

P.S. I forgot to tell you dearest that I received
last week two of your deary letters posted on Nov 18th
& Nov 27th. also a sea mail letter containing beautiful post-card
snaps of Malaya. I have read every word of them over & over
again. I shall reply to them in my next letter.

Spring Villa
195 Springfield Rd,
Belfast.
22nd December 1941

My own darling Frank,

What I wouldnt give to hear from your own dear lips
where you are and how you are to-night. The Far Eastern war has been
waging for 2 weeks and still there has been no news. Kuantan has appeared
so often in the press & in the news, Kuala Lumpur, the home of our good
little priest Fr. Ashress is also rather prominent not to mention Ipoh. I
know them every one, from the mountainous Perak State in the north to
Pahang in the South. My knowledge has come from you dearest one, from
your letters, your magazines and above all your beautiful Snaps. I have
enjoyed Malaya's beauty with you. I had Hugh doing some shopping for me
to-day - he searched the booksellers & educational establishments of
Belfast for a good sized wall-map of Malaya. I want to follow every
phase of the war in that far off peninsula. He was unsuccessful but
there is a promise held out to us that maps should be published soon.

As I look at your beautiful Snaps, darling I cannot help
feeling sad. To think that now those beautiful places and simple
peace loving inhabitants are suffering, their homes being bombed and
their very lives being endangered. When, oh when, is this terrible war
going to cease? Though I said I had no news of you since the war, I really
mean written or sent by you since hostilities began. It must be difficult,
perhaps even impossible to get news out so I pray to God each day for
patience. Some months ago, when I foresaw this war I felt that when the
time would come I should have gone crazy - the uncertainty of not
knowing whether you were alive or dead, well or suffering, in danger or
not. Well darling, for about the first week after December 8th I did really
believe I was going crazy. I fought, ate & slept and I knew not if I did - you
filled my mind so completely. Prayer was the only thing in which I found
any relief. As each day dawned I felt as though I could not survive it.
I could not pray for myself or anyone at home - my prayer was always
for you. I am telling you all this now dearest Frank because this
unbearable depression has gone. I am still very worried but I am stronger
and much better able to work for you (in prayer) and to look after
myself so that I shall keep strong and well. You are not to worry about
me. I promise to try not to worry unduly about you, darling.

I am still praying with all that I have. I go to 2 masses
every day now and two on Sundays. Since it is my holidays, Mamma

2 asked me not to rise too early so I go to 8.30 mass in Clonard. After breakfast I go down to 10 o'clock mass in St. Pauls. If there is devotions in the evening your Eileen is there again, if not I go to make a visit and say my Stations. Often, during the day, while I am walking especially, I keep saying our two favourite aspirations to Our Lady & the Sacred Heart. This morning I called round to speak to Fr Ryan, the Director of Our Lady's Confraternity. I had not known him before but I wanted to question him about having your name in the community's daily masses & prayers. He has promised to mention your name every morning in his mass & also to ask a few of the Fathers to do the same. He knows of Fr Cosgrove, the Director of the Redemptorist monastery at Singapore. Though the latter house is supplied from Australia, still Fr Cosgrove was educated in Ireland. This will be surely a link with home when you should meet him. I am to remind you to visit Singapore before leaving Malaya. Do you still want to be reminded ???

Have you had any word from Mattie yet? Do not be disappointed darling if she does not write. She is only allowed to write 3 letters home yearly, Christmas, Easter & Summer. We still have not had a single line from her. Josephine is expected home on Christmas morning for good. She is a very courageous little girl, but though on the face of things it may not appear so. You see Frank she loved her job in England and did not want to give it up. It was absolutely to please Daddie & Mamma that she did so. How they are longing to see her. It is a nice thought that she will be with them during the remaining winter months. I am particularly glad about this, because with Josephine's company Mamma will go back to Killough. It is lonely down in that small village especially when the days are so short. The nuns have no electricity in St. Joseph's so to the dwellers of Spring Villa that is unbearable. We city dwellers are utterly ruined with our modern conveniences.

It is now 9.15 so I must slip round to Clonard before it closes at 10 p.m. How I shall pray for you in the darkness & quietness of our beautiful church.

