

The Irish Catholic

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Pride of the parish: Delight over Leona Maguire win

Chai Brady

Co. Cavan parishioners have expressed delight that local woman Leona Maguire has put the community in the global spotlight following her historic golfing victory.

The 27-year-old made history by becoming the first Irishwoman to win the ladies' PGA tour in Florida in the early hours of Monday morning.

Fr Oliver O'Reilly of Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan described her as a great ambassador for the parish. "People are utterly delighted," the proud priest told *The Irish Catholic* this week saying local people took pride in Leona as "a lovely, lovely person" who is "very humble and well spoken," following her victory.

He said that in the parish "there has been a lot of excitement over the last couple of years, because when she got to the first Olympics there was a big celebration, and then with the Solheim Cup, she did so well, there was another big celebration around the town. So people are really pleased about it," he said. He predicted a fresh round of celebrations following the result and said local people were very keen to congratulate Leona and her family.

"I actually spoke about it at the end of Mass, congratulating herself and her family on this great

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Golfing hero Leona Maguire, Ireland's first champion on the LPGA Tour.

Benedict seeks forgiveness for abuse failings

Jason Osborne

Retired Pope Benedict XVI (94) has said he is conscious he will soon stand before the judgement of God as he answers claims that he mishandled abuse allegations during his time as an archbishop in Germany.

In response on Tuesday to a recent report on sexual abuse cases in the German Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, Pope Benedict also said that an error in the testimony written on his behalf had been an oversight and "was not intentionally willed and I hope may be excused."

However, the retired Pope, who headed the Munich Archdiocese from 1977 to 1982, emphasised his feelings of great shame and sorrow for the abuse of minors and made a request for forgiveness to all victims of sexual abuse.

"I have had great responsibilities in the Catholic Church. All the greater is my pain for the abuses and the errors that occurred in those different places during the time of my mandate," Pope Benedict wrote.

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Pride of the parish: Delight over Leona Maguire win

» **Continued from Page 1** achievement," he said, revealing that people were delighted.

After shooting six birdies, Leona is the first Irish winner on the LPGA Tour, carding a round of 67 for a 54-hole total of -18 to take home the winner's cheque of \$225,000 (€197,000).

The win has pushed Leona up 17 places in the world rankings to 20th after having started at 177th in 2021.

Fr O'Reilly said of Leona's

successful career: "It is really doing an awful lot for the promotion of female sport generally. It's absolutely essential to have those role models. I would hope that this is the first of many titles to come over the next number of years."

He also spoke highly of her grandmother and parents Breda and Declan saying "they're a really nice family" and that "Leona would, whenever she is home, often comes to Mass here with her parents".

Many people are at economic breaking point

There is much talk about the rising cost of living on both sides of the border. There is a broad consensus from politicians that something must be done. Invariably, the same politicians are divided on what should be done. What was it that Cherterton said about reformers: the reformer is always right about what's wrong. However, he's often wrong about what is right.

In the Republic, concerns about the rising cost of living have now overtaken the housing crisis as the major factor influencing voters – according to the polls.

After the devastation caused to many livelihoods as a result of draconian lockdowns, rising prices is just one blow to struggling families.

“I had the biggest reaction I’ve ever had on the social networking site Twitter on the issue”

A man put it well on the radio the other night when he said: "I work hard, my wife works hard. We have nothing to show for it – we work to survive". It was heartbreakingly honest and a dreadful reflection of a system that is broken with people feeling squeezed on all sides.

I had the biggest reaction I've ever had on the social networking site Twitter on the issue. I

tweeted simply that if the Government was thinking of ways to help people who are struggling with rising prices, they should abolish the Universal Social Charge (USC). You'll recall, the USC was introduced as a temporary financial emergency measure to plug a hole in public finances during the depths of the economic crash.

Remains

But that was 12 years ago – and yet this 'temporary' measure remains. My tweet, which by the time of going to press this week had garnered 349,000 impressions, clearly struck a chord with people. Not because I had any particular stunning insight about the USC, but because of the fundamental unfairness of an indefinite continuation of a charge that people were promised was temporary when so many people are struggling to make ends meet.

Even before the latest crisis on the cost of living, people were struggling. We have arrived at an almost unthinkable moment in recent history when the next generation can no longer expect to be better off than the generation that went before them. It is no longer

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



realistic for young couples who earn good salaries in good jobs to expect a reasonable standard of living. It is no longer a realistic expectation for these couples to own their own home with all the difficulties that this presents when it comes to starting a family.

“Even before the latest crisis on the cost of living, people were struggling

Politics is failing too many people and this is something that the Church should have a prophetic voice in calling attention to. The Church has a duty to articulate what contributes towards the common good of society. We also all have a vested interest in the future of society. As it

stands, many hard-working people don't see the fruits of their labour and this is causing extreme pessimism amongst many people. Almost two years of restrictions have been hard on people, and now people find that they are in a situation where come the third week of the month they have very little left to see them through.

Rise

Politicians will rail against the rise of populism (and populism has nothing to offer) but they will not stop to ask themselves the questions as to why people are seemingly drawn to extremes with simplistic solutions.

Politics should be about inspiring hope and reassuring people that measures will be taken to ease their burdens. Such succour is sadly in short supply.

Fatima pioneer Veronica Duffy dies

Staff reporter

Veronica Duffy who died recently, aged 88, was a co-director, with her husband Lauri, of Fatima Pilgrim Tours.

Veronica spent most of the pilgrimage season in Fatima where she was a sanctuary-authorized pilgrim guide. She had a special devotion to the angels, and in her guided tour talks to the Irish pilgrim groups she always drew attention to the not-so-well known role of the angel of peace in the message of Fatima, as well as to the role of the angels in daily life.

She was a reader in the Howth parish of the Assumption, and was often a reader at the Irish pilgrims' Masses in Fatima. When Pope St John Paul went to Fatima in May 2000 for the beatification of Francisco and Jacinta Marto, Veronica was invited to read the prayer of the Faithful in English.

Veronica was a native of Lahinch, Co. Clare, but lived



The late Veronica Duffy RIP.

most of her life in Howth, where she also served as a minister of the Eucharist, and was an active member of the Eucharistic adoration group. For many years, she was a member of the association of lay Franciscans in the Capuchin Friary in Raheny.

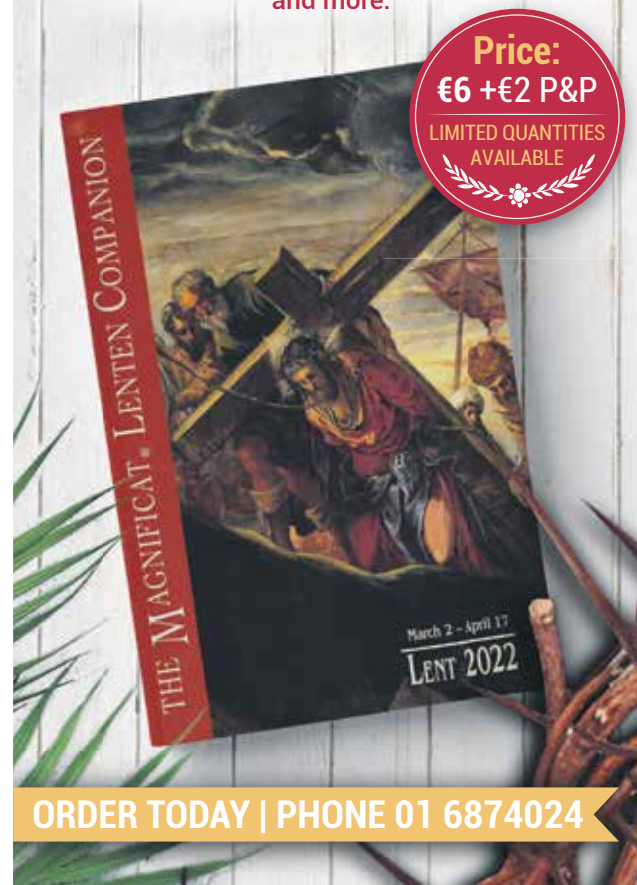
Veronica is survived by Lauri and their children Marie-Therese and Joseph. May she rest in peace.

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Priests warn rural parishioners living in fear of violent crime

Jason Osborne

Many parishioners in rural Ireland are living in fear of being victims of crime in their own homes, priests have told *The Irish Catholic*.

Concern has been heightened after a recent attack on Co. Sligo pensioner Tom Niland provoked shock and anger across the country.

Gardaí say that Mr Niland, 73, was attacked and robbed by up to three masked men. He was tied up and had to crawl along the road to seek assistance.

Parish priest of Skreen, the site of Mr Niland's attack, Fr Michael Gilroy said that there's a sense of "devastation" among the community, and that people have been left feeling "gutted" by the assault.

"This naturally has an impact on them, too. There have been a number of burglaries in west Sligo over the

past number of months, and the aggravated nature of this one has had devastating consequences.

"It's a tightly knit community, and the elderly in our community are very much held with great honour and respect and that's what makes this attack all the more sickening," Fr Gilroy said.

Offaly-based priest of Daingean Parish, Fr Declan Thompson said rural crime has resulted in a "sense of being violated" among parishioners he knows.

He said that parishioners who had been burgled were now anxious about returning to their homes.

In Leitrim, Ballinaglera priest Fr Thomas Mannion said that rural crime is causing some of his parishioners to be "fearful", "because every time you hear about these things, it goes into the brain, into the subconscious and you say, 'My God, could I be next?'"

Fr Raymond Gahan of Crossbridge parish, Co. Wicklow, said that there's been a few break-ins in his area recently, and people "are definitely concerned about security."

"We've had two break-ins in just the last week, in two houses," Fr Gahan said.

He added that people have felt more "isolated" recently as a result of the pandemic and its ensuing lockdowns.

"It's hard to have a strong sense of community with this Covid lockdown era."

"It's hard to visit and check in on neighbours when people have been afraid they might bring a virus."

Speaking to this paper, Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran said that it's a source of "real concern" to him that there are people "out there in our communities who are so lacking in common decency that they are prepared to inflict mindless violence on others".

Lights in the darkness



Pupils of St Patrick's Primary School Legamaddy, Cecilia (11) with her sister Mary (9) with their candles lit at St Patrick's National Shrine ahead of the Novena Mass held in St Patrick's Church Saul, Co. Down. Photo: Bill Smyth.

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Brexit the 'ghost that haunts Good Friday Agreement' - historian

Jason Osborne

Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol are challenging the Good Friday Agreement, prominent historian Dr Eamon Phoenix has said.

This comes following Paul Givan's resignation as Stormont First Minister as part of the DUP's escalating protest strategy against Brexit's Northern Ireland Protocol.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Dr Phoenix said power sharing "is very prone to extraneous threats and difficulties" such as the Northern Ireland

Protocol and Brexit, which is "the ghost that haunts the Good Friday Agreement".

Dr Phoenix told this paper that the institutions which have been undermined by the DUP's recent actions, are also "losing credibility for the 1.8 million people who live in this place".

However, he cautioned that any "rejigging" of the agreement "would require the focused attention and, if you like, mutual respect between Dublin and London, and that's not going to come any time soon," as Anglo-Irish relations

"are at their worst level now since 1972".

Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown said that it's time to review the Good Friday Agreement but warned that "Northern Ireland is not a normal country, it's not a normal political entity and therefore you have extraordinary methods for running it."

"Mandatory coalition is not healthy in a normal society, but Northern Ireland isn't a normal society," Bishop McKeown said.

Dr McKeown added that he thinks "we do need to look at how the government func-

tions," and "we do need to be reviewing the Good Friday Agreement" on the basis that Northern Ireland has undergone significant change since the 1998 implementation of the agreement.

"There certainly are strains, but you give me a better way forward for Northern Ireland."

"It's fine to say that there are problems, it's really a question of how we can constantly review what we're doing so that the policies are serving the common good and not just political ideals or agendas," he said.

Boxing champ reveals he found peace in church

Staff reporter

Belfast-born boxer Carl Frampton has revealed that attending Mass with his former manager brought great comfort ahead of fights. The former two-weight world champion, from a Protestant background, admitted to not being "overly religious" during a recent event at Clonard Monastery as part of the Four Corners Festival. However, he said he values the sense of peace he has found in places of worship.

"I've been in churches and chapels all over the world," he said. Mr Frampton (34) revealed that he used to attend Mass with his former coach Nigel Travis.

"He [Nigel Travis] never

misses Mass...even during the pandemic he was attending Zoom Mass," Mr Frampton told the congregation. "A couple of times I went early morning in New York with him. We were out training for a fight – and with jet lag we were up at the creek – and I went on a walk and sat in a few chapels with him. There is just something about a chapel or a church where you get a sense of peacefulness."

"I'm not an overly-religious person, but I am pretty spiritual," he said.

Mr Frampton is a two-weight world champion, having held the WBA and IBF super-bantamweight titles between 2014 and 2016, and the WBA super-featherweight title from 2016 to 2017.

Thousands raised for sleepout



Parishioners of Cooley, Co. Louth raised €115,100 for the Peter McVerry Trust after a sponsored sleepout under a Victorian railway bridge in Bush. Fr Peter McVerry said he was "staggered" at the amount raised. Pictured are: Fr Peter McVerry, Eugene Bolton, Fr Malachy Conlon, and Meg O'Hanlon.

Mask wearing in churches 'never requirement' under legislation

Chai Brady

The Minister for Health has confirmed that the wearing of masks in churches has never been a requirement under statutory instrument – it has been public health advice.

Last week in the Dáil, Minister Stephen Donnelly, in response to a question from Mattie McGrath TD, said that while the majority of public health measures have been lifted there are still requirements for mask wearing in all settings currently regulated under statutory instruments.

These settings include on public transport, taxis and at stations/airports/ports, retail

premises and more.

However, he said that "the wearing of masks in churches was never a requirement under statutory instrument but was instead public health advice similar to that applying to all indoor public spaces".

He added: "The NPHET also advised that the continued wearing of masks, practicing of physical distancing and avoidance of crowded environments based on individual risk assessment, along with adherence to basic hand and respiratory hygiene will remain important. It will be a matter for sectors, organisations, premises and individuals to determine the most appropriate arrangements."

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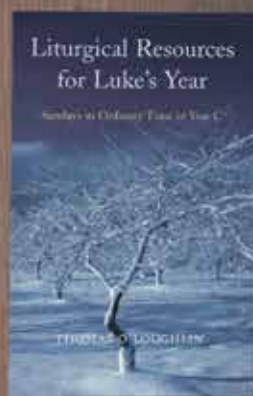


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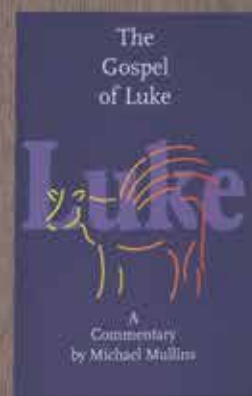


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Divorcees were banned at Ascot's royal enclosure until the 1960s – but Camilla is now to be queen...



Mary Kenny

Even leaving aside the Catholic Church (and up until 1995, the Irish electorate) few institutions have been as opposed to divorce during the 20th Century as the British royal family.

King George V, monarch at the time of the foundation of the Irish State (and of the Stormont parliament), would not receive divorcees at court. His elder son, Edward VIII, forfeited the throne, and the role of emperor, to marry an American divorcee and was forever exiled thereafter – never forgiven by his family because the divorce issue had put the crown in peril.

George VI, who succeeded, also didn't receive the divorced at court (and divorced people were banned at the royal enclosure at Ascot until the 1960s). When Elizabeth II's younger sister, Margaret, became involved with a divorced man, almighty pressure was brought to bear on her to renounce the relationship, which she did.

Record

Despite the historic record of Henry VIII, divorce was anathema to the Church of England, and its governor, Queen Elizabeth II. Her mother, the Queen Mum, especially deplored the break-up and dissolution of marriage.

And when it became known that Camilla Parker-Bowles was the long-time love of Prince Charles, she was at first excoriated. She had to hide from bawling mobs, as the 'other woman', who had caused so much pain to Princess Diana.

It's perhaps a measure of how times, and values, change that, Camilla, the former Mrs Parker-Bowles, now remarried to Charles, has been fully and warmly accepted into the royal family. And that Queen Elizabeth has bestowed her full blessing on the lady, announcing that she will reign as Queen Consort when Charles accedes. The 'other woman', now Duchess of Cornwall, has been wholly rehabilitated.

Welcomed

This has been broadly welcomed: Camilla has indeed shown herself to be a dutiful and discreet consort to Charles since they married in 2005. I've met Camilla briefly, and she strikes me as one of those practical, no-nonsense Englishwomen who have a firm hand with a horse – and is entirely devoid of neurosis or narcissism.

In reversing a long tradition of divorce disapproval, is Queen Elizabeth – always emphatic about her own Christianity – simply accepting the inevitable and moving with the times? After all,



Pope Francis talks with Britain's Prince Charles and his wife, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, during a private audience at the Vatican in 2017. Photo: CNS.

that is what has happened to most families and communities over the years: divorce, once so stigmatised, has been accepted as a fact of life, and a means to repair an earlier mistake of having chosen the wrong first spouse. We can all think of individuals who have made fulfilling second unions after an unhappy first marriage; and, anyway, Christians aren't supposed to be judgemental.

Yet, does Elizabeth ask herself if the previous Church, and social, prohibition against divorce was therefore an error? This public royal pronouncement is a huge turnaround, symbolically, and represents a quan-

tum shift in attitudes once held so sternly.

Disapprove

There are still some who will disapprove – because they

remain loyal to the memory of Diana, for whom the relationship with Camilla always meant "there were three of us in this marriage". For the Dianaistas, it is she who was betrayed.

Moreover, Camilla isn't queen yet: Elizabeth has recovered from a health blip, is now hale and hearty and could live well into her centenary years.

“Camilla has indeed shown herself to be a dutiful and discreet consort to Charles since they married in 2005”

Punishing celebrations

How amazed Robert Emmet might have been, if he could have foreseen that Ireland would so visibly take her place among the nations of the world in assuming a seat on the UN Security Council.

And how astonished he would be, if this had been foretold, that lifting a glass of champagne to celebrate

this terrific achievement would be penalised and priggishly condemned for a breach of 'social distancing'!

Why shouldn't the Department of Foreign Affairs enjoy a glass of 'sparkling wine' to mark such an occasion? I'm sure it was all done quite decorously.

Where is the sense of

proportion in dragging Simon Coveney and Joe Hackett before an Oireachtas committee this week to answer more questions about what was, it would seem, a modest celebration.

The DFA should have stood their ground instead of cravenly submitting to latter-day enforcers of Cromwellian Puritanism!

● I'm currently having medical treatment on my right eye after a macular bleed – and very grateful too for these regular eye injections, which have much ameliorated the situation. Fifteen years ago, my elder brother had the same problem and was told "there's nothing we can do".

I am permitted to wear a contact lens in the afflicted eye every other day. So, on Monday, I have good vision: on Tuesday, I can only see fully with the other eye, so the vision is asymmetrical. But I express gratitude for the gift of eyesight – of which I'm now much more aware – every single day.

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Theologian raises concerns over calls to reinstate Fr Flannery

Chai Brady

Following calls from the Irish Redemptorists for the Vatican to reinstate a priest removed from ministry, a theologian has raised concerns that he is still “at loggerheads with several important Church teachings”.

Fr Tony Flannery CSsR was suspended from public ministry by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2012, with that dicastery citing the incompatibility with Catholicism of his view that the priesthood was not instituted by Christ.

Dublin City University Theologian Dr John Murray told *The Irish Catholic* that if someone believes

the priesthood is man-made “a lot of things flow from that”.

“There’s a huge amount of implications, for the sacraments for the Church’s teaching, authority, the whole basis for a Catholic understanding of Christianity,” he said.

“The basic understanding of priesthood, the link with Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, these are very deep, significant aspects of the Faith, you mess with them at your peril. If you want to get down to the basics of these things look at Vatican II.”

He added: “The way Vatican II presents the belief and divine revelation concerning the Church, priesthood is very important. Especially today when we have a crisis

looming about priesthood, the age of priests and very few men going forward for the priesthood. It’s not a good time to be raising doubts about the priesthood.”

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* Fr Flannery said it was “heartening” that his order in Ireland were supporting his return to public ministry.

Asked if he would like to return, he said, “I would, but now I’m 75 years of age, I think it would be important and it would be a great signal...I would be glad.”

Fr Flannery said he still holds to his beliefs over which the CDF raised concerns, saying that the very first issue was regarding whether Christ intended to found the priesthood.

“The other issues were mainly around Catholic sexual teaching, things like contraception, homosexuality, and also of course the case of women in the Church, they were the main ones,” he said.

Fr Flannery claimed that what he described as the “dogs in the street” are now saying similar things to him now, and his views are mainstream and “to some degree traditional”.

A document sent to his order’s superior general in 2020 stated if Fr Flannery was to return to public ministry, he must first submit a signed statement regarding his positions on homosexuality, admission of women to the priesthood, gender theory and civil unions between same-sex couples.

Youth 2000
gears up for first
post-pandemic
Valentine’s ball

Jason Osborne

Catholic youth group Youth 2000 is “delighted and really excited” to be welcoming young Catholics back to their first major in-person event since March 2020, National Administrator for the group, Emma Maloney told this paper.

Ms Maloney said the pandemic made it “very hard for single Catholics for the last two years to get out and socialise and potentially meet their spouse.”

“The Youth 2000 ball is a wonderful opportunity to get out and meet new people,” she said.

“I know a few people who have met at the Youth 2000 ball and are now married.”

