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'Humble icon' Bro. Kevin hailed as he retires

Chai Brady

Tributes have poured in for the "humble" and "powerful" Bro. Kevin Crowley OFM Cap. who will retire after decades of feeding the poor.

Bro. Kevin told *The Irish Catholic* he will miss working with the homeless "who I love so much". The 87-year-old hopes to hand over the reins of the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin, which he founded in 1969, to someone who will give the poor "the same care, same love and service that we have been giving them for the last 50 years".

"I would hope and pray, and I have no doubt that it will, continue to give the service and the generosity of people will still continue," he said.

"Certainly there has been a lot of challenges, there's no doubt about that. Without the grace of God, and the Faith, I certainly wouldn't be able to do what I have done." He thanked staff, volunteers and benefactors for their work and generosity, without which "we wouldn't have achieved what we have achieved".

Fr Peter McVerry SJ, founder of homelessness charity the Peter McVerry Trust, described Bro. Kevin as an "icon" whose presence "will very much be missed".

"He's a very humble man, he never courted publicity, but he did speak publicly. I think he is very powerful and his power came from his experience of increasing poverty and increasing difficulties for poor people," Fr McVerry said.

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On God's holy mountain...



Fr Francis Mitchell concelebrates Mass with Archbishop of Tuam Francis Duffy (right) at Máméan in the Maamturk Mountains with the statue of St Patrick by Clíona Cussen in the background. The annual pilgrimage to St Patrick's shrine took place in glorious sunshine on Sunday, August 7.

ST PETER FABER

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WORK OF MERCY

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'Humble icon' Bro. Kevin hailed as he retires

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"His faith is very much part of who he is and the motivation which drove him, he's an example that faith can be a very, very positive factor in the commitment that a person makes in life and it certainly was in his case," he said.

Founder of Focus Ireland, Sr Stan Kennedy RSC, said he gave a "great service" and will be missed. "He was a strong voice for the poor. People will remember him for that particularly because of the economic situation people find themselves in. It's not just homeless people who go there [Capuchin Day Centre]. He gave a great dedicated service and left a great legacy," Sr Stan said.

Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap., parish priest in Priorswood and fellow Capuchin Franciscan, said Bro. Kevin's life is a "tremendous story of commitment to the homeless community".

He said that when the Pope visited the Capuchin Day Centre during the World Meeting of Families in 2018, one

of the things that moved him was that no questions are asked of anyone availing of the food.

"Kevin, from early on, never asked questions – everybody that came to the door, he saw as a brother and sister," he said.

Fr Shortall described it as the "end of era" but work will go on. "We need other Bro. Kevins... we're involved in calling followers to our family, to follow Christ in the way of St Francis".

Tony O'Riordan CEO of homelessness charity Sophia Housing said of Bro. Kevin: "The values he showed every day, of passion and kindness are values we hold dear. He recognised that in terms of tackling poverty and exclusion it isn't enough to provide home or shelter, there were other issues that he responded to through the day centre.

"There were people coming there that were on the bread-line who couldn't have survived without his work," he added. Bro. Kevin is set to retire on August 22.



Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return in the autumn

Lack of investment in schools leading to triple threat this winter

Jason Osborne

A lack of investment in primary schools is seeing teacher shortages and hikes in energy prices becoming increasingly problematic before the next academic year according to a representative of a Catholic schools' body.

Oversized classes

"Unacceptably high" levels of oversized classes continue to plague Irish primary schools as well, despite improvements in recent years, according to the Secretary General of the Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association (CPSMA), Seamus Mulconry.

"The numbers in supersized classes are reducing, but they're still unacceptably high," Mr Mulconry said.

"There is a problem too, and we're

certainly concerned, about a shortage of teachers in the system overall. Specifically, about a shortage of substitute teachers which we think we're going to see again next year.

"Covid hasn't gone away from schools unfortunately and I think we could have a problem with a lack of substitute teachers next year as well, so that's an additional issue," Mr Mulconry warned.

Mr Mulconry cited a drain of teachers to places such as Abu Dhabi and "pent-up demand" for travelling following Covid as potential reasons for the teacher shortage, but also salary competition in areas – particularly in Dublin.

"There is a problem in Dublin in that it's very hard for a teacher to get started there because the salaries they're on, they're competing with people from Google for accommodation," he said.

Mr Mulconry said that "overall, I think it's true to say that we're just not investing enough in primary".

Heating and electricity

The major costs in running a school are heating and electricity, Mr Mulconry said, and with the cost of heating oil rising by over 115% and electricity by over 40%, "it's going to be challenging to run a school next year both in getting teachers and in getting sufficient funds to make sure you keep the doors open and the children heated".

"We started getting schools contacting us in late spring because they were looking at the impact of increased fuel charges on their budgets at that stage, but certainly it will be a source of major concern as we head into the winter period," Mr Mulconry said.

Olivia Newton-John revealed pact with God in final interview before death

Ruadhán Jones

Pop music and *Grease* star Olivia Newton-John made a pact with God to save her daughter Chloe's life while she was pregnant, she said in a final interview before she died.

Ms Newton-John, who died peacefully aged 73 on Monday, revealed in an interview with *A Life of Greatness* that she was "close to losing" her daughter Chloe.

"I went to bed and asked God to save her and if he did, I would say the Lord's Prayer every night for the rest of my life and so I have," the singer said.

She added: "I think prayer is very powerful".

In the year 2000, Ms Newton-John performed at the Jubilee Celebration for the Sick and Healthcare Workers at the Vatican and had a private audience with Pope John Paul II.

In an interview with Sr Wendy Beckett, she recalled the "amazing experience" of meeting Pope John Paul, saying "he was a very special man. It was a wonderful moment in my life".



Cork and Ross 'families of parishes' announced

Staff reporter

The new structure for the diocese of Cork and Ross, with priests appointed to 'families of parishes', have been announced.

The diocese will have 16 families of parishes each ministered by a team of priests.

In the first phase, which will take place September 10, 12 families of parishes will be established, Bishop Fintan

Gavin said in a statement.

"I would like to thank all the priests who have accepted new appointments in recent weeks," Bishop Gavin said.

Eight priests are retiring and the bishop thanked them for their "service and commitment over many years in their diocesan appointments throughout their dedicated priestly ministry".

A further three priests are returning to their religious orders. In addition to the

parish appointments, the following will take up roles as healthcare chaplains: Fr Declan Mansfield to be Chaplain in Marymount University Hospice; Fr Patrick McCarthy to be Chaplain in Mercy University Hospital;

Fr Jerry Thornton MSC to be Chaplain in Saint Stephen's Hospital, Sarsfield's Court.

Visit corkandross.org to see the changes in full.

Irish priest to advise Russell Crowe on his role in exorcist film



Russell Crowe

was frequently in the news for his comments on the subject of demonic forces. He detailed his work in best-selling memoirs *An Exorcist Tells His Story* and *An Exorcist: More Stories*.

Fr Amorth often warned about the danger of occult practices and spoke of the need for exorcists. He said in 2006: "It is very important today because there are so many requests for them. People have lost the Faith, and superstition, magic, Satanism, or Ouija boards have taken its place, which then open all the doors to the presence of demons."

The Pope's Exorcist will be directed by Julius Avery, an Australian director and screenwriter, and is expected to be in theatres in

September 2023. Filming in Ireland began this month.

It's believed the movie will be based on Amorth's books, which detail his battles with the demonic.

Fr Jose Antonio Fortea, a Spanish theologian who knew Fr Amorth, told CNA (Catholic News Agency) in 2016 that the priest was highly influential both within and outside the Church.

"His strong, vigorous voice spoke to millions of people about the action of the Devil. He alone, one person, managed to revitalize the ministry in one country and then his influence reached everywhere in the Church. The means to achieve this was simply to tell what he had seen," Fr Fortea said.



Fr Gabriel Amorth

Chai Brady

An Irish priest is being consulted on a new film about famous Italian exorcist Fr Gabriel Amorth to ensure the depiction is accurate, *The Irish Catholic* understands.

Part of the *The Pope's Exorcist* is set in Ireland. The psychological thriller stars

Russell Crowe as Fr Amorth, who it is estimated performed about 100,000 exorcisms.

The Irish Catholic understands the priest will also be meeting Mr Crowe to assist him with the role.

Fr Amorth died aged 91 in 2016. He was the world's best-known exorcist who

Ciara Mageean pride of Portaferry after silver triumph

Jason Osborne

Runner Ciara Mageean secured herself a silver medal after a speedy 1500m battle at the Commonwealth Games on Sunday.

Ms Mageean, 30, from Portaferry, Co. Down clocked a time of 4:04.14 at the Alexander Stadium in Birmingham. She was second only to Scottish favourite Laura Muir, who scooped gold with a time of 4:02.75.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Fr Feargal McGrady of Portaferry parish said that the "whole community is very, very proud" of her.

"First and foremost, we're very, very proud of her," Fr McGrady said, continuing, "we're sharing the joy of her achievements as one of our own, one of our own parishioners".

Importance of Faith

Ms Mageean has previously spoken of the importance of faith, with RTÉ reporting Ms Mageean as saying she grew up in a "very Catholic household".

She's also previously



Ciara Mageean. Photo: Sam Barnes/Sportsfile.

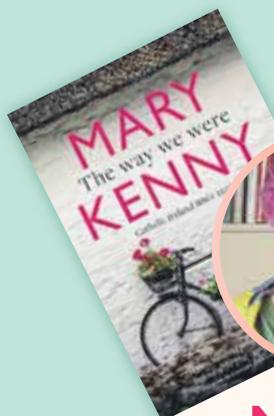
stated her belief that faith and family are very valuable, and that it is important people have something in their lives they can "look towards for that little bit of strength".

Fr McGrady said that "Ciara's very much a part of the Faith and she brings all of those values to the sport".

CATHOLIC IRELAND

a proud legacy or a shameful debacle?

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN



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Teacher competence not ethos biggest barrier to RSE, says NCCA

Ruadhán Jones

The biggest barriers to effective Relationship and Sexual Education (RSE) are teacher confidence and competence, not ethos, the NCCA have said.

Dr Patrick Sullivan said the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment found “school ethos is not in fact the barrier that it is often perceived to be”, following a review on the delivery of RSE in Ireland.

“We found that the biggest barriers to inclusive, effective and child-centred RSE are teacher confidence and competence”, Dr Sullivan said.

“It can happen that teachers who feel a little unconfident or unsure of themselves in the classroom will think they cannot address a particular issue.”

Dr Sullivan, NCCA deputy CEO for early childhood and primary education, was responding to a question from Sinn Féin Senator Fintan Warfield during the Joint Oireachtas

Committee on Gender Equality.

Senator Warfield asked: “Does the ethos become a bit of a barrier (to satisfactory RSE) and if so where?”

The views of Dr Sullivan were echoed by Ms Annette Honan, NCCA education officer, who told the senator that taking ethos “in isolation is not really helpful”.

“[T]here are other more systemic and fundamental issues to be addressed as well.”

The question of ethos being a bar-

rier was addressed in the review, but “generally participants did not say that it was an issue, apart from in a minority of instances,” Ms Honan said.

“For the most part, they identified other areas that were much more of an issue in terms of enabling them to become more effective or disabling them.”

Earlier, Dr Sullivan spoke about the importance of consulting communities before implementing change in “sensitive topics” like RSE.

“There are cautionary tales all around the world on this,” Dr Sullivan told the Committee.

“Our nearest neighbours (England) in recent years have had mass walkouts and opt-outs from minority faith communities because they were not consulted in the development of the curriculum.

“They did not feel they had buy-in or ownership of what was being taught in schools.”

Dr Sullivan said the NCCA wants to “avoid any such situation”.

Queen’s University Belfast ready to welcome FOCUS missionaries

Jason Osborne

Focus missionaries are set to aid the Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen’s University Belfast in its outreach efforts in the coming academic year.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Director of Campus Ministry Shannon Campbell said that Focus will help to develop the chaplaincy’s “outward vision”, which will stop it from becoming a “little holy huddle”.

Focus, or the Fellowship of

Catholic University Students, is an international outreach ministry based on college campuses, which seeks to share “the hope and joy of the Gospel” with university students.

A team of Four focus missionaries – featuring missionaries from both Ireland and the US – will be based with the Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen’s in the next academic year, which Ms Campbell said will be a “big help”.

“They describe themselves as the hands and the feet of the

chaplaincy team, so their outreach will take place everywhere – lecture halls, canteens, sports fields, halls of residence,” Ms Campbell said.

“They’ve just spent two and a half weeks in Austria training, so that they’re really at the top of their game in terms of mission when they come to Belfast.

“We’re confident that they’ll be able to do that and do a really good job,” she said.

Pope’s message on meat divides opinion – poll

Chai Brady

The Pope’s message calling for young people to eat less meat has proved divisive according to a social media poll taken by more than 350 people.

The poll, conducted by *The Irish Catholic*, asked “Pope Francis has urged young people to eat less meat as a way to help save the environment. Do you agree?”

There were 362 responses, with those that disagree coming out marginally on top at 53%.

The Pope’s message was given to participants in the EU Youth Conference last

month. He asked them to eat less meat, saying that it is part of a “self-destructive trend”.

“If you do not succeed in turning this self-destructive trend around, it will be difficult for others to do so in the future. Don’t let yourselves be seduced by the sirens that propose a life of luxury reserved for a small slice of the world,” he said.

“...There is an urgent need to reduce the consumption not only of fossil fuels but also of so many superfluous things. In certain areas of the world, too, it would be appropriate to consume less meat: this too can help save the environment.”

To Our Lady of Lourdes from Laois...



Parishioners from the Laois/Carlow parish of Graiguecullen and Killeslin make the most of their pilgrimage to Lourdes. Photo: John Bradley.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Knock novena returns to traditional format

The annual Knock national novena returns to its original format next week for the first time since 2019.

The theme for this year is ‘A Journey in Hope’, with the novena running from Sunday August 14 to Monday August 22.

More than 8,000 pilgrims are expected to attend each day at the Shrine.

Included in this year’s programme, Dr Nicola Brady will speak on the Irish contribution to the Universal Synod, while a special day of prayer for peace in Ukraine will be held with Ukrainian families and hosts in attendance.

On the anniversary of the Apparition, August 21, a family day will take place on the grounds of Knock Shrine.

Bishop Cullinan releases clerical changes for Waterford

Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Alphonsus Cullinan has announced the clerical changes for his diocese, to take effect September 1.

Fr William Carey retires from his role as PP Kilsheelan and Kilcash and will assume the title, Pastor Emeritus.

Fr Brian Power to be PP Kilsheelan and Kilcash.

Fr PJ Breen to become PP Killea, Crooke and Faithlegg.

Fr Jim Denmead to become PP Touraneena and the Nire and will link in with Ardfinnan and Newcastle.

Fr Martin Keogh to become PP Cappoquin and Modeligo, linking into the parish areas of Lismore, Tallow, Ballyduff Upper and Knockanore.

Fr Garrett Desmond to become PP Newtown and Kill, linking into the parish areas of Portlaw and Ballyduff.

Fr Pat Gear to be Co-PP in St Joseph and St Benildus and St Mary’s.

Fr Shane O’Neill is to join the staff at the St Patrick’s College, Maynooth.

The redemptive powers in our midst

I attended a funeral last week, which is not, in itself, an unusual event among my demographic. But this funeral was an illumination, for me, of the redemptive powers that are in our midst.

“She remembered him being great fun, telling her bedtime stories, singing Irish ballads and Wagnerian opera”

The deceased was Heather Iandolo, aged 93, born Heather Brooke Joyce, and the eldest daughter of William Joyce, known as the pro-Nazi broadcaster, “Lord Haw-Haw”. William Joyce is buried in Bohermore cemetery, at Salthill in Galway – his remains taken there in 1976 by his daughter. Heather felt the need to rebury her father in consecrated ground: hanged for treason, Joyce’s body had lain in Wandsworth prison yard, interred in abject circumstances.

Heather spent much of her life seeking to make amends for her father’s odious anti-Semitic and racist views. For some years, she attended synagogue with a Jewish congregation. She visited Israel as an act of reparation. She joined Chris-



Mary Kenny

tian-Jewish reconciliation groups. And, as a teacher, during her retirement, she would give coaching tutorials to students of colour – often for free – bearing in mind that Joyce, as a teacher himself, refused black or Asian pupils.

She rejected entirely her father’s political views: and yet, as a daughter, she had loved her father as a person. She remembered him being great fun, telling her bedtime stories, singing Irish ballads and Wagnerian opera. When he was executed in 1946, she felt a desperate grief. She always retained a filial affection for William Joyce, and worked, all her life, to make amends for his offences.

Amends

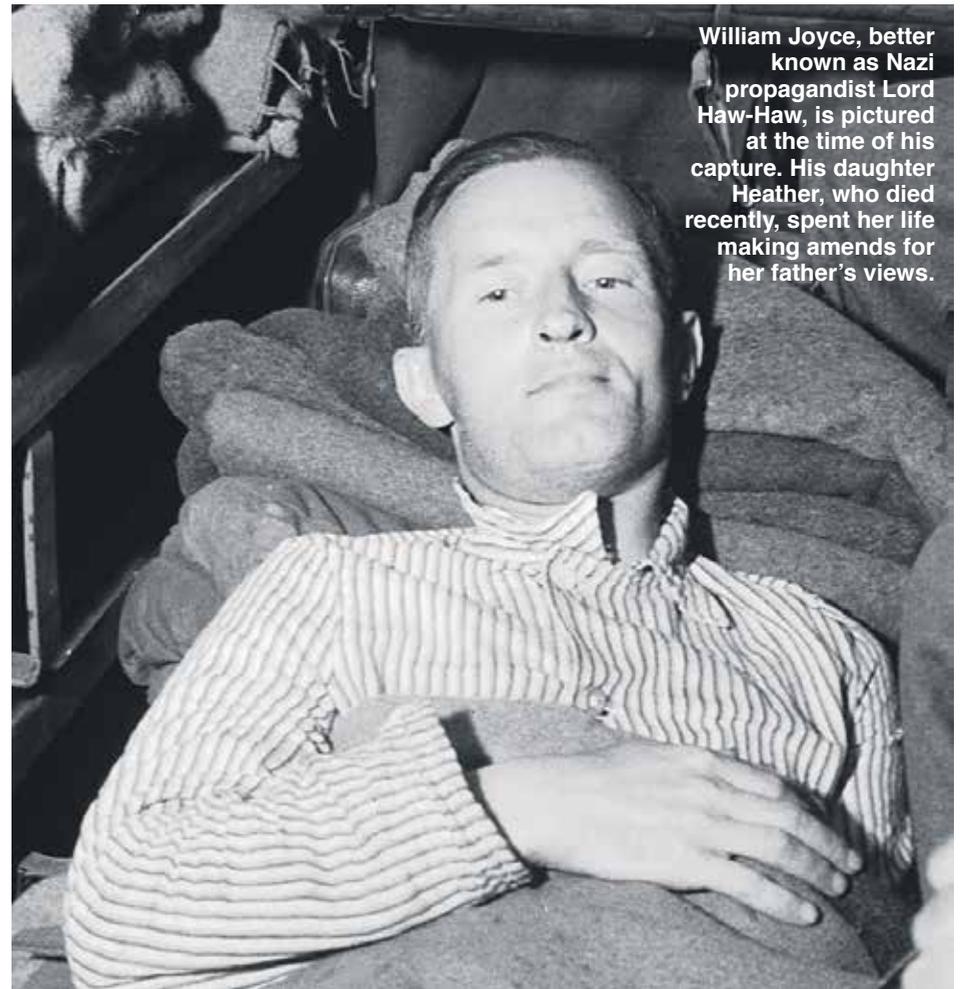
And she did make such amends. She was much-loved by her pupils, her four children and 17 grandchildren, and remembered for the many kind deeds she carried out – she was an active member of the Legion of Mary and worked voluntarily for Catholic caring charities. She sang in the choir at her local church, Our Lady’s, at Gillingham, Kent, where she was a frequent Massgoer.

There was a traditional Requiem Mass for her passing, attended by her extended family, and by

parishioners who cherished her as a good neighbour, and a good person. Her sons, daughters and grandchildren praised her care for them, and for her altruistic values. Three priests concelebrated, of whom two were African – perhaps, in itself, a riposte to racism.

“William Joyce had once been dubbed ‘the most hated man in Britain’ because of his radio propaganda for Hitler’s Germany”

The funeral of Heather Iandolo (she had been married to an Italian, Vincenzo Iandolo, who predeceased her) demonstrated to me how there can be healing, and redemption, over the generations. William Joyce had once been dubbed “the most hated man in Britain” because of his radio propaganda for Hitler’s Germany, but his daughter did so much to show, not hatred, but love, care and devotion through the auspices of her faith.



William Joyce, better known as Nazi propagandist Lord Haw-Haw, is pictured at the time of his capture. His daughter Heather, who died recently, spent her life making amends for her father’s views.

Cheering on that valiant steed

Early August always has one salient memory for me: the Dublin Horse Show, which was near to us where we lived in Sandymount. Back in my childhood, it was considered one of the most exciting events of the year, with all sorts of interesting crowds milling around, a great international buzz, and the thrilling performances of the show jumpers themselves. Around the paddock there was that wonderful smell of horses – sort of warm and earthy –

and we followed the stars of the show-jumping ring with breathless excitement.

Young girls were, then, much inspired by Iris Kellett, who had been the leading woman showjumper in Ireland and Britain on her legendary mount, Rusty. Even after a devastating injury, she remained a superb rider. She also ran a riding school in Mespil Road and I longed to have riding lessons there. But, as they cost seven shillings and six pence at the

time, they were deemed too expensive for a child’s whim. Being deprived of riding lessons will form part of my misery-memoir sometime!

Yet I’ve always remained a fan of the horse, who I think is a force for unity, as in the Dubliners’ song about the Galway races, where you meet “the Catholic, the Protestant, the Jew, the Presbyterian”. All cheering for that valiant steed!