God protect you, my own darling, from all harm. May the Holy Blessed Mother find a way of sending you home safely to me soon. Good night darling and God bless you.

Christmas Eve.
Though there is nothing but excitement & fuss within the four walls of the
Khane abode, I have dropped all my jobs & here I am trying to write at the
table with excited human beings flitting about & wondering how on earth
I am able to concentrate. I do feel like hollering for silence but knowing
the response it would receive, Eileen just keeps quiet. I do want to write
you a little note today and tomorrow, to tell you how much I love
you, how much you mean to me and how I am longing and praying
for your safety and for our speedy reunion... During these days of
danger you are never out of my thoughts. My prayers are going
up to Heaven continuously day and night for you, my dearest
Frank.

No parcels have been received from London or the Far East up
to date. I am sorry our candlesticks were not here so that I could
perform to the letter your wish about welcoming our Lady & St. Joseph
to our home. It was such a beautiful thought. You have so much to
teach me darling about our native Irish customs. I am so ignorant
of them. The blessed candles were duly purchased some days ago.
at 6 p.m. to night I placed them in 2 small glass candlesticks, lit
them and placed them on our Lady's altar which stands on the
landing at the head of the stairs leading from the hall. Fr Joe
blessed them for us. There is a war on, my darling and so I
could not place them in any window — all these must be
carefully blacked out — Our Lady will understand. I am going out
now to Christmas Eve devotions in Clonard. To night the family
rosary will be recited as usual before the picture (a family heirloom)
of the Holy Family but our two candles will be placed before
that picture. Do you know darling that our family rosary is said
each night for your safety? You are so well known in our
family now that to say "we offer up this rosary for Frank's
safety" is quite sufficient. I may find time to write a few more
lines when I return.

Christmas Day 1941. 9.15 A.M.
Good morning my darling and a very very happy and holy Christmas to
you. You are very close to my heart today, on this the first anniversary
of our coming together again. Lying on the table before me as I write is

4 is your beautiful Malay Christmas card and those even more beautiful words which you have written within it. I shall treasure them always as I shall treasure that card. Often throughout this day I shall read your card because then I feel we are really together. Mamma was really delighted with your card to her. She loves you darling as any one of her own children & I know that during these dangerous days for you, she has put you first in her prayers. It was so nice of you to sign yourself her loving child - she will always be your loving mother. Each morning, we go out to mass together, she goes to the altar of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour & there lights a candle which burns all through the mass which we both offer for all your intentions but above all for your safety & early homecoming. May the divine Infant, in his manger this morning hear our joint prayers and the prayers of hundreds of my friends (this is no exaggeration) for your speedy return to family and friends. She calls the candle "Frank's candle".

I have just put out our two candles. They burned before Our Lady's altar last night - Christmas Eve - from 6 p.m. until almost midnight. This morning they were relit. There is just enough left to burn for another hour. That hour will be 11 to 12 noon. Father Joe is saying 3 masses from 11 until 12 and the first one he is saying for you darling. This is my Christmas box to the one boy in all the world whom I love. I was so thrilled that the mass could actually be said on Christmas morning. I intend to go over to St. Brigid's for "your" mass. Please God I shall write again, later in the day to you. I do so want to spend Christmas with you darling. I am happy amongst all my dear ones but now I know that never will my happiness on earth be complete until you are here. There is a void in my heart darling which can never be filled until you return to me. Each time I see your father he says "Tell Frank to hurry home" (at times he does drop "Francis"). You know that I want to write those words in every line of my letters in every letter I write. So hurry home, darling. There will be such a welcome for you that the very thought of your arrival gives me such pleasure. For the moment I shall say adieu darling. See you in a few hours.

8.20 p.m. Christmas Night.

Josephine arrived home from England this morning. She is home to stay and we are all delighted. She feels very much giving up her job - it was to please both Nuddie & Mammy. You should have seen the excitement when her expected telephone call came through at 10.15 A.M. There was a wild dive for the phone, but I got it first. Everyone tried to shout through the phone at the same time so I gave over trying.