Tickets have been selling “really, really well”, she said, with the Armagh City Hotel “booked out” as a result of the February 19 event.

Tickets remain on sale for another week. The cost is €55 per ticket, with more information available at www.youth2000.ie. The Valentine’s ball is strictly over 18s.

Collusive behaviour revealed in murder of 11 Catholics

Staff reporter

The Police Ombudsman has found “collusive behaviour” by police in 11 loyalist murders in the North, including the 1992 attack at the Sean Graham betting shop.

A report by Marie Anderson also identified “significant” investigative and intelligence failures.

She said it was “totally unacceptable” that police used informants within the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) who were engaged in crimes such as murder.

Ms Anderson’s 344-page report covers multiple attacks, mostly in the early 1990s. The worst was at a Sean Graham betting shop on the Ormeau Road in south Belfast in February 1992, when two UDA gunmen shot five Catholics dead and wounded seven others.

A statement from Relatives for Justice said the families of victims felt vindicated by the report’s findings.

It added: “The report finds that 11 murdered citizens and their families were systemically failed by

the British state in life and in death.

“It is a damning report that is undiluted evidence of the policy of collusion as it was practiced in south Belfast, and across the north.”

The ombudsman’s report also identified a range of other collusive behaviours.

These included the “deliberate destruction” of files relating to the Sean Graham betting shop murders; intelligence failures which allowed loyalists to obtain weapons and a failure to exploit all evidential opportunities.

Serving Christ in Church and family



Deacon Paul Flynn with his wife, Angie, and their children following Deacon Flynn’s ordination February 2 in St Michael’s Church, Enniskillen.

Benedict seeks forgiveness for abuse failings

» **Continued from Page 1**

“Each individual case of sexual abuse is appalling and irreparable,” he said. “The victims of sexual abuse have my deepest sympathy, and I feel great sorrow for each individual case.”

The letter comes after a German law firm released a report in late January on how abuse cases were handled in the Archdiocese of Munich

and Freising.

The report, compiled at the request of the archdiocese, incriminated retired Pope Benedict, with lawyers accusing him of misconduct in four cases during his tenure in Munich.

“Once again I can only express to all the victims of sexual abuse my profound shame, my deep sorrow and my heartfelt request for forgiveness,” he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Classic Catholic poetry series airs on internet

A new series presenting the world with classic, Catholic poetry has kicked off online, offered by Bishop Barron’s Word on Fire ministries.

The show sees a series of favourite Catholic poems by a variety of poets read by *The Chosen* actor, Jonathan Roumie.

“These are not just poems for Catholics, they are treas-

ures for anyone who seeks what is good, true, and beautiful,” the website reads.

The first episodes have focused on Gerard Manley Hopkins, with poems such as *God’s Grandeur*, *The May Magnificat*, and *Spring and Fall* read by Mr Roumie so far.

The series can be found at www.youtube.com or www.wordonfire.org



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AMID CRISIS, HOPE: PEDRO'S STORY

Every three minutes, a child is born with cleft. This number doesn't change even during a global pandemic. Since 1982, Operation Smile has provided hundreds of thousands of free, safe care to children and adults born with cleft conditions, who could not otherwise access or afford medical care.

One of them is 7-year-old Pedro. Pedro's family fled an increasingly uncertain and dangerous political and economic situation in Venezuela and moved across the border to a refugee camp in his father's home country of Colombia.

Many Venezuelan refugees have no choice but to live in camps in this part of Colombia, and many arrive in poor health. The two local hospitals only have the capacity to treat refugees in emergency situations, leaving even potentially fatal conditions like cleft untreated.

THE NEED HERE REMAINS DIRE

Pedro's mother, Marbelis, is a quietly-spoken and quietly determined woman who would do anything for her young family.

Marbelis had all but given up hope of ever finding Pedro the medical help he so badly needed in Venezuela. For seven long years, she watched her little boy struggle, and no matter how hard she tried, there was little she could do to help him.

Pedro was fortunate to avoid the severe health problems that can be caused by cleft conditions, but he bears the emotional scars of having been badly bullied at school.

Thankfully, just a few weeks after the family had made a makeshift home in the April Third refugee camp, a local healthcare community worker identified Pedro and his need for cleft care, and his details were passed on to Operation Smile Colombia.

A few months later, Marbelis and Pedro travelled to the nearest medical mission, where Pedro received a comprehensive health evaluation from our expert team. He proved to be an ideal candidate for surgery.

Pedro's operation went smoothly, and in just over an hour he was safely back in the recovery room. When Marbelis first saw him, she was overcome with emotion.

"I ran in here and when I saw him, I started to cry, because he looks so beautiful."



ABOUT OPERATION SMILE

Since 1982, Operation Smile has provided hundreds of thousands of safe surgeries and care to children born with cleft worldwide.

In addition to mobilising highly accredited medical volunteers, Operation Smile trains local medical personnel and partners with hospitals, governments and ministries of health to ensure that safe surgery is a right for everyone in need, not a privilege.

If you would like additional information about treating children cleft lip and cleft palate, and to find out how you can help, please visit:

www.operationsmile.ie/Pedro

or call: **01 667 6659**

Operation  Smile

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Breda O'Brien

The View



Trying new things instead of waiting for them

Times are hard for many people and particularly so for people of faith, who see their cherished values being undermined in so many different ways.

That's why I found a recent event that both my adult daughters were involved in so cheering. Along with seven other leaders, they took a group of almost 40 teenagers aged twelve to 17 away for a weekend retreat in Avoca.

“This group, called Ballinteer Dundrum Youth (BDY) has been in existence for five years and the last two of those years were dominated by the pandemic”

In contrast to so many youth groups, most of the teenagers were male as were four of the nine leaders. (There was also a group of older adults who contributed in practical and invaluable ways to the smooth running of the weekend.)

This group, called Ballinteer Dundrum Youth (BDY) has been in existence for five years and the last two of those years were dominated by the pandemic. It grew out of a confirmation preparation group run by some of the older adults. The young people, then aged 12 and 13, loved the confirmation preparation so much that they wanted to stay together afterwards.

Like so many successful ventures, there was a strong element of family involvement. Some of the youngsters were children of committed parents, who in turn, recruited some of their own older children to help. These older teenagers, as they then were, reached out to some of their own friends.

It was a great success from the beginning. The younger ones loved the involvement of the group leaders who were often only five or six years older than them. Every year, new members joined after they made their confirmation.

Then came the pandemic. The group went online for a while,



but unfortunately, Zoom fatigue eventually killed even that. This was at a time when schools were online, people were socialising online, and there had been a massive migration online in general. There were also concerns from the archdiocese about child protection risks involved in online ministry.

Adventure

The BDY adventure could have died at that point but as restrictions lifted, a determined group of the older adults and the younger ones who were now young adults, decided that it was time for a Lazarus moment.

After a slightly shaky start, it began to thrive again. The weekend away was both a culmination and a beginning, a precious moment of normality and

bonding as they played games, prayed and ate together.

“There were also good places to meet, including a magnificent, relatively new pastoral centre in Dundrum”

It is fair to say that people had dreamed for years of something like the BDY venture. My own children had asked for years for something for themselves and as they grew older, they were very happy to provide it for others.

It grew out of the spirit of 'let's try something.' So often in the Church, we sit back and wait for something to change outside of us. We wait

for synodal processes, or changes in the culture, instead of just trying something.

The BDY group did have some advantages. There was a network of families who already knew each other, although it soon expanded far beyond that. There were also good places to meet, including a magnificent, relatively new pastoral centre in Dundrum. There were supportive priests in the parishes, including Fr John Bracken.

Meetings

The formula for the meetings, though, is simple, and could be replicated almost anywhere. A time for fun and icebreaker games is followed by talks and teaching by one of the older ones. After that, there is discussion and something to eat.

“The gender balance is intriguing because young urban males are the most alienated from the Church”

The witness from slightly older teenagers is vital. One of the lovely aspects of the recent weekend was that the first members, who are now in fifth year, started taking leadership roles in some of the activities. Similarly, the original young leaders have had their own faith reinforced by serving others.

Some of those who attended the weekend come from families that are not committed. In fact, for some of the younger members, it was the first time that they had been to Mass in two

years. Their families simply got out of the habit during the pandemic.

Other fourth year lads had brought along some of their pals who are not involved in the Church at all, enticing them by promising them a weekend where they would be accepted for themselves and would also have great craic.

Gender balance

The gender balance is intriguing because young urban males are the most alienated from the Church. They obviously find something worthwhile in BDY.

You could be cynical and say that 40 young people are only a fraction of those who have made their confirmations over the past five years.

Or you could thank God that there are green shoots like this in the Church and begin to dream and act in ways that make space for the Holy Spirit to act in the lives of young people. If we take small steps, the Lord blesses our efforts in big ways.

“Times are hard for many people and particularly so for people of faith, who see their cherished values being undermined in so many different ways”

The Irish Catholic

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Renewing the Faith under St Patrick



Parish priest of St Patrick's church Saul Fr Paul Alexander, Deacon Jackie Breen and Papal Nuncio Jude Thaddeus Okolo blessing the congregation with the relic of St Patrick at the Novena Mass held in St Patrick's church in Saul. Photos: Bill Smyth.

Staff reporter

The Pope's representative in Ireland has thrown his weight behind a new initiative for the renewal of faith through an all-island novena which follows in the steps of St Patrick.

Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo visited St Patrick's Church in Saul on the feast of Candlemas as part of a St Patrick's novena.

Archbishop Okolo was welcomed by parish priest Fr Paul Alexander along with parishioners, including schoolchildren, gathered in the church in Saul close to where Ireland's patron saint began his mission. Pilgrims following the nine week novena from church to church were also present.

Speaking of his visit to Saul, Archbishop Okolo said, "It was indeed nice and uplifting, praying together on that holy ground, on which St Patrick trod".

The celebration of faith included Mass, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the rosary. Two first class relics of St Patrick were also displayed for public veneration – the relic of his jawbone from the treasury of Down and Connor Diocese and also a piece of bone which came to Ireland from Rome in 1932 at the time of the Eucharistic Congress.

St Patrick's altar stone is also in this church famous for its stained glass windows telling the story of St Patrick's arrival in Saul.

Homily

In his homily, Fr Alexander said, "St Patrick's first church in Ireland was here in Saul and from here the Faith spread. St Patrick brought the light of Christ to Ireland, the same light we read about in the Gospel today on this feast day of the Presentation, the feast of light. We have to follow the example of St Patrick and bring the light to others. We have to start again, bringing the light of Christ into our hearts, our families and into our homes."

"We all know these are days of darkness, we have been living through them, days of fear and anxiety. We need the joy of the Gospel, the joy of Christ, the same joy brought to Ireland, by St Patrick," he continued.

He urged the congregation to ask themselves "what am I going to do to bring the light of faith to others. Generations of our ancestors kept the Faith alive. What are you going to do to keep the Faith alive? Let us revive our faith and go forward with St Patrick".

The novena was launched by Archbishop Eamon Martin in St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh and is being celebrated in churches across the country.

The national novena to St Patrick is the inspiration of Fr John Mockler SDS, a priest from Co. Limerick, recently appointed by Pope Francis as a consultant to the Congregation of the Causes of Saints. Speaking of the intentions of the novena Fr Mockler said, "Ireland needs healing, families need healing, people of all ages need healing. All true healing will begin with a rejuvenation of the Faith. Ireland needs St Patrick. He is God's gift to Ireland. Let us celebrate the gift of faith he brought to Ireland".

Yesterday (Wednesday) the novena journeyed to St Patrick's Church in Slane where Patrick lit the Paschal fire on March 25, 433AD. From Slane the novena will follow in the footsteps of St Patrick to St Mary's Church in Westport on the slopes of Croagh Patrick, St Patrick's Church in Rathvilly, Co. Carlow, the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Patrickswell Co. Limerick, St Mary's Church in Pettigo in Co. Donegal close to Lough Derg, returning to Armagh on the eve of St Patrick's Day.

i Updates from the novena, following in the footsteps of St Patrick are also available on the Facebook group *Hail Glorious St Patrick*. Highlights and interviews each week are available on the YouTube channel *Hail Glorious Saint Patrick*.





Parish priest of St Patrick's church in Saul, Fr Paul Alexander, showing St Patrick's altar stone to the Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo at the Novena Mass.



Teresa McClean, Geraldine McCormick and Carol Campbell from Downpatrick meeting the Papal Nuncio at the Novena Mass held in St Patrick's church, Saul.



Pupils of St Colmcilles High School Crossgar Thomas, year 8, Gerard, year 9 and Grace, year 12, receiving a blessing from the Papal Nuncio.



Declan McGrady, Theresa Mullan and Marie Cully from Downpatrick meeting the Papal Nuncio.



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The Christian identity card

If you want to know what to believe, study the Creed; if you want to know how to pray, study the Our Father; and if you want to know how to behave, study the Sermon on the Mount. In today's Mass we have Luke's version of the Beatitudes at the beginning of that major sermon which is the charter for Christian living (Luke 6:17, 20-26). We are probably more familiar with Matthew's version which has eight Beatitudes, whereas Luke has only four.

The translation used in our Mass Lectionary uses the word *happy*, whereas more recent translations have returned to the word *blessed*. Happy describes how one is feeling while to be called blessed describes how one is seen in God's eyes. I don't think anybody would be happy while suffering hatred and persecution but faith in God might enable a person to understand persecution as a blessed union with Jesus in his passion.

A level playing pitch

Matthew situates the story on a mountain with Jesus standing there like Moses introducing the people to the commandments as the terms of their covenant with God. Luke prefers a more humble setting, picturing Jesus coming down to a piece of level ground. At a session of Gospel sharing, a man with a sporting background noted that Jesus was establishing a level playing pitch for all. It was an astute observation because what Jesus proclaimed was a kingdom of justice and equality.

The people to whom Jesus was preaching had come from far and near to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. His sermon offered the cure for a diseased world of inequality, injustice, war, hunger and persecution.

Back in the time of Jesus there were misguided teachers, the blind leading the blind, who saw God's blessing in the four p-words: prosperity, power, popularity and prestige ('when everyone speaks well of you'). These misguided teachers are still to be heard today. Their religion is a personal hotline with God without social obligations. They preach that God's blessing is to be seen in prosperity in business, success in sport, avoidance of accidents, enjoying prestige and position in society. Call it the 'Prosperity Gospel' or

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



'Cadillac Christianity'. But what about the poor, or those who constantly experience bad luck, mishaps or constant suffering? The easy answer is that these are cursed conditions, brought about by sin. But many who are suffering are not notorious sinners. Ah, they say, there must be serious sin back in the family tree.

Upside down

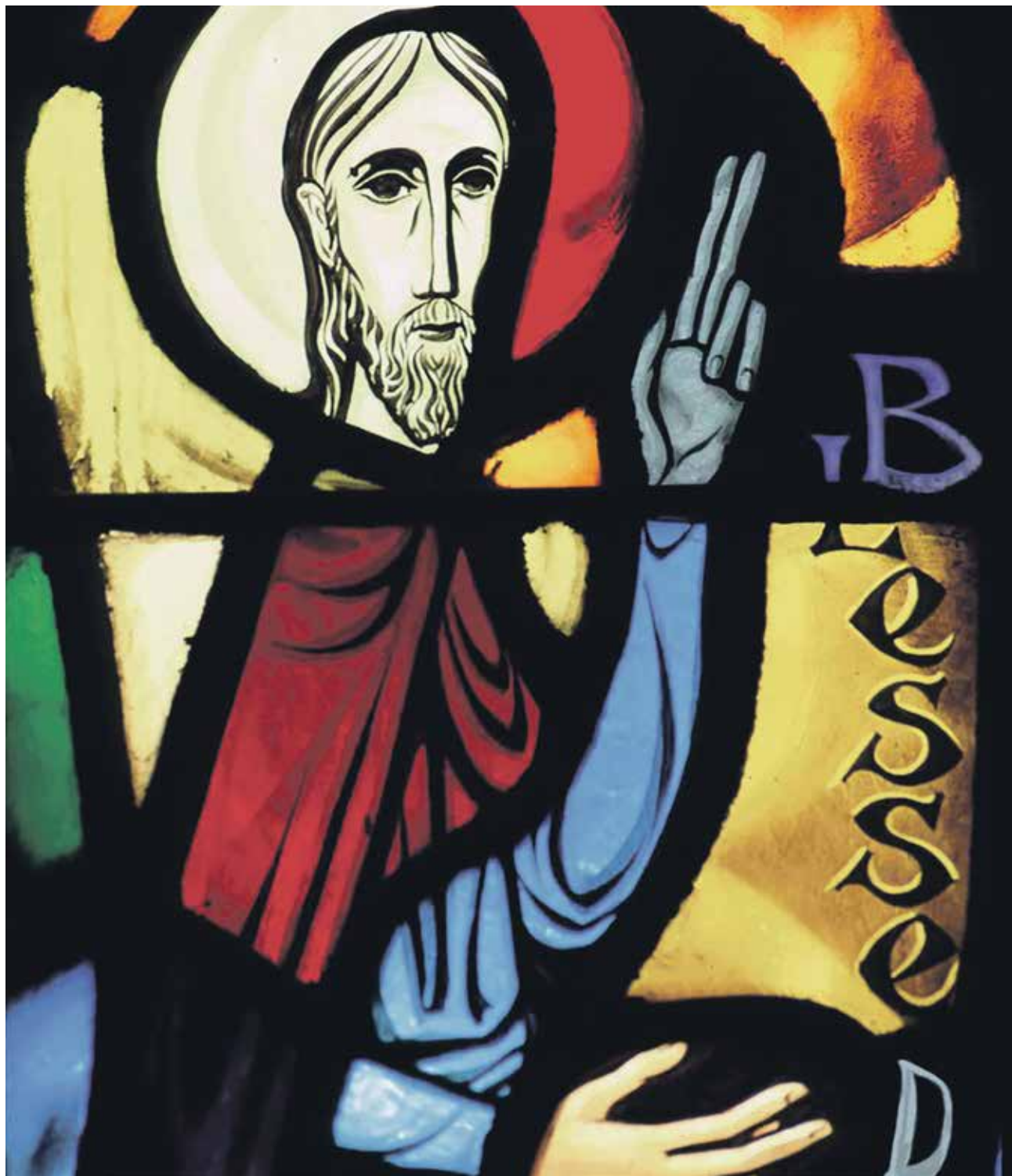
Jesus turned the ideas of the 'Prosperity Gospel' upside down. Blessed are the poor and powerless, those who are mourning, even those who lack food, or who are suffering persecution or abuse of any kind. By calling these people blessed, Jesus asserts that God's heart holds a very special compassion for them.

Lest the lesson be open to misinterpretation, Jesus follows the four blessings introduced with "Alas". Alas for you who are rich...who have plenty to eat now...who are laughing now...or when everyone speaks well of you! It anticipates the description of the final judgement in Chapter 25 of Matthew. "I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink...in so far as you neglected to do this to the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you neglected to do it to me."

True identity

If you want to know how to behave as a Christian, follow the Beatitudes. The great sermon of Jesus is the *magna carta* of the kingdom of God on earth. Pope Francis refers to the Beatitudes as the identity card of a Christian. He came to Rome from a background of being among the very poor people in the shanty towns around Buenos Aires. Among these victims of social injustice and discrimination, he found many people with an extraordinary depth of faith. Their faith enables them to discern their unity with the suffering Christ. It produces a mysterious wisdom. Saint Paul wrote that Jesus became poor for our sake so as to make us rich. He wasn't referring to financial wealth but to a blessed union with God.

Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation on the



proclamation of the Gospel in today's world, reflects on the faith of these people. "This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. In their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelised by them. The new evangelisation is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voices to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and

to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them" (*The Joy of the Gospel*, par. 198).

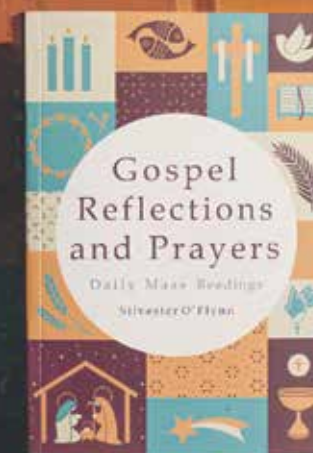
When a pope writes like that, it is hardly surprising that he is not too popular among the Cadillac Catholics. Remember what Jesus said when a rich young man refused the invitation to follow him, and walked away from him: "How hard it is for those who are rich to enter the kingdom of God." You enter the kingdom by letting the kingdom enter you in thought and action.

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, thy kingdom come. Give us the grace to turn away from false gods, ideals and values. May we walk in the light of the Gospel. May we be totally committed to your kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

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Like the Church, Ireland is getting greyer



We must devise policies that make it easier for couples to have children and start their families sooner, writes **David Quinn**

Critics of the Church often like to point out that the Mass-going population of the country is shrinking and getting older all the time. It's true, but what they often fail to notice, is that the same can be said about Ireland as a whole. Birth rates are now well below replacement level, and falling, and the population is ageing rapidly. In the decades to come, only immigration will keep the population growing.

To maintain a country's population level (without considering immigration), each couple needs to have 2.1 children on average. But our fertility rate has now fallen to around 1.7, far below what's needed.

More starkly, the number of over 65s is shooting up. As at Census 2016, 629,800 of us were over 65, but by 2051, less than 30 years away, this will have increased by about 1 million. This is not speculation. It will happen as surely as night follows day because all the people who will be over 65 by then, are alive today.

Whereas in 2016, about 13% of the population was over 65, by 2051, it will be roughly twice that.

