

MESSIAH'S ARMY

THESE are millionaire 'Messiah' Tony Quinn's disciples, the people who keep the wheels of his empire turning and who cater to his every whim.

Most have gone unpaid for their work over decades as the controversial mind guru amassed an estimated €50 million fortune from his favourite catchphrase – OPM or Other People's Money.

Constantly at his side is Jim Fitzgerald, nicknamed Lucky Jim, who warms-up clients for him at his expensive seminars and films and records every word of wisdom that comes from the guru's mouth.

He joined Quinn's cult in the late 1980s when he did a massage course and has worked like a slave for the Educo empire ever since but has nothing of his own to show for his years of hard work.

The 51-year-old sleeps in an annex of Quinn's luxury Bahamas villa but lives a hand-to-mouth existence, often accepting offers of clothes and meals from those who attend the mind guru's courses.

He travels the world with Quinn, along with 62-year-old former nurse Mary Power who has totally devoted her life to the former butcher and shares the two-bed annex on Paradise Island with Fitzgerald.

By day she cooks, cleans and works as a personal assistant to Tony, monitoring and sifting through his e-mails and post to sort positive from negative – dumping anything critical.

Bizarre

She bakes leavened bread for him in the mornings and regularly caters for the bizarre diets that he claims to live on for weeks at a time.

Originally from Kilkenny, she left her job and family to devote her life to Quinn after becoming infatuated with him when she attended his early yoga classes in Dublin in the 1970s.

She was one of the first to move into a commune he set up in Templeogue, Dublin – in a property once occupied by priests. There he made his quarters in the former chapel and even slept on what was once the altar.

He had up to 50 devotees living in the commune, often going on 40-day fasts on his advice and believing themselves to be reincarnations of the followers of Jesus from biblical times.

Mary was told that she was the second coming of Mary Magdalene, Jesus' most important female follower and the first to witness his resurrection.

She moved to London in the early 80s to stay at his plush home on Ham Haugh Island on the Thames before returning to Dublin to nurse his mother Kathleen when she became ill with cancer.

After she died in 1986, Mary stayed on to look after Tony's father, Paddy, a former taxi driver who died in 1993. Once both his parents had passed away, Mary moved to the Bahamas, where Tony had settled as a tax exile, and started to look after his every domestic need.

She has remained there through a succession of girlfriends and knows Tony's habits, from where he likes his armchair to be when he watches his treasured old cowboy films to the way he likes visitors to greet a teddy bear he calls Pink Ted.

When he bought his yacht, Far Niente, which is parked at the marina at Paradise Island, it was Mary who completed a course in captaining.

At times the entire entourage moves onto the boat when Tony feels he needs to get away from the confines of his penthouse and, with Mary at the helm, they cruise around the Caribbean Sea.

Gold-plated

Although she is high in the pecking order in the Bahamas, Quinn's lover Eve still has to assume her place as a devoted apostle. In fact, the 23-year-old South African beauty, who has been with the guru for four years, cannot use his personal gold-plated bathroom and has her own guest room as he likes to sleep alone.

She too behaves like Quinn's slave. She carries his bags, cooks and caters to his every need and even dresses the way he likes her to. She regularly polishes the six-foot statue of Jesus that stands on the stairwell to his bedroom.

Those who knew her before she met Quinn say she came from a wealthy South African family. She was educated in the UK where she attended one of his seminars. She was on the verge of becoming a golf pro at the time. They say she totally changed her image to emulate his idol Marilyn Monroe.

Back in Ireland, a team of devotees keep the wheels of Quinn's Educo business turning.

At the helm are former caterer Collette Millea and her partner Tom McKenna, an early disciple who Quinn said was the re-incarnation of Moses.

Millea was a late devotee who joined up in the early 1990s and immediately muscled in as a 'business manager' for



Quinn. Her son Thursten Pym now runs an Educo gym franchise in LA.

Both she and McKenna are the chief recruiters for the seminars in the sun, where followers pay between €16,500 and €63,500 to spend two weeks in the presence of Quinn. Both have attend-

ed a number of seminars themselves.

Martin Forde is Director of the Tony Quinn Health Shop network across Ireland. He also runs Quinn's Irish Health Culture Association which offers courses in Yoga and Ki Massage at the Eccles Street, Dublin, headquarters and the Irish Association of Holistic Medicine which sells diplomas in counselling and psychotherapy.

His former wife, Margaret Forde, a psychotherapist, runs courses and lectures students who pay up to €3,000 for their qualification which is recognised by City

and Guilds of London Institute. Quinn referred to her as "the Blessed Virgin."

Both are said to be highly qualified and have worked around the clock for years earning little more than small wages.

Finances

They have attended many of Quinn's seminars raising the money from their personal finances.

Mum-of-three Aideen Cowman is also based at Eccles Street, where she works as a psychotherapist and coun-

sellor. Her husband Dave and three sons are also major supporters of 'the Messiah.' Quinn often boasts on stage how she has never taken a penny from him for all her work over 30 years for him.

Blonde nutritionist Caroline McDonagh runs the shop in Eccles Street and sorts and sources Quinn's bizarre dietary requirements.

Whenever he holds a seminar abroad she sends out bags of duck eggs, fresh organic beef and pink lady apples. Before he returns to Ireland she gives

Tony's disciples show absolute devotion...Eve even regularly polishes the huge statue of Jesus in his bedroom



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