

TELL WHAT THE RELIGIOUS ICON IS REALLY LIKE

WITH A PEW



SUSPICIOUS: Christina Gallagher has amassed a huge personal fortune and former supporters have questioned her recent purchase of a massive home in Croy, Co. Mayo



EXPANSION: The House of Prayer, Co. Mayo, along with its newly constructed wing



tion of Christ is a fabrication." The religious paper said Gallagher's claims that eternal life would be given automatically to those who made pilgrimages to the House of Prayer was heretical and contrary to all church teaching.

A former American fundraiser told the *Sunday World* this week that she no longer supported Gallagher because of the violence of her messages.

Christine Adler said: "I collected a lot of money for them but I have stopped. When you hear a genuine message from God it is never threatening or frightening. She is frightening people."

Cult

"There is such a thing as a cult mentality and there are people who fall into it easily. If you question some of her supporters, they just explode. They are not reasonable, they can't have a discussion, and that is not of God."

"She also has a temper which she turns on people. She is preaching that if you do not go to the House you will not be saved. That is not God's word. Even the Pope doesn't say everyone has to go to the Vatican to be saved. They are the words of a false prophet."

Many supporters claim they were attracted to the House of Prayer by Christina Gallagher's spiritual director, Fr Gerard McGinnity, who everyone we spoke to agreed was a genuinely devout and pious man.

Fr McGinnity became known as the senior dean at Patrick's College, Maynooth, who in 1984 blew the whistle on Fr Michael Ledwith for allegedly abusing young student priests.

Former House of Prayer supporters say they are amazed Fr McGinnity has remained loyal to Christina Gallagher. He co-wrote her book *Out of the Ecstasy and On to The Cross*.

One ex-supporter said: "The reason many still go is because of Fr McGinnity. He seems blinded by her. He used to talk about spirituality but now he talks about her all the time."

This week the *Sunday World* contacted the House of Prayer and asked to speak to Christina Gallagher about our investigation into her finances. However, she refused to comment.

to reveal the sources of her vast wealth

One of Christina Gallagher's former devout followers told the *Sunday World*: "People who worked there voluntarily were told that if they owned their own house they should sell it and give the money to the House of Prayer to help Christina Gallagher's work."

"Others were asked to will their homes, money and land to the cause while she herself seems to have the best of everything."

"I don't know how many people did but it could have been hundreds."

He told how he himself persuaded two wealthy Catholics to donate between €50,000 and €100,000 to the House of Prayer which he now deeply regretted.

Most of our sources did not

want to be named for fear of being abused for crossing the visionary.

The House of Prayer has expanded rapidly in recent years and now has sister homes in Texas, Ohio, Florida, Minnesota, Kansas and Mexico City.

The *Sunday World* has a copy of an astonishing letter from an American priest fundraiser telling US supporters that Christina Gallagher wanted them to send cash only, "NOT a cheque".

Wealthy

The 2003 letter said money should be sent to Gallagher's address in Cortoon, Culmore, Westport, rather than the House of Prayer because "Christina wishes to answer you immediate-

ly herself".

The letter from Fr Robert Burns of Omaha said: "It will be opened only by Christina. Do not let the envelope be bulky with written pages."

Would-be donors were told to keep the envelope's weight under 11lb or they would have to fill out a customs form.

One woman who once worked in the House of Prayer said: "Christina never thanks people but just expects people to do as she says. There is no way of telling how much money she was sent."

Another lapsed follower last night appealed to the supposed visionary to be more open over her accounts.

He said: "I think Christina was probably genuine to start with

but her head has been turned by all the money and the lifestyle."

"Whether or not she is a charlatan or a genuine messenger of God, she owes it to her followers to explain how she has become a wealthy woman when she started out a poor one, ie before her alleged visions. To any objective observer it looks suspicious."

Donors

The value of all seven Houses of Prayer could be worth between €10 and €20 million, according to some estimates.

She is believed to have "a big house" in Dublin as well as paying for separate houses for her grown son and daughter near Ballina. She is also rumoured to own a site nearby. Her estranged husband Paddy has his own