

The Irish Catholic

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Don't allow the Church to become a museum! – Pope

Greg Daly

Pope Francis has issued a rallying cry to Catholics urging them to not allow a rigid adherence to rules to turn the Church into a museum.

In a landmark new document on the call to holiness for all believers *Rejoice and be Glad*, Pope Francis also insisted that priests must become "passionate missionaries" rather than bureaucrats sitting behind a desk.

He also said that Catholics must not be afraid of change. However, the Pontiff also warns that people need to discern whether new thinking is from God or "an illusion created by the spirit of this world or the spirit of the Devil".

The Pope insists that sometimes "the forces of evil induce us not to change, to leave things as they are, to opt for a rigid resistance to change."

"Yet that would be to

Gaudete et Exsultate

'Rejoice and be glad' – Pope Francis on the call to holiness

See Pages 11-14

block the working of the Spirit," he writes.

On the role of clergy, the Pope writes that "we are inspired to act by the example of all those priests, religious, and laity who devote themselves to proclamation and to serving others with great fidelity, often at the risk of their lives and certainly at the cost of their comfort."

Testimony

"Their testimony reminds us that, more than bureaucrats and functionaries, the Church needs passionate missionaries, enthusiastic about sharing true life."

The Pope warns that too often "the life of the Church can become a museum piece or the possession of a select few."

"This can occur when some groups of Christians give excessive importance to certain rules, customs or ways of acting. The Gospel then tends to be reduced and constricted, deprived of its simplicity, allure and savour," he insists.

Welcoming the emphasis in the document on the fact that holiness is for everyone, Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin said the Pope has "reinforced this essential teaching of Vatican II and reinterpreted it for the contemporary world."

Archbishop Eamon said the exhortation "is a great opportunity for all of us, lay, ordained and consecrated, to refocus our lives on what is the central point of our faith in Jesus."

Standing up for the innocent



Demonstrators attend LoveBoth's 'Stand Up for Life' regional rally in Cork.
Photo: Damian Coleman

MARY KENNY

Lessons on moving on

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in God

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Nothing unlucky
about Friday 13

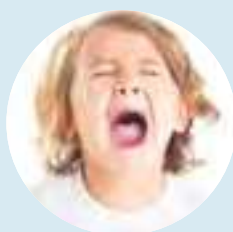
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A softly, softly
approach to
tantrums

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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment returns next week

Plans to cut religion from sex ed could be unconstitutional

State takeover would make NAMA 'look like a garden party'

Greg Daly

Proposals to introduce a new national sex education curriculum without a religious influence could be open to a constitutional challenge, a leading academic has said.

"The State can impose certain things on schools, including such things as a certain minimum level of education," UCC's Dr Seán Ó Conaill told *The Irish Catholic*, "but at the same time, freedom of conscience is protected in terms of religion."

Comments

Dr Ó Conaill's comments come following a recommendation from the Oireachtas committee on the Eighth Amendment that the sex education in Ireland's schools should be reformed and provided "in an impartial and factual manner that is free of religious ethos".

In response, Seamus Mulconry, general secretary of the Catholic Primary Schools

Management Association (CPSMA), said that while the CPSMA would make a submission into any review that took place, the review should produce an age-appropriate curriculum in line with the ethos of both school and parents.

Pointing out that religious rights are enshrined in the Constitution, Mr Mulconry said there would be "constitutional implications" to any attempt to compel a school or teacher to teach a course contrary to its ethos.

"There's definitely an arguable case around ethos, whether it's an atheist ethos or a Catholic ethos or whatever – it is protected under the Constitution," said Dr Ó Conaill.

"It's definitely an arguable point that schools can protect their ethos: they're private schools, they are not state-owned or -run schools," he stressed.

Characterising the debate

as a bluffing game between State and Church, Dr Ó Conaill pointed out that in principle the State could respond by threatening to withhold funding from Church-owned schools.

Bluff

"That's the State's trump card, but it's a huge game of bluff, because can you imagine what would happen," he said, pointing out that the Church and the Church of Ireland, who between them own and run the vast majority of Ireland's schools, could respond by closing their schools.

"What would the State do? It can't just take the land, because that's constitutionally protected," he said, continuing. "It would make NAMA look like a garden party."

"The State bluffs a lot, but the State has franchised out education for its entire existence."

Religious orders called to deliver properties before Papal visit

Any remaining properties promised by religious orders under the redress scheme for victims of abuse should be handed over to the State in advance of the Pope's visit this August, members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) have said. This comes after a report by the Dáil committee criticising the Department of Education's approach to the property transfers, saying there is a "lack of determination" to bringing the process to a conclusion.

The report also said "after 16 years, the ongoing delay is not acceptable" and recommended that the department "urgently

concludes the transfer of property from religious organisations".

However, a spokesperson for the Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI) has said that individual religious congregations are dealing directly with the Department of Education on "all matters" relating to the redress scheme and property transfers.

"AMRI is aware that the individual congregations have made every possible effort to complete the transfer of properties to the State in accordance with their earlier commitments," the statement added.

Peace takes risk and leadership – Armagh archbishops

Colm Fitzpatrick

Religious representatives of the Irish Catholic and Anglican communities have thanked God for the political peace that has been achieved in Ireland in the last 20 years and have urged people to continue to be "ambassadors of reconciliation".

Archbishop Eamon Martin and the Church of Ireland's Archbishop Richard Clarke released the joint statement on April 9 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), which was vital for the major political progress in Northern Ireland during the late 1990's.

In the statement, the archbishops gave thanks to God "for all that has been achieved in building peace since that historic moment", which was written in a context of decades of violence, divided communities and immense suffering and death.

Generation

"Above all we thank God for the generation of young people who are growing up without the sounds of bomb or bullet on a daily basis; for the livelihoods and businesses which have not been destroyed; for the families and neighbourhoods who have been spared the heart-breaking pain and trauma of death or serious injury."

The archbishops also warned that although the GFA has allowed healthy democracy to be developed and sustained, Northern Ireland still presents many problems and opportunities which all of us can solve and grasp.

Krakow

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Conference to urge Catholics to stand up for their faith

Staff reporter

A conference later this month addressed by a former Vatican ambassador and an acclaimed biographer of Pope Francis will hear calls for Irish Catholics to stand up for their faith.

Entitled 'How to Defend the Faith Without Raising Your Voice', the conference which will be held in the Red Cow Hotel on Saturday, April 28, will aim to help Catholics frustrated by misconceptions about the Church in the media.

Prof. Francis Campbell, Britain's former ambassador to the Vatican, and Dr Austen Ivereigh, who has written extensively on Pope Francis, will be amongst the speakers.

Controversy

Controversial issues will be addressed including the Church's stance on abortion, same-sex marriage and female ordination.

Other speakers will include Senator Rónán Mullen, columnist Breda O'Brien, Maria Steen of The Iona Institute and Cora Sherlock from the Pro-Life Campaign.

The conference will look at some of the common criticisms of the Church – including the belief pushed

by some commentators that the Church should have no voice in the public sphere – and offer coherent answers.

The event will look at the practise of 're-framing' debates by trying to understand where critics of the Church are coming from and helping them to understand why the Church teaches what it does.

The event – which will run from 9.30am-3pm – will also see the launch of a new book by Editor of *The Irish Catholic* Michael Kelly and Dr Ivereigh with the same title *How to Defend the Faith Without Raising Your Voice*. The book offers credible answers to hot button questions and also encourages Catholics to take the lead in defending their faith in public.

Ahead of the forthcoming referendum on the Eighth Amendment, the conference and book will present the Catholic view on the right to life and help those advocating for a 'no' vote frame arguments in favour of the unborn for their colleagues or friends.

i For more information see page 15. To attend the conference call 01 687 4028, email events@irishcatholic.ie or log on to www.irishcatholic.com

Irish nun hits screens across India



Sr Loreto with Irish Ambassador to India Brian McElduff.

An Irish Presentation Sister is the subject of a documentary – *Sister India* – produced by Irish film-maker, Myles O'Reilly. Sr Loreto, born Peg Houlihan near Carrick-on-Suir in Co. Tipperary in 1927, has spent 70 years teaching in India where she recently celebrated her

91st birthday. The film is currently being screened at a number of film festivals in Ireland and in India.

The idea for the film was sparked by another Irish woman, Áine Edwards, who has been living in India since 2003 where she runs a business consultancy

service. "My many conversations with Sr Loreto evoked a passion in me to produce a documentary on her," she says. "I wanted to not only share her story, but also to celebrate the work of so many other Irish educators in India, as this era draws to a close and another starts."

Fodder crisis could drive people off land, Cork bishop warns

Greg Daly

It is vital to support the farming community if Ireland wants to keep people on the land, Bishop John Buckley of Cork and Ross has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* after an appeal for all Masses in the diocese to include prayers for the farming community, Bishop Buckley said parishes had responded well to the appeal, which was appreciated by the diocese's farmers.

"The farmers are under great pressure in recent times after a long, cold and unseasonably wet winter and spring. They're experiencing great hardship and they certainly need support from the wider community," he said, explaining that weather conditions had forced farmers to keep livestock indoors for much longer than usual, with fodder supplies running low.

In his travels throughout the diocese people have constantly told him how serious the fodder situation is and that they would appreciate Government support, he said.

"I think that the Government should just respond very generously to the situation," he said, adding, "maybe they are, but the farmers are saying they need more."

Pointing out the importance of the farming community to Ireland's economic wellbeing, Dr Buckley said: "The danger would be in case they think of abandoning agriculture and abandoning their farms and so on."

"It's very important to support them," he said, continuing, "I'd be very concerned about rural depopulation, especially in West Cork. It has happened and the danger is that this could accelerate it."

JOE WALSH TOURS | 2018



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End 'stony silence' about builders of Good Friday Agreement – call

The contribution of Fr Alex Reid and others to the Peace Process needs to be recognised, Mattie McGrath TD has said.

Speaking at the General Liam Lynch Memorial in Newcastle, Co. Tipperary, the independent TD urged the Government and Fianna Fáil to highlight those who seem excluded from current political debates around the Good Friday Agreement, but who were instrumental in bringing it about.

Commenting on how Fianna Fáil "maintains a stony silence" about the contribution of former leader Bertie Ahern to the agreement, he added: "The same can be said about the key role that Albert Reynolds and Fr Alex Reid played. Why is it that the only reference to these individuals during the recent Dáil debate on the Good Friday Agreement came not from the Government or Fianna Fail, but from myself?"

Describing this as "historical amnesia", he called for justice to be done to all those centrally involved in the formulation of the agreement by keeping them in mind "as we head into a period of renewed reflection on the necessity of the Good Friday Agreement".

Concerns raised over referendum tweet by agency director

Chai Brady

Concerns have been raised after a social media post critical of a pro-life statement from a bishop emerged apparently from a senior executive at the ad agency running the information campaign on behalf of the Referendum Commission.

The Referendum Commission has charged BBDO Dublin with promoting voter turnout and to explain the referendum proposal in a factual, impartial manner.

This comes as a Twitter account apparently owned by BBDO's Executive Creative Director, Dylan Cotter, appeared critical of a statement made by Bishop Kevin Doran.

Article

Linking an article in which Dr Doran said that if abortion was legalised it would pave the way for euthanasia to be legal in Ireland, the tweet read: "Hypocritical old eunuchs talking s**** about the rights of independent young women does a lot more to pave the way for euthanasia to be honest."

Niamh Uí Bhriain of the Save the 8th campaign said anyone who receives taxpayer funding for a neutral information campaign should be pub-

licly neutral on the issue.

"It would be a matter of concern if any of the directors of an agency is seen tweeting in favour of repealing the Eighth while also being involved in a Government campaign that's supposed to be neutral," she said.

"We've already seen how biased the process was in regards to the Citizens' Assembly and the Oireachtas Committee on abortion, and I think the public are getting fed up because of that."

Social media

Ads for the Referendum Commission's four-part information campaign will start appearing this week across several platforms including TV, social media, radio and billboards. The second phase of the campaign will begin on April 23.

The Referendum Commission was established by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government at the end of May, and is chaired by High Court Judge Ms Isobel Kennedy.

The other members of the Commission are the Ombudsman, Mr Peter Tyndall; the Comptroller and Auditor General, Mr Seamus McCarthy; the Clerk Assistant of the Dáil, Mr Peter Finnegan; and the Clerk of the Seanad, Mr Martin Groves.

Despite repeated attempts, a spokesman for the Commission had not answered questions from this newspaper on the issue at time of printing.

Presidential pardon welcomed



Canon Kieran Waldron, diocesan archivist of Tuam Archdiocese, President Michael D. Higgins and Bishop Fintan Monahan celebrate Mr Higgin's decision to grant a presidential pardon to Maolra Seoighe who was unjustly convicted and hanged in 1882 in connection with the Mám Trasna murders that occurred earlier that year.

SVP says it will take no stance on abortion referendum

Staff reporter

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has announced it will not be taking a stance in the upcoming referendum on abortion, and will not be issuing any advice to its members on what choice to make on polling day.

Contacted by *The Irish Catholic* this week the Church-founded organisation said in a statement that

it is a "personal decision for each member, based on their own views, on how they wish to vote".

However, the statement backed away from an earlier draft obtained by this newspaper which said the stance was based on the fact that SVP is a "member-led organisation". The statement issued by the spokesman does not contain this line.

The SVP has 11,000 members, making it one of the largest charitable organisations in Ireland. The members and volunteers "include a wide range of people, men and women from every part

of the country, from different backgrounds, of different ages and from different nationalities and religions".

Help

The charity said they "provide practical and emotional help to an equally wide range of individuals and families in a non-judgemental way and in a spirit of friendship".

"As with previous referenda and elections the organisation will not be issuing any advice or comment to its members or volunteers in relation to the forthcoming referendum."



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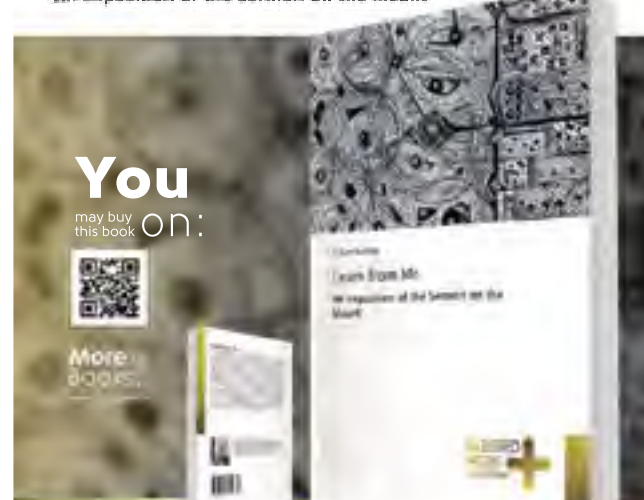


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Lessons on moving on

It's six months now since I was obliged to leave the lovely old flat in central Dublin which I had rented for 21 years. It was on the second floor of an old Georgian building and I loved it. It was full of books and old things, nooks and crannies, memorabilia and memories and I was sad indeed when I got notice to quit.

The situation also sharpened my awareness of homelessness and the cost of accommodation in Dublin, and I realised I was fortunate when friends knew about a small bedsit in the Stillorgan area which I might



Mary Kenny

be able to rent instead. And so it came about, and discarding almost all the books and much of the furniture that I had accumulated over the years, I moved into a single room, with kitchenette and bathroom ensuite.

Simplicity

And guess what? I have come to realise that there can be satisfaction in simplicity, and a kind of freedom in discarding

possessions. I have also come to like my single-room bedsit very much, and I can pass my old Georgian flat on the bus, now, without the pangs of yearning and regret, (although I miss the lovely neighbours I had there). But I now remember all the problems associated with that dwelling, since it had not really been maintained properly for some years.

It's sometimes hard to

"move on" from a way of life, and to leave behind what it represented. I am inclined to cling to possessions that represent the past: I lugged a totally unsuitable carpet from my old abode simply because it had once belonged to my sister. But you have to let things go, and allow the past to take care of itself.

It would be false to claim that my one-room lifestyle is my whole way of life, since I'm only in Dublin part-time. But it's been something of a revelation to me how rewarding it can be to simplify and embrace the change.

Ofsted has an odd sense of priority

An orthodox Jewish girls' school in North London, the Yesodey Hatorah school in Stamford Hill, enjoys an excellent academic and disciplinary record.

It is among the top 2% of schools in Britain for maths – and all progressive educationalists surely want to encourage girls to achieve high grades in maths. It is among the top 10% in English language and literature grades.

There are no disciplinary problems – no drugs, gang violence, or teenage pregnancy.

Education

And yet the Yesodey Hatorah school is now under investigation by the government's educational inspectorate authority, Ofsted, because it does not teach the pupils sex education as British educational authorities now require. It does not teach girls about masturbation, homosexuality or abortion.

The school also discourages the use of internet communication where possible. Yesodey Hatorah has received indications that Ofsted may penalise this school for failing to meet with "equality" and "diversity" criteria essentially because of its rather traditional and reticent view of sexuality.

How very modern. Excellent academic grades and good behavioural standards apparently count for little next to the urgent need for an explicit sex education instruction which parents have not requested.

Virtue of gratitude is alive and well on Dublin's buses

Here's a fascinating sociological question. Many Dublin buses have a front (entrance) door to the vehicle, and a side (exit) door too: and yet the exit side doors are seldom used or opened. Passengers usually enter and exit by the same front doors, which means that boarding passengers have to wait until others have alighted.

By contrast, on London buses with a similar vehicle design, it's a compulsory practice to enter by the front door and exit by the side, or back door – thus enhancing 'flow' of ingress and egress, and helping the bus to move off faster.



I have wondered whether this Dublin practice of only using the same door for entrance and exit might be related to the question of social trust. A Japanese-American academic, Francis Fukuyama, wrote a whole book studying social trust in different societies – and whether citizens trust one another (concluding that France was the European country in which citizens least trusted each another).

So, do Dublin bus drivers mistrust the

citizenry, keeping the exit door closed in case fare-dodgers nip in without paying? Possibly.

But someone has come up with a more benign suggestion: people on Dublin buses like to say "thank you" to the driver as they alight. And so, by leaving the bus via the front door, they are able to deliver their words of gratitude. It's not mistrust – it's a social courtesy to the man (or woman) who has the stressful job of navigating a bus through traffic.

Gratitude is a great attribute – G.K. Chesterton thought it a most vital virtue – and so I now see it practiced daily upon the Dublin buses.

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Martin Mansergh

The View



Brexit was never foreseen in Good Friday Agreement

The political history of 20th-Century Ireland is book-ended between the 1916 Easter Rising and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

These descriptions are very evidently linked symbolically to key events in the Christian calendar. Pearse's writings leading up to the Rising are suffused with religious metaphor, for which he was notably criticised in an article by F. Francis Shaw SJ for Studies written in 1966 but held back till 1972. But the Easter

Rising remains the name almost universally given to the rebellion in Dublin in 1916.

The Good Friday Agreement was the name Bertie Ahern was especially keen on for the 1998 accord, both because of its reference back to the Easter Rising but also because it subliminally emphasised the moral and Christian purpose of what had been agreed. The name was readily adopted by Tony Blair and President Clinton.

Others were not so keen on the religious overtones, and insist on calling it the

Belfast Agreement. This is firm editorial policy in the *Irish Times*, but is also the practice of many unionists and Northern Protestant ministers of religion, some of them always on the alert for manifestations of the influence of Rome real or imagined, in this case imagined, and in many cases more reserved in their support for the Agreement.

Other than the fact that the Agreement was concluded (it was never signed – signed copies were for souvenir purposes only) on Good Friday, April 10, 1998, there is no clear connection with the original Good Friday, and no attempt has been made to create one.

“Support for the fundamentals of the Good Friday Agreement remains overwhelming at home and abroad”

April 2018 is the month of two important anniversaries: the conscription crisis of 1918 and the Good Friday Agreement of 20 years ago. Accounts of both events tend to downplay the role and input of the Catholic Church.

The Church turned political opposition to conscription into an all-out moral crusade, uniting both with the Irish Parliamentary Party under Redmond's successor, John Dillon, and with Sinn Féin under Eamon de Valera. After the Rising itself, the conscription crisis is credited with galvanising public opinion, which resulted in the sweeping victory of Sinn Féin the following December.

