

# Judy and William Coyne

## Founders of the Knock Shrine Society

In August 1935 Judy and William Coyne founded the Knock Shrine Society. This began the Coyne's involvement with Knock Shrine which lasted for twenty-five years in Liam's case and seventy-four in Judy's.

Liam was involved in many aspects of the Shrine's work including stewarding, correspondence, promotion and organisation of pilgrimages. He was the author of several publications on Knock including *Cnoc Mhuire in Picture and Story* and *Venerable Archdeacon Cavanagh*.

In 1938 the Coyne's commenced publication of the Knock Shrine Annual to record yearly events at the Shrine. Judy compiled and edited this book for fifty-eight years. She was a woman of strong faith and her spiritual influence on those with whom she worked was inspiring. She had a special love for the sick and organised the running of St. Joseph's Rest Home in the Shrine grounds, for over forty years. During her seventy-

four year involvement with Knock, she established various Apostolates including: the Dedicated Handmaids; the International Blessed Sacrament Guild; the Rosary Crusade and the Apostolate of the Holy Souls.

Judy received many honours in her lifetime and in 1997 was the first woman to be made Papal Knight 'Dame Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester'. She was a great believer in providence and her memoirs, published 2004, are entitled *Providence My Guide – The Heroic Force in the Knock Shrine Society*.

Liam died in September 1953 and Judy in April 2002. They are buried side by side in the Old Cemetery in Knock.



Judy and Liam Coyne departing on honeymoon to Paris  
11 February, 1924  
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# Knock Shrine Society

The Knock Shrine Society was established in 1935 to promote the cause of Knock Shrine. The Society consists of lay people, Stewards and Handmaids, who give freely of their time and service in honour of Our Lady and the greater glory of God.



TOP: Stewards leading Rosary Procession at Knock, c.1970

BELOW: Handmaids and Stewards gather at Knock for 'Day of Recollection', 21 October, 1984

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The Stewards' role is to welcome pilgrims to the Shrine by guiding and assisting them during ceremonies and processions. The Handmaids care for the sick at the Shrine and help in the various Shrine offices.

Handmaids wear a white uniform which has an embroidered rosary entwining the letters CM, *Cumhal Mhuire*, meaning 'handmaid of Mary'. They also wear a white veil with a golden rose on its peak.

The Stewards are called *Giolla Mhuire*, meaning 'servants of Mary' and wear a navy blazer, grey slacks and a tie with an emblem of Knock Basilica. Most stewards wear a green

sash; officers wear a yellow sash; the first-aid section wear brown leather straps.

There are two types of handmaids, those who help out one Sunday each month and Dedicated Handmaids who take vows of poverty, obedience and chastity and work full-time at the Shrine. There is also a section of the Society for girls and boys aged between eleven and fifteen years.

Today there are approximately 1200 registered members of the Knock Shrine Society. Since 1935, it has played a major role in the development and promotion of Knock Shrine.

