to pay Christina's medical bill - but added: "That caused Christina embarrassment and it stopped."

He described our story as "gutter journalism", adding "this Jim Gallagher is a gutter journalist. His sole intention was to do maximum damage to Christina and the House of Prayer."

Some 200 people were packed in the church house for the sermon, with an overspill outside.

The pilgrims - most of them elderly - said they had seen the article and did not believe it.

### Shocked

But locals were shocked when they saw our pictures last week of her mansion on Millionaire's Row in Malahide, Dublin.

Members of the House of Prayer fraternity desperately snapped up the paper in an attempt to stop their neighbours reading it.

In a newsagent on Achill Sound, I saw one of the women grab a bundle she could barely carry.

Elsewhere on the remote island (population of 3,000) the *Sunday World* was sold out.

After morning Mass in the Catholic church - whose priests do not recognise the House of Prayer - locals said they were not surprised.

"We've heard things over the



DEVOUT: Pilgrims travel miles from the length and breadth of the country to visit the House of Prayer on Achill Island



STIGMATA: Christina Gallagher pictured bleeding



MARKS: Gallagher's feet



MONEY-SPINNER: Some of the merchandise on sale

### PAY FOR PRAY...

- IT REALLY is pay as you pray in the shop attached to the House of Prayer. Prices range from €2 for a souvenir pen to €500 for a brick in the church.
- It's €30 annual subscription to the Fraternity's monthly magazine. Items on sale include rosary beads for €8.50.
- Statues of various sizes and styles, most around €10 but some for €50.
- Mass cards for €5 - signed by Christina Gallagher's right-hand man, Fr McGinnity.
- Pieces of cloth with "Padre Pio's blood from his wounds" on them were touted from the pulpit by a Fraternity member after the Novena on Saturday night.
- At €5 a pop, visitors reckoned they were a small price to save them from the "fires of hell".

Dick was clearly clever, but so nice that he only saw the good in people. Local man Paddy volunteers at the centre, but is paid in kind - with a free daily meal.

Most of the pilgrims who attended the Rosary last Saturday were old and sick - and I was told this was a typical crowd.

With three coaches outside, a lot of cars, it was a typical Saturday afternoon.

One gent told me he travelled every Saturday from Co Kildare especially to say the Rosary.

A local B&B owner's daughter told me there had been 10,000 visitors last July for the House of Prayer's anniversary.

### Preached

Inside the Church, Fr McGinnity preached through a screen on the altar.

This was real fire and brimstone stuff - all directed at those who would dare "attack" the organisation or Christina.

The *Sunday World* and journalist Jim Gallagher were the main focus of this wrath. Fr McGinnity spoke of a vengeful Virgin Mary - who was passing on warnings through Christina.

These messages included: "My Son's Hand is about to come over the earth in justice... the chastisement... the purification... is on the way... Save us from the fires of Hell!"

It revolted me to think that these nice people were being coddled, ripped-off and threatened with eternal damnation if they did not support Christina Gallagher morally and financially.

### Purgatory

They were gambling their life's savings - and the last years of their lives - on a promise of reduced Purgatory in return for funding her cause.

Next day, one of their members, a kindly man called Eoghan, revealed just how suspicious of strangers the Fraternity had become. "Anyone can just walk in and listen in on us. We don't know who they are. They could be the media."

Eoghan, Dick, Paddy and some of the other members of the Fraternity seemed genuinely good people. I hope they will forgive me for deceiving them into thinking I was a pilgrim; I did it in a quest for the truth.

## Priest claims Sunday World is 'demonic' after our man reveals Gallagher's wealth

years about Christina," a woman told me. "She only wants cash - she won't accept cheques."

Locals say they are disgusted that the House of Prayer is using a consecrated chapel. The diocese has forbidden the organisation to say Mass in the little church - which used to be a chapel attached to the Sisters of Mercy convent and the school next door.

Local man Canice O'Sullivan said: "The people who visit the House of Prayer are good people, but I'd rather not comment about the organisation."

Posing as a pilgrim, I visited the House of Prayer on Saturday and was back on Sunday to see the reaction to our story.

On Sunday afternoon, hushed discussions in the chapel quickly turned to loud Hail Marys as I walked in.

A leaflet in the House of Prayer urges pilgrims to make donations to The Blue Ivory Trust - which it describes as "a legal Trust set up by the Fraternity to fund the work desired by Our Blessed Mother".

I was encouraged to buy a brick. It would have my name on it and "Christina will pray for you", a member of the

Fraternity called Paddy told me. I offered €100 cash, then realised I had only €50 cash; would that do? I asked Eileen. She blinked to hide what looked like disappointment, and said yes. She clearly wanted me to show her the money - and I wanted to see the greed, so, out of sheer devilment (well, my employers had been described as "agents of the Devil"), I told her I could only donate €20.

### Private

Eileen looked rather cross, but the man who worked with her was grinning as I paid up. "What will my €20 get me?" I asked - apart from membership of the Fraternity, which entitles me to attend private meetings.

I finally got a receipt and am now officially a member of the Fraternity.

On a table in the shop, there are ring-binders full of letters

which purport to have been written by satisfied customers. They thank Christina for healing them emotionally, spiritually - and even physically. She is credited with 500 miracles - including many cancer cures.

But the names and addresses are vague - some are just initials.

There is also a list of doctors who verify that patients have been inexplicably cured after they turned to Christina - but no one can give me contact details for these doctors. They're "mostly in America", Eileen claimed.

Staff and volunteers are mostly Irish. They include a retired, but aptly named, private investigator called Dick, from Boston, who had first come as a pilgrim after reading about the House of Prayer. Dick was wearing a green fluorescent bib emblazoned "Our Lady's Helper."

He said his old job hadn't fitted in with his morals.



MYSTERY: Christina Gallagher