“Part of the problem is that my generation (and those coming after me) had about half the number of children as earlier generations, and the number is dropping all the time”

The number of persons over 80 will rise from 147,600 in 2016, to around 540,000 in 2051. If I live long enough, I will be in that category myself by then.

Retired

So many of us will be retired that the country's expenditure on healthcare and pensions is going to shoot up. If you are over 65 now, it won't be so much of a problem, but if (like me) you were born in the 1960s or after, it will be a very big one.

I am going to be a member of the largest number of old people Ireland has ever seen and there won't be



enough younger, working-age people to support us. Part of the problem is that my generation (and those coming after me) had about half the number of children as earlier generations, and the number is dropping all the time.

Fertility

If the fertility rate is currently around 1.7, it is not at all beyond the bounds of possibility that it will drop to 1.4 or 1.5 in the years ahead, in which case the problem of an ageing population only gets worse. Other European countries are already there.

In Britain, they think there will be more deaths than births by 2025, which is just three years away. We're probably around 10 years behind that.

The problem is even worse in East Asia. In South Korea, for example, couples are having less than one child each, on average, which is cataclysmic. They don't believe in large-scale immigration either.

When I left school in the 1980s, we were always being told that half the population was under the age of 25. Lots of us ended up emigrating, of course, me included. But many of us came back as well, unlike in the past, as the economy improved.

In those days, we had one of the youngest populations in Europe. This actually helped us during the pandemic. One reason Britain has

had more Covid-related deaths per head of population than we did, is that a considerably higher percentage is already over 65 compared with Ireland.

The average age of Irish people is 38. In England it is 40. That might not sound like much, but over a big population, it makes a large difference. To put things in perspective, in 1985, the average age here was 26.

One of the responses to an ageing population is raising the age at which you can qualify for the State pension. It is currently 66. The plan was to raise it to 68 by 2028. That now looks to be dead in the water.

The retirement age became a big issue in the 2019 General Election. It was to be raised to 67 last year, but Labour campaigned against that, and then Sinn Féin climbed on board. The Government and Fianna Fáil climbed down.

An All-Party Oireachtas Committee was established to look into the matter and last week it came out against raising the age at which you qualify for the State pension beyond the current 66.

Difference

The committee claims raising it won't make much difference.

The recommendation might suit people like me who are due to retire in the years ahead, but it doesn't suit younger people one bit.

The State pension is paid out of tax revenue raised each year. The more people there are in need of it, the more tax must be raised, and that means either higher tax levels, or less money for the likes of health, housing and education.

The burden will fall straight on young people who will make up a smaller percentage of the population than ever before. Does that seem fair?

“The State pension is paid out of tax revenue raised each year. The more people there are in need of it, the more tax must be raised”

When only 13% of the population is over 65, the situation is manageable, but when that doubles, it becomes unmanageable under present policies. It might become unmanageable anyway.

Aside from raising the retirement age (something I support for those my age and younger), we will need either massive levels of immigration, or we must have more children.

Mass immigration will change society in unpredictable ways that are bound to be politically con-

tentious in the end. In any case, it means we would be solving the problem of an ageing population by effectively 'stealing' the children of other people.

We didn't like it when this country was being drained of its young people in the era of mass emigration.

Approach

A better approach is to devise policies that make it easier for couples to have children and start their families sooner. This means, among other things, making housing more affordable. It also means looking at the tax system, to make it more pro-family. If you have dependent-age children, you should pay less tax, because you are raising the next generation and making great sacrifices to do so.

Earlier marriage should be encouraged. At present, couples tend to wait until they are well into their 30s before tying the knot. That leaves very little time to have children.

Countries like Poland and Hungary are losing people through low birth rates and emigration. They are trying to reverse things by introducing very family-friendly policies. It is too early to say for sure whether they are working.

We must wish them well, because if they don't work, then things are looking bleak. It goes without saying that a society which has made it hard to have children, is ultimately turning its back on itself.

It is not only the Church in Ireland that has to worry about its future.

“So many of us will be retired that the country's expenditure on healthcare and pensions is going to shoot up”

Breaking bread together... but remaining strangers



We need to use the synod to see what we can learn from the newer Catholic communities in Ireland, writes **Sr Josephine Enenmo, OLA**

I am delighted at this opportunity to share my experience of being part of the Church in Ireland and my hopes for this journey titled: 'For a synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission'. The preparatory document for the synod states that a synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together". How is this 'journeying together' happening today in my local church? The story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus form the basis for my reflection. The disciples did not recognise the stranger as Jesus until he broke the bread and vanished from their sight. However, their trusting the stranger must have begun way back on the road when he first started to explain the scriptures to them and they invited him to stay with them. Today, I believe that Jesus is still walking along beside

us explaining the scriptures to us, breaking bread with us and then vanishing from our sight. And we are still slow at trusting or rather slow about recognising what is happening.

“I do not think these are the same in every parish but they could be simple restrictions that make it difficult for the stranger to be included”

Coming from Nigeria – a country that holds the Irish missionaries in high esteem – I arrived in Dublin with a longing to settle in a parish community and I really desired to be an active parishioner. While I received a 'thousand times' welcome, there seemed to be structures that hinder active participation and communion with the local community. I do not think these are the same in every parish but they could be simple restrictions that make it dif-

ficult for the stranger to be included. For example, in the bulletin a Church organisation appealed for volunteers to work with couples and their families. I indicated interest but was told that their list does not include nuns. In a Church with more than 40 in attendance, a man serves at the altar, reads the first and second readings, prayer of the Faithful and gives out Holy Communion. In this two-man show (priest and assistant), there is no space for others and so we sit, listen, receive communion and leave barely saying hello to one another. How can we break bread together and still remain strangers? In this area, what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our 'journeying together'?

Struck

I am struck by the absence of young parents and adolescents in the Church community. I read from a parish bulletin that "the feature we have in common with many parishes throughout the country is a dramatic falloff in the number of young people attending the church, and an even smaller number par-

ticipating in parish activities". I have heard so much about Catholic education in Ireland and I have experienced first-hand the enthusiasm of Irish missionaries in Nigeria.

“I am struck by the absence of young parents and adolescents in the Church community”

I wonder what went wrong here? I have met with school chaplains who are doing great work but this is not reflected in the parish community. Furthermore, some parishes act as host to chaplaincies for example Croatian, French, African... These are dynamic communities, made up largely of young couples with young families and they create space for faith and faith formation. Sadly, these communities have no real link with the ordinary people in the parish and this has made me wonder whether Christ has been 'parcelled' out. Is

there no room for all in the Catholic Church?

Reflect

Pope Francis tells us that the synodal process "offers us an opportunity to reflect together, to listen to the questions and together search for answers regarding people on the margins in our parishes without hindrances". What can these chaplaincies offer to the Church in Ireland? Why have we remained strangers in the same Church, the same parish? Could it be because of fear of being transformed by the other? The challenge presented to us at this time is so great that we must root our response in prayer. Arise fellow pilgrims, let us listen, hear and engage with the synodal process. Let us ask God to show us where we have erected walls of fear and convinced ourselves that they are not only necessary, but sacred. May God give us the courage to take these down. Let us light the candle and keep it burning even after the synod.

i Sr Josephine Enenmo, OLA is a religious sister of the Congregation of Our Lady of Apostles based in Dublin.

“Pope Francis tells us that the synodal process ‘offers us an opportunity to reflect together, to listen to the questions and together search for answers’”

What do you think?
Share your views on the synod process by email to editor@irishcatholic.ie

First Irish Redemptorist reaches 100



Fr Tony celebrating his one hundredth birthday.

Born in the same year as the Irish Free State came into existence, Fr Tony Mulvey CSSR is the first Irish Redemptorist to reach 100 years of age. But achieving this milestone doesn't mean he has retired, he insists. "There's no retirement for Redemptorists. The only place you retire is into the box when you're carried down to the cemetery!" he says of the milestone.

Journey

Fr Tony's journey with the Redemptorists started in 1937 when, as a teenager, he was so impressed by a mission they gave in his home parish of Ballinaglera, Co. Leitrim that he entered the Redemptorist junior seminary in Limerick. "I got a great education in Limerick in art and music," he says. "I went twice to the Prado, a famous art gallery in Madrid, and that's something I wouldn't have dreamt of doing were it not for the training I got in Limerick. And I can spend hours now listening to good music; we had Beethoven's 5th Symphony nearly off by heart from hearing it."

After completing his secondary education in Limerick, Tony entered the Redemptorist novitiate in Dundalk in 1942. He then moved on to study in Cluain Mhuire in Galway and was delighted to be allowed to

travel to Belgium as part of his studies. It was shortly after the Second World War, and conditions were harsh. He says the year in Belgium was the best decision he ever made. "It was good for me because I learned how different Europe is. I had a foothold in the continent, and as a result, I visited many places around Europe I would never have seen if I was a secular priest."

“He also taught religion in the European school for children whose parents worked in the institutions”

After ordination, Fr Tony returned to Limerick to teach French in the Redemptorist College. "I was also very keen on Irish and used to go to places where Irish was spoken. I went down to Kerry, near Dunquin, and to the Aran Islands and Spiddal. Two of us took charge of a parish in Carraroe, all in Irish. I'm still very keen on the Irish language and love to get a chance to speak it."

After Ireland entered into the then European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, Fr Tony was assigned to Luxembourg to minister to the growing number of English-speakers who had moved to the city to work in the European institutions. He

spent 12 years there. "I had 25 nationalities in my section of the parish," he recalls. "A lot of people came to the English Mass to learn English." He also taught religion in the European school for children whose parents worked in the institutions.

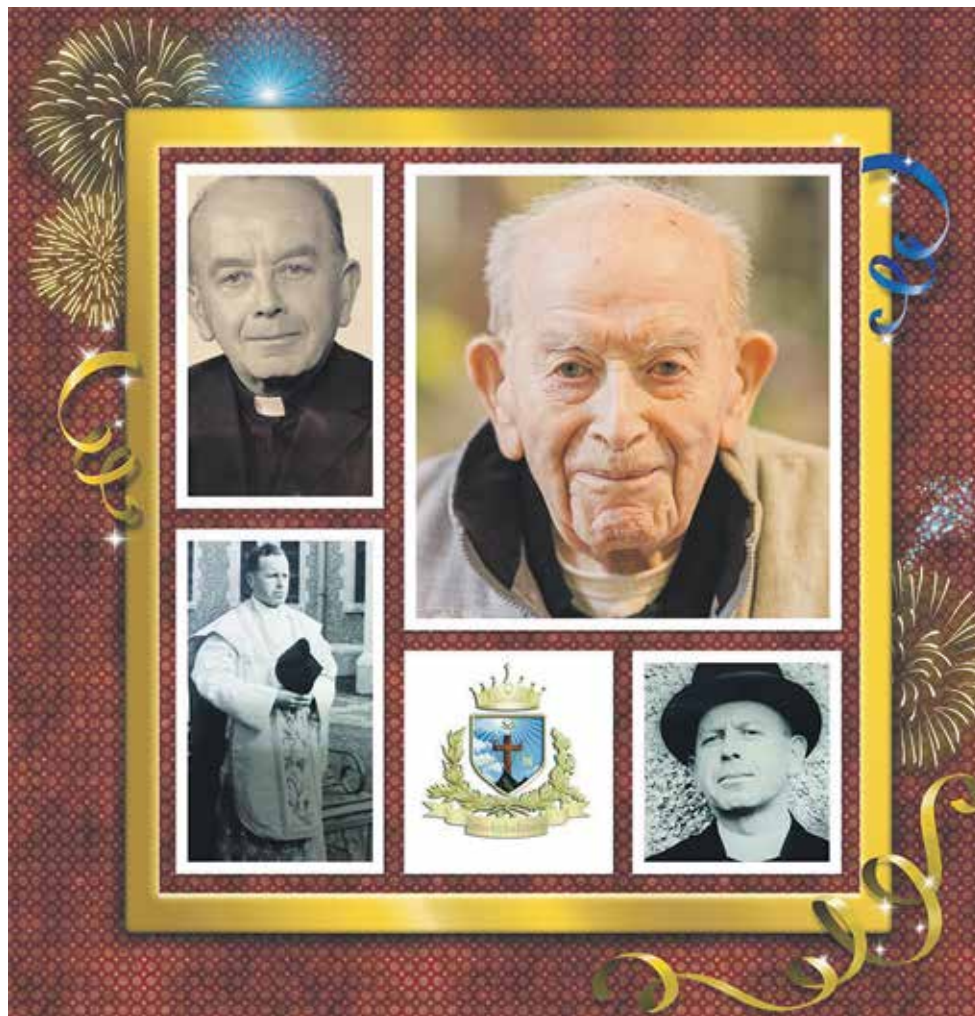
He got to know many politicians during his time there. "[Future president] Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh was my parishioner, and in fact the night before he left for Ireland for his inauguration as president, we prepared his presidential speech together. He was very keen on Irish, and so I was often at his house, and we were personal friends."

In 1987, Fr Tony was summoned to Rome to work as a translator in the Redemptorist general house, where he remained for 24 years. He describes that time as "a marvellous experience. I would love to go back to it, but as I grew older, the heat was too much for me!"

After returning from Rome, Fr Tony was stationed in Dundalk in Co. Louth for some years before moving to Esker in Co. Galway in 2016, where he currently resides. But he misses Rome. "I have always loved mixing with other nationalities and getting the history of their country. What's written on paper is hardly ever the truth, but when you get speaking to somebody from the country, they'll give you the real story."



Fr Tony's ordination at Cluain Mhuire, Galway, August 26, 1951.



Ballyphehane parishioners welcome bishop's first visit



Bishop Fintan Gavin and Canon Michael Murphy PP photographed with some parishioners following Mass which was celebrated by the bishop on his first visit to the Church of the Assumption, Ballyphehane since his appointment.



Bishop Fintan Gavin listens to Phil Ui Murchu while Geraldine Ahern and Eileen O'Connor look on.



Charlie, Fred, Gill and Molly Sorensen with Bishop Fintan Gavin of the Diocese of Cork and Ross.



Catherine Murphy and Christine Wallace with Bishop Fintan Gavin and Canon Michael Murphy PP at Church of the Assumption, Ballyphehane, Co. Cork.



Bishop Gavin meets Tommy O'Mahony, Mary O'Neill and Colette O'Mahony.



Cillian, Helen, Niall, Aislinn and Stiofan Corkery with Bishop Fintan Gavin after Mass.

The Catholic cold war with the world



Catholics are exhorted to love the world, but more often we find ourselves suspicious of it or hostile towards it, writes **Jason Osborne**

‘Cold War’ is a phrase reappearing with greater frequency these days thanks to the simmering tensions between the West, namely the US and the majority of Europe, and Russia and its more loosely-associated allies.

While the situation is evolving and people absorb and reflect upon that news, it occurred to me recently that some Catholics, myself included, have had a head start on the cold war mentality, having been locked in one with ‘the world’ for much of our faith lives.

“The resulting bitterness felt by many who hold their faith dearly, then, is entirely understandable, as is their desire to have little to do with ‘the world’”

This should come as no surprise, what with most current developments seeming to further erode the Church’s position in modern society. Many in Ireland, including among the public representatives, aren’t shy about their dislike or disdain for the Church, and actively seek opportunities to denigrate it, belittle it or remove it as far as possible from relevance. The resulting bitterness felt by many who hold their faith dearly, then, is entirely understandable, as is their desire to have little to do with ‘the world’.

Reading a homily recently, though, by St Josemaría Escrivá, I realised that I, and a large segment of the Church in the West, adopt precisely the opposite of a loving attitude to the world as a result, allowing ourselves to be goaded into viewing it instead with suspicion and condescension and thus falling into something of a cold war with it.



A silhouette of the statue, ‘Hands Across the Divide’, is pictured in Derry. Photo CNS.

Homily

In his homily, *Passionately Loving the World*, St Josemaría makes a number of pertinent points that are just as relevant now as the day he made them in 1967:

“This profound and consoling truth, which theologians call the eschatological significance of the Eucharist could however, be misunderstood. And indeed it has been, whenever men have tried to present the Christian way of life as something exclusively ‘spiritual,’ proper to pure, extraordinary people, who remain aloof from the contemptible things of this world or at most, tolerate them as something necessarily attached to the spirit, while we live on this earth.

“When things are seen in this way, churches become the setting *par excellence* of the Christian life. And being a Christian means going to church, taking part in sacred ceremonies, being taken up with ecclesiastical matters, in a kind of segregated world, which is considered to be the antechamber of heaven, while the ordinary world follows its own separate path. The doctrine of Christianity and the life of grace would, in this case, brush past the turbulent march of human history, without ever really meeting it,” he said.

Radicalisation

This is more so the case in something of a polarised age. With an unparalleled proliferation of media and viciously-held opinions, the danger is that we’ll allow ourselves to fall prey to one of the prevailing ideologies of the day. Catholics are as susceptible to this as anyone – with conservative, liberal, traditional, progressive or otherwise often being a more accurate label for many of us than Christlike.

“The Danish theologian and philosopher Soren Kierkegaard theorised that there are three stages on life’s way: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious”

The results of this sees large groups of people shutting each other down and writing each other off – behaviour which should be anathema to everyone, but particularly to Catholics.

It is as St Josemaría said. There

is a powerful human tendency to sequester ourselves away from that which we find disagreeable or difficult, and that’s no different as Catholics. For those of us who’ve been privileged to come to know and love God here on earth, and to benefit from the utter sanity of Catholic teaching, there can be a temptation to revel in it, locking ourselves away in a safe, Catholic bubble.

Religious motivation

The Danish theologian and philosopher Soren Kierkegaard theorised that there are three stages on life’s way: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. Put very briefly, he believed that the religious realm of human life was the highest, but that man wasn’t supposed to stay locked up there; he was supposed to allow it to inform and guide him as he went back about his daily tasks on the lower levels of human experience.

How does this relate back to thawing the cold war between Catholics and the world? To borrow St Josemaría’s words once again, “Your ordinary contact with God takes place where your fellow men, your yearnings, your work and your affections are.

“There you have your daily encounter with Christ. It is in the midst

of the most material things of the earth that we must sanctify ourselves, serving God and all mankind.”

A reappreciation of the goodness of normality and mundanity is desperately needed, for it is only by infusing these basic elements of human experience with God that the world is redeemed. As novelist George Eliot wrote that, “the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life”.

“Only then are our love of neighbour and trust in God working in harmony”

While we may disagree with many of our neighbours on abortion or the rewriting of marriage, or whether or not the Covid vaccine is a good thing or not, it strikes me that the key is not to turn every interaction into a contentious flash-point, but to build normal, healthy relationships while remaining unyielding on the non-negotiables of the Faith: a personal relationship with Christ, frequent prayer and reception of the sacraments. Only then are our love of neighbour and trust in God working in harmony.

Recommitting to the world and those we all too easily condemn as “worldly” is what will allow the flame of love to thaw the cold growing between us.

“A reappreciation of the goodness of normality and mundanity is desperately needed, for it is only by infusing these basic elements of human experience with God that the world is redeemed”

Celebrating St Brigid



Pupils from Ballymoney national school from Ballineen in West Cork.



Mr Murphy's third and fourth class in Croom national school in Co. Limerick.



Pupils at Ardagh national school in Co. Mayo.



Pupils from Beaumont girls' national school in Dublin.





Students from Sacred Heart College in Omagh were joined by school chaplain Fr Peter O'Kane.



Students from Ms Kinsella's sixth year religious studies class at Enniscorthy Community College.



Students at the Dublin City University (DCU) chaplaincy were joined by pupils from Corpus Christi girls' national school in Drumcondra.



Year eleven Gaeilgeoiri at Edmund Rice College in Belfast took a break from their books.



Students at St Peter's College, Dunboyne in Co. Meath.





Pupils at St Conval's Primary School in Glasgow get in touch with the city's Irish roots.



Mr Mulvihill, principal of St Michael's College in Kerry was presented with crosses by students.



First class pupils at Scoil Angela in Thurles, Co. Tipperary.





Pupils at Woodbrook national school in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Roscommon.



Pupils from Scoil Eoin in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.



Pupils from St Patrick's primary school in Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone.



Students from Blessed Trinity College in Belfast.

Out&About

Celebrating Ceist at St Mary's High School



CORK: Students from St Mary's High School, Midleton celebrate the 15th anniversary of Ceist.



CORK: Celebrating the 15th anniversary of the foundation of CEIST at St Mary's High School, Midleton are: Faith Development Co-Ordinator Helen Barry, Deputy Principal Niamh O' Connor, Sr Maura Manning, Sr Carmel Hartnett, Community Leader Sr Mary Higgins and Sr Carmel Flynn. Front: Third year students Cathy O'Brien and Julie Joyce.



LAOIS: On St Brigid's day in Portlaoise parish Gabrielle Jin made her First Profession as a Presentation Sister at their 10am Mass.

IN SHORT

Cork school celebrates Ceist's 15th anniversary

On February 1, St Brigid's Day, St Mary's High School, Midleton in Co. Cork celebrated the 15th anniversary of the foundation of Ceist.

To celebrate the occasion a representative group from St Mary's visited the Presentation Sisters in the convent adjacent to the school.

A spokesperson said: "Ceist post-primary schools, through the whole

process of teaching and learning, promote the Gospel message of 'fullness of life'. Our aim in St Mary's is for the girls to live life to the full, to laugh and to make the most of every opportunity."

They added that Ceist endeavours to inculcate Christian values and the empowerment of women in the world today.

The organisation is a trust body of Catholic schools which includes the Presentation order schools, of which St Mary's High School is a member.

