

P.S. I am very excited about our ring. How I shall love it because it is your choice. I shall cable the moment it arrives. It shall never be off my fingers day or night, darling. I thank you with all my heart. You shall be there when I put it on. I promise you.

9, Holmview,
Cunah,
Co. Tyrone.
Tuesday, Dec 9th 1941
Eileen

My own darling Frank, what I have dreaded all these months has now come to be a reality - the Far East and Malaya especially, is at war with Japan. What can I say or do! I feel so terribly at a loss to express just how my heart is aching for you. I know you are happy to be doing some fighting at last, to return to your doctoring and to do your bit in bringing this scourge of war to a close. What can I say when I know that this is what you want, except God bless you and protect you every step of the way. May our lady Immaculate, on whose feast, Japan threw down the gauntlet to Britain & U.S.A. and whose medal you wear as your shield, may she guard you by night and by day from every danger from land sea or air. I have given you over completely to her maternal care. May she never leave your side for a single moment until you return to Ireland's shores & me. Each day we shall say our joint prayer to her and to her Son for your safety and our speedy reunion.

The news of the declaration reached us in Spring Villa on the 9 p.m. news on Sunday night & I need not say I was surprised. It has been evident for a long time that militarist Japan was insatiable and was determined to plunge her people into another war. What the outcome will be God alone knows but should this letter reach you darling, always remember that I am with you always. I love you and I shall wait for you, no matter how long or how trying that wait may be. I need not try to hide the fact that I am worried to distraction about you but to night I asked our Lord to let my suffering be as acute as he likes if only he will spare you to me. If I have prayed hard and earnestly before I am now going to quadruple my prayers. Your life must be spared should I hammer on the men's gates for ever. I am getting prayers said on all sides - children & grown-ups alike. I have had mass said for you already since your war began. Surely our good Lord could not let such a good man as you, Frank darling, die? And yet I recite your prayer written at the beginning of November "may thy Holy will be done O Lord"

Darkness or no darkness, rush or no rush I shall be at mass & Holy Communion each morning for your intentions. I have been to mass for the past five mornings & in each day, with one exception I heard 2 masses. I am going to commence the 15 decades of the Rosary each day too. It will give me such consolation in knowing that I am doing my little bit to help you. I wish I could be of some material help. Frank's dearest, I do so want to see you & speak to you to night. If I could but see you and tell you how much you mean to me then I feel the wait would not be half so bad.

I cannot write more to night when ones heart is so full words seem so inadequate. Good night, darling and with all my heart and soul & self I say God bless you and guard you now and for ever.

Wednesday, Dec 10th
another day of your war has come & gone. News looks black but I am now relying absolutely on prayer. Why am I worried about you darling when I trust so much in prayer? My heart is very heavy. I am afraid to think of you or even to read your letters - I break down completely when I do. It is stupid, I know

but I am praying for more courage and strength. My whole day is one of prayer now. I keep saying the aspirations to Our Lady & the Sacred Heart every moment I am able. From 11.30 p.m. until 3.30 p.m. is my most anxious time because this is Malaya's day. Are you still saying the 3 Hail Marys to Our Lady of Guilo? To-day I was given St. Patrick's Breastplate by Mrs. Andrews. Her husband swears by it. He came through the last war & had a miraculous escape from death when his steel helmet was split in two upon his head. He says it, as also does his family, every day. Won't you memorize it darling and say it daily? I shall say two every day, one for each of us until I hear that you are saying it. I am also enclosing in this letter Pope Benedict's prayer for peace. You asked for it in your last letter. It is my own copy, hence its well-worn look. I know it off by heart now so I do not need it.

I received on the night I went home (Friday Dec. 5th) your grand letter written between Halloween & November 4 on which date it was posted. It actually arrived on Tuesday but Mamma decided against re-directing it. I got such an amount of consolation from it — you told me about your return to doctoring & that from 15 to 50 mls. behind the front line, should the war clouds break over Malaya. Certainly I shall agree to your suggestion about giving one of ~~my~~ my expedited photographs to Beechwood. It shall be framed and put beside yours. I told Anne & she is delighted about the suggestion. I also called about the enlargements. The girl said they were expedited "any day" and that I should have them by post in a few days. Sorry my darling for disappointing you so much about my photographs.

I was unable to get up to Beechwood at the week-end but Anne met me in town on Monday morning & came around with me doing my shopping. Afterwards we went up to Spring Villa for lunch & then persuaded Mamma to join us in going to see a very nice musical film programme in the Hippodrome. Anne said she thoroughly enjoyed her day & as I expedited has fallen a victim to Mamma's charms. She did not meet Daddie. Your father has invited Daddie & Mamma over to Beechwood during the Christmas holidays. He is a little troubled with rheumatism & prefers not to leave the house. So darling, the forthcoming holidays should see the meeting — the momentous meeting of our parents. Anne had a friend of Margaret's up for the weekend (Lucy Hegarty from Castleberg) otherwise I might have managed a wee trip over to see all your dear ones.