I have not told you yet that the whole family - 8 of us - were out at 6 o'clock mass this morning. It was mky black but we crawled round to blonard in two rows of four deep. I never miss 6 o'clock mass but for years it was down to St. Malachy's church. I went to sing in the choir. With Felix gone I could not go alone. Perhaps next Christmas morning you will take me to St. Malachy's to 6 A.M. mass!! Will you darling? Before we left home this morning for mass, we were in a very frivolous mood. The 3 lads - now young men in their "longs" - had hung up their stockings. The holes in the toes were ungainly tied by a piece of string so that the contents!!! would not fall out. - that's the way our college boys land home to us - no toes in their stockings, not to mention a few other "nos" that also exist.

Everyone of us remembered your intentions darling. I waited in the church until 8 A.M. during which 2 hours I heard 9 masses. Each priest said 3 masses. Masses were going on at all altars & it was just Heaven to be present in that beautiful church this morning. When I received the Divine Infant into my heart I did not forget to pray for what you asked - for God to bless our love and our marriage and that he may send you back home to me very soon.

Tea is ready so I shall join the others & say good night. God bless you.
Sunday Dec. 28th

So I seem very careless my dearest in taking such an age to send off this letter? Though I have been home for over a week I have not got a single one of my many jobs done. Many letters have got to be written (in answer to nice letters, cards and presents sent for Christmas) many friends have got to be visited, not to mention all the attractive embroidery hours I should love to spend. Did you every try to write a good letter darling with 3 boisterous boys doing everything but climbing over you? Where are they now? you might well ask. I am alone, because the Hugh, Ferguson Joe Mary, Josephine & Mammy have gone to the family devotions in St. Mary's Church. Such devotions take place on the 1st Sunday of every month, when there is a rosary, short

sermon in Irish and benediction. All hymns are sung in Irish. Mamie
has gone to the "3rd Order" meeting in St. Peter's and Daddie is, as usual,
having his afternoon nap. I believe darling after the terrible omission of the news of
Felix's wedding I shall have to keep a diary, then there will be no
chance of such a mistake happening again. When I have told you all
the latest news I shall return to the wedding, the details of which are
still very fresh in my memory.

Since I came home I have been over twice to see all at Beechwood.
I wanted to go over before Christmas so that I could bring my good
wishes my self for the holy season. I met all 3, your father, Philip
and Anne. Your father was in wonderfully good form - his
shoulder pain seemed to have eased somewhat and his cold was
gone. He always does - he made me very welcome, pulled
an armchair up to a cheery fire & made me sit down. He is
most hopeful about your safe return to us and really it is
such a relief to speak to him. Instead of considering your
dangers he insists on speaking of the time you will return, how
we shall make our home in Beechwood; in which district you
should have a surgery. He could talk all day long about you
Frank and he knows that in my he has a very willing listener.
We both love you so much Frank and we both want you back
soon. Anne was looking very well too. She has put her hair into a new
style which suits her very well indeed. She gave me a beautiful
evening bag and a Christmas box which I thought was very sweet
of her. He really never considered the possibility of her giving me a
gift. I tried to tell her how much I loved it but words failed me. I had
a very nice little lina brooch (I have learnt to spell this correctly) for
her, just like the one Anne gave Frances as a birthday gift. The
two stones in it are blue & it looks very nice on the burgundy
brooch you bought her in Birmingham. The blue stones also suit her
eyes. She has been wearing the brooch every since & she says she loves
it. I left your father a bottle of Daddie's best whiskey. Although
I know he has never been a drinker yet he once told me that
nowadays he found that a little did help him. Every Christmas
Mamie always sent a bottle of whiskey to grandfather Murphy so I
really feel as if I am carrying on a family tradition.
Philip too made me very welcome, shook my hand warmly
and complimented me on how well I was looking. I was wearing my

lived costume and French beret (which Anne has gone crazy about). I think Philip looks better than when I saw him some months ago. I would like to get to know your young brother much better. I should imagine him to have a very admirable character, if one could but get to know him. They say he is getting very like you Frank, but don't worry darling - it is only because he is your brother that I am interested in him. There is only one Murray for me and that is you, Francis Mary Joseph. It is such a beautiful name. Speaking of resemblances, both Anne & your father think that in manner, personality, nature etc I resemble your sister, Margaret. When told this I declared it the nicest compliment I have heard in years. Don't you think so darling?