● An Italian judge has told those attending her court, in Nola, north-east of Naples, to smarten up: Judge Vincenza Barbalucca warned defendants and plaintiffs alike, that her chamber was not the beach. Short skirts, short pants, vests and skimpy tee-shirts will no longer be permitted before the bench. Such apparel “is not in keeping with the decorum of the office of the court”, and guards have been ordered to turn away anyone “in shorts, flip-flops, tank tops or the like”.

It’s hot in Italy during summer, granted, but there’s a tradition in the Med countries of requesting appropriate dress – entering churches as well as courts.

Interesting that it took a woman judge to spell it out. A male judge might have been anxious to avoid the accusation “mansplaining”!

“Today the visibility of faith has for all intents and purposes vanished” – Archbishop Dermot Farrell

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Pro-lifers will resist any attempt to close down Rally for Life

Ruadhán Jones

Pro-lifers will resist any attempts to use new 'exclusion zones' legislation to ban the largest pro-life event of the year, the Life Institute have said.

Niamh Uí Bhriain told *The Irish Catholic* that such an interpretation of the legislation would be extreme and "malicious".

"That would have profoundly important implications for the right

to protest for everybody, not just for pro-lifers," she said.

"It shows the danger of this particular piece of legislation, because it's wide open to being used and abused in really malicious ways... your actions or what you're holding can be interpreted so broadly, they could potentially clamp down on any pro-life expression."

The annual gathering could be banned or face re-routing in the capital under controversial proposals being drawn up by Fianna

Fáil Health Minister Stephen Donnelly.

Protests

Mr Donnelly has vowed to ban any pro-life protests or events within 100 metres of where abortions are carried out in so-called 'exclusion zones'.

The traditional route of the Rally for Life in Dublin passes the Rotunda Hospital which carries out abortions, meaning it could fall foul of the controversial plan to silence pro-life voices.

"Rally for Life and every pro-life person in the country would resist very, very strongly any attempt to close down" the rally, Ms Uí Bhriain said.

Mr Donnelly has moved ahead with the legislation despite the Garda Commissioner saying it is unnecessary.

The weekend following the heads of the bill being announced, Ms Uí Bhriain said pro-life people around the country were having peaceful vigils outside abortion centres.

"The centres were closed, but they're there to make a point, to pray for mothers and babies and to draw people's attention to the fact that abortions are happening there.

"Dublin, Roscommon, Meath – people everywhere are saying we're not going to be silenced by this draconian piece of legislation, because it's just being used to silence the pro-life message.

"There's no valid reason for it," Ms Uí Bhriain finished.

Irish missionary opens women's empowerment centre in Kenya

Staff reporter

Fr Patrick Devine SMA hopes to tackle violence against women in Nairobi, Kenya, through a new Empowerment Centre.

The centre will offer women and children the tools and supports to be "significant architects of their security", according to a press release from the Shalom Centre.

The new Empowerment Centre, part of the Shalom complex, will give special attention to "all forms of manifest and structural violence", the release continues, including inter-ethnic, inter-religious, domestic violence and sexual violence.

Fr Devine and his team founded the centre having witnessed the level of violence against women in the slums in Nairobi.

"Women were suffering a lot, as well as children, and we want to help tackle these issues in their lives," Fr Devine told *The Irish Catholic*.

"We want to give them the analytical skills and techniques, and provide them with support to become the architects of their future to live in peace."

Domestic violence is a major social problem affecting the health of thousands of people in the region, according to the statement.

Two congregations of religious sisters – the Dimesse Sisters and the Daughters of St Anne – have provided staff for the centre as well as the Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation.

If you wish to support their work, visit <https://shalomconflictcenter.org/> or contact Fr Devine at pdevine@shalomconflictcenter.org.

Spears takes aim at church closures

Jason Osborne

American popstar Britney Spears took to Instagram to vent about church closures during Covid which she claims prevented her from having the Catholic wedding of her dreams.

In a now-deleted post, Ms Spears said that she'd wanted to marry in St Monica Catholic Church in Southern California, but was prevented from becoming a regular attendee because of the Covid-closures.

"This is where I originally wanted to get married during COVID!!!! I wanted to go every Sunday," she wrote, before commenting



Britney Spears with her husband, Sam Asghari

on the church's beauty. "[T]hey said it was temporarily shut down due to COVID!!!!

Then 2 years later when I wanted to get married there they said I had to be catholic and go through TEST!!! Isn't

church supposed to be open to all???"

A spokesperson for St Monica's later told TMZ that there was no record of any contact from Ms Spears requesting to be married there.

Seeking Our Lady's blessing...



Men pray the rosary on Grand Parade, Cork City, as men's rosary rallies took place across the country last weekend, with rallies being held in Carlingford, Dublin, Wexford and Tralee.

Shannon Campbell

The View



Chaplaincy must be challenging, not a 'holy huddle'

People think that when a university breaks for summer, work stops and staff enjoy an (excessively) long holiday. Perhaps for some, but the vast majority of academics and support staff are on campus, reviewing the year that has past, and preparing for a new intake of students in autumn.

The same is true for chaplaincy. The spiritual and pastoral crises experienced by students don't always fall conveniently within the rhythm of the academic cycle, and so we continue to be there for them throughout the summer holidays.

“We know the age range 16 to 25 is the time when young people shape their outlook and values”

As I write, I am attending a FOCUS missionary summer camp for students in a former Carthusian monastery in Gaming, Austria. It's not a hardship to be 'working' in an old Charterhouse nestled in a forest half-way between Vienna and Salzburg, but this work trip is very much rooted in my ministry at Queen's University Belfast.

For almost two years now, I have been collaborating with a team to develop chaplaincy at Queen's in new and exciting ways. We've been working to deliver Vision 2022, a foundational document written by our chaplain, Fr Dominic McGrattan, not long after he took up post in 2019.

Conscious that for many young people university is right at the heart of their most formative years, Fr Dominic understood the inestimable importance of a well-run chaplaincy with a clear understanding of its role and potential.

Together with a steering group of distinguished lay alumni and friends, he identified strategic goals for the development of chaplaincy. He set this, our 50th year at our landmark site at the heart of campus, as our target for delivery.

Since then, and despite the challenges of pandemic, we have been growing key aspects of ministry, including community and outreach, faith and worship, discernment, intellectual formation, and action and global concern.



In a boost to these efforts, Bishop Noel Treanor announced at a Gala to mark our golden jubilee, that plans are well-advanced to redevelop our chaplaincy site to include a major upgrade of facilities and the provision of high-quality accommodation for upwards of 40 students.

It is incredibly encouraging to know that the Diocese of Down and Connor, under whose auspices Chaplaincy is run, has such confidence in this project and is investing, not just generously, but strategically, in the pastoral care and spiritual wellbeing of young people at a critical time in their lives.

We know the age range 16 to 25 is the time when young people shape their outlook and values and when they make decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Those values and those decisions will also affect the future of society.

So whether we find the prospect daunting or thrilling, the truth is that before too long many of today's undergraduates will be among the world's most influential people, and the Church needs to invest in them.

We are confident that a stable, resident student community on site can only benefit the experience of chaplaincy for all who use our facilities and avail of our services.

And those for whom chaplaincy plays a positive part in their university experience, and who allow its values to shape their lives, will become tomorrow's much-needed agents of change.

With our ministry set to expand even further in the coming years, we are working to ensure the services we provide from a new state-of-the-art facility will be of world-class standard.

That's why I'm in Austria. For the past year, Fr Dominic and I have been in conversation with FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, and their team at University College Dublin. Just

last month, after some collective prayer and discernment, Bishop Treanor gave his blessing for FOCUS to partner with us.

Founded in 1998 as a campus outreach ministry at Benedictine College, Kansas, in direct response to Pope John Paul II's call for a new evangelisation, FOCUS works to inspire and equip third level students to know, love, and share their faith through intentional, virtue-based friendships.

“FOCUS is partnering with us at a time of vitality and growth for both organisations”

Missionaries stationed at campuses throughout the United States and internationally invite students to grow in their faith through Bible studies, small groups, events, mission trips, and one-on-one discipleships.

This coming academic year, FOCUS missionaries will serve at 205 locations, which includes 22 parish venues and eight international campuses, among them for the first time, Queen's University Belfast.

FOCUS is partnering with us at a time of vitality and growth for both organisations. Of the 10,500 students at Queen's who identify as Catholic (or coming from a Catholic background), around 43% have registered their wish to receive chaplaincy services during their studies.

We can't afford to be complacent though. Statistics from the United States suggest some 80% of young Catholics are lapsed by the time they start university. In the UK it is almost certainly worse. The rate of religious disaffiliation among the young is on the increase, and we can see that at work, at university and in Church.

Every year, we have to put it to a new intake of students: Do you really want to make a dif-

ference with the life that God has given you?

Since my appointment as Director of Campus Ministry, I have come to realise that chaplaincy ought not to be a safe space, a 'holy huddle' for Catholics challenged by ideas expressed elsewhere on campus.

Of course it has to be a place of welcome and friendship, a place of formation and of prayer, but it also has to be as a place from which students are encouraged to go out and make a difference. They are to be, what the Church calls, 'missionary disciples'.

If every Catholic student took seriously the call to be a missionary disciple with a heart able to feel for the needs of a stranger, and equipped to evangelise in the ordinary circumstances of their daily lives, they would change the world for the better.

Our chaplaincy is a busy place. We are effective and offer lots of initiatives to help students experience an

encounter with Christ. But it's not enough to expect people to come to us. A chaplaincy, like a parish, exists not simply for those who attend but for the sake of those who do not yet attend.

Peer-to-peer

To reach them effectively, we need people on the ground engaged in peer-to-peer outreach. FOCUS brands itself as 'the hands and feet of the chaplain', engaged in mission in the lecture hall and the lab, on our playing fields and at the bar or in the halls of residence afterwards.

They're concerned, not with organising big events but rather dedicating time to the individual so they can grow in an apostolate of confidence and friendship. They facilitate a personal encounter with, and conversion to, Christ in each student, helping them become more rooted in him.

They help us help students to deepen their knowledge and

understanding of the Faith, nourish and restore them through prayer and sacramental grace, and encourage them through the witness and support of friends embarked on the same journey as they seek to orientate their lives towards God and their hearts towards the needs of their neighbour.

FOCUS is determined that mission on campus has little to do with proselytism, or schemes, or techniques or quick fixes or having all the answers. It's about the quality of our friendship and the integrity of our lives. It's about thinking who that 'one person' is, praying for them every day, befriending them and caring about them enough to introduce them to Jesus.

I am confident that, as we embark on this new and exciting chapter of friendship with FOCUS, we can envision the future with hope and confidence for our chaplaincy and the students it serves.

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Why do young people like conservative Catholic communities?



Conservative Catholic communities offer tight-knit Catholic networks, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

Raymond Friel, an English Catholic academic, caused a bit of a stir on Twitter recently when he questioned why young priests are drawn to what looks like a Church imagined from the 1950s “soutanes in the high street, etc.”

It’s an interesting question, one which many Catholics were willing to offer their view on. One of those who responded to Prof. Friel’s tweet (which he took down later) was the editor of *The Scottish Catholic*, Ian Dunn, who suggested two reasons.

One is that it is a reaction against the failures of modernity. The second, a more practical one, is that conservative Catholic groups have built and sustained communities of the devout more effectively than liberal ones.

I think that Ian has hit the nail on the head with his two very simple points. The fact is, and this is laid down repeatedly in Scripture, the world does not want the Church to succeed in its mission to save souls.

“The family, community, and Church that christened me had communal bonds that most communities today can only envy”

We feel this reality keenly in Ireland, where the legacy of the Church and rampant secularism steels the resolve of those who oppose us. And this secularism, so much the child of modernity, lead us in our turn to reject it.

This is, at least partly, what draws young Catholics to tradi-



Members of the Youth Classical Schola of St Louis Catholic Church in Alexandria, Virginia, sing a canticle before the start of a pontifical solemn high Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, April 2010. Photo: CNS

tionalist communities that do reject modernity. This rejection has good and bad elements. For a number of my peers it seems as though the change is largely an aesthetic one.

They appear to consider English Catholicism of the 1930s to be the highpoint of Catholic culture, and moustaches, tweed, ‘paddy’ caps and pipes are all making a quite unexpected comeback. For others, it’s political and they see the rejection in terms of stereotypically conservative politics.

Unified

While this is off-putting to outsiders, these affectations conceal a real and more important rejection of modernity. The practical success of these communities is that they are tight-knit and care about each other.

They are unified by what they reject, coming together with the excitement of an

‘underground’ movement. But more importantly they are unified by what they expect of each other. At their best, these communities reject the superficiality and vanity of our self-centred age, they see the Catholic Faith as integral to their lives and they want to confess and be forgiven so they can participate in God’s love.

Fr Ron Rolheiser, writing in this week’s paper (see P35), reflects on his own experience of the pre-Vatican II period, the good and the bad. In the ‘good’, he notes that “The family, community, and Church that christened me had communal bonds that most communities today can only envy.

“You truly were part of a body, a family, and a community that incarnated a sense of transcendence that made faith something natural, and community part of your very identity. You knew you were a child of God and you knew too that

you were a moral creature with real responsibilities to others and to God.

“You knew your eternal significance, your essential dignity, and the moral responsibility that came with that and you couldn’t exempt yourself from it.”

Community

This is the kind of certainty and community that young Catholics are seeking out, those that share a common goal and a common means of achieving it. They are a network of friends and relations who want to support each other. And around this common goal and its practical implications, these conservative communities have a shared culture.

For instance, I think we can say that the shape of the TLM liturgy is ‘inculturated’, to use the term from the Second Vatican Council – it has been shaped by the culture of

TLM communities and in turn shaped them.

“The fact is, and this is laid down repeatedly in Scripture, the world does not want the Church to succeed in its mission to save souls”

Liberal communities, by contrast, can appear to young Catholics to lack a definite culture – they seem bland and fade into the wider culture. This is in part because they tend to favour the welcoming and accepting aspects of community. While these are vital to encourage participation, ultimately they only lay the ground work for a community.

That is because they require a neutral space, not one that has committed to this or that particular vision of reality. They need divisions and separations so that what might be truly felt, and yet would lead to conflict if expressed, remains under the surface.

Politeness

There is a superficial politeness, but without the possibility of deep friendship oriented towards a common goal – in this case salvation in and through Christ’s body, the Church.

That of course is a generalisation, and more space and time is needed to really tease out undoubted problems in my analysis. I have already written about the dangers of turning our communities into ‘safe spaces’ for Catholics. If we lose our missionary and charitable outlook, then we will turn into a bickering elect. Just because the world rejects us, we cannot reject them.

But all the same, if we are to more than merely survive, tight-knit ‘kin’ networks of Catholics who support each other spiritually and materially are badly needed. And this is what conservative communities offer more effectively than liberal ones.

“We feel this reality keenly in Ireland, where the legacy of the Church and rampant secularism steels the resolve of those who oppose us”

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A very modern scandal our politicians are ignoring



Surrogacy and gender reassignment surgery are the scandals of modern Ireland, writes David Quinn

Different times produce different sorts of scandals, and they are often the product of the particular set of values a given society has at a given moment. As we are now well aware, in the past babies were frequently taken away from mothers and placed for adoption. Sometimes the birth certificates of the babies were deliberately and illegally altered to ensure the child in later life could not trace their natural parents.

“Sometimes the name of two women or two men can appear on the birth cert as the child’s parents, which is obviously biologically impossible”

The Government is now trying to make amends for this by making it easier for adopted people to trace their parents and a nationwide information campaign has been launched to this effect.

The scandal was produced by the values of the time. Unmarried motherhood was hugely discouraged for moral and economic reasons and massive pressure was often placed on unwed mothers to give up their babies.

Today, of course, pressure can exist to abort a baby instead, but this causes no scandal because abortion is now portrayed as a ‘solution’ to a crisis pregnancy.

Ironically, efforts to make it easier for adopted people to trace their natural parents are taking place at the same time as legislation has been passed that allows birth certificates to be altered by people who use donor eggs or sperm to have children. The names of the natural parents can be removed from the

short form version of the birth cert and replaced by the names of the adults who used the donated eggs and/or sperm to have a child.

Sometimes the names of two women or two men can appear on the birth cert as the child’s parents, which is obviously biologically impossible.

This State-authorized alteration of birth certs is presented as a sign of progress.

Children produced via egg or sperm donation will, theoretically speaking, be allowed to find out the identities of their natural parents when they turn 18, but how likely is it really that they will ever form a proper relationship with their sperm donor father or egg donor mother when that person probably lives overseas because most of the donor eggs and sperm used in Ireland are imported from abroad?

Surrogacy

Furthermore, a big push is now on to recognise international commercial surrogacy which involves paying a woman overseas to bear a child for someone else. Most countries ban this practice because it commodifies children.

In years to come there will be a scandal over it, but for now, it seems to fit with modern Irish values, proving again that at any given time a society can become blind to scandals happening right under its nose.

Why do the adoption scandals of the past cause uproar today, but not the new ones taking place right in front of us? The reason is that removing a child from an unwilling mother violates autonomy, but because individual autonomy is the chief modern value, it doesn’t bother enough of us that so many abortions occur, or that the use of donor eggs, sperm and surrogate mothers interfere with the identity and rights of a child, because the adults involved are making free choices.

Another scandal is also unfolding before us, and this one involves the HSE sending more than 200 children, at the expense of the taxpayer, to the Tavistock clinic in London to undergo ‘gender reassignment’, which involves seemingly turning a boy into a girl, or vice versa.

This process might involve no drugs, in which case everything is reversible. It might simply involve counselling a boy or girl who identifies as the opposite sex in how to make the ‘transition’.

But far more controversially, it will often involve drugs such as puberty blockers and sex hormones.

The aforementioned Tavistock clinic is now set to close down following a scathing official review of its practices.

As the London *Times* says, the review accused the clinic “of rushing teenagers into life-altering treatment on hormone-blocking drugs”.

It adds: “Legal experts said the trust [behind the clinic] could now be sued by patients who felt they did



not receive the right treatment.”

The National Health Service decided to close the clinic on the recommendation of Dr Hilary Cass, a paediatrician who is leading a review of the service.

Dr Cass expressed concerns about the use of sex hormones and puberty blockers. She challenged claims that the latter are reversible, saying there is not enough evidence to say such a thing.

“Despite growing concerns in Britain over the Tavistock clinic, the HSE continued to send children there uninterrupted”

Puberty blockers are sometimes given to adolescents who say they have been born into the ‘wrong body’ in order to prevent them developing secondary sexual characteristics such as breasts.

The clinic has seen an enormous increase in demand for its services in the last decade, a jump critics say is mainly the result of social pressure and the massively increased profile of transgender-ideology, including online.

But if the alarm is now being sounded in Britain about what is going on there is still very little sign of the same in Ireland, or in official circles at least. Despite growing concerns in Britain over the Tavistock clinic, the HSE continued to send children there uninterrupted. Concerns raised by a handful of Irish doctors such as Paul Moran and Donal O’Shea appear to have been totally ignored.

Puberty blockers

Furthermore, there has been a continued insistence at official level that puberty blockers were reversible. For example, a review into our ‘gender recognition’ law ordered by then Minister for Social Protection, Regina Doherty, in 2018, insisted this was the case, and so did the Chief Operations Officer for Children’s Health Ireland only last year in a response to Independent TD, Carol Nolan.

In total contrast, Dr Hilary Cass said in her review: “We cannot be sure about the impact of stopping these hormone surges on psychosexual and gender maturation. To date, there has been very limited research on the short, medium or longer-term impact of puberty blockers on neurocognitive development.”

The HSE looks like it has learnt

nothing from what happened at Tavistock. According to Dr Paul Moran it now wants to send Irish children to a clinic in Belgium, which he says, “is a bad idea, for all the same reasons the Cass Report identified”.

The Government has said nothing in response to all this, and only *The Sunday Independent* in Ireland has given the matter extensive coverage. For the most part, the whole story is being ignored despite the very direct Irish link. It’s quite likely we will see lawsuits in the years to come against the HSE.

“We simply create new forms that arise directly from our new, much-vaunted values”

But what is happening serves as another example of how a scandal can unfold right before us but we avert our gaze because it doesn’t suit our current values to confront it. In turn, this shows we have learnt less than we think from the scandals of the past. We simply create new forms that arise directly from our new, much-vaunted values.

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Soaring inflation and the impacts of Covid-19 are causing increasing strife in Lebanon, writes **Chai Brady**

Despite Lebanon being considered by the World Bank as an upper middle-income country, they face a plethora of crises which are being acutely felt by the most vulnerable and discriminated in society.

The country has seen the worst food inflation worldwide in the second quarter of 2022, according to the World Bank, partly due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the explosion of grain silos in Beirut's port two years ago which crippled the nation's ability to distribute wheat and maize.

The Lebanese lira has lost 90% of its value which has caused a banking crisis. They face electricity and fuel shortages leading to power outages and there are also shortages in medicines and medical equipment.

Despite these challenges, Irish Rosminian missionary Fr William Stuart has continued to support refugee children in Lebanon, providing primarily education but also food and other necessities when circumstances demand.

School

Based in Tyre, south Lebanon, his school started with 35 children but will welcome 300 in the upcoming academic year. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Stuart says it's hard to describe the deprivation they face.

"We have kids who've never had a toothbrush, a lot of them, their little baby teeth are rotting in their mouths," he explains. "We had an oral hygiene session last year. We got toiletries from Ireland and we decided rather than just giving them out we would do an educational day on how to brush your teeth."

"The two things that stand out for me on that day was they couldn't coordinate the



A woman pushes a cart past damaged buildings in Beirut last year. According to the United Nations, more than two-thirds of Lebanese people now live below the poverty line. Photo: CNS

toothpaste onto the toothbrush because they had never done it before and then even though we told them all about the brushing, the up and down, over and across, back and front: they held it static to their teeth. They didn't know even when you told them. It was laborious.