Pro-life group encourages students to make contact

Pro-life group 'Students for Life' is appealing for those who are either a student of UCC (University College Cork) or interested in setting up a pro-life group on their college campus to contact them.

In December 2021 a group of UCC students came together with the goal of defending the preborn and promoting a culture of life in society.

Students for Life stated: "Students for Life

exists to support students on campus to be activists for life, educating fellow students about the fundamental human right to life and to support pregnant students and parents on campus, as we believe that no student should have to choose between having a baby and continuing their education.

They said the group "is setting an example for the entire [pro-life] movement, showing the power of young people's voices in turning the tide in our generation".

Those interested can email: hello@studentsforlife.ie

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
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Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



WEXFORD: St Peter's College's show jumping team, including Jack Jones, Sean Bishop and Evan Kennedy Power, are pictured having competed recently, while Jack O'Reilly acted photographer as he was side-lined due to injury.



ANTRIM: The Catholic chaplaincy at Queen's University Belfast hosts the traditional Ark celebration with the Eritrean Coptic community.



MAYO: Dame Catherine Concannon, Knights Ger Concannon and Dominic Feeney venerating the Stations of the Cross in Knock Parish Church on the occasion of the semi virtual pilgrimage of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem - Lieutenancy of Ireland.



WEXFORD: Presentation Secondary School sixth year student Kristy Fenlon's work was featured in the Wexford Lions Club Art Exhibition at Wexford Arts Centre. She is pictured receiving her award for her painting 'There... in the Darkness', which is on display at the exhibition which runs until February 19.



CARLOW: Students in St Fiacc's NS take advantage of a sunny winter morning to play some cricket on January 26.

Events

● In the current Covid-19 crisis, it is clear that most (and perhaps all) Church events, other than some Masses, are suspended. Consequently, we are withholding the popular Events Listing column until normal activities can resume in our parishes. However, please do email us if you know of any parish event planned and we will publish details.



World Report

IN BRIEF

US pastor resigns after discovering invalid baptisms

● Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix said baptisms performed by a priest during years of ministry in the diocese are invalid, leading to the resignation of the clergyman, February 1.

In a January 14 letter to the diocese, Bishop Olmsted said diocesan officials learned from the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that the baptisms were invalid because of the form used during the ritual by Fr Andres Arango.

"Specifically, it was reported to me that Fr Andres used the formula 'We baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' The key phrase in question is the use of 'We baptise' in place of 'I baptise,'" Bishop Olmsted wrote.

Vatican foreign minister visits Lebanon

● The Vatican's foreign minister, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, concluded a five-day visit to Lebanon on Friday, marking 75 years of diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

The week included meetings with political authorities, Christians, and victims of the August 4, 2020 port explosion.

According to Vatican News, Archbishop Gallagher,

who is secretary for relations with states, told local journalists that Pope Francis still hopes to visit their country, "when conditions permit."

The Vatican envoy also addressed the Middle Eastern country's 2019 economic collapse. Lebanon's state debts, created by the lavish spending of successive governments after the 1975-1990 civil war, have led to a severe financial crisis.

Catholics pray novena for young priest killed in Congo

● Catholics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are paying tribute to a young priest who was killed after offering Mass on the World Day of Consecrated Life.

Fr Richard Masivi Kasereka, 36, was assassinated by armed men in the northeastern territory of Lubero on February 2, while driving to his parish, St Michael the Archangel, after offering Mass in Kanyabayonga, according to his bishop.

Bishop Melchisédec Sikuli Paluku of Butembo-Beni said in a statement sent to ACI Africa that an investigation into the murder had begun.

Attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) have been reported in the Butembo-Beni diocese. The ISIS-affiliated rebel group from neighbouring Uganda is reportedly under the leadership of a Muslim who abandoned the Christian faith.

Congolese bishops concerned over increased attacks

● The head of the Congolese bishops' conference said Church officials are very worried about continued attacks on civilians by armed groups, as reports of the death of dozen in a camp of internally displaced persons emerged.

At least 59 people in Plaine Savo displacement camp in the eastern province of Ituri were killed and about 40 others injured February 1. The deaths have been blamed on a deadly association of ethnic Lendu group militias known as CODECO (Cooperative for the Development of Congo).

"The Church is very worried about these attacks," Archbishop Marcel Utembi Tapa of Kisangani, president of the bishops' conference, told *Catholic News Service*.

"Many people have died. We preach the life of the human being."

The camp is home to nearly 24,000 people, who fled previous attacks in the area in 2019.

According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, the attackers had used guns and machetes to target the occupants of the camp.

Fourth Anglican bishop in a year joins Catholic Church in the UK

A fourth Anglican bishop in a year has been received into the Catholic Church.

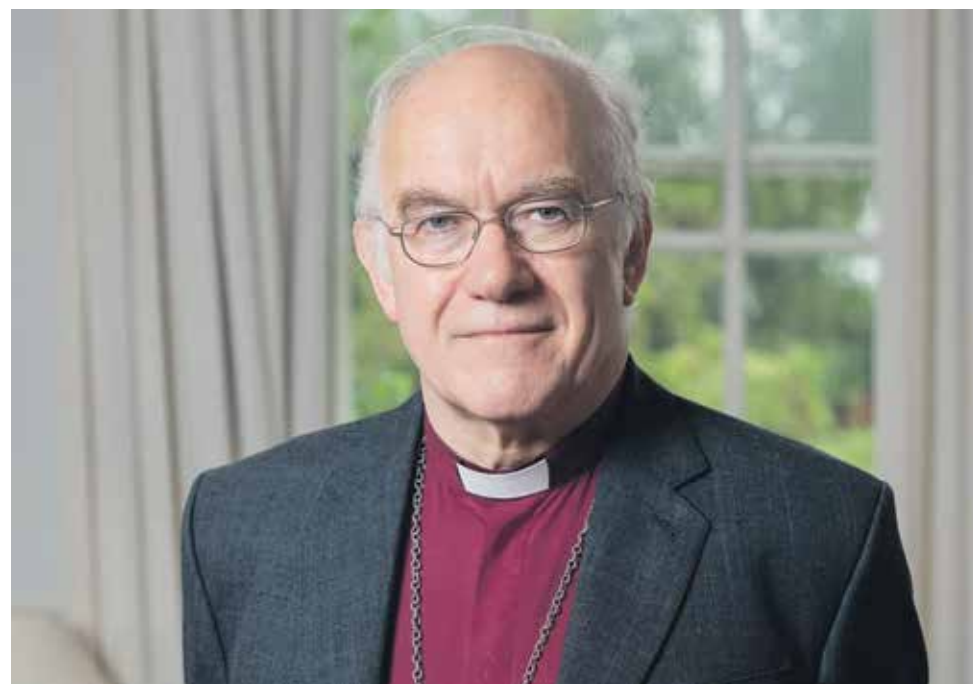
It was confirmed by the *Church Times* – an independent newspaper covering the Church of England – that the former bishop of Chester, Peter Forster, became Catholic last year.

The three other Church of England bishops to become Catholic last year are the former Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali; the former Bishop of Ebbsfleet, Jonathan Goodall; and the former Bishop of Burnley, John Goddard.

Foster was received into the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh in Scotland, where he and his wife now reside.

Forster retired from the Diocese of Chester in 2019, having been the longest serving Church of England bishop. There were complaints he mishandled an allegation of abuse against a priest of the diocese in 2009, and in testimony to the Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), he admitted he made a "misjudgment" and that "it wasn't handled properly at the time".

While a Church of England Bishop, Forster served members of the English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee. While opposed to efforts to legalise same-sex marriage in the UK and the ordination of practicing



Former Anglican bishop Peter Forster.

homosexual clergy, he had supported the ordination of women, and the first woman bishop in the Church of England came from his diocese.

However, the *Church Times* said that Forster was worried about the effect of women bishops on ecumenism.

"[He] noted a 'drift' in ecumenical relations 'from a vision of full visible unity to an essentially debased vision of reconciled diversity.' It was 'astonishing' that ARCIC had not produced work on the ordination of women, he said," the newspaper reported.

The bishop was one of 26

Lords Spiritual – Church of England bishops serving in Parliament – serving in the UK's House of Lords from 2001 until his retirement in 2019.

Forster was also critical of Pope Francis's 2015 environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*, co-authoring *The Papal Encyclical: A critical Christian response* with Bernard 'Donoughue, a Labour Party peer. The document, published by The Global Warming Policy Foundation, called the encyclical "somewhat naïve" and claiming that if the pontiff's policy prescriptions were followed, it would

"only serve to increase the very poverty that he seeks to reduce".

The retired bishop, 71, hasn't spoken about his reception into the Catholic Church, and there is no information on whether he will seek to become a Catholic priest.

In addition to the four Church of England bishops, former Church of England priest Gavin Ashenden was also received into the Catholic Church in December 2019. Ashenden had been ordained a bishop in the Christian Episcopal Church, a breakaway Anglican denomination, in 2017.

Argentine prelate responds to overdose wave

The president of the Argentine bishops' conference expressed sorrow and called for action on addiction after the consumption of contaminated cocaine claimed at least 23 lives and hospitalised dozens more in the low-income suburbs of Buenos Aires.

Bishop Óscar Ojea of San Isidro, conference president, tweeted February 2, "I am deeply moved by the death of young people and adults due to the consumption of adulterated drugs. We pray to God

for each one of them, especially for their families and for the entire community that suffers. We also pray for those who are hospitalised in serious condition."

He later tweeted February 3, "(Illegal drug consumption) has to do with the most profound problems of our society: lack of life and labour options, deep family crises, the enormous deficit of our education system, deep loneliness and the need for affection."

Bishop Ojea concluded, "These are

the issues that must be addressed by a 'better policy' as Pope Francis proposes in *Fratelli Tutti*."

Officials in Argentina say cocaine sold in Buenos Aires province had been cut with a synthetic opioid; victims responded favourably to an antidote.

But Sergio Berni, provincial security minister, said officials were unable to identify the exact substance. He urged anyone who had purchased cocaine to discard it immediately.

Lithuanian archbishop backs hard line against Russia

The president of the Lithuanian bishops' conference warned that his country and its neighbours could be targeted if Russian President Vladimir Putin imposes his will on Ukraine.

Archbishop Gintaras Grušas of Vilnius, who is

also president of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, urged Western countries to maintain a "hard line of deterrence."

"We're in a precarious geographical and historical position – Mr Putin has reiterated his view that

Russia's empire should not have collapsed and seems to have a claim on our three Baltic states," the US-born archbishop told *Catholic News Service* February 3. "But we have the guarantee of deterrence, with NATO forces here on the ground,

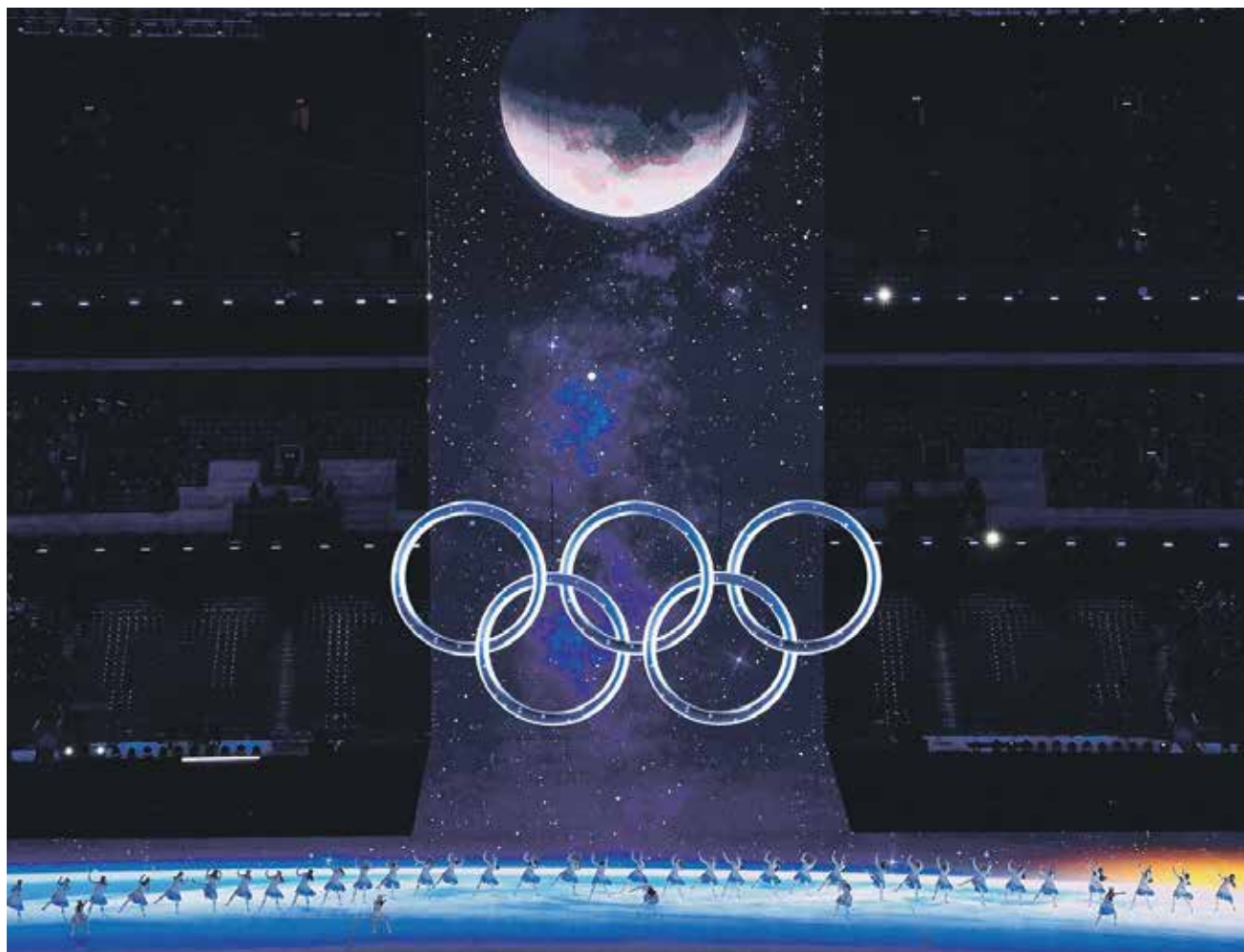
and we are part of the European Union.

"So long as European countries stay united, I think the deterrence will work. Russia is tempting the West in various ways to see if its unity is intact," said the archbishop.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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Dancing on ice



Performers are pictured under the Olympic rings during the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics at National Stadium in Beijing February 4. Photo: CNS.

Nicaragua revokes legal status of Catholic projects

The Nicaragua national assembly ordered the revocation of the legal status of five universities – including a Catholic university – along with several Catholic educational and charitable projects, marking the latest act of repression targeting supposed opponents of President Daniel Ortega.

Projects that would be forced to close in the Diocese of Estelí include an association of parochial schools, an agricultural institute, a Catholic cultural association, the diocesan justice and peace commission and the diocesan Caritas chapter. The Universidad Católica del Trópico Seco also lost its legal status.

The country's Interior Ministry alleged in a report that the targeted universities and nonprofits thwarted attempts at oversight, failed to properly disclose financial details and did not identify their directors, according to the Nicaraguan newspaper *La Prensa*. Members of the Ortega-controlled assembly accused the nonprofits of improperly profiting from their legal status.

Attempts to reach a diocesan spokesman in Estelí were unsuccessful. The Spanish news service EFE described the Diocese of Estelí as "one of the most critical of the Ortega government."

Msgr Carlos Avilés, vicar

general of the Archdiocese of Managua, told Catholic News Service that retired Estelí Bishop Juan Abelardo Mata "was very critical of the government and denounced many things".

"It's all false and a pretext to repress," Msgr Avilés said. "They want to mess with the diocese of Estelí."

He added that Caritas chapters have had difficulties presenting paperwork to the Nicaraguan Interior Ministry. In a diocese like Estelí, he said, Caritas often delivers grains and food, which is received via in-kind donations, but the Interior Ministry wants Church officials to put a value on the donations.

Nicaragua's Catholic Church tried to promote dialogue as an exit to the political crisis in 2018 and allowed protesters to seek refuge in parishes. But the Ortega regime turned paramilitaries on protesters. It also is holding political prisoners, whose families have been harassed while holding prayer services in churches.

Ortega was re-elected in November, but Church leaders said the election was fraudulent.

"There is no institutionalism here," Msgr Avilés said. "There is no law, and nothing is independent."

Pakistan receives first Servant of God

When a suicide bomber attempted to enter a Catholic church in Pakistan in 2015, a 20-year-old volunteer security guard blocked him.

"I will die but I will not let you go in," he reportedly told the terrorist armed with explosives. The attacker then set off a bomb, immediately killing himself and the man now recognised as a candidate for canonization: Akash Bashir.

Because of his actions, the church – with more than 1,000 Catholics inside – was saved from a direct blast.

Bashir died on March 15, 2015, when suicide bombers attacked St John's Catholic Church and Christ Church of the Church of Pakistan. Located in Lahore, the churches stand in one of the country's largest Christian neighbourhoods.

Terrorist group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Jamaatul Ahrar (TTP-JA) later claimed the attacks that killed 17 people and injured more than 70, Vatican News reported.

Those numbers might have been greater if Bashir had not guarded St

John's Catholic Church.

Nearly seven years later, on January 31, Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore announced that the Vatican accepted Akash Bashir as a Servant of God, the title given to a candidate for the sainthood while his or her life and work is closely examined.

The archbishop made the announcement about Bashir, an alumnus of the local Don Bosco Technical Institute, on the feast of St John Bosco, UCA News reported.

Vatican roundup

New UAE Apostolic Nunciature opens in Abu Dhabi

● The Substitute of the Secretariat of State, Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, presided over a ceremony to officially open the new Apostolic Nunciature to the UAE on Friday.

The event took place on the same day as the world marks the International Day of Human Fraternity, which commemorates Pope Francis' signing of the Document on Human Fraternity in Abu Dhabi in 2019.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Archbishop Peña Parra conveyed the Pope's "cordial greetings and spiritual closeness" to everyone in the UAE.

He also expressed the Pope's best wishes for the recent celebration of the 50th anniversary of the country's founding.

The Archbishop said the new diplomatic outpost demonstrates the "good bilateral relations that already exist between the United Arab Emirates and the Holy See" as the two mark the 15th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Archbishop Peña Parra said Pope Francis' signing of the 2019 Document on Human Fraternity, with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, in Abu Dhabi affirmed the important role of faith in Emirati society.

Pope Francis appoints new archbishop of Glasgow

● Pope Francis appointed a new Catholic archbishop of Glasgow on Friday.

The Vatican announced on February 4 that Bishop William Nolan will lead the prominent Scottish archdiocese, based in the country's biggest city by population.

Bishop Nolan, 68, has served as the bishop of Galloway, in southwest Scotland, since 2015 and chairs the Scottish bishops' conference commission for justice and peace.

"As I overcome my initial shock at being appointed archbishop my thoughts now turn to the challenges that lie ahead," he said in a statement published by the archdiocese.

"I look forward to

working with everyone in the archdiocese, laity and clergy, to carry out the mission that we share of proclaiming God's good news and of bringing the joy of the Gospel into the lives of the people of today."

Bishop Nolan succeeds the late Archbishop Philip Tartaglia, who died suddenly two days after his 70th birthday in January 2021.

Previous archbishops of Glasgow include the outspoken Cardinal Thomas Winning (1974-2001) and Archbishop Mario Conti (2002-2012).

Bishop Nolan's installation Mass will take place on February 26 at St Andrew's Cathedral.

Pope sends greetings to Beijing Winter Olympics

● Pope Francis sent warm greetings to participants in the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games that are about to open in Beijing on 4 February and 4 March, respectively.

Speaking during a General Audience, he sent wishes for success to both the organisers and the athletes.

"I therefore appreciate that the International Olympic Committee has added the word '*Communitas*,' meaning 'together' to the historic Olympic motto '*Citius, Altius, Fortius*,' that is 'Faster, Higher, Stronger': so that the Olympic Games may nurture a more fraternal world," he said.

On 20 July 2021, the Session of the International Olympic Committee approved a change in the Olympic motto that recognises the unifying power of sport and the importance of solidarity.

As Pope Francis explained, the change adds the word "together" after an en dash to "Faster, Higher, Stronger" meaning that the new Olympic motto now reads in Latin "*Citius, Altius, Fortius – Communitas*."

The Pope went on to say his thoughts go in particular to the entire Paralympic world.



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

Sunday marked the 63rd anniversary of an important turning point for 20th Century Catholicism, and one with direct relevance for understanding the current occupants of two of the most influential offices in Italy: Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, and Sergio Mattarella, the recently re-elected President of the Republic.

That turning point was the ordination of Giuseppe Dossetti to the priesthood on January 6, 1959, by the legendary Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro of Bologna, whom Dossetti would go on to serve as a key adviser and ally.

Both Francis and Mattarella have been described by many Italian observers as *Dossettiani*, meaning disciples of the legendary socially conscious priest.

Born in Genoa, as a young man Dossetti became involved in Italy's Catholic Action Movement. He was nine years old when Mussolini's forces marched on Rome, and he became a determined anti-fascist, at one point participating in combat with Italy's partisan forces under the code name Benigno. After the war Dossetti got involved in politics, supporting the transition to a democratic republic and playing a key role in drafting the country's post-war constitution.

Dossetti was always motivated by a keen Catholic faith and spirituality, and during the 1950s he felt an increasing tug to the priesthood. He told Cardinal Lercaro of his desires in 1956, and, after two years of reflection, the cardinal finally ordained Dossetti, then 45 years old, in January 1959.

