

The Irish Catholic

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Call for parishes to lead the way on 'red alert' climate crisis

Chai Brady

Parishes across Ireland can "lead the way" in tackling the climate emergency with Catholic activists pleading for the same energy that went into fighting Covid-19 to tackle the crisis facing the planet.

It comes as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned this week that without urgent action to tackle dangerous gases, every country on the planet will suffer.

Jane Mellett of Trócaire said climate change was already affecting the world's poorest people and said every parish in Ireland had a responsibility to do their bit.

"From physically decarbonising a parish, a diocese, a school, a congregation and families, these are the groups Pope Francis is inviting to take on this challenge," she told *The Irish Catholic*.

Encouraging parishes to be proactive, Ms Mellett said "There are shining examples of parishes that have really taken this on and it brings life to the parish. It's something that young people are really passionate about and I think if parishes can make this link between youth ministry and care for the earth, people respond to that kind of witness."

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'So good to be back!'



Parishioners in Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath Hilary Maye with son Bob and daughter Amy who are delighted to be back to Mass and looking forward to meeting other returning parishioners.

LA SAGRADA FAMÍLIA

A house of God like no other

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CHAI BRADY

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

Bishops to proceed with sacraments undeterred by renewed Govt advice

Staff reporter

Bishops are to continue with First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies this month despite the Government renewing an appeal that the ceremonies be delayed.

It was revealed last week that bishops in Waterford & Lismore, Elphin, Raphoe, and Killaloe had given priests the green light to proceed with Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies if they felt it was safe to do so. They were joined by cross-border bishops in Armagh, Derry and Clogher who also advised priests in their parishes in the Republic that they could proceed on the same basis. The Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell said that while he felt the ceremonies should wait, he would not stand in the way of parishes that wanted to proceed.

Criticised

However, this was criticised by the Taoiseach Micheál Martin and after a meeting of the Cabinet sub-committee on Covid-19 the Government asked that the ceremonies be delayed until September.

However, *The Irish Catholic* understands that the advice from the sub-committee has not changed plans in any of the dioceses that already said they would proceed.

This newspaper understands that the bishops in the dioceses will perform some of the Confirmation ceremonies themselves while others will be presided over by the parish priest and numbers restricted to those permitted by the current public health advice.

According to Church law, the "ordinary minister" for



Saoirse McMenamin of St Joseph's Primary School, Ederney, Co. Fermanagh, relaxes after her Confirmation celebrations in St Joseph's Church in May in the Diocese of Clogher

the Sacrament of Confirmation is a bishop. However, the law also allows bishops to delegate this faculty to priests – something which has become more common in recent years.

Meaningful

The Irish Catholic understands that parishes in the

Republic who are proceeding with the sacraments are working to ensure that the ceremonies remain meaningful to the children and their families while being simpler than in previous years. It is also being impressed upon families the need to ensure that post-ceremony social celebrations

are carried out in a responsible fashion and in line with Government advice aimed at slowing the spread of the pandemic.

First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies have been proceeding in the North since spring with no reported Covid-19 related incidents.

Fr Neal Carlin led many from addiction along 'roadways of life'

Jason Osborne

Fr Neal Carlin is being remembered for leading people to God along "stepping stones" he laid throughout his long ministry.

Fr Carlin, of Fahan, Co. Donegal, died Friday, August 6, having established a number of institutions dedicated to spirituality and fighting addiction in his local region.

He set up the Columba Community, as well as the White Oaks addiction treatment and rehab centre on the Donegal/Derry border. As well as these, he founded the St Anthony's Retreat Centre and the IOSAS Centre and Celtic Prayer Garden in Muff.

Fr Carlin ministered not only to the Faithful of Ireland, but to those in Scotland, too, serving in a number of parishes there before returning to Derry.

His funeral Mass was led by Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown at St Eugene's Cathedral on Monday and was attended by family, friends and a number of priests.

Inishowen priest and friend of Fr Carlin's, Fr Francis Bradley told those gathered, "Fr Neal laid stepping stones for others which would bring them along the roadways of life, a shlí na firinne – on the way of truth - which takes us to heaven".

Following the Mass, Fr Carlin was buried at St Mary's Cemetery, Ardmore.

Call for parishes to lead the way on 'red alert' climate crisis

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Fr Seán McDonagh SSC, an outspoken eco-theologian said that it is important for people to move from being concerned about climate change to taking concrete action in their own parishes.

"It's a moral issue that must be connected to action, we've got good at talking about climate change but what we need is action to do something about it.

"Generating electricity from solar energy on our roofs [in churches], that's going to happen right across the board because energy has been generated by fossil fuel, that has to stop within ten years," he said.

Author and theologian Fr Dermot Lane told *The Irish Catholic* it is vital for the State to partner with local communities to bring about action. He criticised the Government for what he described as "totally ignoring" faith communities regarding the challenge of climate change.

"The faith communities have a particular contribution to make, the great religions of the world all have a commitment to the care of our common home," he said.

He added: "The Catholic Church in Ireland for the last three years has been rolling out resources about the care of creation and has made those resources

available to all the parishes in the country, it's known as the 'Season of Creation'. It provides resources for liturgies, for Sunday worship and for action at the local level.

"I've never heard any politicians or any Government minister refer to the contribution that faith communities can make to the provision of motivation and inspiration to act to save our planet," he said.

The 'Season of Creation runs from September 1-October 4 on the theme 'Restoring Our Common Home'. It aims to celebrate creation as well as encouraging awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment.

Preaching to remain top priority for new Dominican head

Jason Osborne

The new provincial of the Irish Dominicans has said that Catholics cannot fully live their faith without the Mass and other sacraments.

Fr John Harris OP was speaking to *The Irish Catholic* upon his election as prior provincial at the weekend and appealed for Catholics who have been away from the sacraments during the pandemic to return.

Asked whether the Dominicans will continue to appeal to those who've been away

from the Church, particularly after the pandemic, Fr Harris said he "would definitely encourage people to come back to the fountain" that the Church and its sacraments are.

"The answer to what we're talking about is – what you are looking for is Jesus.

"The Lord Jesus in the sacraments...the supernatural life of grace is very important. The sacraments are the means of that life of grace, the life of God within us. We cannot be expected to live the supernatural life of grace without the normal means of the

supernatural life of grace, which is the sacraments."

Fr Harris said his part in his election is just "an act of obedience to accept the election," and that he leaves the results "up to God".

"If I was to look at it just by myself, I would be very, desperately apprehensive, but maybe the glory of God can shine through all the more," he said.

Fr Harris said he's "very encouraged" by people's support and prayers, and that his number one priority is to "encourage and

support the brethren" [his fellow Dominicans] in their mission of bringing the Gospel to people.

"St Dominic founded the order of preachers so it's not an option," Fr Harris said, continuing, "We have to preach the Gospel, to offer people the joy and the hope of the Gospel. I think it's very necessary.

"St Dominic is the man who gave us that job, and we have to follow on with what Dominic wants. Of course, evangelisation is how we understand it. Dominic called it 'preaching'."

Winning silver while jumping for Jesus

Jason Osborne

Australian high-jumper Nicola McDermott, 24, took home silver after competing in the women's high jump in Tokyo, but God is of greater value to her.

"Jumping with the peace that you are loved can take you to heights you have never seen before," she tweeted following her Olympic success, adding the hashtag, "#JumpingforJesus".

Ms McDermott not only took home the silver medal, but also cleared a personal best and set an Oceanian record of 2.02 metres with her leap.

On her blog, Ms McDermott says of her faith, "In the pursuit of sporting success, there was a large turning point in my career

when I realised that no gold medal could bring lasting satisfaction to my heart.

"I discovered satisfaction was not found in a performance but found in a person. Everything changed when I was introduced to Jesus."

Ms McDermott once saw her sport as "a performance-driven passion to bring meaning to life", but says that now with God, "it is an international platform to make the unbiased, consistent love of the King known".

Beginning a ministry called 'Everlasting Crowns', Ms McDermott says her main focus now is to see "fellow athletes transformed by Jesus's perfect love, planted in churches and disciples to be a blessing to every place they are sent".



Nicola McDermott

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Archbishop says drop the long face

Staff reporter

If Catholics want to attract more people to the Gospel they must radiate joy rather than come across as downcast, the Archbishop of Dublin has warned.

Dr Dermot Farrell was speaking at Mass on Monday to mark the 800th anniversary of the death of St Dominic in the church named for the founder of the Order of Preachers in Tallaght, Dublin.

"St Dominic can teach us that cheerfulness and kindness, reflected in our

faces, is a better witness to the Gospel than the 'funeral face' sometimes mentioned by Pope Francis in his homilies".

The archbishop warned that "our bitter thoughts and actions seep into our faces and infuse our words with a caustic bite; people notice when they look at us at Mass that we are a bunch of sour and dour faces."

"Don't forget to ask yourself this question: Am I a joyful person? Or, are am I one whose face is downcast, bitter and, at times, a grimace

that would stop a clock?" he asked.

Reflecting on the crises faced by St Dominic and his first followers, Dr Farrell said that "today, in the pastoral life of the Church there is another real crisis — in discovering and proclaiming the Good News, in other words — in evangelisation. And also in genuinely and deeply trusting God, our Father and God's ways."

Faith

Unlike the past, when the threat to the Faith in Ireland came from outside, today it comes from within, where almost all generations are constructing their own identities.

"We see this absolutely everywhere in our culture. Freedom of choice reigns supreme: I become the person that I choose to be... When we look at this crisis within the Church, then, like Jesus, we need a creative response to the chasm that exists between faith and daily living."

"In Ireland, at a time when the tap root of faith appears to have been damaged, the challenge is to make a convincing case for the Catholic Faith, a



Archbishop Dermot Farrell was conferred with the pallium at Mass in Dublin's pro-cathedral at the weekend by the Pope's representative in Ireland Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo. Blessed by Pope Francis at the Vatican on the feastday of Ss Peter and Paul, the woollen vestment marks the archbishop's authority as metropolitan of the Dublin ecclesiastical province as well as his communion with the Pope. Photos: John McElroy.

life of virtue, and a just society," he warned.

Dr Farrell also insisted that Catholics must be counter-cultural. "The person of faith stub-

bornly reads the world through the lens of the Word of God and speaks the divine truth.

"And this mission implies opposition, confrontation,

and critique, since the keepers of worldly order are frequently looking through other lenses and listening to other worlds," he said.



Archbishop Farrell with Papal Nuncio Dr Okolo after the Mass.

New film about Fr Des Wilson tonight

Chai Brady

A new film about one of Belfast's most loved peacemakers is to be screened tonight (Thursday).

Docs Ireland is to host a special screening of Fr Des - *The Way He Saw It* on Thursday as part of Féile an Phobail.

The documentary by Vincent Kinnaird focuses on the life of West Belfast priest, the late Fr Des Wilson.

Pioneering

The film looks at the pioneering work of Fr Des in community, education and peace-making, and is narrated by Belfast born actor, Stephen Rea.

The film is primarily recounted in Fr Des' own words, featuring interviews taken

between 2011-2018, alongside earlier footage.

It includes contributions from Stephen Rea, Rev. Brian Smeaton, a Church of Ireland minister on the Shankill Road in 1969, Eilish Rooney, a senior figure in the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University and Bernadette McAliskey, a civil rights activist and former MP.

Affectionately known as 'the people's priest', Fr Des spent his life helping those in need, particularly during the Troubles.

He continued to advocate for justice and against inequality until the end of his life in November 2019.

The documentary will be screened tonight (Thursday) at 7pm at the Odeon in Belfast. Further information is available at docsireland.ie

Envelope of bullets sent to Pope Francis

Jason Osborne

Italian police announced Monday that they have identified the sender of a letter addressed to Pope Francis containing three bullets.

While the police haven't released the name of the suspect, they said August 9 that it is a French citizen "already known to Vatican security, with whom the Carabinieri of Milan will now coordinate to evaluate the meaning of the gesture and its possible danger".

According to Italian news agency ANSA, the information that most interests investigators is the sender's location "because it would raise a different level of alarm to know if he were in France or in St Peter's Square in Rome".

The Italian police initially revealed that the envelope contained three pieces of nine millimetre ammunition and a message referring to financial operations in the Vatican.

Their latest statement revealed that the envelope also contained a copy of a 10 euro deposit, but it is not known why.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Apple to report images of child sexual abuse detected on iCloud

Apple will report images of child sexual abuse uploaded to iCloud to law enforcement in the US, the company said last week.

The new system will detect images called Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) using a process known as 'hashing', where images are transformed into unique numbers that correspond to that image.

The move will bring Apple into line with other cloud services which already scan user files using the same hashing systems for content that violates their terms of service.

Apple says its new system is more private for users than previous approaches to eliminating images of child abuse because it uses sophisticated cryptography on Apple's servers and user devices.

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The IRA man who prayed for those he had killed every day of his life...

How should we commemorate the Irish Civil War - the centenary occurring at the turn of the year? If it were left to Fergal Keane, the renowned war reporter, it wouldn't be 'commemorated' at all.

He's really troubled by that word 'commemoration' - with its overtones of honouring an event - because he's seen so much of the sorrow that war and civil conflict causes. He's seen it over three decades in the North of Ireland, in Rwanda, Iraq and the Balkans; he quit war reporting 18 months ago because he's been suffering from conflict-induced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). "War left me traumatised - it damaged my mental health," he says. He broke down and couldn't return to war zones.

Not only does the experience of conflict cause deep psychological (as well as physical) wounds, he believes: but there is epigenetic trauma - transmitted through families across the



Mary Kenny



Fergal Keane is war weary

generations. He is deeply distressed by the history of his own home place, Listowel, Co. Kerry, where there were "agonyes of revolution and civil war". His grandmother and great-uncle were IRA activists in the War of Independence and witnessed terrible things. Then, even more terrible things were experienced in the Civil War. Exploring the archives now available, Fergal perceives

some of the fallout: the alcoholism, depression, "troubles with nerves" that followed for decades afterwards.

Church

One Listowel man, Con Brosnan, went to the church every day for the rest of his life to pray for the men he had killed. Fergal reiterated the story of the killing of James Kane, a fisheries inspector in Listowel in June 1921. The IRA headquarters ordered his execution because he was suspected of passing information to the RIC, the police force, then supplemented by the Black and Tans. Mr Kane was taken to Knocknure on a beautiful summer's evening where the execution was to be carried out. A priest was called to administer the last rites. The priest asked if the man's life could be spared,

but was told that orders from HQ must be followed. Mr Kane was instructed to write his last will, which he did, and asked that his body be left near Listowel. He wrote to his children: "I give you all my blessing and pray God may protect you all. Pray for me and get some Masses said." He added that he received "the greatest kindness" from his captors.

The executioners and their victim then knelt and said a decade of the Rosary together. Mr Kane remained praying until the end. The killing squad, which included Mr Brosnan, Dan Enright, Denis Quille and Brian O'Grady - who became Kevin O'Higgins' close associate. They agreed that James Kane had been "a good man".

Fergal Keane was giving an impassioned talk at the West Cork History Festival last weekend (he has also recounted the story of James Kane in his affecting history-memoir *Wounds*.) I've seldom seen a man so haunted by the

accounts of war as Fergal is. He has come to hate conflict. "I'm up to here with killing and death."

His proposal to replace commemorations is - just tell the stories. Say what happened. Tell the stories of the defeated as well as the victors, the losers and the silenced. Though his family was Republican, Fergal has sympathy for the RIC men - 80% of the ordinary constables were Catholics - who were targeted and killed. Attempts to include them in public commemorations have proved controversial: so just tell their stories.

Fergal, now 60, has changed from reporting war to healing its damage: he's been involved with The Wave Trauma Centre in Belfast, which addresses the psychological scars of war, arising now from the northern troubles.

He gets angry and impatient with talk of heroes and villains. "Surely to God we've moved beyond that?" We must see war as it is - the pooling of blood on the floor, the pieces of human skin hanging from trees. Here is a man with a mission, and a crusader for truth.

• All honour to boxer Kellie Harrington who has lifted the nation by winning gold at Tokyo - and bravo to all athletes who won Olympic medals. But I'd also like to applaud Sarah Mortimer from Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow, who has just swum the English Channel in 13 hours, 35 minutes, Dover to Cap Gris Nez. She's not a competitive swimmer and only began training three years ago.

She swam the Channel for the sightsaving charity Orbis and their work in Ethiopia. Sarah, who is 48, is dedicated to helping to prevent blindness in Africa, especially among children. Such a worthy cause. And I hope she also had a satisfying swim - and the five minutes she was allowed in France!

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Govt commitment to 'safe access zones' dubbed farcical

Chai Brady

The Government's continued commitment to introduce 'safe access zones' around abortion clinics has been described as "farcical" by a Laois-Offaly TD.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Carol Nolan TD accused the Minister for Health of being "openly terrified of the pro-choice lobby" over the issue.

Minister Stephen Donnelly said he was "fully committed" to introducing legislation on safe access zones around healthcare facilities over the weekend, adding: "This commitment is in the programme for Government." This comes after reports the legislation had been shelved, provoking a strong response from pro-choice groups and the media.

Satisfied

Garda Commissioner Drew Harris told previous Health Minister Simon Harris in late 2019 that he was satisfied that existing public order legislation could "adequately deal with any reasonable



Carol Nolan TD

public order incident that may arise at such centres".

The commissioner added: "I re-confirm my views expressed at our recent meeting that protests to date at such centres have not contravened the law and are peaceful."

Ms Nolan said: "The Government position on exclusion zones would be farcical if it were not so serious. It represents the triumph of political pandering over respect for constitutional and civic values and it needs to be abandoned once and for all."

“The focus of this review should not be about trying to create wider access to abortion but rather on finding ways to reduce the spiralling abortion rate”

"He needs to stand up for the core values of free speech, recognise the peacefulness of pro-life supporters and stop insisting that he will introduce blatantly discriminatory laws to appease an aggressive and misleading campaign that falsely caricatures pro-life vigils without evidence or substantive reasons."

Responding to the Minister for Health's statement, spokesperson for the Pro Life Campaign, Eilís Mulroy said: "The Government should never have committed to bringing forward such legislation in the first instance. If enacted, it would represent a gross infringement of civil liberties and freedom of expression."

Peaceful

She said that "pro-life volunteers are extremely peaceful and respectful whenever they assemble in public. To introduce a law that specifically singles out and targets pro-lifers would be a totally unjust and discriminatory move".

"The focus of this review should not be about trying to create wider access to abortion but rather on finding ways to reduce the spiralling abortion rate and putting supports in place to provide positive alternatives to abortion," Ms Mulroy added.

Newman letters go under the hammer

Staff reporter

Rare letters from Cardinal John Henry Newman are among items up for sale in an upcoming auction of the contents of Howth Castle.

The 24 letters described as "extremely rare" by auctioneers were written by the saint between the period 1863-1878.

The letters are addressed to Thomas Gaisford, eldest son of the late Dean of Christ Church, who was, like Cardinal Newman a recent convert to Catholicism and an enthusiastic supporter of the project of founding an Oratory in Dublin.

Most of the letters for sale date from 1863-1867 and concern the suitability of a site then being offered and the raising of subscriptions to pay for purchasing it and building the college.

Fonsie Mealy Auctioneers, from Kilkenny, will auction the contents of Howth Castle on September 8 and 9 and September 22 and 23.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Painful' funeral limits must be lifted – TD

The current limit of 50 people allowed to attend a funeral is "harmful and painful" and should be lifted, according to the leader of Aontú.

Peadar Kirby TD of Meath West said: "The Government cannot keep imposing these harmful and painful restrictions on grieving loved ones."

He said it should be possible to lift the restrictions since funerals can be compliant with health guidelines with the wearing of masks, social distancing, the doors and windows open in a massive church and with many outside.

"The Government consistently fails to think of the human cost of these restrictions. 18,000 people were in Croke Park for the Leinster SFC final, but only 50 are allowed gather to bury a loved one?" he asked.

One-quarter of pregnancies ended in abortion in England and Wales in 2019

New statistics have revealed that a record one-quarter of pregnancies in England and Wales ended in abortion in 2019 – with the 2020 figure estimated to be higher.

The figures, released by the Office of National Statistics, showed that 207,384 of 821,809 pregnancies conceived by residents of England and Wales in 2019 ended in abortion.

This meant that 25.2 per cent of pregnancies across women in all age groups were calculated to have ended in abortion that year.

This figure marks the highest percentage of pregnancies to end in abortion since records on this figure began in 1990 in England and Wales, and is the first time the figure has passed 25 per cent.

Covid memorial a 'place of healing' in Tallaght hospital

Jason Osborne

A permanent memorial honouring those who died during the pandemic, grieving families, hospital staff and the community has been unveiled in Tallaght University Hospital.

Fr John Kelly, Director of Pastoral Care at the hospital said of the 'Heart Memorial': "There's a lot of people who just want to forget what has happened over the last year and half but we can't forget the sacrifices that were made, the lives that were lost and the contribution of so many people, the healthcare staff here and the response from the local community which was always very positive."