I suppose the extinction of hostilities will mean many delays in our letters — it may even mean that you, darling Frank, cannot write so often. Do not let that worry you because I shall understand. I shall continue to write my weekly letters & post them constantly. I shall cable you too, often, in case my letters are not getting through. You have often said darling that your only aim in life was to make me happy. You can accomplish this so simply — by taking every precaution of your precious self and coming home safely to me soon. This is my earnest prayer for you to-night, my own darling. God bless you, us both, in our love & His.

Sunday, Dec. 14th

Never in my life have I been so near you darling as during the past week. Day and I can add truthfully, night, I am thinking of you and praying for your safety. All the prayers of our good friends are reinforced. Already in the past few weeks I have had 3 masses offered up for you dearest Frank and your safety. Father Joe said your birthday mass, a Redemptorist priest said another mass during the past week. I wrote also to my good friend Fr. Cleary to have another mass said for you. I have asked him to remember you daily in his mass. Fr. Jacobs, our military chaplain here has promised to do the same & I attend his mass each morning in our Omagh Church. As a matter of fact I hear 2 masses each day & receive Holy Communion. Everything I can do is being offered for your safety. You must be spared to me. Never have I felt so worried. I cannot ever bear to look at your photograph or read a single letter as my courage goes, a lump comes in my throat which almost chokes me and the tears are never far away. I am fighting hard to be as brave as you are darling. (I know I am not). It would distress you to know that I was fretting so I shall redouble my efforts to keep a bright exterior. I shall offer my suffering up for your safety.

Wednesday, Dec 18th

There have been many lapses in this letter darling. I did so want to write to you but I could not pluck up enough courage. Had I written during the past week then you would have been distressed at my anxiety. To tell you how worried I have been is useless - I couldn't even attempt it. I wouldn't bear to even mention your name, to look at the newspapers, to listen to the radio. My great fear was that I should have broken down in class before the children. All the nuns have been so thoughtful for me. From Rev Mother down they come & told me how hard they were praying for your safety. Never a day passes without some little prayer or irrefragable novena leaflet being left in my press. Mother Teresa has the children praying every morning after mass for you. I have arranged to pay for the upkeep of the Sanctuary lamp perpetually burning until you are out of danger. Day & night it shall burn brightly in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament for you darling and your safety. Thus while I am sleeping, your cause is ever before Jesus in the Tabernacle.

Fr. Cleary's reply arrived to-day. He says he offered Holy Mass for you, darling on Sunday morning last (Dec. 14) in Athlery where he is now stationed. and he added "I shall not forget him in my masses & prayers."

Another friend of mine - a Fr. O'Leary, of the Maynooth mission to China (Nawan) paid Omagh an unexpected visit yesterday. He came down to visit me & I told him of my troubles. He too is going to say a mass all for you and also he has promised to remember you in his prayers &

4 masses. The poor fathers are very worried about their own missionaries in the Far East especially in the Philippines.

In my desperation too, I wrote to my saintly Aunt in Carlisle. Such a beautiful letter I had by return. She says "I have got a few of the Saints here to pray for him. I am giving him all my prayers to day (Monday, Dec. 16) masses & Holy Communion and I am fasting also." Enclosed in her letter was one from a very good friend of hers in Canada - a nun in an order of Perpetual Adoration. Auntie asked her to pray for me when I was ill. She now writes "I am delighted about Eileen and hope her future husband will be preserved from all danger and that they may be very happy together in their own and God's love. Tell her I pray for her sweet self every day, God bless her." These words gave me such consolation because I know this nun to be one of the world's many Saint's. I intend to have a mass said weekly for your safety darling. To take you from me now that I really know what you mean to me, would be surely too much to expect of me. I only want your life to be spared and your return to me some time. It does not seem a very large request and yet if it is granted to me I shall never cease thanking God until the day I die. We both shall. I shall give you every support in having Our family Rosary said daily commencing on our wedding day.

Now darling to tell you how hard I am fighting for you. I am at

masses & Holy Communion every morning (this has been going on for the whole month of December) with God's help it shall never cease again. The mornings are cold and black & often very wet & stormy but I thoroughly enjoy making the sacrifice for your sake. All the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to & from the church I say the two of my favourite aspirations: "O Mary, conceived without sin" and "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in Thee". Cycling to school I do the same. All the prayers I say with the girls before class are for you. Any free time during school hours I slip away to the convent chapel & say rosary after rosary. In the evenings before returning to my digs I say the Stations & at each station I fervently say the prayer to the Sacred Heart, which you wrote to me some time ago. Often times I return to the town church at night to speak again to Mary's Son for you, my own darling Frank. I only wish I had more time to spend in prayer. It is only when I am praying that I feel confident that nothing will happen to you. I have reasoned everything out with my friend in the Tabernacle & he has convinced me that you shall be saved and shall return to me very soon. This great sorrow is on the eve of a great joy - our reunion. How happy I shall be when I shall have you home again. There will be no more worrying

for me. With you, dearest Frank by my side nothing will ever worry or frighten me again.