Three years later Dossetti accompanied Cardinal Lercaro to the Second Vatican Council as his *peritus*, or theological expert, where they were part of the broad progressive majority. Unlike most of the leaders of that movement, however, who were primarily interested in internal Church reform, Dossetti's vision was strongly *ad extra*, seeing the Church's renewal in terms of vital engagement with social and cultural movements, especially the defence of the poor.

Council

During the council, Dossetti was the lone Italian to serve on a working group on Church poverty that met at Rome's Collegio Belga and was led by French theologian Father Paul Gauthier, which many observers credit with helping stimulate the liberation theology movement in Latin America. Dossetti was also part of the inspiration for Cardinal Lercaro's famous homily for the first World Day of Peace on January 1, 1968, in which he directly condemned America's bombings of North Vietnam. Cardinal Lercaro was removed from his post in Bologna by

Italian priest's legacy shows that in Catholicism, the past is never past



St Peter's Basilica is seen at the Vatican, January 26. Photo: CNS.

St Paul VI not long after, in obvious irritation for Cardinal Lercaro's break with the pontiff's more diplomatic approach.

“Dossetti was always motivated by a keen Catholic faith and spirituality”

As the drama of Cardinal Lercaro and Dossetti was playing out, two young Catholic men in their twenties were watching it all and drawing inspiration: Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who entered the Jesuits just months before Dossetti was ordained, and Sergio Mattarella, who was deepening his involvement in the youth branch of Catholic Action.

Bergoglio, of course, would go on to become Pope Francis a half-century later, making Dossetti's vision of a “poor Church for the poor” the mission statement of his papacy.

As for Mattarella, who essentially saved Italy from itself last month by reluctantly agreeing to a second term as president when efforts by the major parties to find a successor ended in rancour and paralysis, his career in some ways could be seen as a long effort to translate Dossetti's legacy into the messy business of government.

Mattarella picked up the political mantle from his older brother Piersanti, who was a member of the Christian Democrats and served as President of Sicily until his assassination in 1980 after leaving Mass one Sunday, an ambush believed to have been ordered by the Sicilian mob in retaliation for his efforts to break the mafia stranglehold on local government.

Fallen

The young Sergio Mattarella was the one who collected his older brother's body from in front of the Church where he had fallen, and in the years to come he would move through the ranks in Italian politics, eventually serving as minister of both defence and education as well as deputy prime minister before being elected to the presidency for the first time in 2015. Broadly speaking, Mattarella always has been seen as part of the centre-left “social Catholicism” streak in the country's political life.

Of his devout Catholicism, there can be little doubt. One small sign came during the St John Paul II years, when many leftist politicians made a show of shaking the pope's hand rather than kissing his ring as a demonstration of the secular character of Italy's republic and the separation of

Church and state. Mattarella, while sharing those ideals, nevertheless quietly performed the traditional *baccia-mano* whenever he encountered the pontiff. He attends Mass at Rome's Basilica of Sant'Andrea della Fratte, not far from the president's residence at the Quirinale Palace, where the pastor in a 2015 interview described him as someone who “comes often ... he's a good Catholic.”

“The young Sergio Mattarella was the one who collected his older brother's body from in front of the Church where he had fallen”

In his speech last Thursday during his swearing-in ceremony, Mattarella laid out an ambitious agenda for Italy's future rooted in Dossetti-style social Catholicism, insisting on human dignity as the foundation.

“Inequalities are not the price to be paid for growth,” he said, taking direct aim at a conventional claim of capitalist dogma. “Instead, they're a brake on every prospect for growth,” he said, lamenting the “desperate and endless poverty which, unfortunately, mortifies the hopes of so many people.”

Granted, not every Catholic in Italy is quite sold on Mattarella as a living embodiment of the Faith. Some, for instance, complain that Mattarella once resigned a ministerial position in protest of a law that paved the way for the rise of Silvio Berlusconi's media empire, eventually propelling the conservative Berlusconi to the Prime Minister's job, but he did not step down in protest of either a law liberalising in-vitro fertilization or one which permitted rapid divorce. (This despite the fact that Mattarella didn't actually hold office when either of those laws were adopted, so he didn't have anything from which to resign.)

Quasi-socialist

More broadly, some Catholics here see Mattarella as the product of a mushy, quasi-socialist version of the Faith, one that all but ignores the transcendent dimension – a charge many of them would make, needless to say, about Francis as well.

Whatever the case, it's fair to say that Francis and Mattarella are proof positive that despite the mythology about Catholicism as incapable of change, in reality things change all the time. Not so long ago, Cardinal Lercaro was a cardinal whose career ended in ignominy and a papal rebuke, and Dossetti was an all but forgotten footnote to history. Today, in the form of the Pope and the President, their legacy could instead be said to represent the soul of Italy's ruling class.

William Faulkner's famous words apply in a special way to Catholicism: “The past is never dead. It's not even past.”

“Some Catholics here see Mattarella as the product of a mushy, quasi-socialist version of the Faith”

European cardinals call for major Church changes



Elise Ann Allen

Over the past week, two leading European cardinals, both of whom enjoy broad favour with Pope Francis, have made public statements calling for a change in the Catholic Church's current position on the issues of homosexuality and priestly celibacy.

Homosexual relationships

In an interview published in Germany's Catholic News Agency (KNA) earlier this week, Jesuit Cardinal Jean Claude Hollerich, Archbishop of Luxembourg, voiced his belief that the Church's position viewing homosexual relationships is wrong.

"I believe that the sociological-scientific foundation of this teaching is no longer correct," he said, saying the time has come to revise this position, and suggesting that Pope Francis's own rhetoric on homosexuality could open the door for this change to take place.

Since the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis, who has also voiced concern over homosexuality in the priesthood, has taken a softer approach to the issue and has urged the Church to be more welcoming to homosexual individuals and to families with homosexual members.

In 2013, he signalled a new approach to the issue with his famous declaration that if a person "is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will ... Who am I to judge?"

In 2018, he said that the Church has to find a way to help the parents of gays and lesbians so that they "stand by" their children, telling parents with LGBT children, "Do not condemn. Dialogue. Understand. Make space for the son or daughter; make space so they express themselves."

During an interview in 2019, Francis said he does not think it's rare for parents to have a homosexual child and said that homosexual tendencies "are not a sin," insisting that tendencies themselves "are not sin. If you have a tendency to anger, it's not a sin. Now, if you are angry and hurt people, the sin is there."

Last year, he met with a group of parents of LGBT children, telling them that God loves their children as they are, and that the Church loves them because they are "children of God."

Earlier this month, during one of his general audience speeches, the Pope said he thinks often about parents struggling with problems their children are facing, including "Parents who see different sexual orientations

in their children" and who struggle with "how [to] manage this and accompany the children without hiding behind a condemning attitude."

In addition to overseeing the Archdiocese of Luxembourg, Cardinal Hollerich also serves as president of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) and over the summer was appointed by Pope Francis to the significant role of Relator General for the ongoing Synod of Bishops on Synodality. He was made a cardinal by Francis in 2019.

His remarks on homosexuality come in response to a public campaign by 125 Catholic Church employees in Germany who recently outed themselves as homosexual, saying they wanted to "live openly without fear" in the Church.

In the interview, Cardinal Hollerich said it is important that the Church remain human, and admitted that he knows of homosexual priests and laypeople in the Archdiocese of Luxembourg.

“His remarks on homosexuality come in response to a public campaign by 125 Catholic Church employees in Germany who recently outed themselves as homosexual, saying they wanted to ‘live openly without fear’ in the Church”

"They know that they have a home in the Church," he said, adding, "With us, no one is dismissed because they are homosexual, with us no one has ever been dismissed because of that."

Even divorced and remarried people without an annulment are active in his archdiocese, Cardinal Hollerich said, insisting that, "I can't kick them out... They would become unemployed. How can such a thing be Christian?"

Cardinal Hollerich also made waves in the interview for suggesting that his fellow cardinal, Cardinal Rainer Woelki of Cologne, who is on a papal-mandated sabbatical until March following intense public backlash over his handling of clerical abuse cases, should resign.

"It seems that the archbishop is no longer welcome in his diocese among a large majority," Cardinal Hollerich said of Cardinal Woelki, adding, "If that's what happened to me, I would tender my resignation."

While Cardinal Woelki has not brought any blame on himself in the review of abuse cases and while he has devoted himself to child protection, "he has very poor communication," Cardinal Hollerich said, and criticised Cardinal Woelki's decision not to publish the results of an ini-

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg, president of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, in 2020. Photo: CNS.



tial report he had commissioned into abuse in the Archdiocese of Cologne.

"You can't do that in the digital age," he said, and admitted that he found it "difficult" that the cost of the legal reports Cardinal Woelki commissioned exceeded payments the archdiocese had made to victims. "In that case something is wrong," he said.

According to information released by the Archdiocese of Cologne, Cardinal Woelki spent roughly €2.8 million on legal experts, media lawyers, and communication consultants from 2019 to 2021 as part of his inquiries into abuse in the archdiocese, whereas only €1.5 million has been paid to victims of clerical abuse since 2010.

Cologne Auxiliary Bishop Rolf Steinhäuser, the current administrator of the Cologne archdiocese, has ordered a review of the contracts over concerns that key Church committees might have been ignored in the process of awarding them.

Cardinal Hollerich said that if he were in Cardinal Woelki's position, he would "go to a parish somewhere. A student community, for example," adding, "As a Christian, I don't have to be at the top to live my faith."

Europe

Elsewhere in Europe, another top prelate and close papal aide, German Cardinal Reinhard Marx is making waves over recent comments in an

interview stating his belief that the Church ought to change its stance on mandatory priestly celibacy.

Speaking to German daily *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, Cardinal Marx said "it would be better for everyone to create the possibility of celibate and married priests."

Currently the archbishop of Munich and Freising, Cardinal Marx is a former leader of the German bishops' conference and is also a member of the Pope's council of cardinal advisors.

“Cardinal Marx was faulted in the report as well as several predecessors, including retired Pope Benedict XVI, who led the archdiocese from 1977-1982”

His remarks on priestly celibacy come as his archdiocese is still reeling from an independent report into its handling of clerical sexual abuse cases over several decades. Cardinal Marx was faulted in the report as well as several predecessors, including retired Pope Benedict XVI, who led the archdiocese from 1977-1982.

Cardinal Marx, known as a pro-

gressive reformist who enjoys the Pope's favour, said after the Munich abuse report's publication that a deep reform is needed if the Church is to overcome the "disaster" of clerical abuse.

In the interview, Cardinal Marx said that "For some priests, it would be better if they were married – not just for sexual reasons, but because it would be better for their life, and they wouldn't be lonely. We must hold this discussion."

In his vision, celibacy would not be eliminated entirely, Cardinal Marx said, but admitted that he sees a "question mark" as to whether "it should be taken as a basic precondition for every priest."

Priestly celibacy

The topic of priestly celibacy and advocacy for optional celibacy is not new for Cardinal Marx, who voiced support for a limited openness to the married priesthood during the 2019 Synod of Bishops on the Amazon as a possible solution to the regional priest shortage.

Priestly celibacy has also been an open topic of debate throughout the German Catholic Church's "synodal path" reform process, which was launched in response to the country's clerical abuse crisis. The latest session of the process began Thursday.

Letters

Letter of the week

A better indication of the divisions in Ukraine

Dear Editor, I couldn't agree with Mary Kenny more that there is a case for teaching more about faith traditions which are relevant to current political conflicts [The Irish Catholic – January 20, 2022].

But let's start with Ukraine. The dominant religion in Ukraine, east or west, is Orthodoxy. This is divided between those under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow and those in the autocephalous (autonomous) Ukrainian Orthodox Church, supported by Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Eastern Catholics make up a significant and influential minority in Western Ukraine. These are in communion with the Latin Catholic

Church, with whom they share everything except the Latin Rite – the Syro-Malabarese mentioned in the profile of Johnstown/Walterstown parish in your same issue are in a similar position.

The Ukrainian Eastern Catholic liturgy and spirituality are closely related to those of the Orthodox, but Ukrainians – Orthodox and Catholic – would say Russian Orthodoxy has its roots in the Christianity of the Kiev Rus rather than vice versa. Uniate, by the way, is a term of contempt Orthodox use for Eastern Catholics and should not be used in a Catholic newspaper other than in the same manner as 'Papist' would.

Western Ukraine was a long-time part of the Hapsburg Empire until 1918, so it would see its connexion with the West through Hungary and Austria rather than Poland. Indeed, the Second Polish Republic (1919-39) was far from positive for the Ukrainian minority.

There is a much simpler way to divide east and west in modern Ukraine. Russian is spoken in the east and Ukrainian in the west and that serves as a better indication of this divide.

*Yours etc.,
Peadar Laighléis
Laytown, Co. Meath*

Coverage of Knock's Marian shrine status

Dear Editor, In the issue at the end of the year [The Irish Catholic – December 30, 2021] you reviewed the year using monthly reminders of events considered of interest to your readers.

For instance, March highlights Minister for Mental Health Mary Butler's warning that prolonged restrictions regarding religious ceremonies can affect people's mental health. An overview of the future of Christianity in the Middle East and the position of school opening during the pandemic.

All important issues, no doubt, but not so newsworthy, in my opinion, as the elevation by Pope Francis on the Feast of St Joseph on March 19, of Knock to the status of Ireland's 'International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine'.

I think it rather remiss of our leading Catholic newspaper to omit this momentous event in your survey of the year's happenings.

In fairness, in your issue of March 25, 2021, you dedicated a full page plus illustrations of the event.

Yours etc., Patrick Fleming, Glasnevin, Dublin 9



Dismissal and denigration of family life

Dear Editor, The most significant social mal-influence in the whole arena of life and culture today is ignored in modernism's constant and, I believe, orchestrated call for the uprooting of sexual intercourse from its primary raison d'être. That being the gifting and nurturing of human life itself in families created by parents in love.

There is no other relationship in which all of the traits, virtues and inspirations essential to the creation of civilized life are sourced, constantly employed and borne witness to. These include the fostering of egalitarian-

ism as the younger ones are protected by more mature siblings; a respect for just authority sourced in parental disapproval and correction of bad behaviour coupled to forgiveness as well as expectation and appreciation of improvement; a confidence in their own futures, whatever the difficulties it presents, assured by grand-parental proven resilience and serenity as well as a growing appreciation of the exemplary integrity of their longer life witness to all-embracing good.

The wellbeing of society could not but benefit from the commitment of citizens nur-

tured and ennobled in such well-sources of love, integrity, generosity and realisation of obligation to one another.

In fact, it may well be that the dismissal of and even denigration of family life as the initial guiding influence cultivating respect for all others is a primary cause of the harassment of women now prevalent in Irish society.

The 'condom culture' modernism espouses and relentlessly propagates as liberating and progressive has also bestowed a demographic crisis of epochal consequences on 'greying Europe'. The birth rates in all of its major coun-

tries have fallen below that necessary to ensure adequate population growth.

In inevitable turn the resultant existential uncertainty facing its peoples has yielded a stunted spirituality quite incapable of accepting a realisation of the humane obligation to the deprived urgently required to redress the indifference shown toward the uncertainties facing Europe's immigrant communities and the suffering of the refugee peoples incarcerated at its borders.

*Yours etc.,
Colm Ó Tórná
Artane, Dublin*

Indoctrination in Irish universities leads down 'dangerous road'

Dear Editor, There is a major issue in Irish third-level institutes of groupthink. Subsequently, and alarmingly, this has led to hostility towards people with differing views.

Shannon Cambell's article 'Students must be educated beyond their echo chambers' on the issue of cancel culture raises many good points [The Irish Catholic – January 27, 2022].

While she says there is a positive mode of thought among a younger demographic, which people of faith can "engage with constructively", I very much hope she is correct.

From what I have seen, it seems Irish universities are continuing down a dangerous road led by radical lecturers and other outside societal influences.

When students and lecturers all believe

in certain ideas and principles, and denigrate, demonise and attempt to de-platform those they deem to have 'wrong' beliefs – that is not education. In fact, it is indoctrination and no good will come of it – to say the least.

*Yours etc.,
Rory Kelly,
Dublin 8*

facebook community

Each week we publish a selection of comments from The Irish Catholic Facebook page

Forgiving is a 'grace-filled art' says bishop on 50th anniversary Mass for Bloody Sunday

I was privileged to be there. It was very dignified and uplifting. The presence of Bishop Andrew Foster from the Church of Ireland Diocese of Derry and Raphoe was so welcome too. – **Charles Glenn**

Region hosting Olympic skiing has history of Catholic persecution

For so many, many reasons, the China Olympics is a media event to boycott. Absolutely disgusting. – **William Broderick**

Dominicans to launch new online ministry this autumn

Dominicans in Ireland are probably among the greatest order left over there. I saw it during restrictions. – **Guillaume Rouy**

That's a brilliant idea. – **Rita Teehan**

It seems to be a great idea and to me the Dominicans are great and that is why people love them. They are a lovely bunch of priests. – **John Long**

What do you think? Join in the conversation on The Irish Catholic Facebook page

Time to reach out to people and welcome them back to parishes

Dear Editor, For a very long time we have been unable to live a normal live due to the Covid-19 pandemic, now that every indication is that we are past the worst, we must now start to rebuild. I thank *The Irish Catholic* for the front-page article welcoming people back to their parishes and parish life [The Irish Catholic – January 27, 2022].

It was already very challenging to maintain a vibrant parish life, creating a welcoming environment for families, holding prayer meetings and events etc., post-Covid there is a daunting hill we must climb. Many may never return, but that is no reason to fall into despair and to give up, the Faithful must set about creating something for people to return to – not just an empty church.

It is time to build on the new confidence people have to socialise again, like going out to restaurants, pubs, playing sports and more, and reach out to let people know their parish is there and delighted to welcome them back.

*Yours etc.,
Cathal Murphy
Waterford City, Waterford*

Letters to the Editor

All letters should include the writer's full name, postal address and telephone numbers (day and evening). Letter writers may receive a subsequent telephone call from *The Irish Catholic* as part of our authentication process which does not amount to a commitment to publish.

We regret that we cannot give prior notice of a letter's publication date, acknowledge unpublished letters or discuss the

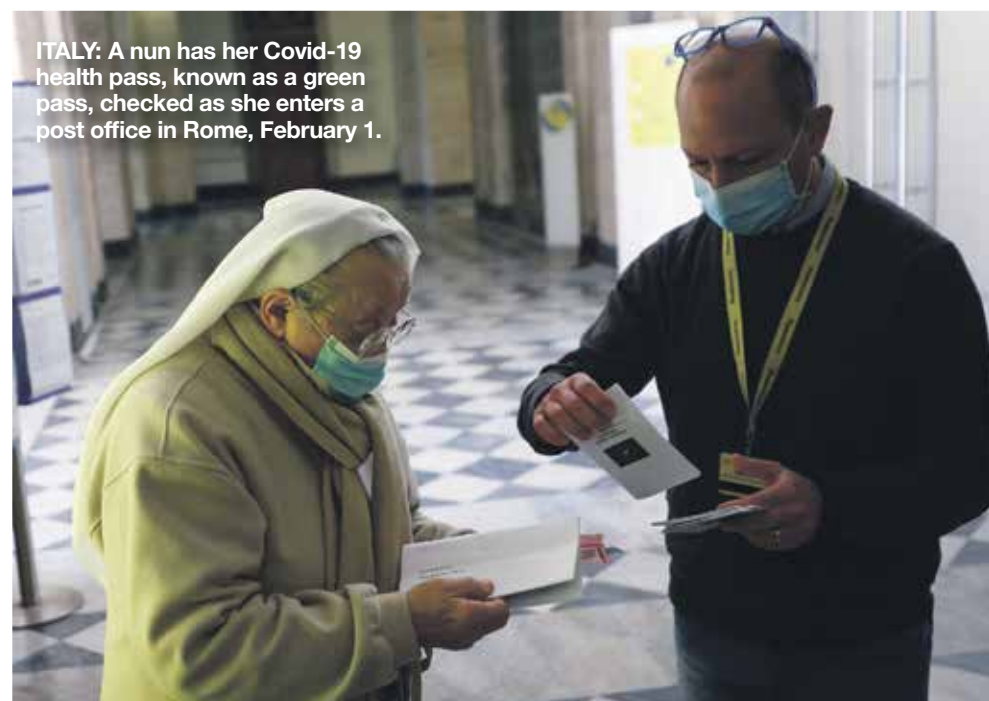
merits of letters. We do not publish pseudonyms or other formulae to conceal the writer's identity, such as "name and address with editor". We do not print letters addressed to someone else, open letters, or verse. Letters to the Editor should only be sent to *The Irish Catholic*, and not other publications. Letters should not exceed 300 words and may be shortened for space requirements.