"Our kids, their baby teeth get loose and they fall out and the tooth fairy looks after the rest, for them they just rot away, it's just an indication of the deprivation."

“The country has seen the worst food inflation worldwide in the second quarter of 2022”

Many of the children are undocumented, which Fr Stuart says means they are not allowed to attend state schools. Meaning many only access education through his school, which is not recognised by Lebanon's authorities.

"If we don't provide something for them, nobody else will. How do we know that? Because when we leave kids on the street and say we can't take anymore the school is full, and we manage to move 5, 10, 15

kids into the state school when they have reached a certain level of literacy, we go back out onto the streets and the same kids that we left the previous time are still there," he says.

"Nobody has come to pick them up or do anything with them because nobody wants these kids. They are absolute pariahs. The local municipality, they're happy that we're doing something because we're taking the 'nuisance' off the streets."

There are children who start working as young as five years old, selling the likes of bottled water, tissue and chewing gum on the streets. He gives the example of one of his pupil Abdullah (6), saying: "His father was killed in the winter of 2020, trying to cross from Syria into Turkey and he was shot. He's on his own and the mother has disappeared, he's looked after by some women in the camp but they take the view that he needs to pay for his food and he's out every day collecting plastic bottles in the dump."

"He was a gorgeous little kid and he's become angry, he hits everybody, it's awful to see it because you know this is all a consequence of his situation."

In more severe circum-

stances children have become victims of sexual abuse in order to earn money. Fr Stuart says there are children as young as 12 on the streets. On one occasion he saw a car stop beside a child he knew, there was a short conversation, and the child got into the car.

"I'm filled with rage, I want to go up and destroy the car and destroy the driver. But you can't do anything, well you can, but they'll put a bullet in my head. It's beyond awful, to witness this is horrendous," he says, "All our kids are vulnerable."

Conditions

Regarding living conditions for refugee children, he says: "Our kids, in terms of habitation, are living in what I call either tents or tenements. The tenements, they're living in a room or two rooms and they share facilities within the building."

"The tents are associated to horticulture. So it's part of their salary. It's literally a tent you couldn't stand up in. It's probably about 3 metres by 2 metres. It's tarpaulin. There are no windows in it, as an adult you couldn't stand up in it," he explains.

"They have one hour of electricity a day. There are communal toilets, they are



Rosminian priest Fr William Stuart with two street children who are brothers, Zakariya (10) and Ibrahim (9) in Lebanon. Fr Stuart says the school has lost them, they now work full time on the streets.

beyond stinking. In the summer, to sleep in these, it's unbearably hot."

Some kids have learning disabilities, autism and visual impairment, which the school is catering for by buying in services. They have 6-8 children who are getting therapies of one form or another twice a week.

Immense challenges

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), there are currently more than 830,000 registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon. In a statement earlier this year the UNHCR said

that while it recognised the "immense challenges" Lebanon is facing, it stressed the need to continue upholding the principles of refugee protection in Lebanon, including non-refoulement – the principle that no one should be returned to a country where they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment – and the right to voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity.

It stated: "The current dire economic crisis facing Lebanon has affected the whole of society, pushing the most vulnerable to the brink. Nine out of ten

“Many of the children are undocumented, which Fr Stuart says means they are not allowed to attend state schools”



Kindergarten children in Fr William Stuart's school in Tyre, Lebanon.



Fr Stuart visits a child who is recovering after nearly dying from a snake bite.

Syrian refugees in the country are living in extreme poverty, and nearly half of Lebanese fall under the poverty line.

"Since 2015, Lebanon has received nearly US \$9 billion [€8.8 billion] in support of Syrian refugees, vulnerable Lebanese, Palestinian refugees and public institutions under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). The assistance made possible by donor contributions and implemented by humanitarian, development and government partners has been a vital contribution to address the impact of multiple crises that Lebanon has been enduring."

Critical

Fr Stuart was critical of NGOs and their decisions during the Covid crisis, saying it felt like they were "running away and abandoning" vulnerable refugee children at a time when they needed support most. "I was angry at them. Their sense of priority was very, very misplaced," he says, adding that he could not do his work from home.

During this time, he felt it was important to continue reinforcing the children's education.

Fr Stuart says: "I was afraid that the basic numeracy and literacy skills would be lost in our kids if the lockdown went on for a protracted period, which it did. So we addressed that issue. They didn't learn anything extra, but we absolutely consolidated what they had been taught. Worksheet after worksheet."

While initially it was Fr Stuart and another teacher who went into the refugee camps during Covid, more of the teachers decided to assist.

"During the Covid, I took the view that we didn't have the privilege of walking away from them and we really had to consolidate their education

so we started producing worksheets in English, Arabic and maths, so the teachers prepared them, I delivered them and gradually all the teachers came on board," he says.

"We went out to the camps we delivered them, we collected them, we brought them home, corrected them and we returned them and we built up great, great relationships not just with the kids but with their families and that has stood us greatly to this day."

"I was angry at them. Their sense of priority was very, very misplaced," he says, adding that he could not do his work from home"

In addition, during the height of the pandemic there came a time when food provision became more pressing than education. The money kids were earning on the streets selling bottled water and other items during regular times had dried up because people were being ordered to go home – a policy enforced by the military – and everything was closed.

Every week during lockdown they were preparing food parcels which included lentils, rice, pasta, sometimes vegetables, tinned food, but not meat as it was too expensive.

Missing school

Fr Stuart says they also do their best to ensure that children are not missing school. Their school administrator follows up with parents when there are absences.

He says: "The first session starts at 12 noon, the second session is at 4.30pm, we have

107 kids in the first session and 200 in the second. If the kids don't arrive into school the administrator is immediately on to the families, 'Where is he/she?', 'Please make sure they're in tomorrow', if they're not in two days in a row we go out to the camps to see what's going on."

The missionary says he does not believe this care is provided for Syrian refugees who enter state schools. After hearing reports that some students previously in his school were being verbally abused and beaten by teachers, Fr Stuart says he went to investigate.

He alleged: "We spoke to the principal. Bear in mind he has 500 Syrians in the afternoon session on his books, but he has less than 120 in school. They don't care, they absolutely don't care. Asked where the other 380 were – they don't know – 'Did you think of looking for them?', 'Oh there's too many we can't do that.'"

Fr Stuart says they levelled the children's claims to the principal and he replied it doesn't happen in the school. "He categorically denied it," Fr Stuart says, adding, "He spoke about the impact Syrians were having on Lebanese society – none of it positive."

Asked about discrimination of refugees in Lebanese society, he says: "Younger people are only little bit more open, but anybody over 30, 40 they're all the same, they ask me: 'Why are you helping them? Why don't you help ours?'"

Banking crisis

Due to rising costs in Lebanon, Fr Stuart says it will be harder to raise enough funds, adding that it's "very hard to say to kids 'no, you can't come in'". He was very complimentary of the support he has received from Irish parishes who have sent hundreds of



A girl learning basic literacy and numeracy in Fr Stuart's school in Tyre, Lebanon.

boxes of various supplies to aid his mission.

"I'd say 100% of our kids are now wearing Irish clothes that came out via two containers in the last two years from parishes here in Dublin, a lot of it new, but most of it really good quality second-hand, shoes, clothes, it's great. The support has been fabulous. But the need is just never ending."

Fr Stuart began visiting Syria in 2002 and says he fell in love with Arab culture, even taking a sabbatical to study Arabic in Damascus. When the war broke out, he wanted to help, and began teaching refugees in 2013 and has continued to do so. Although currently back in Dalkey parish in

Dublin, he will be returning to Lebanon before the new academic year.

While refugees are in a dire situation, Lebanon as a whole is struggling with the government unable to meet many of the needs of its population.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty Olivier De Schutter, speaking to a Middle East-based news agency, said Lebanon risks becoming a "republic of NGOs".

"There is what I call a crisis of trust in the government's ability to respond to the needs of the population," he said.

"Many people I spoke to feel abandoned, they feel disenchanted, they have lost faith in the willingness and

ability of the government to provide solutions, and I am concerned that many answers that today are being provided by Lebanon are not structural in nature, they are not long-term answers to the country's problems, they are short term humanitarian answers and Lebanon unfortunately risks becoming a republic of NGOs with humanitarian actors."

Solutions to Lebanon's current crises are far from simple, and while they continue, the poorest and most vulnerable in particular are suffering the most.

i Those interested in donating to Fr William Stuart's school can email him at stresa2@gmail.com

Bishop Edward Daly was ‘trusted wherever he went’

Ruadhán Jones

A new exhibition, ‘A Man for all Seasons’, on the life of the late Bishop of Derry Edward Daly was launched Wednesday 3, August.

Exhibition

It will be on display at St Eugene’s Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road, from August 8-14.

The exhibition - which is supported by Derry & Strabane Council - features items linked to all aspects of the bishop’s life, including his mitre, crozier and various manuscripts.

It also includes film footage and photographs from throughout his life.

Among those at Wednesday’s official launch was the

late Bishop’s sister, Anne, and other relatives, as well as the Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown.

Grainne McCafferty - one of the organisers of the exhibition - told the launch that Dr Daly led Derry and the North “to hope rather than despair”.

She added that he had “lit a candle in the darkness and was a visible, known and trusted presence wherever he went”.

Essence and spirit

Ms McCafferty said the new exhibition aimed to capture the “essence and spirit” of Bishop Daly and to celebrate and mark the “many facets of his life and the multiplicity of ways he left his mark and influence”.



Grainne McCafferty, one of the organisers of the new exhibition chronicling the life and legacy of Bishop Edward Daly, pictured at a display featuring his mitre, crozier and skull cap.



Anne Gibson, sister of Bishop Edward Daly, chats to Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown and other guests at the Wednesday, August 3, exhibition launch.



Bishop Daly’s nephew, Gerard, along with Fr Eamon Graham at the exhibition launch.



Betty Doherty (on right), who for many years was Bishop Daly’s housekeeper, was among those to attend this week’s exhibition launch.



Ms McCafferty pictured at the exhibition opening.



Bishop Donal McKeown, speaking at the exhibition launch.



Family and friends of Bishop Edward Daly at the launch of 'A Man for All Seasons' which opened to the public at the St Eugene's Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road, on Monday.



Pat McCafferty at the launch of 'A Man for All Seasons'.



Pictured at the official launch of the new Bishop Edward Daly exhibition are (from left) Grainne McCafferty, Anne Gibson (Bishop Daly's sister), Mayor of Derry and Strabane Sandra Duffy, Bishop Donal McKeown and Emmet Thompson, pastoral co-ordinator, Derry Diocese.

Agriculture emission targets: challenges and hopes



The Pope's call for young people to reduce meat intake comes at a time when Ireland is pushing for a more sustainable agriculture sector, writes **Chai Brady**

The Government's agreed set ceilings for greenhouse gas emissions for each sector have been dubbed a "positive step" by climate scientists, renewing hopes Ireland will reach its commitment to halve emissions by 2030.

However, cuts to emissions in the agriculture sector proved the most contentious, with a 25% reduction agreed upon. This was a smaller percentage target compared to other sectors – despite agriculture making up 37.5% of Ireland's overall carbon emissions.

“There is an urgent need to reduce the consumption not only of fossil fuels but also of so many superfluous things”

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, said at the announcement of 'Sectoral Emissions Ceilings', that the decision on agriculture "recognises the special economic and social role of agriculture, and the importance of sustainable food production. I am satisfied that the agreement we have arrived at today strikes an appropriate balance in this regard".

This comes as Pope Francis urged young people in a message to participants in the EU Youth Conference last month to eat less meat, saying that it is part of a "self-destructive trend".

"If you do not succeed in turning this self-destructive trend around, it will be difficult for others to do so in the future. Don't let yourselves be seduced by the sirens that propose a life of luxury reserved for a small slice of the world," he said.

"...There is an urgent need to reduce the consumption not only of fossil fuels but also of so many superfluous things. In certain areas of the world, too, it would be appropriate to consume less meat: this too can help save the environment."

The Pontiff's advice aligns with the majority of the scientific community, who have advised that the reduction of

meat consumption can significantly reduce an individual's carbon footprint.

Irish farmers have received assurances any changes in the sector will be voluntary and there will be "generous financial incentives" in return with an additional financial package in Budget 2023.

Green Party leader Eamon Ryan said, in relation to reduction in the national herd before the set ceilings were agreed, that "As more farmers switch to these viable alternatives by choosing to use more of their land for energy production or storage they may find that they do not have the requirement for the same number of animals".

Supports

Environmental scientist Ciara Murphy, who is the Environmental Policy Advocate for the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, said there are several ways Ireland's targets in agriculture can be met but farmers must receive adequate supports.

She said: "The most fair way is to make sure farmers are supported either in reducing the stocking rate, or diversifying into horticulture, tillage or even rewilding part of their land, they need to be supported and it needs to be balanced.

"It can't only be a certain cohort of farmers who get the benefit for any supports, it needs to be across the board but concentrated on the ones that are most vulnerable."

Dr Murphy added that a recent announcement that scrubland will be eligible for payments under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is welcome, saying: "It is a really important step in terms of emission reductions but as well for biodiversity, that's really beneficial not just for the environment but also for farmers as well.

"If you have to clear land that is beneficial to biodiversity, but is non-productive, then you're spending money just to get some money back and it's not in your best interest."

“Regarding beef – the production of which scientists have connected with large greenhouse gas emissions – Mr Dempsey outlined its health benefits, including being a source of protein, iron and B vitamins”

The former Editor of the *Irish Farmers Journal*, Matt Dempsey expressed concern that food production is not being given the importance it deserves in decisions around emission reductions.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, he said the demand for milk is expanding globally, with milk consumption being seen in many countries as "inherently beneficial".

"You have to look at it in a more global sense... it's very clear that per kilo of milk produced Ireland is in a uniquely competitive position, so I have no problem with very strict clean water demands being placed on the sector," he said, "I do have a problem where it's treated in isolation – a commodity that's in such worldwide demand and brings such huge nutritional benefits to the population."

“If we stop producing it and we stop advertising it, that doesn't mean that it will be taken up elsewhere”

He added that the need to safeguard food security is in the Paris Climate Agreement and that "there should have been a much more global approach to food and agriculture".

Regarding beef – the production of which scientists have connected with large greenhouse gas emissions – Mr Dempsey outlined its health benefits, including being a source of protein, iron and B vitamins. He questioned what the land would be used for if not for cattle, citing grass's role in absorbing CO₂, and said that there are now certain feeds that can reduce a cow's methane production by 30% and more.

"Obviously farming can cope and will still survive in Ireland but I think the



whole emphasis of the entire announcement has been wrongly focused and I don't think you can blame the Irish Government on that, I think it's broadly a failure, whether it's at EU level or at international level, in taking proper cognisance of the importance of food production and particularly the importance of grass in sequestering CO₂ and then producing a highly nutritious product [beef] that's in growing demand across the world," Mr Dempsey said.

Competition

Regarding global competition surrounding milk and beef, Dr Murphy said Ireland should spend less advertising these products with the aim to increase dairy and meat consumption abroad.

Asked whether she believes reducing exports of these products will increase production in other countries, Dr Murphy said: "We need to be responsible for our own emissions. We don't have a crystal ball to say 'this exact amount of emissions will be emitted elsewhere', if we stop producing it and we stop advertising it, that doesn't mean that it will be taken up elsewhere. I would say it's disingenuous to have that argument while actively promoting increased consumption."

She added: "It could be an issue, but every country has signed up to the climate agreement, so every country is having this conversation.

We do need to look at our own consumption... in terms of the amount of meat and dairy that is consumed, or how it is consumed, what products are being manufactured, are they necessary?"

Dr Murphy said that overall the targets for emission cuts are "a very positive step, it needed to happen".

“There is a shift in thinking globally about food production and its sustainability with rising populations”

"We can look at other countries and see that they have reduced their emissions, so what makes us different?"

Ireland was ranked in the "low performance category" of the 2021 Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), coming 46 out of 60 countries due to a failure to cut emissions.

Dr Murphy added: "If we look across the board, transport has to reduce emissions by 50% – we can create safer environments with better air quality, more liveable public spaces, people can get around without needing a car. It's about trying to create a society, an environment and communities that are actually better, shifting our lifestyles – it's a positive thing."

There are a plethora of scientific studies connecting animal agriculture, particularly meat production, with high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Last week scientific journal *The Lancet* published an article entitled 'Ethical and economic implications of the adoption of novel plant-based beef substitutes in the USA: a general equilibrium modelling study'.

It stated that current beef production systems in the US are a major source of negative environmental impacts and that plant-based alternatives "could help to reduce the carbon footprint of the food system, while also reducing the number of animals needed to meet growing global food demand".

"If widely adopted, plant-based alternatives could restructure the food system, redefining economic and material flows within many value chains, with some economic activities expanding while others decrease. New demand for crops might spur intensification of crops that were previously less economically important (eg, pulses as inputs to plant-based alternatives). All these changes will ultimately lead to both positive and negative effects along many dimensions, all with important ethical implications," it stated.

There is a shift in thinking globally about food production and its sustainability with rising populations.

Demand for products such as beef and dairy are on the rise in Asia. Ireland has been tapping into those profitable markets.

Solutions are not simple, but Ireland's 25% reduction target for agriculture sets an ambitious goal.

Out&About

'In the beginning was the Word...'



TIPPERARY: The Logos Scripture Summer School, led by Fr Terence Crotty OP, came to an end August 3, following five days of reflection on Scripture in Mount St Joseph's Cistercian Abbey, Roscrea.



AUSTRIA: Fr Dominic McGrattan (far right) and Shannon Campbell (far left) of Queen's University Belfast's Catholic chaplaincy are pictured with FOCUS missionaries at their training camp in Austria, August 1.



DOWN: Recently ordained Fr John O'Laverty is pictured outside St Patrick's Church, Legamaddy, with his parents Elizabeth and Martin, his sisters Edel and Marie, his brother-in-law and his nieces, July 31.

IN SHORT

Volunteer opportunities at Catholic hospital in Kenya

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Mutomo in Kenya are offering opportunities for volunteers both at the hospital and in the community.

The hospital partners with organisations for volunteer and residency programs as well as community health programs such as children and mothers' initiatives, water and sanitation.

They also had volunteers supporting non-clinical components of care such as Monetary & Evaluation and IT.

Volunteers would be expected to sponsor their own return air fare and can stay for three, six or 12 months.

The hospital offers work experience in a safe area of Africa and an opportunity to broaden your experience.

For further information please email Sr Mary Okumu, at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital: lourdes@mutomohospital.or.ke

Horn of Africa drought escalating, warns Concern

The worst drought the Horn of Africa has experienced in 40 years continues to escalate, Irish charity Concern Worldwide has warned.

A combination of drought conditions and a lack of grain from Ukraine and Russia is leaving millions facing "catastrophic levels of hunger", the charity warned in a statement.

"Right now, due to resource limitations, we are having to prioritise people facing emergency and catastrophic levels of hunger," said Concern's Regional Director for the Horn of Africa, Amina Abdulla.

"By doing so, we risk people facing less severe but still serious levels of hunger being neglected and falling into famine-like conditions," she added.

"We need more funding to enable humanitarian organisations to respond to all in need."

Irish Christian singer releases new single

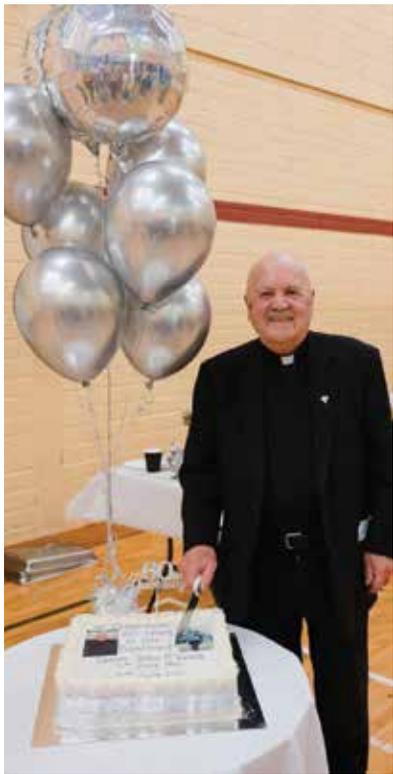
Irish Christian singer-songwriter Victoria Johnston is set to release a reimagined rendition of

the *From A Distance* on Friday August 12.

From A Distance being a smash hit for both Nanci Griffith (1987) and Bette Midler (1990), and Ms Johnston's own original debut song *Tar Liom* being shortlisted for the 2021 Grammy Awards for Song of the Year. Ms Johnston has now teamed up with Billy Farrell (Grammy-nominated producer, The Corrs) who has arranged and produced this single.

On the decision to record and release *From A Distance*, Ms Johnston said in a statement that it "feels like the right time to breathe new life into this song".

"It's been a long time since this song has had a fresh arrangement by a female artist," she said.



TYRONE: Fr John McKenna, retired Parish Priest of Kilskeery Parish, is pictured at the celebration of his Diamond Jubilee (60 years) in the Priesthood in St Macartan's Church, Trillick.



DERRY: Foyle Hospice's Summer Raffle Jackpot of £10,000 was won by Louise Doherty pictured here with her daughter Lucy, July 31.



NEW YORK: Anna McKinley (back right), formerly a member of Queen's University's Catholic chaplaincy is pictured having completed her postulancy with the Sisters of Life. She has been admitted to their novitiate, July 21.



CARLOW: Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty welcomes Irish Winter Olympian Tess Arbez on her July 27 visit with her parents Jean-Max and Marguerite to Carlow Cathedral to see the font where her grandad Francis Neerman was baptised on April 1, 1944.



CLARE: Fr Robert MacNamara PP Lisdoonvara is pictured celebrating Mass in the cemeteries at Kilmoon and Doolin.



Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



DUBLIN: The Peter McVerry Trust's annual Wexford Cycle, which will take place September 17, was launched by former participant Sean Kinsella and Trust CEO Pat Doyle, July 28.