John Redmond, whose death 100 years ago will be remembered in Wexford this coming Sunday in a State ceremony, which was postponed in March because of the bad weather, was always adamantly opposed to conscription, though he supported voluntary enlistment.



Redmond's denigrators never give him any credit for this, and indeed because of the party's opposition Ireland was exempted from conscription introduced for the rest of the United Kingdom in January 1916. Because of the reaction when it was attempted shortly after Redmond's death, conscription was not introduced in Northern Ireland during the Second World War. The instinctive reaction to the very suggestion is so strong that every time that a new European Treaty has to be ratified, opponents come up with the bogey of conscription to a European army. The only surprise is the number of educated people gullible enough to swallow it.

Political impasse

Notwithstanding the current political impasse over the Executive, support for the fundamentals of the Good Friday Agreement remains overwhelming at home and abroad, and not least in the European Union. The agreement obtained above all the benefits of peace for Northern Ireland and the whole island.

While the political border

remains, the physical border effectively disappeared, thanks both to the peace process and the European Single Market. No one sees a return to violence as an answer to current political difficulties, though a low-level residual remains.

There is little doubt that Brexit threw a spanner into the working of the Agreement, which assumed, as is evident from its text, British and Irish membership of the EU would continue.

So did the Church of Ireland, two-thirds of whose members live in Northern Ireland. When it published its new edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* in 2004, it included not only the Litany, but a modernized version called the Litany in contemporary language. This was used on Good Friday in St Mary's Tipperary, and included the prayer: "Bless the European Union, and draw us closer to one another in justice and freedom".

The language echoes the "ever closer union" in the preamble to the Treaty of Rome so detested by supporters of Brexit. One could not help thinking that

this version, or at least this prayer, may not be much used north of the border in a year or two's time.

The border, which runs through communities (and dioceses) not between them, is a real stumbling block for Brexit. As the DUP's Gregory Campbell MP acknowledged in a letter to the *Financial Times* on April 3, even at the height of the Troubles it could not be secured by police, military and customs.

That fact was behind the formalisation of the Common Travel Area in 1952, after Ireland became a Republic and left the Commonwealth, and its maintenance after restrictions on Commonwealth immigration were introduced in 1961. Otherwise, British citizens (i.e. Unionists) would have been among those who had to be stopped to show identity at ports and airports in Great Britain, and, as we know, that would not be acceptable to them.

Weaknesses

One of the biggest weaknesses in the case for Brexit has been the failure of its protagonists to demonstrate in tangible terms the economic benefits that will flow from the freedom to conclude all those fantastic(al) bilateral trade deals with far-flung countries as a substitute for more restricted access to the large EU market on the doorstep.

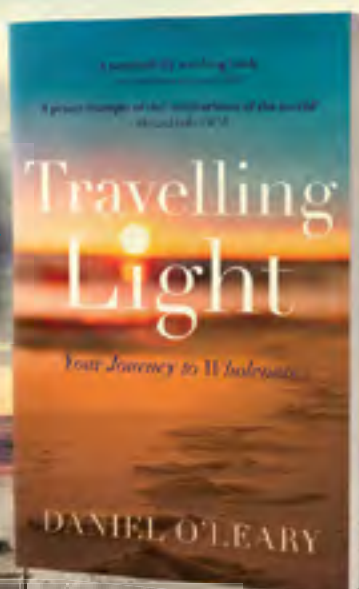
Even Harold Macmillan and Margaret Thatcher understood that Commonwealth markets would not be nearly sufficient to sustain prosperity, so what has changed since?

It may be that the uncertainties of Brexit will have to be resolved and the exceptional hold that the DUP have over the British Government cease, before power-sharing in Northern Ireland resumes. The new factor in the situation is that the option of a united Ireland will in future be bound up with the question of the North rejoining the EU.

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10 horrible things that will happen if abortion-on-demand is legalised

Dear Fellow Pro-Life Catholic,

My name is David Manly and I'm coming to you on behalf of Family & Life, Ireland's oldest and largest pro-life organisation. I'm going to be exceptionally blunt. Here goes...

Abortion-on-demand will kick down the door on the 25th of May unless we act now.

Here's what to expect if we lose this referendum...

1) Destruction of the family will accelerate. Ireland's history as a country of strong, loving families will be on the way out.

And that's just for openers. Abortion-on-demand will also bring this...

2) Some babies will survive abortion and be born alive. They will be left to die. Their bodies will be disposed of as "medical waste."

3) Some women will be injured and maimed by abortion "doctors," then rushed to overcrowded emergency departments where patients already wait on trolleys.

Hold on, there is more...

4) Abortion businesses will move into Ireland from abroad.

5) Powerful elites will help the abortion industry avoid unwelcome scrutiny.

6) Abortion will be advertised as a "compassionate solution" to a crisis pregnancy.

And I'm not done yet...

7) Abortion "clinics" will pop up in Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway.

8) Babies with disabilities will be singled out as prime abortion targets.

9) Pharmacies will display and sell abortion pills as over-the-counter "medicine."

Plus there is this

10) Children will grow up thinking that abortion is normal. When children start believing that, Ireland will have fallen into a culture of abortion, probably never to recover.

Immediate action is required - here it is...

Working with other pro-life organisations, Family & Life has 1,600 canvassers going door-to-door. We hold public meetings almost nightly. We're reaching over 600,000 people online every week. Family & Life billboards are on the road 16 hours a day. Our speakers regularly appear at public forums and on TV and radio.

Family & Life has brought a team from Poland to campaign among Poles in Ireland who have become Irish citizens plus we have a full-time organiser in England working to bring Irish pro-lifers home to vote in the referendum.

But that's not enough! If we stop now, we will lose this referendum and Ireland will have the most liberal abortion laws in all of Europe. So here's what must be done immediately and what it will cost...

• **€100,000** is required to print leaflets for our canvassers to leave with voters

• Another **€100,000** is needed now for more billboards, beer mats, bathroom advertising and an even larger digital campaign.

• **€45,000** is required to pay additional staff around the country.

These are last-minute campaign essentials. If we drop the ball, I can tell you what will happen in three short words: **Abortion on demand.**

That threat requires a last-minute financial sacrifice from me, you and every other pro-lifer! And I'm asking for your support right now because we have very little time left for essential last-minute campaigning.

"David, how much should I send today?"

- If you can send €50 right now, then I'm asking you to sacrifice and make it €75 instead.
- Is €100 the amount you're thinking of sending now? If so, I'm asking you to find a way to rush €150 instead. Better yet, double the €100 you might be considering and make your cheque or credit card donation for €200.
- My wife and I have sent our cheque for €250. Will you match our gift and send €250?
- Support of €500, €1,000 and €1,500 will really help us meet the last-minute deadline. Will you send one of those amounts? Do your means allow you to send €2,500? That could be the gift that puts us over the top!

Only days left to raise essential last-minute campaign funds

Even just a day of lost campaigning could be the difference between winning and losing. So right now is the time to RUSH your last-minute help.

Abortion-on-demand is what we're staring at. May I hear from you immediately, please?

Yours for the defeat of abortion-on-demand,

David Manly

Family & Life

PS I just listed 10 horrible things that will strike Ireland if abortion-on-demand is legalised. They are the very best reasons for you to immediately give as generously as you can.

PPS Time is so short that you can call us with your vital last-minute support. The number is 01-855-2145. Whether by phone or post, please let me hear from you today!

Clip and Post This Reply TODAY!

☐ YES! I'll help keep abortion-on-demand out of Ireland with a critical last-minute campaign gift to Family & Life.

Enclosed is...

- ☐ €50 ☐ €75 ☐ €100 ☐ €150
☐ €200 ☐ €250 ☐ €500 ☐ €1,000
☐ €1,500 ☐ €2,500 ☐ Other € _____

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You can also donate by phone:
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Human beings are more than a choice – Finola Bruton

Colm Fitzpatrick

The wife of a former Taoiseach has urged voters to retain the Eighth Amendment in light of the “breath-taking” Government proposals which will put the lives of unborn babies in jeopardy.

Speaking at the Iona Institute on April 10, Finola Bruton said that repealing the constitutional provision will effectively introduce a liberal abortion regime into the country. “For the most part, this is an agenda-driven, ideologically-led, media- and youth-focused attempt to allow for the extinction of the lives of thousands and thousands of our most vulnerable human beings before they have allowed to be born,” she said.

Mrs Bruton added that the referendum is a challenge to all of society and that it requires everyone to examine their attitude towards the value of human life, noting that the current Government proposals are beyond all expectations and has disturbed many “middle-of-the-road citizens”.

“The breath-taking proposals that our legislators are envisioning,

aided and abetted by the media, are at last stirring that still small voice of conscience in many who have up to now, been slumbering in a fog of moral ambivalence and misplaced, if well intentioned, compassion.”

She also pointed out that dialogue concerning the long-term consequences of a woman having an abortion herself has been

left out of the referendum debate, despite the fact that the after-effects can be “traumatic”.

“The terrible guilt, the awful grief, the desperate if futile wish that all could be reversed. If only, they could go back. Yet, at every desperate mental and emotional turning, they are told that what they did was for the best. And more harshly, that it was their

choice.”

Mrs Bruton concluded her speech by decrying the media’s focus on procedures and political fallout concerning the referendum, rather than dealing with what the debate is essentially about “a baby, a defenceless little girl or boy, a human being whose life we believe is worth more than a mere choice”, she said.



People at a Rally for Life in Athlone.

Voters won't be 'fooled' by referendum side-tracking

Colm Fitzpatrick

People must not become distracted by irrelevant narratives which attempt to sway voters away from the reality of repealing the Eighth Amendment, a Legal Consultant to the Pro-Life Rally has warned.

Speaking at a Cork rally to retain Ireland’s constitutional protections for the unborn on April 7, lawyer Caroline Simons said that the referendum next month has nothing to do with failures in the Church, or with deaths where the media have given the impression that the cause was due to the Eighth Amendment.

“This referendum is not about the tragic death of Ann Lovett and her baby, it is not about the Kerry babies or the Tuam babies or the Magdalene laundries, it is not about the failure to see sepsis developing in Savita Halappanavar or about clerical sexual abuse. It’s not about any of these things,” she said.

“What the vote on May 25 is about, is removing the only constitutional protection that the unborn child has.”

At the rally which had estimated crowds of around 2,000 people, Ms Simons also said that the electorate will not be “fooled” by Minister for Health, Simon Harris’ suggestion that abortion up to 12 weeks in all cases was in some way being restrictive.

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11.50-12.45 MARY MCALEESE

12.45-1.55 LUNCH

2.00-2.40 MARK PATRICK HEDERMAN

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Lots of small, kind gestures make saints, writes David Quinn

A few weeks ago during a chat with a renowned Italian journalist, the Pope seemed to call the existence of Hell into doubt, or so it was reported. The journalist, Eugenio Scalfari (94), is founder of the traditionally anti-clerical newspaper, *La Repubblica*. Pope Francis has granted several interviews to Scalfari and afterwards Scalfari always reports something sensational. The Vatican then has to state that Scalfari – an atheist – is not accurately quoting the Pope.

In any event, this time Scalfari has the Pope doubting whether Hell exists. He has the Pope saying that the souls of unrepentant sinners simply “disappear”. This would, of course, contradict the words of Christ himself who emphatically confirmed the existence of Hell. This is why the Vatican had to say that Scalfari’s account of the interview is not to be taken literally.

A new papal document released on Monday shows that the Pope certainly believes in the existence of the Devil. The document, an Apostolic Exhortation, is called *Gaudete et Exsultate* (‘Rejoice and Be Glad’). It is essentially a call to holiness.

Pope Francis has repeatedly spoken about the Devil. Contrary to his soft reputation, he speaks about the Devil far more than the average priest or bishop.

Struggle

In his new Exhortation, he describes the spiritual life as “a constant struggle against the Devil, the prince of evil”.

He speaks of him as “a personal being who assails us”.

He says, “we should not think of the devil as a myth, a representation, a symbol, a figure of speech or an idea”, adding that “this mistake would lead us to let down our guard”, allowing the Devil to “destroy our lives, our families and our communities”. And, Francis might have added, the Church itself.

God is in the details



Eugenio Scalfari.

He tells us how to fight the Devil. He says we “can count on the powerful weapons that the Lord has given us: faith-filled prayer, meditation on the word of God, the celebration of Mass, Eucharistic adoration, sacramental Reconciliation, works of charity, community life, missionary outreach”.

As mentioned, we rarely hear any of this kind of thing from many of our clergy today. They do not warn us that the spiritual life is also a battle, a battle we can lose, and will lose without the grace of God. Maybe this causes us to lower our guard in the way the Pope warns against?

For the most part, though, the purpose of *Gaudete et Exsultate* is to tell ordinary Catholics that we can all be holy, that holiness is not something only a special elite consisting almost entirely of priests and religious can achieve.

“The clergy do not warn us that the spiritual life is also a battle, a battle we can lose”

In his typical, down-to-earth style, Francis gives us examples of the sort of very ordinary, day-to-day things any one of us can do on the path to holiness.

He says: “This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: ‘No, I will not speak badly of anyone’. This is a step forward in holiness.

Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness. Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness. Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step.”

“Holiness is not something that can be obtained only by special people”

The document is also full of his usual impatience with people who try to turn the Faith into an intellectual superstructure, out of reach of the comprehension of ordinary people, something only a handful can understand. He calls these people “gnostics”. They put knowledge first. ‘Gnostic’ comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning ‘knowledge’.

He also has hard words for those he calls “pelagians”, who think they can be saved through their own will and their own efforts. Pelagius was an early Church heretic who believed we did not need the grace of God to be saved.

Here again, he condemns a spiritual elitism that seems to discount ordinary people and puts holiness beyond their reach.

The Pope says: “This [new Pelagianism] finds expression in a variety of apparently unconnected ways of thinking and acting:

an obsession with the law, an absorption with social and political advantages, a punctilious concern for the Church’s liturgy, doctrine and prestige, a vanity about the ability to manage practical matters, and an excessive concern with programmes

of self-help and personal fulfilment.”

Here he slams legalists, but he also slams those who seem obsessed with the latest New Age spiritual technique. (Does he mean the likes of the Enneagram?)

Sometimes when reading

“For the most part, though, the purpose of *Gaudete et Exsultate* is to tell ordinary Catholics that we can all be holy”

Pope Francis, it’s hard to escape the impression that he is reacting against the excessively clerical and authoritarian Church of his youth in Argentina. He would have found the same thing here in Ireland.

There is lots of clericalism still around today, but almost all of the authoritarianism of the past is gone and has been replaced by a very soft, unchallenging type of religiosity that seems to dispense with almost all law. Laxism has taken over from legalism.

That said, *Gaudete et Exsultate* contains much of Pope Francis at his best. A dominant theme of his papacy is that ordinary Christians can be spiritual heroes in their ordinary day-to-day lives.

Holiness is not something that can be obtained only by special people. Ordinary people can become saints through the “small gestures” he lists. Add lots of those together and you have a saint, and that saint could well be your own mother or father.

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WMOF prayer petitions also benefit those who make them – Msgr McGuinness

Chai Brady

On the feast day of St Macartan a special liturgy was celebrated in Clogher parish and the petitions placed by thousands of families in various parishes over recent months were entrusted to the five religious orders in the diocese.

The focus was on families and the forthcoming World Meeting of Families (WMOF) to be held in Dublin in August and which will be attended by Pope Francis. The petitions of families across all the parishes of Clogher diocese will be added to the prayers of the religious communities over the coming months, before they are taken to the closing Mass of the WMOF in the Phoenix Park on August 26, which will be presided over by the Pope.

The celebration was organised jointly by the diocesan group for the WMOF, the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and the Parish of Clogher. The



Diocesan Administrator, Msgr Joseph McGuinness, presided.

The petitions were brought forward at the start of the liturgy by five families, representing different parts of the diocese.

Themes

The readings, psalms, prayer and music of the celebration reflected the themes of family and Pope Francis' exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* – the Joy of Love.

These themes were reflected in the homily of Msgr McGuinness. Following the prayers of intercession, the petitions were entrusted

to the five religious congregations: the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Louis, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Passionist Fathers and the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

“Some will speak of the longing for healing for a sick family member”

In his homily, Msgr McGuinness spoke about the petitions saying: “Each of these pieces of paper is a message of love.”

“Each one too is a unique expression of Christian faith and hope. Some will speak of the longing for healing for a sick family member or the liberation of one captive in the grip of addiction.

“Others may pray for the safety of loved ones far from home or the future success and happiness of the next

generations. Others still may yearn for the gift of forgiveness and the mending of broken relationships. What all will speak of is the love and compassion which is at the heart of the families which make up our Christian community.”

He added that although the prayers were made for the benefit of others, they also bring blessing to those who wrote them.

“For in taking time and giving thought, we nurture the gift of love within ourselves. These simple acts of kindness and compassion make us more truly God's chosen race, his saints. They make us better people.”



Parishioners at Clogher parish celebrate the feast day of St Macartan.



Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran promotes Family Picnic Fun Day with families.

Elphin gears up for Family Picnic Fun Day

Bishop Kevin Doran is inviting families across the 37 parishes of the Diocese of Elphin to a family picnic fun day in Lough Key Forest Park, Boyle on Sunday April 22. The celebration is part of diocesan preparations for the World Meeting of Families which will take place this August.

Speaking at the event launch at the Forest Park Bishop Doran said: “This is a celebration of family in an atmosphere of fun, sharing and friendship. Families of other religious traditions and of none are our neighbours and friends and I want them to feel most welcome on this family day. The day will begin at 1pm and continue until 6pm with an official opening at 2.30pm.

Picnic

Bishop Doran went on to say: “Lough Key Forest Park is a really beautiful location...a family picnic in the scenic location of Lough Key Forest Park is an opportunity for the wider family in the diocese to come together. To eat together, to renew and build

friendships. The surroundings of Lough Key gives another moment to think about the environment and how we care for it.”

There will be face painting, dance workshops and outdoor games to play. Musicians, singers and choirs will share their gifts and create a family atmosphere. Families may choose to do some of the walks around the park and gain some insight into the history of Lough Key Forest Park. An opportunity will also be available to explore the beauty of creation and consider how we can care for

our common home. They can also discover the Family Cube, a resource to help families on their journey of faith and love.

Admission to the event is free, with free parking. Families are encouraged to bring their own picnic or avail of Lough Key's on-site catering. BBQ's are permitted. Families are also invited to bring a bit of extra food for a sharing table.

i Please note that the usual charges apply for Lough Key Forest Park's own activities. You can find out more about the family picnic fun day on www.elphindiocese.ie

Please contact World Meeting of Families correspondent Chai Brady with photos, news or articles relating to your parish or diocese's WMOF2018 preparations and events for inclusion in the weekly update:

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‘Rejoice and be glad’ – Pope Francis on the call to holiness

The new apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis *Gaudete et Exsultate* (rejoice and be glad) was published this week. Here we offer bitesize extracts from the 22,000-word document

CHAPTER ONE THE CALL TO HOLINESS

THE SAINTS WHO ENCOURAGE AND ACCOMPANY US

4. The saints now in God's presence preserve their bonds of love and communion with us. The Book of Revelation attests to this when it speaks of the intercession of the martyrs: "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, 'O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge?'" (6:9-10). Each of us can say: "Surrounded, led and guided by the friends of God... I do not have to carry alone what, in truth, I could never carry alone. All the saints of God are there to protect me, to sustain me and to carry me".

5. The processes of beatification and canonisation recognise the signs of heroic virtue, the sacrifice of one's life in martyrdom, and certain cases where a life is constantly offered for others, even until death. This shows an exemplary imitation of Christ, one worthy of the admiration of the faithful. We can think, for example, of Blessed Maria Gabriella Sagheddu, who offered her life for the unity of Christians.

THE SAINTS 'NEXT DOOR'

6. Nor need we think only of those already beatified and canonised. The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people, for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness" (*Lumen Gentium* #9).

In salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individ-

ual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people.

7. I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile.

In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant. Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in our midst, reflect God's presence. We might call them "the middle class of holiness".

“Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church”

8. Let us be spurred on by the signs of holiness that the Lord shows us through the humblest members of that people which "shares also in Christ's prophetic office, spreading abroad a living witness to him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity" (*Lumen Gentium* #12). We should consider the fact that, as St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross suggests, real history is made by so many of them. As she writes: "The greatest figures of prophecy and sanctity step forth out of the darkest night. But for the most part, the formative stream of the mystical life remains invisible. Certainly the most decisive turning points in world history are substantially co-determined by souls whom no history book ever mentions. And we will only find out about those souls to whom we owe the decisive turning points in our personal lives on the day when all that is hidden is revealed".



THE LORD CALLS

11. "Each in his or her own way" the Council says. We should not grow discouraged before examples of holiness that appear unattainable. There are some testimonies that may prove helpful and inspiring, but that we are not meant to copy, for that could even lead us astray from the one specific path that the Lord has in mind for us. The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them. We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness.

12. Within these various forms, I would stress too that the 'genius of woman' is seen in feminine styles of holiness, which are an essential means of reflecting God's holiness in this world. Indeed, in times when women tended to be most ignored or overlooked, the Holy Spirit raised up saints whose attractiveness produced new spiritual vigour and important reforms in the Church. We can mention St Hildegard of Bingen, St Bridget, St Catherine of Siena, St Teresa of Avila and St Thérèse of Lisieux. But I think too of all those unknown or forgotten women who, each in her own way, sustained and transformed families and communities by the power of their witness.

14. To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordi-

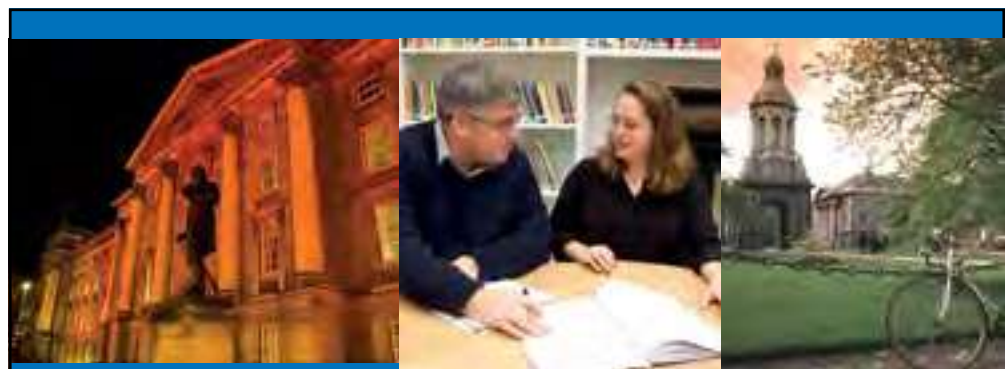
nary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case.

We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness

in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves. Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you married? Be holy by

loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church. Do you work for a living? Be holy by labouring with integrity and

» Continued on Page 12



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'Certainly there can be no love without

skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a parent or grandparent? Be holy by patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you in a position of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain.

15. Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. Gal 5:22-23). When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: "Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better". In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God's love, "like a bride bedecked with jewels" (Is 61:10).

16. This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: "No, I will not speak badly of anyone". This is a step forward in holiness. Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness.

Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness. Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step.

26. It is not healthy to love silence while fleeing interaction with others, to want peace and quiet while avoiding activity, to seek prayer while disdaining service. Everything can be accepted and integrated into our life in this world, and become a part of our path to holiness. We are called to be contemplatives even in the midst of action, and to grow in holiness by responsibly and generously carrying out our proper mission.

27. Could the Holy Spirit urge us to carry out a mission and then ask us to abandon it, or not fully engage in it, so as to preserve our inner peace? Yet



St Teresa of Calcutta.

there are times when we are tempted to relegate pastoral engagement or commitment in the world to second place, as if these were 'distractions' along the path to growth in holiness and interior peace. We can forget that life does not have a mission, but is a mission.

30. The same distractions that are omnipresent in today's world also make us tend to absolutise our free time, so that we can give ourselves over completely to the devices that provide us with entertainment or ephemeral pleasures.

As a result, we come to resent our mission, our commitment grows slack, and our generous and ready spirit of service begins to flag. This denatures our spiritual experience. Can any spiritual fervour be sound when it dwells alongside sloth in evangelisation or in service to others?

32. Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you, and you will be faithful to your deepest self. To depend on God sets us free from every form of enslavement and leads us to recognise our great dignity.

34. Do not be afraid to set your sights higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace. For in the words of León Bloy, when all is said and done, "the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint".

CHAPTER TWO
TWO SUBTLE
ENEMIES OF
HOLINESS

41. When somebody has an

answer for every question, it is a sign that they are not on the right road. They may well be false prophets, who use religion for their own purposes, to promote their own psychological or intellectual theories. God infinitely transcends us; he is full of surprises. We are not the ones to determine when and how we will encounter him; the exact times and places of that encounter are not up to us. Someone who wants everything to be clear and sure presumes to control God's transcendence.

“Could the Holy Spirit urge us to carry out a mission and then ask us to abandon it?”

42. Nor can we claim to say where God is not, because God is mysteriously present in the life of every person, in a way that he himself chooses, and we cannot exclude this by our presumed certainties. Even when someone's life appears completely wrecked, even when we see it devastated by vices or addictions, God is present there. If we let ourselves be guided by the Spirit rather than our own preconceptions, we can and must try to find the Lord in every human life.

This is part of the mystery that a gnostic mentality cannot accept, since it is beyond its control.

45. A dangerous confusion can arise. We can think that because we know something, or are able to explain it in certain terms, we are already saints, perfect and better than the 'ignorant masses'. Saint John Paul II warned of the temptation on the part of those in the Church who are more highly educated "to feel somehow superior to other members of the faithful". In

point of fact, what we think we know should always motivate us to respond more fully to God's love.

Indeed, "you learn so as to live: theology and holiness are inseparable".

48. The same power that the gnostics attributed to the intellect, others now began to attribute to the human will, to personal effort. This was the case with the pelagians and semi-pelagians. Now it was not intelligence that took the place of mystery and grace, but our human will. It was forgotten that everything "depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy" (Rom 9:16) and that "he first loved us" (cf. 1 Jn 4:19).

49. Those who yield to this pelagian or semi-pelagian mindset, even though they speak warmly of God's grace, "ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style". When some of them tell the weak that all things can be accomplished with God's grace, deep down they tend to give the idea that all things are possible by the human will, as if it were something pure, perfect, all-powerful, to which grace is then added. They fail to realise that "not everyone can do everything", and that in this life human weaknesses are not healed completely and once for all by grace. In every case, as St Augustine taught, God commands you to do what you can and to ask for what you cannot, and indeed to pray to him humbly: "Grant what you command, and command what you will".

52. The Church has repeatedly taught that we are justified not by our own works or efforts, but by the grace of the Lord, who always takes the initiative. The Fathers of the Church, even before St Augustine, clearly expressed this fundamental belief. Saint John Chrysostom said that God pours into us the very source of all his gifts even before we enter into battle. St Basil the Great remarked that the faithful glory in God alone, for "they realise that they lack true justice and are justified only through faith in Christ".

54. The Catechism of the Catholic Church also reminds us that the gift of grace "surpasses the power of human intellect and will" and that "with regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man. Between God and us there is an immeasurable inequality". His friendship infinitely transcends us; we cannot buy it with our works, it can only be a gift born of his loving initiative. This invites

works of love...

us to live in joyful gratitude for this completely unmerited gift, since "after one has grace, the grace already possessed cannot come under merit". The saints avoided putting trust in their own works: "In the evening of this life, I shall appear before you empty-handed, for I do not ask you, Lord, to count my works. All our justices have stains in your sight".

“The Gospel invites us to peer into the depths of our heart, to see where we find our security in life”

57. Still, some Christians insist on taking another path, that of justification by their own efforts, the worship of the human will and their own abilities. The result is a self-centred and elitist complacency, bereft of true love. This finds expression in a variety of apparently unconnected ways of thinking and acting: an obsession with the law, an absorption with social and political advantages, a punctilious concern for the Church's liturgy, doctrine and prestige, a vanity about the ability to manage practical matters, and an excessive concern with programmes of self-help and personal fulfilment.

Some Christians spend their time and energy on these things, rather than letting themselves be led by the Spirit in the way of love, rather than being passionate about communicating the beauty and the joy of the Gospel and seeking out the lost among the immense crowds that thirst for Christ.

58. Not infrequently, contrary to the promptings of the Spirit, the life of the Church can become a museum piece or the possession of a select few. This can occur when some groups of Christians give excessive importance to certain rules, customs or ways of acting.

The Gospel then tends to be reduced and constricted, deprived of its simplicity, allure and savour. This may well be a subtle form of pelagianism, for it appears to subject the life of grace to certain human structures. It can affect groups, movements and communities, and it explains why so often they begin with an intense life in the Spirit, only to end up fossilized...or corrupt.

CHAPTER THREE IN THE LIGHT OF THE MASTER

67. The Gospel invites us to peer into the depths of our

heart, to see where we find our security in life. Usually the rich feel secure in their wealth, and think that, if that wealth is threatened, the whole meaning of their earthly life can collapse. Jesus himself tells us this in the parable of the rich fool: he speaks of a man who was sure of himself, yet foolish, for it did not dawn on him that he might die that very day (cf. Lk 12:16-21).

68. Wealth ensures nothing. Indeed, once we think we are rich, we can become so self-satisfied that we leave no room for God's word, for the love of our brothers and sisters, or for the enjoyment of the most important things in life.

In this way, we miss out on the greatest treasure of all.



St John of the Cross.

That is why Jesus calls blessed those who are poor in spirit, those who have a poor heart, for there the Lord can enter with his perennial newness.

75. The world tells us exactly the opposite: entertainment, pleasure, diversion and escape make for the good life. The worldly person ignores problems of sickness or sorrow in the family or all around him; he averts his gaze. The world has no desire to mourn; it would rather disregard painful situations, cover them up or hide them. Much energy is expended on fleeing from situations of suffering in the belief that reality can be concealed. But the cross can never be absent.

78. Jesus offers a justice other than that of the world, so often marred by petty interests and manipulated in various ways. Experience shows how easy it is to become mired in corruption, ensnared in the daily politics of *quid pro quo*, where everything becomes business. How many people suffer injustice, standing by powerlessly while others divvy up the good things of this life. Some give up fighting for real justice and opt to follow in the train of the winners. This has nothing to do with the hunger and thirst for justice that Jesus praises.

85. Certainly there can be no love without works of love, but this Beatitude reminds us that the Lord expects a commitment to our brothers and sisters that comes from the heart. For "if I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have no love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor 13:3). In Matthew's Gospel too, we see that what proceeds from the heart is what defiles a person (cf. 15:18), for from the heart come murder, theft, false witness, and other evil deeds (cf. 15:19). From the heart's intentions come the desires and the deepest decisions that determine our actions.

87. This Beatitude makes us think of the many endless situations of war in our world. Yet we ourselves are often a cause of conflict or at least of misunderstanding. For example, I may hear something about someone and I go off and repeat it. I may even embellish it the second time around and keep spreading it...and the more harm it does, the more satisfaction I seem to derive from it. The world of gossip, inhabited by negative and destructive people, does not bring peace. Such people are really the enemies of peace; in no way are they "blessed".

90. Jesus himself warns us that the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance. He reminds us how many people have been, and still are, persecuted simply because they struggle for justice, because they take seriously their commitment to God and to others. Unless we wish to sink into an obscure mediocrity, let us not long for an easy life, for "whoever would save his life will lose it" (Mt 16:25).

“The Beatitudes are not easy to live out; any attempt to do so will be viewed negatively”

91. In living the Gospel, we cannot expect that everything will be easy, for the thirst for power and worldly interests often stands in our way. Saint John Paul II noted that "a society is alienated if its forms of social organisation, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people". In such a society, politics, mass communications and economic, cultural and even religious institutions become so entangled as to become an obstacle to authentic human and social development. As a result, the Beatitudes are not easy to live out; any attempt to do so will be viewed negatively, regarded with suspi-

cion, and met with ridicule.

94. Persecutions are not a reality of the past, for today too we experience them, whether by the shedding of blood, as is the case with so many contemporary martyrs, or by more subtle means, by slander and lies. Jesus calls us blessed when people "utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account" (Mt 5:11). At other times, persecution can take the form of gibes that try to caricature our faith and make us seem ridiculous.

Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness.

96. Holiness, then, is not about swooning in mystic rapture. As St John Paul II said: "If we truly start out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified".⁷⁹ The text of Matthew 25:35-36 is "not a simple invitation to charity: it is a page of Christology which sheds a ray of light on the mystery of Christ". In this call to recognise him in the poor and the suffering, we see revealed the very heart of Christ, his deepest feelings and choices, which every saint seeks to imitate.

100. I regret that ideologies lead us at times to two

harmful errors. On the one hand, there is the error of those Christians who separate these Gospel demands from their personal relationship with the Lord, from their interior union with him, from openness to his grace. Christianity thus becomes a sort of NGO stripped of the luminous mysticism so evident in the lives of St Francis of Assisi, St Vincent de Paul, St Teresa of Calcutta and many others. For these great saints, mental prayer, the love of God and the reading of the Gospel in no way detracted from their passionate and effective commitment to their neighbours; quite the opposite.

101. The other harmful ideological error is found in those who find suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist. Or they relativise it, as if there are other more important matters, or the only thing that counts is one particular ethical issue or cause that they themselves defend.

Our defence of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred,

however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection.

We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some revel, spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in abject poverty.

104. We may think that we give glory to God only by our worship and prayer, or simply by following certain ethical norms. It is true that the primacy belongs to our relationship with God, but we cannot forget that the ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others.

Prayer is most precious, for it nourishes a daily commitment to love. Our worship becomes pleasing to God when we devote ourselves to living generously, and allow God's gift, granted in prayer, to be shown in our concern for our brothers and sisters.

108. Hedonism and consumerism can prove our downfall, for when we are obsessed with our own pleasure, we

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» Continued from Page 13

end up being all too concerned about ourselves and our rights, and we feel a desperate need for free time to enjoy ourselves.

We will find it hard to feel and show any real concern for those in need, unless we are able to cultivate a certain simplicity of life, resisting the feverish demands of a consumer society, which leave us impoverished and unsatisfied, anxious to have it all now. Similarly, when we allow ourselves to be caught up in superficial information, instant communication and virtual reality, we can waste precious time and become indifferent to the suffering flesh of our brothers and sisters.

Yet even amid this whirlwind of activity, the Gospel continues to resound, offering us the promise of a different life, a healthier and happier life.

CHAPTER FOUR SIGNS OF HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD

112. The first of these great signs is solid grounding in the God who loves and sustains us. This source of inner strength enables us to per-

severe amid life's ups and downs, but also to endure hostility, betrayal and failings on the part of others. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8:31): this is the source of the peace found in the saints. Such inner strength makes it possible for us, in our fast-paced, noisy and aggressive world, to give a witness of holiness through patience and constancy in doing good. It is a sign of the fidelity born of love, for those who put their faith in God (*pístis*) can also be faithful to others (*pistós*).

They do not desert others in bad times; they accompany them in their anxiety and distress, even though doing so may not bring immediate satisfaction.

115. Christians too can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet and the various forums of digital communication. Even in Catholic media, limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and respect for the good name of others can be abandoned. The result is a dangerous dichotomy, since things can be said there that would be unaccep-

table in public discourse, and people look to compensate for their own discontent by lashing out at others.

It is striking that at times, in claiming to uphold the other commandments, they completely ignore the eighth, which forbids bearing false witness or lying, and ruthlessly vilify others. Here we see how the unguarded tongue, set on fire by hell, sets all things ablaze (cf. Jas 3:6).

“Christians can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet...”

117. It is not good when we look down on others like heartless judges, lording it over them and always trying to teach them lessons. That is itself a subtle form of violence. St John of the Cross proposed a different path: "Always prefer to be taught by all, rather than to desire teaching even the least of all".

And he added advice on how to keep the devil at bay: "Rejoice in the good of others as if it were your own, and desire that they be given precedence over you in all things; this you should do wholeheartedly. You will thereby overcome evil with good, banish the devil, and possess a happy heart. Try to practise this all the more with those who least attract you. Realise that if you do not train yourself in this way, you will not attain real charity or make any progress in it".

122. Far from being timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humour. Though completely realistic, they radiate a positive and hopeful spirit. The Christian life is "joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17), for "the necessary result of the love of charity is joy; since every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved... the effect of charity is joy".

Having received the beautiful gift of God's word, we embrace it "in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess 1:6). If we allow the Lord to draw us out of our shell and change our lives, then we can do as St Paul tells us: "Rejoice in the Lord always; I say it again, rejoice!" (Phil 4:4).

128. This is not the joy held out by today's individualistic and consumerist culture. Consumerism only bloats the heart. It can offer occasional and passing pleasures, but not joy. Here I am speaking of a joy lived in communion, which shares and is shared, since "there is more happiness in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20:35) and "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor



9:7). Fraternal love increases our capacity for joy, since it makes us capable of rejoicing in the good of others: "Rejoice with those who rejoice" (Rom 12:15). "We rejoice when we are weak and you are strong" (2 Cor 13:9). On the other hand, when we "focus primarily on our own needs, we condemn ourselves to a joyless existence".

137. Complacency is seductive; it tells us that there is no point in trying to change things, that there is nothing we can do, because this is the way things have always been and yet we always manage to survive. By force of habit we no longer stand up to evil. We "let things be", or as others have decided they ought to be. Yet let us allow the Lord to rouse us from our torpor, to free us from our inertia. Let us rethink our usual way of doing things; let us open our eyes and ears, and above all our hearts, so as not to be complacent about things as they are, but unsettled by the living and effective word of the risen Lord.

138. We are inspired to act by the example of all those priests, religious, and laity who devote themselves to proclamation and to serving others with great fidelity, often at the risk of their lives and certainly at the cost of their comfort. Their testimony reminds us that, more than bureaucrats and functionaries, the Church needs passionate missionaries, enthusiastic about sharing true life. The saints surprise us, they confound us, because by their lives they urge us to abandon a dull and dreary mediocrity.

149. For this to happen, however, some moments spent alone with God are also necessary. For St Teresa of Avila, prayer "is nothing but friendly intercourse, and frequent solitary converse, with him who we know loves us". I would insist that this is true not only for a privileged few, but for all of us, for "we all have need of this silence, filled with the presence of him who is adored". Trust-filled prayer is a response of a heart open to encountering God face to face, where all is peaceful and the quiet voice of the Lord can be heard in the midst of silence.

150. In that silence, we can discern, in the light of the

Spirit, the paths of holiness to which the Lord is calling us.

Otherwise, any decisions we make may only be window-dressing that, rather than exalting the Gospel in our lives, will mask or submerge it. For each disciple, it is essential to spend time with the Master, to listen to his words, and to learn from him always. Unless we listen, all our words will be nothing but useless chatter.

CHAPTER FIVE SPIRITUAL COMBAT, VIGILANCE AND DISCERNMENT

160. We will not admit the existence of the devil if we insist on regarding life by empirical standards alone, without a supernatural understanding. It is precisely the conviction that this malign power is present in our midst that enables us to understand how evil can at times have so much destructive force. True enough, the biblical authors had limited conceptual resources for expressing certain realities, and in Jesus' time epilepsy, for example, could easily be confused with demonic possession. Yet this should not lead us to an oversimplification that would conclude that all the cases related in the Gospel had to do with psychological disorders and hence that the devil does not exist or is not at work.

“The opposite can happen, when the forces of evil induce us not to change, to leave things as they are”

He is present in the very first pages of the Scriptures, which end with God's victory over the devil. Indeed, in leaving us the Our Father, Jesus wanted us to conclude by asking the Father to "deliver us from evil". That final word does not refer to evil in the abstract; a more exact translation would be "the evil one". It indicates a personal being who assails us. Jesus taught us to ask daily for deliverance from him, lest his power pre-

vail over us.

167. The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today, since contemporary life offers immense possibilities for action and distraction, and the world presents all of them as valid and good. All of us, but especially the young, are immersed in a culture of zapping. We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend.

168. This is all the more important when some novelty presents itself in our lives. Then we have to decide whether it is new wine brought by God or an illusion created by the spirit of this world or the spirit of the devil.

At other times, the opposite can happen, when the forces of evil induce us not to change, to leave things as they are, to opt for a rigid resistance to change. Yet that would be to block the working of the Spirit. We are free, with the freedom of Christ.