"It's a place for people to come for healing and for some remembrance of the patients that we cared for during that time."

The memorial is located in the garden adjacent to the hospital chapel and pastoral care department. The piece is based on an initiative by the pastoral care team called 'identical hearts'.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and continuously since then, healthcare chaplains in TUH incorporated the practice of placing a handcrafted heart in the hand of a dying or deceased patient while an identical heart is given to the next of kin/family member (when present) or if not forwarded to them by post. These identical hearts are handcrafted by hospital staff and also sent in by members of the public.



Fr John Kelly, Director of Pastoral Care at Tallaght University Hospital with Richard Bierney, husband of the late Eithne who died during the pandemic, at the unveiling of the Covid-19 'Heart Memorial'.

Martin Mansergh

The View



Housing is a vital need but providing for it should not be at the price of amenity spaces

Paradise is depicted at the beginning of the Bible as a heavenly garden. Given that the origin of the Jewish religion was in a mainly dry, hot and arid region of the Middle East, not surprisingly a fertile and fruitful garden represented an ideal habitation for humanity.

The story inspired great works of art, such as Haydn's oratorio *The Creation*, the libretto for which was drawn not only from the Bible but John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Wisely perhaps, it did go much into the subject of the fall, where today the biblical account of the blame game is very problematic to modern sensibilities. If his powers had lasted longer, Haydn would have been tempted by a considerably more daunting subject for an oratorio, the Day of Judgment, at the other end, if a libretto from Goethe had been available. Goethe in his reworking of Faust did broach the subject of damnation, inspiring both Berlioz and Gounod. The greatest work of art on the subject is its depiction in the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo.

Risks

One of the biggest fears today, if one were to translate it into religious language, is that mankind risks being damned for its environmental sins. We in Ireland mostly benefit from relatively benign climatic conditions, but this may not always remain the case, and we could equally be adversely affected by the knock-on consequences of a dramatic deterioration elsewhere. Even if we are not a major contributor to world pollution, we have a responsibility to work for its reduction in solidarity with others.

“Well-kept and restored parks and gardens are among the country's biggest visitor attractions”

As records of the past show, the Irish climate can be harsh, but most of us are relatively insulated from its worst effects by modern living and working conditions. As a result, we are more conscious of the privilege of living in a country with a climate favourable to agri-



The Last Judgement by Michelangelo Buonarroti in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican: Photo: CNS/Paul Haring.

culture, forestry, and prolific and colourful plants. While the pleasure of floral beauty can be created in very limited spaces, we also have large-scale parks and gardens run by public authorities as well as those owned by private individuals and organisations that open them to the public. While there are fine gardens in other countries, we have a share of them ourselves, with an advantage of abundant sunshine and rain. In many climates, irrigation is a challenge, and the range of plants and trees that can survive and flourish in intense heat and long periods of drought is limited.

Garden

Last week, on holiday with extended family in Mayo, my wife Liz and I revisited the beautifully-maintained walled garden of Kylemore Abbey set against a magnificent background of mountains and lakes. My mother, whose hobby was landscape painting and who took lessons with Kenneth Webb, painted the Abbey twice. Benedictine nuns relocating from Ypres in war-torn Belgium took over around 1920 a fine estate laid out by Mitchell Henry MP, and used it in particular to run a girls' boarding school. As stated here previously, the survival of some of Ireland's architectural heritage through turbulent times owes much to occupancy by religious orders.

Well-kept and restored parks and gardens are among the country's biggest visitor attractions. Their value has been underscored by the pandemic, and over time park

maintenance and improvement has become a high priority for local authorities. While housing is a vital need, providing it should not be at the price of amenity spaces, where people can exercise and children can play. There is a potential contradiction between higher housing density and the social distancing required by any pandemic, which authorities responsible for planning and development need to re-evaluate.

“Kant once linked as sources of wonder the starry firmament above and the moral law within”

This country has overall a low density of population compared to our neighbours. Even a small garden or box-plant well-kept can create occupation and pleasure that contributes to quality of life and mental health. While it may not be a priority or a necessity for everyone, many experts are too ready to dismiss it. One can only speak from personal experience, but contact and physical work with nature as well as with animals, whether domestic or farm, is a great aid to sanity. I suspect even those charged with the highest demands of spiritual welfare try as far as they can to remain earthed.

In many countries, there is a sharp divide between winter and summer. Winter here is rarely barren. Holly berries, daphnes, jasmine and winter-flowering cherries blossom. In the mild Blackwater Val-

ley in Co. Cork, certain types of rhododendron even come into flower in late December. Beginning with snowdrops, plants, shrubs and trees grad-

ually come to life, illustrating nature's power of renewal. A fireworks display is short and spectacular. Natural displays can also be spectacular, but are on view throughout the year. Kant once linked as sources of wonder the starry firmament above and the moral law within.

Equilibrium

Many parts of our world, through hunger, conflict, disease and other afflictions, natural or man-made, are far from paradise, and more resemble a living hell, reminding the more fortunate of the amount that needs to be done to create any sort of human equilibrium. That is where religious values come in aid or should.

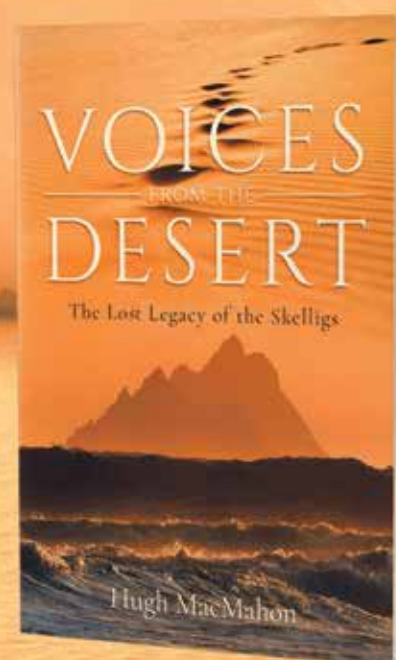
Coming back from Mayo, we stopped to look in on St Mary's Church, Headford,

consecrated by Archbishop John MacHale in 1865, for which a programme of restoration is underway. It was built thanks to an energetic priest Fr Peter Conway with the help of money that he raised from Irish exiles in America. The land for the church, the priest's house and a school was given, after some dispute and after evangelical opposition was sidelined, by the local landowner, a collateral relative of mine. The influence of the Church in the community was in the ascendant, that of the landlord on the decline, but in 1865 a harmony of interest had, for the purpose of providing proper Catholic church facilities for the vast majority, been achieved. A booklet describing all this and more, *A Journey of Hope*, is on sale in the church for €2.

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‘No greater love’ – heroic priest warmly remembered as man of openness and humour

Chai Brady

A heroic Cork priest who died after reportedly saving a woman by pushing her out of the way of a bus which lost control has been remembered for “his openness to all people”, with tributes continuing to be paid following his funeral on Saturday.

“Mourners were told at the funeral that Fr Cronin aimed to imitate Christ by living his life for others”

Fr Con Cronin (72), a Kiltegan missionary and curate in the harbour parishes of Passage West and Monkstown, died when struck by

the bus while he was crossing the road.

Bus Éireann driver Mark Wills (51) from Carrigdeane is believed to have suffered a medical trauma which caused him to lose control while driving. He also died in the incident.

The tragedy occurred at 1.35pm Tuesday, August 13. Fr Cronin had just left the nearby Bosun pub after lunch with the local sacristan, a woman in her 60s. They had almost reached the footpath when the collision happened. The sacristan escaped uninjured after the priest reportedly pushed her out of the way. Fr Cronin was pronounced dead a short time later despite efforts by paramedics to revive him.

The bus continued on and collided with several parked cars.

Bishop Fintan Gavin of

the Diocese of Cork and Ross expressed the diocese’s “utter shock and sadness of the untimely death of Father Con Cronin RIP”.

“Heartfelt thoughts and prayers go to Father Con’s family,” Bishop Gavin said, continuing, “his wide circle of friends, parishioners and his fellow priests in the Saint Patrick’s Missionary Society, Kiltegan, as well as the priests of the Diocese of Cork and Ross”.

Tragic

Speaking also of the bus driver who died, Bishop Gavin said: “This tragic accident also leaves another family mourning the loss of a loved one and I extend my prayerful support to his family also.”

“This tragic accident also leaves another family mourning the loss of a loved one”

“I pray for healing and peace for all who were injured and those who witnessed the accident. I wish to acknowledge the professionalism and kindness of the emergency services who attended the accident scene.”

Mourners were told at the funeral that Fr Cronin aimed to imitate Christ by living his



People wait in line at St Mary’s Church in Passage West, August 6, to pay their last respects during a wake for Fr Con Cronin. Photo: CNS.



A makeshift memorial is displayed in Monkstown, August 5, where two days earlier Fr Con Cronin, 72, died after being hit by a bus. Photo: CNS.

life for others, and that he remained true to this spirit until the end of his life.

“This was brought home very powerfully even at the moment of Con’s death, his last act was to push his friend from the path of the oncoming bus and thus save her life – sadly, he himself was unable to avoid the impact and he and Mark lost their lives,” *The Irish Times* reported Fr Tomas O’Connor, Fr Cronin’s friend and area administrator for the St Patrick Missionaries, as saying.

Ministered

Fr Cronin was ordained in 1979 and ministered in Africa with the Kiltegan Fathers for 25 years before returning to Ireland in 2004 where, after promoting the missionary work of the Church, he settled into parish life in his native County Cork.

Fr Cronin served in the Harbour parishes since 2012, with Bishop Gavin saying he established “a warm rapport both pastorally and person-

ally with all to whom he ministered and all who had contact with him”.

“He will be remembered fondly for his unique sense of humour and his openness to all people. He died on the day when the Gospel reminds us what happened the day Jesus asked Peter to step out of the boat and come to him across the water. Jesus called out to him, saying, ‘Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid,’” Bishop Gavin said.

Young farmers ‘key’ to agricultural emissions reduction

Staff reporter

Macra na Feirme has insisted that young farmers are key in tackling agricultural sector emissions reductions targets.

Responding to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report this week, the rural youth organisation said that young farmers right across the country have already demonstrated a willingness to engage in measures that both reduce emissions and improve on-farm viability.

Storing CO2

Macra na Feirme National President John Keane said that “agriculture is uniquely placed to sequester and store CO2 and policies

must ensure that this sequestering and storage is attributed to farmers and agriculture”.

He insisted that young farmers are “essential in driving on farm change and adoption of new technologies to reduce emissions, but it must also be realised that these very same champions of climate change mitigation need to be provided with a future in which they can grow and thrive in.”

“It is clear from the IPCC report that the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation are two key drivers of increasing global CO2 emissions. The Government must now look to maximise Ireland’s potential in continuing to grow our sustainability credentials while also supporting growth in our sector which on a global level is a leader,” he said.

Knock to host Eurovision Assumption Mass

Ruadhán Jones

This Sunday August 15 – the Solemnity of the Assumption – a Eurovision Mass will be celebrated and broadcast live from Knock Basilica on RTÉ One at 11am.

The main celebrant will be Fr Richard Gibbons, PP and Rector of Knock Shrine. The liturgy will feature music by the Schola Cantorum Basilicae under the direction of Una Nolan with Organist Mark Keane.

The Mass will also be broadcast live via the Eurovision Global Network making it available to viewers in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, and Portugal and livestreamed on www.knockshrine.ie/watch

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, attendance will be restricted to 200 people on a first-come, first served basis with queuing systems in place.

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Before the pandemic firmly took its grip, Missio visited Malawi to witness first-hand the vital impact the Church is having. As we drove towards the Lisanjala Health Clinic to meet Father Vincent and Sister Nilcéia, we were in awe of the stark beauty of the countryside. Bright blue sky framed against blood-red earth. But however spectacular the landscape, scorched earth does not a bountiful harvest make. Poverty in the region is widespread, and supplies of maize are constantly in short supply as people anxiously await the rainy season. Life expectancy is low, just fifty-eight for men and sixty-one for women. Malaria is the constant threat, and it can kill in just one or two days. This is why Church-run services like the Lisanjala Health Clinic are so important. They offer a beacon of hope.

An all-embracing Church

When we arrived and stepped out of our van it felt like we were walking into a sauna. Under trees, groups of Malawian women had taken refuge from the heat. They eyed us warily until Sister Nilcéia appeared with outstretched arms



Sr Nilcéia, a Brazilian Benedictine missionary, is sharing God’s love with the people of Malawi



‘I truly don’t know how we would go on without the support of our brothers and sisters in Ireland. It sustains us mentally, spiritually and financially.’ Fr Vincent Mwakhwawa

and her infectious smile. As she walked towards us she scooped up a small child and rested him on her hip. She told us that today’s clinic was full, ‘many of the women have walked over three hours carrying their sick children’, and on other days, ‘pregnant teenage girls might walk almost six miles to get help from our clinic.’ But today is Tuesday, the day when boys and girls up to five years old are seen. In the all-embracing nature of the Church, the small team of health workers at the Lisanjala Health Clinic welcome all - no matter their religion, who they are, or where they are from.

Sorrow in this broken world

Although the rewards far out-weigh the challenges, missionaries experience much sorrow. Sister Nilcéia, many miles from her home in Brazil, shared this sad reality, ‘I remember delivering a little boy called Blessing. His mother Linda was only fifteen. She had been abused by a much older man. Not long after he was born Blessing contracted malaria.’ In time, Blessing went to live with his grandmother, ‘we provided milk for him every week’. But when he was just ten months old Blessing died. He was malnourished. ‘It turned out his grandmother had

been giving the milk to another child.’ ‘I cry when I think of Blessing. He didn’t have to die. But this is a broken world. Our only hope is in God, who is with us through the sadness. It was our privilege to love Linda and baby Blessing when it mattered most.’

Far-reaching solutions

By being on the ground it is glaringly obvious what the Catholic Church is doing to help combat the huge challenges people face in Malawi. Sister Nilcéia’s and Father Vincent’s faith and charitable actions offer far-reaching and long-term solutions in a region that is desperate for help. As Sister Nilcéia put it, ‘the need here in Malawi is great. But the Lord is faithful and we continue to serve. We take courage from knowing you are with us in this mission’.

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Uncovering Mary's glorious assumption



The Church leaves the question of whether Our Lady actually died open, writes **Daniel Holmes**

In recent days a Catholic journalist whom I greatly respect, in referring to Our Lady's Assumption into heaven, used the phrase "After her death". For the first time, that phrase urged me to become more conscious of what the Church actually teaches about Our Lady's human nature and to seek out some of the many references to the Virgin Mary's death and assumption into heaven – references found in the works of such incomparable authorities as St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas and St Alphonsus Liguori. Such authorities as these instil massive hesitations in the limited understanding of those who might wish to comment or conjecture on whether or not Our Lady actually experienced death in any possible form; these hesitations are particularly troublesome when ones such as Aquinas and Alphonsus clearly assert that she did die before her soul and uncorrupted body were reunited and assumed.

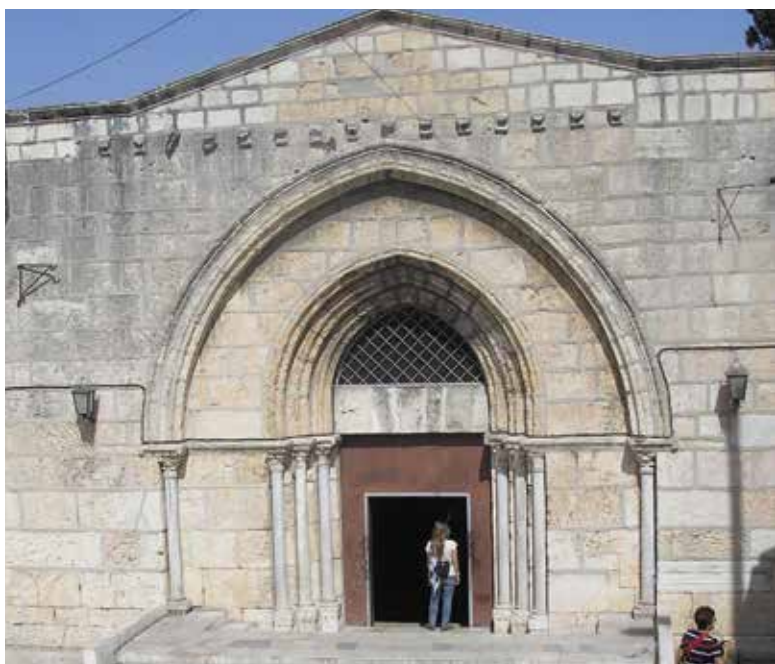
Body and soul

I do not for a second doubt what the Church teaches about Mary's body

and soul assumption into heaven, but presently I am now more aware of the existence of two schools of thought – one of which accepts the proposed fact of Mary's death and the other which asserts that Mary did not die and, in fact, could not die because she was immaculately conceived, redeemed and preserved from the inherited deadly contagion of original sin and lived an earthly life "full of grace" and untouched by any shadow or stain of actual sin. In explaining Adam's original transgression in Eden, St Paul says that "sin came into the world through one man and death through sin" (Romans 5:12). With reference to that 'sin' Pope St Pius IX infallibly proclaimed in *Ineffabilis Deus* (1854) the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: "The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was from the first moment of her conception...preserved immune from all stain of original sin". Consequently one might, as others have, reasonably and theologically concluded she was also 'preserved immune' from death.

“St Paul says that ‘sin came into the world through one man and death through sin’”

In *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950) Pope Pius XII dogmatically and infallibly states that "the Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." Moreover, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* consciously using similar language and imagery, states that "the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory".



The Tomb of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Jerusalem believed by Orthodox Christians to be the burial place of Mary.



The Assumption of Mary is depicted in a stained-glass window at St Mary's Church in Manhasset, New York. Photo: CNS.

It is noteworthy that neither the 1950 declaration nor the catechism explicitly proclaim Mary's death as an established and verifiable fact; and of course there have been for centuries past much theological attention given to this fascinating issue which has been addressed by so many. We might reasonably say that in 1950, in modern times, this question was closely and very visibly scrutinised again. Following on from Pope Pius XII's declaration we still find continuing forthright assessment and comment on the perennial question as to whether or not Our Lady was confronted with death. For example, in Sheehan's 2001 edition of *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine* we find the following: "The Pope deliberately left open the question of whether or not Our Lady died before her Assumption".

Earthly life

This conclusion has been widely acknowledged to emphasise clearly that Our Lady was assumed body and soul into heaven when she had "completed the course of her earthly life" but it does not at all suggest that she died before her assumption occurred. Nevertheless, although the question has

been left open, it also has to be acknowledged that there is among the Faithful almost a universally presumed and accepted belief that she did briefly pass through death in some form before her soul and uncorrupted body were reunited and assumed into God's immediate presence.

“The Pope deliberately left open the question of whether or not Our Lady died before her Assumption”

In contrast to this general understanding of the Assumption there is another school of thought with perhaps fewer advocates who legitimately assert on a sound, logical theological and orthodox basis that the Virgin Mary, being immaculately conceived, could not possibly be vulnerable to the inherited contamination of the original sin which inflicted death on all of humankind. They also maintain that not only was Mary luminously sinless and thus preserved from death but she was preserved also from the physical forces and effects of ageing which dictate the gradual degeneration of the body

until body and soul are separated and death inevitably occurs.

In the light of the above considerations, and with the question of Mary's death consciously left open, it is therefore acceptably orthodox to say that Catholics are not bound to believe in her mortality as a matter of dogma. It might well be accurate to surmise and conjecture, as some do, that when Our Lady grew into the resplendent prime of her young womanhood her incorruptible physical appearance remained in its primal beauty despite the passage of years; the mortal effects of ageing were rendered powerless whilst she waited to complete "the course of her earthly life" when her God would summon her and assume her into his divine presence and her eternal home. Finally, some again might find it interesting and certainly particularly relevant to recall here that in the Fourth Century Timothy of Jerusalem described the Virgin Mary as 'immortal'. Needless to say, it's only recently that I have been perhaps a little more able to better understand what he meant.

i Daniel Holmes is a reader of The Irish Catholic from Co. Derry.

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The Assumption of Blessed Mary

While the Assumption of Mary has been celebrated for over a thousand years, the doctrine of her assumption was officially defined as late as 1950. To mark the occasion, the famous novelist, Graham Greene, who had been received into the Catholic Church shortly before that, was asked to write an article for *Life*, then the best-selling glossy magazine in the world. For a while he wondered what he might write for his likely readers. Then it struck him that this was a celebration of the nobility and sanctity of the human body. This was only five years after World War II when battles, bombings and death camps showed absolute disregard for the human body. At the other extreme he reflected on the false glamourisation of the body. Here we are, seventy years later and matters have got worse. There is huge pressure on people, girls especially, to conform to certain models of so-called beauty. The Christian concept of beauty is that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and is destined to reflect the glory of God in the light of the beatific vision.

