

# The Irish Catholic

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## Parishes left in limbo on energy bill support plans

Chai Brady

Parishes have been left in limbo regarding Government help with the rocketing cost of fuel.

A Government scheme will allow Church-owned properties to avail of additional funds as long as it is being used for a "community service".

In response to a query from *The Irish Catholic*, a spokesperson for the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) gave examples of a community crèche or meals on wheels as activities that would allow parishes to avail of support.

However, *The Irish Catholic* understands there is confusion as to what exactly constitutes a community service and disappointment more support is not being offered, particularly for churches.

Fr John Carroll PP of Barntown in Co. Wexford said: "Any audit of Church facilities will show that a huge number of them are provided at little or no cost to society and social groups, and it's done willingly. The State needs to broaden its awareness of the variety and quantity of services the Church provides, it's starting to wear that the Church is left on this 'last to be considered' list."

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### Three cheers for the gift of life...



Caolinn (7), and twin brothers Liam and Daniel O'Connor (5) from Artane attend the Irish Kidney Association's 37th Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving in Newman University Church at St Stephen's Green, Co. Dublin. Liam received a kidney transplant earlier this year. Photo: Irish Kidney Association/Conor McCabe

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# Pause for thought needed on parish clustering model

A few years ago 'clustering' was a word largely unknown by Catholics across Ireland. Today, parish clustering is the order of the day as it has been embraced by people within the Church as a response to the declining number of priests. I've often thought that clustering – joining a group of parishes together – sometimes begins from the wrong starting point. Parishes are clustered together at breakneck speed with a hard-pressed priest spending Sunday running from parish-to-parish to facilitate several Masses in a kind-of sacramental endurance test to ensure that everyone has access to the Mass within a short distance from their home.

## Observation

About 15 years ago the famous Maynooth sociologist Fr Liam Ryan observed that the Church was going the same way as the Garda quipping that there'd soon be two curates in a squad car covering half a county! A priest told me of his experience each Sunday celebrating four Masses. Himself and an elderly priest cover four rural churches with a smattering of people in each barely enough to make one full congregation. Is this what we call keeping the show on the road?

The Church of England has published research that should make for interesting reading for those involved in pastoral planning in Irish dioceses and parishes.



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell sits in an empty church.

One conclusion that should lead to a pause for thought in Ireland when it comes to parish clustering is the finding that "the strategy of grouping multiple churches together under one leader has in general had a detrimental effect on church growth".

Clustering has been embraced in many dioceses with gusto as if it is the only possible way forward. The research from Britain clearly indicates otherwise.

## “A priest told me of his experience each Sunday celebrating four Masses”

When you talk to parishioners, clustering is often seen as part of the 'keeping the show on the road' model of ministry. Groups of parishes are lumped together with various priest rotating between churches and parishes with little sense of responsibility or a single parish priest as a point of focus. There's lots of talk of parishioners being co-responsible for the Church. In reality, and despite the sincere engagement, most people see this merely as a response to falling numbers of priests. Where the permanent diaconate has been introduced this too is often seen as a response to an aging priesthood rather than the restoration of a distinctive ministry.

I can't help but think that we're perpetuating a service-driven pastoral model of the Church in Ireland at a time when it is really a Pope Francis-inspired missionary and an evangelical model of

tweaking the Church's more unpalatable teachings will have Irish people flooding back to Mass as if most non-practising Irish Catholics have walked away after decades of struggling with difficult aspects of the Church's teaching. Some have, but most haven't. Most no longer see the need for regular practise of their faith, others have been bored by terrible liturgy and substandard preaching. We'll also have to face the uncomfortable reality that, in many ways, the tide has gone out on the Church in Ireland and religion in general. Irish Catholics aren't setting aside their Catholicism in favour of another religion, they're simply setting it aside.

## “Clustering has been embraced in many dioceses with gusto as if it is the only possible way forward”

Only a Church that is missionary, a Church that Pope Francis says he dreams of, a Church "capable of transforming everything" will be able to meet the challenges. It will require more than parish clustering.

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# Parishes left in limbo on energy bill support plans

## » Continued from Page 1

He added: "What is social capital in Ireland? It's certainly not limited to the Government's understanding of what it is – society is bigger than the State."

The DRCD spokesperson said that there are a number of schemes being put in place to address energy cost increases in different sectors, including supports provided at local authority level.

The department is currently working with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on "the design of the community and voluntary sector support scheme, in the con-

text of alignment with the other schemes".

"Where a Church-owned property such as a parish hall is being used for a community service (for example, community crèche, meals on wheels,) it will be able to apply for support," the spokesperson said.

The Irish bishops called on the Government to extend energy bill supports to parish centres and churches last week, warning that otherwise there would likely be "drastic closures" due to rapidly increasing energy costs.

They said: "Especially during winter church buildings are frequented by the homeless and vulnerable

to keep warm and to be safe. With soaring heating costs, the numbers seeking to spend part of their day in such settings can be expected to rise dramatically. However, the related energy costs are also rising rapidly to the point where it is difficult to see how drastic closures can be avoided.

"To address this dilemma, we urge Government to make assistance available so that these vital community resources can remain open on a sustainable basis throughout this stressful period, and to offer grant support to equip such facilities to be more energy efficient in the future," the bishops said.

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# Pieta House founder lauds faith's role in mental health

Jason Osborne

Pieta House founder Joan Freeman told Joe Duffy on RTE's *The Meaning of Life* that "all of the research in the world" reveals that faith is good and helpful when it comes to mental health.

Ms Freeman was speaking about the importance of her own faith in God, and she revealed the importance of prayer in her own life.

"My husband and I would probably say our prayers together in the morning," Ms Freeman said, continuing, "We would say the chaplet of Divine Mercy and we would offer it up for somebody,

every day we offer it up for somebody".

She grew up in "the traditional religious household", but said that it wasn't so much the religious practices that appealed to her.

"It wasn't so much the religion, it was watching my parents live. My parents were terribly good, generous people, who were very compassionate, but it was that that had the biggest influence on me rather than the rules of the Church."

Ms Freeman expressed her gratitude for God's love, saying that "it's not even the physical part when I think of God".

"I think of the goodness, I think how

good he has been to me. I think that the fact that he loves everybody – that to me is the most important part of my faith."

She felt she was "carried through my faith...I'm not a holy joe, but I do have my faith and I'm proud of my faith and all of the research in the world would tell you that people who have faith – it doesn't matter what they believe or who they're attached to – that it's very good and helpful for their mental health."

There are going to be times in your life where you're just floundering, Ms Freeman said, adding that "they're the times for me when my faith supported me".



Joan Freeman

## €800m mother and baby homes redress scheme approved

Staff reporter

The mother and baby home redress scheme has been approved by Cabinet, and is set to be debated in the Dáil and the Seanad in the next weeks before a vote.

The scheme is expected to cost about €800 million and will be open to around 34,000 victims of the for-

mer mother and baby home institutions.

After missing a previous deadline of this year, the scheme is set to open "as soon as possible" in 2023.

Under the latest proposals, there are refined payment bands.

In a statement sent to survivors on Tuesday Minister O'Gorman said that "an important differ-

ence between the original rates approved by Government in November 2021 and the rates set out in the Bill today is that I have improved the overall approach by introducing more refined payment bands".

All those who spent time in an institution are entitled to receive a payment, the value of which increases

depending on the length of their stay.

Mothers who spent up to three months in an institution are entitled to €5,000, while those who spent up to six months are entitled to €10,000.

The highest possible payment is €65,000 for women who spent more than 10 years in an institution.

## Seven peaks in seven days



Pat Spatt (left) and Fr Eugene Baker (right) presenting a cheque for €22,275.50 to Mick Sheridan CEO Irish Community Air Ambulance (centre) at O' Neill's Bar Buttevant, Co. Cork on October 8. Pat Spatt and Fr Eugene Baker tackled the seven highest peaks of Munster on gruelling treks over seven days to raise the funds.

### JOE WALSH TOURS

PILGRIMAGES 2022/2023



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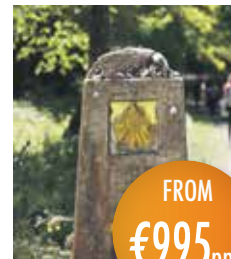
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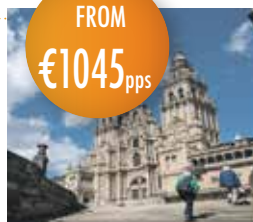
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# Catholics must lobby politicians to ensure poor helped in cost crisis

**Chai Brady**

The economic pressures on families and individuals have led to “an unacceptable level of social deprivation”, the Irish bishops have warned.

Following their Autumn General Meeting in Maynooth the bishops said if the hardship is not dealt with “equitably by those who have public responsibility” it will threaten social cohesion and the common good.

“In pursuit of the Gospel mandate to love God and our neighbour, Catholics also have a responsibility to continue to lobby those in authority to ensure that their policies and actions do not widen the gap between rich and poor, thereby leaving poor people further behind,” they said.

The prelates mentioned research by the Society of St Vincent de Paul which found more than 200,000 children are living in enforced deprivation and 70% of calls to

that organisation came from households with children.

They said this is further backed-up by recent research from Accord who highlighted that 81% of couples surveyed reported that money-related problems are the greatest cause of family and relationship pressure.

The bishops said: “It is also a very difficult time for small and medium-sized businesses, who provide the very backbone of local economies. Public policy supports should continue to target directly

such businesses in order to mitigate the financial crisis that they are now facing.”

Regarding Budget 2023, they said that while it addressed some aspects of the cost of living and energy crisis in the short-term, the budget does not deal with the underlying growth in the levels of poverty in society and the increasing gap between rich and poor.

The bishops also said the use of one-off payments are only a temporary solution and will not stop people on the

lowest incomes “from falling further down the ladder”.

The bishops stressed solutions need to be targeted and focused on addressing systemic issues that engender poverty such as lack of housing, insufficient education supports, underemployment, and youth unemployment.

They added that: “These systemic failures were highlighted again in recent days through figures from the Department of Housing reporting that in August some 10,805 people were accessing

emergency accommodation, including 3,220 children. This continuing crisis cannot be ignored by politicians, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the rights of every person to appropriate housing is respected, protected and advanced.”

The bishops asked that all parish communities follow the example of Jesus and put the poorest and most vulnerable among us at the forefront of their action.

## Sr Stan pins homelessness on Govt mistakes

**Jason Osborne**

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy has attributed soaring homelessness to poor political decisions, speaking as Focus Ireland issued its annual report for 2021.

The founder of the home-

lessness charity said that the crisis will worsen this winter without immediate action from Government.

Last year, the charity helped 1,288 households to avoid homelessness or leave homelessness, according to its latest annual report. Focus

helped 767 households move out of homelessness and another 521 households were helped not become homeless in the first place.

It said there are currently 3,400 homeless children.

As well as helping people and families find a home or avoid homelessness in the first place, Focus also supported more than 12,300 people who required their services throughout 2021.

Sr Stan said that a temporary eviction ban would ease the situation while the rate of social housing delivery was increased.

“The eviction ban that



was established during the pandemic had contributed to a significant drop in homelessness, but lifting it, along with the shortage in supply

of social housing, and ‘soaring rents’, contributed to a rise again in the number of households without a home,” Sr Stan said.

## Pope’s climate crisis call welcomed ahead of COP27

**Staff reporter**

Pope Francis has called on world leaders to keep their promises to help poorer nations affected by the climate crisis ahead of a UN climate conference next month, a message the Irish bishops have welcomed.

In the Pope’s Season of Creation message he said world leaders should “take more ambitious steps”, to keep “their promises of financial and technical support for the economically poorer nations, which are already experiencing most of the burden of the climate crisis”.

The climate conference, COP27, takes place in Egypt from November 6-18.

Irish bishops highlighted the “devastating” floods in Pakistan in which about 1,500 people have died and the dire drought being experienced in the horn of Africa as examples of the impact of climate change.

They reiterated the Pope’s call that economic systems must not be based on short-term profits but should serve the common good of present and future generations.

The bishops also welcomed provision of resources by the Laudato Si’ Working Group – available on [www.catholicbishops.ie/2022/07/11/resources-for-the-season-of-creation-2022/](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2022/07/11/resources-for-the-season-of-creation-2022/) – encouraging everyone to avail of the resources.

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## Dining for life...



Over 400 people attended Ceiluradh Cois Life, the annual fund-raising dinner for pro-life education and support on Friday, October 7 in the RDS Concert Hall. Pictured left to right are Delvit George, Laura Conlan and Stephanie Byrne. Photo: John McElroy



# Are traditional women happier?

**D**oes marriage and family life make women happier? That's a debate going back centuries. Queen Victoria herself, though founder of a dynasty of marriages and families, opined that it was better to be happy and single than married just for the sake of wedlock.

**“Conservative women were twice as likely to be satisfied with their lives as liberal women – 31% as opposed to 15%”**

Exactly so. People have different vocations in life.

Yet a new survey carried out in America – the 2022 American Family Survey, backed by the government – has produced some interesting findings, notably for women. Liberal women



**Mary Kenny**

(in the 18-55 age bracket) are significantly less likely to be happy and fulfilled, and more likely to worry about mental health issues, than conservative women.

Conservative women were twice as likely to be satisfied with their lives as liberal women – 31% as opposed to 15%. Some 36% of conservative women felt satisfied with their mental health as opposed to 15% of liberal women. Conservative women were more likely to be married, and liberal women more likely to be single or divorced.

The takeaway message was that women who adhere to marriage and home life seemed likely to be more fulfilled in their lives than women who embrace liberal

values. This is also true of men – although the margins are narrower. And the narrative attacking “patriarchy” has been that marriage and family life were arranged to suit the comfort of men, and the control of women.

## Forensic analyses

Surveys often need more forensic analyses, and sometimes there are other issues involved – town versus country, for example. But it is a fascinating finding just the same and should be discussed in health education.

I am all for independence for young women, but that shouldn't rule out a happy marriage and a fulfilled family life – which evidently brings more serenity.