173. Naturally, this attitude of listening entails obedience to the Gospel as the ultimate standard, but also to the Magisterium that guards it, as we seek to find in the treasury of the Church whatever is most fruitful for the "today" of salvation. It is not a matter of applying rules or repeating what was done in the past, since the same solutions are not valid in all circumstances and what was useful in one context may not prove so in another.

The discernment of spirits liberates us from rigidity, which has no place before the perennial 'today' of the risen Lord. The Spirit alone can penetrate what is obscure and hidden in every situation, and grasp its every nuance, so that the newness of the Gospel can emerge in another light.

175. When, in God's presence, we examine our life's journey, no areas can be off limits. In all aspects of life we can continue to grow and offer something greater to God, even in those areas we find most difficult. We need, though, to ask the Holy Spirit to liberate us and to expel the fear that makes us ban him from certain parts of our lives. God asks everything of us, yet he also gives everything to us. He does not want to enter our lives to cripple or diminish them, but to bring them to fulfilment.

Discernment, then, is not a solipsistic self-analysis or a form of egotistical introspection, but an authentic process of leaving ourselves behind in order to approach the mystery of God, who helps us to carry out the mission to which he has called us, for the good of our brothers and sisters.

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Events deadline is a week in advance of publication

Columbans celebrate in Galway



GALWAY: Columbans celebrate the centenary of the founding of a Missionary Society of St Columban community by Fr Edward Galvin and Fr John Blowick in Shrule.



NIGERIA: Sr Dolores Kearney, a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA) and a native of Plumbridge, Co. Tyrone, pictured with Sr Assumpta Mordi, Provincial Leader of the OLA Province of Nigeria, following a celebration to mark Sr Dolores' Golden Jubilee in Ibadan.



CORK: Canon Thomas Browne PE holds the Paschal candle at the solemn Easter Vigil Mass at St Mary's Parish Church, Youghal. Fr David Herlihy PP performed the ceremony of the blessing of the fire and preparation of the candle outside the church as members of the congregation gathered to watch. The congregation lit smaller candles before proceeding into the church by candlelight.



DUBLIN: Fr Martin Cosgrove, moderator of Ballyroan, Rathfarnham and Churchtown parish grouping, organised a Son Rise Ecumenical celebration with Church of Ireland neighbouring parishes, led by Canon Adrienne Galligan at Mount Pelier Hill on Easter morning 6.15am.



DUBLIN: Winners of the under-16s Division 2 Dublin basketball final from St Mary's Secondary School in Baldoyle, pose with coaches Robert Fennell and Denise Morgan, (back) Robert Fennell, Amy Reidy, Molly Butler, Sarah Keenan, Gemma Keenan, Jessica Carroll, Niamh Cummins and Denise Morgan, (front) Fasih Mebuin, Aicha Freeman, Caitlin O' Brien, Cody Fitzsimons, Shauna Benson and Nikita Corrigan.

ANTRIM

The 'Amoris: Let's Talk Family,' a six-session programme, will continue in Clonard Monastery, Belfast, from 7.30-9pm, on April 17, 24 and May 1, 22, 29. To book your place, phone 00 44 2890 445950 or email reception@clonard.com.

ARMAGH

Eucharistic Adoration in St Malachy's Church, Armagh daily from 6am to midnight, and all night on Wednesdays. Adoration chapel, Edwards St, Lurgan, adoration weekdays, 9am-9pm.

CLARE

Divine Mercy Chaplet prayer group meets every Tuesday in Ennis Cathedral at 8pm in the chapter room. There will also be a short *Lectio Divina* after the chaplet. Celebration of new life and blessing of expectant parents in Ennis Cathedral Thursday, April 26 at 8pm.

CORK

A pro-life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month at the Poor Clares monastery, College Road, at 7.30pm. Kathy Sinnott, former MEP and Alan Daveron, Solicitor will share their thoughts on the critical importance of retaining the Eighth Amendment in our Constitution in Bridge Tavern Room at The Parkway Hotel in Dunmanway on Friday April 13 at 7.30pm.

DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Monday to Friday, 8am-noon and 3-9pm.

DUBLIN

Life to the Full (Jn 10: 10) Book Club, Thursdays in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay 7-8.30pm. Join others in their 20s and 30s to meditate, share and discuss life and Faith. Resumes April 12. Email st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie

'Future Families: Challenges for Faith and Society' on Saturday April 14 at Hilton Hotel, Charlemont Place, organised by the Association of Catholics in Ireland in preparation for the World Meeting of Families. Opening and welcome at 11am.

Mass commemorating the 74th anniversary of Venerable Edel Quinn in St Saviour's Church, Dominic Street on May 12 at 6pm with rosary prayed before Mass.

Pro-life afternoon on Sunday April 15 in Convent Disciples of Divine Master Newtownpark Ave/Bray Road with speakers Dr Rita O'Connor from Human Life International and David Quinn from the Iona Institute beginning at 2.30pm and concluding with Mass and Benediction at 5pm.

Our Lady of Knock prayer meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month in St Gabriel's Nursing Home, Glenayle Road, Raheny, D5, from 8pm-9pm. All welcome.

FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm. All welcome. www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly.

KILDARE

Leixlip Parish is hosting 'Amoris', a six-session programme to reflect on our experience of family based on *The Joy of Love*. It will continue in Our Lady's Parish Centre, Leixlip, on April 18 at 8pm.

KILKENNY

First Saturday Devotions, Adoration, Rosary, Divine Mercy and Prayer for Healing from 7-9pm in St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy. Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday at 5pm in St Patrick's Church, College Road, Kilkenny (opposite St Kieran's College).

LIMERICK

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm, Crecora on Thursdays, following morning Mass until 12noon and from 6-10pm, and in Mungret Church on Wednesdays, from 10am to 12noon.

LOUTH

A Centre Prayer Meeting is held at Mount Oliver (near Ballymascarnlon, Dundalk) every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm. Contact 00353 863623361 from NI or 086 3623361 from Rol.

MEATH

Trim Prayer Group meeting every Thursday evening, 8-9pm, in Trim Parish Centre. Christ the King Prayer Group, Enfield, meeting every Monday evening, 7.30-8.30pm, Enfield Parish Centre

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday April 20 and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085-7746763.

ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday 10-11am and Thursday 8-10pm. Also at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday 7.30-8.30pm.

TYRONE

Life in Spirit Seminars in Sacred Heart Church in Omagh at 7pm every Thursday from April 12 until May 17 with unique speakers and themes each evening organised by the Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group.

WICKLOW

The Glencree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glencree on the First Saturday of every month.

Pilgrimage yesterday and today

Pilgrimage and Spiritual Tourism in Ireland: this was the title of a seminar hosted some weeks back by Waterford Institute of Technology. The title is an intriguing one.

Some will balk at the very idea of 'spiritual tourism'! Some will apply the 'New Age' label and consign the concept to an appropriate receptacle. Some will see it as yet another incursion by commercial interests into the domain of religion.

But not all responses need be negative. To choose a refreshing break in a religious context can become a significant spiritual choice. Entrepreneurs may hear 'spiritual tourism' as a development opportunity in a niche market. Anyone who – like myself at Lough Derg – has to make ends meet in the business side of matching pilgrim needs and the costs of staff and maintenance cannot neglect the financial and marketing aspect of the work.

From Canterbury to Santiago... and beyond

When Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, his middle-English vocabulary did not include tourism, spiritual or otherwise. But the delight of that famous collection of stories springs in no small measure from the range of personalities and motivation among Chaucer's pilgrims. We can find the company that set out for Canterbury on an April day in the 14th Century recreated through the ages in almost any pilgrim setting.

The recent astonishing revival of interest in the Camino of Santiago bears witness to the significance of pilgrimage as a human phenomenon. The interaction with those one meets along the route and the reflections which arise from the experience have generated a vast array of books and blogs that record and ponder the unexpected blessings that await those who feel and answer the call of the Camino. These in turn promote further interest in the Camino and in other, lesser known routes.



has significance. And what happens in the heart of the pilgrim may be of deeper meaning than the external and observable events along the journey and at the goal, and may not be easily accountable even to the pilgrim him / herself.

The pilgrimage experience

It should hardly then come as a surprise that pilgrimage studies is beginning to emerge as an academic discipline. Pilgrimage has been defined as 'a meaningful journey to a place of spiritual significance' and the practice is almost as old as recorded history. This definition highlights both journey and destination.

Pilgrimage is not all about 'getting there'. What happens along the way also

Pilgrimage in Ireland

Here in Ireland, it is now 21 years since the Heritage Council set up the Pilgrim Paths project, initially involving seven historical routes scattered around the country.

The initiative engaged with local communities in beginning to develop a network of walking routes along medieval pilgrim paths. National Pilgrim Paths emerged as a volunteer organisation in 2013 (see

www.pilgrimpath.ie) and a National Pilgrim Paths Day followed in 2014. This year it was a week-long event with 12 pilgrim paths in the network. The paths are of course open outside the focus week. Five of the paths now offer a stamp on a pilgrim passport, following the tradition of Santiago di Compostella, and on three of these there is the possibility of having 25 km recognised as part of the official Camino itself.

Pilgrimage was strong in the Irish Christian tradition, especially in the Celtic monastic ambit. There was little of the tourist in this context! For most it was a penitential undertaking, especially with the hardships of travel at that time.

Monasteries welcomed

pilgrims and offered them hospitality, in the spirit of the Gospel. Columbanus, Fursey and others understood their radical choice to leave their homeland permanently to spread the name of Christ as a pilgrimage – a '*peregrinatio pro Christo*'.

Pilgrimage and the heart

We began with the WIT conference on pilgrimage and spiritual tourism. I suggest we do well not to take too doctrinaire an attitude on what we think might 'qualify' as pilgrimage.

Addressing pilgrimage organisers themselves on pilgrimage to Rome in the context of the 2016 Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis had this to say: "It would be a mistake to think that the person who goes on pilgrimage is living not a personal spirituality, but a 'crowd' spirituality. In reality, the pilgrim brings, with him or her, his or her own story, their own faith, the light and the shadow of their own life. Each one carries in their heart a special desire and a particular prayer."

I cannot speak for Knock, Croagh Patrick or the many more local pilgrimage destinations in Ireland including the Pilgrim Paths initiative, but I can say that our experience at Lough Derg very much bears out the Pope's insight. As its traditional title, St Patrick's Purgatory, indicates, Lough Derg in the past was very deeply identified with penance.

Nowadays, only a minority come with penance as

their key purpose. A recent survey online indicated that many of our pilgrims name the heart of their pilgrimage experience as giving thanks, finding peace and tranquility, and experiencing continuity in faith with family members who made the pilgrimage over the generations.

A call to answer

Columbanus wrote movingly of the entire Christian life as a pilgrimage. Ignatius of Loyola, in his lifestory dictated a short time before he died, refers to himself throughout in the third person simply as 'the pilgrim'. The pilgrimage of life takes many forms. The real destination is an interior one.

As an early Irish text puts it: "O pilgrim bound for Rome, you will not find there the God you seek unless you bring him with you."

To quote again from Pope Francis' address to pilgrimage organisers: "Whoever they may be, young or old, rich or poor, sick or perhaps a curious tourist, may they find a worthy welcome, because in each one there beats a heart that seeks God, sometimes without them being fully aware of it."

The Irish Catholic Pilgrimage supplement, now an annual feature, offers a wide range of possibilities to those hearts that seek God, as pilgrims or as spiritual tourists. I hope that you may find something here that will speak to your heart – and the opportunity to follow the call you hear.

Fr La Flynn,
Prior, Lough Derg.



Discover a world of hidden gems, beautiful churches, sacred art and a vibrant programme of events to stir the soul!

Pilgrimage at Knock is regarded as a personal experience and you are invited to explore at your own pace, in your own time. The beautiful grounds, gardens and meandering pathways within the Shrine offer quiet space for reflection, prayer and contemplation.

Organised pilgrimages will place every weekend throughout the season in addition to Mini-Vigils on the first Friday of each month and a continuation of daily Guided Prayer sessions & Spiritual Accompaniment, Stations of the Cross, Anointing of the Sick and Exposition. Healing and Reconciliation are an important part of the pilgrimage journey with many taking the opportunity to attend Confessions which are available on a daily basis.

The history of Knock can be explored with a visit to the award-winning Knock Museum. The Religious & Spiritual Bookshop offers an excellent range of contemporary titles as well as books on Irish Saints, Theology and more. Families and young people are welcomed at 'The HUB', a bright, fun place for teens and young people.



" People are searching for ways to reach out to God and to connect with him. Knock Shrine can facilitate people in that search and offers many opportunities for worship and prayer, for stillness and peace in our souls – all so necessary in our busy and sometimes hectic world. "

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pilgrimage Season:
Sunday 29th April
– Sunday 14th October

Knock Shrine has a vibrant and varied calendar of events offering concerts, spiritual retreats, workshops, pilgrimages and themed days in addition to daily Masses and Ceremonies.

'Quiet Days for Busy People' Day Retreat

Saturday 28 April

New Life!

The whole of creation reveals God to us, we just need to slow down and become aware of his presence with us.

11am-3pm in the Prayer Guidance Centre, Cost €30 includes lunch
Bookings: T (094) 93 75355 E: faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie

5th Anniversary of Donal Walsh

Friday 11th May

This year marks the 5th Anniversary of Donal Walsh the Kerry teenager who touched so many lives, with his powerful message live life! We are planning a special day on May 11th for all TY's and 5th Year students to celebrate his life and his message. The day will offer a variety of events for students, followed by a very special Mass in the Basilica at 12:30. The day promises to be an inspiring experience and a chance for students to come together from all over Ireland and reflect on what it means to Live Life!

'Family Day' at Knock Shrine

Sunday 19 August

A Day of Celebration & Activities for Families

Come and enjoy a day full of music, dance, art and crafts, games, fun workshops and much more for all ages. Activities will take place in various locations throughout the Shrine. For more details, contact the Youth Ministry (094) 93 75321

E: knockyouthministry@yahoo.ie

Scripture Summer School

13-17 June

Listen to what scripture is saying to the churches! As hearers of the Word, we explore the Word of God, with open hearts, open minds and open lives. The week will be facilitated by Fr Kieran O'Mahoney, Jessie Rogers and Sean Goan, who will offer three days to clergy and three days open to all. They will be focusing on St Mark's Gospel.

Bookings: T (094) 93 75355 E: faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie

Jesuit Week/ Week of Ignatian Spirituality

23- 31 July

Your Life, Your Story, Your Pathway to God

Prayer is about listening as well as speaking. It doesn't always do away with the struggles of life, but it helps us to see that the One who created us wants to guide us and to give us courage and a sense of peace. This is what the Jesuit way of prayer is all about. This week will be facilitated by Eddie Cosgrove SJ, Terry Howard SJ & Dermot Mansfield SJ.

Bookings: T (094) 93 75355 E: faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie

To find out more about all of the services available at Knock as well as upcoming events and pilgrimages, visit: www.knockshrine.ie

Watch Ceremonies: www.knockshrine.ie/watch



Come home to the love of God's family on Lough Derg

Cross over – reclaim your family roots here, or put down some new ones and connect with the spirituality of this ever new pilgrimage island.

PILGRIMAGE SEASON 2018

ONE DAY RETREATS

One Day Retreats on Lough Derg, now in their 27th Year, offer an opportunity for quiet and respite in the midst of a busy life.

MAY - Sat 5th, Sun 6th, Mon 7th, Tues 8th, Sat 12th, Sun 13th, Tues 15th, Sun 20th, Tues 22nd, Sat 26th, Sun 27th, Mon 28th

AUGUST - Sat 18th, Sun 19th, Mon 20th, Mon 27th, Tues 28th, Wed 29th

SEPTEMBER - Sat 1st, Sun 2nd, Tues 4th, Wed 5th, Sat 8th, Mon 10th, Tues 11th, Sat 15th, Sun 16th, Sat 22nd, Sun 23rd, Sun 30th.

A SHORT GUIDE TO YOUR ONE DAY RETREAT

- One Day Retreats are guided days of prayer and reflection and include Prayers of Intercession, Healing of Memories, the option of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the celebration of Eucharist in St Patrick's Basilica. The afternoon also offers an opportunity for quiet time and for Eucharistic Adoration.
- Hospitality on the day includes tea/coffee & scones on arrival and during lunch time soup & sandwiches are served.
- It is advisable to wear/bring warm and waterproof clothing (pilgrims keep footwear on).
- Advanced booking is essential** - To make a booking contact Lough Derg on +353 (0) 71 9861518 or email info@loughderg.org
- Admission €45

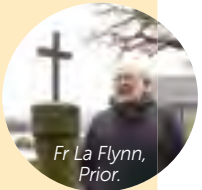
*The Retreat Programme runs from 10.00am-4.30pm
The day retreat is open to adults and not suited to children.
(Fasting or walking barefooted is not required)
Boat Times: Available from 9.15am and return from 4.00pm.*



THREE DAY PILGRIMAGE

The Three Day Pilgrimage on Lough Derg offers space for a thoroughly alternative perspective on our daily pilgrimage of life.

People say to me: 'Lough Derg – oh indeed I intend to go/go back... sometime.' I know that readers of the Irish Catholic will be well familiar with our Lough Derg logo and promotional material during the summer months. But how many have experienced the real thing in recent years, the more quiet, reflective experience, now that the queues are a thing of the past?



Fr La Flynn, Prior.

Friday 1st June -Wednesday 15th August.

(Last day to begin your Three Day Pilgrimage Monday 13th August)

A SHORT GUIDE TO YOUR THREE DAY PILGRIMAGE

- The Three Day Pilgrimage follows a centuries-old pattern prayer.
- The pilgrimage programme includes prayer and quiet reflection in bare feet, keeping Vigil (24 hrs) and maintaining the Fast (one simple Lough Derg meal each day). Pilgrims must be over 15 years, physically able to walk and kneel unaided and to maintain the Fast.
- Pilgrims typically arrive around midday on the first day having fasted from midnight and depart on the third day at 10.00am. Pre-booking is not required.
- Boat times: Daily between 10.30am & 3pm. Crossing approx. 10 mins.
- Admission €75; student discount 15%, concessions for seniors and groups.

SPECIAL DAYS

Each season there are other retreat events inviting people to experience the Island in new ways. One pilgrim's reflection: "Lough Derg is a special place, a hidden treasure. It is pure and untarnished. It is a place of beauty and rhythm, which provides sanctuary from much of the routine of modern living."

QUIET DAYS

Fri 25th May & Mon 3rd September

A Quiet Day is a precious day for oneself with God, an opportunity for contemplation and spiritual nourishment. A self-guided day at your own pace. Refreshments on arrival & a light lunch are served.

A DAY OF FRIENDSHIP & PRAYER

Wed 16th May

Pilgrims long associated with Lough Derg delight in inviting neighbours & friends from other Christian Churches to enjoy a special day of friendship, prayer and reflection together.

NEW CARE FOR CREATION DAY

Sat 19th May

This new event will explore the call of Pope Francis in his encyclical Laudato Si – care for our common home. Reflection will centre on how in practical ways we may make our contribution.



McAllister Family, Day Retreat 2017

FAMILY DAY Fri 17th August

The Family Day is one of the highlights of the season growing in popularity. Children, parents, guardians, grandparents and relations come together to celebrate the family relationship with God.

NEW FINDING GOD IN THE MESS

Thur 20th September

A day of input, engagement and reflection on finding God in every situation on our earthly pilgrimage.

LIVING WITH SUICIDE DAY

Sat 29th September

A special retreat day to support people who have been affected by suicide either through personal loss, those who minister to the suicide bereaved or work in support services.



www.loughderg.org

To find out more about ONE DAY RETREATS, THREE DAY PILGRIMAGE or SPECIAL DAYS please contact Lough Derg on +353 (0) 71 9861518 or info@loughderg.org

WE HELP PILGRIMS LINK WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT WHERE AVAILABLE AND WITH PILGRIMAGE OR RETREAT ORGANISERS IN THEIR OWN LOCALITY.

To walk where Jesus walked



A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a moment for a deeply spiritual encounter with Christ, writes **Michael Kelly**

The Holy Land – those places associated with Christ's earthly life – has often been described as 'the fifth Gospel'. There is a real sense in which the very stones of the place speak of the Gospel. The Christian community there – those who are the descendants of the first people to hear the words of Christ – are a real vibrant presence and give witness to the fact that Christianity is a living faith in a living place.