After a long chat & tea on Sunday last with your dear ones, your father & I set off for magabus. We decided to go over & pay a visit in the Sacred Heart Church & then I was to "put on" as a bus at the end of the Oldpark Road. However, the strains of sweet music attracted us to the Parochial Hall where we found a pantomime practice in progress under May King. Mr. Sauran insisted on our coming in & prevailed upon his parishioners to buy some tickets. Your father declared that Anne, Philip & I were to use the tickets but I prevailed on him to join us which I am glad to tell you he did and what more he enjoyed himself. It was on Boxing Day I returned to Cliftonville & all were set for the Panto. There were eight of us in the party & we almost occupied one whole row. From left to right as we faced the stage the party were your father, & Teddy Sloane, my Mr Jackie Sloane (I was definitely in the bosom of the church that night) Freddie Sloane, Anne and Mrs Sloane. The Sloane family are friends of Anne's and I think Freddie (in the air force) is very interested in Anne. The Pantomime (Red Riding Hood) was very good but a small deformed little man called "Duckie" was the turn of the night. Your father tells me he is a married man with 2 children. The costumes were wonderful & the choruses too. The wise cracks were not so rich. However I did laugh when I heard that the hens were now so "stuck up" (2 eggs per person per month - ration) now that they had to be "screenaded" to lay some eggs.

Mrs Sloane refused to say good-bye to me & insisted that Anne should bring me up to her home in Newpark next day. I forgot to tell you darling that your father asked me to stay at Beechwood that night. Well, we had our supper together, after which your father went off to bed. Well, Anne & I got chatting & it was 2.30 A.M. before we could tear ourselves away. We slipped up to bed & I had the honour for a second time of sleeping in your room, Frank. I promised myself to have a good look from the window at "your" view the following morning but also it was a rotten day & the mountains were enveloped in a mist. However

Though the hour was late (or early) I did dream - morning dream - of your dreams in that room. May everyone of them come true. That home holds many memories for us both darling.

Next morning Anne & I went out to Fr. Teddy's mass in the Sacred Heart Church at 9 a.m. There were only a handful at mass. I did pray very hard for you, darling as I knelt in those seats in which you prayed for many years and especially when I received Holy Communion at the altar rails. I must excuse myself now for an hour or two. You see I promised to make the tea for our mob. They will be back any time & like an avalanche they will devour all before them.

Sunday 9.30 p.m.

Here I am back with you again darling. I have since been to devotions in Clonard. The sermon was very appropriate. We were urged to do some stock-taking with regard to our souls - to look over our accounts of 1941. The Te Deum was then sung in thanksgiving for all the graces & blessings we had received during the past year. How I thanked our good God for us both. I never say "I" or "me" in my prayers now. It is always "we" or "us". Some time ago I sent you a short version of St. Patrick's Breastplate. I asked Fr. Joe ~~for~~ the full version. He tries to get me a copy for you but could not, so he gave me his own. I shall enclose it for you in this letter. Do not worry about him giving it up. I shall write it out again for him.

Yesterday morning while still at Beechwood Anne & I went down to visit Margaret & Maureen in the Convent. Margaret is back in Belfast for a few weeks holiday. She returns to Dungannon on January 6th. They thought at home that she had got rheumatism. She is working very hard in Dungannon. In the afternoon we went up to Sloane & spent quite a pleasant evening with that family. They were very anxious to see a snap of you darling so I produced the one I like best - the one taken on the Kabel banks. Mrs. Sloane, in order to get a better view, took out a magnifying glass. I thought to myself, "Poor Frank is having quite an examination." She decided finally you were rather like Philip. Fr. Jackie was returning to his post as Chaplain to the Dominican nuns in Portlewart that afternoon. Freddie was also returning to Scotland. Fr. ~~Freddie~~ Teddy is a Mill Hill missionary outside Kilkenny. Teaching in one of the seminaries. To-day Sunday I have been to my usual two masses. I had a big temptation not to go back to my second. Daddie & Mamie invited me to come with them for a walk along the Lagan banks.