CHINA: Pilgrims pray at the shrine around the grave of the first Columban martyr, Irishman Fr Timothy Leonard, San Gang.



CAVAN: Kingscourt parishioner Martin Hickey captured an aerial view of the large crowds who attended the 2022 blessing of the graves at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the church.



DERRY: On the 2nd Anniversary of John Hume's passing, the Hume family and grandchildren were joined by Bishop Donal McKeown to plant a 'Tree of Peace' in honour of John and Pat Hume, August 3.



MAYO: Breda Tumelty of the Legion of Mary in Westport, Ireland, poses for a photo July 31. Tumelty was offering pilgrims a gift of a miraculous medal "to keep them safe" in the first Reek Sunday climb of Croagh Patrick since the pandemic hit. Photo: CNS

ARMAGH

Bach at Twilight, part of the Charles Wood Festival and Summer School 2022 collection, will take place in St Malachy's Catholic Church August 25. Tickets cost £10. Visit Eventbrite.ie for more information. The event will also be live streamed.

CLARE

The Killaloe diocesan pilgrimage to Scattery Island takes place August 28 from 2:30-5pm.

Mass will be celebrated at St Joseph's Well on Monday August 15 at 7pm. Celebrant: Fr Darisuz Zarebski.

CORK

The 71st Annual Mass and Devotions at the Holy Rosary Shrine, Lee Road, takes place August 15, the feast of the Assumption, with Bishop-emeritus John Buckley to celebrate.

DERRY

Exhibition on the life of Bishop Edward Daly, 'A Man for All Seasons' (Monday August 8-Sunday August 14) in St Eugene's Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road. This exhibition has been compiled to celebrate the life, influence, work and legacy of Bishop Edward Daly. For more information, please visit www.steugenesacathedral.com

DONEGAL

A half day retreat at the Divine Mercy Centre, Letterkenny, takes place Saturday August 13 from 2-5:30pm. The retreat will comprise two talks, prayer time and community. For more information contact dvm-letterkenny@gmail.com or 074 916 9934.

DOWN

Eucharistic Adoration in St Patrick's Church, Downpatrick, will resume on Friday September 2 at 11am until 7:30pm.

DUBLIN

Donnybrook parish are running a four-week book club meeting on Tuesday mornings (August 9, 16, 23 and 30), in the Parish Pastoral Centre after 10am Mass. They will read *Let us Dream*

– *The Path to a Better Future* by Pope Francis. If you would like to participate, contact the parish office.

Mass and Blessing of Graves in Balscadden Church, Balscadden Old School and Flemington Cemeteries in Balbriggan will take place on August 14 at 4pm.

Legion of Mary Centenary concert takes place September 3 in St Patrick's Cathedral. Featuring Celine Byrne, the Dublin Concert Band and many more. Begins 8pm, ticks cost €20 or €30. Visit Eventbrite.ie or contact 087 230 5946.

GALWAY

A Youth 2000 prayer gathering for young Catholics (aged 18-35) takes place in the Church of St Oliver Plunkett, Renmore on Fridays at 8:15pm. For more information, contact Maire on 0851482076.

KILDARE

Athy parish is holding a one-day pilgrimage to Our Lady's Island, Co. Wexford on Monday, August 15, Feast of the Assumption. The bus leaves from St Michael's Parish Church car-park at 11am. Mass at 3pm will be followed by a procession around the Island and will conclude with Adoration and Benediction. Subsidised fare is €10, 30 seats are available, please contact parish office on 059 863 8391.

KILKENNY

The Legion of Mary meet in the presbytery of St John's parish on Tuesday evenings at 8pm.

LONGFORD

The diocesan pilgrimage to Knock takes place Sunday September 4 with ceremonies beginning at 2.30pm.

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Mel's Cathedral from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 8pm to 12 midnight Monday to Saturday in the Oratory at the side of the Presbytery.

MAYO

Knock International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine will host a family day on Sunday August 21, where children and families can join in a

range of fun activities in the beautiful grounds of Knock Shrine.

MONAGHAN

The blessing of the graves ceremony for Monaghan and Rackwallace cemetery takes place Sunday September 4 at 3pm.

OFFALY

Clonmacnoise pattern day takes place Sunday, September 11. The pattern begins at 2.45pm with Mass at 3pm.

TIPPERARY

The Celtic Brothers (formerly known as The Willoughby Brothers) in Concert on Friday September 30, in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Thurles. Tickets now available in the Parish Office, Cathedral Street and Bookworm, Liberty Square. Ticket donation: €30.00. All proceeds towards the cathedral 'Raise the Roof' project.

WATERFORD

'Jesus, My Lord' - a day of prayer, thanksgiving and healing – takes place Sunday, September 11 in the Rhu Glenn Hotel, Slieverue with guest speaker Fr Pat Collins. Runs from 10am to 6pm with Mass at 12 o'clock. Contact Tom 087 2701311/ Sile 086 8590394.

Four-day Medjugorje-style retreat at Glencomeragh Retreat Centre, with Fr Patrick Cahill. Full board accommodation, but spaces are limited so book now. Takes place August 18-21/ September 1-4. Cost: €260. Full Medjugorje-like spiritual programme. For more information or to book contact info@holymfamilymission.ie or (052) 6133181.

WESTMEATH

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Cathedral of Christ the King from 2:30pm-7pm Monday-Friday.

WEXFORD

St Aidan's Cathedral Eniscorthy's parish pilgrimage to Our Lady's Island takes place Monday August 29 at 8pm. The bus is subsidised by the parish so the cost is €5 per person.



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A celebration of Daniel O'Leary's unrelenting conviction that life itself is God's love eternally unfolding before us. Featuring a collection of notes found on Daniel's laptop after his death.



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Sinéad De Valera

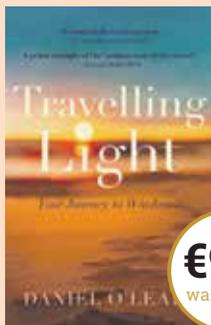
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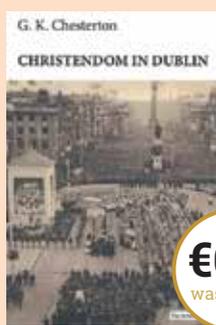
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Greg Daly

Discover multiple aspects of the 1916 Easter Rising, including information about the rebels' Catholic faith, the Church's reaction to the rising and the morality of revolution.

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2022

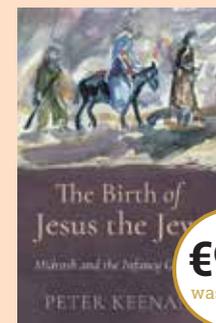
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What Happened to Fr Seán Fagan?
Angela Hanley

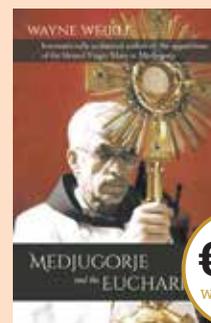
What happens when theologians are asked to obey rather than discover? This book is Fr Fagan's story which covers his thoughts on issues of conscience and sexual morality as well as his Vatican censure.



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Already Within
Daniel O'Leary

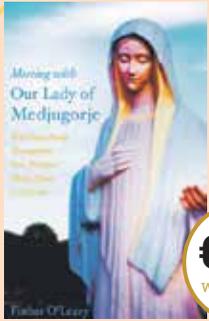
A collection of some of Daniel O'Leary's best articles categorised by seasons celebrating the presence of God in the ordinary moments of our lives.



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Medjugorje & the Eucharist
Wayne Weible

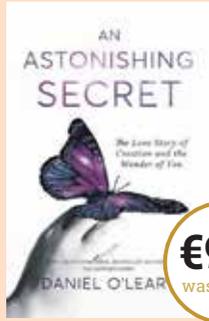
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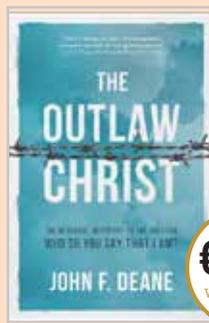
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Early Irish Saints
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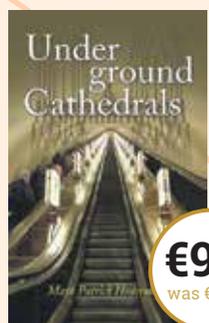
These short essays on well-loved saints present a very readable mix of historical fact and folklore. The introduction provides a useful commentary on what early biographers of saints saw as their function.



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What Have the Irish Ever Done for Us?
David Forsythe

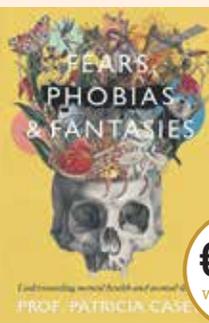
For centuries, the Irish have had an impact on the world far beyond what would be expected from a tiny nation and this book will open many people's eyes to their incredible achievements.



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Donal Harrington

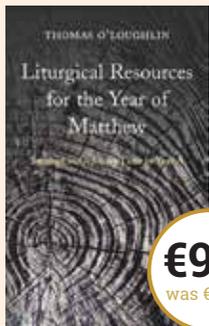
Written for anyone who has an interest in the future of the Church, the author lays out a new vision to bring a revitalised energy and hope to the parish moving forward through the Synod and beyond.



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Allowing ourselves to experience God's mercy in Confession



A temptation to believe that we presume too much on God's mercy dogs the spiritual progress of many Christians, writes **Thomas Flowers SJ**

St Peter Faber (1506-1546) came to see his battle with scruples as an occasion for the mercy of God. As a young man, guilt overwhelmed him. He worried not only over every actual and possible sin, but over whether he had confessed properly the sins he had brought to the Sacrament of Confession; perhaps he had forgotten a sin or neglected some detail and thus not actually been absolved by the priest. Yet in the spiritual diary he kept between 1542 and 1546, when he reflected on his most tortuously scrupulous moments, he gave thanks. In words addressed to his own soul, he marvelled that "without those scruples, Iñigo perchance might not have been able to get through to you, nor you to desire his help as happened later on." The Iñigo to whom he refers is St Ignatius of Loyola, who became his roommate and companion at the University of Paris in 1529, and whose spiritual guidance trans-

formed Faber's life interiorly and exteriorly. Ignatius gave him "an understanding of my conscience and of the temptations and scruples I had had for so long without either understanding them or seeing the way by which I would be able to get peace". The friendship of Ignatius and Faber was the first step in forming the group of companions who would become the founding members of the Society of Jesus. That friendship was rooted in the peace of God to which Ignatius led Faber through spiritual counsel and the Spiritual Exercises. Ignatius helped Faber to know the mercy of God for which he had longed his whole life, and Faber spent the rest of his life preaching that mercy to all whom he served.

“At the heart of the gratitude Faber expressed for his scruples lies a nuanced understanding of divine providence”

Such mercy speaks as eloquently to our own era as it did when Faber proclaimed it in the Sixteenth Century. A persistent temptation to believe that we presume too much in our constant cries for God's forgiveness dogs the spiritual progress of so many Christians in every age. We listen to Jesus' words in the Gospel that call us to "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" and we consider such evangelical challenges

as to "love your enemies" and to stop judging "so that you may not be judged", and we all too easily feel inadequate, unsuited to the Christian life. Yet what Faber learned so powerfully through his conversations with Ignatius and through the sort of prayer Ignatius taught him to pray was that our God is not a God of ideas and ideals, but a personal God concerned with persons. If we fixate on rules of life by which we hope to attain moral perfection without recognising that Christ's call to conversion is always a call filled with care and concern for our weakness and well-being, then we miss the opportunity to encounter the God who gave Peter Faber peace. The God to whom Ignatius introduced Faber was one whose love could transform even the worst harm Faber did to himself into an occasion for grace.

Gratitude

At the heart of the gratitude Faber expressed for his scruples lies a nuanced understanding of divine providence. Faber did not believe that God had made him scrupulous so that God could lead him to Ignatius and show him mercy. Such a view of God's providence would be profoundly unchristian, for it would attribute something that causes us harm – the scruples that torment us and make us think we have sinned when we have not – to our all-loving God. Indeed, in the same section of his spiritual diary, Faber bewilderingly writes of "some scruples and remorse

“The God to whom Ignatius introduced Faber was one whose love could transform even the worst harm Faber did to himself into an occasion for grace”



St Peter Faber is depicted in a 19th Century painting by Pietro Gagliardi.

of conscience by which the demon began to drive you to seek your Creator." Faber does not believe that God sent either his scruples or a demon to lead him to God. Rather, schooled in the Spiritual Exercises, Faber was convinced that God uses all possible means to labour for our good. This is because all things "on the face of the earth are created for human beings, to help

them in the pursuit of the end for which they are created", and God "works for me in all the creatures on the face of the earth." God made his mercy manifest to Faber in the way he utilised every possible means, even Faber's own scruples, to lead and care for him.

Convictions

These are the convictions that grounded Faber as a

confessor. Faber's renown as both a director of the Exercises and a confessor was already solidly established in 1544 when he wrote a letter to fellow Jesuit Cornelius Wischaven, counselling him on the art of hearing confessions. Composed only a few years before Faber died at the age of 40, it is Faber's master text not only on Confession, but on the mercy of God. For Faber, the sacramental encounter in Confession created a privileged occasion to immerse the penitent in the mercy of God. In Confession, the fragility of the penitent met the healing embrace of God, whose personal care Faber prayed would be made manifest



Peter Faber wanted the confessor to help sinners to establish new habits rooted in God's grace.

in the tenderness of the confessor.

Such tenderness reveals itself immediately in the welcome Faber proposed a confessor ought to give to his penitent. Faber wanted a penitent to be at ease, and so allowed that someone previously unknown to the confessor should by all means "make his confession in his own way, following the usual procedure of going through the commandments, the deadly sins, the five senses, and so on". A traditional approach to the Sacrament had considerable merit if it felt familiar and comfortable to the penitent. But Faber did not regard this as the best possible way to begin a confession, suggesting rather that one should "start off by accusing himself of what he himself considers his worst sin" because "almost everyone is conscious of being weighed down by one sin more than others." One's worst sin need not be one's gravest sin, for the criterion Faber here proposes is entirely subjective: the sin with which Faber hopes penitents might begin Confession is the one that weighs them down most heavily, the one that bothers and disturbs them most.

“Faber does not believe that God sent either his scruples or a demon to lead him to God”

The point is not to disregard the gravity of sins, but rather to begin where the burden is greatest.

For Faber saw the Sacrament as serving not only to reconcile sinners to God and the Church, but to lift the weight that sin imposes upon us and to set sinners on the road to a life of greater freedom and fulfillment. It was not enough for a confessor to identify sins and evaluate the contrition of the penitent so as to determine appropriate penance and give absolution; Faber wanted the confessor to help sinners to free themselves from the morass of sin and to establish new habits rooted in God's grace. Thus, "the causes and occasions of their sins should be examined", not merely to determine gravity and culpability, but "with a view to their removal". Knowing why sinners fell into the sin that particularly plagued them, a confessor could offer counsel for how to avoid those occasions, and yet more significantly propose virtuous habits to replace the habits of vice. It was essential that the confessor "give your penances not just with a view to their making satisfaction for their previous life but also to their improving their lives in the future".

Pious

Faber had been a pious youth. As such, he undoubtedly already followed the established custom of the Church and confessed his sins at least annually when he first encountered Ignatius in Paris. But he knew personally that absolution from one's sins did not always grant peace. The grip of one's sinful tendencies could make even the sublime gift of God's grace offered in the Sacrament

seem distant, as Faber knew from his own doubts about the completeness of his confessions. And so Faber believed that a confessor needed to do more than absolve: a confessor needed to console because consolation is the primary language with which God reveals himself to us. Faber had learned that from Ignatius and the Exercises. He had learned that left to ourselves, too many of us excel at devising new ways to torment ourselves, supposing that our sinfulness is too great to be truly pardonable. But Faber knew that God's mercy knows no such limits.

“The point is not to disregard the gravity of sins, but rather to begin where the burden is greatest”

Faber believed that with help, people could begin to see how God worked amid even their sinfulness. This was why Faber desired that a penitent should "look into himself and state his own sins without fear and without any intimidation stemming from your words". There was no reason to fear sin when brought into the Sacrament: for in Confession, by God's grace, past sins became places of encounter and transformation. The confessor therefore needed to keep ever in mind that his presence embodied the presence of the God who forgave, who transformed, who consoled; there was no

room for 'intimidation' in such an encounter. Rather, "we must make sure that no sinner is ever made to feel bad in the very place where he came for the sole purpose of being examined, instructed, and judged by us, to whom he has come as the representative of the gentle Christ."

Faber acknowledges the traditional role of the confessor as one who 'judged' the culpability and contrition of the penitent. But such judgment ultimately belongs not to the confessor, but to "the gentle Christ" whom the confessor represented, and that judgment ought not to make a sinner "feel bad." Confession is a place for a sinner to feel good, to feel burdens lift, to feel certain of Christ's gentle consolation.

“A confessor needed to console because consolation is the primary language with which God reveals himself to us”

This is why "so far as we can, we should never let a person leave us who would not willingly come back". It is perhaps the most telling line in the entirety of Faber's instruction. Encompassed in these words is the very personal encounter Faber envisioned taking place in the Sacrament of

Confession. He wanted the penitent to feel cared for, to remember with fondness the person who represented Christ in his gentleness. Faber does not shrink from the seriousness of the task in Confession: he acknowledges the wiles of sin and proposes specific strategies to uncover the full extent of the hidden habits of sin. But sin never becomes the centre of Faber's concern because Faber had come to know that sin never is centre of God's concern. The seriousness of sin has less to do with which commandments, laws or rules are violated, and more with the harm sin inflicts, the burdens it creates. Commandments, laws and rules exist to help us not to inflict harm and not to create burden. God is concerned with persons. Faber came to know this as God's consolation broke the grip his scruples had upon him. And he spent the rest of his life helping others to know the same gentle care God lavished upon him.

i Thomas Flowers SJ recently completed a PhD in Jesuit history at the University of York and is currently teaching Jesuit history to Jesuits in formation in the USA. The article first appeared in Thinking Faith.



St Ignatius of Loyola inspired followers, including St Peter Faber, with his still popular *Spiritual Exercises*.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Ortega regime in Nicaragua shuts Catholic radio stations

● Nicaraguan police broke into Divine Mercy parish the night of August 1 in the town of Sébaco in the Diocese of Matagalpa to shut down one of the five Catholic radio stations closed that day by the Daniel Ortega regime.

On Facebook, the parish broadcast live the arrival of the police at the parish doors as well as their entry by force.

The Catholic Channel in Sébaco also broadcast live the police raid on the Infant Jesus of Prague chapel.

The station reported that the officers fired shots into the air and launched tear gas canisters to drive away the people that came out to support Fr Uriel Vallejos, the director of the media outlet.

Pope tells Medjugorje Youth festival to 'follow example of Mary'

● Pope Francis has urged the thousands of young people gathered at Medjugorje this week to follow the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who leads us closer to Christ.

In a message to the Medjugorje Youth Festival published by the Vatican on August 2, the Pope said that

"it takes courage" to live like Christ.

"Beloved, do not be afraid. Go to him with all that you are carrying within your heart. He is the only Lord who offers true refreshment and true peace. Follow the example of Mary, his and our Mother, who will lead you to him," Pope Francis said.

Caritas Ukraine prepared ahead of Russian invasion

● One year ago, Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk named Tetiana Stawnychy president of Caritas Ukraine.

Within about seven months, Russia had invaded Ukraine, and Caritas was one of the first groups to provide assistance to people affected by the war.

In an interview with Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Ms Stawnychy said the period before the invasion was a time of intense preparation.

"It was very important for me to find a path that would take us through this difficult time so that the organisation, which has been operating in Ukraine for almost 30 years and which is a practical tool for active service of the Church, was capable to respond to the challenges of our time and continue to develop and improve itself," she told RISU.

Now, she said she is confident that Caritas Ukraine is ready for all changes.

Investigation of alleged eucharistic miracle in Mexico needed

● Cardinal José Francisco Robles Ortega of Guadalajara, Mexico, recently spoke out about an alleged eucharistic miracle posted on social media, which supposedly occurred at a parish in his archdiocese.

Speaking to the press July 31, Cardinal Robles said the case is "very serious, because it's a matter of the greatest Sacrament of our faith, where we are certain, sure of the real, living presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist".

"It's a very sensitive issue that some extraordinary element be recorded or made official without the ecclesiastical authority knowing what happened, reviewing the details that have to be reviewed in order to say that it's a supernatural, prodigious act, a miracle," he said.

Videos posted on social media seem to show the Host, exposed in a monstrance for eucharistic adoration, "beating" or "palpitating" as if it were a heart.

Nicaraguan bishop detained by police

A Nicaraguan human rights organisation released a video August 4 showing police in riot gear outside the diocesan offices of one of the country's bishops, preventing him from leaving to celebrate Mass at the cathedral.

Because the incident took place on a Thursday and Catholics were likely expecting him to show up for exposition and adoration of the Eucharist, Bishop Rolando Alvarez of Matagalpa explained his absence in the video.

"I want to tell you that I've been wanting to head to the cathedral for holy hour, but obviously authorities haven't given us permission," Bishop Alvarez said in the video that shows the police blocking the door.

A second video shows him holding a monstrance with the Eucharist in a cordoned area of the street and a policeman preventing him from processing. The policeman whispered to him.

"You're the ones who didn't cooperate," the bishop answered him, explaining that he was trying to do what is habitual for him on Thursdays, to expose the Eucharist and pray.

Bishop Alvarez coordinated a network of Catholic radio stations that the Nicaraguan government recently shut down because it was critical of the administration of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo.

Without naming the bishop, Vice-President Muriello, on a state TV program, called him a "buffoon", and a "manipulator of religious symbols".



Bishop Rolando José Álvarez of Matagalpa, Nicaragua, is pictured in Managua. Photo: CNS.