Many people have remarked how superbly Fr John Joe Duffy has reacted to the tragic events at Creeslough. He immediately emerged as a pastor of great sensitivity and empathy with the bereaved, which really included the whole community. His sorrow was so genuine and his words so apt.

The Church leaders in general have done what was needed: be there for the people and offer their service. It is hard, indeed, to find comfort in such a terrible event, and the loss of lives, including lovely young people with their futures before them. But pastoral and spiritual care does give support.

There have been many remarks, too, about the randomness of the deaths – people just going about everyday tasks like buying a cake, going to the ATM machine, giving a neighbour a lift. Such sorrowful observations are also in the New Testament: “You know not the day nor the hour”: and “one shall be taken and one shall be left.” But loss is always a great grief.

## Painting or praying?

One of the most comprehensive exhibitions of Paul Cézanne's paintings has opened at London Tate Modern gallery. It's a surprise to me to learn that Cézanne, whose work was said to have altered modern art, was a devout Catholic who went to daily Mass (although that fact is absent from the art gallery's notes on the French post-impressionist).

Cézanne – his father was a banker who wanted his son to be a lawyer, not an artist – may have been an innovating modernist, but he revered previous Masters, and particularly studied Tintoretto, Veronese, Poussin, and Chardin. The “geometric” forms in his work, notably in his many pictures of table fruit, are drawn from earlier classi-



Paul Cézanne's 'The Card Players'. Photo: Wikimedia

cal work. Although he paved the way for Cubism, he is a modernist who also drew from tradition.

Cézanne also infuses feelings into his pictures: when you look at “The Card Play-

ers”, you can sense the mood of the men at the card table.

He died in 1906 aged 67. His genius wasn't recognised during his lifetime, as is often the way with people with a unique vision.

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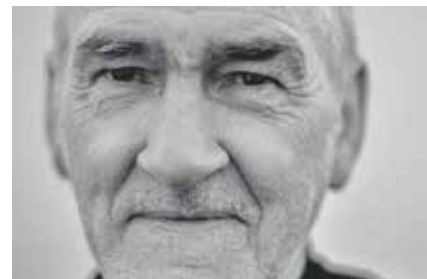
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# ‘Draconian’ prison-time proposal for pro-life activists condemned

Jason Osborne

The Pro Life Campaign has criticised as “draconian” and “excessively authoritarian” the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission’s call for a response to pro-life activity that “engages criminal law”.

The IHREC suggested that “civil remedies, like an injunction, are not effective to address widespread and repeated protests,” in a statement.

Witnessing pro-life activity can cause “mental and physical harm” for women seeking abortions and lead to delayed appointments “as well

as increasing judgement and stigma,” the IHREC further claimed in its submission on the General Scheme of the Health (Termination of Pregnancy Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill 2022.

In July, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly received Cabinet approval to legislate for the designation of “safe-access zones”, which seek to protect access to abortion services in medical settings.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, PLC spokesperson Eilis Mulroy said that the IHREC’s recommendations are “a far-cry from what any human rights body should be saying”.

“There’s no question that the existing public order legislation is enough to deal with any issues. There’s no question that there has been no incidences of any significance that justify this completely disproportionate response,” Ms Mulroy said.

Human rights organisations, including organisations like Amnesty International, “which in recent times, of course, has campaigned aggressively for abortion”, would have campaigned in favour of the freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, Ms Mulroy said.

In a statement, Ms Mulroy decried the pro-

posal, which could see prison sentences of up to two years if convicted, as “inherently discriminatory, as it singles out a particular ideological and moral worldview for punishment”.

“Regardless of the facts and evidence, the advocates of exclusion zones are now pushing the boundaries of constitutional rights and seeking to jail people simply for expressing their views in a respectful and dignified manner. The IHREC is actively contradicting and undermining its mission statement of defending and advancing the cause of human rights by its conduct in this matter,” Ms Mulroy finished.

## Ireland rallies for rosary on the coast



People gathered at Mungret grotto, Co. Limerick on Sunday for the Rosary for Faith and Life.

Staff reporter

Ireland took to the coasts for the Rosary for Life and Faith on Sunday, with Fr Marius O'Reilly praising the “great witness” of those who took part.

The Faithful gathered at around 180 locations on Ireland’s coasts to pray for “faith and life in Ireland”. Inland communities that wanted to join in prayed in churches, at grottos and beside riv-

ers instead.

“Families would come out and sometimes they’d have refreshments afterwards and there’s great excitement over it.

“It’s praying just for faith and life in Ireland. That’s the mission,” Fr O'Reilly told *The Irish Catholic* newspaper.

The Rosary for Life and Faith was started in Poland, but was taken up in Ireland in 2017. People gather to pray the rosary every October, on the first Sunday after the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

“People want to pray for Ireland, that’s one of the things I’ve noticed...They want to help our country in some way, and prayer is certainly one of the ways that you can do that, so it’s a kind of a ready-made formula for them,” Fr O'Reilly said.

“It captures people’s imagination as well because a lot of people go to their coast to pray so we try and surround the country in prayer, but that’s where the whole concept came from – it’s to surround the country in prayer.”

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mercy sisters dip into podcasting

Three Mercy Sisters from the Western Province have ventured into the world of podcasting in order to share their stories.

Sr Angela Bracken tells of the two choices she faced at the age of eighteen: the convent or the stage, while Srs Noreen Lyons and Anne Mills reveal how their lives were touched by ‘the Universe Story’.

Sr Noreen’s search for meaning led her to establish an organic Earth Centre in Portumna, where they built the second house in Ireland with a geothermal heating system. Sr Noreen was joined by Sr Anne Mills in 2000.

The podcasts are available under the banner of Stories from the Mercy World on YouTube, or on [www.sister-sofmercy.ie](http://www.sister-sofmercy.ie) under recordings.

### Book launch argues diocesan boundaries outdated

A new book edited by Fr Eugene Duffy, *The Restructuring of Irish Dioceses* was launched by Marion Coy, former Director of GMIT, in St Nathy’s College, Ballaghaderreen, on Friday September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Guests at the launch heard of how the current boundaries were set down about 900 years ago, but are now not fit for purpose, as people no longer have a strong sense of belonging or identity with their diocese.

The essays in the book outline the possibilities for reorganising diocesan spaces, which for example could be more aligned with county boundaries. Alternatively, it argues better use could be made of provincial structures.

## Ireland worst in OECD for ‘public family policies’

Staff reporter

Research by price comparison website confused.com has revealed that Ireland is the worst of the Organi-

sation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states when it comes to “public family policies”.

The State scored just 1.05 out of 10 when it came to spending on family, educa-

tion and more.

Ireland also came in second last of the 38 countries when it comes to parental leave. The average parental leave entitlement across the OECD states is 32.73 weeks

for mothers and 4.73 weeks for fathers. However, Ireland offers just 7.6 weeks for mothers and 0.5 weeks for fathers.

Only the United States, which offers no paid paren-

tal leave, scored lower than Ireland. Meanwhile, Romania came out on top for parental leave, with 92.4 weeks for mothers and 4.7 weeks for fathers.



## Niamh Uí Bhriain

### The View



# Ireland has already aborted more than the population of Sligo

**T**his week, the Life Institute, of which I am a director, will launch its annual billboard campaign to shine a light on the appalling outcomes of Ireland's abortion law.

As the years slip by, what we know for certain is that the death toll from legalised abortion gets higher and higher. In just over three years, according to official figures from the Department of Health, 21,000 babies have been aborted. The number is so large, and the loss of life so dreadful, that it can be difficult to grasp.

21,000 lives lost is more than the population of Sligo, one of the bigger population centres in the West of Ireland. And that's in just three years.

Or think of it this way: if the average size of an Irish classroom is 24 children, then Ireland has already aborted 875 average classrooms of children. They will never sit fidgeting, or draw messy pictures with crayons, or play games at morning break, because their lives were ended before they were born.

It's curious to think that Ireland's abortion rates have escalated at a time when its already been projected that the number of children attending primary schools in this country is set to drop by about 20%. Abortion doesn't just destroy our future child by child, it leaves us bereft of those who would have brought growth, and flourishing, and hope to a world in need of the promise new life brings.

### New campaign

One of the billboards in the new campaign also urges that we 'help women choose life' by ensuring the three-day waiting period before undergoing an abortion is not scrapped despite the increasingly extremist demands from abortion campaigners.

As I have written here previously, the then-Tánaiste Simon Coveney and other 'Yes' campaigners used the three-day wait to reassure voters that abortion provision would be

subject to 'strict guidelines', precisely because they knew from polling that voters did not support an abortion model they believed would be unrestricted.

What voters are promised is not what voters get, but, given the rocketing abortion rate underlined by these billboards, it would be an act of egregious voter deceit to remove one of the very few restrictions which actually does help women with unexpected pregnancies to seek a better answer than abortion.

### Question

Figures released in response to a parliamentary question from Carol Nolan TD suggest that, in 2020 alone, almost 20% of women who attended GPs and clinics seeking an abortion subsequently changed their mind and did not go ahead with the procedure. That should be enough evidence for TDs to stand up and be counted, to demand that no action is taken which might lead to even more abortions taking place. That would be a travesty.

**“What we know for certain is that the death toll from legalised abortion gets higher and higher”**

The billboards are a centrepiece to an escalation of pro-life activity, which is both welcome and crucially important after the long Covid lockdown and as we enter the final stages of the review of the abortion legislation. One of the important actions will be to energise pro-life activists throughout the country with in-person events where we can meet and plan the renewal necessary to rebuild our broken culture.

The Renewal Tour, reaching the four corners of the country and featuring speakers such as GAA legend Mickey Harte, pro-life politicians, and historian and activist Jonathon Van Maren, will be an opportunity to watch Tim Jackson's excellent documentary on how the 8th was lost. It will



Thousands of people attend the Rally for Life in Dublin, July, 2022. Photo: Rebecca Roughneen

also be a chance to hear from Jonathon Van Maren on how Ireland's strong pro-life past can give hope for the future. But most of all it is an opportunity to learn from each other and to renew our commitment to protecting both mother and child.

### Commitment

That commitment is surely spurred by the appalling reality writ large on the billboards being erected today. 21,000 babies aborted already. Every day 18 unborn children are being added to that total - and, as the experience of Britain has shown, those numbers may get even worse.

If we do nothing, what town will feature on these billboards in years to come? Will we have aborted more than the population of Galway? Or Limerick? Or Cork? We need to keep this appalling reality before the public, because most of the media are only too happy to ignore the outcome of legislation they campaigned for.

Yet, cultural change can swing both ways. And it will, but only if we keep the path lit, and keep shining a light on the numbers that abortion campaigners and the establishment would rather we ignored.

See more about the Renewal Tour at [www.thelifeinstitute.net](http://www.thelifeinstitute.net).

## The Irish Catholic

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Archbishop Eamon Martin kneels in prayer at the altar in St Michael's Church in Creeslough, Co. Donegal. Photo: Joe Dunne



Chai Brady

**T**here has been an outpouring of grief, sympathy and messages of solidarity across Ireland and the world following the devastating explosion at a petrol station in Creeslough, Co. Donegal.

Across the world Masses have been offered, rosaries prayed and holy hours held.

As the funerals continue this week, Church leaders spoke of the "awful loss" of the 10 people, three young people, four men and three women, on Friday afternoon, October 7.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr John Joe Duffy of Dunfanaghy/Creeslough parish praised the support of parishes and people across the country and thanked them for their prayers.

"We're just trying to help one another through this. We're being carried by the sense of community and by the grace of God," he said.

## Mass

During Mass in Creeslough on Sunday, Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian, who went to the parish after the tragedy, described the situation as a "nightmare".

Bishop McGuckian said: "We hold in our hearts most especially

those for whom the shock is most acute: we think firstly of the ten who have lost their lives and gone to God and those nearest to them who are most bitterly bereaved; those who are injured and struggling to recover in body and spirit; everyone, both the community and the first responders in the public services who have carried the burden of being close to the tragedy as it has unfolded; we remember everyone, here in Creeslough and throughout the country who feels helpless and shaken by the shock of what has happened."

**“People can help, those little messages and social media messages of comfort and consolation, you can bring hope into somebody's life”**

Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin, who also visited the community this week, said he felt called to visit to convey the thoughts and prayers of the people of Ireland and further afield to those who have been "shattered" by the "horrific and tragic" events.

The archbishop spent time in St Michael's church in Creeslough to

pray in front of the 10 candles that were lit for the victims.

"Words are pretty superfluous at a time like this and yet we do try to find some words and just try to be present with people," he said.

He added he was also trying to bring the comfort of the Gospel, the comfort of faith and prayer, to the community.

"People can help, those little messages and social media messages of comfort and consolation, you can bring hope into somebody's life, just by a word, a word that we're thinking about you, a prayer, a thought, whatever it might be, each one of us brings our gifts to help others," said Archbishop Martin.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell of the Archdiocese of Dublin said that along with people all over Ireland he watched "with deepening sadness and loss the unfolding events in Creeslough".

## Tragedy

He said: "This tragedy is of huge proportions, not only for the closely-knit community of Creeslough, but for the whole of Ireland. The words of Saint Paul ring true: 'the life and death of each of us has its influence on others.' (Romans 14:7)"

"On my own behalf, and on behalf of the Archdiocese of

Dublin, I offer my sympathy to the community in Creeslough, and to the wider community in Co. Donegal upon your loss. No words can make sense or explain a tragedy as numbing as yours," the archbishop said.

**“This tragedy is of huge proportions, not only for the closely-knit community of Creeslough, but for the whole of Ireland”**

"In moments such as this when we can only stand in solidarity with each other. I wish to assure you of a place in my prayer, and in the prayer of the parishes and people of Dublin in these tremendously difficult days, and in the weeks and months ahead. May our Lord who knew tragedy, loss, and death from the inside be your consolation and your strength. May his presence among you, and within you, carry you and give you the strength to carry each other (see Matt 11:28-29)."