Mary, model of the Church

There is an old saying in theology that what God desires of the many, he first expresses in the one. That means that Mary is set up as a headline to copy, just as we learned to write by copying the headline words at the top of the page. When her life on earth was completed, she was taken up to complete her sharing in the resurrection of her Son. And where she has gone, we hope to follow. "For today the Virgin Mother of God was assumed into heaven as the beginning and image of your Church's coming to perfection" (Preface of the Mass).

A sign of sure hope and comfort to your pilgrim people

When Jesus hung on the cross he turned to his mother, Mary, and to John, known as the beloved disciple. He said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son." And to the beloved disciple

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



he said, "Behold your mother". If he had addressed Mary as mother, it would have referred to her as his own mother, but when he addressed her as woman, it expressed her universal motherhood of all his beloved disciples. In other words, she was given to us as our mother. A mother not only gives birth to her child but continues to be mother in feeding, nursing, caring and responding to every need. The preface for today's feast describes her as "a sign of sure hope and comfort to your pilgrim people".

There are many beautiful titles given to Mary such as "Health of the sick" and "Comforter of the afflicted". The shrines of Mary are associated with stories of all sorts of healing. A title that has become popular in recent years is "Mary, Untier of Knots".

Mary, Untier of Knots

Back in 1986, Jorge Bergoglio, the future Pope Francis, completed his term as Provincial Leader of the Jesuits in Argentina. It was the period of the dirty war when it was impossible to steer a path that would please everybody. To get away from that stressful situation he was advised to go abroad on Sabbatical to resume his studies. He came to Augsburg, Bavaria. During this difficult time, he found great peace in a little church where he was attracted to a portrait of Mary unravelling a long, knotted ribbon.

“There are many beautiful titles given to Mary such as ‘Health of the sick’ and ‘Comforter of the afflicted’”

The story goes back 300 years to a Bavarian nobleman, Wolfgang Lagenmantel, whose marriage to Sophia was on the verge of breaking up. This was a time when Catholics and Protestants were constantly at war, and the separation of a Catholic couple

would have been a publicity disaster. In desperation, Wolfgang went to Fr Jacob Rem, a Jesuit known for his wisdom and prayer. Fr Rem asked the nobleman to come back to him with the white ribbon which at that time bound the arms of the newly-weds as a symbol of their union. Fr Rem was inspired by something that St Irenaeus, a second century theologian had written. "The knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. And what the virgin Eve had brought forth through unbelief was set free through Mary's faith." After quoting these words he raised the soiled and tangled ribbon high, saying, "In this religious act, I raise the bonds of matrimony, to untie all the knots and to smoothen them." From that moment on, harmony returned to the couple.

She will unravel your knots

About a hundred years later, their grandson, a priest, recalled this family story and commissioned an artist to paint it. He modelled his painting on Apocalypse, Chapter 12, today's first reading, where a woman adorned with the sun crushes the serpent of temptation under her foot. Mary dominates the picture, surrounded by angels, with a crown of stars over her head. At the top of the golden sunlight is a dove, representing the Holy Spirit who overshadowed Mary at the conception of her divine son. She stands on a crescent moon which was a symbol of her Immaculate Conception. Her foot crushes a serpent whose body is twisted in knots. An angel on one side brings a twisted, knotted ribbon to Mary while an angel on the other side takes a perfectly restored white ribbon. Mary has untied the knots.

Fr Bergoglio found such peace in this picture that he brought a copy with him on his return to Argentina. He set it up in the church where he ministered. The local people were drawn to it. Other parishes followed suit and now the devotion is known worldwide. It's a picture that ordi-



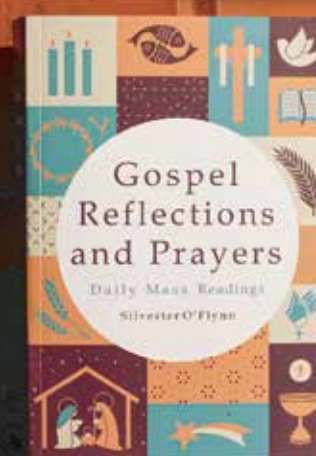
nary people can understand. They recognise not only the knots of an unhappy marriage but also our knots of anger, anxiety, fear, addiction, guilt and so on. People find great consolation and hope when they bring their problems to the motherly heart of Mary, Untier of Knots.

Prayer

Holy Mary, Mother of the Lord and our mother too. Mother, you always come to the aid of your children in need. I trust that you will take this knotted area of anxiety into your hands (mention your petition for yourself or another person). Take this problem to your Divine Son just as you did at the wedding in Cana. You are a sign of sure hope and comfort to your pilgrim children.

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To allow or not to allow First Holy Communion and Confirmation again?



People are starting to realise that public health is no longer the overwhelming consideration it once was, writes **David Quinn**

To what extent are we morally obliged to follow public health guidance, and does there ever come a point at which we can decide for ourselves that other considerations override that guidance?

Ever since March of last year, when the Covid-19 pandemic began to take a grip on the country, almost all of us have been happy to follow public health advice, which often had the backing of penal sanctions.

Some people were delighted to do so, because it meant at least a temporary end to long commutes to and from work. Many people would prefer to work from home forever.

“Some people were delighted to do so, because it meant at least a temporary end to long commutes to and from work”

On the other hand, there were many others who either lost their jobs or had them put on ice, especially in sectors like hospitality. Lockdown for these workers could mean staring at the four walls of a small flat all day. It may even have meant being locked up with an abusive, drunken partner or parent.

Still others had to keep going out to work every day. These were essential workers like nurses and doctors, those working in food shops or food processing, journalists and so on. They had to risk their health and even their lives on a daily basis while the rest of us stayed at home.



Pupils from St Malachy's Primary School, Ballymacilroy, Co. Tyrone after their First Holy Communion ceremony in May. Photo: Jason McCartan.

Meanwhile young people found their education placed on hold. Zoom classes were no substitute for in-class learning.

In other words, the Covid-19 measures affected different people in different ways. Economically and socially speaking, they created winners and losers.

Ireland's restrictions have been among the most onerous in Europe. Schools were kept closed for longer than anywhere else, for instance. So was the hospitality industry and so, of course, was public worship.

For some, this was a matter of national pride, especially when we compared ourselves with Britain or America which had much bigger deaths tolls per head of population and seemingly reckless leadership.

Compare

But it was always ridiculous to compare ourselves with countries that have much bigger populations and massive urban conglomerations.

It made much more sense to compare ourselves with other, small, sparsely populated countries on the edge of Europe, like Norway or Finland. Each of those countries has had smaller death tolls per million than we have had, and their restrictions have tended to be less onerous.

Even Sweden, which never fully locked down, has a death rate to-date roughly

equivalent to our own when you adjust for their older population.

So, have our very restrictive, long-lasting restrictions really done us as much good as we think, or have they caused unnecessary harms, such as damaging the educational prospects of children, and taken away too many of our liberties?

Does there come a point at which it is morally permissible to ignore a given guideline on the grounds that it is disproportionate, unjustified, and even against the common good?

“These ceremonies are now finished for the year in the North because they were restarted months ago”

This is the dilemma bishops have faced when presented with continued advice against holding First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies.

These ceremonies are now finished for the year in the North because they were restarted months ago. They caused no obvious spike in Covid-19 cases.

All over Europe, children have been free for weeks, if not months to make their First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

“All over Europe, children have been free for weeks, if not months to make their First Holy Communion and Confirmation”

all times, for the sake of the common good.

Vaccinated

Others will decide that with so many people now fully vaccinated, we can start to make our own decisions again and go against public health guidelines in limited cases. Public health advice will almost always err on the side of caution in any case. In life, different goods must be held in balance, and health is only one of them. The common good takes many considerations into account.

“Some bishops have now acted and given their priests formal permission to allow ceremonies to go ahead”

In my view, what has happened over the past week or so is a good development. People are starting to realise that at this point in the pandemic, public health is no longer the overwhelming consideration it once was.

The debate inside the Church about the topic is also a good sign. It is not a cut-and-dried matter whether First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies should go ahead again now. It is one of those issues about which Catholics may, in good faith, differ from each other.

Some will be of the opinion that in the context of a pandemic, public health advice must be followed at

Given these facts, it would have been very strange if at least some bishops did not begin to question the reasonableness of the guidelines. This is especially so when a lot of parishes are already allowing small groups of children to make their First Holy Communion at the ordinary weekend Masses and pressure from parents is mounting.

Permission

Some bishops have now acted and given their priests formal permission to allow ceremonies to go ahead. In the case of bishops, the question of Confirmation is especially pertinent, because only a bishop or a nominated priest, may confirm a child (or an adult as the case may be).

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell, has told his priests they can hold First Holy Communion ceremonies again, although his own preference is that they wait until the middle of next month, which is also the Government's new preference.

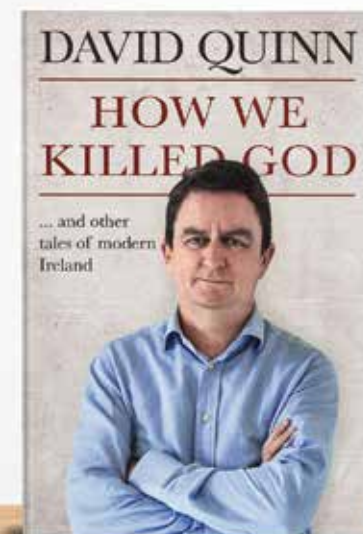
Presumably this means he will not personally be presiding at Confirmation ceremonies himself, and may delegate no other priest to do so?

However, a majority of bishops have not given priests permission to allow First Holy Communion and Confirmation before the public health advice changes. We could characterise this as

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Failing to ask the deeper questions is a failure to be truly human



The Covid-19 pandemic has offered people an opportunity to reflect on deeper questions.



Philosophy should be understood as a manner of living and not just an exercise done in an armchair or a classroom writes Dr Philip Gonzales

It is often said that philosophy deals with the deepest human realities such as birth and death and this is, indeed, true. Moreover, it is also true, as Socrates famously said, that an unexamined life is a life not worth living. What then would a life look like that is no longer interested in the questions of birth and death? And, further, what kind of human life would one have that no longer examines life's meaning in the time between birth and dying, the time of our only sojourn within this world? To ask these kinds of questions is to philosophise because

philosophy deals with profound human truths and this is why to be human is to be a metaphysical animal. Humans irrevocably live within these borders and thus must *think* questions of the border, the borders of life and death, of what lies before and what lies beyond. All questions of borders are metaphysical or ultimate questions. To fail to ask such questions is to shirk the task of being a metaphysical animal, a shirking which is indifferent to the distinguishing marks of what makes us human questioning animals in the first place and such a life, as Socrates saw long ago, is a life no longer worth living and has lost its salt and existential flavour.

“What then would a life look like that is no longer interested in the questions of birth and death?”

What I propose here is by no means to answer these life defining questions but rather to simply reflect upon and examine these abiding questions. In doing, one enters into these questions thereby seeing how they are human questions and not just questions of specialists or academics. Here it is important to remember that philosophy should be understood as a way of life and a manner of living and not just an exercise done in an armchair or classroom.

Facts

One of the strangest facts about our human existence is that not one of us ever asked to be born. None of us — thank goodness — were there presiding over our parents' passionate embrace asking to be conceived on the day or night of our conception. The choice, via the sexual embrace of our parents, was thrust upon us. We had no say about the most fundamental event of our life, that is, our very entrance into existence, the womb and our subsequent birth onto the stage of this world. Nor can we avoid death and choose to live forever on this earth. Despite how healthy we eat, how much we exercise, how far technology and medicine may advance we are still subject to the law of human mortality. The supple and fresh flesh of the infant turns into the beauty, vitality and maturity of adulthood which turns into the time-worn wrinkles of the human face and body in its old age. No machine and no

technology, however great, can stop this cycle of human life, of birth and dying and the time in-between. These human, all-too-human mysteries of birth and death are beyond our control and this is what it means to be human, finite, contingent and not divine.

Yet, surely what is in our power as humans is, in the words of Dylan Thomas, to “...not go gentle into that good night,” understood here as the deep human need to actively reflect and examine the meaning of our birth and life before we pass over the border into that ‘good night’. Indeed, we are allowed - no rather compelled - to ask those fundamental questions of human existence: ‘who am I?’, ‘why are we here?’, ‘what is the meaning of it all and is there any meaning?’, ‘am I/we free?’, ‘what comes before birth and is there life after death?’, ‘what are we meant to do with the time given us on this brief stay on earth and what is my place in the human family?’. These are but some of the great press-

ing questions of human life and thus of philosophy.

“Despite how healthy we eat, how much we exercise, how far technology and medicine may advance we are still subject to the law of human mortality”

To wonder at, to be puzzled and perplexed by, our entrance into existence and are our fast-approaching exit of death is to be pressed between birth and death. Between birth and death is our short appearance on the stage of human life. What do we do on this dramatic stage, how to we live, what do we desire and love? Is it not true that where our heart is there also is our treasure? What we love thus reveals who we are. A human life that no longer struggles with such questions exists upon the human stage as a kind of unreflective prop that fails to be pressed by urgent and ultimate metaphysical questions. Here human life is reduced to a fated tragedy of inaction and non-participation. Such a life is no longer worth living and this is why the French atheist philosopher Camus saw that the philosophical question is the question of suicide.

Consumption

Our current fetishising of consumption exhibited in our ‘throw-away culture’ (Pope Francis) mutes such press-

ing human and metaphysical questions. In such a world, to paraphrase Thoreau, people live lives of quiet desperation. In such a world, philosophy must shake people free from the lethargy and tragedy of a unreflective life awakening them to the pressing questions of birth and death and our time on the stage between these two borders in which the urgency and ultimacy of fundamental human metaphysical questions are raised. Christian philosophy has never been afraid of such deep human questioning because to raise such questions is to participate and perform our humanity and this humanity that lives between birth and death is the ground in which faith and grace are incarnated. Catholics and Christians are more obliged than others to philosophise so as to understand our humanity in which grace and faith are incarnated. In doing, we stay awake on the stage of life and history pressed for time to do everything within our conceivable power to live as we should in a reflective life that shows we will ‘not go gently into that good night’ thereby showing that our lives have not lost the saltiness and flavour of existential urgency; for what we love reveals who we are.

i Dr Philip John Paul Gonzales is a lecturer in philosophy at St Patrick's College, Maynooth. This article is part of a regular column where philosophers from Maynooth Drs Gonzales and Gaven Kerr offer accessible introductory thoughts on perennial themes in the history of philosophy and the Catholic tradition.



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A house of God like no other



The Passion Façade is dedicated to Christ's betrayal, suffering and death. Every detail is oriented towards this – right down to the columns which are designed to look like strained muscles.



Jason Osborne

With ongoing construction guided by the vision of 'God's architect' Antoni Gaudí, Barcelona's La Sagrada Família is already one of God's finest houses.

The project was designed in 1882 by another man, Francisco de Paula del Villar, and his plan was more in-keeping with the prevailing architecture of the time. Neo-Gothic dreams saw ogival windows, buttresses, flying buttresses and a pointed bell tower feature in the original designs.

Technical differences saw this architect leave the project, to be replaced by the man whose name was to become synonymous with the site: Antoni Gaudí. His main sources of inspiration were to be light, nature, the Bible and the Liturgy, all of which feature heavily in his greatest work.

"The Temple of the Sagrada Família will be bright," he said, speaking of the role light has to play in his work.

"Religious emotion will not come from the fear of shadows only just penetrated by a ray of light, but will be born from the bright mystery of the harmony of light, from the sense of wellbeing that comes from sunlight filtering through a tree with the thousands of nuances of its leaves.

"It will, thus, be the Tem-

ple of harmonious light. Everything must be designed to highlight the architectural forms, to give a perfect vision of the symbolic decoration throughout the inside of the basilica and, therefore, reach the greatest spiritual efficiency."

Taking up the project in 1883, Gaudí initially worked on it alongside other buildings. This would be the case until 1914, when he would begin working on the Temple exclusively until his death in 1926.

Gaudí lived to see only the Nativity Façade completed, but his writings and quotes demonstrate his comfortability with passing the project along to others – an essential part in any great work, he believed.

Struck by a tram as he crossed the street June 10, 1926, he was buried in the chapel of Our Lady of Carmel in the temple's crypt, where he remains to this day. Gaudí was put down the path for canonisation by Barcelona's then-archbishop Ricard Maria Carles in 1998, and he's currently recognised as a Servant of God by the Church.

Since then, guidance of the basilica has passed through the hands of many up to today, with November 7, 2010 seeing Pope Benedict XVI consecrate the basilica for religious worship and designating it a minor basilica.

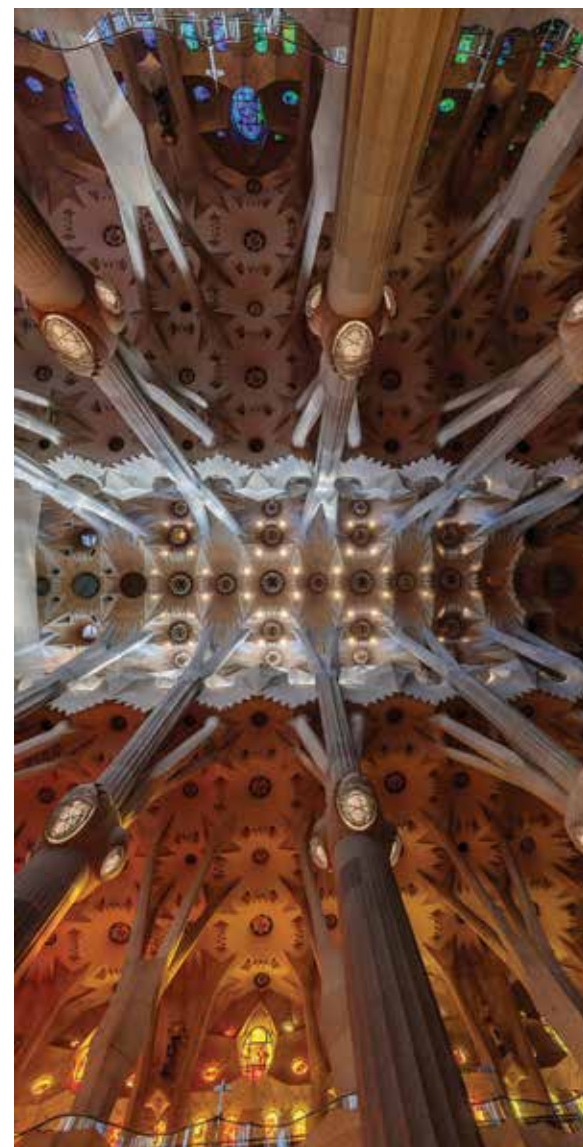
The project is due for completion in 2026.



▲ A statue of St Joseph stands over the entrance from the Nativity Façade.



▲ The Nativity Façade, which depicts Christ's birth and the events surrounding it in its artwork, is the only part of the temple Gaudí lived to see completed. Started in 1891, work concluded with the Saint Barnabas bell tower in 1925, a year before Gaudí's death.

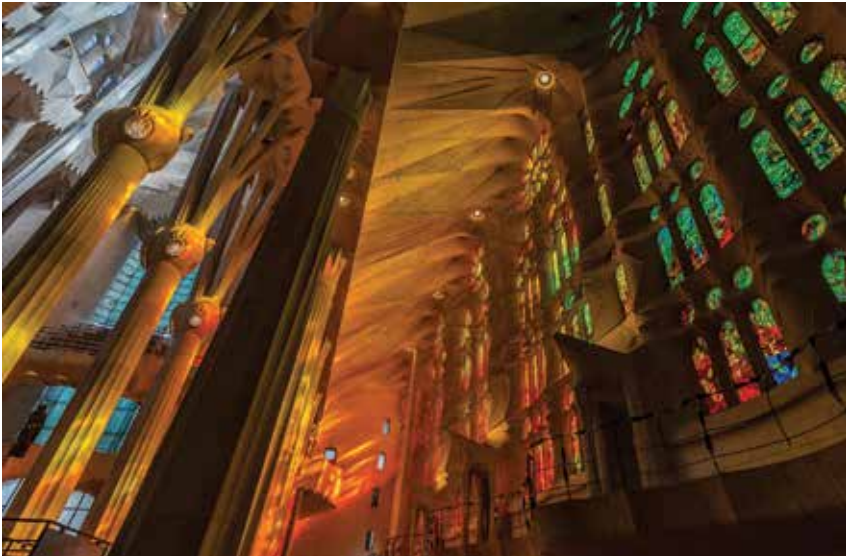
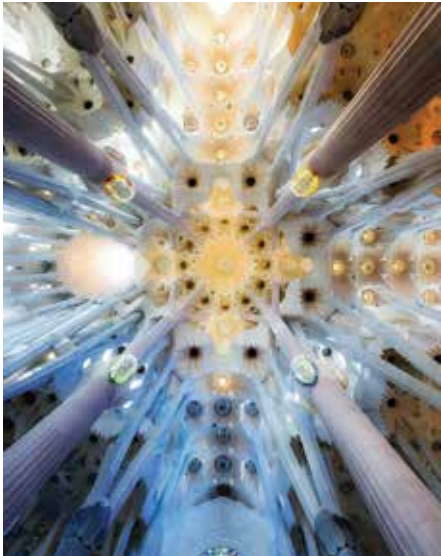




▲Detail from the Nativity Façade shows Christ's birth at the bottom, with the star of Bethlehem soaring overhead. Angels herald the birth to the left and right.