Around the world

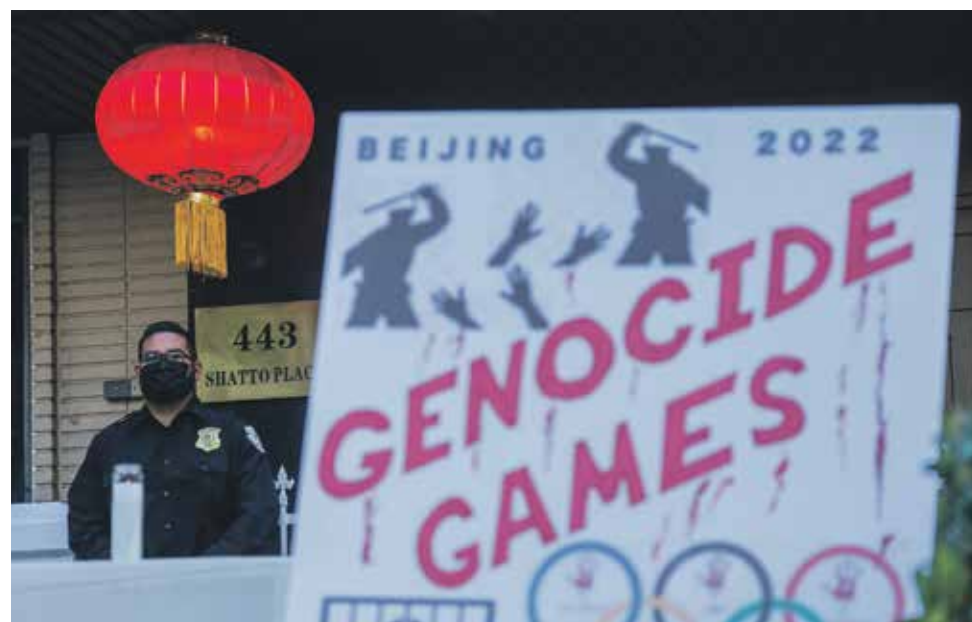


▲ **COLOMBIA:** A woman wearing a shirt with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe prays with a rosary as she demonstrates in front of Colombia's constitutional court in Bogota February 3, against removing abortion from the penal code. Photos: CNS.

◀ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis looks on as a dancer and musician perform during an audience with members of the Casa dello Spirito e delle Arti Foundation at the Vatican.



ITALY: A nun has her Covid-19 health pass, known as a green pass, checked as she enters a post office in Rome, February 1.



USA: A security man stands guard outside the Chinese consulate in Los Angeles during a rally ahead of the Beijing Winter Olympics February 3, 2022, to protest the Chinese government's human rights record. Photos: CNS.



▲ **ARGENTINA:** Residents gather in the low-income neighbourhood 'Puerta 8' in Buenos Aires, February 3. At least 23 people died in low-income areas of Buenos Aires, and dozens more were hospitalised after consumption of contaminated cocaine.



▲ **ADRIATIC SEA:** US Navy sailors are seen aboard aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman in the Adriatic Sea. The Truman strike group is operating under NATO command and control along with several other NATO allies for coordinated maritime manoeuvres, anti-submarine warfare training and long-range training.



When our world is falling apart

The early years of my adulthood and priesthood were spent teaching theology at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Canada. I was young, full of energy, loved teaching, and was discovering the joys of ministry. For the most part, these were good years.

However, they weren't always easy. Restlessness and inner chaos find us all. The demands of ministry, the tensions inside community, the obsessions I'm forever prone to, the not-infrequent departure of cherished friends from the community, and the constant movement of people through my life, occasionally left me in emotional chaos, gasping for oxygen, struggling to sleep, wondering how I was going to still my soul again.

“The same kind of emotional chaos and heartache can still unsettle me on occasion and leave me unsure of who I am”

But, I had a little formula to help handle this. Whenever the chaos got bad, I would get into my car and drive four hours to our family farm just across the border in Saskatchewan. My family still lived in the house I'd grown up in and I was able to eat at the same table I'd eaten at as a child, sleep in the same bed I'd



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

slept in as a boy, and walk the same ground I'd walked while growing up. Usually it didn't take long for home to do its work. I'd only need a meal or an overnight stay and the chaos and heartache would subside; I'd begin to feel steady again.

Heartache

Coming home didn't cure the heartache but it gave the heart the care it needed. Somehow home always worked.

Today, the same kind of emotional chaos and heartache can still unsettle me on occasion and leave me unsure of who I am, of the choices I've made in life, and of who and what to trust. However, I cannot drive to my childhood home anymore and need to find the steadying that going home once gave me in new ways. It isn't always apparent where to find this, even amidst a good community, a still

supportive family, loving friends, and a wonderful job. Home can be elusive on a restless night. What one needs to steady the heart isn't always easy to access. Once you've left home, sometimes it's hard to find your way back there again.

Roots

So what do I do now when I need to go home and retouch my roots to steady myself? Sometimes a trusted friend is the answer; sometimes it's a call to a family member; sometimes it's a family that has become family to me, sometimes it's a place in prayer or in nature, sometimes it's immersing myself in work, and sometimes I can't find it at all and have to live with the chaos until, like a bad storm, it blows over.

Through the years, I've discovered that a special book can take me home in the same way as driving there once

did. Different people find home in different places. One of the books that does this for me, almost without fail, is *The Story of a Soul* by Therese of Lisieux. Not surprising, it's the story of a recessive journey, the story of Therese's own effort at recapturing what her house, home, and family once gave her. But the recessive journey in itself is not what gives this book (which I highly recommend for anyone whose heart is aching in way that unsettles the soul) such a special power. Many autobiographies unsettle more than they settle. This one soothes your soul.

“Sometimes a trusted friend is the answer; sometimes it's a call to a family member; sometimes it's a family that has become family to me”

However, remembering alone doesn't necessarily care for the heart and sometimes our memories of home and childhood carry more pathology and pain than steadying

and healing. Not everyone's home was safe and nurturing. Tragically, one's initial home can also be the place where our trust and steadiness are irrevocably broken, as is the case often in sexual and other forms of abuse. I was fortunate. My first home gave me trust and faith. For those who were not as lucky, the task is to find a home, a place or a person, that caresses a wounded soul.

Caresses

What makes for a home that caresses the soul?

Home is where you are safe. It's also the place where you experience security and trust and where that steadiness enables you to believe in the things of faith. I used to drive four hours for a meal or a night's sleep in order to find that. Today, I need to make that recessive journey in other ways.

It's a journey we all need to make in times of chaos and deep restlessness in our lives, namely, to find a place, a space, a friend, a family, a house, a table, a bed, a book, or something that grounds us again in security, trust, stability, and faith.

Of course, there are headaches and heartaches for which there is no cure; but the soul doesn't need to be cured, only properly cared for. Our task is to go home, to find those people, places, prayers, and books that caress our souls at those times when our world is falling apart.

“Whenever the chaos got bad, I would get into my car and drive four hours to our family farm just across the border in Saskatchewan”

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 10, 2022

Personal Profile

El Salvador
via Ireland
and Rome

Page 34



The Valentine behind Valentine's Day

Unfortunately, like with so many holidays these days, St Valentine's Day has lost much of its reason for being. It's now understood by many to be a day of token gestures and chubby, winged cherubs, but not much else. Like with Christmas, and Easter with its onslaught of eggs (good fun, of course, but they're not what Easter is primarily about), Valentine's Day has become one of expensive cards and chocolates.

The day as we have it is the product of a melting together of a number of European traditions and customs throughout the ages, from ancient Rome through England and France in the Middle Ages. However, the Catholic claim on the day comes from a real flesh and blood saint, St Valentine. A martyr, he was beaten and beheaded for his faith



Valentine's Day has lost much meaning over the years, but finding the saint behind the name should reinvigorate it for Catholics, writes Jason Osborne

under Roman Emperor Claudius the Goth.

How did this holy figure with such a violent end come to be tied to a day of love and romantic leisure? It's not so clear.

The real St Valentine

It's generally understood that there are at least three different St Valentines, all of whom are martyrs and are mentioned in the early martyrologies under the date of February 14. There are also some accounts of a possible

African St Valentine, another early Christian who was persecuted alongside his brothers and sisters in the Faith, but little to nothing else is known about this mysterious figure.

The St Valentine celebrated today is no less mysterious. One account of St Valentine sees historians unsure whether he was in fact one person or an amalgamation of two Valentines who died in very similar circumstances.

One is described as a priest in early Rome, the other as bishop

of Interamna (the modern city of Terni, Italy). Both seem to have suffered for their faith in the latter half of the third century, ultimately being killed for it, and to have been buried on the Flaminian Way, but reportedly at different distances from the city of Rome.

Speaking to the Catholic News Agency (CNA) about this take on St Valentine, Associate Professor of Church History at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois Fr Brendan Lupton said St Valentine was either a Roman priest and physician who was martyred or he was the Bishop of Terni, Italy, who was also martyred in Rome around 270 AD by Claudius the Goth.

Despite the muddled details, St Valentine is generally regarded as one of the first Christian martyrs of the Roman persecutions, being killed at a time when violence

against Christians was beginning to surge.

In the same interview, Fr Lupton explained the circumstances Rome found itself in at the time of St Valentine's martyrdom:

"More or less at that time, especially around the mid-third century, there was sort of a crisis in the Roman world known as the Third Century Crisis, where the Roman world was really in great peril," he said, continuing, "There was a great amount of inflation. There were barbarian incursions at the time. There was lots of political instability. So that sort of unleashed the first general persecution of Christians. Prior to that time, there were local persecutions, but they were local and sporadic."

>> Continued on Page 33

Family News

AND EVENTS

WEATHER WARNING
OVER FALLING IGUANAS
IN FLORIDA

People in Florida have been warned that immobilised iguanas could fall out of trees due to unusually cold temperatures across the region.

"Iguanas are cold-blooded. They slow down or become immobile when temps drop into the 40s (4-9 Celsius). They may fall from trees, but they are not dead," the US National Weather Service Miami-South Florida said on Twitter.

Zoologist Stacey Cohen, a reptile expert at Palm Beach Zoo in Florida, explained the iguana phenomenon to television station WPBF.

"Their bodies basically start to shut down where they lose their functions and so they are up in the trees on the branches sleeping and then because it gets so cold, they lose that ability to hang on and then they do fall out of trees a lot," she said.

Although most of the reptiles will likely survive this period of immobilisation, she said freezing temperatures were a threat to their survival and pointed to a cold snap in 2010 that wiped out a large number of the population.

PATERNAL ALCOHOL
USE INCREASES FOETAL
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Prenatal visits have traditionally focused almost exclusively on the behaviour of mothers, but new research from the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVMBS) continues to suggest that science should be looking more closely at the fathers' behaviour as well.

Dr Michael Golding, an associate professor in the CVMBS' Department of Veterinary Physiology & Pharmacology (VTPP), has spent years investigating the father's role, specifically as it relates to drugs and alcohol, in foetal development.

Dr Golding says a number of publications have shown that males pass down more than just their genetics, but exactly how that process works and the consequences of it remain largely unknown.

"When you look at the data from throughout human history, there's clear evidence that there's something beyond just genetics being inherited from the male," Dr Golding said. "So, if that data is solid, we've got to start looking more at male behaviour."

FIRST VIRUS
INFECTION LINKED
WITH INFECTIONS
LATER IN LIFE

Asymptomatic viral infections in the first days and weeks of a baby's life are associated with an increased risk of respiratory infections later in life, research suggests.

Viruses were found to interact with newborns' immune systems and microbiomes – the community of microbes that live in our body – in a way that affected both a child's risk and number of subsequent infections.

Prevention of such early viral infections, or strengthening immune systems with specially designed probiotics, may avert this risk, experts say.

The microbiome of a newborn baby can be influenced by many things, including delivery method, breastfeeding, antibiotics and the hospital environment.

Confirmation is not just a
rite of passage

If you were to believe some of our popular media, you could be convinced that Confirmation is just a mere rite of passage, a cultural or ceremonial ritual that marks the passage of childhood into adulthood.

It's often presented as a Sacrament involving a decision to embrace or choose the Catholic faith, affirming the decision usually made by parents when you're a baby. Sometimes a case is made for delaying Confirmation with the idea that a particular child isn't mature enough or lacks the understanding of what's involved. Here in Ireland, there's an inclination to view Confirmation as a special celebration to mark the end of primary education. When Confirmations were postponed during Covid lockdowns, some of the discussion focused more on children missing out on their special day, the loss of that chance to share the celebration with classmates and the practical considerations around growing out of clothes and shoes.

“Through Confirmation, we are more perfectly bound to the Church and enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit”

Confirmation is not a coming-of-age ceremony or a rite of passage. Confirmation, along with Baptism and the Eucharist, are the sacraments of Christian initiation. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* it explains that “the Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace”.

Through Confirmation, we

A parent's
perspective
Maria Byrne

are more perfectly bound to the Church and enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. I can clearly remember my own Confirmation and firmly believed that, the day after the ceremony, I'd be totally transformed and would have no problem dealing with all the difficulties and challenges of trying to be a good Catholic. I think, in my childish mind, I imagined that I'd feel this surge of energy that would turn me into some version of a Catholic Superwoman. In reality, Confirmation does give us the strength to witness to God's love and might in our words and deeds. The *YOUCAT*, the youth Catechism of the Catholic Church, describes the Sacrament very well giving the example of a coach sending a soccer player onto the playing field, putting his hand on his shoulder and giving him final instructions. It suggests that we can understand Confirmation in a similar way as a hand being placed upon us as we step out onto the field of life. It says:

“Through the Holy Spirit we know what we have to do and we have been given the power to do it.”

I wasn't too far wrong as a child in believing that I'd been bestowed with a great gift. All I had to do was to correspond with the full outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the same outpouring of the Spirit that the apostles were granted on the day of Pentecost. It is indeed a reason for great joy and celebration and not just a day to party and be glad because we got a “good haul” in terms of gifts and money.

I spotted an interesting blog title on the Catholic website, *Life Teen Blog*. Trenton Mattingly poses the question ‘Who the heck is the Holy Spirit?’ Many of our young people preparing for Confirmation could ask that exact same question. They may have heard a lot about God the Father and Jesus, who is God the



Son, but as the blog posts points out, the Holy Spirit is often the forgotten person of the Blessed Trinity. He is our teacher and our guide who makes his home in our souls. St John Vianney described how he “leads us along as a mother leads her child by the hand, as a sighted person leads a blind one.”

How often in life do we feel sad and discouraged, overwhelmed in our quest to lead Christian lives? How often do our teenagers and adult children talk about how difficult it is to swim against the tide and to be joyful witnesses to the Catholic faith in a world that often has little interest in the spiritual or the transcendent? Imagine how our outlook would change if we really

thought about how the Holy Spirit is pouring his supernatural strength into our souls. We are not alone: St Josemaría says in his famous little book, *The Way* – “The Advocate is in the centre of your soul : listen to him and be docile to his inspirations.”

The apostles had already seen the glory of the risen Christ but they were weak and fearful during the time of trial. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit transformed them into courageous soldiers for Christ.

“What a lovely prayer for anyone waiting to be confirmed and, indeed, for all of us”

In St Josemaría's *Christ is Passing By*, he describes how “The Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of strength, has made them firm, sure, bold” and able to spread the word of God loudly and vibrantly in the streets and squares of Jerusalem. Through the anointing with oil at Confirmation, each person receives the ‘mark’ or the seal of the Holy Spirit and now participates more fully in the mission of Jesus Christ and in the fullness of the Holy Spirit that he possesses. What a joy to have such a friend. In *The Forge*, St Josemaría again urges us to turn to the Holy Spirit: “Pray to him: Divine Guest, Master, Light, Guide, Love, may I make you truly welcome inside me and listen to the lessons you teach me. Make me burn with eagerness for you, make me follow you and love you.”

What a lovely prayer for anyone waiting to be confirmed and, indeed, for all of us.

» Continued from Page 31



Another take

Another account of St Valentine's life tells that he, along with St Marius, aided the Christians during the Claudian persecution. In addition to many other edicts concerning Christians, Emperor Claudius also issued a decree forbidding marriage. It's told that in order to increase troop numbers in his armies, he attempted to forbid young men from getting married, in the belief that single men made better soldiers than married men.

Legend states that Valentine defied this decree, urging young lovers to come to him in secret so that he could join them in the Sacrament of Matrimony. This kind of subversive behaviour could naturally only remain hidden for so long, and when the authorities found out, Valentine was promptly arrested and brought before the Emperor.

“The night before his execution, Valentine wrote a farewell message to the girl, signing off affectionately, ‘From your Valentine’”

Impressed with the zealous priest, Claudius attempted to convert Valentine to Roman paganism rather than executing him – which proved to be unsuccessful, as Valentine's saintly status hints. As such, the Emperor condemned him to death and sent him to prison.

This same account of Valentine's life recounts that while in prison, St Valentine was tended to by the jailor Asterius, and his blind daughter. Developing a friendship, St Valentine converted both to Christianity before his life's end – with this legend adding that he miraculously restored the sight of the jailor's daughter.

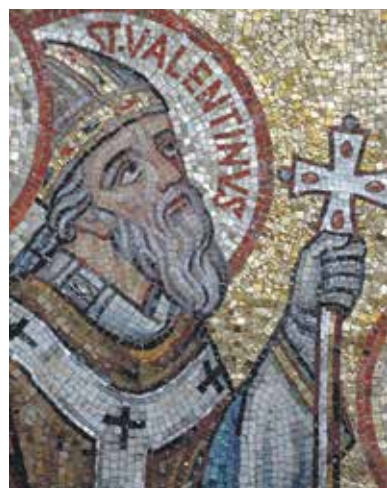
The night before his execution, Valentine wrote a farewell message to the girl, signing off affectionately, “From your Valentine”. Other accounts say that the exchanging of cards trope harkens to Valentine's habit of sending notes to other Christians from prison.

Origins

With these accounts in mind, it's not hard to see where some of the modern trappings of St Valentine's Day come from. His storied letter writing and ministry to young love have seen him become eternally associated with romance as the patron saint of engaged couples.

St Valentine's Day was also instituted around the fifth century by Pope Gelasius as a replacement for the sensual Roman holiday of Lupercalia, which was a popular feast day in ancient Rome, during which the pagan priests would offer sacrifices of different kinds of animals before running through the streets and slapping women with their hides – a ritual thought to guarantee fertility and health for the coming year.

Another element of the day and time which is entirely unrelated to St Valentine but of Roman origin is that of bows and arrows; imagery taken



from the Roman god Cupid, who was their god of love.

Another way in which St Valentine's Day may have come to be celebrated in its modern form was because the bird mating season was thought to begin around mid-February.

The Irish connection

Regardless of how St Valentine's life actually played out, what's certain is that he's made his way to Ireland.

In 1835, an Irish Carmelite, Fr John Spratt visited Rome. A famous preacher, he received many tokens from the Church's elite, with Pope Gregory XVI granting him the remains of St Valentine.

“A pilgrimage to Whitefriar Street Church for a prayer before the saint's earthly remains wouldn't hurt, either”

On November 10, 1836, the reliquary containing the remains arrived in Dublin and were brought to Whitefriar Street Church, where they remain to this day. Today, the shrine is one of the most popular in Ireland and is visited by couples and young singles alike, asking him to bless their love and help them find love respectively.

How to celebrate Valentine's Day properly

A celebration of St Valentine's Day that properly honours the meaning of the day and the saint behind it would see a focus on St Valentine's sacrificial love for all those he encountered, whether they were fellow Christians or pagan.

A pilgrimage to Whitefriar Street Church for a prayer before the saint's earthly remains wouldn't hurt, either.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



The pandemic seemed to be slipping away and we could look forward to brighter days. So I thought, until one morning last week, when one of the kids began complaining of vague symptoms.

I did a precautionary antigen test, just for reassurance. I presumed this was yet another false alarm. Yet, within just a minute or two, the fateful pink line appeared, confirming that she was positive.

The poor child had only had coronavirus last September. She was hustled off to her room, and – to despairing groans – the other three children were told that school and life outside the house was cancelled, yet again.

Other tests confirmed my wife as positive. The rest of us are negative, for now. Yet it seems only a matter of time before we also succumb. My wife has some unpleasant symptoms, although my daughter is now perfectly fine. The two patients are ensconced in one part of the house, while I try to manage working online, and the other three kids, along with preparing meals and all the rest of the daily household chores.

It is a strange turn of events to find ourselves suddenly imprisoned at home again, just as life was returning to normal with school, clubs, cafés and restaurants all beginning to take strides towards the post-pandemic spring we've all been longing for.

Thankfully, this latest variant tends to be much less severe than that which took so many lives this time last year – including my own mother, who died of coronavirus after catching it in hospital. Her picture looks down on me from the mantelpiece, and my heart warms whenever I think of her. The first anniversary of her death is coming soon and it's strange to have coronavirus in the house at this time. Yet I simply cannot think of her as truly dead, for my heart deeply knows that she is living still, in a realm of unimaginable happiness.

Just two years ago, a global pandemic seemed but a figment of the imaginations of the more pessimistic epidemiologists. There were rumours of a strange new virus circulating in China, but few of us knew what was really coming. Since then, we have seen life across the

entire planet disrupted in surreal ways. Great cities fell silent, while air travel all but ceased. Schools and workplaces were shut, while whole populations cowered in their homes. There was conflict too, as some railed against restrictions, while other embraced a simpler way of life.

Ireland has been changed by the pandemic. It certainly dealt



a blow to the already faltering Church in Ireland. Surveys suggest that many who were prevented from attending Mass, do not intend to return, now that restrictions are being lifted. Some argue that Christianity has not been so weak on this island since the retreat of paganism.

Yet the pandemic also showed the Irish priesthood at its finest. I have an image of quiet heroism indelibly imprinted in my memory. It is of one of the Cork University chaplains putting on PPE to enter the Covid ward, to go and administer the last rites. They did this, at risk to their own lives, throughout the pandemic, long before there were any vaccines. I saw priests reach out with warmth and compassion in new ways, through Facebook and online, when many parishioners were lonely and fearful. Fr Fogarty in Carrigaline held us at the time of my mother's death, with a remarkable kindness and grace.

Sacraments were delayed in our family, thanks to the pandemic, and our move home from England. Canon Kingston in Bandon wrapped us in kindness, and gave our family a sublime hour just before Christmas, when he administered Baptism and First Holy Communion with great warmth and wisdom. Even in the shadow of pandemic, there is light to be found.