Pope Francis sent a message to Bishop McGuckian through the Vatican's Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin saying he was saddened to learn of the loss of life and destruction caused by the explosion in Creeslough and expressed

"his spiritual closeness to all those suffering in the aftermath of this tragedy".

In the message Cardinal Pietro said: "While entrusting the deceased to the merciful love of almighty God, his holiness implores the divine blessings of consolation and healing upon the injured, the displaced and the families coping with pain of loss. As a pledge of strength and peace in the Lord, the holy father sends his blessing to all the people of Ireland."

## Investigation

Gardaí continue to investigate the cause of the explosion at the Apple-green service station however it is being treated as a tragic accident, with a gas leak being one theory. The blast occurred at about 3.20pm and emergency services were on the scene in 10 minutes.

As well as the members of the Creeslough community, a huge number of emergency service personnel assisted with the rescue operation, including the Irish Coast Guard, the Coast Guard rescue helicopter 118, Irish Air Corps 112, the Northern Ireland Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS), the Irish Community Air Ambulance, Northern Ireland Search and Rescue, Donegal Mountain Rescue, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service heart team, Donegal County Council Civil Defence.

The names of those who died are: James O'Flaherty (48), Jessica Gallagher (24), Martin McGill (49), Catherine O'Donnell (39) and her son James Monaghan (13), Hugh Kelly (59), Martina Martin (49), Robert Garwe (50) and his daughter Shauna Flanagan Garwe (5) and Leona Harper (14).

**“Archbishop Dermot Farrell of the Archdiocese of Dublin said that along with people all over Ireland he watched ‘with deepening sadness and loss the unfolding events in Creeslough’”**



# Churches overlooked by Govt again like during the pandemic



Churches seem to be an afterthought in the post-pandemic world, writes **David Quinn**

**P**arishes, like the country in general, will have to pray hard for mild weather this winter if they are to cope with the big rise in energy costs caused chiefly by the war in Ukraine.

Fortunately, the Government has allocated additional support to householders and those on various welfare supports. For example, every house in the country will have a total of €600 shaved off their electricity bills over the winter in three separate tranches of €200 each.

Businesses, sports organisations and voluntary organisations will also receive help. For example, €35 million has been allocated to sports clubs so they can pay for their flood lights and keep changing rooms heated.

A total of €60 million has been allocated to sporting, Gaeltacht and community organisations, but notably, nothing has been allocated to parishes.

The measures, which are part of Budget 2023, also include energy support of up to €10,000 per month for tourism businesses.

Announcing the support, Minister of State, Jack Chambers, said: "We look to these sectors to continue to reinforce our resilience and mental fortitude."

Given that the Churches have been totally neglected so far, it appears the Government does not believe religion helps to "reinforce our resilience and mental fortitude".

## Consolation

The only thing that can be said in favour of the Government supporting some sectors, but not others, is that the promised money is going to sectors that are already in receipt of public funds, such as sporting bodies. But this is small consolation to both the Churches and community bodies that do not receive public grants.

The bishops have reacted to the lack of support. In their statement following the latest quarterly meeting of the bishops' conference they pointed out that, "during winter church buildings are frequented



Administrator Fr Peter Finnerty in the Church of the Resurrection, Bayside, Dublin celebrates Mass after churches reopened last year. Photo: John McElroy

by the homeless and vulnerable to keep warm and to be safe".

They predicted: "With soaring heating costs, the numbers seeking to spend part of their day in such settings can be expected to rise dramatically."

However, they warned that because of soaring energy bills, they may have to close church buildings, including parish halls in use by various groups and for various purposes, for much of the day.

**“With soaring heating costs, the numbers seeking to spend part of their day in such settings can be expected to rise dramatically”**

The bishops appealed: "To address this dilemma, we urge Government to make assistance available so that these vital community resources can remain open on a sustainable basis throughout this stressful period, and to offer grant support to equip such facilities to be more energy efficient in the future."

Bishop Michael Router told media: "It is possible that churches may have to close their doors except when there are services going on."

The enormous energy bills are coming hard on the heels of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects.

As Bishop Router said, there was a drop of 90% in church collections because no-one could go to Mass for months.

Parishes, therefore, are in a poor financial position heading into the winter.

## Attitude

The lack of support from the Government for the Churches is very reminiscent of the attitude during the various lockdowns. We should recall that during the pandemic, public worship ceased in Ireland for longer than any other country in Europe.

At one point, people could not attend Mass, but they could go to hairdressers, restaurants or the gym so long as social distancing guidelines were observed. The priorities of the Government were clear, and the Churches were very far down the list.

In September 2020, when parts of the country were going back into certain restrictions, the acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr Ronan Glynn was asked why churches had to close again, but other sectors of society, like gyms, could continue to operate.

He said that the aim was to "decrease contacts in areas that, as a society, are relatively speaking in the context of a pandemic less important, so we have choices to make: we can have contacts for health carers, contacts in schools, in our universities, in our workplaces but we can't have them everywhere".

He said Churches were not being targeted per se but going to Mass was "one more opportunity for social contact", and therefore people should not be allowed to go until the incidence of Covid-19 had reduced again.

**“It is possible that churches may have to close their doors except when there are services going on”**

But the message was clear; so far as NPHET and the Government were concerned, public worship was "less important" than the economy.

Aside from during the first lockdown, few other European countries took this attitude. They reduced the numbers who could attend worship, but allowed people to attend religious services because the evidence was that churches were doing a very good job ensuring everyone was safe from the disease.

Governments elsewhere simply showed more respect for religion. In the North, for example, Churches were consulted before new Covid rules were imposed on them. But here, there was no such consultation.

Now, we see the continuation of the same mindset.

Bishop Router also noted that Mass attendance has not returned

to pre-pandemic levels, meaning parish income streams have not done so either.

Some Mass-goers simply got out of the habit, and some still feel nervous about doing so because they still haven't lost their concern about going to settings with large numbers of people.

## Heating off

Many parishes are already keeping the heating off as much as possible. They have been fortunate that the weather has been mild so far, but if churches feel very cold over the course of the winter, a lot more elderly people may stay away.

This will exacerbate the problem caused by Covid-19. Mass attendances may further decline putting parish finances in an even more parlous position. The commonplace idea that parishes are flush with cash, will be exposed once again as the falsehood it is.

The Churches together need to start lobbying the Government hard for support over the winter in paying the energy bills. It is not good enough that sporting organisations should receive help but not parishes that offer support not only to church-goers, but to all the people who use parish services.

Ordinary Mass-goers also need to lobby their local politicians. Some may object that this amounts to the State 'endowing religion'. But it is hardly 'endowing religion' to help parishes keep the heating on.

If the Government refuses to pay any heed to such calls, then we will be forced to conclude that, as during the pandemic, the Irish State has reduced the Churches in Ireland to an afterthought and endeavours like sport are considered more important.

**“To address this dilemma, we urge Government to make assistance available so that these vital community resources can remain open on a sustainable basis throughout this stressful period”**



# Fr. Donal O'Mahony's home-saving legacy

**F**r Donal O'Mahony was an extraordinary man. An activist, advocate, peacemaker and negotiator; for more than 30 years he was on the frontline of homeless prevention. He had a unique vision, which was to improve housing rights for families and individuals, and he had the courage to make a very real difference. Most importantly, he gave a voice to tenants, something which had never been done in Ireland before. His legacy now lives on in Threshold, Ireland's only charitable organisation dedicated to housing rights and homeless prevention, which he founded in 1978. As we deal with an unprecedented cost of living crisis, the highest ever rents and a time when housing has become one of our most scarce resources, Fr. O'Mahony's vision for a safer and fairer Ireland is more important than ever. Threshold has received a call every 20 minutes this year from someone who has received an eviction notice.

Fr. O'Mahony was born in Cork, and was educated at CBC, Rochestown College. He began his working life as a sportswriter, before he joined the Capuchin order in 1958 and travelled the world. Unable to remain a bystander to injustice, he fostered a role in peacebuilding throughout this post. As a gifted and natural mediator, he achieved many outcomes where violence was averted, and lives were saved.

Fr. O'Mahony acted as an intermediary in several high-profile kidnappings including that of Tiede Herrema, the Dutch-born industrialist who was kidnapped by an IRA splinter group led by Eddie Gallagher and Rose Dugdale in 1975. The case led to a long-running siege in Monasterevin, Co Kildare, which lasted for 35 days. It was eventually brought to an end with the help of Fr. O'Mahony and the safe release of Dr Herrema, who ran the Ferrenka company in Limerick.

Fr. O'Mahony also worked in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, promoting and facilitating dialogue between opposing paramilitaries, offering an alternative to the violence that was otherwise prevalent.

Further afield, he was a member of an international team who successfully negotiated the release of 106 Nicaraguan university students imprisoned by the government in Honduras. He later successfully negotiated the release of an English-Jewish mother and daughter kidnapped in Italy. He also entered talks with Muslim leaders in order to protect Christian schools in Lebanon.

Fr. O'Mahony continued his quest to achieve non-violence, and as a visiting scholar in Berkeley University, California, he gave a series of public lectures on the subject.

In 2004, he founded the Capuchin Franciscan Peace Centre in Pretoria, South

## THRESHOLD: WHO WE ARE

*When a family, couple or individual suddenly find themselves at risk of homelessness, Threshold takes immediate action to help keep them in their home. This would not be possible without the kindness of Threshold supporters.*

- We offer free, confidential and expert housing advice
- We help renters to challenge unreasonable rent increases and illegal evictions
- We act as point of contact to provide guidance and negotiate solutions between landlord and renters



Threshold's vision is an Ireland where everyone has access to affordable, secure, suitable and good quality housing.

Africa. It was from this centre that emerged the major non-violence project for the continent of Africa: The Damiatta Initiative.

Fr. O'Mahony's greatest contribution in Ireland was the establishment of Threshold in 1978. He was appointed chaplain to Dublin's flat-dwellers by the Archbishop of Dublin in the 1970's. Throughout his work, the employment conditions of returned emigrants and young people who had travelled up to Dublin improved. He was sympathetic to the plight of those forced to live in squalor and sub-standard accommodation with no protection of tenancy.

Fr. O'Mahony knew that someone had to speak out for these young people. He

was far ahead of his time in his approach to creating change, and redefined what homelessness was, in the broader definition in which we now understand it. He believed that just because someone had a roof over their head did not mean that they necessarily had a home.

**“Since Threshold's foundation it has assisted half a million people at risk of homelessness”**

“A person may have an address and a door key but if they are living in overcrowded conditions,

without basic facilities in unsanitary conditions, if they are cold because they cannot heat themselves, if they face eviction, if they are poor and can't reasonably afford rent, then it is only right to call that person homeless.”

Fr. O'Mahony turned his focus to housing justice, and through setting up Threshold, he put homelessness prevention firmly on the political map. Since Threshold's foundation it has assisted half a million people at risk of homelessness.

Fr. O'Mahony passed away in 2010 at the Marymount Hospice in Cork at the age of 74. The announcement of his death was met with golden tributes. People spoke of his modesty and his dedication, giving praise to an “unsung hero”. It is thanks to him that in Ireland today, Threshold is still working to end homelessness, in all its forms.

## A legacy still going strong

A significant legacy was left by Fr. O'Mahony on the housing sector in Ireland. With much thanks to the generosity of its donors, Threshold has continued with his work and pioneering ethos, expanding to serve the needs of communities all over Ireland. Threshold is still fighting for the most vulnerable; to improve standards in rented accommodation and ultimately helping to protect families from the nightmare of homelessness.

Today, we are in the middle of Ireland's worst housing crisis. Rents are higher, and there are fewer houses than ever available.

Threshold remains a front-line service and is

often the first point of call for anyone worried about losing their home. People from all walks of life are dialling Threshold's number and finding help at the other end of the line. Threshold is more determined than ever to do everything possible to ensure families can stay safe in their homes, the homes they have come to know and love.

Because once a person or family falls into homelessness, it's a frightening spiral that is incredibly difficult to break out of. Threshold aims to prevent this before it happens, stopping homelessness, and fulfilling Fr. O'Mahony's mission in Ireland. Still to this day, Threshold remains the only charity dedicated to homelessness prevention and keeping families in their homes. These home-saving services would not be possible without the donors who tirelessly support Threshold's work.

Keeping families in their own homes is also incredibly cost-effective. The average family who enters emergency accommodation in Ireland will remain there for ten months, costing the state €31,000. In comparison, Threshold can protect that same family from homelessness for a €340. Anyone who chooses to support Threshold can be confident that their gift will be put to work, efficiently and effectively, to stop homelessness before it starts.

## How Threshold works

Threshold helps prevent homelessness by providing free advice to people in housing difficulty, and campaigning for a fairer housing system. There are eight drop-in centres for face-to-face guidance and support, and offices in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Threshold helps 30,000 people across Ireland each year with housing problems.

**In the first six months of the year, the generosity of our supporters meant that Threshold advisors:**



**Supported 17,188 households; 22,738 adults and 14,184 children**



**Prevented 2,249 individuals and families from entering homelessness**



**Answered 24,402 calls to our freephone helpline**



**Completed 85,766 home-saving interventions**



A team of Housing Advisors work 9am to 9pm, taking calls and operating weekend emergency lines when needed. In addition to a phone line, the public are invited to email in queries or questions, or to use our Webchat on [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie). Threshold has also launched an online video chat service, so anyone who can't travel to our offices can still see and speak to a Housing Advisor face to face. Our team has been working solidly to understand the effect of the housing crisis on renters, and amplifying their voices to government to protect their rights and to create lasting change.

When a person contacts Threshold, a specialised Housing Advisor gets to work – taking every possible action – offering sound and practical advice; negotiating and mediating with landlords; representing the person or family; finding ways for them to pay their rent and keep their home; helping them find an alternative home when needed; bringing sensible solutions to government.

Threshold is here to help all renters, be it students, families, individuals, or retired. An advisor will be a listening ear, with the kindness, compassion and knowledge to help every person who needs help.