The windows bear the names of holy sites and saints.



▲(Left) Tributes to the four evangelists adorn the central columns, which will one day support the basilica's tallest tower – to be dedicated to Jesus Christ.

▲(Right) As the sun travels around the basilica, different colours take hold of the interior, from fiery red to deep blue.

▼ Inspired by nature and the grandeur of God's creation, Gaudí sought to replicate the effect of entering a forest with the tree-like columns and delicate play of light.





This week marks the centenary of the murder of a priest who stood up for his flock in the US deep south, writes **Chai Brady**

One hundred years ago, a series of events led to the remarkable incident of a priest from Co. Roscommon being shot dead by a hardline Protestant minister who was also a member of the racist Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

As America continues to struggle with the legacy of supremacism and racism, it is worth remembering Fr James Coyle's story: a man who faced prejudice and threats as well as ministered during the height of the Spanish flu pandemic – a situation similar to what the Church faces now due to Covid-19 but arguably more challenging – and still held his resolve.

He was born in Drum in rural Roscommon 1873 just 20 years after the Great Famine in which a million Irish people starved and a further two million left as refugees in search of a better life, mostly in North America.

His childhood was marked by the agitation of the so-called Land War when Catholic peasant farmers campaigned for a fair rent and fixity of tenure on the land they worked.

“Contemporaries said his passion and fervour for the Faith attracted more people to join the growing Catholic community”

He was ordained a priest in 1896. At the time there was a shortage of priests in the southern states of the US and an abundance in Ireland, so after Fr Coyle's ordination in Rome he was dispatched to Alabama, where anti-Catholicism and segregation were rampant.

Birmingham

Fr Coyle served as pastor of the Cathedral of St Paul in Birmingham for almost 17 years. Before that he had ministered for eight years in Mobile. While there he also became a charter member of the Mobile council of the Knights of Columbus – founded by a son of Irish immigrants Fr Michael J. McGivney.

Fr Coyle subsequently became the chaplain for the Birmingham Council 635 of the Knights of Columbus and contemporaries said his passion and fervour for

The Irish priest who fought against



Fr Coyle with members of his family.

the Faith attracted more people to join the growing Catholic community. At the time, the Catholic population of Birmingham was growing rapidly due to an influx of thousands of Italian miners and steelworkers.

The growing Catholic presence was not universally welcomed. At the time, 'the Klan' was the predominant influence in Alabama dubbing itself a 'patriotic' fraternity which targeted Catholics, Jews, African Americans and others loosely dubbed as foreigners. This was the second generation of the KKK, said to have been inspired by the notorious silent film *Birth of a Nation* in 1915. By the mid-1920s, there were four million 'klansmen' in the US.

Laws

It was a time when laws were passed that allowed Catholic convents, monasteries and hospitals to be searched without a warrant. The KKK fuelled hysteria that the Knights of St Columbus were the military arm of the Pope and were stockpiling weapons and planning an insurrection.

They also spread hysterical and false claims accusing Catholics of kidnapping Protestant children and women. Fr Coyle was ready

to put himself in the firing line to defend the Church and did so until his untimely end.

Edwin Stephenson, who was a minister in the now defunct Methodist Episcopal Church and a proud member of the KKK, had a well-known hatred of Catholics and subsequently of Fr Coyle.

“He allowed black people into his church, and I think he founded the first black school in Birmingham which was very badly received by the Ku Klux Klan”

Ruth, his daughter, became fascinated with Catholicism when she was 12-years-old and began secretly taking instruction from the nuns at the Convent of Mercy. She was subsequently baptised a Catholic on April 10, 1921, when she was 18. However, the new convert was beaten badly when her parents discovered what she had done.

Undeterred, just months later on August 11, Ruth Stephenson married the 44-year-old Pedro Gussman, who being from Puerto Rico was Catholic. Mr Gussman

had previously worked at the Rev. Stephenson's house several years earlier.

Fr Coyle had been the celebrant for the nuptial Mass and witnessed the couple exchange their vows. But, shortly after the wedding, enraged by the ceremony and his daughter's new union Rev. Stephenson went to the Catholic church with his rifle. There he found Fr Coyle reading on the porch of St Paul's and shot him three times, once in the head. Fr Coyle died very shortly afterwards.

Murder

Rev. Stephenson immediately turned himself in, and was charged with murder. He was defended by a lawyer called Hugo Black, who later became a klansman himself. The legal fees were paid for by the KKK. Rev. Stephenson was found not guilty and Mr Black went on to represent the Democratic party in the US Senate and subsequently served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court until his death just 50 years ago in 1971.

On the centenary of his murder, Fr Coyle is still remembered with pride in his native Co. Roscommon – particularly by his family. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Coyle's grandniece Chrissy Killian who lives a few

miles outside Drum explained how her great-aunt Marcella Coyle – Fr Coyle's sister – lived with her after returning to Ireland from Alabama. In the US, she had helped out in the parish where Fr Coyle met his untimely end.

“She was there when the incident happened. My aunt was a witness at the wedding. Uncle Jim [Fr Coyle] told her to witness from the sacristy for her safety.

“She was in the rectory when [Rev.] Stephenson walked up and shot uncle Jim. She went out and she screamed and called for a doctor,” Ms Killian recalled to *The Irish Catholic*.

“On the centenary of his murder, Fr Coyle is still remembered with pride in his native Co. Roscommon”

Fr Coyle's sister – Marcella – continued to live in Alabama, but moved to Mobile after the murder before returning to Ireland in 1963 where she lived out her final days with Ms Killian and her family.

“I would have cared for her for about ten years before I went to college...and was bedridden and she would constantly speak about her brother.

“He was very much part of the family,” Ms Killian recalls.

She recalls Fr Coyle being spoken of as “a very poetic man, a strong-minded and principled man – a strong Fenian [Irish nationalist] back in the early 1900s.

“Laws were passed that allowed Catholic convents, monasteries and hospitals to be searched without a warrant”

anti-Catholicism...and paid the ultimate price



Fr James Coyle and his sister Marcella.

“He was a great man for people’s rights, he stood with the people”

“I’ve read a lot of his poetry that he wrote about Ireland and Ireland’s struggles through 1916 [the Easter Rising] and the early 1920s. When [Éamon] de Valera went over to the United States to gain support for the Irish Republic he went down to Birmingham, Alabama to visit Uncle Jim and I’ve seen photographs of the two together,” she recalls.

Progressive

By the standards of the day, Fr Coyle was also remarkably progressive according to Ms Killian. “He allowed black people into his church, and I think he founded the first black school in Birmingham which was very badly received by the Ku Klux Klan. He was honoured by the civil rights movement in Birmingham, Alabama and they have a library dedicated in his honour and a website.

“They remember him everywhere in Alabama,” she says with pride.

Speaking about Fr Coyle’s funeral Mass, Ms Killian said “it was massive and all the bishops attended”.

There is an extensive report on the funeral in the *Catholic*

Monthly of September, 1921, Volume 12 by a Mrs L.T. Beecher. It states there were “thousands of men and women of all classes and denominations gathered around St Paul’s church long before the hour of three o’clock, which has been fixed for the funeral service...”

“He is a very good example for good Christian living and living by your faith”

The glowing report on Fr Coyle begins: “During the past month the members of St Paul’s parish and, indeed, all the Catholics of the district, have been so stricken with grief, have received such a test of their Christian patience and fortitude as, pray God, may come no more to us personally or collectively while this earthly trial lasts. Deep in the hearts of all who revere simple goodness and loyalty to an ideal was our priest who for seventeen years went about among us doing good.”

Bishop Edward P. Allen, who was the Bishop of Mobile from 1853-1926 and a son of Irish immigrants from Co. Meath, further

attested to Fr Coyle’s character and good works after his death saying: “Fr Coyle was a zealous and devoted missionary and afterwards a successful professor and rector of McGill Institute, one to whom the students could look up and whose wise direction they could follow. I felt that he would make a worthy successor of the late Fr O’Reilly. In this, I have not been disappointed.

“He laboured and preached the word of God in season and out of season, visiting the sick, instructing the little ones of the poor and needy and afflicted. He especially laboured to bring the people to the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary which was offered first by our Divine Lord at the Last Supper.”

The report also states that the funeral sermon was preached by another Irish cleric Fr Michael Henry of Mobile who had known Fr Coyle as a child and they had gone to Rome and studied in college together before being ordained at the same time. They both became missionaries and arrived in the US on the same boat and worked in Mobile together too.

“We are always keen to keep the memory of Fr James Coyle alive”

Fr Henry said: “The Catholic Church will say to those who persecute it and its priests of even Jesus Christ himself said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. That is the kind of people we Catholics are. We believe in law and order and the institutions of the land which upholds these.

“Today, dear brethren, there is sorrow in your heart, and tears in your eyes. Dry your tears, for they are not necessary. We honour him, and the bishop honoured him, and the priests were his devoted friends. The people of St Paul have never failed to respond to any call...if Fr Coyle were here today he would say, ‘Hold fast to the faith and carry on the work.’ “And I make this appeal to you for the sake of the sacrifice he made for you that you carry on the work. I appeal to the children, to those who are grown up, to the old men and women, to those he loved so much, to pray for his soul. It was a great and noble soul,” Fr Henry said.

Home

Ms Killian said that Fr Coyle came home regularly, and during the earlier part of the 1900s up until his death. “He would have taken a lot of family photographs at the time. He was a larger-than-life character. He went to a Jesuit school, he was very strongly principled in his Catholic beliefs and his principles

for humanity and equality of people and freedom for people and I think that was very central to his philosophy on life because it was evident in his sermons and in his poetry.

She added: “He is a very good example for good Christian living and living by your faith. He obviously came from a very learned and principled family and those values carry forward into the rest of his life and if you come from a rural area in south Roscommon there’s nothing to say that you can’t make a difference in the world and he certainly did in his short years,” she says.

Ms Killian adds that her uncle, who was a nephew of Fr Coyle, went on to become a priest for his native Diocese of Elphin. Inspired by his heroic uncle, Fr Dennis Killian went out to Alabama and ministered there for ten years after his ordination as a tribute to the murdered priest.

Something Bigger

Ms Killian’s sister, Sheila Killian has written a novel entitled ‘Something Bigger’ which chronicles the story from their aunt, Marcella’s point of view.

For Anton Lennon, the manager of the Drum Heritage Centre in Roscommon – where Fr Coyle was from – there is an enduring need to remember the heroic priest and his little-known story.

“He was a great man for people’s rights, he stood with the people,” Mr Lennon told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that the priest used to write home decrying the what he had read about the “suffering of people at the hands of the Black and Tans and the heavy-handed approach by the British authorities [in Ireland] at the time”.



Fr James Coyle

“We are always keen to keep the memory of Fr James Coyle alive, we have a display here at the centre all the time on Fr Coyle’s life and his early days in Drum.

“In the late 1980s Drum Heritage Group restored Drum old cemetery. Fr Coyle’s parents’ grave, Eoin and Margaret (Durney) Coyle, is located in Drum old cemetery. Both of them were teachers, Eoin was schoolmaster in Drumpark National School which is now the local parish hall and his wife Margaret was a teacher at nearby Cornafulla National School.”

He added the heritage group are “proud of our association with the late Fr Coyle and keeping his story alive”.

During the Spanish flu, a pandemic in which it is estimated 50 million people died, places of worship in Alabama were closed to stop the spread of the virus – much like what happened in many jurisdictions due to the current pandemic.

“There is an enduring need to remember the heroic priest and his little-known story.”

Fr Coyle reached out to his parishioners at this time to emphasise the importance of the congregation coming together for Mass. He said: “You are for the first time in your lives, deprived of hearing Mass on Sunday, and you will, I trust, from this very circumstance appreciate more thoroughly what the Mass is for Catholics...Sunday Mass is no mere gathering for prayer, no coming to a temple to join in hymns to the maker, or to listen to the words of a spiritual guide, pointing out he means whereby men may walk in righteousness and go forward on the narrow way that leads to life eternal.

Contemplation

“No, there is something else that draws the Catholics, to the wonderment of non-Catholics, from their warm homes on cold bleak winter dawns to trample through snow-covered streets in their thousands and hundreds of thousands to a crowded church, where they kneel reverently absorbed in the contemplation of a man, who in a strange garb, at a lighted altar, genuflects and bows and performs strange actions and speaks in a long dead tongue. What draws the multitude?

The Mass, the unutterable sweetness of the Mass.”

Fr Coyle’s voice and his heroic witness echoes from the past, and while his sacrifice surely inspires so too perhaps his devotion to the Mass and his closeness to people deprived of it as Irish Catholics have indeed endured during this current pandemic. His message still stands the test of time and is perhaps more relevant than ever.



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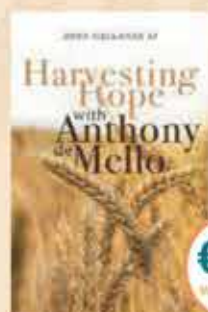


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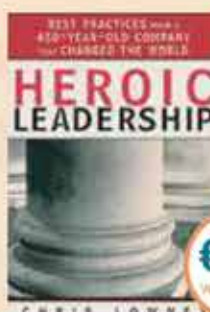


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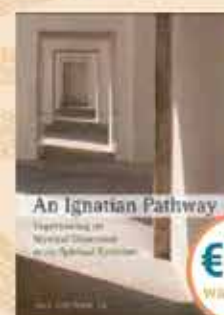
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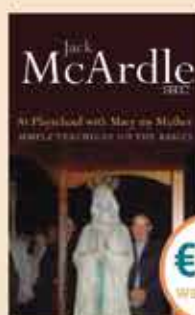
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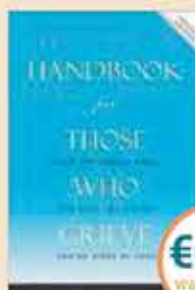
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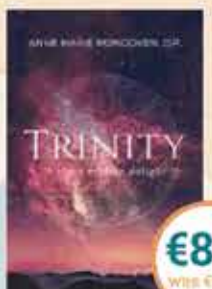
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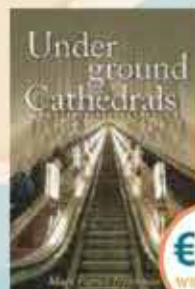
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Out&About

May the Lord bless you and keep you...



GALWAY: Fr Gerard John Acton, a recently-ordained priest of the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora imparts his first blessing on members of the congregation in the Cathedral of Our Lady Assumed into Heaven and St Nicholas. Photo: Joe Crean.



WESTMEATH: Fr Michael Kilmartin celebrated his Silver Jubilee of Ordination on Sunday July 25, 2021. Fr Michael is pictured in front of the Church of the Assumption, Kinnegad with Fr Tom Gilroy PP.



TIPPERARY: Members of the Irish Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem who were recently awarded with the Grand Cross (see below) left-right: Chev. Carroll E. Falls, Dame Catherine Concannon, Lieutenant His Excellency Peter F. Durnin, Dame Joan Hanly, Chev. John Bosco O'Hagan, and Chev. Eamonn Walsh.



SHROPSHIRE, ENGLAND: Kerry native Fr Humphrey O'Connor who was recently ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Shrewsbury in England. He is pictured following the ceremony with Bishop Mark Davies.

IN SHORT

Dublin archbishop announces appointments

Archbishop Dermot Farrell has announced his first round of clerical appointment since being installed as Archbishop of Dublin in February.

As previously reported in The Irish Catholic Fr Gareth Byrne is appointed Moderator of the Curia and will also serve as a Vicar General. Other Vicars General are Msgr Ciaran O'Carroll and Fr Donal Roche.

Fr Paul Coyle is appointed Diocesan Chancellor while Msgr Eoin Thynne is appointed Vicar for Clergy.

Fr Kieran McDermott will chair the Diocesan Synodal Steering Committee while Fr Seamus McEntee will serve as Director of Vocations with Fr William O'Shaughnessy appointed assistant Director of Vocations.

The archbishop also announced the following parish appointments:

Balally: Canon John Delaney, moderator Sandyford and Adm. Balally;

Ballygall: Fr Paul St. John, SVD, Adm. Walkinstown to retire as Adm. and appointed parish chaplain, Ballygall;

Beaumont: Fr Robert Smyth appointed Adm. Beaumont with Fr Dominic Kwikiriza as curate;

Blakestown/Hartstown/Huntstown and Mountview: Fr Joseph Coyne appointed moderator;

Blanchardstown: Fr Michael Carey appointed PP;

Cabra: Fr Michael O'Grady appointed PP, in addition to Cabra West Castleknock and Laurel Lodge and Fr Damian McNeice appointed PP of Castleknock and Laurel Lodge while Fr Brendan Quinlan retires as Co PP, Laurel Lodge and appointed CC Castleknock and Laurel Lodge;

Clondalkin/Bawnogue/Rowlagh/Neilstown/ Travelling People/Deansrath/Sruleen grouping of parishes: Fr Kieran Coghlan appointed moderator with Fr Pdraig O'Sullivan appointed co-PP;

Dalkey: Fr Liam Lacey appointed PP Donnybrook: Msgr Ciaran O'Carroll appointed PP

Lucan/Esker-Dodsboro-Adamstown/Lucan South: Fr Philip Curran appointed moderator with Fr Aloysius Zuribo appointed CC Lucan

and Confey and Fr Ubaldo Muhindo appointed curate-in-charge of Lucan South; Mulhuddart: Fr Adrian F Crowley appointed CC;

Rathdrum and Roundwood: Fr Derek Doyle appointed PP of Rathdrum in addition to PP Roundwood and Glendalough with Fr John Greene appointed curate to Rathdrum, Roundwood and Glendalough;

Saggart, Rathcoole, Brittas and Newcastle: Fr David Fleming appointed CC;

Sutton and Howth and parish grouping Sutton/Howth/Baldoyle:

Fr Cyril Mangan appointed PP of Sutton and Howth and moderator of the parish grouping Sutton/Howth/Baldoyle with Fr Gerard Tanham retiring as moderator of the groupings of Sutton/Howth/Baldoyle and is appointed CC Howth and Sutton

Swords/Brackenstown/Rivervalley with Fr Desmond Doyle appointed Moderator of Swords/Brackenstown/Rivervalley and Fr Colin Rothery appointed co-PP, Swords/Brackenstown/Rivervalley;

Walkinstown: Fr Paul Glennon, appointed PP;

Permanent deacons:

Deacon Gerard Reilly appointed to Malahide, Portmarnock and Yellow Walls;

Deacon Damian Murphy to Cabra, Cabra West and Phibsborough grouping of parishes;

Deacon Jeremy Seligman appointed to the parishes of Ashford and Glenealy, Glendalough, Roundwood;

Deacon Joe Walsh appointed to Maynooth;

The following priests are retiring: Canon Patrick Carroll, Fr Patrick Devitt and Fr Owen Lynch while Msgr Paul Callan and Fr Karl Fortune have been granted sabbatical leave.

Holy Land order promotes members

A promotion in rank ceremony was held at Holy Cross Abbey, Holycross Co. Tipperary on Saturday July 24 by the Equestrian Order Of The Holy Sepulchre Of Jerusalem. The Lieutenancy of Ireland promoted a record 21 dames and knights with five members promoted to the rank of Grand Cross of the Order. The ceremony was held at Holy Cross where the Order was established in Ireland in July 1986 (see picture above).

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



ANTRIM: Youth workers with Holy Trinity Youth Centre in Belfast Thomas and Kev on detached youth support in West Belfast reaching out to young people who may be in need.



ANTRIM: Blathnaid Loughran and Steven Carlin who were married in Queen's University Belfast Chaplaincy recently. Family friend Dr John Keenan, Bishop of Paisley, flew in from Scotland to officiate.



MAYO: Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey with Paddy Nyland, sacristan in Kilkelly Church. Mr Nyland has served in the position since the church opened in 1961 and continues to work as sacristan for the local community.



◀ WESTMEATH:

Eric Leonard assists his Gran, Caroline Glynn plant a tree in the grounds of the Church of the Assumption, Kinnegad to mark First World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Also in the photo Eric's mother Martina Leonard and his brother, Ross. And Christy Brennan and Jacinta Geraghty (church stewards).



ANTRIM: Members of Holy Trinity Youth Centre in Turf Lodge, Belfast participate in pizza-making courses as part of the summer activity scheme to encourage healthy eating.

Events

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



World Report

IN BRIEF

New allegations against David Haas prompt publisher to cut ties with composer

● A top publisher of hymns will stop publishing works by David Haas after receiving additional allegations of sexual misconduct against the embattled Catholic composer.

"We have suspended our publishing and sponsorship relationship with Mr Haas and have also removed his music, books, and recordings from our catalogue and website," said a letter from Alec Harris, president of GIA Publications.

The letter was sent to each diocese in late July. Portions of the letter were made public on August 2.