"There are images that seem to come out of the absurd, images that reflect a manipulation of symbols that must remain sacred to everyone," she said.

In the video, the bishop said police have not allowed him, along with six priests and six lay Catholics, to leave the diocesan offices.

"We will stay here without disrespecting the police," the bishop said. Looking at the officers at his door, he said to them: "We've never disrespected you. These brothers, they have families, they are our friends."

Then he blessed them.

But the bishop later appeared irritated when police would not allow him to pray, even in the street, as people began to gather near the besieged building.

"You're the ones who didn't allow in the priests, the choir, those who were going to transmit (eucharistic adoration)," he told them.

He blamed police for the chaos caused, for not allowing people to participate in the life of the Church.

"Who are (the) ones responsible for the restlessness? Who has introduced

this chaos?" the bishop asked.

"I was just preparing for adoration, for the Blessed Sacrament on this day of sanctification and protection for pastors," he said referring to that day's feast of St John Vianney, patron of parish priests. "And look at what the police have done to the curia! So, obviously, people have come over there. I didn't ask them to come, but the faithful people of God have come to pray because we believe in the power of prayer. We believe in the power of the Blessed Sacrament. We believe that Christ is alive!"

Australian legislation would pave way for euthanasia

The Australian Parliament is considering legislation that would allow the country's two territories to pass their own laws, paving the way for legalising euthanasia.

On August 2, the House of Representatives passed the Restoring Territory Rights Bill 2022, which removes the risk of the federal government overriding the territories' laws.

The bill must still be passed by the Australian Senate. The primary aim of the new legislation was to enable the

last of the country's 25 million citizens – who live in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, which includes Canberra, to set their own laws on euthanasia, or voluntary assisted dying.

The sparsely populated Northern Territory was the first to legalise such practices, but its law was overturned by the federal Parliament, which does not have the same powers over Australia's six states, all of which have passed assisted dying laws since 2019.

A spokesman for the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn told Catholic News Service: "Archbishop (Christopher) Prowse notes the passing of the Restoring Territory Rights Bill through the House of Representatives.

"A number of speeches made in the debate presented careful and rational perspectives on all sides of the issues at hand. He expresses his appreciation to all those members (of Parliament) who understood the serious issues at play and voted according to their consciences."

Nuns and priests flee as churches shut in Tigray region

Catholic bishops in Ethiopia warned that insecurity is shutting down churches and forcing more priests and nuns to flee, as consequences of the war in the northern province of Tigray are felt across the entire

country. The bishops reiterated that the insecurity also had made it difficult for the Church to effectively carry out its pastoral work in many parishes – including those in the Diocese of Adigrat in Tigray.

"The Church is facing a great challenge, especially the lack of peace in our country. ... Many of our parishes, including Adigrat Diocese, share the challenge. "Priests and sisters have

fled their monasteries due to (in)security, and the number of closed chapels and monasteries is increasing," Cardinal Souraphiel Berhaneyesus, chairman of the Ethiopian bishops' conference, said in late July.



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Dancing for St Anne



Members of a traditional dance group perform outside Santa Ana Ixtlahuatzingo Catholic Church in Tenancingo, Mexico, July 26, during a celebration on the feast of the church's patron saint, St Anne, grandmother of Jesus. Photo: CNS.

Legal abortions fall by 90% in Poland in 2021

The number of legal abortions taking place in Poland decreased by 90% in 2021, following a court ruling that banned abortion in the case of a foetal medical diagnosis such as Down syndrome.

According to a report by the Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita*, data from the Ministry of Health shows that the number of legal abortions in the country decreased from 1,076 in 2020 to 107 in 2021 following changes to the country's abortion law.

On October 22, 2020, the Constitutional Court ruled the law's exception for foetal defects violated the constitutionally protected right to life. The exception had permitted physicians to recommend

and perform abortions in cases with a "high probability of severe and irreversible impairment of the foetus or an incurable disease threatening its life".

The court ruling left in place exceptions in cases of rape and incest and when the life and health of the mother are at risk.

If it had not been for the change in the law about 1,000 children would have lost their lives in their mothers' wombs in Poland, mainly due to suspected Down syndrome, said lawyer and psychologist Magdalena Korzekwa-Kaliszuk, head of the pro-life Proelio Group Foundation.

"This means that the law is working and has allowed

specific people to be saved," she said.

While legal abortions have been dramatically reduced in Poland, it is not clear how many illegal abortions are taking place in Poland. Abortion advocates estimate the number is in the thousands but that claim cannot be independently verified.

Krystyna Kacpura of the pro-abortion Federation for Women and Family Planning told the website *Notes from Poland* that women seeking abortions resort to purchasing abortion pills online. Under Polish law, women who have an abortion are not subject to criminal penalties, but those who assist them in terminating pregnancies can

be prosecuted.

Even if illegal abortions continue to take place, Poland's new restriction on legal abortion will save lives, said Ms Korzekwa-Kaliszuk, the head of the Proelio Group Foundation.

"A good law has a positive impact on people's attitudes. On the one hand, it reinforces the conviction that the right to life should not depend on the diagnosis of a medical condition," she said.

"On the other hand, not being able to kill a child on eugenic grounds means that doctors will no longer have a basis for proposing or even pressuring parents to have an abortion," said Ms Korzekwa-Kaliszuk.

Opus Dei in Argentina responds to accusations of exploitation

Opus Dei in Argentina has responded to a BBC news story about a complaint made to the Vatican by 43 women who claim to have been exploited by the Catholic apostolate.

In a communiqué, Opus Dei told ACI Prensa that it considers it necessary "to set up a listening and study commission that will allow us to learn more about these experiences and the context in

which they took place".

The BBC published an article August 2 reporting that 43 women from Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia made a complaint against Opus Dei with the Vatican in September 2021.

According to the news article, what the women demand is "financial compensation and public acknowledgement by the Church".

According to the BBC, these women came from "low-income families when they were between 12 and 16 years old and [Opus Dei] took them to Buenos Aires in the '70s, '80s, and '90s with the promise of giving them an education".

However, the BBC continued, "they received training in domestic tasks and made them work for free for high-ranking members and priests" of Opus Dei.



Pope Francis appoints personal health assistant

● The Vatican announced August 4 that Pope Francis has appointed a "personal health care assistant".

Pope Francis has selected Massimiliano Strappetti, a Vatican nurse whom the Pope has credited with saving his life, to provide additional assistance as the 85-year-old Pope faces mobility problems.

"A nurse, a man with a lot of experience, saved my life," Pope Francis told Spanish COPE radio after his colon surgery last summer.

Strappetti advised Pope Francis to undergo tests after he had his first flare-up of diverticulitis in February 2021, according to *La Repubblica*. He, along with the Pope's other medical staff, recommended that the Pope have an operation to keep the problem from becoming worse.

The Vatican nurse was also part of Pope Francis' medical team during his trip to Canada, accompanying the 85-year-old Pope during some of his public appearances in a wheelchair.

In his new role, Strappetti will work with Pope Francis' personal physician, Dr Roberto Bernabei, a professor of internal medicine and geriatrics at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Rome.

Cardinal Müller: 'The German synodal way was over before it even started'

● Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has sharply criticised the synodal way in Germany.

In an interview with EWTN Vatican / CNA Deutsch, the 74-year-old cardinal said that the Synodal Way, declared a "reform process" by its initiators, is "over" and was on an "anti-Catholic, wrong track".

The Holy See issued a

statement June 21 noting that the Synodal Way was "not authorised" to "oblige the bishops and the Faithful to adopt new forms of governance and new orientations of doctrine and morals". It was "necessary" to clarify this in order to "safeguard the freedom of the people of God and the exercise of the episcopal ministry".

Canadian Jesuits told Church unity threatened by ideology

● Pope Francis told Jesuits in Canada about how his experience in Latin America formed his beliefs about synodality, liturgy, and divisions in the Church, in a private meeting in Québec last week.

"When there is conflict the liturgy is always mistreated," Pope Francis said, according to a transcript published by the Jesuit periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica* on August 4.

He explained: "In Latin America thirty years ago there were monstrous liturgical deformations. Then they moved to the opposite side with a backward-looking intoxication with the old. A division was established in the Church."

The Pope went on to tell the gathering of 15 Jesuits in Quebec on July 29 that his actions with regard to the liturgy have "aimed to follow the line taken by John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who had allowed the ancient rite and had asked for subsequent verification".

"The most recent verification made it clear that there was a need to regulate the practice, and above all to avoid it becoming a matter, let us say, of 'fashion' and remaining instead a pastoral question," Francis said.

"I look forward to the studies that will refine the reflection on the theme that is important: the liturgy is the people of God's public praise."



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

If you were listening closely this week, your ears may have picked up a subterranean rumbling out of Rome. It was the sound of the tectonic plates of history shifting, as, perhaps for the first time ever, the Vatican actually more or less came clean about its finances.

In the old days, it used to be said that how much money the Vatican has was among the mysteries of the faith, akin to how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Funds were distributed among a bewildering variety of entities and accounts, many of them off the books – in some cases, cash was literally stuffed into desk drawers and cabinets in Vatican offices, replenished and doled out with no paper trail at all.

Further complicating things, there's long been ambiguity about what's meant by 'the Vatican' when it comes to accounting.

Some people mean the Roman Curia, the Church's central administrative bureaucracy composed of the various departments that oversee matters such as doctrine, liturgy and the appointment of bishops. Yet there are other operations that aren't considered part of the Curia, but which play important roles – the Synod of Bishops, for instance, is a big deal, especially in the Pope Francis era, but, by design, it's not a curial office.

“There's long been ambiguity about what's meant by 'the Vatican' when it comes to accounting”

There's also the Vatican City State, which administers the 108-acre physical plant of the Vatican as well as other papal territories, and runs the Vatican Museums, the Vatican's police, security and fire services, the Vatican Post Office, and so on. Its accounting is also separate, even though most ordinary people obviously think of it as part of 'the Vatican'.

In addition, there's the so-called 'Vatican Bank', technically the Institute for the Works of Religion, which also keeps a separate set of books, mostly because the vast majority of the assets it has under management don't belong to the Vatican. It handles deposits from religious orders, movements and organisations, dioceses, and other Catholic entities, and the Pope can't simply dip into those accounts at will because it's not his money.

Friday's new financial statement excludes the Vatican bank – which isn't really all that consequential, since reforms begun under Pope

Rome comes clean about its money



“Pensions are a problem for almost all states, and our pension fund is no exception”

Benedict XVI mean the bank now issues its own detailed and independently audited annual statement, so we know its situation – and also the government of the Vatican City State, which remains a bit more opaque.

Remarkable

Even allowing for those omissions, however, Friday's statement was still remarkable.

It was prepared by the Secretariat for the Economy, an office created by Pope Francis as part of his first wave of reform in 2014, which is now led by Spanish Jesuit Fr Juan Antonio Guerrero Alves. For the first time it includes not just the Roman Curia but virtually every outfit that flies under the Vatican flag, with the number of entities covered rising from 60 in past statements to a robust 92 this time around.

According to an interview with Fr Guerrero in *Vatican News*, the state-run media service, previous reports only covered about 35% of the Vatican's total financial foot-

print, while this one is pretty much the whole show. Among other things, it confirms what many long suspected, to wit, that the Vatican's annual income and expenditures were significantly under-reported – they're closer to \$1 billion than the \$350 million previously claimed – and that its total assets are around \$4 billion instead of \$2 billion.

Overall, the statement presents a good news/bad news situation.

Deficit

The good news is that while the Vatican's deficit for 2021 had been projected at around \$33 million, it turned out to be only about \$3.3 million. Fr Guerrero attributed the result in part to the performance of Vatican investments and favourable currency conversion rates, but mostly to aggressive efforts to contain costs.

The bad news is that to bring over-spending under control the Vatican is selling off about \$20-\$25 million of its patrimony every year, which means it's cutting not just fat

but muscle. Fr Guerrero said revenues have to be increased, calling the Pope's missions “under-funded”.

There's also a ticking time bomb in the form of the Vatican's pension fund, which lacks the resources to cover the costs of a rapidly aging workforce nearing retirement, meaning that deficits could grow exponentially without serious new investment.

“This week, the Vatican more or less told us the truth about its financial situation”

Fr Guerrero tried to take the sting out by arguing the Vatican is hardly the only place struggling to cover its pension obligations.

“Pensions are a problem for almost all states, and our pension fund is no exception,” he said. “Yet I'd say that in its small proportions, Vatican pensions are in better shape and more secure than in many nearby countries.”

Perhaps, but such comparisons may be of cold comfort to retirees who gave their lives in service to the Pope only to find their pension checks bouncing in years to come.

Problem

There's also a problem driven by a papally-owned hospital in southern Italy founded by Padre Pio, the Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza. Without providing any hard numbers, Fr Guerrero said the hospital is in dire straits and must adopt “urgent measures” to avoid calling into question its survival.

Those challenges have to be faced, and it's not clear exactly how a Church struggling with declining membership in countries with the world's most developed economies can generate the resources needed.

Still, there's also a danger of missing the forest for the trees here.

This week, the Vatican more or less told us the truth about its financial situation – the full truth, or at least as close to it as the place has ever come. However ugly the picture may be, it's still got to be better than the rosy landscapes we used to get.

Pope Francis deserves credit for delivering, at least partially, on his pledges of transparency. He just has to figure out what to do about the hard truths we can now see more clearly thanks to his reforms.

Ukraine's Vatican envoy hints Pope may be set to visit the country



Elise Ann Allen

Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See has hinted that a possible papal trip to his country could happen before the Pope's visit to Kazakhstan in mid-September, when he is expected to meet with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill.

Pope Francis met with the Ukrainian Ambassador to the Holy See, Andrii Yurash, on Saturday for a private conversation at the Vatican.

In a Tweet sent after the August 6 meeting, Mr Yurash quoted the Pope as telling him, "I am very close to (Ukraine) & want to express this closeness through my visit to (Ukraine)".

Mr Yurash called these "important words" from the Pope and said that "(Ukraine) for many years & especially since (the) start of (the) war has been waiting for (the) Pope & I'll be happy to greet him before his trip to Kazakhstan".

Meetings

In a separate Tweet, Mr Yurash said his meetings with Pope Francis are "always inspirational. Especially when there is a chance to discuss and promote subjects that (are) 'on table' for a long time, like Pope's visit to Ukraine".

"(Ukraine) wants to meet and greet His Holiness as quick as possible, even before his trip to (Kazakhstan)," Mr Yurash said.

Pope Francis has stated his desire to visit Kyiv repeatedly and has said several times that a trip



Pope Francis speaks with Andrii Yurash, Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See, during a meeting for the ambassador to present his credentials to the Pope at the Vatican in this April 7, 2022, file photo. Photo: CNS

to Kyiv is "on the table", but also that such an outing would be complicated, and the Vatican must find the right moment.

On a July 30 return flight from Canada, Francis told reporters that he would still like to go to Ukraine, but that it depends on his leg. The 85-year-old pontiff has been coping with ongoing osteoarthritis of the knee, and has said surgery is not an option due to a bad reaction to anaesthesia during his colon surgery last summer.

In an interview with *Reuters* last month, the Pope said that if he went to Ukraine, he also wanted to visit Russia, and that he wanted "to go to Moscow first".

Observers have said a trip to Russia is unlikely, and presidential spokesmen in Russia have denied that plans are underway for a potential papal visit.

Congress

However, even if he can't make it to Russia, it's likely that during his

September 13-15 visit to Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, for a high-profile interfaith congress, Francis will meet with Kirill, who is known for his vocal support of the war in Ukraine and is close to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Francis called off a planned meeting with Kirill in June in Jerusalem due to the diplomatic fallout such an encounter would have created, given Kirill's defence of the war in Ukraine on both spiritual and ideological grounds. In previous remarks, Kirill said Russia is defending itself against western secularism, which he argued violates "God's law," as well as a growing "Russophobia" among western nations.

“Francis told reporters that he would still like to go to Ukraine, but that it depends on his leg”

Pope Francis and Kirill held a first historic meeting in Havana, Cuba in 2016, marking the first time a pope and Russian Orthodox patriarch had met, and the Jerusalem meeting was to be the second time they sat down in person.

The two spoke by video call in March. If they do meet in Kazakhstan, it will mark the first time they have met in person since the war began after Russia's February 24 invasion of Ukraine.

Pope Francis's meeting with Mr Yurash came the day after he held a private with meeting Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, president of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of Foreign Affairs, meaning he essentially serves as the patriarchate's foreign minister.

Kazakhstan

Both meetings came just days after the Vatican announced the Pope's visit to Kazakhstan, suggesting that not only is the Pope likely to meet with Kirill, but he could also be trying to make good on his intention to visit Ukraine.

Should the Pope and Kirill meet, it would likely be on the second day of the Pope's visit, during the congress's scheduled time for private meetings among the various interfaith leaders present.

If Pope Francis can't visit Russia, a conversation with Kirill could be his next best option if he intends to visit Ukraine but doesn't want to alienate the Russians or give the impression that he is taking sides, as the Vatican has long practiced a diplomatic strategy of neutrality.

A quick visit to Ukraine could also be a way to avoid sending the wrong message to Ukrainians who might be inclined to see the meeting as a betrayal, and who have been critical of past remarks in which Francis has said there are no clear "good guys" and "bad guys" in the conflict, suggesting that arming Ukraine is a mistake.

Local residents look on as smoke rises after shelling during Russia's invasion of Ukraine in Donetsk, Ukraine, July 7, 2022. Photo: CNS



Letters

Letter of the week

Complaint about hymn but not pornographic pop music

Dear Editor, Yet another attack on Christianity in Ireland has thankfully been quashed due to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's correct decision not to accept a complaint about RTE's broadcasting of popular Christmas carol *O Holy Night* [*The Irish Catholic* – July 28, 2022].

In their decision they say: "The broadcaster notes that it is mindful of its responsibility to serve the interests and concerns of a diverse audience and that Christianity is a predominant part of Irish culture."

It is a pleasure to see the fact Christianity – despite the wishes of secularist to do away with any reference to religion in this country – is still given the recognition it

deserves as an intricate part of Ireland's culture. Without our Christian faith, brought to us by St Patrick, this country would be a wholly different and most certainly worse place.

The complainant oddly says that the broadcasting of this hymn is "harmful" and "stigmatises" non-Christians. Have they listened, at all, to the utter filth that is regularly broadcast on every radio station in the form of pop music? Some of the lyrics are openly pornographic, misogynistic and violent; listened to and sung by very young children who are being sexualised by this content at a young age. Yet a hymn about the humble beginnings of Jesus Christ is somehow more reprehensible

and harmful to this particular person's sensibilities? Anyone of the same mindset needs to take a long hard look at themselves.

Perhaps if they understood the beauty that is Christ's Church and his message to us they would not be so quick to make outrageous assertions.

It is genuinely sad if people do feel victimised by a hymn, if they could only see what following Christ can offer them, their lives would be infinitely better, and perhaps they would find something better to do with their time.

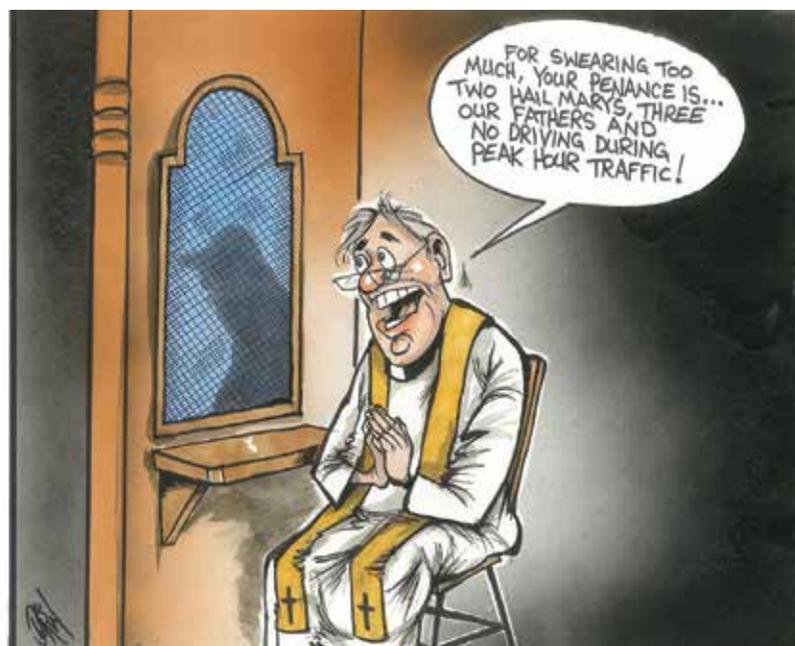
*Yours etc.,
Mary Duffy
Wicklow Town, Wicklow*

Shocking and sinister attack on free speech

Dear Editor, Regardless of one's opinion of abortion the decision of the cabinet to consider restricting and fining people for simply saying prayers outside abortion clinics surely sets a dangerous precedent and is one of the most shocking and sinister attacks on freedom of speech and assembly in Ireland in recent years.

In fact it is a proposed law which you would see in a totalitarian state rather than in a western democracy. The liberal media's support for such an anti-free speech law, whilst not surprising, is still shocking.

*Yours etc.,
Brian Thornton
Kells, Co Meath.*



Commendations on coverage of Irish martyrs

Dear Editor, I must commend you on your outstanding coverage [*The Irish Catholic* – July 28, 2022] of the Irish martyrs who have been put forward for sainthood by the South Korean Episcopal Commission. The several articles about these exemplary clerics, their Irish roots, and their work with the faithful in Korea prompted much discussion in our household which includes children, teenagers,

and young adults. Clearly the sacrifices of these priests have already borne fruit in South Korea. May their witness also contribute to conversion in North Korea and to a renaissance in the Catholic Ireland that shaped them in the first place.

*Yours etc.,
Jennifer Mooney
Lifford, Co. Donegal*

Martyrs' sacrifice must never be forgotten

Dear Editor, It is great to see Irish martyrs being recognised for their incredible witness, so well done for the extensive reportage [*The Irish Catholic* – July 28, 2022].

