

**EXCLUSIVE EX-HOUSE OF PRAYERS DEVOTEES**

# €1M ROOM



MESSAGE: Gallagher

## Diocese no longer supports the centre

By JIM GALLAGHER.

**CHRISTINA** Gallagher claims she was "a shy Irish housewife" when she received her first "vision" in January 1988.

While visiting a friend in Dublin, the Co Mayo woman says she experienced an apparition of a "beautiful lady".

A few weeks later she began receiving messages from the lady who identified herself as the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace.

She had a message for the world which she wanted Christina Gallagher to pass on.

That message was for people to turn back to God while there is still time, repent their sins, go to confession and to pray constantly, particularly the rosary.

She said the apparition



SUPPORT: Cassidy

told her to build a House of Prayer which was officially opened on Achill Island in 1993 by the then Archbishop Joseph Cassidy.

The Church initially backed the centre thinking it was going to be a place of retreat and prayer for priests.

The archdiocese later withdrew its support claiming the house had been turned into a shrine attracting huge crowds. The Church claims there is no proof of any "supernatural phenomena" there.

Christina Gallagher announced the closure of the House in July 1998 but later reopened it without consulting the archdiocese, which still technically regards it as closed.

Her messages have got more strident in recent years.



**TODAY** we reveal the cash secrets of Ireland's most enigmatic religious icon - self-proclaimed visionary Christina Gallagher.

A *Sunday World* investigation has discovered that the secretive founder of the controversial House of Prayer on Achill Island has splashed out €1 million on a stunning new mansion in Co. Mayo.

We can also reveal the woman who claims to suffer the unexplained stigmata wounds of Christ and receive regular messages from the Virgin Mary, has become so obsessed with money and wealth that it has outraged some of her own supporters.

Latest accounts reveal that the House of Prayer has accumulated massive profits of over €2 million.



CONTROVERSY: House of Prayer

Today for the first time, some of her former followers turn whistleblower to reveal the truth about Ireland's most enigmatic visionary and the reality of life in the House of Prayer.

They tell how Gallagher's disciples are asked to sell their own homes to fund the House of Prayer and reveal that vast sums of cash have been donated for years.

Others have complained that her messages from God have become increasingly terrifying and threatening towards those who do not support her.

Gallagher was a humble housewife 20 years ago when she first claimed she was receiving regular messages from Our Lady and suffering stigmata.

### Salvation

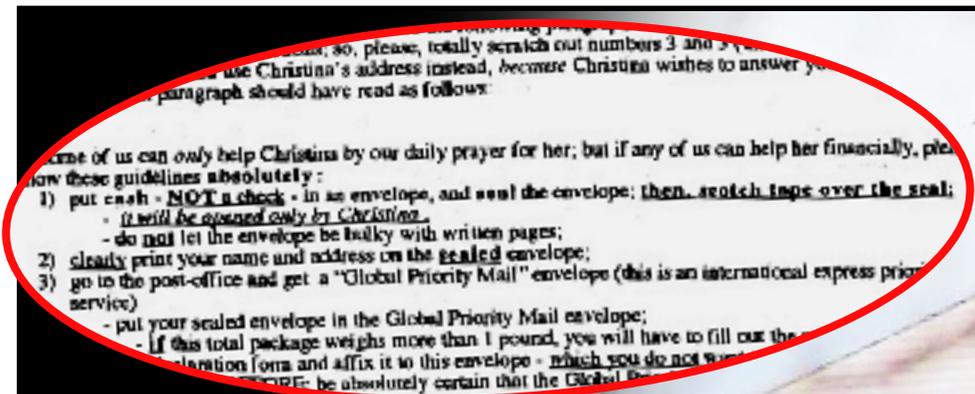
She set up her House of Prayer in Achill as a place for pilgrims to pray for salvation from hell and damnation.

Gallagher has told supporters for years that she has no interest in material things.

But a *Sunday World* investigation has revealed the wealth accumulated by the House of Prayer.

Today we reveal the stunning house she has bought to go with a number of other properties owned by her family.

And we also carry a copy of an



BIZARRE: Fr Burns's letter urging donations in cash only

year	10	(159,562)	12
Retained profit brought forward		2,288,514	2,418,098
Retained profit carried forward		2,128,952	2,288,514

WEALTH: House of Prayer's profit and loss account for 2006



VISIONS: Christina Gallagher claims she suffers stigmata

## Self-proclaimed visionary under pressure

extraordinary letter sent to prospective financial supporters in the US telling them that Christina wanted "cash only" and no cheques.

We can also reveal that some of her supporters have left the House of Prayer after becoming deeply suspicious about its finances.

One former staunch follower, who says he gave the House of Prayer one third of everything he owned, said he was sickened by Gallagher's wealthy lifestyle.

"She used to have a big house outside Castlebar and I was one of many followers who got together in a trust, the Blue Ivory Trust, to buy it from her when she said it was too big for her.

"She said the size was being

used as a stick against her and she couldn't afford it," he said.

"You can imagine my shock when I discovered she has now bought an even bigger one in Croy, outside Ballina. It is the biggest house for miles around and most of her followers don't even know she has bought it."

The *Sunday World* discovered Mrs Gallagher paid €850,000 for the mansion, complete with electronic gate and drive, near Lough Conn, a year ago. Average family houses in the area cost €200,000 to €300,000.

### Spending

Locals said Gallagher's daughter Mary is currently living in it.

One resident said: "We are all wondering what she is going to do with it as she is spending a fortune

doing it up. Tradesmen are being paid in bags of cash."

The House of Prayer attracts 10,000 visitors a year, many leaving donations, even though it does not have the official backing of the Vatican or Irish Catholic Church chiefs.

Church authorities have confirmed to the *Sunday World* they have never seen any accounts from the House.

Fr Fintan Monaghan, secretary for the Tuam Diocese and a spokesman for Archbishop Michael Neary, said: "The House of Prayer does not have the support of the Archdiocese."

"As far as we are concerned it is officially closed. We tried to integrate it into the archdiocese but it didn't happen.

"We asked to see their

accounts in 1998 but we have had no real communication with them since then.

"As they are a private body and do not have our support, any money matters are a concern for the Revenue Commissioners rather than the archdiocese."

The House of Prayer claims on its official website that it has charity status but that was taken away two years ago following a lengthy review.

### Profit

Annual profits from donations and sales of merchandise reached €300,000 a year back in 1996 and 1997. Recent figures are not available.

Now some supporters are demanding to know what happened to all the cash.