In our quarantined sick house, the birdsong in the garden grows more cheerful, under a strengthening sun. Bright and incongruously green shoots rise in the wintry woods, for spring is coming.

El Salvador via Ireland and Rome

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

Bishop Michael Lenihan OFM's faith may have started in Ireland, but it's been shaped by El Salvador, where he's currently ministering.

"I feel like I have been blessed in the time I've spent here as a bishop," he tells *The Irish Catholic* newspaper.

But that's not where his story begins, a strong rooting in the Faith through family, and early encounters with the local Franciscans providing for that.

"The missionary turn his vocation would take wasn't immediately apparent, with just a 'general attraction' to the religious order existing initially"

"Everybody went [to church]," Bishop Lenihan says, continuing, "But it was a very Catholic background and upbringing, parish missions and all like that...It was in the country area (Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick).

"My parents were country people, good, honest, down to earth people. People of great faith," he says.

The Franciscan element entered the picture at the age of 14 or 15, when he got to know some of the local brothers.



Bishop Michael Lenihan, right, pictured with Fr Emmet Murphy recently in El Salvador.

"Well, I was about maybe 14 or 15. I got to know the Franciscans. I got to know them through an activity they used to have called 'questing'," he says.

"I'm talking about the '60s, when the Franciscans were poor. They went around to the different shops, it was sort of begging, they called it questing.

"They used go down to the creamery for butter and milk and things like that. I got to know two or three of the brothers. Bro. Patrick Vaughan, who's now with the Lord, and Bro. Peter.

"I was very impressed when I saw the Franciscan habit, the sandals and the rosary beads," he says. "In the beginning, I was impressed with the habit and that way of life. Then I read and got to know more about St Francis and eventually I decided to join the Franciscans."

The missionary turn his vocation would take wasn't immediately apparent, with just a "general attraction" to the religious order existing initially. However, that was enough to get him signed up, and before he knew it, he passed through the early

stages of study in Ireland before going on to Rome to study theology.

"They were the happiest years of my life, the four years in Rome," Bishop Lenihan says.

"We got to know the city, we went to the Vatican, we met the Pope. We went to Assisi, where St Francis was born, St Clare, where he was buried – the whole Franciscan tradition.

Blessings

"I thank God for the blessings that the Franciscans gave me. What they spent on us, as well as to form us; we owe a great deal to the Franciscans for what they did for us.

"I certainly feel I owe them a lot. I try to pay it back in some way through my work and the work that I do, just to show that I'm grateful for everything they did for us."

However, it wasn't straight on to the missions after this. A very good friend of Bishop Lenihan's and fellow Franciscan, "Alfred Loughran from Limerick... He was one of the first friars to come out to El Salvador in 1968.

"We became great friends, then when he would come home on holi-

days, he would visit the student houses and he would explain to us about the mission. In those days it was slides, it was the old fashioned way, they had no modern equipment," Bishop Lenihan explains.

"It was very interesting and through him I got to love El Salvador. When I was ordained, I asked the provincial if I could go on the missions and he said not yet, you have to work at least four years in Ireland before you can go on the missions."

"There was a lot of suffering, people living in very inhuman conditions, without water and depending on handouts"

So he did just that, first in Westmeath, then in Wexford – but then it was off to El Salvador.

"After two years in Wexford, I was told if I still wanted to go to the missions, I could go to the missions now, so I was delighted," he says.

"It wasn't the easiest mission I suppose. Coming out to El Salvador in 1984 – I was ordained in 1980 – coming out to El Salvador in 1984 when the country was in civil war between the guerrillas and the army.

"It was a very difficult situation, there was a lot of suffering. We heard about it through the news and then I knew about Bishop Romero in March 1980 – it was world news. Then we got to know about the persecutions of the priests and the Christians and all that."

Well versed beforehand about the area, Bishop Lenihan "came knowing where I was coming to and I never regretted [it]. They were hard years. I came to San Francisco Gotera in 1984.

"We were based in a military town, right beside the barracks. There were a lot of refugees there from the north," he says.

"There was a lot of suffering, people living in very inhuman conditions,

without water and depending on handouts. The food was given by the Red Cross and Caritas.

"It really was a culture shock, coming into a situation like that from leading a very comfortable life in Ireland and a comfortable Church, coming then to El Salvador and being enculturated in that atmosphere."

Despite the difficulties, it was a "nice experience," he says, adding that it was a "conversion" for him, "just getting to know their way of life.

"The Salvadorian people, they are very warm and loving. The Irish Franciscans were there for years, so they were very understanding of us. When we came out we didn't speak Spanish that well – they would laugh and say, the first year we didn't understand a word you were saying. They're a lovely people," he says warmly.

From there, then-Fr Lenihan was moved around the country extensively, experiencing different peoples, climates and circumstances.

While in Guatemala, he got a call from the nuncio to give him a visit, during which he was consulted about various priests. However, during a second meeting, he was sitting in the nunciature, when the nuncio came in and without waiting said, "you have been appointed the first bishop of La Ceiba by Pope Benedict".

Shocked to say the least, Bishop Lenihan grappled with the revelation before deciding "if it's for the good of the Church, I'll accept it".

"It was a difficult moment. I was a foreigner and a Franciscan, not known here. But I must say that the people were so good and so welcoming that I never felt any hostility or rejection from the people. From the moment I came I felt that I was welcome."

It hasn't always been easy since then, but nevertheless, Bishop Lenihan has always said, "Thy will be done".

Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Children's Corner

Chai Brady

Some bacteria a day keeps the doctor away

Bacteria have unfortunately got a very bad name due to their association with spreading sickness and causing food to decay. However, despite the 'bad eggs' bacteria are pivotal when it comes to how our body works. It helps humans digest food, neutralise toxins and even helps us get nutrients.

It is a fascinating type of microorganism which will always be central to how the body works even if it makes some squeamish! This column will focus on growing bacteria and monitoring how it reproduces over a period of time.

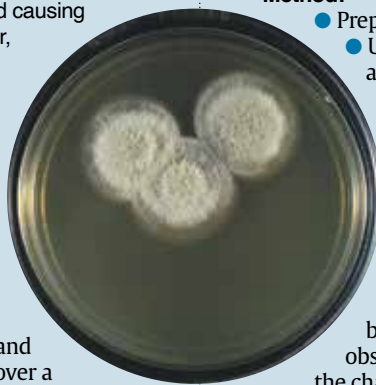
Apparatus:

- Petri dish of agar
- Cotton buds
- Newspaper (which can be used to wrap the

petri dish when disposing)

Method:

- Prepare your petri dish of agar.
- Using a cotton bud, swab a certain area of your house (i.e. collect a sample by rubbing the cotton bud on a surface of your choice).
- Rub the swab over the agar with a few gentle strokes before putting the lid back on and sealing the petrie dish.
- Allow the dish to sit in a warm area for two or three days.
- Check the growth of the bacteria each day by making an observational drawing and describing the changes.
- Try repeating the process with a new petri dish and swab from under your finger nails or between your toes.
- Dispose of the bacteria by wrapping up the petri dish in old newspaper and placing in the



rubbish (don't open the lid).

The agar plate and warm conditions provide the ideal place for bacteria to grow. The microorganisms on the plate will grow into individual colonies, each a clone of the original. The bacteria obtained with the cotton bud grows steadily, becoming visible with the naked eye in a relatively short time. Different samples produce different results, what happened when you took a swab sample from your own body?

You will find bacteria throughout the Earth, it grows in soil, radioactive waste, water, on plants and even animals too. Fortunately, the human immune system usually does a great job of making bacteria harmless. For instance, there is a lot of 'good' bacteria in yoghurt and the well-known German dish *sauerkraut*, which is said to be good for the gut.

So while many types of bacteria can be harmful to humans – some can be fatal – others are hugely beneficial and have been the source of countless studies and experiments.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



TG4 proves a boon for hidden gems

I've often thought that if I was forced to have just one television channel to watch TG4 would be among the top contenders.

This was confirmed for me by *Ar an Aer* (TG4, Tuesday). Subtitled 'Pobal Dé', it was a short and unfussy programme compiled from the archives 1960s-1990s and focusing on the work of priests in Gaeltacht areas, looking after the spiritual needs of the people but also helping to progress the development of their communities. One of the best known was Fr James McDyer of Glencolmille in Co. Donegal.

We saw him leading a pilgrimage around the area but I'd like to have heard more about his community development work. We also got insight into the situation of the dwindling community on Tory Island. Sometime they were cut off from the mainland for weeks on end, and even at other times access to medical care was very patchy. In the early 1970s Fr Seosamh Mac Breartaigh facilitated any islanders who wanted to leave and live on the mainland but not everybody agreed.

He said many had starry eyed notions about island life but might change their tune if they stayed there for a winter. In the 1980s Fr Diarmuid Ó Péicín returned from the African missions and ministered on Tory, with more em-



TG4 put a fresh focus on the often unseen work of priests serving Irish-speaking communities.

phasis on making life better for those who stayed - "they don't have basic rights" he said. He was described as "one in a million" and "a stubborn resilient leader".

Many from Connemara went to England for work, and in archive footage we heard from Fr Seamus Cartúir, an Irish-speaking priest who was sent to Huddersfield to look after the needs of the emigrants who were settling into a very different environment. One of the needs was to hear the Confessions of those who spoke Irish only. There was strong emphasis on religious rituals and patron days in the Gaeltacht areas - for example the celebrations for the feast of St Gonnait in

West Cork - "pilgrimage and lots of noise!" Check it out on the TG4 Player.

Back among the moral dilemmas of our own time, journalist Tim Stanley complemented *Question Time* (BBC One, Thursday) for having a free and open discussion about Covid-19 vaccination.

And it was refreshing. It started as an item about vaccine mandates for NHS workers in the UK. The government there has been pulling back from plans for such a mandate, not because vaccination isn't desirable, but because too many essential health workers would lose their jobs. I was surprised that two health experts on the panel were against the

mandate (not against the vaccine) preferring instead the approach of persuasion. One pointed out that 95% of NHS staff was vaccinated already. Even more surprising was that several members of the audience spoke about their choice not to get the vaccine, and weren't shut down or name-called. One young woman said that on balance she chose not to get vaccinated, but had tried to persuade more vulnerable members of her family to take it.

One young man had a wad of notes about vaccine risks, and his concerns were responded to by a vaccine expert on the panel. It was so refreshing to hear such an open debate, one you

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTÉ One Sunday February 13, 11am

Fr Dominik Domagala, OMI, celebrates Mass with a congregation and the folk group from Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Bluebell, Dublin, in the Divine Word Chapel, Maynooth.

A CONCERTO FOR EVELYN

BBC Four Sunday February 13, 7pm

James MacMillan's concerto for percussion and orchestra, *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*, composed for Evelyn Glennie. Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducts the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

BRAVERY UNDER FIRE

EWTN Sunday February 13, 9pm

This original EWTN docudrama presents the life and ministry of Fr Willie Doyle, SJ, an Irish Jesuit priest who was killed in action during World War I.

rarely if ever get in the Irish media. Those in favour of the Covid-19 vaccines will have been confirmed in their view, those wavering may reconsider their reluctance, those against this particular vaccine were given food for thought that just might lead to a change of heart.

Covid-19 has a devastating effect in many ways, but the developing humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan is on a different scale altogether. It was highlighted in harrowing Sky News reports through last week. You'd wonder what the Taliban thought they would achieve by their recent coup except for the abject misery visited on their people. Much vitally needed foreign aid was

lost, and now, as always, the children are suffering the most - starving or freezing to death, despite the efforts of parents and medical staff struggling with so few resources. In one report a child died, another was born to a young mother and after a shaky start was saved for now by dedicated hospital staff working in appalling conditions.

Finally we heard an urgent plea from former Prime Minister Gordon Brown stressing the moral imperative for the West to provide assistance immediately.

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Music

Pat O'Kelly



Considerable shilly-shallying before big NSO transfer

In 1994, then Minister for the Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Michael D. Higgins, set up a review group - Provision and Institutional Arrangements Now for Orchestras and Ensembles (PIANO) - to examine among other things "the roles as they evolved of the performing groups in RTÉ with particular reference to which the broadcasting and non-broadcasting demands are compatible and to make whatever recommendations it considers desirable regarding the development of the groups".

The review was considered necessary because it was recognised that "from humble beginnings" in the 1920s the music groups associated

with broadcasting had grown in size and importance, and RTÉ's role as a major employer of musicians, a major provider of music programming and source of commissions for new music, required some examination.

Chaired by John O'Connor, the PIANO group, comprising John Horgan, Loretta Keating, John Kinsella and Geraldine O'Grady, deliberated for almost two years before issuing their report in January 1996.

The substantial document gave considerable space to the structure and management of the NSO. The report suggested that the orchestra should move out from the immediate control of RTÉ and be linked to the Department of the Minister for the Arts, Culture and the Gael-



Venezuelan-American conductor Ilyich Rivas.

tacht.

Well, after considerable shilly-shallying, it has taken over a quarter of a century for the transfer to take place and from January 24, 2022, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland has come under the umbrella of the National Concert Hall.

Besides the musicians, a number of administrative staff,

among them general manager Anthony Long and marketing and communications manager Assumpta Lawless, has also transferred along with the broadcaster's choral groups. I wish the enterprise every success.

With music by Schönberg (*Transfigured Night*), Wagner (*Wesendonck Lieder*) and Bernstein (*Symphonic Dances*

from *West Side Story*), tomorrow's NSO concert - February 11 - is being described as a celebration of love and passion in honour of St Valentine! Venezuelan-American Ilyich Rivas conducts with soloist Romanian mezzo Ruxandra Donose.

While continuing to operate from its Montrose base, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra will give its Dublin public performances at the NCH. The next one - February 17 - brings Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto (Patrick Rafter) and Beethoven's 7th Symphony with Spanish conductor Sergio Anapont making his debut with the orchestra. The RTÉCO has also appointed English musician Stephen Bell as its principal guest conductor.

Away from orchestras, the NCH's International Concert

Series 2022 opens on Sunday - February 13 - with the first Irish appearance of acclaimed South African soprano Golda Schultz. Accompanied by Texan-born pianist Jonathan Ware, her programme is devoted to women composers including Clara Schumann, Nadia Boulanger and South African Kathleen Tagg whose *This is her verse* is being heard here for the first time.

In a varied Music for Galway recital at the city's NUI Emily Anderson Concert Hall on Tuesday February 15, London-born pianist Mishka Rushdie Momen offers Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* as her main work. Pieces by Byrd, Prokofiev, Schumann, Janáček and Pennsylvanian Missy Mazzoli precede it.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



The Church as Sacrament

The Spirit of Catholicism,
by Vivian Boland OP
(Bloomsbury, £16.99/€18.50)

Frank Litton

As somebody who spent a good part of his career teaching organisation analysis, helping students understand organisations and the problems of organising, I have wondered why we pay so little attention to the Church as an organisation, subject to the failings that attend all human attempts to organise.

We can blame the wider culture. While bookshelves are clogged with studies of leadership, techniques for motivating and manipulating staff, through mentoring and coaching, examinations of organisational structure are rare.

Substantial body

It is not that the problems of devising roles and the systems that co-ordinate and control them are unstudied. There is a substantial body of work on the subject. Our culture with its focus on the individual repels reminders of how our interdependencies constrain our agency just as they enable it.

The same bias is found when the institutional Church is disparaged and spirituality praised.

Vivian Boland, an Irish Dominican based in the Angelicum University in Rome, gives the organisational dimension due place in this inspiring study of *The Spirit Of Catholicism*.

An old friend, an expert in organisational analysis, instructed his students that analysis began with the question "what is this organisation's racket?" The answer directs our attention to the activities that must be put in train with systems of co-ordination and control if it is to succeed. There is no one master plan for organising; structures have to be tailored to match the characteristics of the activities.

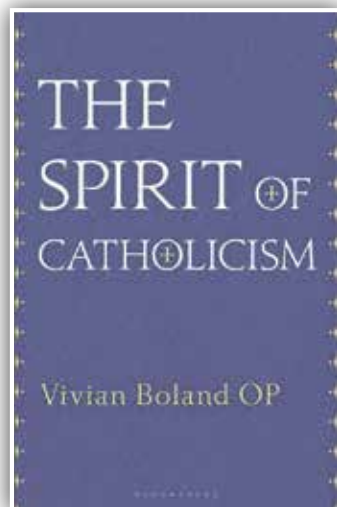
For the Catholic the Church is not an organisation like a political party, trade union or charitable NGO. Certainly, it has a vision it wishes to see implemented, it does have interests it seeks to defend and it engages in a wide range of charitable activities.

These are the aspects that attract the attention of the outsider. But for the believer the Church is first and foremost the source of sacraments. When we think of sacraments we think especially of the liturgical rituals of Baptism and the Eucharist. We should, however, also think of the Church as a Sacrament.

Vivian Boland recalls his confrere, Herbert McCabe's definition of a sacrament: "A Sacrament is a sacred sign, by which we worship God, his message is revealed to us, and his saving work accomplished in us. In the Sacrament God shows us what he does and does what he shows us".

The Messiah comes as 'Priest, Prophet and King'. These three 'offices' or as we might think of them, roles with associated tasks combine to make the Church a Sacrament.

The priestly brings us into God's presence, the prophetic teaches us



his Word, while the kingly realises his authority. Each office has its own character and distinctive perspective proper to its tasks. The perspectives must be co-ordinated and harmony among them, found.

This cannot be accomplished by rigid bureaucracy. While the Church is, indeed, hierarchical, it is not so in the manner of the modern bureaucracy. The organisational form called 'the network' is a closer fit.

St John Henry Newman places these three offices at the centre of his teaching on the Church. In his *Via Media* he draws a link between the priest and the consolations of belief, the prophet and reason and the kingdom and authority. Given human fallibility and sinfulness, consolation can degenerate into superstition, reason into rationalisation and authority into tyranny. All three defects have marked the Church.

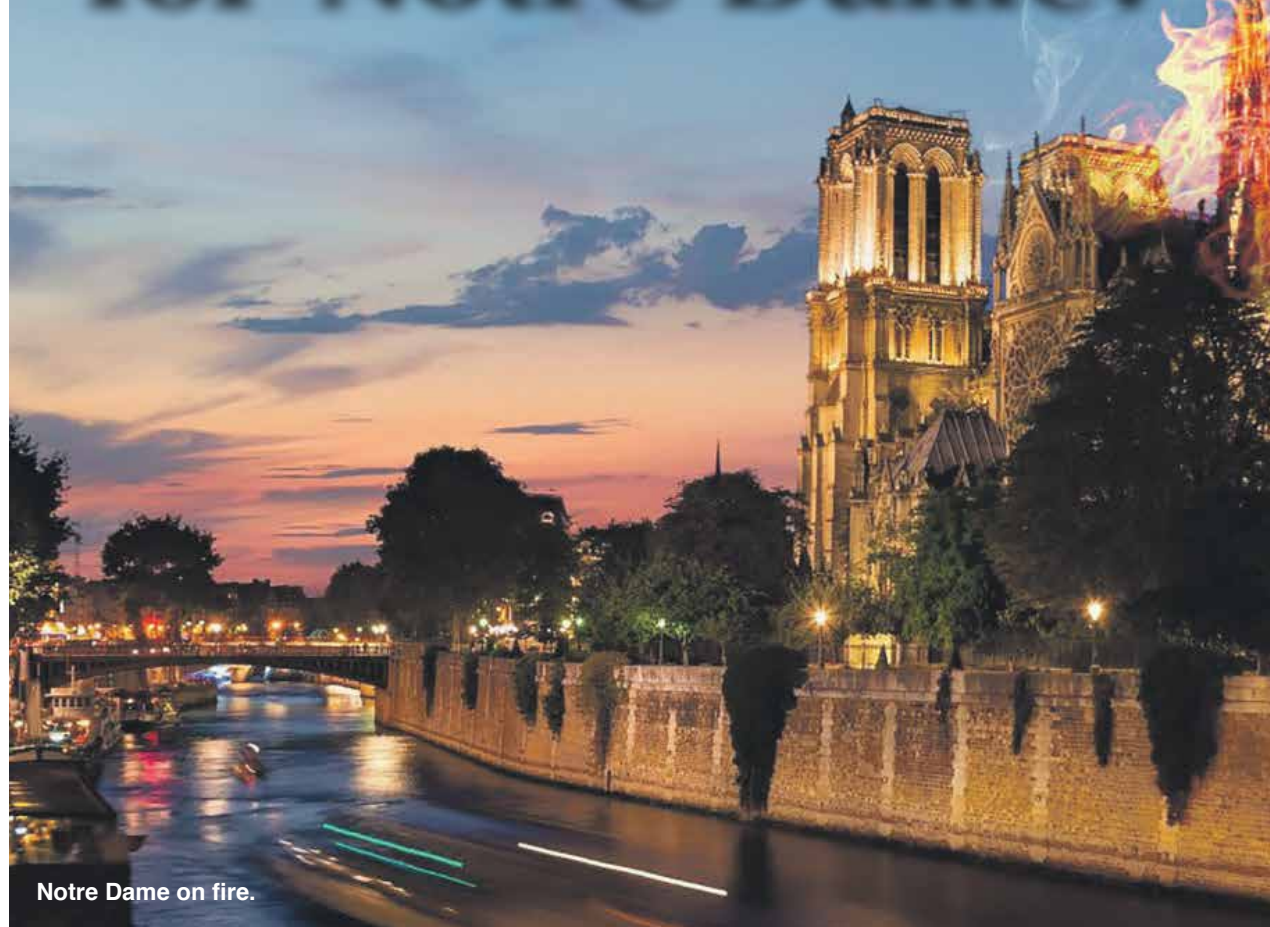
There is another danger: all organisations must manoeuvre in the world about them, gaining the power and establishing the good relations that keep them in business and allow them to prosper. The Church is no exception and efforts to preserve its power and secure its interests can tempt it down paths that comprise its mission. Clerical sex abuse scandals are the most obvious example.