Mr Harris said he was "deeply heartbroken" when scores of women accused Haas of varying degrees of sexual misconduct last year.

Argentine diocese apologises for prayer to Pachamama

● The Diocese of Venado Tuerto's Caritas branch apologised last Tuesday for having posted on its social media a prayer to Pachamama, an Andean deity.

"The pachamama is a symbol of fertility, of the earth and the sacredness of life. It is a myth full of spiritual meaning (that) can be used to advantage," said the now-deleted August 1

post.

Pachamama Day is celebrated annually on August 1 in Quechua and Aymara communities in the Andes mountains of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru in honour of the Andean deity.

The posting of the prayer drew massive pushback on social media, leading to its deletion.

Australian catechist's book introduces theology of the body to children

● Sydney catechist Caroline Fisher says writing a successful book for Catholic children has helped her spread a message of true love "too good" to keep to herself.

The mother of three who is also a naturopath and wellness speaker said her picture book *Jesus Had a Body Like Me: A Theology of the Body for Babies and Little Ones* is aimed not just at children but at those who read to them.

"God doesn't make mistakes, and each of us matters to God and has been 'fearfully and wonderfully' made in his image and likeness for a purpose only we can fulfil, and nobody else," Ms Fisher told *The Catholic Weekly*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Vatican announces launch of Catholic 'global compact' on the family

● The Vatican is launching a research project on the family to be carried out by Catholic universities around the world.

The results of the project, called the Catholic Global Compact on the Family, will be presented at an event held before the World Meeting of Families in Rome in June 2022.

The global compact was launched to create "a shared program of actions for promoting the family throughout the world in light of the social doctrine of the Church," an August 6 press release said.

The Dicastery for the Laity, Family, and Life and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences are organising the Catholic Global Compact on the Family with cooperation from the International Centre of Family Studies in Milan, Italy.

The project is part of the *Amoris Laetitia* Family Year, which began on March 19 to mark the fifth anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis' 2016 apostolic exhortation on the family.

Rwandan immigrant turns himself in for killing French Montfort provincial

A Rwandan immigrant awaiting trial for the arson of the cathedral in Nantes turned himself in to police for killing the French provincial of the Montfort Missionaries.

Emmanuel Abayisenga, 40, a Catholic, had been released on bail earlier this year for the 2020 arson at Ss Peter and Paul Cathedral in Nantes. Montfort Father Olivier Maire, 60, had offered him housing in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, south of Nantes.

Media reported police sources said early indications were that Mr Abayisenga had beaten Fr Maire to death.

Fr Santino Brembilla, superior general of the Montfort Missionaries, described Fr Maire as a "religious, a priest and a missionary of great value, a specialist in Montfort spirituality who accompanied his entire community in coming to a profound understanding of the message of their founder, Louise-Marie Gignion de Montfort," *Vatican News* reported.

Archbishop Eric de Moulins-Beaufort of Reims, president of the French bishops' conference, tweeted: "The murder of Fr Maire is a terrible tragedy. He will have lived following Christ until the very end, in the unconditional acceptance of all. While waiting for more complete elements that the investigation will bring, I pray for his family and his



According to the French Catholic daily newspaper *LaCroix*, this photo shows Emmanuel Abayisenga, the man accused of killing Montfort Fr Olivier Maire, meeting Pope Francis at the Vatican in 2016. The photo is from a November 11, 2016, 'Year of Mercy' jubilee event for people who are homeless or otherwise socially excluded. Photo: CNS/Vatican Media.

religious brothers. I pray for all the people traumatised by this tragedy, for his assassin too, who is at least psychologically adrift, and I assure (Luçon) Bishop (François) Jacolin of my fraternal support. May God grant us the grace to serve him always and in all."

Montfort

Fr Maire served on the Montfort Missionaries' general council from 2006-2011. Soon after that, he was elected provincial of the French province. At 60, Fr Maire was

the youngest member of the French province.

In an August 9 statement on his diocesan website, Bishop Laurent Percerou of Nantes said he worked with Fr Maire during 2021 on local parish concerns, appreciating his "qualities as a listener, his benevolence and sense of the Church".

French Senator Bruno Retailleau sent a tweet paying tribute to Fr Maire at the hand of someone he was housing out of charity.

"His death testifies to the kindness of this priest whom

I knew well and whose depth of faith I had been able to appreciate. His death is a great loss," the tweet said.

On July 25, 2020, Mr Abayisenga admitted lighting two fires in the area of a 17th-century organ and a third above an electrical panel in the Cathedral of Ss Peter and Paul a week earlier. He had been volunteering at the cathedral as a warden and had the keys to the building because he was responsible for locking it up on the day of the fire. He had been in the country since 2012.

Musicologist hopes to reconstruct 12th Century organ from Bethlehem church

Frozen in time, like a "musical Pompeii," the 221 remaining original organ pipes from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem may fill a gap of knowledge of more than three centuries in the history of the organ and its cultural context, medieval church culture, music and technology.

"This organ dates from the 12th century and is a unique specimen in the world," said musicologist and historian David Catalunya, a research fellow at the University of Oxford.

Mr Catalunya was in Jerusalem this

summer to conduct a preliminary study on the pipes. The next phases of the research will involve a larger team performing the scientific study of the pipes, including metal analysis, 3D scanning, and a CT scan.

One aim of the project is to replicate the original pipes and reconstruct the organ's missing parts, so that its sound can be heard again after 800 years.

The organ pipes were discovered, along with bells and other liturgical ornaments, in an archaeological excavation at the Franciscan monastery of the

Church of the Nativity in 1906 and were brought to Jerusalem under the care of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

The objects were stored for more than a century in the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum and will be displayed at the new Terra Sancta Museum in Jerusalem.

Mr Catalunya said French Crusaders probably brought the organ to the Holy Land in the first half of the 12th century. He believes the organ survived the 1187 invasion of Saladin, sultan of Egypt who defeated the Crusaders.

Philippine Catholic Church inks documents with nationalist Church for reconciliation

Catholic Church leaders in the Philippines signed documents with the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), or Philippine Independent Church, "for more ecumenical cooperation amidst diversity."

In a joint statement signed on August 3, leaders of both churches said that together they "ask and pray for mutual forgiveness for any injuries inflicted in the past."

"We shall strive for the healing and purification of

memories among our members," read the statement released on the occasion of the 500th anniversary celebration of the arrival of Christianity in the country.

The IFI formally broke away from Rome and declared

itself a nationalist Church in 1902 "in the midst of a turbulent period of the Filipinos' struggle for independence against the colonial rule of Spain and the United States," the statement said.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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Judging the jab



A demonstrator holds a sign saying "Vaccinated to freedom" during a protest against France's Covid-19 restrictions in Paris, July 31. Photo: CNS.

Some European bishops give their backing to vaccination requirement

With Covid-19 still taking a toll across Europe, Catholic bishops are backing vaccination campaigns, while also counselling against coercion.

In Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel's government has warned of tougher restrictions on those refusing jabs, the president of the bishops' conference said in late July that vaccination should be a personal choice, but he urged Catholics to get vaccinated to ensure that freedoms would not be withdrawn again if there were a new spike after the summer.

"I share the concerns of politicians – we will only defeat this virus if we all pull together," Bishop Georg Bätzing said in a statement.

"To be vaccinated means more protection and freedom not just for you, but for everyone in society. It therefore expresses solidarity and charity."

Vaccinations

The Church in Germany's internet portal, Katholisch.de, debated August 4 whether vaccinations should be compulsory for Mass attendance to make the Church a "moral pioneer."

"It would clearly signal the church was standing behind science and advocating solidarity, as well as using her authority for something good and countering the many negative headlines and scandals," the website commentary said.

"Even with increasing infections, church services could stay lively, with singing choirs, peace handshakes and a carefree reception of Communion."

However, another commentary said excluding the nonvaccinated would be "incompatible with the Christian message."

In neighbouring France, beginning August 9, people wanting to participate in leisure activities or use public transportation will need proof of vaccination, a negative Covid-19 test or proof of recent recovery. Catholic bishops have backed compulsory vaccination for certain groups, despite widespread protests.

"The vaccination is a medical response for coping with an epidemic that risks further paralysing economic and social life," the bishops' conference said July 22.

"By making it compulsory for some and by imposing a health pass for certain activities, the government is fulfilling its legitimate responsibilities. ... It is imposing restrictions on those who refuse the vaccine."

However, Archbishop Pierre d'Ornellas, who heads the French bishops' bioethics group, said in an August 2 website statement a "more tolerant approach" was needed for those with "legitimate hesitations and fears" about civil liberties.

Cuban religious report detainees held without trial after protests

The board of directors of the Cuban Conference of Men and Women Religious reported last Tuesday that following the July 11 protests of the island's communist government "there are still detainees awaiting trial, under investigation and others punished with very severe penalties."

The conference has been offering legal advice to detainees and spiritual and psychological support for their family members in the wake of the crackdown

by Cuban president Miguel Diaz-Canel.

Protests took place across Cuba July 11-12. Protesters cited concerns about inflation, shortages of food and medicine, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Some protesters were beaten, and hundreds were arrested.

Concur called for "the cases to be dismissed of people who were exercising their constitutional right to peacefully demonstrate (which is protected in Article 56 of the Constitution)."

In addition, the conference called for "compliance with the law, the rules of due process and consideration for the age and social background of the participants in the events."

The organisation of religious also stressed it is important that "in cases where the existence of crimes is proven, not applying the maximum sentence allowed by law and imposing penalties other than imprisonment where provided for by the Penal Code."

Vatican roundup

Vatican: 'Killer robots' pose threat to innocent civilians

● The use of "killer robots" and other lethal autonomous weapons systems violate international treaties because innocent civilians could be erroneously targeted, the Vatican said during a UN meeting in Geneva.

The potential of having "swarms of 'kamikaze' mini drones" and other advanced weaponry using artificial intelligence raises "serious implications for peace and security," the Vatican permanent observer mission to UN agencies in Geneva said in a statement August 3 to the 2021 Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).

"The use of swarms in urban areas could lead to high risks for civilians," the statement said. "If functioning without any direct human supervision, such systems could make mistakes in identifying the intended targets due to some unidentified 'bias' induced by their 'self-learning capabilities' developed from a limited set of data samples."

For years the Vatican, particularly the observer mission in Geneva, has warned against the use and development of LAWS or, so-called killer robots, which include military drones, unmanned vehicles and tanks and artificially intelligent missiles.

Pope Francis appeals for Lebanon on first anniversary of Beirut explosion

● Pope Francis during his weekly General Audience appealed for what he called, "the beloved country of Lebanon."

Addressing pilgrims in the Paul VI hall last Wednesday, the Pope said he was thinking of the country "a year after the terrible port explosion in its capital, Beirut, with its toll of death and destruction. I think above all of the victims and their families, the many injured, and those who lost their homes and livelihoods," he noted.

On August 4 last year an explosion in Beirut, set off by 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, killed more than 200 people and left more than 300,000 displaced.

In July this year, the Pope met with Lebanese Christian leaders in the Vatican.

Speaking of this, Pope Francis said that "During the Day of Prayer and Reflection for Lebanon last 1 July, together with Christian religious leaders, all of us listened to the hopes and aspirations, the frustrations and weariness of the Lebanese people, and we prayed for God's gift of hope to overcome this difficult crisis."

In conclusion, Pope Francis expressed his desire to visit the country.

"I continue to pray for you," he said, "so that Lebanon will once more be a message of peace and fraternity for the entire Middle East."

Pope Francis asks Catholics to pray in August for Church reform 'in the light of the Gospel'

● Pope Francis is inviting Catholics around the world to pray this month that the Church receives the grace "to reform herself in the light of the Gospel."

He made the appeal in his prayer intention for August, released on last Tuesday.

"Let us pray for the Church, that she may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel," reads the prayer intention, issued August 3 by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network.

The network also released an accompanying video, in which Pope Francis explained the rationale for the prayer intention.

Speaking in Spanish, the Pope said: "The specific vocation of the Church is evangelisation, which isn't proselytism, no. Its vocation is evangelisation; even more, the Church's identity is evangelisation."



Letter from Beirut

‘Today is a day of strength’ - Mass commemorates Beirut blast victims

Doreen Abi Raad

A year after the catastrophic Beirut port blast, the wounds of the people in Lebanon are scarred by the memory of the tragedy, and cries for justice escalate. This year, August 4 was declared a national day of mourning in Lebanon.

Clutching a framed photograph of her husband Elie, 27-year-old Nancy Khouzami told Catholic News Service: “It’s a hard day. But today is a day of strength.”

“I’ve been weak every day for a year,” she added.

Elie Khouzami was one of ten firefighters from the Beirut Fire Brigade who died at the port. The couple had been together for ten years and were married just one month when he died.

“He was full of life. Full of energy. Time was very precious to him,” Nancy Khouzami said of her husband, noting that he “turned 33 in heaven.”

Gathering under the scorching sun at the brigade headquarters, Mrs Khouzami was joined by families and friends of the deceased firefighters, ahead of a Mass at the port, about a mile away.

“The Mass is important because it’s happening where the heroes died,” Mrs Khouzami said. “We don’t want the blood of our heroes to go in vain. Because of their blood we will make a new Lebanon.”

Mrs Khouzami, a Maronite Catholic whose husband was Greek Orthodox, told CNS: “I still can go on only because of my faith. My faith gave me the strength to continue.”

Fahim Farhat came from Houston; it was his first visit to his homeland since his 79-year-old mother, Marie, was killed in the blast.

Photograph

Holding a framed photograph of his mother on his way to the Mass, Mr Farhat told CNS: “I came to commemorate my mom and all the people who died in the blast, and all the wounded - they are living martyrs - and all the people who lost their homes. I feel for them.”

Mr Farhat’s mother was a patient in Beirut’s St George Hospital, recovering from surgery for a broken hip. He had just talked to her by video call from Houston an hour before the blast. The force of the blast collapsed the ceiling in her hospital room, killing her.



Healthcare workers march outside St George Hospital in Beirut carrying a clock showing the time of last year’s Beirut port blast. Photo: Reuters.

St George is about a half-mile from the port, but the blast was so powerful that buildings were affected more than 12 miles away, and the tremor was felt on the island of Cyprus, 165 miles across the Mediterranean Sea. One of the largest non-nuclear blasts in history, it was blamed on the detonation of 2,750 metric tons of ammonium nitrate stored for years in a port warehouse.

“Today is a big day. We will celebrate our martyrs, celebrate our victims and celebrate justice also”

Mr Farhat’s brother Joseph had just visited his mother and was exiting the hospital when the blast hit, hurling him. A nurse about 30 feet away from Joseph Farhat was killed as a result of the tremendous force.

Mr Farhat, a Melkite Catholic who works as a family physician in Houston, called on “the international community to be very supportive of the Lebanese people, because this is a crime against humanity.”

“And I call on The Hague, the highest court in the world, to create an international tribunal to investigate and hold those people who are behind the

blast responsible and obtain justice for the Lebanese.”

The port Mass was organised by a group of Maronite, Melkite and Latin Catholic priests known as ‘Église pour le Liban’ (Church for Lebanon), who have been helping the families of the victims and those affected by the blast for the past year.

Mass

On his way into the Mass site, one of those priests, Maronite Fr Hani Tawk, said: “Today is a big day. We will celebrate our martyrs, celebrate our victims and celebrate justice also. For us, it’s a miracle to celebrate the Mass here. From the death, we celebrate life.”

Mass was by invitation to family members of the blast victims, the injured and those whose homes and livelihoods had been destroyed. No politicians or government officials were invited.

Surrounded by wreckage near the damaged grain silos, families of the victims were among the first to arrive, seated directly in front of the altar. Songs broadcast from speakers punctuated the emotional ambiance, including the haunting *Le Beirut* from Lebanon’s renowned singer Fairuz, and *The Prayer*.

Maronite Fr Elias Maroun Gharious stopped by each family member. “May God bless you and protect you,” he said, taking the time to listen

to those who needed to share their pain. Some embraced the priest, crying.

The ceremony began with a recitation from the Quran, a minute of silence at 18.07, the exact time of the tragedy, and the recitation of the names of the victims.

Cardinal Bechara Rai, Maronite Catholic patriarch, was the main celebrant. He was surrounded by the Vatican nuncio to Lebanon, Arch-

bishop Joseph Spiteri; Syrian Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan; and more than a hundred bishops and priests. Three choirs sang at the Mass.

In his homily, Cardinal Rai said, “We are here to witness the unity of Christians and Muslims in loyalty to Lebanon alone.”

“We stand together humbled between destruction and ruins. We light the torch of

hope and the future and write a new history for generations.”

“What are the people in power waiting for in order to address people’s needs?” he asked. “To what bottom are they waiting for the country to reach so that their hearts can move and they feel the people’s pain and work on alleviating it until it is removed?”

Trauma

Aside from the trauma and suffering of the blast, Lebanon is in the throes of an extreme economic crisis, which the World Bank calls one of the worst in the world since 1850. Since late 2019, Lebanon’s currency has lost more than 90% of its value, plunging more than 50% of its population into poverty.

“We light the torch of hope and the future and write a new history for generations”

The port blast killed 214 people, left more than 6,000 injured, made some 300,000 people homeless and shattered lives and livelihoods in Beirut and beyond. There has yet to be justice or accountability for the catastrophe.

“We are here to demand truth and justice,” Cardinal Rai said. “We want to know who took these explosive materials to the port, who allowed their storage and transport, who knew the danger,” he said.

“Whether the port bombing was a result of negligence or a terrorist act, it is, in any case, an attack on our existence,” he said.

Cardinal Rai offered encouragement: “I say to you, people who are wounded in the depths of your hearts: Trust and believe that God loves you, suffers with you, lives in you, and relieves your sorrows. On the fourth of last August, Jesus was on the cross with us, and today he invites us to the resurrection with all that it means from the depth of faith, inner peace and life.”

Thanking Pope Francis for his solidarity and prayers, Cardinal Rai cited the words spoken by the Pope that same morning: “My dear Lebanese, my desire is great to come and visit you, and I will not tire of praying for you, so that Lebanon will return to be a message of brotherhood and a message of peace for the whole of the Middle East!”



Nancy Khouzami poses with a photo of her husband, Elie, at the Beirut Fire Brigade headquarters. Photo: CNS.

Can the Church profit from Italy's 'Summer of Gold?'



Part of the Italian Olympic delegation at the opening ceremony in Tokyo.



In rediscovering what it means to be Italian, will the faith that has defined the country for centuries be reconsidered asks
John L. Allen

Fifty years from now, Italians now alive probably will still smile whenever someone mentions the summer of 2021, what's now being described as the greatest summer in the history of Italian sports, its 'summer of gold'.

Last month, the Italian national soccer team – this time a hardscrabble unit composed almost entirely of non-superstars, mostly young with a few grizzled veterans, all deeply recognisable Italian personalities – won a hard-fought European championship, vanquishing England in the final on their home turf in Wembley Stadium on penalty kicks.

The paroxysms of joy from that conquest hadn't even subsided when Sunday rolled around. On that day in Tokyo, in an arc of just ten minutes, Italian athletes won gold medals in two centrepiece track and field events, one of which, the 100-meter dash, had not even seen an Italian in

the finals before in the entire 125-year history of the modern Olympic games. Italy had only claimed two previous gold medals in a track event of any kind, one dating to 1960 and the other 1936.

Indelible

The most indelible image from the soccer championship had been a photo of head coach Roberto Mancini and one of his assistants and long-time close personal friends, Gianluca Vialli, embracing on the field at Wembley Stadium after the final match, with Mr Vialli openly weeping.

“What I do know is that imaginative Church leadership would be making the ask right now”

Now that image will be forever joined with the shot of Gianmarco Tamberi, who claimed the high jump gold and then hurried over to watch the 100-meter final, embracing his friend Marcel Jacobs after it was over, both with expressions of disbelief and utter joy on their faces.

Think about what this country has been through since the last Olympics. Italy failed to qualify for the games in 2016, and, more humiliatingly still, failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. That flop

stung, especially since for Italians the national soccer team is like a civil religion, one of very few things that actually unify the entire country from north to south.

On top of all that, Italy was hit first and hardest in the West by the coronavirus pandemic. Aside from the direct loss of life, the economic hardships imposed by a series of closures and travel bans has devastated the tourism industry, which accounts for 12% of the country's GDP and 13% of total jobs. To this day, the ranks of unemployed or underemployed waiters, cooks, tour guides, drivers, hotel staff, and so on, are legion. There's hardly a family in this country that hasn't either lost someone to the pandemic, or is struggling to support someone out of work, or both.

On top of that, Italy has also lived through the rise of a new kind of polarising, hyper-partisan politics previously associated mostly with the US, stoking old divisions and creating new ones in ways that have pitted families, communities, civil associations and workplaces against one another.

Backdrop

Against that backdrop, to experience things in which all Italians can feel pure, undiluted pride has been a national tonic.