### Liz's story

76-year-old Liz made the decision to sell her home and moved into a retirement village – a place where she could live independently, make new friends, and feel a sense of security. But one autumn evening, there was a knock at her door. Just like that, Liz was handed a notice of termination. The amount of time she was given to leave her home was far less than legally allowed.

*"I was stunned. It felt as if my world was collapsing."*

A few weeks later, Liz was handed a second notice of termination. It was then, in a state of panic and worry, that she contacted Threshold for advice and support. She remembers how awful it felt to be facing the prospect of homelessness.

"Every hour I'd be wondering whether the

**I got in touch with Threshold when I received a rent hike out of the blue. I had started searching for places to live and even contacted my local TD, but could find nothing.**

**Because of Threshold's help and support, I realised I qualified for HAP and we were able to stay in our home. They spared us from having to turn up at homeless accommodation, our lives reduced to a few small bags. I'm just so grateful, so relieved.**

**- Ciara, Threshold Client**

water would work, whether the heat would be cut off, whether I'd be locked out. I'm too old and too sick for the streets."

When Liz got in touch, we were able to listen to the details of her situation. We were then able to work with her to form a plan of action to help her fight against the illegal eviction, and to keep her from becoming homeless. The generosity of Threshold supporters meant that our team of service advisors were able to be by Liz's side, guiding her through the complex paperwork and challenging the notice of termination at the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). Thankfully, the RTB ruled in her favour and Threshold helped Liz find a new home. Things were finally turning around for her.

"I'm so thankful for the help I received from Threshold, they helped me understand what supports were available. I try not to think about where I would be if they hadn't been there for me, firmly beside me in my lowest moments. Threshold heard me when no-one else was listening."

### Thinking of Threshold with your Legacy

For many of us, our Will is a way of making sure the people we care about are looked after when we're gone.

But a Will can also be an opportunity to have a

lasting impact on the causes that we care about. A way for our values to continue and to make a difference to the lives of others.

After you've taken care of your family and friends, would you consider leaving a gift to Threshold?

### Your gift is a foundation for life

We all know that homelessness is not just the absence of a home. It takes away the foundation for life. It damages health, emotional health and childhoods. So your gift will truly be a foundation for people's lives.

**“Threshold is here to help all renters, be it students, families, individuals, or retired”**

Your gift is a wonderful promise to future generations, and every gift, whether it is big or small, will make all the difference to a household in a vulnerable situation. Losing the roof over your head impacts all aspects of your life. By supporting Threshold, you are the key to keeping a family safe in their home, where they belong.

"For me making my Will was about three things that matter to me. Firstly, and most importantly, it was about the legacy I leave to my loved ones. The second thing was more about who

I am today – making a promise to my family and a charity now, while I'm still living life. And third, it's part of my own modest personal legacy – how I want to be remembered by those that matter most to me."

– Threshold Legacy Donor

If you would like to discuss your Will further, we'd be happy to talk to you and answer any queries you may have. Please contact Catherine

Murray, [catherine.murray@threshold.ie](mailto:catherine.murray@threshold.ie) or freephone 1800 434 445.

### How to leave a Gift in Your Will

We recommend that you first contact your solicitor. They will guide you through the process of making your Will.

If you already have a Will and would like to change it to leave a gift to a charity of your choice, they will be able to advise you on this too.

### Our gift to you

We know that making or amending a Will can be both costly, and complicated. This is why we have partnered with LawOnline ([www.lawonline.ie](http://www.lawonline.ie)) to offer you a free and convenient Will making service. This free and simple-to-use service means you can make a Will online for free, or amend an existing Will for a significantly reduced price.

Call or email us today in confidence, to avail of this service. There is no obligation to leave a gift to Threshold in order to use the service. But if you do, you can be assured that your kindness will have a powerful impact in protecting families and individuals from homelessness for generations.

**1** If you enjoyed learning about the life of Fr. Donal O'Mahony, and would like to know more about the work of Threshold please send a message to [catherine.murray@threshold.ie](mailto:catherine.murray@threshold.ie) or write to us at **Threshold, First Floor 25-28 Strand Street Great, Dublin 1 D01 XP04**. You can also find out more about our work at [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie).

**A gift in your Will is the precious gift of a warm secure home - for generations**



If you know of anyone who is facing an eviction or struggling to pay the rent – please tell them to contact Threshold straight away by calling our National Freephone Helpline on **1800 454 454**



Threshold Head Office, 21 Stoneybatter, Dublin 7, D07 KV61  
Threshold.ie | LoCall 1800 43 44 45 | Charity Reg. 20011031

**Threshold**  
preventing homelessness



# Irish pilgrims walk in the footsteps of Christ



Pilgrims pose with the Old City of Jerusalem behind them.



Editor of *The Irish Catholic* Michael Kelly (left) and his father Michael (right) and spiritual director Fr Eamonn Conway in the middle.

## Staff Reporter

**I**rish pilgrims travelled to the Holy Land from October 1-9 and visited numerous sites connected to Christ's life including Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem.

There were 46 pilgrims on the trip, with Fr Eamonn Conway as the spiritual director.

The pilgrimage was organised by Marian Pilgrimages and *The Irish Catholic*.



Pilgrims celebrate their 53rd wedding anniversary at Mount Carmel.



Pilgrims at the Mount of Temptation in Jericho, where Jesus was tempted by the devil.



The pilgrims experience a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee.



Some pilgrims enjoy Taybeh.



Renewal of baptismal vows in the river Jordan at Qasr-al-Yahud, where Jesus was baptised.



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# The spiritual life under the shadow



It's our Christian duty to learn how to serve God and our neighbour under the shadow of worrying and distracting global events, writes **Jason Osborne**

**U**S President Joe Biden said last week that the risk of nuclear "Armageddon" is at its highest point since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, as the war in Ukraine goes from bad to worse for Russia. Russian political and media voices have increasingly been speaking of using tactical nuclear weapons in response to Ukraine's successes on the battlefield, which many fear could lead to an uncontrollable spiral into global nuclear war.

**“Despite the relative novelty of the nuclear threat, this isn't the first time humans have asked these questions”**

The unknown element in all of this is what exactly Russian President Vladimir Putin is thinking, and whether or not he was bluffing when he said Russia would use nuclear weapons to defend itself if necessary. The buck stops with him, after all, and his willingness to invade Ukraine in the first place hasn't exactly reassured people as to his peaceful ideals.

Speaking at a Democratic party fundraiser last Thursday, President Biden attempted to answer that question, when he said that Vladimir Putin is “a guy I know fairly well” and that he’s “not joking when he talks about the use of tactical nuclear weapons or biological or chemical weapons”. The additional reports that diplomatic back-channels have been used by the US in recent months to warn Russia of the “catastrophic” consequences of using

nuclear weapons is further proof of how seriously they're taking the Russian President's threats.

Nuclear war is a rare phenomenon in that it's one of the few genuinely new threats humanity faces; conventional warfare, natural disasters, plague and more have been around since time immemorial – the threat of global, instantaneous, fiery, man-made destruction hasn't been. Pre-World War II and the fateful development of nuclear weapons, no one ever had to worry about a conflict devolving into a world-ending fiery holocaust (despite the horrific tolls World War I and II took on both Europe and the wider world).

## Comprehend

The scale of such a conflict is difficult to comprehend, with various estimates for how many would die in the initial explosions and radiation exposure ranging from the hundreds of millions into the billions, while billions more would likely die during the ensuing 'nuclear winter', as the ash and detritus from the explosions and firestorms plunged the earth into an ice-age. So goes the theory, anyway.

In light of this possibility hanging over our heads once again, how is anyone supposed to continue living out their daily lives? When the possibility is back on the table that life and civilisation as we know them could end in a brief, fiery flash or fade out in a cold, barren wasteland, how are we supposed to return to our jobs, our taxes, our weekly shop, or any of the other mundanities that make up most of our activity?

Despite the relative novelty of the nuclear threat, this isn't the first time humans have asked these questions. In our own search for answers, we

can have recourse to the thoughts one spiritual giant offered in a 1939 lecture delivered at Oxford, shortly after Europe entered into the biggest war the world has ever seen. That man was C.S. Lewis.

Professor of Theology and C.S. Lewis scholar Joel Heck writes that in 1938, Somerville College English Fellow Helen Darbishire told Oxford's Somerville Council that “it would

be advisable to ascertain, if possible, whether in the event of an international emergency, university education would continue, and, if so, on what basis”. The question was clearly on many minds as to how they could continue on as before when disaster appeared ready to burst forth on the European mainland.

As we all know, war did erupt on September 1, 1939, as Germany invaded Poland. England declared war on Germany just



two days later on September 3, and Soviet Russia joined Germany in its invasion of Poland just over two weeks later on September 17. A continental war had begun, and the scholars' questions about university education during wartime became urgent.

**“If human culture can stand up to that, it can stand up to anything”**

The following month, on Sunday, October 22, 1939, C.S. Lewis preached a sermon at St Mary the Virgin Church, Oxford, which has come to be known as his “Learning during war-time” address. In it, Lewis set forth his defence of intellectual, and indeed all other kinds of, activity at a time when many were saying that all but the bare essentials were unnecessary in light of unfolding war. Others went further, suggesting that to focus on anything other than the war was positively irresponsible.

With the conversation raging, as it continues to in our day, Lewis attempted to answer the question: “What is the use of beginning a task which we have so little chance of finishing?” He went further, saying that even if our own lives should not be interrupted “by death or military

service”, why and how can we continue to take an interest in our usual occupations “while the lives of our friends and the liberties of Europe are in the balance”?

“Is it not like fiddling while Rome burns?” Lewis asked. We may well ask the same in October 2022, as the war on Europe's borders continues to boom, with the potential for world-consuming escalation.

In his typically insightful way, Lewis begins by suggesting that the question can't be answered until we put it alongside other questions that all Christians ought to be asking themselves, outside the shadow of war – in other words – during peacetime.

## True tragedy

“I spoke just now of fiddling while Rome burns. But to a Christian the true tragedy of Nero must be not that he fiddles while the city was on fire but that he fiddles on the brink of hell,” Lewis says. He suggests that while many Christians don't like to mention heaven and hell, as in our day, they aren't removable from Christ's teaching and therefore from his Church. If the realities of heaven and hell are acknowledged, every Christian must “at all times face a question compared with which the questions raised by the war are relatively unimportant”.

“He must ask himself how it is right, or even psychologically possible, for creatures who are every moment advancing either to heaven or to hell, to spend any fraction of the little time allowed them in this world on such comparative trivialities as literature or art, mathematics or biology. If human culture can stand up to that, it can stand up to anything. To admit that we can retain our interest in learning under the shadow of these eternal issues, but not under the shadow of a European war, would be to admit that our ears are closed to the voice of reason and very wide open to the voice of our nerves and our mass emotions.”

**“The essence of his point is that there has never been a time in this world that has not been full of crises, anxieties or emergencies”**

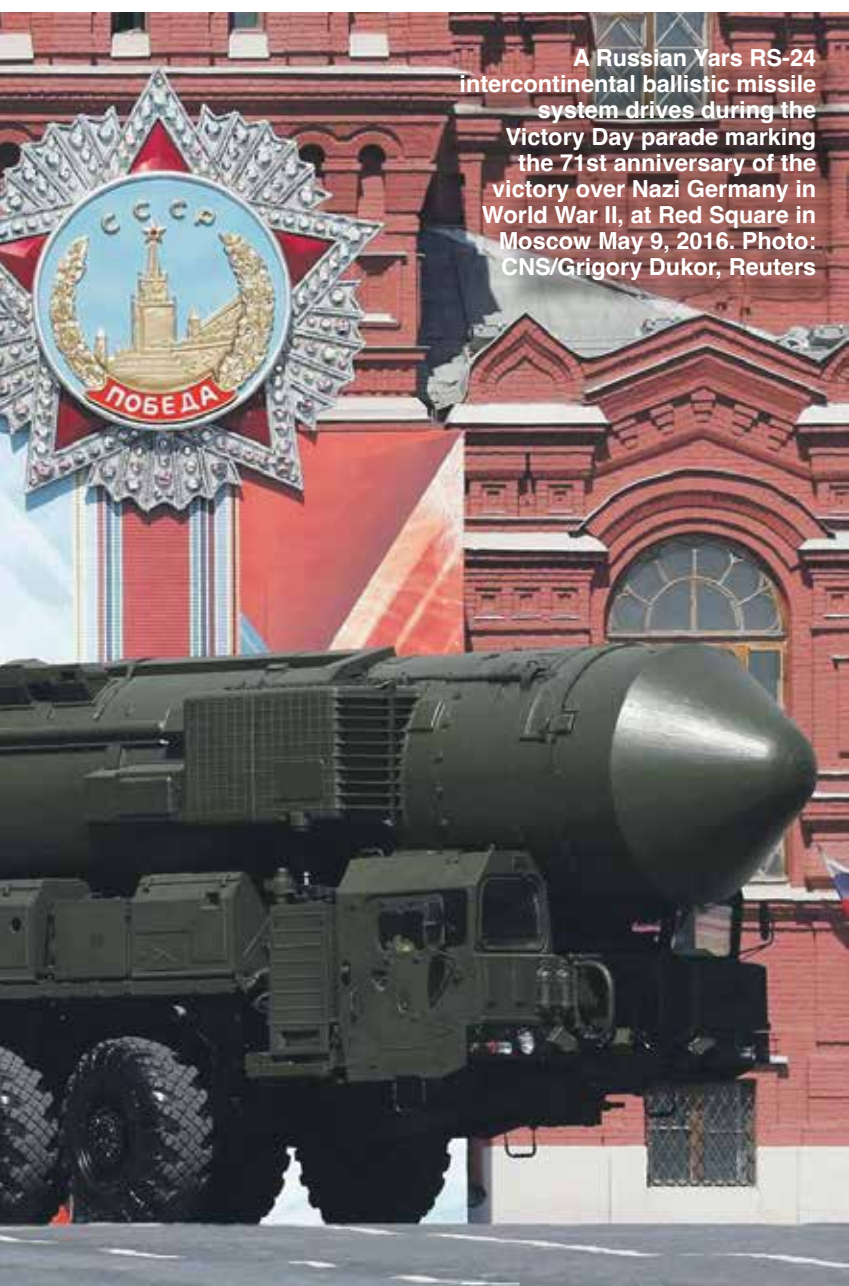
Despite this, that is precisely the case with most of us: our ears are closed to what we know to be true and important, but wide open to those things that induce fear and excitement, bright and flashy as they are. However, sometimes



Author C.S. Lewis is pictured in a 1955 portrait by Walter Stoneman. Photo: CNS/courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London



# of nuclear war



A Russian Yars RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missile system drives during the Victory Day parade marking the 71st anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, at Red Square in Moscow May 9, 2016. Photo: CNS/Grigory Dukor, Reuters



Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a ceremony in the Georgievsky Hall of the Great Kremlin Palace in Moscow September 30, 2022, to declare the annexation of four Russian-controlled regions of Ukraine. Photo: CNS/Sputnik, Grigory Sysoyev, Pool via Reuters.

the things that seem most urgent are not always the most important. The only “true perspective” to see our present calamities in relation to is the eternal perspective, and so it has to be acknowledged that these developments, be they war, famine or otherwise, don’t bring about some “absolutely new situation”. Rather, they only serve to cast an uncomfortable light on the precipice that humanity has always lived on the edge of.