2 They had not known my darling that you used to walk along these same banks with Fr. Michael Kelly. I did so want to go but I thought that self must be forgotten in these times, so back to 12 mass I went. Daddie promised to take me that walk again when I told him about you, darling he told me that it was on the Lagan's banks that he proposed to Mamma. He remembers the exact spot, so I have a double interest in visiting the Lagan's banks.

Now I have another interesting episode to tell you. On Christmas morning I went over to St. Brigid's to be present at your mass. Fr. Joe's 3rd mass was a High Mass. The Deacon was Fr. Michael Kelly. It was all very solemn & Fr. Michael sang beautifully. Afterwards we met to have a cup of tea in the Parochial House. He knew me immediately & heartily congratulated me on our engagement. He was very interested to hear all about you, Frank & complained bitterly that you had not answered his last letter. I told him where you were & he has promised to remember you in his masses. Fr. Joe has the very highest praise of Fr. Kelly. He thinks him one of the best priests of his year. He is in charge of the Catholic Students at Queen's & is he making a success of his job? He has formed a Sacred Heart Sodality which meets monthly in St. Brigid's Church. They have a monthly mass and Holy Communion too. The famous Jesuit (Fr. Nash) has been asked to give the Retreat, commencing on January 18th. Fr. Nash is a great friend of Mother Teresa of Omagh. The family have reassembled for supper so I am forced, much against my will to stop. Before I go let me tell you that you are still and ever shall be my only love. God bless you, Frank. May He and His Blessed Mother protect you every minute of the day and night now and forever.

Monday, 29th December
Good morning darling! What are your thoughts about this morning? Does the date bring anything to your mind? I shall never forget December 29th (it also happens to be Josephine's birthday) It was certainly was a milestone in both our lives. Will December 29, 1942 see us together again? How I would love to know the answer to my question. So much can happen and will happen within the next year.

Do you know what I did this morning darling? After mass and breakfast, I offered to make the dinner with Josephine's help. This was no small job as there were 10 of us to dine. We made a 3 course dinner - 1st course Turkey broth, 2nd was meat rissoles served with vegetables & "white sauce" & mashed potatoes. The 3rd course was the usual tea & a piece of Mamma's Christmas cake (the one I baked her in Omagh). By the way the cake has got wonderful praise on all sides. Poor Mamma - I never saw

such pleasure on her face. She has a weakness for sweet things. She voted it the best Christmas box she ever got. I quite fancy myself now as a cake baker. Really darling I am not a good baker but if enthusiasm will make me one then I shall not fail you. I was just in my element this morning. Josephine is really a grand little teacher. I am lucky to have her to help me.

We have just been listening to the mid-day news and Kuantan was mentioned. The Japanese had attacked the British troops there, we were told. I wondered how you, my darling Frank came through that? You must be overworked, tired and anxious. The strain must be frightful for you. Yesterday, the day it happened, I finished a very fervent 9 day novena of masses holy communions & acts to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. I felt certain to-day that there would be some good news of you but the 2nd and last post has gone. This afternoon I shall call at the cable office to inquire if cables can get through. I am not blaming you dear Frank for this heart-breaking silence. It cannot be helped. If I were to think too much of the future I should go crazy with worry. I just live from day to day, saying each morning — the war and Frank's homecoming are nearer by another day. This keeps my heart up. No one must worry, because I am worrying. It is my worry so no tears will be shown to anyone. Can you find where a tear fell on this page?

While sitting dreaming over the sitting room fire I asked myself a strange question "Knowing this worrying time would be my cross, would I still have cried as I did last December?" To me this question had only and could only have one answer. I love you darling above all else in the world. I shall never regret having given you my love, no matter what happens. The past year — our first together will be one which shall live for ever in my heart. May our loving Saviour who has conferred so many blessings upon us up to date, finish His wonderful work in bringing us together very very soon. I shall never tire of praying for this intention. You need never worry about my ceasing to pray for you. You are now such an important part of me that ever to forget you would be impossible. It would be like forgetting one's self. So let me know if ever these letters reach you. I am still writing constantly. I send this with all my love and all myself. I belong entirely to you darling and ever shall I be your loving,

Gileen.