I've had the privilege to visit the Holy Land on many occasions – often with a group. On each pilgrimage, I experience something new and gain a new valuable insight on a personal level. Perhaps the greatest privilege has been to

lead a group to Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem with pilgrims who were making the trip to the Holy Land for the first time.



One woman told me how she now understood the Gospels in a radically new way because she had the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Christ and see the things that he saw.

Another man told me that he would never think of the readings at Mass in the same way again since he could now identify with the places mentioned in the Gospel.

It's true that while many of the buildings may have changed or are now

in ruins, the landscape is remarkably similar to that which Jesus lived and saw. There's also the fact that scholars and archaeologists are constantly reaching new insights and uncovering new sites associated with the life of Christ or other biblical figures.

In Islam, Muslims who can afford to and are capable of performing the Hajj pilgrimage are obliged to. There is no such obligation within Christianity, but a visit to the Holy Land is a unique opportunity to engage with the Gospel stories in a life-giving way that can enrich and enhance faith.

The Irish Catholic will continue to lead pilgrimages to the Holy Land. For further information please email michael@irishcatholic.ie



2018 THE YEAR OF ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

2018
50TH 100TH
ANNIVERSARIES of the
DEATH & STIGMATA OF ST. PIO

Anniversaries of the Stigmata & Death of St Pio.

Located in southern Italy, San Giovanni Rotondo was made famous by the humble friar 'Padre Pio of Pietrelcina'. The gift of the stigmata which he received 100 years ago transformed San Giovanni Rotondo from a remote town to a place of pilgrimage which attracts millions of pilgrims each year who come to pray before the remains of the saint.



Pietrelcina

With Marian Pilgrimages, most pilgrimages will start in the quaint town of Pietrelcina, birthplace of St. Pio, as pilgrims visit his family home, the Church of Sant'Anna where the young Francesco was baptised and the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli where Padre Pio celebrated his first Solemn Mass.

From a base in the historical town of Benevento, pilgrims will visit the capuchin friary at Morcone, once the novitiate of the Capuchin friars where the young Francesco Forgione entered at the tender age of 15 years. Mass will be celebrated in the cathedral in Benevento where Padre Pio was ordained, and a visit will be made to nearby Piana Romana where Padre Pio received the invisible stigmata - a stop made also by Pope Francis on his recent visit.

Continuing in the footsteps of this great saint pilgrims will travel to the capuchin friary of Sant'Anna in Foggia and see the cell occupied by Padre Pio, before arriving in the town of San Giovanni Rotondo, home to the friar for over fifty years.

San Giovanni Rotondo

With a typical duration of four/five nights in San Giovanni Rotondo, the first point of call for the prayer groups is usually the English Office where after a much-anticipated cup of 'Irish tea' the groups learn more of the life of St. Pio and receive a blessing with the glove and crucifix of the humble friar.

Sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace

A visit to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace will begin in the ancient church. Regarded as the true heart of the sanctuary the pilgrim will see the confessional where Padre Pio spent many hours and, in the choir loft have the opportunity for private prayer in front of the same crucifix before which Padre Pio received the visible stigmata 100



years ago. Visits will be made to the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie where Padre Pio celebrated his last Mass, the old tomb where the remains of the saint rested for over 40 years and the capuchin friary where he lived and died.

Church of St. Pio of Pietrelcina

Inside the upper Church of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, inaugurated in 2004 to cater for the increasing flow of pilgrims arriving in San Giovanni Rotondo, one will see some fine works of world famous Italian artists. The wonderful mosaics of Jesuit priest Fr. Marko Ivan Rupnik which lead to the lower church and depict the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Pio of Pietrelcina allow the pilgrim time for reflection before arriving at the crypt where the groups have time for private prayer in front of the remains of St. Pio, on this the 50th year since his death.

Home for Relief of Suffering

Padre Pio experienced and understood suffering throughout his life and one of his great legacies is the hospital, 'Home for Relief of the Suffering'. Today pilgrims will often celebrate Mass here and afterwards have a short tour of the hospital, learning of this 'temple of prayer and science' much desired by Padre Pio and of its growth into what has now become one of the most important research centres in Europe.

House of Mary Pyle

Amongst other places of interest to the pilgrims in San Giovanni Rotondo is the house of Mary Pyle - the American lady who gave up her wealthy lifestyle to come to San Giovanni Rotondo where she opened her home to many pilgrims coming from all over to attend the Mass of Padre Pio.

For the Irish groups a visit to the local cemetery is often included as pilgrims remember with great fondness Fr. Alessio and Fr. Ermelindo both of whom made regular visits to Ireland over the years.



ST. PIO ANNIVERSARY PILGRIMAGES

29 June - 7 nights - €995pps

19 September - 5 nights - €799pps

05 July - 7 nights - €955pps

07 October - 5 nights - €699pps

17 September - 7 nights - €955pps

20 October - 7 nights - €1,019pps

Belfast Departure - 21 September - 7 nights - £819pps

View our full itineraries online at www.marian.ie or call our office to request a brochure

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World Report



Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

IN BRIEF

'Nothing can justify' chemical weapons use - Pope

● Pope Francis has condemned the use of chemical weapons after a deadly attack killed dozens of innocent people in Syria. "There is no good and bad war, and nothing, nothing can justify the use of such instruments of extermination against defenceless people and populations," the Pope said on Sunday. A suspected chemical-weapon attack occurred on April 7 when Syrian government planes allegedly bombed the eastern town of Douma, located 15 miles (24km) north of the Syrian capital, Damascus.

The Syrian American Medical Society Foundation reported 42 victims were killed in the attack while hundreds of people showed "symptoms indicative of exposure to a chemical agent".

Manila receives saint's blood

● The Archdiocese of Manila will be the custodian of a precious relic of St Pope John Paul II – his blood, which will be the object of veneration in the Philippine capital starting this month.

Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, Pope John Paul II's former secretary, gave the archdiocese the vial as a gift for the 60th anniversary of Manila Cathedral's reconstruction after World War II.

"This precious gift...is truly a source of consolation and help especially for those who are suffering physical illnesses," read a statement from Manila Cathedral.

Bishops slam deployment of US troops to Mexican border

The Mexican bishops' conference criticised US President Donald Trump's plan to deploy National Guard troops to the US-Mexico border and issued a strong defence of migrants, saying the Catholic Church could not stand by "in the face of suffering by our brother migrants as they seek better conditions".

The letter, addressed to people in Mexico, the US and the presidents of both countries, echoed the sentiments of US border bishops by saying the frontier between the two countries "is not a war zone", but rather an area "called to be an example of social connection and joint responsibility".

"The only future possible for our region is the future built with bridges of trust and shared development, not with walls of indignity and violence," said the bishops of 16 northern Mexican dioceses and the conference's six-member presidential council.

"There is only a future in the promotion and defence of the equal dignity and the equal liberty between human beings."

The Mexican bishops'



Central American migrants line up outside a temporary shelter at a Catholic church in Puebla, Mexico.

statement 'For the Dignity of Migrants' followed Trump's April 4 announcement to deploy troops to the border to thwart the entry of unauthorised migrants.

Tweets

It followed a series of tweets from Trump criticising Mexico for not stopping a caravan of Central American migrants from moving northward toward the US-Mexico border.

The caravan stalled in southern Oaxaca State, some

260 miles from the Guatemala border, and its organisers and Mexican immigration officials have provided the participants – including many women and children – with documents allowing them 20 days to leave the country or 30 days to regularise their immigration status.

Many of the more than 1,000 migrants participating in the annual Stations of the Cross Caravan, which travels through Mexico every Easter, spoke of fleeing gang

violence in El Salvador and Honduras. Organisers say many more Hondurans than usual participated this year due to political repression in the country after a contentious election last November, which was marred by accusations of fraud and a violent crackdown on the opposition.

The number of Central Americans seeking asylum worldwide has surged by 990% between 2011 and 2017, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

World mourns Canada teens killed in truck crash

Grieving people gathered at a hockey arena in Canada for an interfaith service to mourn 15 people who died after the bus carrying the town's junior hockey team collided with a truck.

"I don't want to be here, but it's good that we are," said the Rev. Sean Brandow, the Humboldt Broncos team chaplain and pastor of Humboldt Bible Church.

Rev. Brandow went to the

accident site shortly after the collision.

"I walked up on a scene I never want to see again, to sounds I never want to hear again," he said.

The 15 dead included 10 hockey players between the ages of 16 and 21, the team coach, radio broadcaster, bus driver and other team personnel. The accident occurred early in the evening of April 6 when a bus taking the team

to a playoff hockey game collided with a transport truck on a highway near the town of Tisdale, Saskatchewan. Fourteen others on the bus were injured.

Condolences poured into Humboldt from around the world, including messages from Pope Francis, Queen Elizabeth and US President Donald Trump. The Vatican Secretary of State sent blessings on behalf of the Pope.

"Informed of the injury and tragic loss of life caused by the road traffic accident in the province of Saskatchewan involving young hockey players, His Holiness Pope Francis sends his condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and commends the souls of the deceased to the mercy of almighty God. To all in the community at this difficult time, Pope Francis sends his blessing."

Former diplomat jailed by Vatican on child abuse charges

After months of investigation, Vatican police have arrested a former staff member at the Vatican nunciature in Washington on charges related to the possession and distribution of images of child abuse.

The Vatican said that Msgr Carlo Alberto Capella was taken into custody by the Vatican gendarmes at the request of Vatican City State's promoter of justice, who serves as chief prosecutor and directs criminal

investigations.

One of the charges related to a person who "distributes, disseminates, transmits, imports, exports, offers or sells child pornography through any means, even electronically, as well as whoever possess child pornography for those purposes or otherwise distributes or disseminates knowledge of information directed at grooming or exploiting minors for sexual purposes".

The violation carries a prison sentence of one year to five years and a fine from €2,500 to €50,000, which is increased depending on the volume of illegal material discovered.

The Italian monsignor was recalled to the Vatican from Washington after the US State Department notified the Holy See on August 21 of his possible violation of laws relating to child pornography images.

WORLD MISSIONS IRELAND
SPIRITUAL & PRACTICAL SUPPORT WORLDWIDE

You can support the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (POF) in a number of ways:

- Prayer
- Leaving a gift in your Will
- Regular donations
- Mass stipends

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POF is responsible for building much needed infrastructure in predominantly remote areas. Through POF, your support transforms lives and creates a hub from which the Young Church can flourish and grow, spreading the Good News of the Gospel. Priests in mission dioceses with a large number of outstations in remote rural areas cannot pay regular visits to the scattered communities of the faithful. They rely on the support of catechists and lay pastoral leaders, who travel long distances to lead prayer and minister the Sacraments. Funding received through POF enables the training of more catechists and pastoral leaders who are essential to the growth of the Church overseas.

☐ **YES, I want to help the Propagation of the Faith**
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WORLD MISSIONS IRELAND

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Pope Francis walks through the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy. Photo: CNS



New exhortation conveys heart of Francis' pontificate

When an apparently innocuous teaching document comes out of Rome – and a Pope calling us to holiness fits that description better than most – it's always important on the Vatican beat to ask: why this, and why now?

When you apply the context lens, two recent events help answer that question.

One was yesterday: *Amoris Laetitia* – the most fought-over papal teaching since the *Humanae Vitae* controversies of 1968 – quietly celebrated its second anniversary. Over the weekend, its handful of celebrity opponents organised an event in Rome to insist *Amoris* was heretical, while a group of bishops in Lombardy became the latest of dozens of dioceses to accept and implement it.

At the heart of *Amoris* is an attempt to change the Church's focus: away from concentrating on the defence of the truth about marriage at the level of culture and law and towards widening the access to grace that enables people to live that truth. (Whether it compromises the witness to that truth in the process, as its critics claim, is the disputed matter.)

The paragraph that best revealed the *Amoris* agenda was #37: "We have long thought that simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace, we were providing sufficient support to families, strengthening



Austen Ivereigh

the marriage bond and giving meaning to marital life," Francis admonished.

In *Evangelii Gaudium* in 2013, the Pope foresaw the difficulty some might have with this refocusing, which the 2007 Aparecida document of the Latin American bishops called 'pastoral conversion'. That resistance, he suggested, had echoes of early-Church battles over the ancient heresies of Gnosticism and Pelagianism, at the heart of which was, precisely, the role of grace.

And now, having sought to open the channels of grace in the Church, he is turning to people, and inviting them to open to grace too.

Salvation

Hence event two: A few weeks ago, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a brief treatise "on certain aspects of Christian salvation". Although the CDF prefect, Archbishop Luis Ladaria, spoke of the document as contributing to ongoing debates since John Paul II's 2000 *Dominus Iesus*, the first paragraph of *Placuit*

Deo made clear it was about deepening the teaching on salvation "with particular reference to the teachings of Pope Francis".

Its topic too was grace, and the way it is excluded by the contemporary versions of the ancient heresies of Gnosticism and Pelagianism, which Francis from the start of his pontificate has warned infect not just modern culture but also the Church.

What is unique about *Gaudete et Exsultate* is how it is addressed. Francis not only invites us all into a personal relationship with Christ, but shows us the route there – and includes (as all good maps should) the dead-end paths which at the start look deceptively promising. His goal, he says, is "to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time".

“Grace is an interior gift constantly available to us in humble prayer”

The 'universal call to holiness' is an ancient idea, given rocket boosters at the Second Vatican Council and urged in the papacies since. St John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* #30 and 31 called for the Church to include "training in holiness", above all in the art of prayer.

But while he is clear that the Church has everything we need on our journey to become holy, and even lists the menu of travel aids, Francis is issuing a direct invitation to people to embrace holiness, in

a tone that is not just familiar but positively familial.

And because *Placuit Deo* has dealt with all the fine points and definitions, the Pope in *Gaudete et Exsultate* can take the unusual step of warning Catholics against certain kinds of Catholic mind sets that are an obstacle to salvation via Jesus Christ.

Although they are dressed up in Catholic clothes, the modern forms of Gnosticism and Pelagianism in practice deny Christ (grace) any ongoing involvement in the process of conversion and journey towards holiness. God is reduced to a distant moral code-giver, and salvation is achieved on their own strengths by an elite cadre of enlightened or strong-willed Christians.

It is neo-Pelagian, for example, to speak about grace but then confine it in practice to a one-off gift from the outside in the form of, say, clear doctrine, or forgiveness to one who has repented.

The view of grace in *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Amoris Laetitia* and above all now in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, is very different. Francis follows the firm Augustinian view that grace is an interior gift constantly available to us in humble prayer when we – inevitably – fall, and in which God takes the initiative in order to change people.

"When some of them" – the neo-Pelagians – "tell the weak that all things can be accomplished with God's grace, deep down they tend to give the idea that all things

are possible by the human will, as if it were something pure, perfect, all-powerful, to which grace is then added," Francis writes in *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

In fact, he says, quoting St Augustine, human weaknesses are not healed once and for all by grace, and our holiness grows in our humble reception of grace over time, step by step, within the constraints of our circumstances and strengths.

Conversely, "the lack of a heartfelt and prayerful acknowledgement of our limitations prevents grace from working more effectively within us," because we shut out what we think we don't need.

The reason this goes to the heart of the pontificate's program is that God saves humanity via the Incarnation – in fleshy, concrete human reality – not via precepts and laws and complex ideas. Francis believes that the Church's emphasis on truth and moral precepts without emphasising the centrality of grace has made the Christian invitation forbidding, even threatening, and is one reason why many have stopped listening to the Church.

Gaudete et Exsultate identifies the royal road – actually, the only road – to salvation, which is clearly marked out by Jesus himself in the Beatitudes and Matthew 25. The first are the attitudes, or signs, of holiness in our attitudes, and the second are the ways we respond concretely to human need.

“The authenticity of our prayer can be judged by how it changes how we act towards the poor”

These, too, are all about grace. Our merciful actions make us more receptive to grace, and grace makes us more sensitive to need and merciful in response to it. Thus, says Francis, the authenticity of our prayer can be judged by how it changes how we act towards the poor and how we see them.

Hence a sign of our holiness, he says, is "a constant and unhealthy unease" with regard to the injustices of the world. Rather than absolutising one area of ethical concern and dismissing other kinds of social engagement as political – being strongly anti-abortion, say, but regarding concern for migrants as leftist, examples the Pope himself gives in the document – holiness means growing more and more concerned by every affront to human dignity.

Gaudete et Exsultate is remarkably short: It weighs in at 177 paragraphs, compared with *Amoris*'s 325. But it is arguably his most direct and compelling yet, because it gets right to the heart of his pontificate's aim of restoring the centrality of grace to the Church's invitation.

Why this, why now? Because after great efforts, not without opposition, to open the Church's doors to grace, it's time to invite people to step through them, and to reassure them that it's not their knowledge or strength they need for the journey, but only faith in God's help.

Letters

Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2,
or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

Letter of the week

'Who is missing from our world?'

Dear Editor, The stalwarts of the pro-life movement continue the fight for life on many frontlines these days and yet we still don't see the big picture.

I heard a discussion the other day which made me jump; it was not focused on the numbers aborted or the horrifying array of methods or the blindness and callous hearts of the people involved. It asked the question 'who is missing from our world?'

In every age and nation, God has always provided what (and who) was needed at any given moment in history. Whilst everyone has their own unique role, the destiny of some is far reaching in their impact. Scientists like

Alexander Fleming who discovered Penicillin, social reformers like Florence Nightingale who formalised the nursing profession, or statesmen like Churchill holding back the tide of Nazism and of course our own Saviour.

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that during a discussion between Hilary Clinton and Mother Teresa, the former asked why she thought there had been no female President of the United States; to which Mother Teresa responded "she was probably aborted".

Whether we realise it or not, our societies are impoverished to an ever-increasing extent; we have

no way of evaluating it but we are all unknowingly suffering the consequences of it.

As Ireland stands on the precipice, with its abortion referendum looming, I hope the people will remember those who gave them the gift of life, the sacrifices they made for them, the love extended to them and vote to 'protect' the next generation, many of whom may otherwise not see the light of day.

Yours etc.,

Stephen A. Clark,
Manila,
Philippines.

Mary McAleese is anything but a prophet

Dear Editor, Mary McAleese's very public challenge to the Church has generated quite a considerable amount of comment which no doubt will continue to rumble on.

She seems to believe that there is a central steering committee in the Vatican, which can formulate the truths of our Faith in keeping with prevailing fashions, and she is particularly exercised by the areas of sexuality and the ministerial priesthood.

The dynamic motif of

male and female, from which all fruitfulness flows, is present right from the prologue to Bible, where we hear that "male and female he created them", through the Prophets where God is envisaged as a bridegroom wooing a wayward bride, and the Song of Songs where the soul is presented as feminine, until it reaches its crescendo in the presentation of Jesus as the Bridegroom laying down His life to win a holy bride, His Church.

Viewed in this way it is entirely fitting that the Old Testament priests, Jesus and that those who affect His priestly ministry in each generation would be males. It would be indeed strange if any Pope having the role of confirming the Faith of those who have turned back to God (Luke 22:32), would depart from this.

Mary McAleese's assertion that the Church is misogynistic, seems to miss the point, that the mentality which accompanies the

abortion industry, is the real purveyor of hatred of all things uniquely feminine; fertility, pregnancy, motherhood. Worldwide about 150 million females are missing due to sex-selective abortions.

Finally, Mary McAleese has been hailed as a prophet, but judging by compliments being showered upon her, she is anything but a prophet.

Yours etc.,

Gearóid Duffy,
Lee Road, Cork.

There is only one answer to give: 'No'

Dear Editor, As the 'hard cases' such as rape, incest, and babies with life limiting conditions will not be separately listed as options on the Eighth Amendment ballot paper the only reasonable action for those who do not want abortion on demand is to vote NO.

Yours etc.,
John Burke,
Clontarf,
Dublin 3.



Who are we to deny equal value to the unjustly and the justly conceived?

Dear Editor, The great trouble in the world is, as long as there are children brought into the world for reasons less than love of God, there is always going to be war and conflict. The evidence of what I say is in the Bible. It is written: "Thou

shalt not commit adultery." God, by the prophet Nathan, reacted to the criminal adultery by King David.