## Human culture

“Human culture has always had to exist under the shadow of something infinitely more important than itself,” Lewis said, continuing, “If men had postponed the search for knowledge and beauty until they were secure the search would never have begun. We are mistaken when we compare war with ‘normal life’.

“Life has never been normal,” he said.

The essence of his point is that there has never been a time in this world that has not been full of crises, anxieties or emergencies. Despite this, man’s pursuit of knowledge and all other natural, human activities have continued unabated, without waiting for the perfect security that, in reality, only heaven offers. Despite our understandable panic when dreadful difficulties appear on the horizon, no one can devote them-

selves entirely to those worries, nor can they devote themselves entirely to any one thing, be it religious, cultural or otherwise. Most of our lives are made up of normal, natural actions that we’re going to carry out come rain, hail or shine.

**“Despite fears of nuclear war, you’re going to continue going to work because both you and your family need money”**

Lewis himself fought in the First World War, and he admits in his sermon that before his deployment, he expected “that my life in the trenches would, in some mysterious sense, be all war.

“In fact, I found that the nearer you got to the front line the less

everyone spoke and thought of the allied cause and the progress of the campaign; and I am pleased to find that Tolstoy, in the greatest war book ever written, records the same thing – and so, in its own way, does the Iliad.

“Neither conversion nor enlistment in the army is really going to obliterate our human life. Christians and soldiers are still men: the infidel’s idea of a religious life, and the civilian’s idea of active service, are fantastic,” Lewis said.

All that happens, Lewis argues, if you attempt to live your life around any one thing, such as fears of a nuclear war, or anything else, is that you fail, and end up living a poorer life rather than a better one. Our human activities have to be carried out, for that is our lot here on earth. It’s just that they’ll either be carried out well or badly.

Despite fears of nuclear war, you’re going to continue going to work because both you and your

family need money. In the intellectual realm, you’re not going to stop reading – you’ll just substitute good literature for alarmist news articles. You’re not going to stop thinking – you’ll just substitute edifying topics and ideas for an oppressive mental doom-cycle. In the final analysis, these overwhelming happenings will not “cancel or remove from the slate the merely human life” we were living before they appeared on the horizon.

## Three enemies

In his address, Lewis speaks of the “three enemies” that war throws up against the scholar, but in reality, unsettling reports, “wars and rumours of wars” send these three enemies at us all: excitement, frustration and fear. Excitement being the tendency to “think and feel about the war when we had intended to think about work”; frustration being “the feeling that we shall not have time to finish”;

fear being the fact that war threatens us with death and pain.

**“We have to accept that the vast majority of the tasks God has assigned to us won’t be completed in this life – that’s faith in God’s providential plan”**

In response to these, Dr Heck writes, Lewis offers us self-control in place of excitement, faith in place of frustration and sobriety in place of fear. In the spiritual life, and in all other human pursuits, the perfect conditions will never come, and we could spend our whole lives waiting. Rather, we have to learn how to operate under the “shadow of death” – which is self-control. We have to accept that the vast majority of the tasks God has assigned to us won’t be completed in this life – that’s faith in God’s providential plan. And finally, no one will escape death, whether by nuclear war or old age, and so the best we can do is humbly submit ourselves to our human condition and pray for a “good death” as the saying goes.

**“In the spiritual life, and in all other human pursuits, the perfect conditions will never come, and we could spend our whole lives waiting”**





Iran blocks conversion to Christianity with severe consequences for breaches, writes **Chai Brady**

**I**ran faces some of the biggest demonstrations against the government in decades following the death of a young woman at the hands of the 'morality police'.

The death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, has continued to make headlines after she died in suspicious circumstances. She was detained for not wearing her hijab correctly. Police allege she died of a heart attack whereas other witnesses say Ms Amini was severely beaten.

The Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights has put the death toll at close to 200 as protests erupted and civilians clashed with police. Many young men are joining women, who are removing their hijabs in acts of anti-government defiance across Iran. Recently schoolgirls have joined the protests, according to multiple videos appearing on social media. There have been multiple reports of young women being kidnapped, raped or killed.

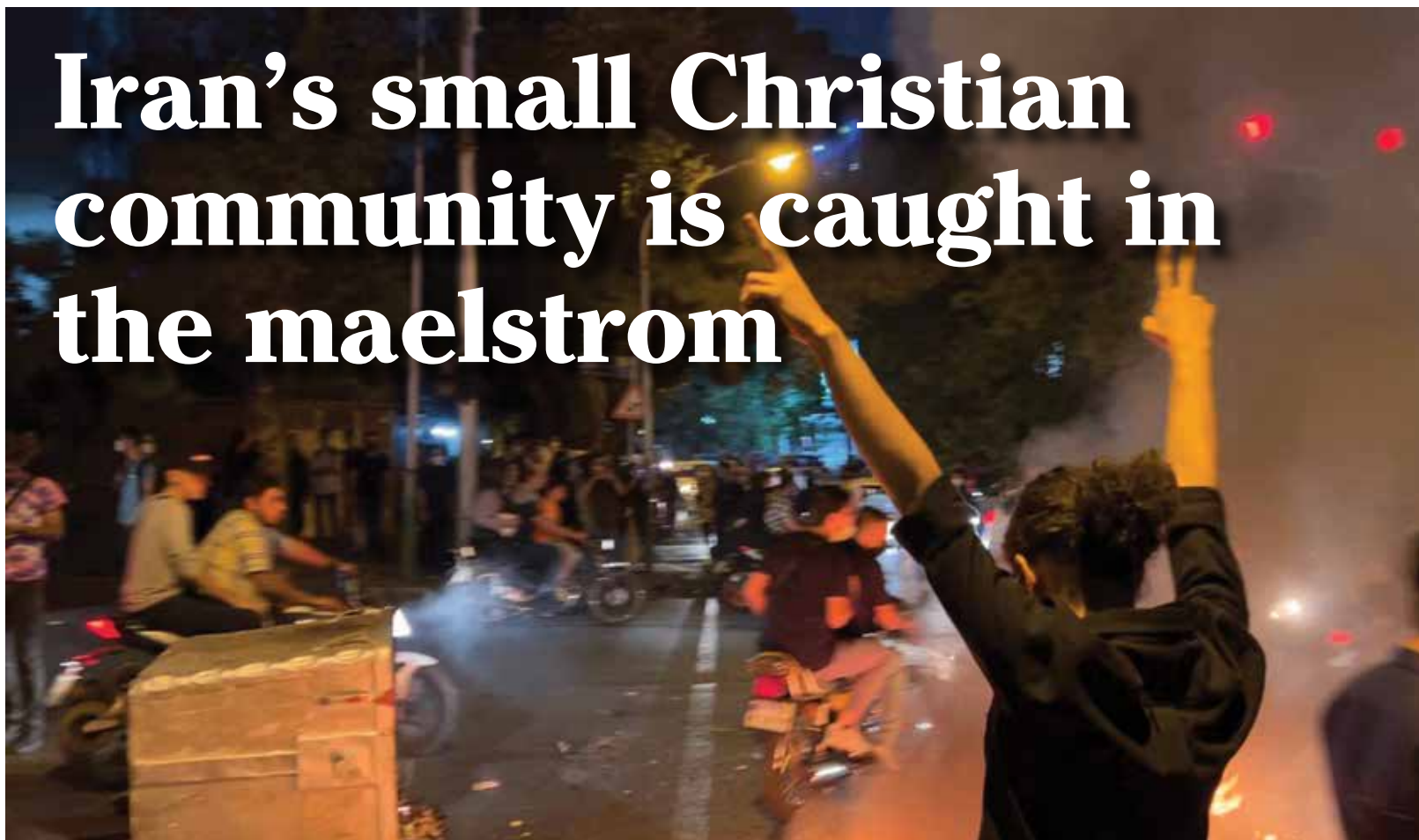
Iran has a theocratic, authoritarian government that allows only restricted political participation. So where does Iran's minority Christian community factor in all the turmoil? How have they manoeuvred in a society that is extremely strict on religions other than Islam?

#### Existed

Christianity has existed in Iran since Biblical times, predating Islam, but has always been a minority religion. It's clear that Christianity is growing, according to the country's own census, but it is very difficult to ascertain

**“Iran has a theocratic, authoritarian government that allows only restricted political participation”**

# Iran's small Christian community is caught in the maelstrom



An image from a September protest in Tehran, Iran after the death of Mahsa Amini.

exact numbers as it is illegal for Muslims to convert – leading to many practicing their faith in secret.

There is estimated to be hundreds of thousands of Christians, with the US Department of State 2014 International Religious Freedom Report putting the number at about 300,000. Some NGOs have higher estimates, even up to 800,000.

**“Christianity has existed in Iran since Biblical times, predating Islam, but has always been a minority religion”**

The constitution states Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians, excluding converts from Islam, are the only recognised religious minorities permitted to worship and form religious societies “within the limits of the law”.

The Armenian Apostolic Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, the Armenian Catholic Church and the (Assyrian) Chaldean Catholic

Church make up the majority of the Christian population and are recognised as minority religions in Iran's constitution, known as ‘ethnic Christians’. The latter two are in communion with the Pope. There is a very small number of Roman Catholics, estimated to be just more than 20,000.

#### Converted

The Christian Churches are known as ‘non-ethnic’, are predominantly Persian (Farsi)-speaking Iranians who converted from Islam to Christianity prior to the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979 and up to around 2005 to 2006. They are made up mainly of Pentecostals, Presbyterians and Anglicans.

There is a third group who face severe persecution, the Christians who converted from Islam since 2005 or 2006, who are not affiliated with registered convert churches, and may belong to the ‘house church’ movement.

A ‘house church’ is when a group of Christian converts worship with others in a private home – the Iranian authorities have deemed

them illegal and arrests are common.

The country requires that Christians and Churches are registered, only those who are can attend church – they are monitored by authorities to ensure Muslim converts do not attend. Services in churches generally can't be held in Farsi, only in their local language.

#### Convicted

Under Iran's law a person convicted of trying to convert a Muslim could face the death penalty. A Christian can face up to five years in jail for trying to evangelise in the country.

Despite the obvious severe consequences, a survey of 50,000 people, 90% of whom were in Iran, conducted by the Netherlands based Group for Analyzing

and Measuring Attitudes in Iran (GAMAAN), found 6% had converted from one religious orientation to another.

**“The Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights has put the death toll at close to 100 as protests erupted and civilians clashed with police”**

According to the UK charity Open Doors, who assist persecuted Christians around the world: “Converts from Islam to Christianity are most at risk of persecution, especially by the government and to a lesser extent by society and their own families.”

“The government sees the growth of the Church in Iran as an attempt by Western countries to undermine Islam and the Islamic regime of Iran. House groups made up of converts from Muslim backgrounds are often raided, and both their leaders and members have been arrested, prosecuted and given long prison sentences for ‘crimes against national security’.

“The historical communities of Armenian and Assyrian Christians are recognised and protected by the state, but they are treated as second-class citizens and are not allowed contact with Christians from Muslim backgrounds.”

The group added that things may get worse following changes to the country's penal code, which “further strangles religious freedom”.







Pope Francis exchanges gifts with Mohammad Javad Zarif, foreign minister of Iran, during a private audience at the Vatican in 2021.

## “Iranian Christian groups and charities, which are based abroad, have condemned the ‘oppression of women’ and ‘violation of human rights’ in the country”

They added: “Under the amendments, teaching the Bible or telling others about the Christian faith – which contradicts the teaching of Islam – could result in prosecution, as could the claim that Christians can communicate with Jesus, whom Islamic teaching regards as a prophet. Christians could also be accused of ‘insults ... with the intent to cause violence or tensions’. This vague wording is open to interpretation, making Christians more vulnerable to unjust accusations.”

### Changing

The USSD IRF Report 2021 states Iranian law prohibits Muslims from changing or renouncing their religious beliefs and that the only recognised conversions are from other religions to Islam.

“Sharia as interpreted by the government considers conversion from Islam apostasy, a crime punishable by death. Under the law, a child born to a Muslim father is Muslim,” it said, “The law does not recognise as Christian individuals who convert to Christianity.”

In spite of this, there seems to be a secularisation process ongoing in Iran, according to the aforementioned study by GAMAAN which found that approximately half of Iran’s population reported losing their religion, while 41% did not report significant changes in religious or non-religious views during their lifetime.

**“The group added that things may get worse following changes to the country’s penal code, which ‘further strangles religious freedom’”**

It also found that 61% of the population hails from a family environment characterised by belief in God and being religious but interestingly 32% reported growing up in a “believing but not religious” family. Less than 3% were raised in an “unbelieving” or “anti-religious” family.

A large amount of the population – 68% – believes

that religious prescriptions should be excluded from state legislation, even if believers hold a parliamentary majority.