Hopefully these men, martyred during the Korean war, will be an example to the people of Ireland. So many people have died preserving the faith so many now take for granted. Their sacrifice should never be forgotten.

*Yours etc.,
John McMahon
Dublin 1*

Something 'utterly amazing' about Belfast's transformation

Dear Editor, The visionary bravery of John Hume (1937-2020) and David Trimble (1944-2022) has forged a much better future. Belfast on a sunny day now bears no resemblance to the dreary city of 'The Troubles' and it's a real joy to ride a city centre Glider (or a double decker bus) in the summer sun. The absence of security zones, armed soldiers, bomb sites, cordons, checkpoints or helicopters, is very welcome news for locals and tourists alike.

New city centre high rise buildings, with their clean and shiny lines, contrast with the run down and dirty or derelict buildings which littered the city in the

past, relics of conflict and post-industrial decay. A declining city, which once shed or scared away its brightest young people, is now on the tourist trail and hosting cruise ships. There is something utterly amazing, perhaps miraculous even, about a place once synonymous with strife and conflict, now being seen as a model for international peace building and reconciliation. Middle aged or older people, familiar with 1980's Belfast, cannot help but marvel at the wonderful improvements in the city centre, along the riverfront and into the Titanic Centre zone.

The cleansing from past defilement,

plus the associated change of heart, remind me of a Bible promise clergy might normally reference in connection with personal spiritual renewal, rather than a national or a city clean up: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

*Yours etc.,
J. T. Hardy
Belfast, Co. Antrim*

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

Priest shortage means change coming soon, says Archbishop O'Reilly

Within the next five years we will see the parish system as have known it collapse all over Ireland. We are in a good position, however, to plan into this and to continue to look at how, as communities of faith, we share the Good News. This next half decade will be both very sad and very exciting. – **Jim Deeds**

I watch mass on Canada Station they have a different priest every day from Africa, India, why can't Ireland bring in more priests from those countries? – **Liz Brauders**

Can we not bring priests from Far East etc.? It's time the mission was reversed. We need help now, just as we helped others in the past when many religious went from these shores to other lands. – **Paul Lennon**

Yes no shortage of Nigerian priests or seminarians. When life as a priest becomes more attractive, workable! We will have more going for priesthood in Ireland. – **Deirdre Quinn**

Campaigner fails in bid to silence popular Christmas carols

Thank God he lost, what a beautiful Christmas hymn. – **Noeleen Moffatt**

Thank God common sense prevailed. There's plenty of stigmatisation of Catholics and other Christians in present day society. Archbishop Fulton Sheen was right when he said the more liberal society becomes the more intolerant it becomes. – **Michael Stapleton**

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

Island-wide lay funeral team training needed

Dear Editor, In the recent past, several dioceses have initiated lay ministries to broaden out the role of lay people, women and men, in liturgical events, including funerals.

However, it appears that each diocese is developing different, but somewhat similar, training and partnership plans for funeral teams. Is there any possibility that they might all work together to form an island-wide structure, so that all people, lay and religious might work and walk together, synod-like, rather than solo runs?

Currently, even within dioceses, there are conflicting styles of lay leadership of funerals, with different styles for different parishes. Surely the Irish bishops and clergy are capable of working together as a national team.

The people are waiting.

*Yours etc.,
Tony Corcoran
Rathfarnham, Dublin*

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.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, August 11, 2022

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Camping tips for a worry-free trip



Having just returned from a very enjoyable camping trip in Poland, I'm ready to sing the praises of this primal activity. A night out under the stars, among the trees, has an effect on the soul of young and old alike, and as such makes for a perfect family activity (or solo activity, if you're in need of an extreme retreat).

Camping is an activity that can be customised to no end, and as such it can't possibly be covered in all of its variety here. To that end, this column will stick with looking at the sort of camping we're likely to embark upon here in Ireland and else-



It's essential to know what to bring and what to do before you head out into the wild, writes Jason Osborne

where, and what you need to bring and do in order to enjoy a successful trip.

What are you after?

The first question to ask is what kind of experience you're after. Even if we've ruled out the extreme end of the spectrum from the start, there's still a wide variety of ways to camp

on offer.

To begin with, you have good, old-fashioned and plainly-named campsite camping, which is as it sounds. Ireland has hundreds of campsites dotted about the island, which will allow you to pay for a plot of land to set up your tent on for a certain period of time. Many of these campsites are fam-

ily friendly, and host a range of conveniences like showers, toilets and playgrounds.

If you're after a relatively comfortable experience of the outdoors with your family in a certified and safe place, this is probably the way to do it. Campingireland.ie is a great resource for finding a campsite to suit your needs in terms of location, price and style, so do give that a look if this kind of holiday speaks to you.

Regular old camping, then, or 'wild' camping is the option for the more adventurous or mobile among us, which is all about picking a site other than a designated campsite – making it

the best way to pierce through to nature's heart, getting off the beaten track.

It's not a simple matter in Ireland, however, as farmers and other landowners are understandably reluctant to allow people to camp on their land and can be quite aggrieved to find them there! Wild camping isn't strictly legal in Ireland, but Outsider.ie explains that it's tolerated in many remote areas, while the Northern Ireland Forestry Service issues camping permits for some of its sites.

With all of that in mind, it's best to either leave this kind of camping until you're abroad in

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Family News



AND EVENTS

GORGOSAURUS SKELETON SELLS FOR OVER \$6 MILLION AT AUCTION

The first skeleton of a Gorgosaurus dinosaur to go under the hammer has sold for \$6.1 million (€6m) at auction in New York.

The specimen is 3 metres tall and 6.7m long, and had been expected to fetch between \$5m and \$8m.

“The result places the Gorgosaurus among the most valuable dinosaurs ever sold at auction, and establishes a new benchmark for a Gorgosaurus skeleton,” Sotheby’s said in a statement.

The Gorgosaurus roamed the earth approximately 77 million years ago.

A typical adult weighed about two tonnes, slightly smaller than its more famous relative, the Tyrannosaurus rex.

Paleontologists say it was fiercer and faster than the T-Rex, with a stronger bite of around 42,000 newtons compared to 35,000.

The skeleton was discovered in the Judith River Formation near Havre, in the US state of Montana in 2018.

The sale marked the first time that Sotheby’s had auctioned a full dinosaur skeleton since it sold Sue the T-Rex in 1997 for \$8.36 million.

SNORKELER SUFFERS SUSPECTED SHARK ATTACK OFF UK COAST

A snorkeler has suffered a suspected shark attack in what they described as a “very scary incident” off the coast of England.

The swimmer suffered a bite to the leg and needed help from the coastguard and ambulance crews following the encounter near Penzance, Cornwall, June 28.

Blue sharks visit Ireland and the UK during the summer months from the Caribbean.

The victim was reportedly bitten by a blue shark while on a snorkelling trip.

Blue Shark Snorkel Trips, the company that organised the tour, said such incidents were “extremely rare” and they were “in continued talks with shark experts” as to what happened.

Blue sharks are known to mainly feed on small fish and squid, but have been known to attack seabirds and other small sharks, according to the Wildlife Trusts.

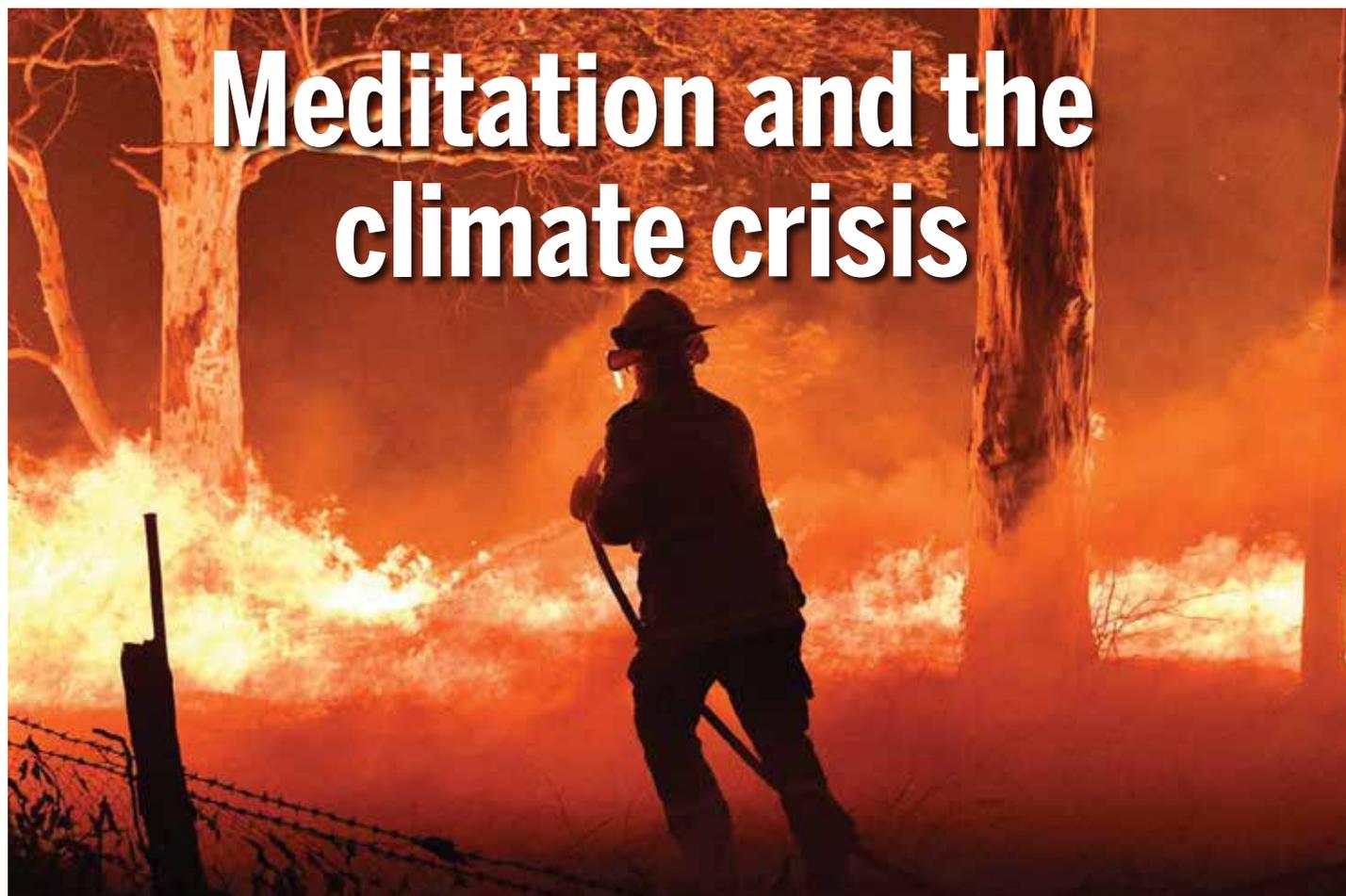
TEBOGO DRAWS BOLT COMPARISONS AFTER SHOWBOATING TO JUNIOR RECORD

Teenager Letsile Tebogo has attracted comparisons to Usain Bolt after showboating his way to the under-20 100 metres world title in a record time with a scorching run in Colombia.

The 19-year-old Botswanan clocked 9.91 seconds to improve the junior world record of 9.94 he set in the heats of the senior world championships last month, but clearly could have gone even faster.

Tebogo made a blistering start at Cali’s Pascual Guerrero Stadium and coasted through the final 20 metres, turning to gesticulate at silver medallist Bouwahjgie Nkrumie with a huge smile on his face as he cruised to the line.

The early celebrations were a deliberate echo of Bolt’s when the Jamaican great won the first of his eight Olympic sprint gold medals in a world record time of 9.69 at the 2008 Beijing Games.



Meditation and the climate crisis

The COP26 Climate Change Conference, which took place in Glasgow in November 2021 was widely regarded as humanity’s last chance to prevent catastrophic global warming. The consequences of the unjustified war in Ukraine makes it even more difficult to achieve the targets we must attain. In recent years we have seen with increasing frequency and ferocity on our TVs, the devastating bushfires in Australia, California and many other places throughout the world. And such events continue with increasing frequency.

Anglican priest Linda Chapman witnessed at first-hand the devastation caused by one of those utterly destructive bushfires which swept along the South Eastern seaboard of Australia. In addition to the displacement of persons who lost their livelihoods and belongings, she also witnessed the destruction of so many life-forms; she observed Koala bears climbing higher and higher up tall trees, being chased by the rising flames which finally overwhelmed them resulting in a very painful death. She saw birds being driven out to sea finding no place to land and later being washed up on beaches.

The displacement of communities and the sacrifice of native species because of human failure to act on climate change is heart-breaking. Linda Chapman observes that the truth is, that like the birds, we too have nowhere else to go. So we must urgently start the work of transfiguration. To do so we must recover our sense of inter-connectedness not just as a mental construct, not simply as a concept we acknowledge, but we must experience it as a reality in our everyday lives.

Climate change is a challenging crisis to face. It

Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



does not have the immediacy of a plague or tsunami. And we have seen, how faced with the immediate crisis of Covid-19, human beings have struggled to find an appropriate inter-connected response. Instead, the wealthiest countries have looked after their own, at the expense of the most-needy in the world. We have witnessed how conspiracy theories of all kinds, arguing that Covid-19 is not real, have made it so much more difficult to deal effectively with the challenge.

“St Augustine suggested that sin is being turned in upon oneself rather than being open to God”

Universal wisdom sees the world as a ‘great chain of being’, but humanity has become its weakest link. Until we accept, individually and collectively, that climate change has to do with how we live on a daily basis – the food we eat, the transportation we use, the vast array of unnecessary luxuries we consume in the Western world and regard as somehow ‘essential’ to our wellbeing.

Richard Rohr observes that when it comes to climate change the real challenge here is to appreciate that the ‘enemy’ we

are called to fight is ourselves; the enemy is the very ordinary life we ourselves are leading. At its most basic level, climate change is the result of too many well-off human beings using too much energy and taking up too much space on the planet. Through such excessive energy use and its accompanying greenhouse-gas emissions, we are changing the planet’s climate in ways that will make it uninhabitable for ourselves and many other species. Wresting our future from the grip of fossil fuel seems impossible – our addiction is too strong, affordable options are too few, and the powers that defend the status quo are powerful. We cannot be freed by chipping away at this millstone; instead, the climate crisis calls us to a radical turn-around that changes the way we see the world, the way we ‘figure things out’ and live out our everyday lives.

St Augustine suggested that sin is being turned in upon oneself rather than being open to God. In our ecological age,



we now see that being open to God means being open to the other creatures upon whom we depend and who depend upon us. Meditation works by taking us beyond the boundaries of the ego; it opens us to deep awareness of the true-self, to the Divine within us in whom we live and move and have our being.

Meditation makes us aware that God is incarnate not just in us but in all of creation. And that we have a responsibility to care not just for ourselves and our immediate family and friends, but for all human beings; indeed, for all of creation. We are called to collaborate with one another, to live our lives from a perspective of self-giving love rather than one of self-centred fear; to live consciously in radical interdependence with all of God’s creation.

For this we need a contemplative stance. We know that meditation builds hope, resilience and community. It gives us the capacity to stand back and see the bigger picture. It can make us wiser, kinder persons and improve our ability to listen. It can help us to stand back from adversarial debate and to have meaningful conversations with others about our response to this crisis.

Because meditation makes us keenly aware of who we are in God and who God is in us, we know that we are not alone as we face this challenge – the universal Christ is in, with, and for us and the world as we struggle to understand what we are called to do.

After 40 years in the education sector Noel Keating was awarded a PhD for his research into the child’s experience of meditation and its spiritual fruits. Noel now leads, in a voluntary capacity, a project which offers free in-service to primary schools who may wish to consider introducing meditation as a whole-school practice. Noel is author of *Meditation with Children: A Resource for Teachers and Parents*.

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a country that widely allows it, or until you have the permission of the landowner in question. If you manage to tick either of those boxes though, you're in for a real "back to basics" experience.

“Ireland offers a number of such sites, which are generally on the pricier side, making them less ideal for a family holiday than for a romantic getaway”

Wild camping will see you living off that which you can carry with you, or that which you can make use of in your environment. If you're looking to escape human exposure, this is the kind for you. Of course, you should take all necessary precautions with this type of trip, telling a family member or friend where you're going and how long you intend to stay for so that they can find you or send help should something go wrong.

A final, modern innovation is 'glamping', the inclusion of which in a camping list might rub some people the wrong way. Glamping involves flashier, luxurious accommodation, which in many cases is done in temperature-controlled, comfortable shelters rather than in tents.

Ireland offers a number of such sites, which are generally on the pricier side, making them less ideal for a family holiday than for a romantic getaway.

Equipment

Once you have your preferred form of camping sorted, the next question is what to bring. If you've opted for glamping, you need only bring your usual luggage as the tent/shelter and all else will be provided for, leaving you responsible only for that which you'd like to bring or that which you're otherwise told you'll need by the site. For all other kinds of camping though, both campsite and wild, you're first of all going to need to think about what to bring – including the tent.

A far longer space would be needed to evaluate the merits of different makes, styles and brands of tents and camping gear, but fortunately, these comparisons and reviews can be found in abundance on the internet, and the expertise of shop assistants can be availed of freely in serious outdoors shops around Ireland.

It's important to note that if you're strapped for cash in this tight economic situation we find ourselves in, most items on a camping checklist are rentable from a number of outlets. I've always been lucky enough to either have what I need or borrow from a friend, but a cursory google reveals that there are plenty of places to rent from, such as bewildireland.com and happycampers-ireland.com.

That said, here's a basic checklist of the key pieces of camping kit that you're going to need, regardless of where you end up and how you go about getting them:

Foundational equipment:

- Tent (with stakes and a mallet/hammer)
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping mat/air mattress
- Headlamp/flashlight
- Folding table/chairs
- (optional)
- Electric lantern (optional)
- Hygiene/medical essentials:
- Toilet paper
- Towels
- Hand sanitiser
- Insect repellent
- Sun cream
- First aid kit
- Cooking/eating items:
- Propane camp stove, fuel and

a lighter

- Pots
- Pans
- Cutlery
- Cutting board
- Food containers
- Water bottles

This is a bare minimum list of some of the most necessary pieces of camp gear you're going to need. Obviously, what you bring along will depend upon what you can carry and the specifics of your trip, but these things are good to have to hand as a rule of thumb.

As a final word, make sure to

bring clothes suited to the climate – always packing for rain, what with the high chance around these parts that a shower might drop in out of nowhere. Camp close to home if it's your first holiday of this kind, as you may decide it's really not for you (which often happens), and you can whisk away to your safe space should that occur. Finally, try your best to "leave no trace", wherever you go, as a large part of the joy of camping is enjoying the glory of God's creation – something more easily done in a fresh, clean environment.



Finding belonging in the faith community

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

Connor McCann has been involved in ministry for almost 40 years, in one form or another. Having discovered the great belonging the faith community offers, he discerned a vocation to the priesthood, before finding his vocation as a pastoral worker.

“I loved to sing, and in some respects I was a bit of a shy young man and it was a good way to meet people”

Connor grew up in what he calls an ordinary Catholic home: “Yes, we were always brought to Mass, yes as children we were taught our prayers; but we would never have been a family that sat down and prayed the rosary.

“We went to Catholic school, like everybody then, and then as we got to be teenagers, we were left to do our own thing. And I did my own thing for a while,” Connor tells me.

However, having joined a folk choir in his local parish, Connor was drawn back into the Faith, taking it more seriously.



Connor McCann.

“I joined because I liked to sing and for the social element. I loved to sing, and in some respects I was a bit of a shy young man and it was a good way to meet people. But I found that I liked it, I liked the sense of belonging and being part of something.

“The priest who was there at the time was very welcoming, very open, very inclusive and really gave us as young people our head,” Connor continues. “And let us take on leadership roles. It was that, the sense of belonging and being part of something, that I had something to offer.

Lay community

This sense of belonging and fulfilment drove Connor to find a lay community in Co. Galway that was under the auspices of the diocesan youth services and run by the Augustinians. It was involved in youth work and parish outreach.

“We would have met for prayer, we had that community aspect of it,” he explains. “Where possible we took meals together, we would also then have been involved in

school retreats. We also had a group from America, a youth exchange programme, and they were based in the centre.

“It was around this time that Connor began to discern for religious life, initially considering the diocesan priesthood”

“We also had a centre for young offenders. There was a bit of land attached to it and the young offenders would come and work the land – there were a couple horses there and they learned to ride and things like that. We did outreach in the parish and work in the schools. It was varied and quite interesting.”

It was around this time that Connor began to discern for reli-

gious life, initially considering the diocesan priesthood. This was all sparked by a chance invite to a rosary meeting.

“A friend of mine invited me to a rosary prayer meeting – I didn’t even know how to pray the rosary. But I was invited to go along which I did, and just found I liked it. Again, it was being part of something, being with people. The community side of it was really important to me then. Then my faith just started to develop from there.”

Then in his early 20s, Connor entered into a period of discernment and discussion with the Archdiocese of Dublin. However the diocese advised that his vocation was elsewhere. Undeterred, Connor applied for and was accepted to the Discalced Carmelites.

“I spent nearly five years with them, it was a wonderful time, I still look at it as one of the best times in my life,” Connor says. “But it just wasn’t for me, it wasn’t where God wanted me. I left then and carried on my degree, finished my studies.

“I did a bit of work with a school retreat team. I was full time in that and was literally in the process of setting up my own retreat team when the pastoral worker role was advertised. I had literally just booked my first couple of retreats when that happened.”

Connor says that even while he was doing retreat work, he wanted to do more work for the Church as such. So when the pastoral role was advertised, he applied and was lucky enough to be accepted in the second intake in 2009.

“The role is very varied,” he begins. “Anything from funeral ministry, supporting priests, meeting with families, having a funeral liturgy, through to doing the actual burial or cremation service, as the case may be.