Today, it's suddenly fashionable again to be Italian. People here are sort of celebrating all those things that make them who they are –

inviting the whole family over for lasagna, dressing smartly to take walks in the city centre, organising expeditions to the beach or the mountains, even getting a lump in the throat whenever they see the national flag, the green, white and red *tricolore*.

Seen through a Catholic lens, an obvious question about all this beckons: Will that new embrace of Italy's roots include going to church, or, at least, maybe feeling a tick or two more Catholic?

“Against that backdrop, to experience things in which all Italians can feel pure, undiluted pride has been a national tonic”

The coronavirus period has been hard on Catholicism here too. Mass attendance came screeching to a halt last March when a ban on public worship was imposed as part of the effort to fight the pandemic, and even though public celebration of the Mass restarted just a little over two months later, to this day the numbers haven't returned to their pre-Covid levels.

One wonders if part of the rediscovery of what it means to be Italian will include reconsidering the faith that has defined and

carried this country for centuries, well before there was such a thing as a unified Italian nation. Having watched Italy claim glory again last Sunday, will Italians show up at Mass next Sunday to give thanks and celebrate?

I have no idea, and frankly, it's probably a tremendously long shot. Italians may have busted out their rosaries and holy cards along the way to these big wins, but I doubt that's enough to propel them back inside the doors of a church.

Imaginative

What I do know is that imaginative Church leadership would be making the ask right now, perhaps with a PR campaign blitz along the lines of, “God gave us a summer of gold. Why not say thank you next Sunday?”

(Really, they'd probably be better off making the appeal in the name of the Madonna, given the intensely Marian faith of Italians. I also don't know who owns the rights to Padre Pio images, but it couldn't hurt to throw him in somewhere too.)

Most Americans, or really anyone outside Italy, might regard all this as an exclusively Italian question in which they don't have any stake. Yet the truth of it is, the fate of the Catholic Church and of Italy are inextricably bound, by history, by tradition, by providence. When Catholicism flourishes in Italy, the entire Church is stronger; when it staggers here, the entire Church is weaker.

Time will tell if the Italian Church is able to take advantage of this era of good feelings. In the meantime, as someone who's made Italy my adoptive home and who loves this country intensely, I know I'll be sending up some thanks next Sunday.

“The paroxysms of joy from that conquest hadn't even subsided when Sunday rolled around”

Letters

Letter of the week

Exchanging a staycation for a 'praycation'

Dear Editor, As Clomaney country music festival, Fleadh Cheoil, Galway races, and the ploughing championships are all cancelled, I decided to do something this summer. So instead of a staycation I did a praycation.

So off to Holy Cross Abbey in Rostrevor, Co. Down for a week. The experience was silent especially with the monks at meal time. The accommodation was ideal for myself as was the food.

What amazed me was that I valued the silence. From the Liturgy of the Hours where we reflected on the

psalms, to the stillness of the prayerful grounds. Even though we have over the last 18 months experienced silence in the lockdowns, I felt those times prepared me well for my week away.

I think it would be a help in our various liturgical celebrations to create more silent moments. We feel that we have to fill every moment with music or the spoken word. Any time I did have silence you can hear a cough or a shuffle from an anxious congregation wanting me to just get on with it.

Silence is unsettling, I agree, but

embracing it can open up a more unique relationship to the God we worship. If the only silence we experience in Church is when everyone is gone, then I feel we are missing out. I know the liturgical experts will have their view, but if we encourage silence every so often, would two extra minutes be such an ordeal?

It's amazing when you go for the praycation how much you can experience a hidden treasure.

Yours etc.,

Fr Martin Gilcreest
Cavan Town, Cavan

Catechesis on the basics of our Faith is needed

Dear Editor, Hand-wringing about lapsed Catholics is futile without action. Some have left, perhaps, for a Church with a livelier social life, a better youth group, etc. Others may have left because being a Catholic requires commitment – to the sacraments, to charity – and endows one with a conscience! Or, because the Mass is not in Latin – were the first Masses in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic? Surely God is multilingual. At the Consecration, transubstantiation occurs – we have the Real Presence (we don't understand how – we have faith – does the language matter?)

Catechesis on the basics of our Faith is needed, especially on the Real Presence.

Yours etc.,

John McCloskey
Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim



Questioning the distinction between indoor dining and Confirmation

Dear Editor, The advice pertaining to religious ceremonies such as First Holy Communion and Confirmation is religious ceremonies should not take part at this time. The basis for this is public health advice, rather than a statutory provision. Based on public health advice means the Catholic authorities do not have a legal duty to follow these rules, and this was conceded by the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly who nonetheless urged clergy to 'stick with them'. The basis for

this is they can be 'spreader events', leading to increased transmission of Covid-19. The minister failed to mention that 'free profession and practice of religion' is guaranteed under Article 44 of the Constitution. The intervention was made on the basis of public health advice, rather than a statute, so it can be inferred no question of constitutionality arose. A moot question, is, what the position of the 1937 Constitution is in civic life? Does it operate solely negatively, used by the courts

to strike down legislation or by the Government to refuse to legislate?

The restrictions imposed by Covid-19 put this distinction into sharp relief. The State's response throughout has been to assume a certain aggregate amount of contact is acceptable, dependent on the prevalence of the disease, the rate of spread, the risk of transmission, and the necessity of the activity being pursued. In Scotland, the legal restrictions on attending Mass were held to violate

the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms under the UK's Human Rights Act 1998 because it surpassed what the Scottish Government were legally permitted to do.

As both indoor dining, confirmations and baptisms occur indoors, it is difficult to ascertain what exactly the epidemiological basis for the distinction between the two practices is.

Yours etc.,

Gerry Coughlan
Kilnamanagh, Dublin 24

An outrageous interference in the right of Catholics

Dear Editor, On 29/7/21 An Taoiseach Micheál Martin announced the Government is discussing increasing the numbers permitted at GAA fixtures in Croke park and elsewhere. At the same time people are advised to continue with recommended precautions against Covid-19 including social distancing.

Given that thousands of people will be allowed gather at sports stadia throughout the country I can't help wondering how social distancing can be maintained/enforced at entrances and exits.

That said, it begs the question as to why the 50 people currently permitted to gather for a church service, should exclude those for First Holy Communion and Confirmation on the grounds of social distancing outside the church, and

fear of in-house celebrations in private homes. And how does that square with the 100 people who will be permitted to attend a wedding in the same church from August 5?

Mr Martin's public statement that such church services should not go ahead is an outrageous interference in the right of Catholics and other Christians to worship and celebrate their rites as God demands!

What we are experiencing is a full-frontal attack on the practice of our religion. The reasons are twofold: Firstly there are votes in allowing sporting events, none in religion; secondly most of our elected representatives who legislated for the abominations now on our statute books are atheist in practice even if Catholic in name and their

actions do not accord with any objective moral criteria.

It is time that those in politics who prattle on about the separation of Church and State acted in accordance with their much-vaunted public utterances and refrained from interfering in a realm in which they have no competence. Otherwise, one can only assume that our Government is practising blatant anti-Catholic discrimination as seen in autocratic regimes elsewhere.

It is time also for our bishops to claim their legitimate authority and protect the flock entrusted to their care.

Yours etc.,

Loretto Browne
Ashbourne, Co. Meath

facebook community

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

Heroic Cork priest killed in freak bus collision remembered for 'openness' and 'humour'

I knew Con well, he was an absolute gentleman and an absolute character; a man of the people and truly a man of God, may his brilliant and prayerful soul rest in eternal peace. – **Uinsionn Seán Ó'Dubhghaill**

Episcopal Resolve hardens as Archbishop of Dublin says he won't stand in the way of Communion and Confirmations ceremonies

Poland has been giving First Communion and Confirmation over the last 16 months and the Polish Church didn't collapse. They have far lower vaccination rate than Ireland. – **Robert Nugent**

If Electric Picnic can go ahead along with all the GAA matches then give me a good reason why the Government believes Communion and Confirmations can't proceed in a safe manner? There's no good reason why Communion and Confirmations can't go ahead. There's no Church that's been the source of a major outbreak yet there have been multiple outbreaks in schools and the Government keeps these open. This is an attack on religious freedom, namely the Catholic Church as a means of settling old scores. If the mental health argument was used to keep schools open why wasn't the same argument applied to keep churches open? Is spiritual health not equally important? – **Nollaig Ó Coileáin**

Shame on him. If the archbishop won't obey the rules, how can we expect others to do so. The Church should be leading by example. – **Sandra Dunne**

Follow the protocol and proceed with Holy Communion. The Government is unnecessarily interfering in Church matters. – **Jayan Joseph**

I support our archbishop. The children need this and I know rules will be followed. – **Deirdre Quinn**

Very late, but at least the archbishop is stepping up now. – **William Broderick**

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

Allowing children to receive the sacraments

Dear Editor, Now that the number of guests at weddings has been increased to 100 and baptisms can be resumed, when will Cardinal Martin and Archbishop Varadkar allow children and young people to receive the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation?

Yours etc.,
Fr Oliver Skelly
Coole, Co. Westmeath.

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



▲ **ENGLAND:** A tanker ship is seen in the English Channel at sunrise near Dover, August 4. Photos: CNS.

◀ **LEBANON:** People carry flags and banners as they march to mark the one-year anniversary of Beirut's port blast, August 4.



USA: The US Marine Corps Band plays outside of a fire station in Arlington, Virginia, August 1, as participants in the "Never Forget Walk" honour the victims of the 9/11 attack in New York, in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon in Virginia.



ITALY: Migrants on an Italian Coast Guard vessel react after being rescued during a joint rescue operation with the German NGO migrant rescue ship Sea-Watch 3 in the western Mediterranean Sea, August 2.



GREECE: Smoke covers the sky as a wildfire burns a forest area near Athens, August 5.



GREECE: A damaged church is seen following a wildfire in Lasdikas, August 6.



Complexity and paradox

Italian religious author Carlo Carretto of the congregation of the Little Brothers of the Gospel.

Reading the *Letters of Dorothy Day* recently, I ran into this line, “doubtless we need a Savonarola as well as a St Francis”. She was speaking about what spirituality needs in order to be healthy and balanced. That triggered something inside me, something I have never been able to sort out. I have always been comfortable, perhaps too much so, in both circles of piety and circles of iconoclasm. I’m drawn to the warmth of the Sacred Heart even as I am stimulated by Nietzsche, and I see Merton’s raw sense of humour as issuing forth from the same unique place within him as his faith, one leaning on the other.

“She was speaking about what spirituality needs in order to be healthy and balanced”

One of my favourite spiritual writers is the Italian monk and hermit, Carlo Carretto. When you are reading a Carretto book, you are never sure what you will meet next in terms of either piety or its (seeming) opposite. On one page, he might be offering a handmade toy to the Blessed Virgin Mary to give the infant Jesus and a page or two later he will be offering a blistering critique of clericalism or calling on the Pope to shut present-day seminaries because he believes those training for the priesthood should be living with everyday families. Many of



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

you are familiar with his ‘Ode to the Church’ within which both his piety and his iconoclasm are manifest:

*‘How much I must criticise you, my Church and yet how much I love you!
How you have made me suffer much and yet owe much to you.
I should like to see you destroyed and yet I need your presence.
You have given me much scandal and yet you alone have made me understand holiness.
Never in this world have I seen anything more obscurantist, more compromised, more false, and yet never in this world have I touched anything more pure, more generous, and more beautiful.
Many times I have felt like slamming the door of my soul in your face – and yet how often I have prayed that I might die in your sure arms!’*

Not many spiritual writers have this range on their keyboard. As Ernst Kasemann once said, the problem in the Church and in the world is that the pious are not liberal and the liberal are not pious. Carretto was both. He could love the Church, fiercely, piously, with childlike devotion, even as inside of that very devotion he could critically acknowledge and speak out against her faults. That’s a rare capacity, seen in some saints.

Pious

Dorothy Day, not unlike Carretto, was an exceptionally pious woman, a unanimity-minus-one defender of chastity in the circles she moved in, and a woman who believed that reverence was a non-negotiable moral virtue. Yet, like Carretto, she could be blistering in her criticism of piety whenever it was blind to injustice, racism,

violence, and war. Small wonder her favourite saint was Therese of Lisieux, a pious nun tucked away in an obscure convent in France, writing mystical treatises on how much Jesus loves us.

“Small wonder her favourite saint was Therese of Lisieux, a pious nun tucked away in an obscure convent in France”

Moreover, that patron saint Therese was herself a wonderful example of a piety that can look saccharine and yet have a disarming capacity for critical insight. Therese of Lisieux is the same person who, while posturing in her writings as a little girl, someone of no consequence, the Little Flower, can pivot radically and suddenly become the wise, aged Sophia, dishing out hard spiritual counsel: “Be careful not to seek yourself in love, you will end up with a broken heart that way. I felt it more valuable to speak to God rather than to speak about Him, for there is so much self-love intermingled

with spiritual conversations. There are no miracles, no raptures, no ecstasies – only service.” Therese had a keyboard that could play very diverse melodies.

Consistency

The late Irish biblical scholar Jerome Murphy-O’Connor used say (partially tongue in cheek) that consistency is the product of small minds. What he was highlighting of course was that great minds aren’t simple, that they know the importance of nuance, that they don’t work in terms of black and white, that they can hold things in tension without prematurely resolving that, and that they can shock you equally in their capacity for reverence and for iconoclasm.

Jesus fits that description. He scandalised his contemporaries and continues to scandalise us with what seem like inconsistencies, but are really the capacity of a great mind and heart to hold truth in paradox, in tension. Small wonder there are so many Christian denominations today. We, his followers, cannot hold the whole truth together as he did and so we live out pieces of it rather than the whole Gospel. The same might be said for other great figures in history, like St Augustine, who is cited alternately as the root for both orthodoxy and heresy in theology.

There are indeed real contradictions and genuine inconsistencies; but there is also the paradox seen in great minds, minds who know exactly when to honour an icon and when to smash it.

“Dorothy Day, not unlike Carretto, was an exceptionally pious woman, a unanimity-minus-one defender of chastity in the circles she moved in”

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, August 12, 2021

Personal Profile

Following
God's call out
of the world

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Grilling for beginners

Summer's close is always somewhat anxiety-producing as you realise how little time you have left for all of the things you wanted and planned to do during the summer.

While the current weather isn't too conducive to fulfilling all of our summer fantasies, sometimes you have to be a little optimistic and hope for the best. With that in mind, I haven't given up hopes of dabbling in some grilling before the season is out, and I encourage others to engage in this archetypal summer activity.

Difference between grilling and barbecuing

Most of us use the terms 'grilling' and 'barbecuing' interchangeably. As mentioned, the 'arche-



While the weather doesn't support it at the moment, the ever-shortening summer implores us to get the grills out, writes Jason Osborne

typal' summer barbecue that graced so many of our childhood evenings was actually a grill, which is technically not a barbecue, I only recently discovered.

Although both barbecuing and grilling involve cooking outdoors over a source of heat, they're not terms that can be used in place of each other as there are differences. The key disparities are the type of heat used and the total cook time.

Barbecuing refers to cooking meat over indirect heat, or away

from the flame, for at least a few hours, although often all day, until the meat is very tender and falling off the bone.

On the other hand, grilling is more likely to be what you're doing as you cook outside: cooking food quickly over direct heat at high temperatures. Whereas barbecuing is "low and slow", grilling is "hot and fast" and often sears the food.

If you're cooking steaks, hamburgers, sausages, chicken, pork chops or seafood, there's a decent

chance you're grilling. Vegetables and fruits are also popular foods for grilling, with most at-home grilling being done over a gas or charcoal grill.

Despite these differences, it's important to note that you can still use barbecue sauce on your grilled foods – just be sure to put it on at the end of the cook time, since the high heat you grill at can cause the sugars in the sauce to burn.

Being more familiar with grilling than barbecuing, it's that this article will be discussing – beginning with identifying which type of grill you have or hope to use.

Grill type

Usually, a griller is dealing with either propane, gas, electric, or old-fashioned charcoal. If you already have a grill and are curious about which you're using, an electric grill is the most eas-

ily identified, simply because it comes with cords which need to be plugged in in order to operate.

If you're sure this isn't what you have, looking beneath the grilling apparatus for a tank should reveal more. If you see one, it's likely you have a propane grill. If you don't see a cord or a tank, check the grill interface. If there are knobs, dials and/or buttons, it's likely you're dealing with a gas grill. This is different from a propane grill in that it taps into your home's natural gas supply. This solves the problem of running out of fuel, as you often do with propane.

Finally, if your grill is very basic – a hollowed out bowl or drum with no knobs, dials, buttons or anything else – you have a charcoal grill.

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Family News

AND EVENTS

DONEGAL RAM SELLS FOR RECORD €44,000

A farmer from Co Donegal has sold a ram for €44,000, which is the highest amount ever paid for a male sheep at a sale in Ireland, RTÉ reports.

The record-breaking, seven-month-old Suffolk ram attracted notice when it went on sale in Wicklow. It was sold by Ballybofey, Co. Donegal farmer Richard Thompson.

He told RTÉ that it was a “dream come true”. The largest amount paid for a ram previously at a sale at Blessington Mart in Co. Wicklow was €38,000.

A consortium, led by Dennis Taylor, a farmer from Coleraine in Northern Ireland, paid the record-breaking price.

Robin McIlrath, chief executive of the Suffolk Sheep Society, said it was an “excellent sale”. “Richard’s record-breaking lamb was the cherry on the cake,” he said.

Mr Thompson said the money will all go straight back into the farm.

UK MILKMAN ARRESTED AFTER BEING MISTAKEN FOR BURGLAR

A milkman in England was arrested on suspicion of being a burglar despite showing police pints of milk and empties in the back of his van, his employer said.

The delivery man was held by officers in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, in the early hours of yesterday even after they witnessed him leaving milk on a customer’s doorstep, according to his boss.

Officers were investigating an incident at the Greenfield Convenience Store and were looking for a man in a van.

The milkman rang his boss, Russ Gibson, at around 2.45am to say there was police activity in the area.

Mr Gibson said the driver then rang again to say he had been followed by police, stopped and asked what he was doing at that early hour, despite them seeing him make a delivery to a doorstep.

The officers seemed unconvinced, Mr Gibson said, so the driver showed them the milk and empties in the back of the unmarked white van, and he was allowed to continue on his way.

Around 15 minutes later, the driver had stopped for a coffee break and was met by officers from three patrol cars who said they were arresting him on suspicion of burglary.

WHO SEEKS MORATORIUM ON COVID BOOSTER DOSES

The World Health Organisation is calling for a moratorium on Covid-19 vaccine boosters until at least the end of September.

The move is to enable that at least 10% of the population of every country was vaccinated, WHO head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

“I understand the concern of all governments to protect their people from the Delta variant. But we cannot accept countries that have already used most of the global supply of vaccines using even more of it,” Mr Tedros added.

Catholics should foster good friendships not factions online

How many of us have made the mistake of comparing our family and children with some other family down the road or someone else’s children? My own late mother did it, I’ve done it and I’d say most parents have engaged in comparisons at some stage or another. When I was young, the shining example was Ann, who lived about five minutes away. Ann was the striking example of the industrious child. She was always cleaning and scrubbing, dusting and ironing. In my young mind, she appeared to be every mother’s dream. Of course, poor Ann had no idea of the lofty pedestal that she’d been placed upon. There was no way any normal child could ever aspire to be like Ann and even Ann couldn’t possibly have been as perfect as the image I’d created in my imagination. No doubt my mother had no inkling of my childish conceptions. I’m sure she was referring to this helpful, kindly girl in an effort to urge me and my siblings on to greater efforts in helping in the house. Her plan was doomed to failure as, when someone is built up too much, instead of attempting to follow in their footsteps, we often just believe that their standard is way out of reach.

Social media

In our present times, there isn’t just one Ann; social media presents us with thousands of Anns, in all sorts of guises, and that sense of not quite measuring up is pervasive. Ubiquitous public posts, often from one’s Catholic circles or contacts, paint images of domestic bliss. I’ve done it myself, posting up well-posed photographs of cherubic smiles, moments in time that appear picture perfect with no clue as to what was going on before or after. Most of us can view the airbrushed editions of family life we see on Facebook



A parent’s perspective Maria Byrne

and Instagram as equivalent to the best photos in a family album. For others, whose family circumstances are a constant challenge, or who struggle with mental health issues or poor self-esteem, the constant status updates take their toll. One young woman I spoke with said that sites like Instagram just convinced her of everything she was missing out on, be it a wide circle of friends or a scintillating social diary. Of course we can’t expect people to stop spreading their joy just because it may contribute to another’s feeling of isolation or exclusion, but we can reflect on how much our social media presence mirrors our Christianity.

“Most of us can view the airbrushed editions of family life we see on Facebook and Instagram as equivalent to the best photos in a family album”

An article on the website of the Diocese of Burlington in the US has the thought-provoking title *Being Catholic Online: Is there a theology of social media?* It suggests that there is and quotes Pope Francis from his 2016 World Communications Day message, “It is not technology that determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal.”