### Protests

The ongoing protests in Iran point to the younger population, particularly women, pushing back against strict religious laws.

What could these protests mean for Christians living there? The answer is unclear. Sources on the ground fear the protests could lead to further persecution of religious minorities – as the government cracks down on dissent – which are already viewed with suspicion, sometimes as a threat, to the imposition of their strict interpretation of Shia Islam.

Iranian Christian groups and charities, which are based abroad, have condemned the “oppression of women” and “violation of human rights” in the country.

Article18, a non-profit organisation based in London dedicated to the protection and promotion of religious freedom in Iran, put

out a statement with Christian groups the Hamgaam Council of United Iranian Churches and the Pars Theological Centre stating they supported the call for justice for Ms Amini.

They stated last month: “In unison with the citizens of our country, we condemn the systematic oppression of women and the widespread violation of human rights in Iran. At the same time, we demand freedom, justice and equal rights for all Iranians.

**“A large amount of the population – 68% – believes that religious prescriptions should be excluded from state legislation”**

“We, like many of the people in Iran who have protested in the city streets with unparalleled courage following Mahsa’s death, consider the imposition of mandatory hijab on the people of Iran – representing a range of religious, ethnic and cultural identities – an obvious violation of human rights, and demand an end to this and other discriminatory laws.”

They added: “We are all Mahsas’, and ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ are among the slogans of the brave women and men of Iran, reminding us that we are all together, regardless of ethnicity, reli-

gion, language or belief, in this fight against the shared pain of injustice, oppression and religious dictatorship, as well as our hope for life, freedom and equality.”

They also said that it was the “spiritual duty” of Christians to stand up for those who are voiceless and oppressed “in the manner taught us by the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ”.

It is unclear how involved Christians are in protests but it is certain they would be treated very harshly by the regime if identified. For instance, in August 2022 UN experts called on Iranian authorities to stop the persecution and harassment of religious minorities and end the use of religion to curtail the exercise of fundamental rights.

They mentioned specifically people from the minority Baha’i faith who face increasing arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and destruction or confiscation of their properties, which “bears all the signs of a policy of systematic persecution”.

### Isolated

The UN experts said the acts were not isolated but formed part of a broader policy to target any dissenting belief or religious practice, including Christian converts.

“The international community cannot remain silent while Iranian authorities use overbroad and vague national security and espionage charges to silence religious minorities or people with dissenting opinions, remove them from their homes and effectively force them into internal displacement,” they said.

The experts called for the immediate and unconditional release of all individuals detained on the basis of their religious affiliation, and accountability for the systematic persecution of religious minorities by authorities.

They also said they were seriously concerned that provisions of Iran’s Penal Code “are used to prosecute individuals on grounds of religious affiliation and based on allegations that they expressed views deemed to be critical or derogatory towards Islam”.

“Such state-sanctioned intolerance furthers extremism and violence. We call on the Iranian authorities to de-criminalise blasphemy and take meaningful steps to ensure the right to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of opinion and expression without discrimination,” they said.

Since the beginning of the year dozens of Christian

leaders and Christians have been arrested. As previously mentioned, the charity Open Doors believes the government sees converts as “...an attempt by Western countries to undermine Islam and the Islamic regime of Iran”.

The charity also stated that if a convert’s new faith becomes known, they are very likely to lose their employment. Government officials in particular will put them under pressure to renounce their faith, as will wider society.

The National Director of Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need Ireland, who are also working to raise awareness of Christians in harrowing situations in Iran, Dr Michael Kinsella gave examples of the some of situations people face.

**“Since the beginning of the year dozens of Christian leaders and Christians have been arrested”**

A Christian convert Fate-meh (Mary) Mohammadi, during protests in January 2020, was taken to a detention centre and beaten so severely she had bruising for almost a month. She was re-arrested in January the following year by the morality police. They said her headscarf was not being worn correctly, her trousers were too tight and that her coat was not buttoned.

### Sanctions

In another case an Iranian Christian couple, Sam Khosravi and Maryam Falahi, had their adopted daughter taken from them in September 2020 because they were not Muslim. They are facing further criminal sanctions for attending a ‘house church’.

The plight of Christians unable to practice their faith in Iran is and has been ongoing, and many continue to exist in secret. It seems that the Catholic Church tends to keep its head down in the country and does not get embroiled in politics, acting as a quiet witness.

*The Irish Catholic* contacted a Catholic priest who ministered in Iran for decades about the current situation but he was reluctant to speak about his time there, dubbing the situation “so delicate”, particularly as Westerners are being blamed for the present unrest.

Despite being the home of some of the first Christians on Earth, the Faith is now hugely repressed and monitored closely – they are a community who must not be forgotten.



# Magic and music as Portmarnock celebrates golden jubilee



Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell cuts the cake celebrating 50 years of St Anne's Church, Canon John Flaherty Co-PP of Portmarnock parish claps beside him. Photos: John McElroy



## Chai Brady

A host of people young and old came together to celebrate the golden jubilee of St Anne's Church in Portmarnock, Co. Dublin.

The colourful event had Mass, face painting, music, magic, cake and more to mark 50 years of the establishment of the church in 1972.

The family fun day took place after Mass, which was celebrated by Archbishop Dermot Farrell of the Archdiocese of Dublin.



Maire Brid O'Dea, Sr Briege McKenna, Pauline Geoghegan and Sr Mary O'Reilly.



Flora Buramu and Suzanne Sherlock.





The Daryl family, mother Reva, father Will and children Maya and Grace at the golden jubilee celebrations.



The Morrison family with mother Norma and father Aidan with children Katie, James, Matthew and Amy.



Martina Nolan, Angela Lodge, Catherine O'Sullivan, Diana O'Sullivan, Biddy O'Sullivan and Dolores O'Rourke.



Children enjoying the magic show at the golden jubilee celebrations.



About to enjoy some jubilee cake is Michelle Whyte with children Caela and Eabha.



Joanne McNulty with children Niamh and Lily.



Antoinette and Christopher Champ with Marian Kearns.



Baker family with parents Jonathan and Sara with children Kyle, Tyler and Amber .



Fergal Cagney having a look at his face painting.



Sarah Jane Doolan with her children Hallie and Lily.



Vikki Ni Bhrein and Islagh Redmond at the golden jubilee celebrations in Portmarnock parish.



# Open letter: Papal document on ecology hits screens to increase action



Carol Glatz

The Pope's climate leadership provides inspiration both on- and off-screen, writes **Carol Glatz**

**H**ighlighting the Church's approach of coupling the power of prayer with active and committed care for the earth, the Vatican wrapped up the monthlong Season of Creation October 4 with the launch of new initiatives.

The feast day of St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology, marked a new beginning with the Holy See's official entry into the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement and its related UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

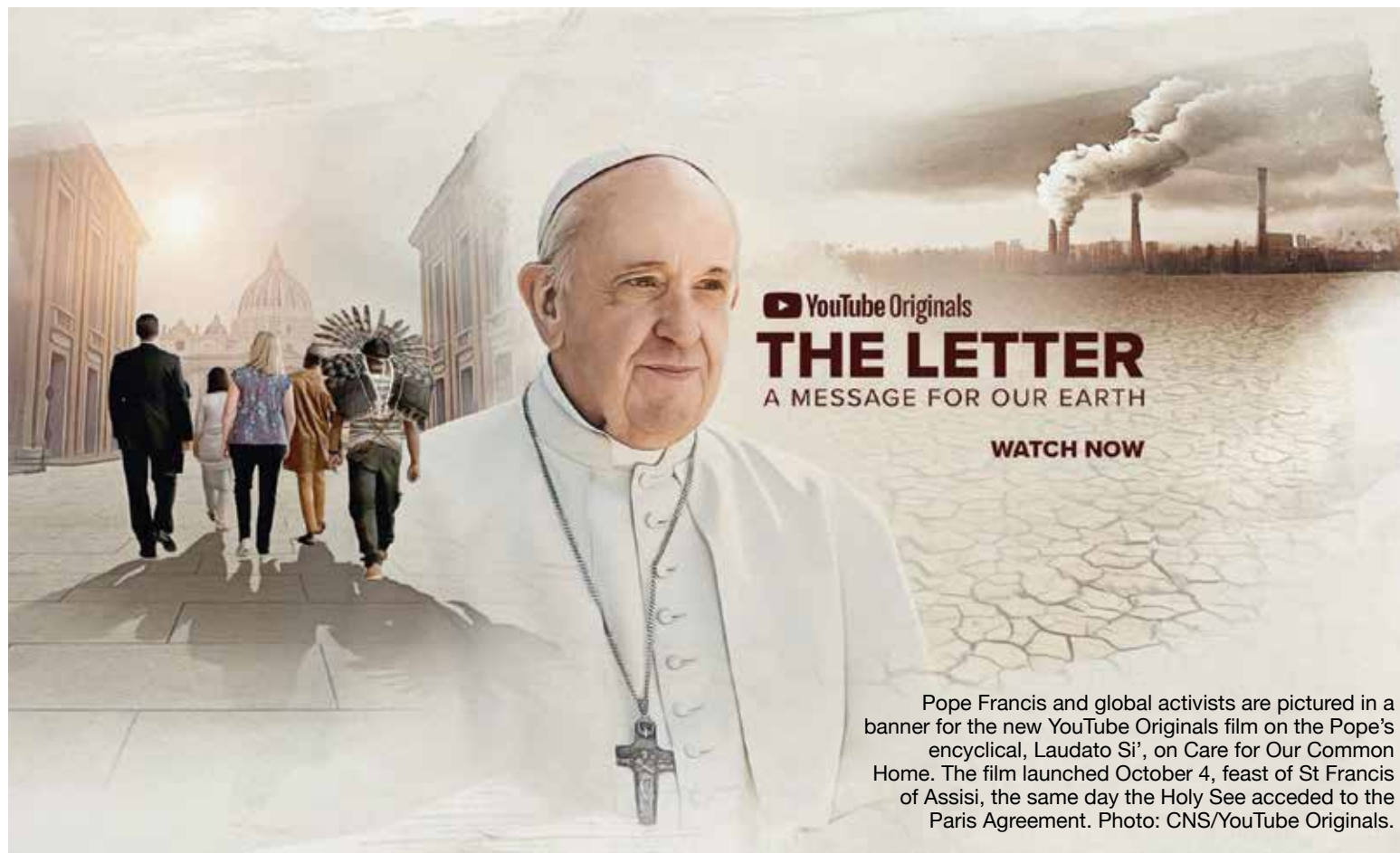
A special gathering was held that afternoon at the Casina Pio IV in the Vatican Gardens featuring top Vatican officials, global climate representatives, government leaders and ambassadors to celebrate "this important step taken [by] the Holy See" and to strengthen the international community's commitment to join together for the common good, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said after the high-level conference.

"We need to promote and encourage international cooperation now more than ever, particularly at a time when multilateralism is in jeopardy and issues like climate change and the promotion of integral ecology risk being overshadowed by our inability to seek authentic dialogue and consensus," the cardinal said at the global premiere of a documentary inspired by *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical letter on caring for creation.

While current challenges are "numerous," many "impressive" initiatives have been created since the letter's publication in 2015, the cardinal said. And it's these efforts and projects like the new film "that help us make this demanding but also stimulating culture of care for our common home into a concrete reality".

## Letter

Titled, *The Letter: A Message for Our Earth*, the film is "a new letter to boost the old letter," Tomás Insua, executive director of the *Laudato Si'*



Pope Francis and global activists are pictured in a banner for the new YouTube Originals film on the Pope's encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, on Care for Our Common Home. The film launched October 4, feast of St Francis of Assisi, the same day the Holy See acceded to the Paris Agreement. Photo: CNS/YouTube Originals.

Movement, said at the premiere.

He spearheaded the idea of inviting an award-winning director to create a visually compelling reminder of the Pope's message and to include the voices of those on the peripheries experiencing the urgency of the climate crisis.

In partnership with the *Laudato Si'* Movement and in collaboration with the Dicastery for Communication and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the film was written and directed by Emmy-winner Nicolas Brown.

**“Many ‘impressive’ initiatives have been created since the letter’s publication in 2015, the cardinal said”**

Mr Brown told Catholic News Service October 4 that he came into the project "with a lot of prejudice" against people of faith, having "walked away" from his evangelical Christian roots and believing religion and science were at odds.

"When reading *Laudato Si'*, I realised that that perception is wrong and flawed, and so I literally went from being someone who wrote off the faith communities" as having any role to play in the

issues of climate change and biodiversity loss to now believing that these problems "cannot be solved without, if not a religious, then a spiritual component," he said.

## Science

So much of science and policy focuses on "technocratic aims" and "the how," he said. What has been missing "is the 'why.'"

"That moral foundation that the Pope has offered is fundamental and crucial" in deciding values, purpose and behaviors that emphasise responsibility for others and stewardship, he said.

Besides filming during a pandemic, he said, the big challenge was turning a largely philosophical-theological document into a proper story.

Mr Brown said he wanted to mirror the Pope's broader message of "getting outside our bubbles" and reaching out to include the voiceless in "this dialogue that the Pope so urgently calls for".

The film's protagonists, he said, represent four groups who are paying a steep price for climate change: Chief Cacique Odair "Dadá" Borari from the Amazon rainforest in Brazil to represent Indigenous people; Ridhima Pandey, a 13-year-old climate activist from India to represent young people; Arouna Kandé, a climate

refugee from Senegal to represent the poor; and US coral reef scientists Greg Asner and Robin Martin representing wildlife.

**“People are encouraged to watch it together with others and ‘create a movement;’ with dialogue and coordinated action”**

For the plot, Mr Brown said he imagined a motif like the one in "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz", in which "we're going to meet the Pope" and tell him their challenges, needs and dreams.

After the five follow Rome's cobblestone road to Pope Francis, it's much like meeting the wizard in the children's story, he said. "There's not a lot he can do for you. He gives a fantastic sermon, but at the end of the day, you realize that it's up to you. You have to dig within yourself."