“We could be working with families, helping them prepare children for the sacraments, training of

people for various ministries. We would train ministers of the Word, ministers of the Eucharist, Baptism teams, funeral teams.”

As they are paid by the diocese, the pastoral workers can also be called on to support diocesan initiatives. It’s full-on work, Connor says, but adds that it’s very interesting and very rewarding. “As I like to say to people, I haven’t done a day’s work in 12 years.”

“Connor is very thankful for the opportunity he has had to take up the rewarding work of pastoral ministry”

“The ultimate role of the pastoral worker is to work ourselves out of a job. It is not to be the busy fool running around doing everything,” Connor explains later in the conversation. “That’s not the role of the pastoral worker. The role would be to identify and encourage, support and train people to do whatever they need to do.

“Whatever people would need to fulfil their own baptismal vocation as I’ve fulfilled mine, in the sense of the call to universal priesthood that we’re all called to serve and fulfil our own vocation in life whatever that may be.”

Connor is very thankful for the opportunity he has had to take up the rewarding work of pastoral ministry.

“I’m very grateful to the diocese both personally in the sense of giving me this opportunity, but also to Archbishop Martin at the time and the priests’ council because that’s really where the pastoral worker initiative came from,” Connor finishes.

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

Sweet Treats

Kiley Britten



Mary’s mouthwatering chocolate morsels

This is a recipe for chocolate biscuit cake which is from my mother-in-law. It is similar to a Rocky Road, and is nothing short of addicting. I love this recipe not only for its ease but because it is a recipe that is a lot of fun! I added Smarties, marshmallows, and white chocolate to the top of my little cakes, but this is a recipe which can almost act as a blank canvas. Add pretzels, your favourite candy bar, or even Irish Cream to the mixture for a recipe that is completely tailored to your own tastes.

My mother-in-law sometimes makes this recipe in a small round cake tin and covers it in a pretty fondant – a perfect cake for anyone who ‘doesn’t like cake’ but would

appreciate a dessert. I placed my mixture into muffin liners to make small portions, perfect for picnics or beach trips. As always, tailor the recipe to be more to your liking, and enjoy the decadence!



Ingredients

- 1lb/16oz chocolate – I used a 70/30 mixture of dark to milk chocolate, but use what you prefer- all milk, all dark, 50/50, etc.
- ½lb/8oz butter
- ½lb/8oz golden syrup (use less depending on how sweet your sweet tooth is)
- 1 packet plain digestive biscuits

● Toppings: Smarties, marshmallows, melted white chocolate, pretzels, etc.

Instructions

1. In a heat proof bowl over a pan of simmering water (make sure the bowl does not touch the water), place the chocolate, butter, and syrup. Let it all melt together, stirring occasionally and ensuring it does not burn.
2. Meanwhile, open the pack of digestives and place into a bowl. Crush using your hands or a heavy spoon. The pieces should be somewhat large, a few centimetres or so.
3. Line a muffin tin with muffin cases or line a cake tin with greased baking paper. You could also line a baking sheet with parchment paper if you want it to be more like a tray bake.
4. Once the chocolate and butter mixture is melted, pour it over the biscuits and thoroughly mix together. Spoon the mixture into the muffin cases, the cake tin, or onto the cookie sheet.
5. Top with your desired toppings, then allow to cool for a couple of hours before tucking in!

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Can you have a civil conversation with someone whose beliefs you disagree with?

This was the question posed by presenter Ciara Kelly on **Newstalk Breakfast** last Friday. Her guests were journalist David Quinn of the Iona Institute, *The Sunday Times* and this paper, and Michael Nugent of *Atheist Ireland* – they have clashed in robust debate on many hot button topics over the years.

We learned that they have been known to go for coffee and chat after such debates. The presenter lamented the hostile discourse of social media – imagine, she said, if people actually listened to each other, or agreed to disagree! She said that her guests seemed to have diametrically opposed views when it comes to religious beliefs, though it's more a case of one having religious views and one not having them at all!

David Quinn said it was important to meet people you disagreed with, so that people with opposing views would be humanised in each other's eyes. He found the amount of abuse on social media “absolutely incredible” and “almost sectarian”. There was no need for the demonising, or assuming the worst of other people. I find that when Christians engage in such judgemental activities it's like they are taking the a la carte approach to their reli-



Anglican priest Fr Bill, one of the participants in BBC's Being... Christian series.

gious faith, an approach they often accuse ‘the other side’ of.

Michael Nugent thought the internet had damaged public discourse and that effectively social media encourages hostile responses, though it has to be said that it comes down to personal choice and many engage respectfully online, even on Twitter!

Strongly believed

He said he “strongly believed” there was no God (another kind of faith, if not exactly a religious one) but also that

Atheist Ireland often engaged with religious groups. They disagree all the time but some people online, he found, went straight in the ‘fascist’ charge.

Ciara Kelly suggested we've largely moved away from religion, which I thought was overstated, and reckoned we were filling the vacuum with ‘new high priests of judgement’ with a ‘new sanctimony’.

There was no sanctimony, just enthusiastic religious faith in **Being ... Christian** (BBC Two, Sunday). It was an

explainer for newcomers and an engaging exploration for the committed. I was glad they concentrated mostly on young people, especially young couples with children. One young Baptist couple, Jon and Rebecca, saw it as a positive to have chosen not to live together before their marriage. They're obviously infused with the joy of romance and believe very much in having God in their marriage. The narrator's blurb left something to be desired – “Some Christians believe that marriage is where physical intimacy finds its best and fullest expression”. Interesting use of ‘some’.

Sportsperson

Savannah was a young English woman, an international sportsperson, whose journey to full immersion Baptism began with the death of a friend. The programme also reflected on attitudes to death, emphasising the centrality of the Resurrection in Christianity. This had a particular poignancy as we saw the funeral of Rev. June Thomas, one of the first female vicars in the Church of England.

A young Catholic couple, Maria and Peter very immersed in their Catholic faith and have five children – we got to be witnesses to the birth of the fifth. The narrator

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTE News Channel Sunday August 14 at 2.15pm
Sunday Mass – streaming on the News Channel this week.

HEART OF THE MATTER FOCUS

EWTN Sunday August 14 at 4pm
Fr Daniel Seward, Msgr Keith Bartrop, Leoni Caldecott, Clare Coggins and Fr James McCaffrey look at the life and legacy of St John Henry Cardinal Newman.

MAXIMILIAN: SAINT OF AUSCHWITZ

EWTN Sunday August 14 at 9pm
Actor Leonardo DeFilippis brings to life St Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan priest from Poland who withstood the degradation and horror of the concentration camp in Auschwitz until his death.

said that “for some Catholics a large family was a celebration of God's love”. The couple didn't presume anything in that line but were open to new life. They were very keen to bring up their children in the Faith, taking their religion seriously but with joy, a good combination. Again we saw a moving Baptism scene, but for this child they opted for a Baptism in Latin. They saw value in the ‘Extraordinary Form’ for special occasions. They found this ceremony had more signs and symbols, was more “visceral”, and Peter liked the “meaty exorcism prayer”.

Exorcism was one of the main topics discussed in **Faith and Life** (EWTN, Wednesday)

when Campbell Miller interviewed Fr Patrick Collins. He is an exorcist, a psychologist and so much more. He finds in recent years a growing demand for his services in the area of spiritual deliverance. People can open the doors to the Devil by dabbling with the occult, a pre-occupation with pornography or a pattern of serious sin. He finds a “collapse of the sense of the supernatural” and comes across “heart breaking stories of need”. Challenging and disturbing!

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Music

Pat O'Kelly



The cornerstone of the French operatic repertoire

“A masterly and nuanced portrayal of hopeless love”, that's how Irish National Opera describes Jules Massenet's *Werther*, which the company will take on a nationwide tour during April and May 2023. But why am I mentioning *Werther* so far in advance? Well, Lyric Opera presents a fully staged single performance of the piece at the National Concert Hall on Saturday, August 20.

Based on Goethe's revolutionary novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Massenet's opera had its première in Vienna on February 16, 1892 and along with *Manon*, a work that has never really ‘won me over’,



Indian tenor Amar Muchhala will make his Irish debut.

is one of his most popular works. *Werther* is, by the way, a poet who chooses a love he can neither possess nor forget – Charlotte, who

is trapped in a loveless marriage to Albert. The ‘eternal triangle’ that develops ends with Werther's suicide.

Debut

The Lyric Opera cast is being led by Indian tenor Amar Muchhala making his Irish debut in the title role with Irish mezzo Carolyn Holt as Charlotte and Scottish baritone Christopher Nairne, also making his Irish debut, as Albert. Lyric's supremo Vivian J Coates heads the production team.

Born in 1842 in the village of Montaud, now absorbed into the expanded Saint Étienne in France's Loire region, Massenet came from a relatively prosperous family. He learned piano

from his mother before the family's move in 1848 to Paris where the talented lad entered the Conservatoire.

His musical education was disrupted for a while when his father's health forced the family to decamp to the south of France. Following his father's death, Massenet returned to Paris in 1855 but declining family finances found him teaching piano and playing percussion in several Paris orchestras, something that stood him in good stead in his own orchestrations.

Winning the Conservatoire's coveted *Prix de Rome* brought Massenet to study at the Eternal City's Villa Medici where the French Academy was based and

where he met his future wife, Ninon de Gressy.

Operas

Back in Paris, Massenet completed the first of his nearly 40 operas – *Don César de Bazan*. Although not a success the composer was undeterred and by 1877 his *Le roi de Lahore* was enjoying performances throughout Italy as well as being heard in Budapest, Munich, Dresden, Madrid and London.

The prodigious success of *Manon* at the Opéra-Comique in 1884 meant him being recognised as the cornerstone of the French operatic repertoire. Following the first performance of *Le Cid* in 1885, the Paris cor-

respondent of *The New York Times* wrote that Massenet had “resolutely declared himself a melodist of undoubted consistency and of remarkable inspiration”.

Strangely *Werther* was not particularly well received at its première, with one critic complaining the work “had no genuine depth”, but its first performance in France by the Opéra-Comique in January 1893 led to it becoming an established favourite.

Following a short illness, Massenet died in Paris on August 31, 1912. He is buried in Égreville, in north central France, where he had a country estate. At his own wish, music did not have any role in his obsequies.

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus

My inspiration this week takes the Second Reading (Hebrews 12:1-4) as a lead in to the Gospel of the day (Luke 12: 49-53). "Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection." I have often taken this sentence as the theme of a retreat.

Facing the complex questions of our time, St John Paul II wrote that we should not be seduced by the naive expectation that we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a person.

Steeping oneself in the Gospel

Focusing on the face of Jesus commences with steeping oneself in the Gospels, pondering on his historical life, on how he lived, on the ideals he promoted, on his teaching, his stories and how he behaved. The rosary and Stations of the Cross are popular prayers based on the Gospels. My favourite place for praying the rosary is walking the fields around Rochestown, a rustic setting I must exchange for city life in two week's time. The rosary is like visiting the Mother of the Lord long after his Ascension. She brings out her treasured albums of photographs, one full of joy, one depicting his Passion, a third about his risen life, and the more recent collection of great moments of light.

“The Sacrament was performed by immersion in the baptismal bath and emerging to be clad in a white garment”

The Gospels teach us the historical life of Christ. The letters of St Paul scarcely mention his historical life but he develops a deep theology of how Christians share in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord. Encountering the risen Lord on the road to Damascus transformed his life. "I am Jesus and you are persecuting me". Two key ideas were revealed to Paul. One, Jesus had conquered death by his resurrection. The second revelation was that in persecuting Christians, he was attacking Jesus himself: "And you are persecuting me." Pondering on these revelations, Paul developed the theology of Baptism. The Sacrament was performed

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



by immersion in the baptismal bath and emerging to be clad in a white garment. "You have been buried with him by your Baptism; by which, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

Bringing fire to the earth

As we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus in today's Gospel, Luke captures the passionate desire of the Lord to bring fire to the world. "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already." This fire would be seen at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire. In cooking, fire transforms the ingredients. The apostles were transformed by the fire of the Spirit. Our popular prayer to the Holy Spirit is a desire for fire. "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the Faithful and enkindle within them the fire of your love." At Baptism the fire of Christ's light is symbolised in transferring light from the Easter candle to newly baptised's candle. "Let your light shine so that all may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven". But, as Pope Francis wrote in *The Joy of the Gospel*, a person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody. It is a small step from being lukewarm to having the fire extinguished.

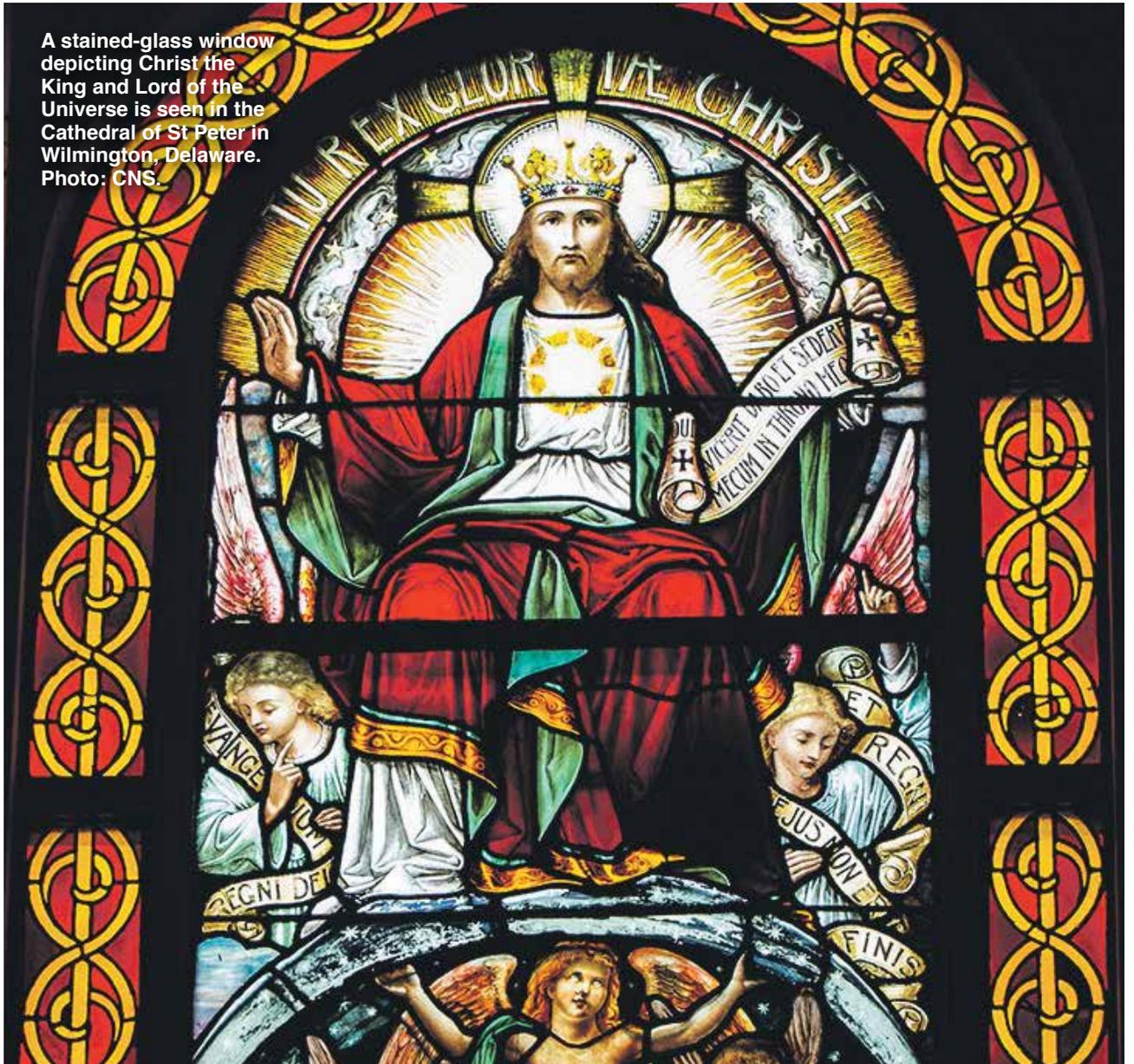
The sea of suffering

Before the fire of Pentecost Jesus would have to face his passion and death. He described it as a Baptism he would have to undergo. Remember that when the Gospels were written, Baptism involved immersion under water. Jesus admitted his distress when he foresaw how he would have to plunge into the stormy water of his suffering on the cross. "There is a Baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!"

Divided families

On several occasions Jesus foretold that his followers too would face per-

A stained-glass window depicting Christ the King and Lord of the Universe is seen in the Cathedral of St Peter in Wilmington, Delaware. Photo: CNS.



secution. The Christians for whom Luke was writing knew how demanding and costly it was to follow Jesus. They were subjected to persecution and martyrdom. Many of them suffered the pains of family rejection. Being a Christian demanded the fire of enthusiasm and courage to take the plunge.

Facing opposition today

At the time when atheistic Communism waged war on religion, a priest from Poland visiting Ireland remarked: "We have the advantage of a visible enemy, while you have the disadvantage of an invisible one". Mind you, society has changed considerably in the intervening years. There are many instances now where it takes courage to be a Christian ... to be seen going to Mass ... to protect life in the womb ... to speak up for chastity in relationships ... to pray in public when the Government is considering banning prayer in certain places while at the same time claiming the right to freedom

of choice! Opposition might come from colleagues, peers, friends, even family members.

Let us keep our minds fixed on Jesus. Let him be for us the way, the truth and the life.

Let us return to where we started this reflection ...today's reading from Hebrews. "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, disregarding the shameful of it, and from now on has taken his place at the right of God's throne. Think of the way he withstood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage."

Remember the night of the apostles on the stormy sea. As long as Peter looked at Jesus, he walked on water, but when he looked instead at the waves, he began to sink. But Jesus stretched out a hand to save him.

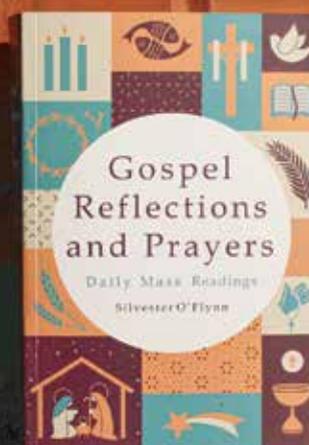
Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Son of God come down to save us. As we ponder on the Gospel, reveal yourself to us that we might keep our eyes fixed on you. Send forth your Spirit to kindle within us the fire of your love.

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Making a recessive journey

In a particularly poignant passage in her poem, *The Leaf and the Cloud*, Mary Oliver pictures herself standing at the gravesite of her mother and father, reflecting on their lives. They were far from perfect and she doesn't sugarcoat their faults. She openly names her mother's heaviness of soul and her father's immature faith. She knows that many of her own struggles have roots there. However, she isn't visiting their graves to lay blame on them. She's there to kiss them an honest goodbye, at peace finally with both their less-than-perfect lives and their influence on her. She thanks them for everything, the good and the bad, wishes them well in the deep earth, and then says, "But I will not give them the kiss of complicity. I will not give them the responsibility for my life."

“No doubt, some of this is valid, early religious training does leave a permanent mark on us”

All of us might do well to make this kind of recessive journey in terms of revisiting our early religious training. An interesting gravesite. Unfortunately, many of us don't ever tarry there long enough to truly sort out what blessed us and what wounded us when some very fallible human agents introduced God to us. Today it is common (almost fashionable) for people to look back only negatively on their early religious training. Indeed many speak



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

of being “in recovery” from it and often blame every kind of unhappiness and neurosis in their lives on their early religious training.

No doubt, some of this is valid, early religious training does leave a permanent mark on us. However, we owe it to ourselves, our parents, our early teachers, and to honesty to sort out the positives and negatives of our early religious background and, like Mary Oliver, make peace with it, even if we cannot give it the kiss of complicity.

Consciousness

What's my own story? For me, awakening to consciousness and awakening to God and Church were inextricably linked. The Roman Catholicism of the time was the air I breathed as a child and this was Roman Catholicism prior to Vatican II, a Catholicism replete with both positives and negatives. The spirituality of my childhood was one of

absolute truths, of non-negotiable rules, of strong demands, of tribalism, and of narrow inclusivity. We, and we alone were the one true faith. Moreover, all of this was underwritten by a God who kept a scrupulous watch on your every action, didn't easily give you permission to make a mistake, held the sixth commandment above all others, used shame as a weapon, and was frowning a lot of the time.

“The family, community, and Church that christened me had communal bonds that most communities today can only envy”

But, that was far from all of it. There was a whole other side. The family, community, and Church that christened me had communal bonds

that most communities today can only envy. You truly were part of a body, a family, and a community that incarnated a sense of transcendence that made faith something natural, and community part of your very identity. You knew you were a child of God and you knew too that you were a moral creature with real responsibilities to others and to God. You knew your eternal significance, your essential dignity, and the moral responsibility that came with that and you couldn't exempt yourself from it.

Non-negotiable

What all of this did was ground you existentially in a very fundamental, non-negotiable human, moral, and religious truth, namely, that your life was not simply your own to do with whatever you wished. You knew in a way that you could not ignore, except by way of infidelity, that you were constitutively social, interdependent, ecclesial, and that God put you on this earth not just to make a good life for yourself. You had a vocation, a certain duty to serve, and God, family, community, and Church could ask you to give your life over. Today, I see this particular brand on my soul as one of the most precious of all gifts that I received from the

spirituality of my childhood. Whatever demons came along with that were worth it.

“Indeed, rigidity, timidity, tribalism, and excess caution aren't a bad place to start from because after they loosen their grip, you are free for the rest of your life”

Besides demons can be cast out and most of those buried inside the catechesis of my childhood have slowly been exorcised through the years. What did it? Lots of things: years of studying and teaching theology, reading good literature, having good spiritual directors, seeing a robust and joyous health in women and men of faith, persevering in my own dogged (and far-from-perfect) attempt to be faithful to prayer, the Eucharist, and church community through seven decades, and, not least, the grace of God.