Innocent

Concern to protect the good name of its institutions took priority over the protection of the innocent, the care of victims, and the punishment of offenders. The temptations of co-option into the ruling elite while less commented upon are just as damaging. They weaken, perhaps even silence, the Church's witness against structures of social and economic oppression.

I have concentrated on how Fr Boland helps us account for the organisational dimension of the Church. This help comes from his theological reflections that are the heart of the book. These are drawn, though, not exclusively, from St Thomas Aquinas. Dense thoughts presented in elegant and lucid prose, they give the readers much to ponder on as they are guided to deeper appreciation of the mystery of God and his embodiment in human history accomplished in his Church.

Does a troubled future lie ahead for Notre Dame?



Notre Dame on fire.

Peter Costello

Just before Christmas the international press carried worrying stories about the renovation and future use of Notre Dame de Paris, one of the most important and pre-eminent churches, not just in Europe, but in the world.

Middle Ages

It has had, since the Middle Ages, a special place also too in the life and imagination, in the very spirit of Paris itself, something of which was realised by Victor Hugo in his celebrated novel of 1831 *Notre dame de Paris* (known in English as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*). In the two chapters of Book III he provides a very effective survey of the Middle Ages, and an overview of what could be seen in the 1400s of the city from the roof of the church, in all its social variety.

This led in the following decade into a renovation of the cathedral overseen by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, a French architect and historian,

who undertook the work in the same inspired and inspiring manner as his other great projects, such as the restoration of Carcassonne, the medieval city in the south of France.

Hence the rumours that have been circulating which hint at a crass scheme for tourists which some critics have called the 'Disneyfication' of the cathedral"

What we enjoyed of Notre Dame until the disastrous fire in 2019 was the result of his interventions — distinctively the wooden spire that flamed up with such horror on that night. But Le Duc was unique. These days there are few such people around. Our age seems beset with the triumph of the mediocre.

Hence the rumours that have been circulating which hint at a

crass scheme for tourists which some critics have called the 'Disneyfication' of the cathedral. Others say that the basic thought behind the display of will be a presentation of the church, the Middle Ages and the Christian faith as 'medieval life for dummies'.

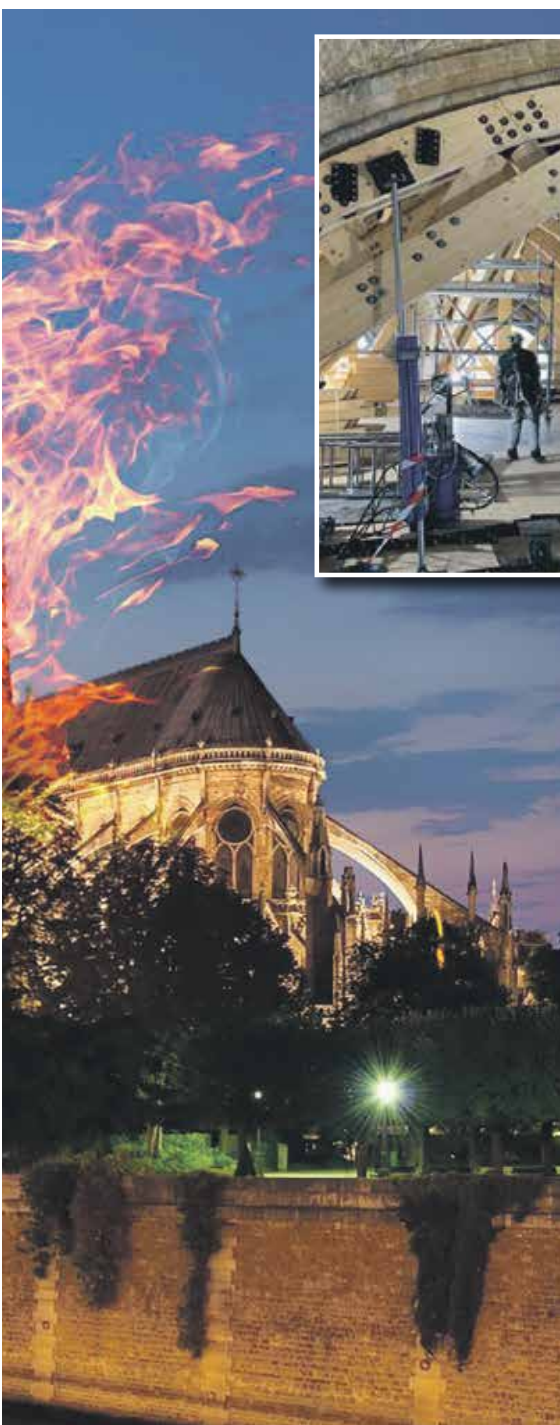
As of now the full scheme has not been revealed in all its horror. But many people for whom the cathedral means a great deal are very anxious.

History of art

We all know what is involved. Graduate students of the history of art, will take the place of priests, and they will deactivate the place and its art through oversimplification.

A few years ago my wife and I were in Venice for the first time. This was the fulfilment of a long desired visit, prompted by an early reading of Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*. But in reality the visit was a disaster. The city and the cathedral were not what had been so long hoped for. Venice has come close

Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.



Viollet-le-Duc as seen by his contemporaries.

“The real purpose of Notre Dame as a place to channel the divine, however we experience it, will be restored: it is not a place of entertainment, but of revelation”

to being ruined by mass tourism.

Do not think that Ireland has avoided this kind of thing. We have, for instance, been endangering the *Book of Kells*, something that causes much anxiety to both the State and Trinity College, who yet desire to maintain the revenue stream that flows from the million odd visitors annually.

I have stood listening to the comments of some of these visitors who are there largely because it is the place to go in the day before visiting Temple Bar in the evening. Many cannot come to terms with what the book is.

The inter-cultural confusions of tourism are often odd.

I still recall decades ago on a visit to Paris my wife and I while attending Mass in Notre Dame were photographed by a party of Japanese tourists. I suggested to my wife that in the autumn a slide of us would perhaps be shown in Osaka, captioned ‘European natives at their traditional religious rites’. But this would only be a just return for all those similar pictures made of other sorts of ‘natives’ by European explorers, colonists and of course tourists.

But perhaps I fear too much. Perhaps common

sense will be restored, and the spell of Walt Disney ward off. The real purpose of Notre Dame as a place to channel the divine, however we experience it, will be restored: it is not a place of entertainment, but of revelation.

Goodwill

Let those who still pray, pray this may be so, supporting the hopes of all men of goodwill.

The intermingling of tourism, state finances, and the contrasting aims and hopes of religion are an important theme, to which I will return again.

What publications of the last century tell us of what our fathers really thought...

Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland 2: A Variety of Voices,

edited Mark O'Brien and Felix M. Larkin (Four Courts Press, €50.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This new book complements an earlier volume on periodicals and journalism, also edited by Mark O'Brien and Felix Larkin, which was published back in 2014. The two volumes, taken together, offer a comprehensive overview of the periodicals that flourished in Ireland in the last century.

This is a valuable collection of essays on journalism in periodicals that flourished in Ireland in the twentieth century. Nine of the 15 essays are about individual titles. One reviews the economics of periodical publishing. Three survey a number of periodicals with a common purpose or target audience. Two are concerned with particular series of articles in *The Bell* and *The Leader*.

Felix Larkin (a regular on these pages) provides a scintillating essay on ‘Mirrors of a changing Ireland: *The Bell*’s series *The Fourth Estate*, 1944-5’. The series was written by Vivian Mercier and Conor Cruise O'Brien, O'Brien (as a serving civil servant) using his literary pseudonym Donat O'Donnell.

Noteworthy

In analysing the Catholic newspapers, O'Brien was at his brilliant best. Of the two Catholic newspapers, *The Irish Catholic* and *Catholic Standard*, he found the latter to be the more noteworthy. It was associated with Alfred O'Rahilly, and O'Brien comments: “Professor O'Rahilly probably does not write all of the *Standard* every week, but it would be feeble merely to say that he has impressed his personality upon it. It is he who has given it a social policy, consisting of his own monetary theories, he who fights its battles with H.G. Wells and others, he who orients its attitude to science and philosophy

and life. Under his occupation the *Standard* shifted to something that might almost be described as the left.”

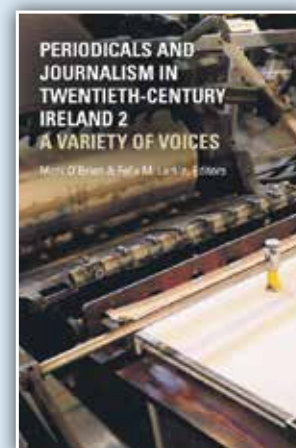
Michael Kennedy discusses a series of articles written by T. Desmond Williams under the title ‘A Study in Neutrality’ first for *The Leader* and later for the *Irish Press*. Based on British and American wartime sources, captured German documents and off-the-record discussions with Irish officials, those articles provided the first insights into the secret world of neutral Ireland's wartime diplomacy.

Williams commended Éamon de Valera for his conduct of foreign policy and the preservation of neutrality from 1939 to 1945. Among his many claims, Williams contended that Leopold Kerney, the Irish ambassador in Madrid, had been suspected of pro-Axis sympathies and had not always acted as was expected of him by the Irish Department of External Affairs.

“This collection of essays is an exemplary publication and a treasury of splendid history writing, which for once places religious opinion in a national context”

Kerney took action to restore his reputation. In the event, Williams was not able to cite a source validating his allegations and lost a libel action in the matter. It was a serious blow to Williams' reputation as a historian. He was seen to have “turned hearsay into history”, to quote Mr Kennedy.

One of the most informative and interesting essays is that by Ian d'Alton on the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, which he pithily describes as a “Church paper for Church people”. He traces the paper's multiple transformations as it attempted to cope with



radical cultural, social and political change.

Patrick Maume, a leading contributor to the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, directs his attention to the *Catholic Bulletin* (1911-39), the greenest publication on the island. He shows that its dominant Catholic post-independence nationalism was mainly due to the guiding-hand of Fr Timothy Corcoran, SJ.

The final essay, by Declan O'Keeffe, deals with publications sponsored by members of the Irish province of the Society of Jesus. These range from the devotional *Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart and Madonna* to the avowedly intellectual *Lyceum*, *New Ireland Review* and *Studies*.

Most influential

Of these, *Studies* was and continues to be the most influential. It first appeared in March 1912 and has surfaced four times a year ever since. Mr O'Keeffe states that it was co-founded by Fr Thomas Finlay, SJ, and Fr Timothy Corcoran, SJ. He could have acknowledged that Alfred O'Rahilly was also one of the magazine's founders as, before leaving the Society of Jesus just before ordination, O'Rahilly co-edited it and wrote a considerable part of each issue in its first years under his own name and under a pseudonym. And he eventually became its most prolific contributor.

This collection of essays is an exemplary publication and a treasury of splendid history writing, which for once places religious opinion in a national context.

Leisure time

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Homeless & Drugs Services



Your heart for the homeless

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

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Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email emma.murphy@mqi.ie

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Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

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Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmissions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

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It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.



Crossword Junior

Gordius 419

1		2		3		4		5				
											6	
7						8						
				9				10	11			
12								13				
		14	15									
		16										
			17									
18								19				
20								21				

- Across**

1 This strange creature can travel through air as well as water (6,4)

7 Thick drink that might have a chocolate or strawberry flavour, perhaps (4,5)

9 You might write a name on a label or ____ (3)

10 24 hours (3)

12 Flying saucer (1.1.1.)

14 Marvellous (9)

17 This makes the ground white after a very cold night (5)

18 This hill was the home of the High Kings (4)

19 A barber cuts it (4)

20 Takes part in a game (5)
- Down**

21 Hit these to keep the beat in the band (5)

1 Very well known (6)

2 The colour of custard (6)

3 Bird's home (4)

4 The Irish one has the colours green, white and orange (4)

5 You plant it in the ground (4)

6 Something to play with (3)

8 Good-looking, like the prince in a fairy-tale (8)

11 Where fish may be kept (8)

13 He has the same parents as you (7)

15 Birr and Tullamore are in this county (6)

16 Slowly-moving creature with a shell (5)

SOLUTIONS, FEBRUARY 03

GORDIUS NO. 544

Across – 1 Hag 3 Laughing gas 8 Pompom 9 Regained 10 Ogres 11 Aches 13 Lilac 15 Mahatma Gandhi 16 Silicon chips 20 Sleds 21 Spots 23 Crawl 24 Feasible 25 Hawaii 26 Near-sighted 27 Hoe

Down – 1 Hippocampus 2 Gomorrah 3 Looms 4 Gorilla 5 Nuala 7 Sod 12 Saint Blaise 13 Limps 17 Cut a dash 18 Beseech 19 Sonata 22 Swiss chard 24 Fan

CHILDREN'S No. 418

Across – 1 Ninety-nine 6 Towel 7 Wales 9 Peacock 11 Niamh 12 Ostrich 14 Mean 16 Horses 18 Eggs 20 Cheapest

Down – 1 Nothing 2 Newspaper 3 Telephone 4 Now 5 Ewe 8 Looking 10 Acts 13 His 14 Moth 15 Asia 17 See 18 Eat 19 Gun

Crossword

Gordius 545

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8						9						
10								11				12
						13		14				
15								16			17	
								18				
		19		20								
21			22					23				
24								25				
26											27	

- Across**

1 Strange or uneven (3)

3 Does it provide Dracula with drink on draught? (11)

8 Idea (6)

9 & 10 Give twenty-five percent to Vi, the Angelus will be on in fifteen minutes! (1,7,2,3)

11 Take hold of (5)

13 Erupt (5)

15 Paying residents (7)

16 Might a rep want to relocate to a Belgian city? (7)

20 A mark usually scored in wood (5)

21 & 18d Youthful in attitude, if not in age (5,2,5)

23 Sporting contest (5)

24 How to make Ma soak us in a Greek dish (8)

25 Roman goddess of the dawn (6)

26 No locations can provide this comfort after loss (11)

27 Strike (3)
- Down**

1 The science of twitchers - fixing a thorny igloo (11)

2 Abhorred (6)

3 The northernmost borough of New York City (5)

4 Place for a prayer (7)

5 Nasal tone, or the sound of a plucked string (5)

6 Lure into a snare (6)

7 Space station, made in Russia originally (3)

12 Bravery award for wounded members of the American Services (6,5)

13 Nonmetallic element, atomic number 5 (5)

14 Freshwater fish of the carp family (5)

17 Can it see what it's biting? (3-5)

18 See 21 across

19 Americans call it the Fall (6)

22 Enthusiasm got us to change (5)

23 Grieve, lament (5)

24 Waterproof coat (3)

Sudoku Corner

419

Easy

1			9				8	4
8				4		2		
	3	2	8		7	5		
		6	2		9	4		8
	8						5	
5		7	4		8	9		
		3	1		4	7	2	
		8		7				9
7	4				2			3

Hard

		4	2		5	6		3
					4	1	5	
		2	3	6				9
	7	6						
				8				
						8	3	
6				3	8	5		
	2	3	7					
4		8	1		9	3		

Last week's Easy 418

6	8	5	7	2	1	3	4	9
9	7	4	3	8	5	6	1	2
1	2	3	9	4	6	7	8	5
5	1	7	2	3	4	9	6	8
4	6	8	5	1	9	2	3	7
3	9	2	8	6	7	4	5	1
7	3	9	4	5	8	1	2	6
8	4	6	1	9	2	5	7	3
2	5	1	6	7	3	8	9	4

Last week's Hard 418

9	6	7	5	8	1	2	3	4
3	8	5	9	2	4	1	6	7
1	2	4	7	6	3	9	8	5
7	1	9	4	5	8	6	2	3
6	5	8	2	3	7	4	9	1
4	3	2	6	1	9	5	7	8
5	9	1	8	7	2	3	4	6
2	7	6	3	4	5	8	1	9
8	4	3	1	9	6	7	5	2

Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



There is no place for the 'holier than thou'

I AM A PIONEER! It is not that I am a trail blazer, entrepreneur or that I have discovered the previously undiscovered. No, I don't drink alcohol and, since my teen-aged years, I have been a member of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association. It was an easy choice since both my parents were members as were my two older brothers. It seemed the right thing to do. I can't say I gave it much thought, nor can I say it has made me any better of a person but it is part of who I am. I wear the pin but only in a jacket. I never rocked the look of the safety pin with the Pioneer emblem rattling around on my jumper or shirt!

Faithful

I can honestly say that I am glad I am a Pioneer. I sometimes believe or perhaps even fear that if I were to drink, I would drink too much. I tend towards doing things in excess, many of them not for my greater good, and it is quite possible that I would tend towards excess in alcohol intake. For that reason alone, I am happy to be a pioneer.

Through the years I have admired people who have stayed faithful to their Pioneer pledge



and can, but won't, name people in politics and in the world of entertainment and sport who wore their pins without fuss or hesitation. There was something wholesome in it – something about a rounded character who could make a gentle statement without ever saying a word. Like so many other aspects of life, this has become less of a feature with the passing of time.

In my time, I have encountered the 'holier than thou' in the Pioneer circle and such encounters have always left me with a sink-

ing feeling. I really do not believe there is any place for the 'holier than thou' and, not least, when so many people are suffering directly and indirectly because of over dependence on alcohol. Countless lives have been wrecked, homes destroyed, and irreparable damage done because of alcohol abuse. In that backdrop, there can be no room for being smug or holier than thou. On the contrary, a quiet prayer of gratitude because, in all truth, the story could all too easily be any of our stories.

Current realities

Recently I met a priest who is closely involved now in the work of the Pioneer Association, and from our conversation it is clear he believes, as do I, that it has a role to play. That role is a developing role that needs to address what we call "current realities" – namely that many of those who are entering into the world of alcohol abuse at frighteningly earlier ages – are, in many cases, not the ones who are reading parish bulletins, religious magazines or surfing the net, having Googled 'PIONEERS'. They remain our concern – their futures so full of potential, can all too easily be

fraught with difficulties beyond their imagining.

This month will see us celebrate Temperance Sunday. If you have taken the time to read this, chances are you are open to making a difference or making a change. Find ways, to encourage without judgement, to help without feeling superior, to pray without knowing the outcome and to be a person of hope. If you take a drink, enjoy it and leave it. Remain in control of the glass and don't let the glass control you. If you are a teetotaler, let it be seen that you enjoy life to the full and if you are a Pioneer, look at the Sacred Heart on the emblem you wear and let your heart be seen through acts of kindness, quiet prayer and spending time in learning what it is like to feel compelled to drink in excess, so that your heart can truly go out to another in their place of torment on the "other side of the sun" and that your hand, reached out to them, might help them on the road to a better place.

The Pioneers have a solid foundation, we can continue to build.

He was a pioneer too

● A great story of an elderly priest going to see the doctor. The doctor marvelled at how healthy the old man was and advised that to stay off colds he might take the occasional hot whiskey. The priest pointed out that he had been a pioneer all his life and wouldn't dream of drinking. The doctor said it was for medicinal purposes and nobody need know. "Buy a small bottle and some sugar, keep it in your room and when you shave, just put a small drop in a glass, mix in the sugar and take it. It will help you". Some weeks later, the doctor met the priest's housekeeper and enquired about the old priest. "He is very confused", she told him, "Very confused. He shaved five times yesterday."



Little Way Sisters providing refugees with food, medicines and accommodation, and bringing them the love, care and compassion of Christ.



PLEASE HELP TYPHOON VICTIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Montfort Missionaries have written to The Little Way Association appealing for urgent help for the victims of typhoon Odette which hit the Philippines in December 2021.

The Fathers have been sheltering homeless victims, and urgently need funds to continue feeding the homeless families, to repair the community's own properties and to build the people new houses.

Fr Norwyn Baydo SMM writes: "The typhoon made landfall in different provinces. Our community in Minglanilla have opened their house to twenty families, though our own building was itself damaged by the typhoon. On Kinatarran island, our house was used as an evacuation site for 10 families. The community members are all safe and are serving the people in providing shelter and for their needs.

"I'm asking on behalf of the victims for financial help to support our relief operation and also for the rebuilding of their houses. Please help us to continue our relief work. God bless you."

Funds sent to The Little Way Association for the homeless are conveyed to religious such as the Montfort Missionaries without deduction of any kind. Please be generous and particularly remember the families with small children.

Typhoon Odette left families in the Philippines homeless and destitute. You can enable missionaries to help rebuild the victims' lives.



"It is love alone that matters."
- St Therese

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

The Little Way Association regularly receives appeals from bishops and religious superiors on the Missions for Mass stipends and intentions for their poor priests. Such payments help them to meet basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Also, the poor and deprived people, whom the clergy serve so faithfully, often turn to their priests for assistance. Thus, your stipends are gratefully received and your intentions are faithfully honoured at Holy Mass.

We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass. Our benefactors will be glad to know that a Mass is offered each day for their intentions.

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **PHILIPPINES TYPHOON APPEAL**
€..... **HUNGRY, SICK & DEPRIVED**
€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state no. of Masses _____)
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to
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**DONATIONS FOR THE
MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT
DEDUCTION FOR ANY
EXPENSES.**