Who then are we to give equal value to the unjust and the justly conceived? Are we superior to God? There are two laws of God operating in

the world today. The law of Moses that judges severely those who don't live by it, and the law of Christ which is the spirit of charity by which he said, "judge not and you will not be judged". Those who live under the law of Christ are not in any

danger by those who don't because they come under the law of Moses. This law has not been invalidated. Christ said he came to perfect it.

Yours etc.,

Terence J. Joyce,
Plessala,
France.

A support network exists for those in need of it

Dear Editor, On one hand we have heart-breaking stories of the Magdalene laundries and then the equally heart-breaking headlines on the Mother and Baby homes. On the other hand, we have the upcoming referendum on repealing the Eighth Amendment.

In times gone by, there were few options open to unmarried women who found themselves pregnant. There was little or no support from the State or from the parents to ensure that these women could keep their babies.

Now, thankfully we have a good support network for women in this situation.

It makes you wonder, had we legalised abortion in this country back then, how many of these children would have a voice today. So the question is: are we a country who protects the vulnerable or are we a country of hypocrites?

Yours etc.,

Cynthia Grimes,
Navan,
Co. Meath.

Steady on with the titles

Dear Editor, David Quinn's piece entitled 'Welcome Bishop Jordan Peterson' (IC 5/04/18) was an interesting read. Like David, I recently started watching some videos of Dr Peterson on the internet, and subsequently read his book. Although the advice is nothing new such as 'make your bed' or 'befriend the right people', he explains it in a way as to sound almost revolutionary. He is able to integrate biblical and psychological themes into his prose with such flow and sophistication that you eagerly await to see what he says next. I would however be hesitant to glorify him with the appellation 'bishop'. Although he has a love for the Bible, he has explicitly said he is not Catholic and so we must be careful not to forget that.

Yours etc.,

Paul O'Leary,
Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Unwarranted arrogance

Dear Editor, I think the comments Senator Catherine Noone made on Easter Sunday were completely uncalled for. She criticised a priest for bringing up the issue of abortion in Mass and then had the audacity to say that no wonder people are "disillusioned" by the Church. The Eighth Amendment is a focal point in Ireland at the moment, and of course priests across all dioceses are going to speak about it. If you don't want to hear their opinion, don't attend Mass. She also described the priest as "octogenarian", implying that his opinion on the matter was invalid because of his age. Everybody has a right to speak about issues of concern, and no one should be ignored based on their age – any belief otherwise is pure arrogance.

Yours etc.,

Sióbhán Downey,
Derry City,
Co. Derry.

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



CANADA: Mourners embrace during a vigil at Elgar Petersen Arena in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, to honour members of the Humboldt Broncos junior hockey team who were killed in a fatal bus accident. Photos: CNS



MEXICO: Central American migrant children smile during a puppet show at a temporary shelter inside a Catholic church in Puebla.



▲ **CONGO:** Protestors attempt to leave the safe haven of a church during violent protests that left at least five people dead and scores injured in Kinshasa.

► **USA:** Women with the Sister Thea Bowman Choir of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York, sing during a prayer service at St Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre.

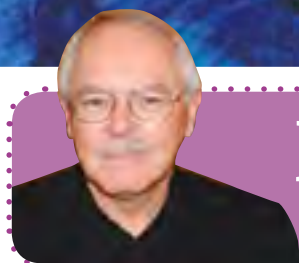


SYRIA: People cross the Euphrates River by cable ferry in Raqqa. The Pope recently decried the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government in an attack that killed men, women and children.



ITALY: Pope Francis kisses the foot of an inmate at Regina Coeli prison in Rome.

REASONS TO BELIEVE IN GOD



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

Belief in God today is often seen as a naïveté. For many, believing in God is like believing in Santa and the Easter Bunny – nice, something for the kids, a warm nostalgia or a bitter memory but not something that's real, that stands up to hard scrutiny and indeed stands up to the dark doubts that sometimes linger below the surface of our faith. Where's there evidence that God exists?

A true apologetics, I believe, needs at a point to be personal. So here are my own reasons why I continue to believe in God in the face of the agnosticism of our overly-adult world and despite the dark nights that sometimes beset me.

● First, I believe in God because I sense, at the deepest level of my being, that there's an inalienable moral structure to things.

Life, love and meaning are morally-contoured. There's an inalienable 'law of karma' that's experienced everywhere and in everything: good behaviour is its own happiness, just as bad behavior is its own sorrow.

Different religions word it differently but the concept is at the heart of all religion and is in essence the very definition of morality: the measure you measure out will be the measure that's measured back to you. That's Jesus' version of it, and can be translated this way: the air you breathe out is the air you will re-inhale. Simply put: if we cut

down too many trees we will soon be breathing in carbon monoxide. If we breathe out love, we will meet love. If we breathe out hate and anger we will soon enough find ourselves surrounded by hatred and anger.

Reality is so structured that goodness brings goodness and sin brings sin.

● I believe in God because blind chaos could not have designed things this way, to be innately moral. Only an intelligent goodness could have built reality this way.

● My next reason for believing in God is the existence of the soul, intelligence, love, altruism and

art. These could not have emerged simply from blind chaos, from billions and billions of cosmic bingo chips coming out of nothing, with no intelligent loving force behind them, endlessly churning through billions of years.

Chaos

Random chaos, empty of all intelligence and love from its origins, could not have eventually produced the soul and all that's highest inside it: intelligence, love, altruism, spirituality, and art. Can our own hearts and all that's noble and precious within them really be just the result of billions of fluke

chances colliding within a brute, mindless process?

● I believe in God because if our hearts are real than so is God.

● Next, I believe in God because the Gospel works – if we work it. What Jesus incarnated and taught ultimately resonates with what's most precious, most noble, and most meaningful inside of life and inside each of us. Moreover, this checks out in life.

Whenever I have the faith and courage to actually live out the Gospel, to roll the dice on its truth, it always proves to be true, the loaves multiply and feed the thousands and David defeats Goliath. But it doesn't work unless I risk it. The Gospel works, if we work it.

The objection could be raised here, of course, that many sincere, faith-filled people risk their lives and truth on the Gospel and, from all appearances in this world, it doesn't work for them.

They end up poor, as victims, on the losing side of things. But again, that's a judgment we make from the standards of this world, from the Gospel of Prosperity where whoever has the most worldly success wins.

The Gospel of Jesus undercuts this. Anyone who lives it out as faithfully as he or she is able, will be blessed with something beyond worldly success, namely, the deeper joy of a life well-lived, a joy which Jesus assures us is deeper, less ephemeral, and more lasting than any other joy.

I believe in God because the

Gospel works! As does prayer!

● Finally, though certainly not least, I believe in God because of the community of faith that stretches back to the beginning of time, that stretches back to the life and resurrection of Jesus, and that baptised me into the faith. Throughout all of history virtually all human communities have been also communities of faith, of belief in God, of worship, and of sacred ritual and sacrament.

“I believe in God because of the community of faith that stretches back to the beginning of time”

I believe in God because of the existence of families of faith and the existence of church and sacrament.

I wrote my doctoral thesis on the classical proofs for the existence of God, arguments for God's existence taken from some of the great intellectuals in history: Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Leibnitz, Spinoza and Alfred North Whitehead.

I rambled through nearly 500 pages of articulating and evaluating these proofs and then ended with this conclusion.

We don't come to believe in God because of the compelling power of some mathematical equation or logical syllogism. God's existence becomes real to us when we live an honest, sincere life.

“David defeats Goliath. But it doesn't work unless I risk it. The Gospel works, if we work it”



Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 12, 2018

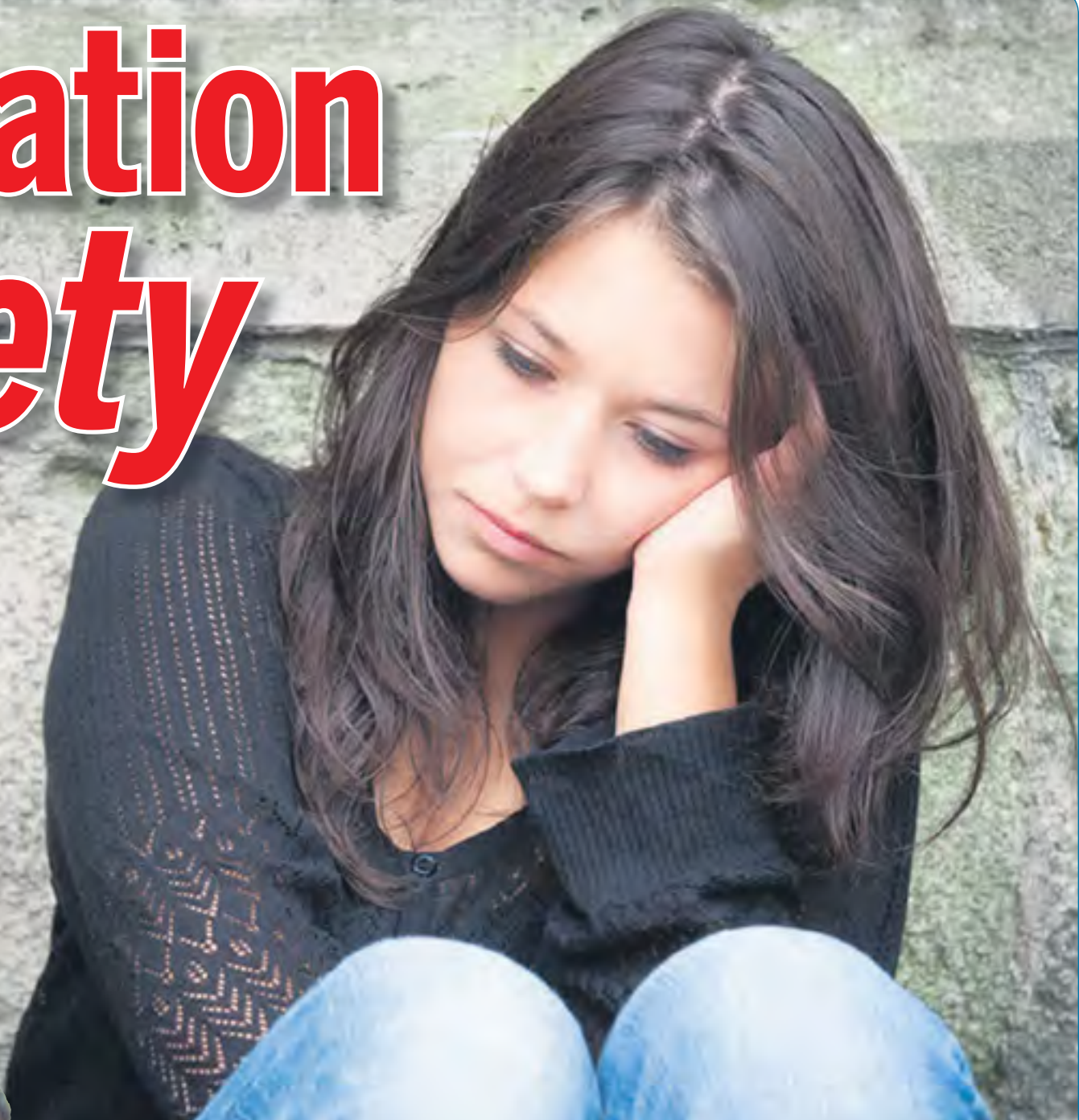
Personal Profile

Keeping
an addiction
bottled up

Page 30



Generation *anxiety*



The 21st Century has been a period of dramatic technological, economic and cultural progress, meaning that society is reaching new highs – but why is it that young people are increasingly feeling so low?

Almost half of young people in the UK have experienced a mental health problem and around 29% think that their life will amount to nothing, no matter how much they try, according to new research.

The findings, which were published by the Prince's Trust Macquarie Youth Index, reveal that many young people feel pressurised, stressed and routinely experience a sense of hopelessness.



Young people are increasingly feeling unhappy, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**

The Youth Index is a national survey that gauges young people's happiness and confidence across a range of areas from working life to physical health. This latest report demonstrates that young people's wellbeing, which dropped last year to its lowest level since the index was first commissioned, has fallen again to a new low this year.

Based on the survey of 2,194

young people aged 16-25, many individuals in this bracket are primarily worried about the current job market, with one in four working young people feeling trapped in a cycle of jobs they don't want. 39% of people also reported that they don't feel in control of their lives with 62% of young women claiming that a lack of self-confidence holds them back.

"This report highlights a

staggering deterioration in young people's confidence in themselves and in their future.

"The cliff-edge decline in young people not feeling in control of their lives echoes conversations we have every day with young people who speak of their fears about finding work, taking short term jobs over longer term careers and the knock-on effect of heightened uncertainty in the economy," said Nick Stace, UK Chief Executive at the Prince's Trust.

Belief

"This has to be our moment to redouble what we do as a trust and as a society. It is our fundamental belief that every young person should have the

chance to succeed and when they do our country will also succeed."

Yet, according to a research carried out by Dr Noelia Molina in 2017 on behalf of Vocations Ireland entitled, 'Religious Vocations in Ireland: Challenges and Opportunities', these figures are really of little surprise.

The study outlines that younger generations now have a 'market mentality' which has emerged from post-modern thinking. This has provoked an 'existential anxiety' and stress over the unknown; a doubt and inability to make choices; and an expressed sense of meaninglessness.

In the study, many interviewees, who were

» Continued on Page 29

Family News

AND EVENTS



Forest fun for the whole family

Whether you're passionate about birds, squirrels and all things nature, or just want to find out a little more about wildlife, then attending the family fun box building event in Cushendun with Biodiversity Office Rachel Bain, and Glens Red Squirrel Group will be the perfect opportunity for you! Taking place on May 12, you will get the chance to wander through the beautiful woodland and see some of the creatures that live there and put up the boxes made.

This is a joint event between Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Glens Red Squirrel Group and the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust. This event is limited to 15 people on a first-come basis, pre-booking is essential. Under 18s must be accompanied by a responsible adult. If you do attend, make sure you bring sturdy walking boots, as well as warm clothing and binoculars.

THE KID-FRIENDLY CLOCK: For young children who are still confused about bedtime, the Remi Smart Kids Sleep Companion can help teach your kids about time from their bedside table. The interactive clock lets them know it's okay to get out of bed and is complete with a digital display of the time so children can read it with ease.

Remi also has a face that lets your child know when it's time for sleep or if they can get up. The device connects to your iOS or Android smartphone via Bluetooth so you can set a sleep schedule for your kids. You can create a time for alerts, lighting, music, and more.

You can also access the speaker on Remi to play songs, such as lullabies. The speaker also has a two-way so you can speak to your child directly.

Antibiotics may increase mortality

Although antibiotics have radically reduced global illness and death, a new study has revealed that taking them for a long time during late adulthood may actually be linked with a higher risk of death among women. In their paper present at the American Heart Association's (AHA) 2018 scientific sessions, Prof. Qi and colleagues found that taking antibiotics for at least two months in late adulthood was linked with a 27 percent increase in risk of death from all causes, compared with not taking them.

This link was stronger for women who also reported taking antibiotics during middle adulthood, or between the ages of 40 and 59. Women who took antibiotics for two months or more were also at 58% higher risk of death due to heart problems, compared with women who did not use antibiotics.

Mature married just love dancing towards the future



Bredan Drumm (fourth left) and family members with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Cardinal Kevin Farrell meeting Pope Francis in Rome.

The *Amoris*: Let's Talk Family! Let's Be Family programme is well underway now in parishes. The six different parish conversations are designed to invite people to reflect on *The Joy of Love*, the document Pope Francis prepared after a world-wide consultation and the two synods on the family.

One of the parish sessions looks at Married Love Growing to Maturity; I have found myself reflecting on what that actually means. My husband Bryan and I will be 22 years married in December of this year. Does that mean we are at the stage where we can consider ourselves as married and growing to maturity?

In a way it feels like yesterday that we stood nervously opposite each other on a snowy December day in 1995. I remember the vows we chose to share as we made our commitment to each other. Mine went something like this: "With love and joy I accept you as my husband. I will stand by your side in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health..."

I remember too how nervous we both were on our wedding day. Everyone we knew and loved was watching us in the church. People planning weddings after ours were taking in every detail. What wasn't helping our nerves was the fact that I had sprained my ankle three days before the wedding day and we were not sure whether I would be able to walk up the aisle at all! In fact, if you were to look closely at our wedding video you can see me whisper to my dad to 'slow down' as he was walking too fast and I was afraid that I would take a tumble.

Our wedding day went by in a blur of happiness and we set

World Meeting of Families 2018



Brenda Drumm

out on our journey together as a young married couple confident that we had done all of the preparations for married life that we needed to.

But married life is a journey. In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis reminds us: "Learning to love someone does not happen automatically nor can be taught in a workshop just prior to the celebration of marriage. For every couple marriage preparation begins at birth. Those best prepared for marriage are probably those who learned what Christian marriage is from their own parents who chose each other unconditionally and daily renew this decision" [AL 208] That was



certainly true for us as we had the marriages of our parents and grandparents to look to.

Things were going well in the early years of marriage and

we got busy with living. In fact you could say that married life was extraordinarily ordinary for us as Mr and Mrs Tobin which was just the way it should have been. We welcomed our first child in April 1997 and life really got busy after that. We were blessed with a son in 2004.

On a day-to-day basis we never really thought about the vows we had shared with one another on our wedding day. As a young couple with two small children, we never really had the time.

“Those best prepared for marriage are probably those who learned what Christian marriage is from their own parents”

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis says: "Young love needs to keep dancing towards the future with immense hope. Hope is the leaven, that in those first years of engagement and marriage, makes it possible to look beyond arguments, conflicts and problems and to see things in a broader perspective." [AL 219]

That was us – we were dancing towards the future with hope! We never really had to think about the "in sickness and in health" or the "in good times and in bad". Life was good.

Then in 2003 we lost a baby through miscarriage. My beloved gran died in 2006. We knew that life was not without its challenges and that difficulties arise in all families. We had to grow in love and in acceptance that things would not always be perfect and that challenges and grief would come.

In 2007 when our daughter was nine and our son was seven our family life was disrupted by a diagnosis of cancer. While I was the one who received the diagnosis, it was the whole family who was impacted by it. In many ways it is harder on the family members as they have to stand by feeling helpless as they watch you suffer through treatment.

I could not have come through my treatment without the love and support of Bryan, Emma, Cathal and my wider family circle.

It was only after the treatment and hearing I was in remission that I started to think about the practical implementation of our vows and particularly the "in sickness and in health" bit. Bryan had stood by me in sickness and in health and in the worst of times. His standing by me was never in doubt. All the way through the treatment he was there for me. He took over all of my chores while I was in treatment. I somehow have ended up never having to lift an iron since I was diagnosed!

I have been blessed by my marriage and family and all they have brought into my life. We are still dancing towards the future with immense hope in our more mature married love – albeit with more sensible shoes!

If you get a chance to become involved in the *Amoris* Parish Conversations please take it – these simple reflections are enriching and offer a timely reminder of the Gospel of Hope that families are for the Church and for Society.

Brenda Drumm is Media and Communications Manager of the World Meeting of Families 2018

» Continued from Page 27



composed of religious and vocational directors and one lay vocational promoter, also spoke about the problem of the loss of spiritual language along with the loss of the Faith journey for young people as these are not shown in school anymore, with one interviewee stating that the school is a “vacuum culture”. By reducing the importance and transformative role of Faith, many young people consciously equate happiness with solely financial security or other materialistic interests, and so are more likely to fall prey to mental health problems.

Indeed, according to Ballyfermot parish priest Fr Joe McDonald, this crisis was first flagged in recent times by Pope St John Paul II who spoke of the “culture of death”. This is a culture which roots its meaning and motivation in social and economic motivation, rejecting the notion of the divine.

“I think that Western Europe has really been hit by a tsunami of darkness and that has manifest itself in a whole lot of ways,” says Fr Joe, explaining that low levels of aggression in daily life such as intolerance when driving or routinely insulting others is one example of this.

“We’re on the edge of Europe at a time of great spiritual darkness, so it does not surprise me that these things have become manifest in drug and sex addiction. It does not surprise me that people seek the pleasure principle – the hedonistic solution – to ease the pain,” he says.

“I think that Western Europe has really been hit by a tsunami of darkness”

Fr Joe also explained that in his experience as a parish priest, there is little to no link with levels of contentment and the social strata that you are in.