Then, on a whim, he said, he decided to bring the film's protagonists, "who came all this way" to Italy, on to Assisi "to understand more deeply" why the Pope chose the name Francis and discover the saint's legacy.

"The real magic of the film actually happens after we meet the Pope," Mr Brown said. The activists form an alliance, "a bond that is deeply human and, really, I think is the deeper message of *Laudato Si'*" where people are moved by compassion after witnessing the crosses others bear.

## Accompanies

Lorna Gold, who accompanies the group in the documentary, said at the film's preview that, despite the worsening climate crisis, there is hope "when we come together" to build bridges and alliances.

Ms Gold, who is president of the board of the *Laudato Si'* Movement, said Pope Francis wanted his encyclical "to reach every person on the planet".

Distributing the film for free on YouTube Originals and TheLetterFilm.org is meant to "bring the letter to new audiences," she said.

People are encouraged to watch it together with others and "create a movement" with dialogue and coordinated action, she said.

Ms Pandey, the young Indian, appealed to premiere-goers, telling them she was proud to be part of the film and an activist, but "I don't run the government and I don't own the factories".

With COP27 coming up this year in Egypt, the UN climate change conferences are more than twice her age, she said. "And what's the conclusion? (Leaders) come there with big speeches that, at the very end, no action has been taken."

"Just act now guys, please!" she said.

**“We need to promote and encourage international cooperation now more than ever”**



# Out&About

## 25 years of faithful service



**DUBLIN:** Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. is pictured with family and friends after celebrating the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, October 1.



**LAOIS:** Students and the staff from Holy Family Senior School Portlaoise were well represented by Mr Malone's Sixth Class in their meeting with Fr David Vard.



**LOURDES:** Students from St Catherine's College, Armagh, meet Archbishop Eamon Martin while on pilgrimage in Lourdes, September 28.

## IN SHORT

### Catholic guides commissioner sworn in

A new national commissioner for the Catholic Guides of Ireland (CGI) was commissioned in the North Cathedral, Cork, October 2.

Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin commissioned Julie Donnelly at an event attended by the Lord Mayor of Cork, Deirdre Forde, and representatives of Guiding and Scouting organisations from across the country.

Ms Donnelly has been involved in leadership roles within CGI for more than 20 years. Until her commissioning, she held the role of training-coordinator for the South-West region.

In an October 3 statement Marion Gleeson, Southwestern Regional Commissioner, said "Julie is a Dublin native but in Cork we are proud to call her one of our own and we are delighted at her election to the role."

"We know that Julie will represent CGI brilliantly as her passion for every aspect of Guiding is an inspiration to us all."

The Catholic Guides of Ireland is an all-island, voluntary organisation for girls aged five or over.

### Law 'more than regulation' – Archbishop Farrell

Concern for law is about "much more than regulation and order", Archbishop of Dublin

Dermot Farrell said at the commencement of the new legal term.

In his homily, Archbishop Farrell told the congregation gathered in St Michan's Church that "To be concerned about law, is to be concerned about the nature of our society and our world."

"It is to be concerned about what is of value and worthwhile in the lives we share with each other in this land, and indeed in our common home", the archbishop said.

In attendance at the annual Mass, October 3, were the President of the High Court, Mr Justice David Barniville and as well as representatives of An Garda Síochána.

The Lassus Scholars directed by Ite O'Donovan provided music for the Mass.

### Study reveals lasting damage of Covid on world's poorest

The crippling impact the Covid pandemic is still having on some of the world's poorest communities is highlighted in new research by Concern Worldwide and a group of EU humanitarian organisations.

Almost 8,500 people in 18 low-income countries were interviewed between March and May 2022 for the research by the Alliance2015 group of European NGOs.

One-third of respondents said household members had gone to bed hungry in the last three months, while 62% reported the quantity of food consumed had decreased.





**CORK:** Lord Mayor of Cork Deirdre Ford is pictured with new Catholic Guides of Ireland National Commissioner Julie Donnelly in the North Cathedral, October 2.



**CORK:** The Catholic Guides of Ireland South-West Region leaders are pictured with new National Commissioner Julie Donnelly and the guests from IGG, Ciara O'Reilly Regional Commissioner for IGG and Deirdre Henley National President of IGG, and Lucy Kate and David O'Neill of Scouting Ireland.



**DONEGAL:** Pictured are members of the Cashel and Emly one-day pilgrimage to Lough Derg.



**DUBLIN:** Science welcome team Martyna Sawicka, Beth Quigley, Anna McCormack and Leah Keyes prepare to welcome prospective students to St Mary's Secondary School Baldoy on the school's open night.



**CAVAN:** Proud pet owners were delighted to have their pets blessed at Masses in the parish of Drumgoon over the weekend of October 1 and 2.



**CAVAN:** Bishop of Kilmore Martin Hayes is pictured at the launch of the diocese's youth initiative St Felim's Five Challenges, aimed at getting second-level students more involved in the Faith.



**DUBLIN:** Trócaire Board member and UN Sustainable Development Goals negotiator David Donoghue, launches the agencies' new Climate Fund which gives business the opportunity to support tackling the devastating effects of climate change.



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



**WEXFORD:** Pictured in Wexford Friary after celebrating the feast of St Francis are Fr Robert Cojoc OFM Conv., Tom Murphy, Fr Ryszard Stefaniuk OFM Conv., Fr Terence Bateman OFM Conv., John Beary and Paddy Beary, October 4. Photo: Terry McNamee.



**ANTRIM:** The Knights of St Columbanus' were proud to watch one of their own, Luke Duffy, represent Queen's University Belfast on University Challenge, October 3.



**ROSCOMMON:** Fr Eugene Duffy is pictured speaking at the launch of his new book, *The Restructuring of Irish Dioceses*, in St Nathy's College, September 30.



**NAPLES:** Fr Dan Baragry CSsR (left), the Irish Redemptorist's Provincial, is pictured with the order's new Superior General Fr Rogério Gomes CSsR in Pagani outside Naples, October 3, following the Redemptorist's 26th General Chapter.

## ANTRIM

Down & Connor Apostolic Work's annual Mission Sunday Mass will be celebrated in St Colmcille's Church, Ballyhackamore, Belfast on Sunday October 23 at 2pm. For further information contact the office on 02890351912, Monday-Wednesday, from 9am-2pm.

Beginning Experience is offering a programme of bereavement support in St Bride's Hall, Derryvolgie Ave., Belfast on Saturday October 29 and November 26 for those grieving the loss of a partner through death, separation or divorce. Booking essential. To find out more, contact Phil: 02890 207645 or Marie 07896119669 or email belfastbe@yahoo.com.

## ARMAGH

A Youth 2000 prayer group meets at 7:30pm on the first Friday of every month in the Church of the Assumption Drumalane, Newry.

## CARLOW

The 6.15pm Mass in Carlow Cathedral will be celebrated in Irish on the first and second Saturdays of each month from October to May. Singers and musicians welcome to Cór an Aifrin. New Readers welcome. Enquiries to 087 2857048.

## CLARE

A blessing of expectant parents takes place Tuesday, October 25, at 8pm in Ennis Cathedral.

## CORK

Making sense of human trafficking and slavery launch event takes place on October 17, 6:15-7:30pm, in St Peter's, 87A North Main St, T12 RF8D. Author David Lohan will launch his new book, *At Freedom's Crossroads*, during the event.

Medjugorje prayer meeting every Wednesday at 8pm in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay, Cork city.

The Diocese of Cork and Ross is holding Connect 2 in UCC, on Sunday October 16 from 10.30am. It is a gathering for people aged 18-35.

## DERRY

Our Lady Untier of Knots Novena continues after 7.30 pm Mass each Thursday until November 24 in Derry Cathedral.

## DONEGAL

The 150th anniversary celebrations for St Brigid's Church, Golan, Milford take place Friday, October 14, at 7pm. Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian will be the main celebrant. Refreshment and entertainment afterwards.

## DUBLIN

A memorial Mass for Fr Tom Stack will take place on Sunday, October 16, at 11.30am in Milltown Parish Church with a reception afterwards in the parish centre.

Pure in Heart trip to Tayto park changed to October 30. Email info@purein-heart.ie by October 15 to book your place. Cost is €25.

## KERRY

The diocese of Kerry is hosting a mission month seminar October 20. Guest speaker will be Pakistan-based missionary Fr Liam O'Callaghan. Visit dioceseofkerry.ie to register.

## KILDARE

The Celtic Tenors will perform in St Peter and Paul's Church, Monasterevin, on Friday, October 21, at 8pm. Featuring Monasterevin Gospel Choir. Tickets available in Monasterevin parish, call 045 525 346.

## KILKENNY

The rosary is said at 2:30pm on Fridays in the Grotto Graiguenamanagh.

## LIMERICK

Words of Light and Power, a retreat for young adults takes place on Saturday, October 22, from 10-5pm in Glenstal Abbey. Refreshments & lunch provided. Suggested donation €30. Contact 061 621005 or luke@glenstal.com

Youth 2000 prayer group meets October 17 in Our Lady Help of Christians Church at 7:30pm. Contact Áine 087 350 1240.

A come and see retreat for those exploring vocations with the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia takes place October

14-16. For more information or to register email limerick@op-tn.org.

## LEITRIM

Ballinamore prayer group meet on Tuesdays 8:30-9:45pm, in St Brigid's Parish Centre, Ballinamore.

## LOUTH

Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal host a come and see retreat for women age 18-35 who are discerning a vocation in St Anthony's convent October 12-16. If interested, contact Sr Agnes 041 983 0441.

## OFFALY

Youth 2000 weekly prayer meeting on Thursdays from 7-8pm in the Day Chapel, Tullamore. Tea and chat in the Parish Centre from 8-8.30pm. For 18-35 year olds.

## TIPPERARY

Be healed retreat led by Fr Patrick Cahill takes place in Glencomeragh House October 14-16. It begins with Mass at 10am Friday morning. Cost is €265. Contact info@holymission.ie or 052 6133181.

## TYRONE

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group meet in the Pastoral Centre on Thursday evenings with Rosary at 7.40pm, followed by prayer meeting at 8pm.

## WATERFORD

All Saints party takes place on the vigil of All Saints, 4pm, Monday, October 31, in St John's Pastoral Centre, St John's Hill. Please bring a small plate of food for a shared table. All ages welcome, come dressed as a saint.

St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn, the only Cistercian monastery for women in Ireland, is hosting a monastic experience weekend October 28-30 for women discerning their vocation.

## WESTMEATH

Charismatic prayer meeting takes place Tuesdays at 7pm in Mullingar Parish Community Centre.

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





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### New cardinals appointed as members of dicasteries

● Pope Francis appointed several recently created cardinals to be members of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the Vatican announced.

Among the new appointments announced by the Vatican October 7 was Cardinal Robert McElroy of San Diego, who will serve as a member of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life as well as the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Cardinal McElroy was among the 20 prelates welcomed into the College of Cardinals by Pope Francis August 27.

English Cardinal Arthur Roche, prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, was named a member of the dicasteries for Evangelisation, for Bishops and for Culture and Education.

The Pope named Korean Cardinal Lazarus You Heung-sik, prefect of the Dicastery for Clergy, as a member of the dicasteries for Evangelisation, for Bishops and for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

### Pope decries refusal to help migrants as 'sinful, criminal'

● The refusal to help desperate migrants "is revolting, it's sinful, it's criminal," Pope Francis said as he canonised a bishop dedicated to assisting migrants and a Salesian brother who had immigrated with his family to Argentina. "The exclusion of migrants is criminal. It makes them die in front of us," the Pope said October 9, referring to the deaths of migrants and refugees crossing dangerous seas

in search of freedom and a dignified life.

At the beginning of the liturgy in St Peter's Square, Pope Francis formally recognized the holiness of St Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, an Italian who founded the Missionaries of St Charles Borromeo to care for migrants, and St Artemide Zatti, an Italian immigrant in Argentina who became a Salesian brother, pharmacist and nurse.

### Opus Dei announces extraordinary general congress to change statutes

● The prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr Fernando Ocáriz, announced in a letter October 5 that he will convene an extraordinary general congress in the first half of 2023 to adapt the prelature's statutes to the instructions in the motu proprio *Ad charisma tuendum*.

The head of Opus Dei made the announcement to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the canonisation of the founder of Opus Dei, St Josemaría Escrivá.

Msgr Ocáriz explained in the letter that the Dicastery for the Clergy has advised the general council and the central advisory of Opus Dei not to limit themselves in this process "to considering what refers to the dependency of the prelature on this dicastery".

### US hospital pauses gender surgeries on minors after backlash

● Vanderbilt University Medical Hospital has paused irreversible gender surgeries on children following Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee's calls for investigation after pressure from social media activists.

The decision was made public Friday afternoon, announced in a letter written by the university medical centre's deputy CEO, C. Wright Pinson.

"You have asked that VUMC halt permanent gender affirmation surgeries

being performed on minors," Mr Pinson wrote.

The letter went on to say that due to recently updated guidelines from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, the medical centre would be conducting an internal clinical review on the program.

"We are pausing gender affirmation surgeries on patients under age 18 while we complete this review, which may take several months," Mr Pinson continued.

## Ethiopian bishop urges action to save millions in renewed war in Tigray

On the date marking 700 days of war in Ethiopia's region of Tigray, Bishop Tesfasellassie Medhin of Adigrat restated his call to the local and international community to act to save millions of people.

People must "exercise their moral duty (to) be a voice of the voiceless and enforce international treaties to save more than 7 million live from vanishing," Bishop Medhin said in a statement October 4.

Fighting began again August 24, shattering a five-month humanitarian truce the government announced in May to allow aid to reach millions of needy people. During the period some food, medicines and other basic needs reached the region.

Bishop Medhin said the Catholic Church in Tigray was urging all the Catholic networks, partners, national and international religious leaders, UN agencies, the international community, among others, to condemn the war and move to help the suffering populations.

"It is very painful and shocking to see horrifying ... indiscriminate ... shelling and bombardment of civilians. As a result, all lifesaving humanitarian operations are totally halted across Tigray," he said.