Trap

It’s so easy for those of us who use social media to fall into the trap of a showy self-promotion. Are we genuinely using Catholic Twitter or Instagram or Facebook to spread an authentic Gospel message or are we more interested in followers and fans? The Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference website offers some great principles for parishes on how to engage on social media that could apply to all of us. These ten tips include pondering before you post, thinking before you Tweet and thinking inspiration before sharing on Instagram. Often, we rush to respond or to post our opinion without thinking of how our words affect others. As it says in the guidelines, “You are what you



share, be careful how you represent yourself online...” This is particularly important; are we seeking to foster friendships and unite people or are we ego driven, determined to have the last word on an issue even if we are creating division and ill will?

It’s easy to forget that anything we post may not be easy to retract and contributes to how we’re perceived, perhaps even years later when some hastily posted comment becomes a source of embarrassment.

“It’s so easy for those of us who use social media to fall into the trap of a showy self-promotion”

Catholics should foster good friendships, not factions. Does it really matter if someone is in some particular Catholic society and their friend is in another? Christians should be known for their Christlike love of others so, issue that invitation, give someone a chance to be part of your circle and resist cliques that are centred on status, popularity and petty power plays. If you’re the person who feels inferior after checking up on social media, adjust your perspective and try to be more proactive. Instead of waiting for people to reach out, be the one who tries to build Christian communities, both on and offline. Watch out for events, book clubs, prayer groups and conferences and go a little outside your comfort zone by getting involved. Back in 2012, Pope Benedict XVI called for the “relentless chatter of the internet to be balanced by silence and contemplation”. Instead of stressing about how others act on online forums we can take his advice and seek out the sites which “can help people today to find time for reflection and authentic questioning, as well as making space for silence and occasions for prayer, meditation and the sharing of the word of God”.

With our eye on the true goal, what anyone else does, or appears to be doing, on social media will be very much a secondary concern.

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Cleaning and prepping your grill

Once you've figured out what kind of grill you have, or acquired one in the first place, preparing it properly is a must. If you've used it before, ensure it's clean. For steel or cast iron grates, you can use a stiff-bristled steel brush to get any sort of dirt off. For any non-stick coated cast iron, you should use a nylon bristled brush to avoid scratching. Check to see if your grill comes with a special tool for cleaning it, as they sometimes do.

After that, ensure that the bottom of the grill is free of any debris from either previous uses or (if your grill is newly purchased) packaging. These things can get stuck and impede a good, clean cooking experience.

“Electric grills usually have a knob or dial for turning on the grill and adjusting the heat setting”

After this, it's time to season your grill-grates (if they're pre-seasoned or coated grates, they don't need seasoning). This helps to create a non-stick cooking surface. You can use canola, peanut, vegetable, sunflower or avocado oil for this, but the main thing is to aim for a thin, even layer. Too much oil will burn and create a build-up, nullifying all your hard-done cleaning work.

Getting cooking

With the grill cleaned and seasoned, the next step is securing the heat. For gas grills, the valve on the gas line that allows gas to flow to your grill must be open. Likewise, for propane grills, the top of the propane

tank, which is located underneath the grill, has a valve that needs to be opened to allow propane to the grill.

For electric grills, simply find a power outlet and plug it in. Lastly, for charcoal grills, you need to add old-fashioned charcoal to the bottom of the grill, going under the grate of course.

At this point, it's time to preheat the grill, which is nearly exactly like preheating an oven. Just give it long enough to build up a sufficient heat for cooking meats right through. With so many different kinds of grill, your best bet for starting the grill is finding your grill's manual and following the instructions therein. That said, here are some of the basics.

Electric

Electric grills usually have a knob or dial for turning on the grill and adjusting the heat setting. If this is what you have, turn the dial to high, close the lid and wait for the grill to reach your preferred cooking temperature. The wait can be a little lengthy with an electric grill.



Gas or propane

These grills are somewhat similar, but a little more complicated in that they have dials and ignitor buttons. The dials let the gas flow from the tank to the burners, and the ignitor button creates a spark that lights the flame you'll use to cook with.

For propane and gas grills, you'll need to turn at least one of the dials (each dial corresponding to a burner) to high. Once it's on high, press and hold the ignitor button. You should hear a clicking followed by a rush, which is the gas igniting. Upon hearing that or seeing a flame, you can release the ignitor button.

“For gas grills, the valve on the gas line that allows gas to flow to your grill must be open”

Keep the temperature high and fire up any other burners you plan to use. You can also close the lid and leave the grill for 10-15 minutes, or until your preferred temperature is achieved.

Charcoal

Charcoal is the most archaic method, if it could be put that way. Some coals can be lit quite simply with a match, while others require the application of some lighter fluid, heeding whatever warnings come with it. Don't use too much, and apply the match quickly after the fluid. Once the coals are coated in light grey ash, they're ready to go and you can get cooking.

After this, it's all in your hands. Depending on what you're cooking, you'll need to adjust your style, but the most important thing for those setting out is ensuring the food is fully cooked through. Mastery will come in time.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



The summer holidays have again crept up on us. We go through our workaday, busy lives with a vague notion of respite at some distant time, until suddenly you realise that the long-promised date with idleness is next Friday. Then, panic ensues. Getting ready for holidays means work: there's grass to be cut, bills to be paid, clothes to be washed and packed and a million little things to be organised before the off. The car is then stacked high with bags and kids. We were barely a mile down the road before I once again awakened to a hard truth learned through bitter experience: a holiday with four young kids is not relaxing. It can be fun, it can be very enjoyable, and it might even be magical, but it is certainly not relaxing. It's a 24-hour job, looking after and entertaining four small people.

“We trekked our way along the clifftops to the crumbling old towers, which stand guard over the bay”

Like many other families, we were happy to holiday at home in Ireland in this second summer of Covid. The shifting regulatory landscape around coronavirus meant that foreign travel was too uncertain. However, we still did get to go overseas – well, across a body of water in any event – to a gorgeous island off the West Cork coast. With no holiday homes or hotels to be had, I had hatched a plan for us to holiday on board the old ketch I've been fixing up this past while. Usually, just two or three stay on board. This time, we were going to squeeze all six of us in for a week.

Boat

I had brought the boat down weeks beforehand to prepare her, and I had even done a few training

weekends with the small kids for a couple of nights at a time. We were tied up alongside, which made life easier, as the kids could go ashore to run and play when they needed to. We all piled on board



merrily upon arrival and, before long, the older kids were swimming off the back, while the smaller ones were catching crabs off the side. Keeping our three-year-old from falling in was a task from which there was no holiday, but we managed to keep her dry for the most part.

Each day, we went out and explored the island. The kids were entranced to discover a magical hidden cove with white sands, overhung with lush vegetation. It was a place more reminiscent of the tropics than the Irish Atlantic coast. We trekked our way along the clifftops to the crumbling old towers, which stand guard over the bay. More than once, the awe-inspiring views of the moody mountains across the bay stopped us in our tracks.

We found plenty time for swimming, fishing and snorkelling, and on those rare evenings when the kids – wearied from all the action – actually went to sleep willingly, my wife and I shared some welcome moments of peace, as the summer dusk deepened in the harbour, and the first stars appeared. In one such rare and quiet moment, a heretical thought stirred in my mind. Could it be that, just maybe, a holiday spent with four young kids in a confined space can be relaxing? All that is needed, it seems, is for the kids to be unconscious.

Following God's call out of the world

Personal Profile



Jason Osborne

Sr Máire Bríd of the Drumcondra Redemptoristines has followed God's call to the very margins of human experience: enclosed, monastic life. It wasn't a step she took lightly. Asked whether it took courage at the time, she responds, "It certainly did".

"It certainly did [require courage] because it was going against the grain. It was so unusual, especially enclosed life. I think for family and friends, if I became a religious sister who was teaching, they'd understand more the value of it, or it would make sense with my career, we'll say.

“The life she found behind the closed doors is ‘deeper than I could have ever imagined,’ she says”

"But I was really going against the grain with the enclosed life and I suppose at the time I wasn't a person who shared my faith much with others. I was only really getting to know myself and getting to know my faith so it was a shock for a lot of people," she tells *The Irish Catholic*.

Journey

"There was that sense of going against the grain and also, in my own journey, trying to work out whether I was doing the right thing, whether it was really what God wanted, or whether I was just going crazy and trying to escape something.

"Was I just not happy as a teacher and trying to run away, you know? Or was there something else



going on...so it was trying to work out what God's will was in it all, and then having the courage to push on even though, you know, it was so hard for my family and for friends and everyone, that I was just leaving. That was hard."

Where does a faith that allows you to follow God no matter where he calls you come from? Sr Bríd says her parents instilled it, although it was far from perfect at the start.

"I was always brought up in the Faith and I would give that credit to my parents, really. But I suppose what I wasn't aware of was that deep relationship with God. It was about going to Mass, it was about being a good person, but it wasn't a close relationship. I discovered that relationship when I was much older, when I was in my 20s and I had become a primary school teacher.

Teacher

"I had finished college, and it was just before beginning work as a primary school teacher that I had that kind of encounter with God, an experience of God's love. From then on, my life changed in terms of that relationship."

The change or "deepening" in her relationship with God came about over time, a process which continues today. While the echoes of a religious vocation rang in her ears from early on, but she thinks she "wasn't always listening or ready".

"I suppose, when it came to filling out the CAO form, before the Leaving Cert, I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do with my life. I remember at that moment thinking about religious life but forgetting it again.

“There was that sense of going against the grain and also, in my own journey, trying to work out whether I was doing the right thing”

"I enjoyed college, I worked hard and everything and made good friends, but there was something there I think that I knew it wasn't my true calling or my true vocation. There was something there."

Regardless, Sr Bríd is assured that everything along the way to her current position "helped me actually open my eyes and open my ears and actually listen to God".

As mentioned, doing God's word is rarely easy – still less when it involves leaving your world behind, in a sense – and Sr Bríd was keenly aware of this tension as she decided to take the step.

"I think for me at the time of choosing and entering, the most difficult part was the impact it was going to have on others. I know I needed to let go of that, but at the time it was very hard. I knew in some way that I was following my own heart and my own dream and what God wanted for me.

"I knew I was being true, insofar as I understood it, that I was doing what was right for me, but I knew that would be very hard for others to understand that, and where it was coming from. The enclosed life was, kind of, extra-radical in some way. When I came to the front door, I left my mobile phone behind and gave it to my mother. That's so hard, for any parent," she says.

Difficulties

Despite the difficulties, or maybe because of them, the life she found behind the closed doors is "deeper than I could have ever imagined," she says.

"In terms of relationships, I think you feel everything more intensely here. You're more aware of nature and beauty and if there's difficulties in relationships, you feel it more intensely, but it's the intensity of love, I suppose.

"I could never have imagined that it could be like this. I could never have imagined that it would be so difficult and yet so beautiful at the same time."

Her sisters are a key part of both the difficulty and the beauty. On a human level, it's other people that most often cause us irritation and bother, while at the same time being the source of the deepest reward and meaning.

"It's definitely a journey," Sr Bríd says, continuing, "on an ordinary, human level, when you put a lot of women together in one building, it's not going to be easy. Different personalities, and in our community, we have sisters from different cultures. You have the generational gap, so there are just very different personalities coming together. There is that challenge every day, and maybe I feel it more intensely, but the challenge to love and to really come to know each sister and love them as best you can with God's love.

"Without my sisters, I wouldn't discover that journey. I need them to show me how to love."



Children's Corner

Chai Brady

Impress friends with a hand crafted water instrument

The oldest evidence of the use of musical instruments dates back tens of thousand of years ago, with ancient flutes often discovered carved out of bone. Humanity has certainly come a long way since then in terms of technological advances in music and instruments.

Now a person just needs a computer to recreate the sounds of hundreds of instruments digitally and music software continues to advance and adapt as musicians try to find unique and ground-breaking sounds to thrill audiences.

With new musical gadgets and software coming on stream seemingly daily, it's worthwhile to go back to basics to truly understand some of the basics about music and sound waves. For instance, have you ever tried making music with glasses or bottles filled with water? Your favourite band may have never given this a try. Experiment with your own special sounds by turning glasses of water into instruments, make some music and find out how it works.

Apparatus

- Five or more glasses or glass bottles of the same size
- Water
- A wooden stick such as a pencil

Method

- Line the glasses up next to each other and fill them with different amounts of water. The first should have just a little water while the last should be almost full. The ones in between should have slightly more than the last.
- Hit the glass with the least amount of water and observe the sound, then hit the glass with the most water, which makes the higher sound?
- Hit the other glasses and see what noise they make, see if you can get a tune going by hitting the glasses in a certain order. You can put

food colouring in the water to help differentiate between the glasses and the sounds they make.

What's happening?

When you tap the glass of water with a pencil the water molecules vibrate and create sound waves through the water. More water means slower vibrations and a deeper tone. The bottle with the most water will have the lowest pitch while the bottle with the least water will have the highest.

Pitch is the way your ear and brain order sounds based on their frequency (vibrations per second). Rapid vibrations (high frequency) that reach your ear are categorized as a 'higher' pitch, while slower vibrations (low frequency) are categorised as a 'lower' pitch. Sound travels about four to five times faster in water than in air. So, water is actually affecting the speed at which the sound waves are traveling and vibrating.

Now all there is left to do is start making some music on your hand-crafted musical instrument and impress your friends and family.





TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



A self-congratulatory celebration of that pro-choice victory

Normally I'd be very pleased to find a programme where the Rosary figured prominently but on the main channels this doesn't happen very often.

However, it was a mixed blessing on **The 8th** (RTÉ One, Wednesday) that much-hyped documentary on the repeal of the Eighth Amendment. It's often said that the victor writes the history, and this film was almost entirely from the pro-repeal perspective. Lead campaigner Ailbhe Smyth even claimed they had "re-written history". The Church has often been criticised for being triumphalist, but this film came across as a self-congratulatory celebration of that pro-choice victory.

Rosary bead

In the early sequences especially, the pro-life side was characterised as made up of rosary bead swinging old people with some graphic aborted foetus pictures thrown in for good measure. Mind you it wasn't a great image for the pro-repeal side either, with a lot of shrieking young women in black. We're all too familiar with the ugly repeal jumpers, but I hadn't seen before the version with 'Repeal' written on bananas. Bananas indeed – I wonder if the PR people suggested that wasn't a good look.



Pro-repeal demonstrators at a Dublin rally in 2018. Photo: CNS.

Ailbhe Smyth was rightly proud of her daughter and grandchildren, campaigning for a better future for them, she thought, even as she sought to have the right to be born of all children done away with. She didn't seem conscious of the irony. The precious few contributions from pro-life speakers were impressive and the filmmakers, for all their lack of balance, showed these advocates making calm, reasoned and compelling arguments. Wendy Grace gave a young woman's feminist pro-life perspective. Maria Steen was incisive – 'Do you believe it's right to kill an innocent child?' Cora

Sherlock and John McGuirk made useful contributions about the campaign. Lawyer William Binchy gave an impassioned plea for the human rights of unborn children at an Oireachtas committee, as did Senator Rónán Mullen on an inclusive society. I believe all these will be seen as prophetic when the penny finally drops about the horrors of abortion.

Referendum

The worst part of the film was the scene, on referendum results day, of the cheering people at Dublin Castle – very likely including people whose lives were saved by

the Eighth Amendment. Wouldn't you think a documentary on the Eighth would have acknowledged or explored the number of lives it had saved? The celebrations were saddening and sickening, mostly when you think of the approximately 14,000 babies whose lives were terminated in the first two years of this 'compassionate' regime – about half of them dead directly because of repeal.

There are urgent media accountability issues – one could easily make the case that RTÉ's broadcast of such a biased and propagandist production, when the three year review of the abortion legislation is a topic of current public debate, is in blatant contravention of the station's obligation to be fair and impartial. And yet it wasn't surprising, as RTÉ's current affairs output over the years, and currently, has been consistently supportive of the pro-choice perspective.

Other worrying concerns about life and death were the subject of **The Salisbury Poisonings** (RTÉ One, Tuesdays), a four part BBC-made drama series about the true story of the poisoning, by nerve agent novichok, of Sergei and Yulia Skripal allegedly by Russian agents. Even though we knew the broad outlines of the case (from

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

RTÉ One Sunday August 15 10.00am

Mass from the Basilica of Our Lady Queen of Ireland, Knock with Celebrant Fr Richard Gibbons, Parish Priest and Rector of the Shrine. Music is provided by the Schola Cantorum Basilicae, directed by Una Nolan. The Mass will be shared across Europe via Eurovision.

FERN BRITTON MEETS...

BBC One Sunday August 15, 10.15am

Fern Britton meets boxing champion Nigel Benn, discussing how his conversion to Christianity ten years ago changed his life completely.

DOCUMENTARY ON ONE: TROUBLES SHARED

RTE Radio One Sunday Aug 15, 6.00pm

Journalists Peter Taylor and Fergal Keane are back in Northern Ireland to share their personal experiences of reporting on the troubles and ask what it all means now.

2018) the drama was absorbing. The characters, even the minor ones, were well-drawn, credible human beings caught up in a potentially drastic incident. The absence of a central villain was actually a bonus – the authorities had enough of an adversary in the poison itself. The human perpetrators were peripheral as the focus was on the investigators and the victims.

Policeman

The family members of one infected policeman were not affected at all, though he had shared a home and physical contact with them. One investigator said he was a scientist but that one word for this was 'miracle'.

Also, there was mention of a woman lighting candles in church with her daughter and the religious funeral ceremony was very moving. So, though grim, it was uplifting at several levels – not a bad achievement.

Finally, in a week marked by dismal antics from our political leaders, it was refreshing to see the courage and skills, the modesty and dignity of our Olympians, whether in victory or defeat, though I'd question the wisdom of interviewing anyone immediately after a crushing defeat.

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Film

Aubrey Malone



Tales of love, hate and eccentricity

The Last Bus is an offbeat story about a widowed pensioner (Timothy Spall) who travels from John O'Groats to Land's End with his wife's ashes in a suitcase. He uses only local buses. The people he meets on his journey – the longest one can make in Britain – help him deal with his loss.

Here Today is a gentle film about the friendship between a veteran comedy writer (Billy Crystal) and a street singer (Tiffany Haddish) that blossoms into love.

I Am Your Man, not to be confused with the 2005 documentary about Leonard Cohen, is a wacky tale about a woman who participates in an experiment that requires

her to live with a humanoid robot.

Reminiscence is another strange one. Hugh Jackman plays a scientist using technology to relive his past and to find a lost love.

The Nest (Irish Film Institute) has Jude Law as an ambitious entrepreneur who leaves the comforts of his suburban American home and moves his family back to his native England. While living in a manor there he discovers some unpalatable truths about his marriage.

Don't Breathe 2 is a sequel to a 2016 thriller, *Don't Breathe*. Stephen Lang plays a man living in a remote cabin with a young girl he's raised after she was orphaned in a



Carrie Coon and Jude Law in *The Nest*.

fire in her house. His life is shattered when a group of kidnappers abduct her. When he goes in pursuit they discover he isn't as quiet as he appears. Expect lots of violence.

Big Sky (Disney +) has a former policeman and a private detective trying to find two sisters who've been abducted by a serial killer on a remote Montana highway.

The Underground Railroad (Amazon Prime) features two runaway slaves finding a secret train that they hope will bring them across the Mason-Dixon line to freedom.

If you can put up with the terrible dubbing in the Argentinian film *The Crimes That Bind* (Amazon) it's actually worth it. Nothing is more disturbing than a film about a woman who kills her baby but here the emphasis is more on what drives her to it than the gross nature of the act.

Aretha Franklin is immortalised in *Aretha* (Disney+), an eight part series spanning a half century of the soul singer's life and career. Cynthia Erivo is a good lookalike for her.

Another legend, Isabelle Huppert, doesn't seem to know the meaning of the word "retire". She appears in *Frankie*, a film with a sad theme but a light touch, dealing with a terminally ill film star who decides to go on a final journey with her family. It's the catalyst for many revelations.

Raya and the Last Dragon (Disney +) is set in the fantasy world of Kumandra. Here humans and dragons live together in harmony. The dragons have already saved humanity as the film begins. Now they're threatened with extinction. Raya, a fearsome warrior, has to find the last one so they repeat such a redemption.

BookReviews

Summer series:

‘Saints and Beasts’ II

St Kevin and the birds



Blackbird feeding off berries in winter

The little monasteries of early Christian Ireland derived their monastic ideals from the desert fathers of Egypt. But instead of some cave or remote hill top such as was to be found in the Libyan desert or in Sinai, they remained faithful to the notions of the ancient Celts, whose religious shrines were, as Julius Caesar described them, clearings in the forest of north Europe.

These forests were then alive with animals and birds of all kinds. And this environment has left its mark on both the saints and the poetry they wrote. Their constant praise of God was conditioned by the bird song that surrounded them.

Wicklow

Glendalough in the south mountains of Wicklow, which is associated with the legends of St Kevin, is a model of its kind.

At the time of the Norman-Welsh invasion in 1169, one

of those who came to Ireland with the new overlords was Gerald de Barri (known also as Giraldus Cambrensis). A leading author of the day, he wrote about Ireland in his book *The History and Topography of Ireland*, which circulated widely in Europe in the following centuries.