“The spiritual hunger I encounter is so deep and so passionate,” he says, noting that he repeatedly hears young people describing their lives

as empty, whereas others reflecting on life often ask him ‘Is this it?’

This sense of purposelessness is reflected explicitly in alcohol and drug abuse as well as in the increase of people self-harming, according to Mater Misericordiae University Hospital psychiatrist, Dr Patricia Casey.

“I think the drug problem, the alcohol problem, we have the seeming loss of interest in religion, which are all contributing to a sense of purposelessness and to the absence of life having any meaning. That’s obviously a great shame,” Dr Casey says.

“We certainly see a lot of young people coming into the emergency department taking drugs and self-harming and things like that are at an epidemic level. Large numbers of people aged 15, 16 and 17-year-olds are coming across the doorstep of the emergency departments across the country,” she added.

Reality

The Irish figures reflect this reality with 75% of alcohol consumed in Ireland being done so as part of binge drinking. Alcohol consumption is also a factor in half of all suicides in Ireland and over a third of cases of deliberate self-harm, peaking around weekends and public holidays.

In response to the Prince’s Trust Study, SDLP Mental Health Spokesperson Mark Durkan has said that mental health is a massive and growing problem and that it will be the single biggest challenge for the next generation. He added that not only do we need to encourage people to talk, but there needs to be more counsellors in Ireland to make this possible. He also said that there must be a real focus on helping people help themselves and their



resilience needs to be developed.

Both Fr Joe and Dr Casey believe that religious faith can be one way in which this resilience and meaning can be realised.

“We certainly see a lot of young people coming into the emergency department taking drugs and self-harming”

“Religious beliefs and practices are one of the cornerstones of resilience – it’s well recognised in the psychiatric literature on resilience – to be a resilient person, to have a purpose in life is a key aspect of it and that most often comes from religious beliefs of some sort. To that extent, it is hugely important,” Dr Casey says.

Similarly, Fr Joe says that existential problems can be ameliorated and transformed by the person of Jesus Christ. For him this encounter is more likely to come about, not through initially attending Church services or reading the Gospels, but from interacting with religious people in a non-faith-based context and in this way, they can begin to see the normality of religious belief in a friendly and relaxed environment.

“When you do that, when you meet them in a common place, over a pint, at football, on the motorbike, do not mention God. Do not mention Jesus and wait – wait on the question – and it always comes,” he explains.

“I don’t say to a young person, ‘You know what you need now, you need an encounter with Jesus’, not at all. I try to facilitate a space and get them to create a space in their life where they will glimpse Jesus. It works. I know it works.”

i For more information on the Prince’s Trust Macquarie Youth Index, see: <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/macquarie-youth-index-2018-annual-report>

Dad’s Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



I have long been fascinated by islands. I remember, as a boy, taking my father’s small boat out to unpopulated islands off West Cork. I would step ashore like Robinson Crusoe on to a perfect, silent beach. There was always a profound serenity on these little islands, the troubles of the world were at a remove. The blue perfect sea provided a perfect, natural moat against all that was hurried, harried and hasslesome out in the broad world.

I used to work on sailing boats in my early 20s. I always found excuses to anchor off islands, and go ashore. I loved to anchor in the treacherous Blasket Sound, and soak in the abandoned village that whispered of the deep



memories of an Blascaod Mór. Valentia [above], Cape Clear, Sherkin and Heir island all became regular haunts when sailing with friends or tourists along the south west coast. A romantic urge to live on one of these beautiful outposts never quite left me. We as a family had the joy of house-sitting a very special cottage on Sherkin island for long periods a few years ago. The kids will always remember the experience of being storm bound for days at a time and helping us to prepare simple, self-sufficient meals with eggs from the hens, crabs from the harbour, and vegetables from the garden.

My wife’s medical training has led us to again live on an island now, the Isle of Wight, off the south coast of England. Yet whereas Sherkin had only about 90 souls on board, the Isle of Wight has almost 150,000. While Sherkin had no shop the Isle of Wight has Sainsbury’s, Asda, KFC and McDonalds.

I remember carrying a pane of glass across Sherkin for a repair in my gloved hands. The Isle of Wight, by contrast, has a B & Q superstore, and myriad local hardware shops. Sherkin had

no doctor, while the Isle of Wight has a fully kitted out hospital. This is island living with all the mod cons.

Yet it remains an island, and it very much feels like one. During a storm, the ferries are cancelled, and we become isolated. Despite the rapid ferries and hovercraft that connect us to the mainland, the sense of being in a place apart remains.

We live at a remove from the 21st Century, for better and worse. Wandering amongst the thatched cottages of our village, it could be the 19th. The concerns and stresses of the modern world are held at bay by the Solent.

Things move slower and people have more time. When returning from a few days work in in Dublin or London, you cross the water to a place where time flows easy.

The decision to spend time here was made with the kids in mind. Childhood only comes once and, along with happy memories of city life in Dublin, we wanted their memories to be washed over with nature, golden beaches with breaking waves, and for them to be ensconced for a while the life of a small, happy village. My eldest boy says of living on an island, “It makes you feel cosy and safe. It’s nice to know there’s water all around you when you are going to sleep, sometimes it feels like you’re getting rocked about as you fall asleep.”

Status

All Irish people are islanders, of course. Yet our island is large and populous enough that we forget that status, until we have to leave it. Then, the necessity of travel by boat or plane reminds us sharply that we are islanders.

I married an Englishwoman, which has meant that for 10 years and more we have been routinely travelling back and forth across the Irish Sea, with the kids in tow, a number of times each year.

Yet living on an island off an island doesn’t isolate, rather the sea connects us. With family from Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, we are home across the archipelago, and we are forever happily hopping on and off boats.



Faith can help fight addiction, writes Colm Fitzpatrick

Alcohol continues to remain an important part of our Irish society, whether it be advertised on television, used during celebrations, or simply drunk to relax, but many people are also prone to over-consumption.

In the hope of combating alcohol addiction, Matt Boylan, the National president of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart (PTAA) is trying to promote prayer, self-denial, and positive lifestyles to those who are willing to listen.

Matt joined the organisation when he was just eight years old after the strong influence of his teachers and has remained steadfast in his convictions ever since.

"I was only going to national school at the time in my local, little parish in Glenavy, Cavan. At that time the teachers were excellent because they were very much for promoting the organisation," Matt explains.

Wayside

"From a very early age I wanted to join, and of course many didn't join – they would have gone by the wayside. But quite a few at that time did hold on until maybe 18 and maybe further," he says.

The organisation was founded by Wexford native Fr James Cullen SJ in the Church of St Francis Xavier in Dublin in 1898. He was always concerned with social issues and established the society in order to

address the enormous damage that he saw excess alcohol was doing in the Ireland of his time. Many workers were heavy drinkers and alcohol usually drained the weekly earnings of the family.

From the beginning, members – who joined in their thousands – pledged three things: to abstain from alcohol for life; to say the Pioneer prayer twice a day; and to bear witness by wearing the pioneer pin at all times. The PTAA has always been underpinned by devotion to the Sacred Heart, and its emblem reflects this.

Although the society was founded over two centuries ago, Matt believes that the alcohol problems Fr Cullen perceived in his Ireland is just as visceral and serious now. "It's a huge problem altogether. It is pitiful to see the situation indeed," he says.

"I have no objection to people

drinking or whatever, but certainly against the abuse. I have no objection anybody going to the pub and having a drink and going about their business but what I do have serious objection to is being carted home, and being drunk in front of the children," he says, adding that it can create a very bad image.

The statistics also clearly reflect this reality, with 85% of Irish people believing that the current level of alcohol consumption in Ireland is too high. Indeed, the World Health Organisation (WHO) found that Ireland has the second highest rate of binge drinking in the world.

As result of this alcoholic dependency many people of all ages turn to the Pioneer Association to receive support and try to get their life back on track.

"Even in my own area in the last four or five years, I've had five people come along like that with a

range of age in their 20s, 30s, 40s and they became senior members", he says, explaining that they had come to a realisation that it was something they could do without, and they wanted to live more quiet, peaceful lives.

“If you are experiencing addiction the first thing you can do is talk about it”

Alcohol addiction is not just an individual problem, as those around a sufferer, such as family and friends, also experience the negative impacts it can have. In Ireland specifically, an estimated 271,000 children under the age of 15 are living with parents who are regular risky drinkers, which as Matt says, can cause a lot of "strife".

In order to counter these

problems, the association has many parish centres which have monthly meetings to pray or to read short reflections as well as plan various activities throughout the year. These include the Lenten Pledge, Youth apostolate, and the Annual Pioneer Mass and enrolment ceremony.

Prayer is also an intricate component of the society and all Pioneer events include a short prayer. It is important for pioneers to set aside time to reflect and meditate, including spending time listening during prayer time.

"You have your little prayer that you say night and morning and you wear your emblem and that's what guards you – you come out as best you can," says Matt.

Priority

The youth are also an important priority for many centres and visitation programmes are often organised to local schools and clubs. Students are invited to take the pioneer pledge until 18 and to keep off illicit drugs for life. The local Pioneer centre follows up with those students who are interested in membership and they are then able to partake in the association's competitions held at different times throughout the calendar year.

Although not everybody will be ready to take the leap in joining the pioneer society immediately, Matt maintains that that if you are experiencing some form of addiction the first and best thing you can do is talk about it.

"Talk to people, that's the problem with Irish people, they're far too proud and bottle things up. The best thing they can do is talk to anybody", he says, even a priest for example. "Certainly, have a talk about it and seek help. Don't be afraid to seek help."

For more information about the association, see: <http://www.pioneerassociation.ie/>

The handover of the Chain of Office from James Shevlin to Matt Boylan.



Adopt a softly, softly approach to a child's tantrum

An only child, my seven-year-old daughter is already acting like a teenager, losing her temper over the smallest thing, shouting at me, banging doors and telling me she hates me. Her emotions are out of control and my husband and I don't know how to help her.

It is likely that a combination of factors are behind your daughter's behaviour. She might not have the tools to manage her emotions or learned the coping skills for dealing with situations she doesn't like, or perhaps tantrums have worked in the past.

Tantrums over little things should be a thing of the past by now, but if they are happening often over small things, it could be a red flag that some of her needs are not being met. Children store up their feelings and then wait to let them loose.

Remember: having empathy with the emotion doesn't mean agreement.

What triggers precede the events? What is happening around them? Research shows that children who don't feel strong connections with

their parents struggle with their emotions, social interaction and even schoolwork. The key here is your relationship with your child, so consider how to build your relationship with your daughter. Start taking note of what is happening when emotions take over.

There could be very obvious things like tiredness or hunger or more complex problems like trouble at school. Then look at the time you are spending together – how much is quality time where you have fun and chat, and how much is doing jobs, or correcting her?

“The louder your child gets the softer you should speak”

Although it's hard, don't try to calm her down. What happens when you lose your cool? If your spouse tells you to 'calm down honey' when you're angry it probably makes things worse. What you probably want is a chance to be understood, especially over why you are upset in the first

place. Children are not that different, though the underlying reasons might not be as complex.

Once she has calmed down, ask why she is upset and then work on a solution together. Your daughter is still just learning to handle her emotions – when her emotions go out of control, it's your chance to get down to her level, so you are physically there, eye to eye, and can, rather than correct her, ask her what is wrong.

Staying calm is especially important when it's just an "I'm not getting what I want" tantrum. Your attention should be positive attention. The louder your child gets the softer you should speak – they'll match your volume and tone. Your challenge is to stay calm. This is your chance to help her learn how to handle these negative emotions, which is a really important life skill.

In your daughter's case you need to figure out what she is feeling at this time and accept those feelings, while helping her understand that the feelings are okay but the behaviour is not. After you have identified, empathised and helped your daughter to understand the emotion, then deal with the bad behaviour. Then talk together about a solution.



Love
Notes

Wendy Grace

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Little revealed in C4's 'new evidence'

Religious programmes are pretty scarce on Channel 4, so when one pops up on a prime time slot you tend to take notice.

Jesus' Female Disciples: The New Evidence last Sunday night, was rather full of its own importance with claims of rewriting early Christian history, of "explosive" new evidence, "overturning centuries of Christian thought", a "radically different story". Actually, no.

Minus the inflated expectations, it was interesting enough and easy watching. The best bits were those that showed us the actual locations of the New Testament stories, and introduced us to archaeological discoveries, like the early church dedicated to Biblical character Salomé. Historian presenters Helen Bond and Jean Taylor were engaging and it was hardly radical to argue that there were women closely involved in the life of Jesus and the early Church, and that they were often overlooked later.

Their starting point was to show that Mary Magdalene wasn't a prostitute, but there was nothing new there. I thought this bad press for her had been debunked years ago.

Based on the theory that her name might have meant 'tower' they tried to suggest equivalence between her and



Helen Bond and Jean Taylor had little new to say about the core subject in Channel 4's *Jesus' Female Disciples: The New Evidence*.

Peter the 'rock'.

Then they took brief mentions of women in the Gospels and speculated extensively with little actual evidence. They really stretched it in trying to show from an ancient mural that there had been a woman bishop. There were telling phrases like "I have a theory...", "I'd like to think...", "I kind of like the idea that there might have been". The narrator said they had set out on a dramatic road trip to try to prove controversial claims – it seemed to me that there

was too much shoe horned of flimsy evidence to fit a predetermined theory.

Meanwhile there were some noteworthy items on the Eighth Amendment debate. On Wednesday of last week **The Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) featured an interview with Dr Mark Murphy of Together For Yes. Towards the start I thought we were going to get a thorough and challenging interview.

When Dr Murphy used the illogical argument that because abortion pills were

already in use illegally, we should legalise them, Kenny suggested we don't legalise what people do "simply because they're doing it". Unfortunately most of the rest of it was soft and unchallenging.

Deflected

Dr Murphy's arguments were not robustly "interrogated". For example he used the old slogan about abortion pills being "very safe", but wasn't asked how safe they were for the unborn baby. Dr Murphy accused the pro-life side of lies, and then claimed that the Eighth Amendment means that the baby "takes precedence" over the mother, when in fact the Eighth explicitly acknowledges equality. In fact if anything, especially in the first two trimesters of pregnancy the mother must get priority, as, if she dies, so does the baby. Kenny didn't make that point either.

He did put it to Dr Murphy



Ivan Yates (Newstalk).

PICK OF THE WEEK

MY COUNTRY, MY FAITH: IRELAND

EWTN, Sunday, April 15, 10.30am, also Wednesday 7pm

Kathy Sinnott and Fr Brian McKeivitt discuss abuse scandals, poor catechesis and erosion of Catholic faith.

CATHOLIC AUTHORS

EWTN Monday, April 16, 11am

Though not a Catholic, the writings of C.S. Lewis have a great influence on Catholics who seek a deeper understanding of their faith.

THE LEAP OF FAITH

RTÉ Radio 1, Friday, April 20, 10pm

Topical religious and ethical issues.

that the pro-life side would describe the unborn as a "baby" (duh!), but his guest deflected – "I will always turn it back obviously to the woman", and Kenny did not pursue the issue.

On Friday's show there was an even softer interview with the anonymous 'Deirdre' who told of taking abortion pills. Both contrasted strongly with a very challenging interview recently with Maria Steen, of the pro-life side.

Over on **The Hard Shoulder** (also Newstalk) on the Thursday evening Ivan Yates interviewed Peadar Tóibín TD (Sinn Féin). As always Tóibín started by outlining his party's pro-choice policy, but then gave a robust defence of his own pro-life position. He stressed he was coming at this from a secular human rights perspective. He said if we don't give equality to everyone, including the unborn,

then it was a case of discrimination.

Yates gave him a good run at the start but then made so many interruptions, quizzing Tóibín intensely. I hope he will give the same style of grilling to his next pro-choice guest.

Further, Yates gave what I'd consider a naïve view that "no-one is in favour of abortion". He also pointed out that you couldn't be sure what legislation would follow as there might be a new minister for health. "That's exactly the point," said Tóibín, pointing out that the whole point of a Constitution was to protect basic human rights from the 'ebb and flow' and flip flopping of party politics. Plenty of that around.

1 boregan@hotmail.com



Pat O'Kelly

Music

Nothing unlucky about Friday 13 at the Opera House

Hopefully Friday, April 13, 2018 will prove an auspicious date for Irish National Opera when the curtain rises on its inaugural production – Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. The *première's* venue is fittingly Wexford's National Opera House after which the company moves to Dublin's Gaiety Theatre where the enchanting piece has performances on April 17, 18, 20 and 21.

Solidly supported by the Arts Council, Irish National Opera comes about through the amalgamation of Opera Theatre Company and Wide Open Opera, both of which had conductor Fergus Sheil as artistic director. He now enjoys the same position with



Peter Whelan.

INO.

The opera's direction is in the capable hands of Patrick Mason with set designs by Francis O'Connor and lighting by Paul Keogan. Well-respected for his work in drama, Mason's operatic

involvements have been seen in several UK centres and at Wexford and his production of Puccini's *Il Trittico* for English National Opera was nominated for an Olivier Award.

Dublin-born Peter Whelan, also artistic director of the Irish Baroque Orchestra, conducts the *Figaro* performances with the Irish Chamber Orchestra in the pit. Whelan, who has had a long-standing relationship with IBO, holds professorships in London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music. His research into music in Dublin before Handel's time here has unearthed a corpus of interesting items.

New Zealand-born Samoan

bass-baritone Jonathan Lemalu leads INO's cast as the valet Figaro. Lemalu gave an NCH recital in November 2013 but this is his first operatic venture in Ireland. He is a regular artist in Covent Garden, New York's Metropolitan and the Bavarian State Opera among many other prestigious houses.

Tara Erraught hardly needs an introduction to Irish audiences. It is marvellous to welcome her return for this INO inaugural as the maid Susanna, soon to be Figaro's bride even if a number of intrigues try to thwart the plan. Tara Erraught's stellar career has recently found her at the Met for *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Hansel and*

● In more serious mould, the Guinness Choir presents Bach's monumental *B minor Mass* at the NCH on Monday, April 16. Under David Milne, the international soloists find Canadian soprano Catherine Redding and New Zealand tenor Christopher Bowen joining established natives Norah King, Alison Browner and John Molloy.

It is uncertain why the avowed Protestant Bach should compose an essentially Catholic Mass but the energy, drive, passion and excitement of the music positively praises the Almighty.

Gretel.

In Munich, Ms Erraught has so far undertaken over 30 roles at the State Opera and her debut in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* in Vienna won her the accolade "new queen of *bel canto*". She has appeared as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Glyndebourne and as Siebel in *Faust* at the Salzburg Festival.

Northern Ireland's Ben McAteer and Dublin-born Máire Flavin, also extending their careers abroad, are the Count and Countess Almaviva while Aoife Miskelly is the simpering Cherubino and Suzanne Murphy the conniving Marcellina who, through one of the opera's amusing twists, is discovered to be Figaro's mother.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Half a century of Waterford politics

The Redmonds and Waterford: A Political Dynasty, 1891 – 1952

by Pat McCarthy
(Four Courts Press 2018, €29.95 pb)

J. Anthony Gaughan

John Redmond inaugurated the Redmond political dynasty when he was returned to the House of Commons for New Ross in December 1881. It would remain in place until 1952.

A native of Wexford, he was born in 1851. Educated at Clongowes College and Trinity College, Dublin, he was called to the bar in 1887 and practised on the Munster circuit. On entering the House of Commons he became one of the whips in the Irish Parliamentary Party and his oratorical skills were put to good use inside and outside parliament. He remained loyal to Parnell during the split in the party in 1890.

Routed

Just a few weeks after Parnell's death in October 1891 Redmond successfully contested the seat in Waterford city against no less a person than Michael Davitt, a seat which he held for the rest of his life. The Parnellites were routed in that general election and won only nine seats to the Anti-Parnellites' 72.

Redmond found himself



leading a declining rump of the IPP. However, there was pressure on the warring factions of the IPP to unite, which they did in January 1900. Redmond was elected chairman.

Redmond was a brilliant parliamentarian. In the House of Commons he sought concessions for Ireland until the opportunity to press for Home Rule arose in 1910 when Prime minister H.H. Asquith was forced to offer a Home Rule bill. Eventually this was placed on the statute book with the provisos that Home Rule would not come into operation until parliament had the opportunity to make special provision for Ulster and that the act be suspended for the duration of the war.