Today I look back on my early religious training in a way wherein the negatives are eclipsed by the positives. I am thankful for it all, even its initial rigidity, timidity, tribalism, fearfulness, and false fears of God, because something inside all of that grounded me and taught me what is ultimately important. Indeed, rigidity, timidity, tribalism, and excess caution aren't a bad place to start from because after they loosen their grip, you are free for the rest of your life. No small gift!

“All of us might do well to make this kind of recessive journey in terms of revisiting our early religious training. An interesting gravesite”

BookReviews

Peter Costello



A heroic witness to the need to speak truth in the news

The Price of Truth: Titus Brandsma, Carmelite
by Miguel Arribas, O. Carm
Carmelite dia,
US\$23.85/£19.60/€23.50

J. Anthony Gaughan

"It was around six o'clock Monday evening, 19 January 1942, when two burly young men rang the doorbell of the Carmelite Priory in Nijmegen in Holland. The brother porter greeted the visitors and enquired, 'how may I help you, gentlemen?' The younger of the two responded in Dutch: 'We would like to speak with Professor Brandsma. We are in a hurry. Please let him know.'

"The brother ushered them into a parlour and called Fr Titus Brandsma. He came down at once and greeted his guests cordially.

"At this stage the previously silent visitor announced in German: 'My name is Steffen: I am an agent of the State Security Police. By order of the Security Service, you are under arrest. You are to come with me on the 7.35 train to Arnhem'."

Thus began the journey which ended with the death of Titus Brandsma at Dachau Concentration Camp on July 26 1942 as a result of a deadly injection of carbolic acid.

Titus Brandsma was born in Bolsward in the north of Holland on February 23 1881. His father was a farmer. The family were religious: four of Titus' five siblings joined religious orders.

After receiving his early education in a Franciscan college, Titus entered the novitiate of the Carmelite Priory at Boxmeer in September 1898. He was ordained in June 1905 and spent the next four years pursuing further studies in Rome.

On returning to Holland Titus was appointed professor of philosophy and Church history in the Carmelite major seminary in Oss. Next he served as the professor of philosophy in the newly-established Catholic University at Nijmegen, eventually becoming the Rector Magnificus in 1932.

Prolific

Besides his academic work, Titus was a prolific contributor to journals: national and international, professional and popular. By the late 1930s Titus was one of the best-known persons in Holland. He was a member of the Union of Catholic Journalists (UCIP) and a card-carrying member of the



St Titus Brandsma

Fourth Estate. Thus in March 1935 the leader of the Catholic Church in Holland, Archbishop de Jong of Utrecht, appointed him chaplain to the Union of Catholic Journalists.

In the meantime National Socialism had come to the fore in Germany. On January 30 1933 Adolf Hitler had appointed himself the country's absolute leader. For Hitler the aim of National Socialism was to promote the supremacy of the Aryan race, or truly White Race.

This was first to be achieved by the 'elimination' of the Jewish race. Subsequently gypsies, the disabled, people with learning disabilities and all who opposed the 'New Order' were to 'disappear'. Titus fearlessly and tirelessly criticised this hideous nonsense in the Dutch press and in various journals. He also conducted a series of lectures in the University highlighting the dangers and rank evil of this National Socialist ideology.

“ Besides his academic work, Titus was a prolific contributor to journals: national and international, professional and popular”

In May 1940 the Wehrmacht overran Holland. The new overlords set out to control the country. They began the round-up of the Dutch Jews. Next, recognising that the Faith of Christians was a direct threat to their worldview and atheistic ideology, they turned their attention to the country's Catholic education system and the Catholic Press.

Because of his central role in both those areas – he was president of the Union of Catholic Schools and chaplain to the Union of Catholic Journalists – Titus became an obvious target of the new regime. Then he was also involved in assisting the Dutch bishops in an unsuccessful attempt to ensure that the editors of the Catholic Press would not be forced to transmit Nazi propaganda.

Arrest

After his inevitable arrest Titus was incarcerated in a number of transit hubs before arriving in Dachau on June 19 1942. Some of those who provided witness statements during his beatification process had been fellow-inmates at Dachau and described the appalling maltreatment visited on him and the other prisoners.

By a curious coincidence the nurse who administered the lethal injection to Titus was also among those who provided witness statements at the beatification process. She told her own story. Aged 16, she was sent to Berlin to be trained as a nurse. She was then appointed to the medical centre in Dachau.

There she took part in the horrific experiments conducted by the SS doctors. If she or her colleagues refused to participate, she claimed they had just two choices: suicide or being prepared to be shot!

On November 3 1985 Pope John Paul II proclaimed Titus Brandsma a martyr and that his feast might be celebrated. On May 27 this year Titus was finally canonised by Rome, much to the joy of his fellow Carmelites in Dublin's Whitefriar's Street community, a community Brandsma visited in 1935.

Summer excursions to places of faith – Part 1: Ireland



With things getting back to normal these days, summer provides enough fine days for us all to make some visits to often overlooked places of faith, as well as a few famous ones. Over the next few weeks some of these will be described here, with their appropriate literary associations.

Croagh Patrick

I am writing this on the last Sunday of July, a day when large numbers of people in fine weather or poor, attempt to climb Croagh Patrick. Legend claims that the saint himself spent some 40 days on the summit in isolation: it would be difficult to do that these days. And climbing the Reek certainly needs stamina and sometimes courage.

The English writer T.H. White wrote an account of his experience climbing the Reek in the 1940s, a charming essay which ends with the author of *The Once and Future King* colloquing with the bishop of the day outside the tea station at the summit. He does not deny that the day was a strenuous one, but one filled with friendly feelings all round.

Lough Derg

The pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick comes down to us it seems from a very early date. So too does the pilgrimage to Lough Derg in Donegal. Though it

ought to be pointed out that over the centuries the nature of the activity has changed. In the early days they seem to have been visionary. But with the closure of Lough Derg first by the Papal authorities, and later its complete destruction by the English authorities, the nature of the shrine when it was later revived ceased to be visionary and was only for specially prepared individuals (who also paid the prior a significant fee) a penitential one. And this is the form that continues today.

These changes over the centre were inevitable, and are now well established.

“ The pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick comes down to us it seems from a very early date”

Curiously Lough Derg has attracted not a few writers from William Carleton to Patrick Kavanagh and Seamus Heaney, but also more surprisingly Sean O'Faolain (whose short story *The Lovers of the Lake* seems now quite unread). These items would make from a historical point of view a very interesting anthology, though the tone of Carleton and others would dismay the more pious. But it is only the medieval material that has attracted scholarly attention (which can be explored in *The Medieval*

Pilgrimage to St Partick's Purgatory by Michael Harem and Yolanda de Pontefarcy, from the Clogher Historical Society, 1988).

Our Lady's Island

At our Lady's Island in Wexford, a place of pilgrimage from early Christian days (perhaps with roots in the prehistoric past), which had faded in the 18th century. And though efforts to revive the place in the 1860s were discouraged at first, but then were organised properly from 1897 onwards. Local clergy were very doubtful about many popular gatherings of a quasi-religious nature, as they seemed to involve scenes of what was seen as misbehaviour and were suppressed. The pilgrimage is on August 15 every year.

Pilgrimages aside, there many places of faith that are well worth a visit, even just to see the ruins.

Clonfert Cathedral

I first visited Clonfert with my family when I was about eight. It was the height of summer and the little building was surrounded by the tall grass of midsummer which quite obscured the recent grave our guide wanted to specially show us. She was reduced to a vague indication that it was "somewhere there". But the Cathedral is itself quite capti-

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.



The Rock of Cashel seen at twilight.

ating, representing, in its isolated way, some of the nature of the Celtic Church in Ireland, long standing trees, long grass, singing birds and quiet piety all in one place.

“When visiting Waterford in ‘the ancient south east’ the real place of faith to see is St Patrick’s Church hidden away in the city”

It was founded by St Brendan in the sixth century: an air of genuine antiquity still pervades the setting. The west door, with its ornate and well carved decorations. It is rightly considered one of the finest examples of the Romanesque style in Ireland. Inside, the east end of the chancel is thought to be the oldest surviving part of the building, dating from the 10th century.

Clonmacnoise

By contrast with Brendan’s church at Clonfert, Clonmacnoise, “St Ciaran’s city fair” as the poet calls it, is impressive, but only I think if you drop down on it by boat from Athlone as we did another summer. To come by car through the long miles of bogs creates a sense of isolation. But seen

from the River Shannon, the place rising on a brow of land, the surrounding, the round tower and the extensive ruins are truly impressive.

This was a famous place of resort for students from all over Europe, a genuine university. In the words of one scholar the place “received towards the evnd of VIII century the generous bounty of Charlemagne, conveyed on the monarch’s behalf by ‘the noble Alcuin’ who added another 50 shekels to the emperor’s original 50.”

This place too had a strong literary tradition. *The Annals of Tigernach* were compiled here, though not by the Abbot in person but under his direction. Here too were set down

Chronicon Scotorum (“the Annals of the Irish”), the earliest version of the Táin in *The Book of the Dun Cow*. Clonmacnoise might seem isolated when you come by road, but by water it was open to the attacks of the Norse established on Lough Ree to the north.

But the place is the subject of the fine poem by Angus Ó Gillán, miraculously translated by Thomas Rolleston, in a poem which will retain him a place in our 19th century Anglo-Irish literature for as long as there is an Irish nation. It is short enough to quote in full.

“In a quiet water’d land, a land of roses,
Stands Saint Kieran’s city fair;
And the warriors of Erin in their famous generations
Slumber there.

There beneath the dewy hill-side sleep the noblest
Of the clan of Conn,
Each below his stone with name in branching Ogham
And the sacred knot thereon.

“There they laid to rest the seven Kings of Tara,
There the sons of Cairbre sleep,
Battle-banners of the Gael that in Kieran’s plain of crosses
Now their final hosting keep...”

St Patrick’s Church, Jenkins Lane, Waterford City

When visiting Waterford in “the ancient south east” the real place of faith to see is St Patrick’s Church hidden away in the city.

This church is of important historical interest, for it is one of the earliest-surviving post-Reformation churches in Ireland. Though the exterior has been less than sensitively treated in recent restoration work, the inside is a place to be wondered at.

According to a government heritage survey, the interior “incorporates artefacts of artistic importance, together with a circumferential gallery of technical interest. The church is a discrete feature of the townscape of Waterford City, and contributes to the historic fabric of the locality.”

“Discreet” is delicately phrased: the church comes from a period when a Catholic church could not be built on a main street, and had in fact to



St Patrick’s Church, Waterford.



Pilgrims hike Croagh Patrick.

have other buildings in front of them to prevent them having any prominence at all. But it is astonishing nevertheless what, even under strict rules, Catholic communities could achieve in the 18th century.

“The most remarkable place of faith in Ireland has to be the Rock of Cashel, now in the care of the Office of Public Works”

Cashel

But the most remarkable place of faith in Ireland has to be the Rock of Cashel, now in the care of the Office of Public Works. When the Church of Ireland was disestablished in 1869, there were those among the country people of Tipperary who thought this might mean that now that it belonged to Queen Victoria, it might be reroofed by the Board of Works, later the Office of Public Works, which was charged with the care of Ireland’s built heritage. But that never came about, preservation rather than renovation being the

agency’s remit from the beginning.

Cashel was often called “the Acropolis of Ireland”, and its combination of religious, public and private buildings matches the Athenian site in many ways.

It stands proud of the Tipperary landscape, rising some 300 feet and covers 200 acres. It began as a fortress, where St Patrick preached to the rulers of Munster – legend says it was here that he first used the trefoil shamrock to illustrate the concept of the Trinity.

In 1101, two generations before the arrival of the Normans, the place was gifted to the Church by Murrough O’Brien, when the bishop of the diocese was raised to the rank of an archbishop. It was here, soon after he landed in Ireland in 1172, that Henry II received the homage of both

the princes and prelates of Ireland.

Its history since has been tumultuous. Finally in 1748 the Cathedral was unroofed by the Church of Ireland archbishop of the day, not for either religious or political reasons, but simply because (again according to local legend) he could not drive his coach and four horses up the steep road to the summit.

Cashel illustrates the long and complicated history of Ireland over more than 2,000 years. No visitor, young or old, cannot but be moved by what they see and hear of Cashel. It is a place that every family in Ireland should visit at least once. In many ways *this* is the most important place of faith in Ireland.

**Next time:
Part 2 - Britain**

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Leisure time

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www.hospicefoundation.ie



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.

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Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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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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Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork. Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmissions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

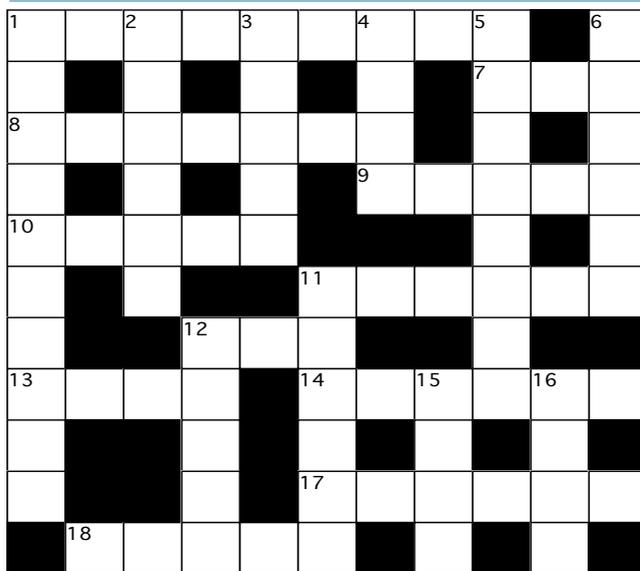


It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

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

Children's 445



Across

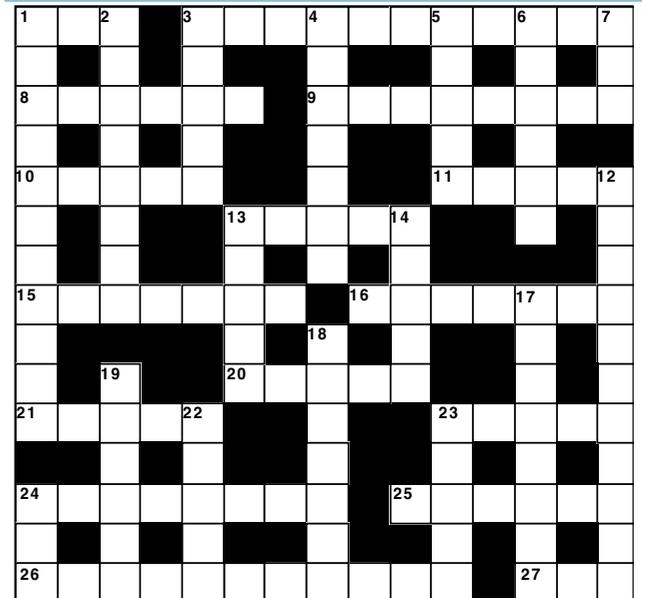
- 1 This sea creature is the world's biggest mammal (4,5)
- 7 No score (3)
- 8 Creatures (7)
- 9 Huge sea (5)
- 10 Holds onto, doesn't give away (5)
- 11 You might travel by gondola in this city of canals (6)
- 12 One way to travel over snow (3)
- 13 Wind a fishing line on this (4)
- 14 This chess piece is shaped like a horse (6)
- 17 Bees gather this to make honey (6)

Down

- 1 You might pick it from a bramble in Autumn (10)
- 2 USA is the _____ States of America (6)
- 3 Puts nice paper around a present (5)
- 4 As well (4)
- 5 Going in (8)
- 6 A quick look (6)
- 11 In history, a raider from Scandinavia (6)
- 12 Connacht county whose gaelic teams play in black and white (5)
- 15 One twelfth of a foot (4)
- 16 Notice a sound (4)

Crossword

Gordius 571



Across

- 1 Pig, boar (3)
- 3 Took property as punishment (11)
- 8 Conversation with the Almighty (6)
- 9 The brat eyed up this and acted treacherously (8)
- 10 Scene of a terrible World War I battle (5)
- 11 Room or space near the roof (5)
- 13 Stiffened a drink (5)
- 15 Sweet course of a meal (7)
- 16 Even Sid arranged to get these salad vegetables (7)
- 20 Causes pain (5)
- 21 & 17d It erupted in 79 AD, destroying Pompeii (5,8)
- 23 Pleasure trip with the disorganized junta (5)
- 24 City in California whose name means 'Saint James' (3,5)
- 25 Coming from Damascus or Aleppo, perhaps (6)
- 26 Money order on which the payee may fill in the required sum (5,6)
- 27 The heavens (3)

Down

- 1 A good compromise keeps the leader of the seance content (5,6)
- 2 Clothes worn to a party, etc (4,4)

- 3 Skilful practitioners in the kitchen (5)
- 4 Materials with which to make clothes (7)
- 5 The court of the Papal See (5)
- 6 Occasions when lovers rendezvous (6)
- 7 Failure (3)
- 12 Specialised advice service (11)
- 13 Move suddenly and clumsily - like a manservant to the Addams Family? (5)
- 14 Sand-hills (5)
- 17 See 21 across
- 18 Ask someone to marry you (7)
- 19 Cereal crop originally from South America (6)
- 22 Dense (5)
- 23 Surname of the author of 'Ulysses' (5)
- 24 Cry, weep (3)

SOLUTIONS, AUGUST 04

GORDIUS NO. 570

Across – 1 Fit 3 Coffee table 8 Circus Maximus 9 Caddy car 10 O'Hare 11 Steam 13 Bland 15 Fervour 16 Jezebel 20 Deals 21 Micah 23 Dante 24 Addendum 25 Casino 26 Picturesque 27 Led

Down – 1 Factory farm 2 Toreador 3 Coupe 4 Factual 5 Tides 6 Bicker 7 Err 12 Millisecond 13 Bound 14 Dregs 17 Biennial 19 Acidic 22 Hindu 23 Drape 24 App

CHILDREN'S No. 444

Across – 1 Tree top 7 Aroma 8 Devon 9 Theatre 10 Oil 12 Gas 14 Expensive 17 Million 18 Invent 19 Edge

Down – 1 Tadpole 2 Envelope 3 Tenth 4 Paper 5 Cottage 6 Bake 11 Assist 13 Sponge 15 Value 16 Men

Sudoku Corner

445

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 444

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

Last week's Hard 444

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

Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



Finding God by opening to his love

YOU MIGHT VERY WELL think it is an obvious thing for a priest to say but recently, I have been thinking a lot about faith. A few weeks ago, the Harvard business school professor, Arthur C. Brooks, shocked RTÉ radio presenter, Brendan O'Connor by suggesting that the two most important things that guarantee a happy life are to love and have a strong Faith. Then, last weekend at Mass, the second reading from Hebrews began with "Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen".



Faith

Whenever I think about faith and love I go back to Tommy. Tommy was a student of an old teacher of mine, John Powell. It is probably best I let Fr Powell tell you about Tommy. It's a long story so there will be no room for jokes or prayers this month!

"Tommy was a student in my Theology of Faith class. He was an atheist, questioned everything and basically made my life very difficult during the term he was in my class. When he handed up his

final exam paper, he said to me cynically; "Do you think I'll ever find God?"

"No!" I said emphatically. "Oh", he responded, "I thought that was the product you were pushing". As he left the room I called after him; "Tommy, I don't think you will ever find God but I'm absolutely sure he will find you!"

A few years later I heard the sad news that Tommy had terminal cancer. I was astonished when he walked into my office one day. His body was badly wasted from his illness, but his eyes were

bright and his voice firm. After some initial chit-chat about his illness, I asked Tommy what it was like to be 24 and dying?

"Well, it could be worse", he said. Like what? "Well, being fifty and having no values or ideals and thinking that booze, seducing women and making money are the real biggies in life".

Reason

Then Tommy told me that the reason he had come to see me was the parting line from a few years earlier ie. you will not find God, but he will find you. Tommy continued; "When the doctor removed a lump from my groin and told me it was malignant, I got serious about locating God. When the malignancy spread, I banged on God's door all the harder. God didn't come out and after some time I just gave up knocking. I decided I didn't care about God or his afterlife or anything like that. "However, I remembered something else you had told us in class that 'The essential sadness is to go through life without loving. But it would be equally sad to go through life and leave this world without tell-

ing those you love that you had loved them.'

"My time was short, so I began with the hardest one, my dad. He was reading the newspaper when I approached him. Dad? 'Yes, what?' he grunted without lowering the newspaper.

"Dad, I would like to talk to you. 'Well talk then'. 'I mean, it is really important'. The newspaper came down three slow inches 'What is it?'

"Dad, I love you, I just wanted you to know that'. The newspaper fell to the floor. Then my father did two things he never did before, he cried, and he hugged me. We talked all night. It felt so good to be close to my father, to see his tears, to feel his hug, to hear him say that he loved me. I was only sorry that I had waited so long. Here I was in the shadow of death, and I was just beginning to open up to all the people I had actually been close to.

"Then one day I turned around and God was there. He hadn't come to me when I had pleaded with him and banged on his door. I guess, I was like an animal trainer holding out a hoop, 'C'mon, jump through, C'mon

I'll give you three days...three weeks'.

Found

Apparently, God does things in his own way and at his own hour. But now he was there. He found me. You were right. He found me when I stopped looking for him."

"Tommy," I gasped, "you have discovered something very important about faith. You are saying the surest way to find God is not to make him a private possession, a problem solver, or an instant consolation in time of need, but rather by opening to his love."

At my request Tommy agreed to share his experience with my current Theology of Faith students but sadly he died before he could fulfil the promise."



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU



Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

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?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass

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:

- €..... **HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU**
- €..... **UKRAINE APPEAL**
- €..... **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
www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.