“St Kevin began his holy life as a hermit and retired to a nearly inaccessible cave, now known as St Kevin’s Bed”

He wrote the book as a result of his visits to Ireland made while his Norman relatives who were busying themselves in saving Ireland for the true faith, as the old-fashioned beliefs of the Irish were highly suspect in the eyes of Rome and Canterbury, and incidentally in the eyes of the king of England when he took control



Kevin and nesting blackbirds.

of the invasion in the 1170s.

The book has many curious tales in it, and what he says about St Kevin quickly became an established legend.

Facts

A few facts about St Kevin first may set the scene. He was said to have been born in 498 and to have died in 618 (according to the *Annals of Ulster*) at the truly patriarchal age of 120. Nevertheless there can be no doubt about his historicity. Gerald de Barri, however, moves in the realm of miraculous legend. This comes from the second part of the book, and opens with some extraordinary tales of the wonders and natural sensations of the country, a delightful collection of ‘traveler’s tales’. He then moves on:

Now let us come to miracles, and let us begin with

Saint Kevin, a great confessor of the Faith, and abbot.

At the time when Saint Kevin was distinguished for his life and sanctity at Glendalough, a noble boy, who was a student of his, happened to be sick and to ask for fruit. The saint had pity on him and prayed for him to the Lord. Whereupon a willow-tree not far from the church brought forth fruit that was health-giving to the boy and to others that were sick. And to this day both the willow-tree others planted from it around the cemetery like a wall of willows bring forth fruit each year, although in all respects, in their leaves and branches, they retain their own natural qualities.

This fruit is white and oblong in shape, health-giving rather than pleasant to the taste. The local people have a

great regard for it. Many bring it to the farthest parts of Ireland to cure various diseases, and it is called the fruit of Saint Kevin.

“The book has many curious tales in it, and what he says about St Kevin quickly became an established legend”

On the feastday of the saint, the ravens at Glendalough, perhaps because they spilled the milk of the same student, are prevented by a curse of Saint Kevin from alighting on the earth or taking food. They fly around the village and the church, making a great noise, and on that day enjoy neither rest nor food.

Once upon a time the same Saint Kevin fleeing during Lent, as was his wont, the society of men, was by himself in a small cabin which warded off from him only the sun and the rain.

He was giving his attention to contemplation and was reading and praying. According to his custom he put his hand, in raising it to heaven, out through the window, when, behold, a blackbird happened to settle on it, and using it as a nest, laid its eggs there.

The saint was moved with such pity and was so patient with it that he neither closed nor withdrew his hand, but held it out in a suitable position without tiring until the young were completely hatched out. In perpetual remembrance of this wonderful happening, all the representations of Saint Kevin throughout Ireland have



Glendalough in 1956, in quieter, less crowded times.

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.

Peter Costello



a blackbird in the outstretched hand.

(Translation from the Latin of Gerald de Barri by John J. O'Meara, in *The History and Topography of Ireland* (Dundalgan Press/Penguin Classics))

St Kevin began his holy life as a hermit and retired to a nearly inaccessible cave, now known as St Kevin's Bed. At the end of his active life spreading the new faith and founding monasteries he renewed this way of life, away from settlements, at home in the wilderness, so to speak.

We have to remember that the Wicklow mountains in those days were very different from they are today. Then they were a part of the great chain of forests that ran across northern Europe, from Donegal to the foothills of the Urals.

“Despite our modern expression of love and concern for nature and animal life, we still see them as separate”

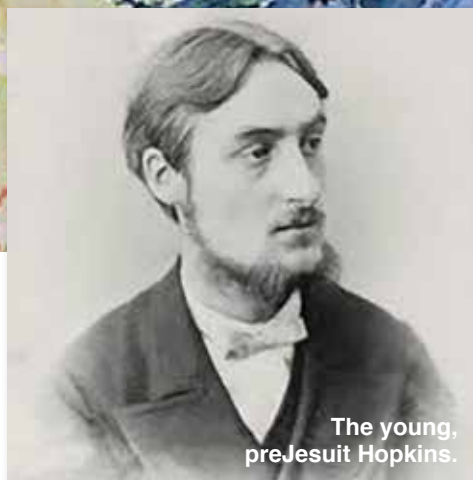
This was territory that lay beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire, and the men of the south saw it a place of legend and danger, filled with strange peoples and stranger animals. In reality this forest shaped the minds and outlook of the peoples of the North. They saw reality in quite a different way to the people of the Mediterranean. The people of the south had the sun and the sea; the people of the north had the gloom of the trees and (as in Ireland) the ever-changing skies that never rested. (Think of the contrast in the imaginations between Albert Camus and Franz Kafka.)

Yet St Kevin in the forest was an image of God's creation, a complete place in which the birds and the animals he loved had a natural place, as indeed had man. Despite our modern expression of love and concern for nature and animal life, we still see them as separate. We need to regain the gift of St Kevin to see God, nature and humanity as all part of one system, to accept that we have not a superior place, but an equal place, perhaps even a secondary place, in creation.

When today we visit Glendalough we should not be so much conscious of the glories of the past, but of the future wonders of the wilderness to be restored. For which perhaps we can offer a prayer to St Kevin.



An artist's interpretation of As Kingfisher's Catch Fire.



The young, pre-Jesuit Hopkins.

The hills and mountains of Dublin and Wicklow were a source of delight to the poet Gerald Manley Hopkins in the last years of his life, when he was sent to Dublin to teach classics at the University College, then run by the Jesuits. Living in No 86 St Stephens Green, he was lucky enough to have behind the house the delights of Iveagh Gardens, while in front the Green itself spread out its ponds, lawns, shrubs, flowers and trees.

The dawn chorus must have been astonishing to hear in those days before the noise of cars drowned everything natural. To wake to it must have been magnificent, a delight to begin the day.

Limited

Though in these last years of his life Hopkins poetic output was limited, we can perhaps in some special way count him as an Irish poet by adoption. There has always seemed to me an affinity of soul between Hopkins and the poets of Early Christian Ireland, though Hopkins seems to have been quite unaware of Gaelic poetry of any kind or any period; though Desmond Egan reminds me that he was trying to learn a little Irish. Hopkins met the

Irish literary revival was just emerging.

Like the poetry of early Christian Ireland, Hopkins' poems, are filled with images of birds. The most powerful of all from his poem *As kingfishers catch fire*:

*As kingfishers catch fire,
dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in
roundy wells*

*Stones ring; like each tucked
string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to
fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one
thing and the same:*

*Deals out that being indoors
each one dwells;*

*Selves — goes itself; myself it
speaks and spells,*

*Crying What I dó is me: for
that I came.*

*I say móre: the just man
justices;*



A windhover, a major symbol for Hopkins.

*Keeps grace: that keeps all
his goings graces;*

*Acts in God's eye what in
God's eye he is —*

*Christ — for Christ plays in
ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely
in eyes not his*

*To the Father through the
features of men's faces.*

“The few poems he wrote in Ireland have often seemed to reflect a deep unhappiness”

Delight

One particular poem of Hopkins has been a source of special delight to me from my schooldays. This is the *Windhover*.

*I caught this morning
morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin,
dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon,
in his riding*

*Of the rolling level under-
neath him steady air, and
striding*

High there, how he rung

*upon the rein of a wim-
pling wing*

*In his ecstasy! then off, off
forth on swing,*

*As a skate's heel sweeps
smooth on a bow-bend: the
hurl and gliding*

*Rebuffed the big wind. My
heart in hiding*

*Stirred for a bird, — the
achieve of, the mastery of the
thing!*

*Brute beauty and valour
and act, oh, air, pride, plume,
here*

*Buckle! AND the fire that
breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more
dangerous, O my chevalier!*

*No wonder of it: shéer
plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak
embers, ah my dear,*

*Fall, gall themselves, and
gash gold-vertilion.*

Unhappiness

The few poems he wrote in Ireland have often seemed to reflect a deep unhappiness. This view has been vigorously disputed by Desmond Egan. But at another level we know that whatever about his personal woes and the difficulties he had dealing with the ill-mannered sons of the Dublin Catholic middle-classes he had to teach, who saw their college degree as a mere step to professional careers free of poetry or literature, or English converts with Oxford accents.

Hopkins found solace in nature always, in the fields around Oxford, the hills of North Wales, and the open lands of Leinster. And though he knew nothing of ancient Irish poetry, remnants of the

environment which inspired those early poets were still alive with animals and birds and he could see and hear on his expeditions.

One place he much enjoyed was the glades of the Massey Estate in the Dublin Mountains. As children we used to visit there for summer evening picnics and it was and is a delightful place. But such joys are for only a few people at a time. There is little consolation to be gained from modern mass tourism.

“We can perhaps in some special way count him as an Irish poet by adoption”

Indeed the dominant image of early Christen poetry is the monk sitting in the open air over the manuscript which he is carefully copying, replicating the word of God to pass on to future generations.

*The Scribe
A hedge of trees surrounds
me.*

*A blackbird's lay sings to
me.*

*Above my lined booklet
The trilling birds chant to
me.*

*In a grey mantle from the
top of bushes*

*The cuckoo sings.
Verily—may the Lord shield
me!—*

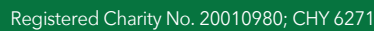
*Well do I write under the
greenwood.*

*8th or 9th century.
Translated from the Gaelic
by Kuno Meyer.*

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie



FOCUS
Ireland



JM

Phone: 01 687 4094

Operation Smile

Charity Regulatory Authority No. 20054588 Revenue Number: CHY 15661

By remembering Operation Smile in your Will, you are leaving the gift of a lasting smile for a child born with a cleft condition.

Operation Smile envisions a future where health and dignity are championed through safe surgery. Get in touch with Kristen Bell, Legacy & Fundraising Manager, on

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or visit **operationsmile.ie/LastingSmile**

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Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Clare Martin at
clare.martin@hospicefoundation.ie
or call 01 679 3188



www.hospicefoundation.ie

MQI

Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Your heart for the homeless

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

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

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

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering

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



Will the MSC Missions

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

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

Trócaire

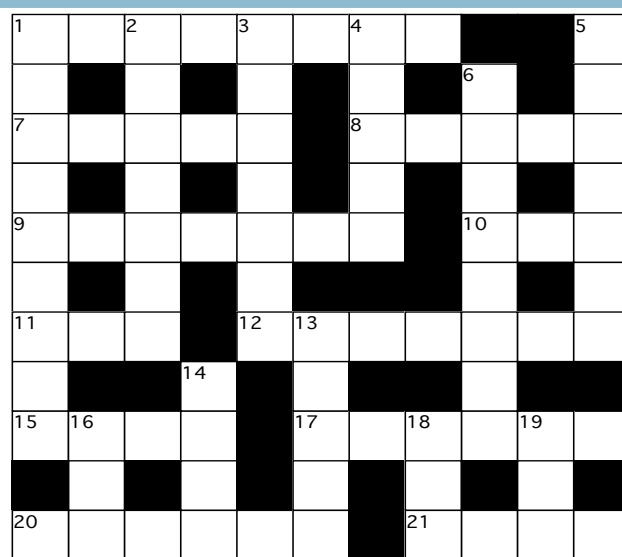
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call **Grace Kelly** on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives.

Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 395



Across

- 1 Your great-great grandmother, for example (8)
7 Locomotive (5)
8 Chennai and Mumbai are in this Asian country (5)
9 "Tell me what you think, I'd like to have your _____" (7)
10 Little devil (3)
11 Insect which lives in a colony (3)
12 Even more fantastic (7)
15 Remove (4)
17 You use it when sewing (6)
20 Chapel (6)
21 Baby deer (4)

Down

- 1 Space traveller (9)
2 Ancient fighting vehicle (7)
3 Performing a song (7)
4 This vegetable might make you cry when you cut it (5)
5 "That knife is blunter - this one is _____" (7)
6 Owned up (8)
13 A huge cattle farm (5)
14 A Grizzly or Polar, perhaps (4)
16 Its wood is used to make hurleys (3)
18 Pixie (3)
19 "That's a crime - it's against the _____" (3)

SOLUTIONS, AUGUST 5

GORDIUS NO. 519

Across – 1 Deck-chairs 6 Club 10 Pylon 11 Gaeltacht 12 Bayonet 15 Nitre 17 Axed 18 Raid 19 Iliad 21 Western 23 Junta 24 Opts 25 Ragu 26 Climb 28 Manager 33 Imprecise 34 Omens 35 Nays 36 Maisonette

Down – 1 Dips 2 Collation 3 Congo 4 Angle 5 Reed warbler 7 Licit 8 Butter dish 9 Stand-in 13 Nave 14 Tantrum 16 Projection 20 Implement 22 Ruin 27 Imply 29 Avers 30 Acorn 31 Riga 32 Isle

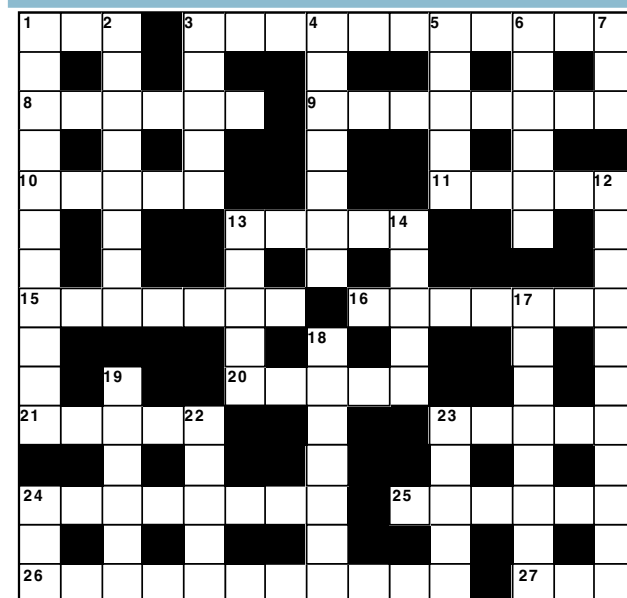
CHILDREN'S No. 394

Across – 1 Footballer 6 Narnia 7 Drip 8 Inside 11 Agree 13 Graves 16 Insect 17 Glance 18 Stream 19 Yes

Down – 1 Shark 2 Entrance 3 Exact 4 Eyebrows 6 Ree 8 Noah 9 Vet 12 Beauty 14 Scare 15 Sums 17 Help 18 Pub

Crossword

Gordius 520



Across

- 1 Recede, like the tide (3)
3 Set up in advance (11)
8 The capital of Greece (6)
9 & 10 When slumbering, Goliath epitomises one that will surely return to greatness (8,5)
11 & 19d Such a creature makes one use glue in a religious group (5,6)
13 Unwanted plants (5)
15 American state, or the nickname of fictional archaeologist Henry Jones Jr (7)
16 Made physical contact (7)
20 Raising agent, or brewer's ingredient (5)
21 Cafe, or one who is eating (5)
23 Spirit associated with Russia, Poland etc (5)
24 Good enough (just about) (8)
25 This nearly had Tom and Sal confused (6)
26 School subject with numbers (11)
27 Performed (3)

Down

- 1 Spread the gospel, being given sealed contents, literally (11)
2 Decapitated (8)
3 & 6d Wine made with a grape variety that is often grey in colour (5,6)
4 Evaluated a precious metal or its ore (7)
5 Zones, regions (5)
6 See 3 down
7 Canine creature (3)
12 How considerate, to have a trike handed around (4-7)
13 Ms Darling in 'Peter Pan' (5)
14 Game; physically skilful competition (5)
17 Teak or mahogany, for example (8)
18 A line which touches the circumference of a circle at one point only (7)
19 See 11 across
22 Awaken, bestir (5)
23 Measure electromotive force in them (5)
24 Point a weapon at a target (3)

Sudoku Corner

395

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 394

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

Last week's Hard 394

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

Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



There is no expiry date on the sacraments

IN RECENT DAYS four people of my acquaintance have tested positive for Covid-19. The four are from different age groups and all have been fully vaccinated in recent months. In all four cases, the positive test has meant that their families and others within their circles are isolating. This personal experience is having a very definite influence on how I view the ongoing debate with regard to the celebration of sacraments like Confirmation and First Holy Communion. I cannot understand why some of our Church leaders are giving permission for these celebrations to go ahead and in so doing are defying the current medical advice. In addition to the recent cases I mentioned above, there are other factors which influence my reluctance. These are in no particular order of importance:

Arguments

One of the central arguments of those who want sacramental celebrations to go ahead is that in church we can safely hold such ceremonies within prescribed guidelines. This is totally true but what happens afterwards may be a completely different matter. While Church authorities cannot be held responsible for how individual families celebrate after the church ceremony I believe we



do have a responsibility for creating the context in which such potentially risky events will take place. The GAA faced a similar dilemma last year when local club championship games led to super-spreader post-match celebrations. Initially the GAA argued that they were able to control what happened at games and so they should go ahead. Later they accepted that they were facilitating dangerous behaviour which they could not control and so they cancelled club games. While most families may celebrate Confirmations and Communions within the guidelines it just takes a few to bring the whole thing into disrepute.

One of the concerns around the Sacrament of Confirmation is that sixth class candidates will have gone

to post primary school and it makes the celebration more difficult to organise in a parish context. There is also a fear that once gone to post primary school, some students may not turn up for Confirmation. Some of my colleagues have said they were having 'sleepless nights' at the thought of their young parishioners not being confirmed! The reality is that, for many years, the vast majority of students have viewed Confirmation as the 'sacrament of exit' from the Church and this reality might be a much better reason for 'sleepless nights'. Personally, I would view those who choose not to turn up for Confirmation as perhaps making a more honest choice about their faith life.

Programme

As one who has argued for a proper programme of preparation for Sacraments of Initiation, I find this rush to

have 'get them over with' events in the August holiday season a bit unedifying to say the least. Church authorities and Catechists have spoken for years about the integrity of the sacraments. I'm not sure how the words and actions of some this summer will have added to that 'integrity'.

Some of our Church leaders and commentators see the banning of sacramental celebrations in Ireland as another opportunity for our secular leaders and influencers to put the Church back into its box. I'm not convinced by this argument as I believe the pandemic is way too scary to be used as an opportunity to score points or assert authority. Furthermore I'm uneasy that the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation should be used as the battleground between Church and State.

My final thought is one articulated by my local bishop on many

occasions. There is no expiry date on the sacraments. Let us wait a little longer so that we can have safe, meaningful community and family celebrations of these important milestones in the faith lives of our young people.

Being challenged

● "Christian sacraments should facilitate growth in discipleship. Otherwise they run the danger of being nothing more than part of a civil religion; rites which justify the status quo politically, socially and economically, where there is no bite and no critique of who we are and no challenge to become something else. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ will invariably mean being challenged to be counter culture." – *A Sacramental People* by Michael Drumm and Tom Gunning 1999.

Liturgical dance

● Unknown to the parish priest the liturgy committee organised some liturgical dance for the Confirmation celebration. Had they told the PP he would have advised them that the bishop was totally against such innovations. The great day arrived and the bishop was seated in his chair with the parish priest just a few feet away. The dance began and the nymph was on her third round of the bishop and wafting off in the distance when out of the corner of his mouth his Lordship announced to the PP; "if she asks for your head on a dish she's getting it".



KENYA'S SLUM CHILDREN DESPERATELY NEED YOUR HELP

The Holy Ghost (Spiritan) Fathers are helping afflicted children and their families in the slums of Migombani, Mombasa, Kenya.

Fr Peter Ndegwa CSSp writes to The Little Way Association: "Children as young as 13 are used as drug-runners and even younger children (girls and boys) become addicts. There is a culture of violence and sexual exploitation. Crime begins with petty theft escalating to major acts of stealing and violence."

Fr Ndegwa lists multiple problems caused by this culture in the slums. He adds: "Covid has only made things worse. A key way to alleviate this crisis is to offer beans, maize and oil to vulnerable families, especially those led by single mothers with small children. If families have food, they are less likely to resort to crime."

The Little Way Association wants to send the Spiritans sufficient funds initially to help 600 households and 400 children of drug-affected families through a six-month programme.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:
€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED**
€..... **CHAPELS IN THE MISSIONS**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state no. of Masses _____)
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to
www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.



Donations to The Little Way will help the Holy Ghost Fathers' feeding programme bring smiles to the faces of vulnerable families in Kenya.

Can you help us?

Every cent that you send to our Hungry, Sick and Deprived fund goes to help people such as the drug-damaged families of Mombasa. **Please be generous towards these endangered children and their struggling parents.**



MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass.

You can help repair a mission chapel

The Little Way Association has a long history of providing humble places of worship for far-flung parishes in mission countries. Nature can take its toll on these simple buildings, and we receive requests from priests for help with repairs. We humbly ask that you allocate some of your kind giving to our chapels fund. By ensuring that these small but dignified churches are in good repair, you help to make possible the offering of Holy Mass in needy Catholic communities. **You and your intentions are remembered in a daily Mass offered in the Missions for all our friends and benefactors.**