

MUSINGS

A wooden sculpture of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child. The sculpture is made of light-colored wood and is set against a background of green foliage. The Virgin Mary has her eyes closed and a serene expression. The Christ Child is looking down with a slight smile. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the texture of the wood.

by FR. SEÁN ÓLAOIRE, PhD - 2019 VOLUME 4

*A Wooden
Heart for
Mother
Mary*

I've carried the Madonna and Child
from parish to parish since
I arrived in Palo Alto 32 years ago.

It's a carving of Mother Mary
and her infant, Jesus.

And for the first eight years,
it hung on a series of rectory walls.



But in 1994, I found them a new home
on a scrub oak on a little hillside
called Cnochán Daire na Naomh
(the hillock of the oak tree of the avatars)
where I have lived since then;
in a place I named, Tír na nÓg -
a mythical, mystical land of ancient Ireland.



Not long after they'd settled in,
they had a wingéd visitor.
Perhaps it was the angel Gabriel again –
in disguise.

I heard him before I saw him;
the rat-ta-tat of a high-powered drill;
but all the power came from his head.

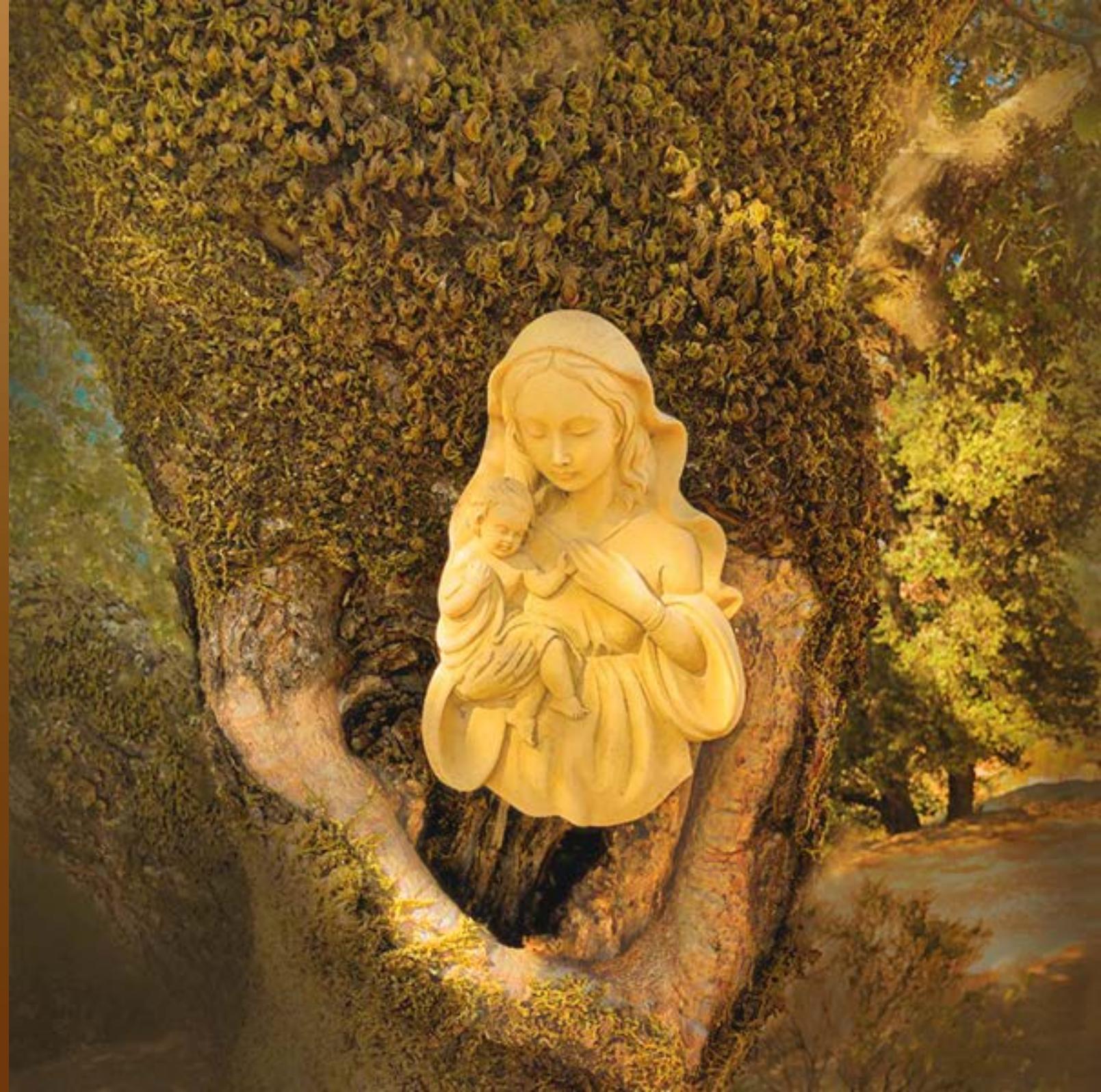
He came as a woodpecker,
with a bright-red crest
and he stayed for several days
until he had completed his task.



I kept my distance,
not wanting to interfere with his art work.
The Madonna and Child looked silently on.
He completed his task, spread his wings
and flew back to the heavens.
He who had once said,
“Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum...”
had now shown that they were still held lovingly
in the bosom of the Father.



He had carved a perfect heart
into the elephant-hide trunk of the oak tree.
It enfolded the mother and babe,
allowing them to feel the pulse
of the planet through the stethoscope
of the tree trunk.



God, you are really something!

Namasté,

Seán

Tir na nÓg

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