The war and the 1916 Ris-

ing destroyed Redmond's life's work. In return for the enactment of the Home Rule bill he had given total support to the recruitment for the war.

“The core of the electoral support for the Redmond's came from the pig-buyers of Ballybricken”

This was no longer popular. Redmond died on March 6, 1915. In the general election in December 1918 the Home Rule party was wiped out in southern Ireland winning only six seats. One of those seats was Waterford city, won by John Redmond's son, Captain William Redmond.

Captain Redmond had

been earlier elected MP for Tyrone East in the general election in December 1910. While serving in France in 1917 he was decorated for bravery. Following his election in 1918 to the seat in Waterford he continued to serve as an MP until he was elected to Dáil Éireann as an independent TD in 1923. With Tom O'Donnell he co-founded the Irish National League in 1926.

He made an unsuccessful attempt to form a coalition to replace the Cosgrave government in 1927. The Irish National League was reduced to two seats, Redmond's and another, after the general election of September 1927. He and O'Donnell then wound up the party and Redmond joined Cumann na Gaedheal in 1931.



Far left: John Redmond (left with his brother Willie at Clongowes Wood. Left: A poster depicting John Redmond, “the British ventriloquist”.

After Captain Redmond's death in 1932 his widow won his seat in the general election in January 1933. She went on to stand in seven consecutive general elections for the Waterford seat and was returned in each, initially for Cumann na Gaedheal and subsequently for Fine Gael.

Constituents

A friend of Eoin Duffy, she was a central figure in the Blue shirt movement in Waterford city and county in the years 1933-4. She was indefatigable in her work for her constituents and a frequent contributor to Dáil debates on social issues. She died on May 3, 1952, ending the Redmond political dynasty in Waterford city.

The core of the electoral support for the Redmond's came from the pig-buyers of Ballybricken, a district in the city. The Ballybricken Pig Buy-

ers Association was a central part of the bacon industry in the city which in the 1890s constituted more than a quarter of the bacon industry in the country. They were excellent employers and exercised considerable influence.

At the behest of John Redmond many of the young men in Waterford signed up to fight in France and by 1915 more than a third of the city's male population had rallied to the colours and a strong tradition of joining the crown forces was established.

Over the years the pig-buyers and ex-servicemen supplied the bully boys who at the hustings controlled the streets and sought to intimidate anyone who challenged the Redmonds at the polls. Their activities are described in detail in this fine study of the halcyon years of the Redmond political dynasty in Waterford city.

How teenagers become human

Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain

by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore
(Penguin Ireland, €16)

Peter Hegarty

In a congenial, fascinating book neuroscientist Sarah-Jayne Blakemore explores the wondrous malleability of the human brain. The brain is continually changing and adapting. If I took up juggling, the part of my brain that co-ordinates the movement of my limbs would expand, as would the region responsible for orientation and spatial awareness if I were to start driving a taxi.

The term ‘adolescent’ – a recent coinage – describes that distinct phase between childhood and

adulthood, when young people turn ‘changeable and fickle’ as Aristotle put it.

Blakemore explains teenage capriciousness and willingness to take risks in terms of the uneven growth of the brain during adolescence: the area that restrains and inhibits us develops more slowly than the region that produces the sensations of pleasure we experience after taking a chance, or trying something new.

Consequences

Warning adolescents about the long-term risks of smoking, drinking or taking drugs is close to pointless, Blakemore argues. Adolescents lack a developed understanding of

the consequences of their actions. They don't have a store of cautionary memories, unlike adults, who know what a hangover feels like, and how difficult it is to give up the gaspers.

“Warning adolescents about the long-term risks of smoking, drinking or taking drugs is close to pointless”

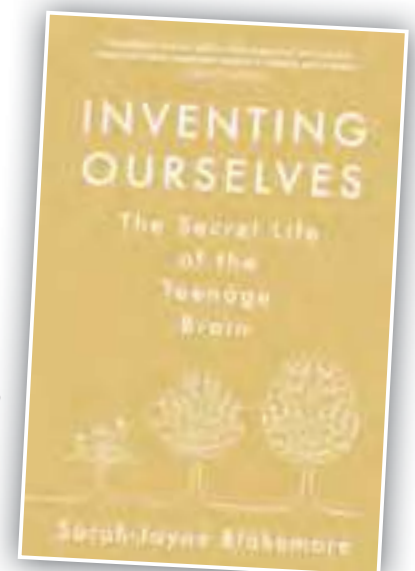
In relation to smoking Blakemore suggests that parents talk to their teenagers about bad breath, malodorous clothes and stained teeth: they might usefully tell people who want their peers to consider them cool that smoking

makes you smell horrible.

Adolescents are receptive beings. As their brains develop, they become more aware of the feelings of others, more empathetic, more sensitive. They listen to socially useful messages, about bullying and its prevention for instance.

Teenagers might learn more efficiently if schools opened and closed later, Blakemore suggests. As children enter adolescence their circadian rhythm – body clock – changes: their brains prefer to remain active longer into the evening, and rest longer in the mornings.

This altered circadian rhythm also explains why teenagers like a lie-in at weekends: they're simply catching up on missed sleep.



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.

Churchill, the British leader and the Irish problem



Churchill & Ireland
by Paul Bew
(Oxford: Oxford University Press)
£9.99pb

Ian d'Alton

One of the problems that an historian faces is the asymmetric. In the case of Britain and Ireland, that is particularly acute. The Irish see Britain through the telescope the right way round. It looms large in our consciousness. Most Britons, though, look at us through the other end of that telescope – and they see, if they see at all, something small and relatively insignificant.

It is given to very few British politicians to comprehend Ireland – north and south – as anything more than a side-dish to the main course. Arthur 'Bloody' Balfour – Chief Secretary for Ireland in the later 19th Century – was quite proud of "the Ireland that we made": landed, devout and conservative.

Churchill never saw Britain's role in Ireland as state- or people-maker particularly in that light. But that did not mean that Ireland was unimportant to Churchill – it just meant that we were largely seen as irritant and indigent.

Connection

He spent some five years of his infancy living in Ireland. He also had Irish cousins – the gentry family of Leslie in Monaghan – and he maintained a life-long connection with Sir Shane Leslie. But Sir Shane was idiosyncratic, to put it mildly, and was hardly representative of anyone but himself.

Winston's father was Lord Randolph, another one-off, famous for playing the Orange Card in 1886 against Home Rule. It is arguable, of course, that the Orangemen were



equally adept at playing the 'Union Card'. Who was manipulating whom? And while Churchill was a significant player in the 1920-22 period, he is probably best remembered in Ireland for his unrelenting hostility to the southern Irish state's policy of neutrality during the Second World War.

De Valera's condolences on the death of Hitler enraged him. Yet Churchill failed to appreciate that on war's outbreak at any rate, the policy of neutrality had broad public support – and that included most of the Protestant representatives in the Oireachtas, as well as the *Irish Times*, a community that one suspects might have been reasonably susceptible to Churchillian flights of fancy.

Paul Bew's book attempts to explain the almost unexplainable – Churchill's twists and turns in regard to Ireland.

It is a thoughtful and engaging exegesis, and it holds a mirror to the larger Churchill – also one of contradictions, twists, turns, word-drunkness, great confusion and above all personal and political calculation.

I still find it difficult to forgive his insistence on the disastrous Gallipoli campaign in the Great War. He attempted to second-guess the generals and admirals on the spot. The results were enormous Irish casualties. My grandfather was one – a 'Pal', a loyal Catholic. He was lucky, getting out of Suvla Bay with 'only' a Turkish bullet in his leg, but a lifetime of disability.

“Paul Bew's book attempts to explain the almost unexplainable – Churchill's twists and turns in regard to Ireland”

Churchill may have redeemed himself, in British eyes at least, with holding fast in the darkest hour of 1940. Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night* writes that “there is no darkness but ignorance”. In relation to Winston Churchill, Lord Bew ably reminds us of that.

This book, first published in hardback in 2016, is now happily re-issued in paperback for a wider readership. Though his attempt to establish a psychological empathy between Churchill and Collins was called by one reviewer “psycho-babble”, the settled critical view of the original edition was that Bew's analysis of where Churchill and Ireland intersected and diverged was broadly on target; that is this reviewer's judgement, too.

The World of Books

By the books editor

The classical culture of old Connemara

About in bed with one of those picked-up bugs that linger on, has allowed me to read some books that I ought to have read, or reread, ages ago. I can leave the rereads for now, for one the reads was extraordinarily interesting and revealing.

This is James Berry's *Tales of the West of Ireland*. I was aware of the book for it was originally published by Liam Miller at the Dolmen Press in 1966, and every Irish bookman is familiar with that press and its output.

Now James Berry may well not be a familiar name (though copies of the earlier editions can be bought on line). His book certainly had a strange history. He was a traditional story teller of a unique kind. During the last years of his life he wrote a long series of partly interlinked recitals of his stock of tales for the readers of *The Mayo News*. He spent his entire life in Connacht, dying at the age of 72 in 1914.

An American academic who taught literature at Aquinas College in Michigan, while leading groups of her students on stays in the west of Ireland in 1964-1965, discovered the tales in a family records and set about, not only recovering them, but in getting them back into print.

Romance

The stories reveal a rip-roaring world of peddlers, shanachies, smugglers, poteen makers, pirates, revenue-men and peasants that is filled with vigour, romance and appreciation of a well-turned tale of adventure and intrigue. It is the story of a world that Jack Yeats could have illustrated.

But here I have only space for only one passage in the book that struck me particularly. In one tale he is speaking of a poet Michael Sweeney, 'the Robert Burns of Connacht' (with all that implies).

This leads into praise of the hedge school: "The peasantry of Sweeney's day who could read and write were far and away the best and cleverest men Ireland has produced since, or ever will again."

Be that as it maybe, this rich store of literature was down to the work of the hedge schoolmasters of the 18th Century. He goes on:

"The hedge schoolmaster was not the sort of man Carleton and Lever have lampooned, no such thing; he was generally a well-informed stranger, the scion perhaps of some noble family who had been disinherited by Elizabeth, or by James the First, or by the inhuman Cromwell.

"The school boys carried with them these masters Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, the *History of Greece and Rome*, the *Arabian Nights*, Thomas-a-Kempis, Dr Gallagher and Keating, the Old Testament, Sallust in English, Ovid, Ward's *Cantos*, McGeoghegan's *History of Ireland*, and a hundred and one other books.

"Where they all came from is one of the things that now astonishes me, for these books were in every peasant's cottage on the little loft over the fireplace, along with the wool-cards, the balls of yarn, and the spindles; there the books nested, some without covers, and all of them stained with smoke. When a boy had his *Odyssey* read, he exchanged it with another chap for his *Iliad*, and so on. They spent seven or eight years at this kind of work, and got them off by heart, as we called it."

Good stuff

I have said and quoted enough to give readers a notion of the good stuff to be found in this book. But on the classical tradition among the peasantry I was reminded of Padraic Colum's once well-known poem (now I suspect, like the poet himself, almost forgotten), 'A Poor Scholar of the Forties', a man of a later generation: of whom the Younger Irelander of 1818 asked "What good to us your wisdom-store,/ Your Latin verse, your Grecian lore?" To which the scholar replied, as many might in all ages:

"And what to me is Gael or Gall?
Less than the Latin or the Greek
I teach these by the dim rush-light
In smoky cabins night and week.
But what avail my teaching slight?
Years hence, in rustic speech, a phrase,
As in wild earth a Grecian vase!"

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Saturday
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Limerick

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THURSDAY 26TH APRIL

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MASS EACH DAY
11.00 A.M. and 3.00 P.M.

MASS ON FEAST
11.00 A.M.

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The Irish Catholic

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 227



ACROSS

- 1 Sandy place beside the sea (5)
 5 Not as warm (6)
 6 Use a spoon (4)
 8 Coming from our continent (8)
 9 Someone who comes to call (7)
 12 Wise saying (7)
 14 You use it to sweep the floor (5)
 15 The easiest thing to see in the night sky (4)
 16 Someone aged between thirteen and nineteen (8)

DOWN

- 1 It might be a double-decker

(3)

- 2 Heal (4)
 3 This part of a garment covers your arm (6)
 4 He's the Dad of your mother or father (11)
 5 What is being carried by a ship, for example (5)
 7 Neater (6)
 10 Make up something completely new (6)
 11 Strip of colourful material sometimes worn in the hair (6)
 12 Use it to put air in your tyres (4)
 13 A step on a ladder (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.345

Across – 1 Caribbean Sea 7 Lap 9 Pork 10 Ulster 11 Fear 14 Flays 15 Neigh 16 Odes 18 Totem 21 Yokel 22 Aesop 23 Endow 25 Bhaji 26 Offal 29 Nods 33 Resign 34 Rift 36 Aim 37 Playing by ear

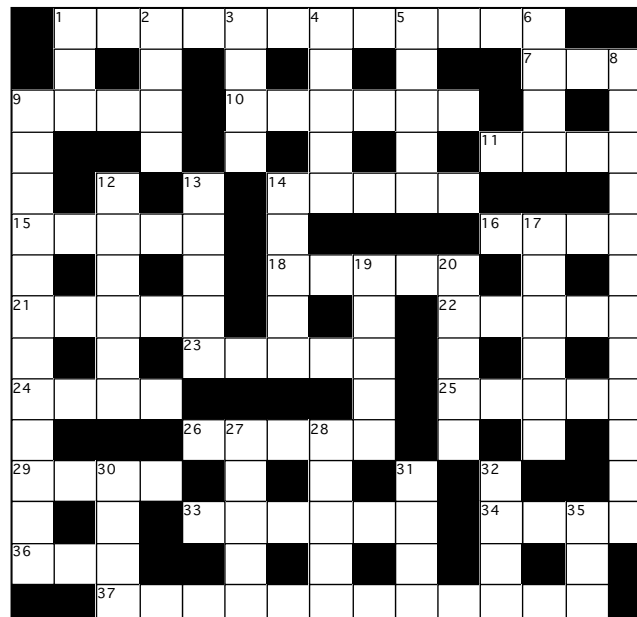
Down – 1 Coo 2 Raki 3 Blue whale 4 Easel 5 Needy 6 Aloe vera 8 Parish priest 9 Pennsylvania 12 Ticker 14 Fated 17 Dismal 19 Towel 20 Mamba 27 Fiery 28 Alien 30 Dump 31 Snub 32 Tree 35 Far

CHILDREN'S No.226

Across – 1 Captain Hook 6 Icicle 8 Evening 11 Eats 13 Improving 14 One 16 Glory 17 Edge 18 Crayon 19 Dig
Down – 1 Chisel 2 Painting 3 Axle 4 Horn 5 Open 7 Evergreen 9 Imitated 10 Giggling 12 Smell 15 Disc

Crossword

Gordius 346



ACROSS

- 1 Will Poles ever mop up MPVs? (6,6)
 7 Gratuity that comes with a recommendation of how to gamble with it? (3)
 9 Extract from a film (4)
 10 Portly (6)
 11 That drink is a Stinger, right? (4)
 14 Economic depression (5)
 15 Competitor, opponent (5)
 16 Five leave the Intrepid to find a Scottish slope (4)
 18 Whatever floats your boat, Noah! (5)
 21 Egyptian god - some macho, rustic type (5)
 22 Some turn to go fishing (5)
 23 Walk vainly (5)
 24 Pillage (4)
 25 Delf from the Far East? (5)
 26 Strengthen character in 16 across (5)
 29 Panache, flair (4)
 33 The last meal before bedtime (6)
 34 It's a pain, having some cognac heated (4)
 36 Total (3)
 37 The Scottish patron's holy? Holey, more like! (5,7)

DOWN

- 1 Friend (3)
 2 Nothing works? Oh, sorry! (4)

- 3, 19d & 20d 'Boss' of the Bossa Nova? (4,2,3,5)
 4 Copper or lead, for example (5)
 5 Snake poison (5)
 6 How hurtful it is when one's pen has a point! (4)
 8 With such stamina and determination, a creep's never around! (12)
 9 After Charlotte, are the Youngers ordained to become these later in life? (6,6)
 12 Indulge excessively (6)
 13 The social standing of many a girl (5)
 14 Less risky, now that fear's been dispelled (5)
 17 Get back when I leave Nigeria confused (6)
 19 See 3 down
 20 See 3 down
 27 Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in this French city (5)
 28 Constable, the artist, provides dried coconut (5)
 30 Equips with weapons (4)
 31 Put one's foot down in part of the Metro dispute (4)
 32 How grand, to find a beer that's masculine! (4)
 35 This ending is not hers (3)

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Sudoku Corner

227

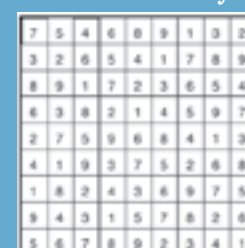
Easy



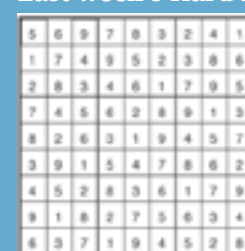
Hard



Last week's Easy 226



Last week's Hard 226



Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough



We must be ready to witness the Kingdom of Love

SOME THREE WEEKS AGO a supermarket in the small town of Trèbes in the southwest of France, became a scene of terror. An armed man, Redouane Lakdim, claiming to act in the name of Islam, entered the shop, shot a worker and a customer, and took a hostage, intending to use her as a shield against the forces of law and order gathering outside.

Among the gendarmes who had rushed to this horrifying scene was Lt Col Arnaud Beltrame, a ferociously talented officer, newly assigned to the area. During negotiations with Lakdim, Beltrame offered to take the place of the hostage.

We all know what happened next: the tragic death of a dedicated servant of peace.

Tragedy

It emerged in the aftermath of the tragedy that Beltrame was a recent convert to Christ, having received his first communion at the age of 33. According to the priest who was preparing Arnaud and his fiancée for marriage, this accomplished man of the world had even built an oratory in his home as a place for personal prayer.



Lt Col Arnaud Beltrame.

Clearly, offering himself in exchange for a hostage flowed from his Faith in the one who said,

“Man has no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:13). But it’s clear too that, aside from this moment of great heroism, his daily commitment to excellence was of a piece with his following of Christ.

His mother bore witness to her son, saying: “Arnaud could never put up with mediocrity; he always wanted to go further, higher, faster.”

Was Arnaud Beltrame an active member of the Church? I have no idea whether he fulfilled any of the undoubtedly important lay roles in his parish – reading, singing, collecting, parish council work – but I do know that when Beltrame put on his gendarme’s cap on the morning of March 23, he was acting as a member of Christ’s Body. When he went to work that

morning, and every morning, he was doing something holy.

How so? Isn’t work something secular and worldly, remote from the holiness of the church sanctuary? Far from it. According to the clear teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the vocation of the laity is precisely secular: “What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature[...]. [They] seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God [...]. They are called [to the ordinary circumstances of family and social life] by God so that [...] they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven” (*Lumen Gentium* 31).

Arnaud Beltrame offers a vivid paradigm of the ‘normal’ lay vocation: confidently secular, worldly and holy”

If we think of the lay vocation as primarily a matter of getting involved in running the parish and its liturgies, we risk missing this point. We risk, as Pope Francis

often says, ‘mothballing’ the Church, making of the Church a cosy community, rather than a missionary movement.

Arnaud Beltrame offers a vivid paradigm of the ‘normal’ lay vocation: confidently secular, worldly and holy, sanctifying the world by being love at the heart of the world.

This is the call of all the baptised: to be holy policemen and accountants and parents, to be the leaven of the Gospel in our schools and sports clubs, to draw strength from prayer as we canvass and campaign and organise, to transform social media with the joy of the Gospel and to be ready always and everywhere – even on a Friday morning when terror grips a sleepy town – to witness to the Kingdom of Love which alone will endure when the world passes away.

COMMENTATORS on Church affairs often speak of the importance of the laity gaining ‘decision-making power’. I’m never sure what decisions are being referred to. It would certainly be good for the voices of the laity to be heard in financial and pastoral decisions of parishes and dioceses, but there are even weightier decisions to be made by the baptised: the decision, each morning, to turn from sin and towards Christ; the decision of workers to consecrate their labour; the decision of a mother to teach her child to pray; the decision of a carer to love with the love of Christ. These are decisions that really matter, and that are, with God’s help, always in our power.



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