Our Saturday last your lovely Christmas and New Year Greetings bubble reached me in Omagh. Although I knew it had been sent before hostilities really broke out in the Far East, it was a link with one, who in the past fortnight seems to have drifted into the unknown. I realize that for weeks nay perhaps months to come cables & letters will neither reach or leave Malaya but this will not deter me from writing. I shall never forget all the messages you have already given me in your letters. This holding up of our letters will mean a lot to us but we shall offer it up for our one big intention — our individual safety & a happy reunion.

On Tuesday morning arrived two of your precious letters. I rang up home on Saturday night to tell them the contents of your cable. They are all praying so hard for you darling. No one ever misses daily mass in "Spring Villa" darling so your intentions are in all those masses. Your letter which arrived 2 weeks ago was censored. It was the first letter from you which has ever been opened on this side by censor. Neither of the recent letters was censored. However I am afraid one letter is missing so far. The first was posted Nov 12th and told me of your lovely week end "up country" and the 3 belts you bought for me (Imagine you daring to think that I should not wear them!!), the second was posted on Nov. 23rd and contained your confessions about the Rosary beads and "Paddy". You commenced this letter on Nov 16th with having posted a letter that morning. This letter has not arrived up to date.

I am glad Frank you told me about the Rosary beads. I felt you were undecided whether to tell me or not. I had made up my mind that I should never mention them again to you, if the history of their whereabouts caused you any worry. Now you have told me & I don't feel the slightest bit hurt — as a matter of fact I am proud to think that they are now in the possession of some little Indian boy who is praying for my beloved Frank. "Mary" sounds a lovely girl. I think I would have loved her. I do not like the sound of "Paddy". Are you annoyed with me, darling for being so candid? Yet I feel sorry for her. She must have realized as I realize your wonderful qualities yet I have been the lucky one to have my love reciprocated. It would have broken my heart had you written a very different letter to the one you did write last February. God has been so very good to me. Fr O'Leary told Violet Cusack (he is really her friend as her brother Fr Tom Cusack belongs to the Maynooth Mission & is now stationed in Korea) that he thinks you are a very fortunate young man. I know he has a very high opinion of me, which I do not deserve. While he was on a visit to Omagh last year I met him & in the course of the conversation I told him about Terquo away in far off (comparatively) Limerick. Within a few weeks his travels brought my good friend to Limerick. He rang up Fr Director at the Redeptionist College & wished to have Terquo out for

by the afternoon. Fergus wrote home concerning his pleasant outing
"Not knowing who this priest was I put on my good clothes" How
Fr. O'Leary laughed at this when I told him. I had out my writing
materials to write you this letter last night but fate stopped me. This
past fortnight has been an awful rush. Thank God for it because I
was prevented from thinking too much. Now all the tests have been
given and corrected. All marks are now neatly inserted in the mark
books and the holiday spirit is abroad. We break up for the Christmas
holidays on Friday Dec. 19 at 12.15. We do not return to harness until
January 13th. Isn't it a grand holiday? The days will be beginning to
lengthen then & Spring will soon be upon us again. What will 1942 hold
for us Frank? Is the Lord merciful in not disclosing to us the future?

This afternoon I spent in Murraghans icing Mummies Cake. The
whole family assembled in the kitchen to see the operation. Now all
is over & my precious Surprise is looking very "Christmassy" in all
its decorations. It will be on show until Friday morning when I &
the convent girls are going to bring it to the station for me. They suggested
coming to help me and I was very grateful. I must tell you how it
looked & how Mummy in particular liked her Surprise.

I am not attempting to answer the various questions you
asked in your last few letters. I intend to write a few respectably long
letters during my vacation. I want to post this going to mass in the
morning so that, by air mail, it will be in London to-morrow.
Will you forgive me sending only 6 pages darling? I am going to bed
earlier now because of my early rise. I shall keep strong & fit &
I shall be ready for any endurance tests in hiking, climbing golfing
etc when you returns. Proof of what I am saying is to be seen in
my term record. From September 1st until Dec 19th I never missed even
one single minute of class. I have not been ill & I have not been off
colour either!! Thank God for his goodness.

Will you say every day darling "St. Patrick's Breastplate"
I say it for you every day. Where the prayer says "me" I say "him". It
is a beautiful prayer.

If I see the Bells of Downpatrick I shall surely give your regards
to Mr McSherry. Isn't the world a very small place? Eleanor Bell
is a keen golfer & she & I have played a lot of golf together but
since Fr Joe left Downpatrick I have seen very little of them although
they write very often, asking me to call and see them. I have many snaps
in my collection taken with this family.

I did not see Gerry at the week-end as expected but I shall
explain all in my next letter.

Good night my own darling. May our blessed Lady and Christ Crucified
shield you from all harm. You have all my love dearest one
from ever loving Eileen.