"It extremely difficult to move across the rural areas to see what is happening, because there is no fuel," he said.

When the war started in November 2020, the government put the region under a blockade and cut off basic services, including telecommunication, banking, transport, water and medical care.



A man injured in an air strike receives treatment at a hospital in Mekele, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia in September. Photo: CNS/Reuters

The blockade is still in place in the region as the Tigray People's Liberation Front battles a coalition of armies in a total media blackout. Some analysts have described the fighting as a "world war in Africa".

The bishop said apart from living through the siege and blockade, it was "heart bleeding" to see over 1.5 million children out of school for three years.

He described the Tigray

fighting as the largest active war on the planet and urged the world to act to stop the indiscriminate bombardment and to push for unfettered humanitarian access and the restoration basic services. He also wants a cease-fire and political dialogue for lasting peace.

"The Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat ... reconfirms its commitment to be in solidarity, prayer and charity with all the people who are going through

the inexplicable suffering in Tigray and across the country," he said.

The war in Tigray started when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali announced military action against the Tigray People's Liberation Front. He had accused the rulers of the semi-autonomous region of attacking a national army base in Mekele, the capital. The rebels denied the allegations.

## French and S. African theologians win Ratzinger Prize

Pope Francis has selected a French Jesuit theologian and a Jewish law professor as winners of the Ratzinger Prize.

The winners for 2022, announced by the Vatican October 7, are: Jesuit Fr Michel Fédou, professor of dogmatic theology and patristics at the Centre Sèvres of Paris and dean of the faculty of theology. He is a member of several theological organisations and commissions involved in ecumenical dialogue with

Lutherans and Orthodox Christians; and Joseph H. H. Weiler, a professor of law at New York University School of Law where he also serves as European Union Jean Monnet Chair and co-director of the Jean Monnet Center for International and Regional Economic Law and Justice. He is also a senior fellow of the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies at Harvard Law School.

Born in South Africa, he has dual US

and Italian citizenship. He served as president of the European University Institute of Florence, Italy, from 2013 to 2016 and received an honorary doctorate in theology from The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

The Ratzinger Prize, a sort of "Nobel Prize in Theology," is given to two scholars each year who stand out for their scientific research in the field of theology, regardless of their religious faith.

## Pope calls Thailand attack act of 'unspeakable violence'

Pope Francis said he was "deeply saddened" after hearing the news of one of the world's worst mass shootings at a day care centre in north-east Thailand.

In a message sent October 7 by Cardinal Pietro Parolin,

Vatican secretary of state, the Pope offered prayers for the victims "of the horrific attack" that claimed the lives of 36 people, including at least 24 children, October 6.

The Pope "offers his heartfelt condolences and the assur-

ance of his spiritual closeness to all those affected by this act of unspeakable violence against innocent children," the cardinal wrote.

According to an AP report October 7, Panya Kamrap, a former policeman, went to the

day care, where his child was enrolled but had been absent for the past month, before going on a shooting and stabbing rampage. He then went home where he shot and killed his wife and child before turning the gun on himself.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
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## Praying over the pets



A priest sprinkles holy water at dogs during a drive-through pet blessing in Manila, Philippines, October 2, ahead of World Animal Day. The day coincides with the feast of St Francis of Assisi, October 4. Photo: CNS/Lisa Marie David, Reuters

## Public spat between German bishop and Swiss cardinal leads to private meeting in Rome

Following demands for an apology and a threat he might "file an official complaint with the Holy Father," the German Bishops' Conference president met with a Vatican cardinal in Rome this week.

Bishop Georg Bätzing sat down with Cardinal Kurt Koch October 4 to apparently clear the air over what the German Bishop Bätzing had called a "totally unacceptable gaffe" by the Vatican cardinal, who is a native of Switzerland and president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The exchange was the result of a disagreement over

remarks involving "German Christians," Nazi ideology, and theological claims of a key document of the German Synodal Way.

"For Cardinal Koch and Bishop Bätzing, it is clear after the conversation that the theological debate, to which the cardinal wanted to contribute in the interview, must continue," spokesman Matthias Kopp said October 5, according to a report by CNA Deutsch.

According to the bishops' conference statement, the cardinal had "assured the bishop that he in no way meant the Synodal Way of

the Church in Germany or the Synodal Assembly by the comparison he drew between theological debates on the Synodal Way and the events surrounding the so-called 'German Christians' during the Nazi era".

"Expressly Cardinal Koch emphasises that it is completely far from him to want to impute the terrible ideology of the 1930s to the Synodal Way," the spokesman continued.

"Cardinal Koch asks for forgiveness from all those who feel hurt by the comparison he made."

However, this assertion is

not new, nor is the apology that Bishop Bätzing said he found not to be to his satisfaction.

CNA contacted Koch about his perspective on the encounter but had not received a response at the time of publication.

On September 29, Cardinal Koch had apologised for any hurt but at the same time defended himself against Bishop Bätzing's claims of an "unacceptable gaffe," saying, "I cannot retract my essential point, simply because I have in no way compared the Synodal Way to a Nazi ideology, nor will I ever do so".

## African faith leaders call for cancellation of punitive foreign debts

Catholic leaders in Africa have called for the removal of the unpayable debts, saying that the burdens were sinking their countries further into poverty.

They said the continent was struggling with an unprecedented confluence of crises and urged international leaders to prioritise actions that enable Africa's recovery.

The faith leaders wrote an open letter to the Group of 7 and African finance ministers, met during the October 10-16 meetings of the International Monetary

Fund and World Bank in Washington.

"The first priority is to remove the crushing burdens of unpayable debts, a call that we find consistently in the voice of leaders of diverse religious traditions, certainly those of the Catholic Church," said the statement signed by Archbishop Gabriel Justice Yaw Anokye of Kumasi, Ghana, president of Caritas Africa, the African confederation of Catholic charitable agencies that participate in the Caritas Internationalis network.

In the October 5 statement, the

leaders highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, saying it led to an economic contraction of more than 3% and reversed years of development progress on the continent.

The letter said since the pandemic began in 2020, more than 40 million have fallen into extreme poverty, after two decades of poverty reduction. It said recession looms again, barely three years after the biggest global recession in a century.



## Vatican roundup

### Tourist detained after toppling busts at Vatican Museums

● A tourist who toppled two ancient Roman busts in the Vatican Museums has been handed over to Italian police, the Vatican said.

The vandalism occurred October 5 when the tourist, identified by several Italian media outlets as an American man, threw down two marble busts from their pedestals in the museums' Chiaramonti gallery.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, told reporters that the man who "knocked down the statues was stopped by Vatican gendarmerie and handed over to Italian authorities".

The Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* reported that the man knocked down the statues after his request to meet Pope Francis was denied. After vandalising the busts, he was stopped by museum staff before being detained by the Vatican police.

According to the Reuters news agency, a source at the Vatican Museums said the man, who is believed to be in his 50s, "behaved strangely" before toppling the busts.

The two ancient Roman busts were not severely damaged and were taken to the Vatican Museums' lab for repair, Reuters reported.

### Vatican publishes schedule for papal trip to Bahrain

● Pope Francis' visit to Bahrain November 3-6 will make him the first pope to visit the archipelago nation in the Persian Gulf.

The focus of the visit will be the Bahrain Forum for Dialogue: East and West for Human Coexistence in Awali and meetings with top Muslim leaders, but it will also include an ecumenical gathering and a prayer for peace in the newly built Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral, a Mass and meetings with Catholics in the Muslim-majority nation.

Bahrain is a tiny island nation – smaller in area than London – and a key US ally in the Persian Gulf. The country's king invited Pope Francis to visit, underlining the importance placed on interfaith

dialogue and understanding among different cultures and civilizations.

The king also endorsed the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, signed in Abu Dhabi February 4, 2019, by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Al-Azhar in Egypt.

Of the country's more than 1.5 million people, immigrants make up approximately 45% of the total population. About 74% are Muslim and 9% are Christian. People of the Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish faiths are among the other communities present.

### Pope Francis: Saints have joyful hearts, not long faces

● The holiness of saints is reflected not only in how they overcame struggles but by their ability to transmit the joy that comes from being loved by God, Pope Francis said.

The gift of sharing the love and mercy Christians receive from God "enables us to experience an immense joy that is not a fleeting emotion or mere human optimism, but the certainty that we can face every challenge with the grace and the assurance that come from God," the Pope told participants at a Vatican conference on holiness.

"Without this joy, faith shrinks into an oppressive and dreary thing; the saints are not 'sourpusses,' but men and women with joyful hearts, open to hope," he said, meeting conference participants October 6.

The conference, "Holiness Today," was sponsored by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints and held October 3-6.

During the conference, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the dicastery, announced the creation of a commission that will recognise Christians who, although not canonised and perhaps not Catholic, were exemplary and even heroic witnesses to the Christian faith.





# Letter from USA



John L. Allen Jr

Once again a Nobel Peace Prize was announced Friday, and once again a pope didn't win.

This year's honour went to human rights' campaigners in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, in what's widely been seen as an implicit condemnation of Russian President Vladimir Putin and both his war in Ukraine and his anti-democratic tendencies at home.

Russia's Memorial organisation, Ukraine's Centre for Civil Liberties and Belarus's Ales Bialiatski will share the prize money of 10 million Swedish krona, roughly \$900,000, and will receive the award in a December 9 ceremony in Oslo, Norway.

**“Fr Dominique Pire, a Belgian Dominican honoured in 1958 for his work, in helping refugees in post-war Europe”**

While four US presidents have won (Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama), along with several prime ministers and statesmen from other countries, no pope has been honoured since the inception of the prize in 1901.

Pontiffs routinely are nominated, as Pope Francis was again this year by Dag Inge Ulstein, Norway's Minister of International Development, who cited the Pope's “efforts to help solve the climate crisis as well as his work towards peace and reconciliation”.

In the run-up to Friday's announcement, online oddsmakers had installed Pope Francis as about a 15-1 favourite to win the prize, more or less the same odds given to Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg and the UN Refugee Agency. Over the years, on several occasions I've been asked to stand by on a TV platform someplace on the day of the announcement in case the Pope wins; in each case, we've always had to stand down.

(I've sometimes considered billing the prize committee for all the appearance fees I never collected, but somehow I doubt they'd pay the invoice.)

To date, four other Catholic leaders have received the Peace Prize:

- Fr Dominique Pire, a Belgian Dominican honoured in 1958 for his work, in helping refugees in post-war Europe.

- Mother Teresa, now St Teresa of Kolkata, who received the award in 1979 for her efforts to alleviate human suffering.

- Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes

## Why don't popes ever win the Nobel Peace Prize?



Pope Francis meets with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad during a private meeting at the Vatican August 26, 2021. Ms Murad was kidnapped by Islamic State militants in Iraq in 2014 during a genocidal campaign against the Yazidi people. Photo: CNS/Vatican Media

**“Every pope has been nominated at one point or another since Benedict XV, who reigned from 1914 to 1922, but so far none of them have ever become Nobel laureates”**

Belo, who shared the prize in 1996 with politician José Ramos-Horta for their leadership in achieving a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict in East Timor that led to national independence.

- Fr Jose Ramon Tizon Villarin, a Filipino Jesuit who was part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that received the prize in 2007.

Recently Bishop Belo has faced charges of sexual abuse and misconduct, which reportedly led to a previously undisclosed Vatican sanction in 2020. To date, however, there's not been any suggestion that his prize might be revoked.

Every pope has been nominated at one point or another since Benedict XV, who reigned from 1914 to 1922, but so far none of them have ever become Nobel laureates.

**Why don't popes win?**

To begin with, the Nobel Peace Prize is bestowed by a five-member commit-

tee selected by the parliament of Norway, a traditionally Protestant country where levels of interest and attention to popes aren't especially high.

It's not that Norwegian parliamentarians are caught up in old debates over, say, Philip Melanchthon (whom many of them would probably think is a striker for Bayern) or the Diet of Worms. But in general, in a country where national identity was forged in part through the rejection of papal authority, giving such an award to a pope just isn't the most natural thing to do.

In some cases, the anti-papal bias is explicit. When Bishop Gunnar Stalsett of Oslo of the Church of Norway, who also served as leader of the country's Centre Party, was a member of the Nobel Peace Prize committee from 1985 to 1990 and again from 1994 to 2003, he explicitly stated he would not support the candidacy of Pope John Paul II due to the Catholic Church's position on contraception.

Many observers believed at the

time that without Bishop Stalsett's informal veto, John Paul II likely would have been named a co-winner in 1990 along with Mikhail Gorbachev for their roles in the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet empire.

In part, the logic for not giving the award to popes also has to do with the fact that popes don't need the money, nor do they need the media spotlight the award always generates, whereas lesser-known activists and organisations can benefit immensely from both.

### Arguments

Of course, the same arguments could be made about giving the prize to presidents, prime ministers and other high profile public figures, which hasn't stopped the committee in the past from doing precisely that.

In the end, it's probably fair to say that there's a vague secularist bias in the process which assumes that religion simply isn't as important, or as helpful, in global affairs as *Realpolitik* or civil society. Over the 121 years the prize has been awarded, relatively few of the laureates have been religious figures of any sort – Swedish Lutheran Archbishop Nathan Söderblom in 1930, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa in 1984 and the Dali Lama in 1989 are among the handful of exceptions.

Naturally, it's not that losing out on the Nobel Prize somehow diminishes a pope's moral authority, or that popes themselves hunger for the recognition. Popes already get plenty of acclaim – Francis, for example, has been proclaimed *Time's* person of the year, he won the Charlemagne Prize for European unity, and he's even been on the cover of *Rolling Stone*.

On the other hand, it's not as if the Vatican doesn't notice. During the John Paul II years, employees of Vatican media outlets sometimes were advised to downplay the prize announcement on the grounds that any winner who wasn't the pope was, *de facto*, an insult.

In any event, the statutes of the Nobel Peace Prize state that it's to be awarded to those who have “done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses”.

It's hard to believe that not once over the last 121 years has any pontiff ever qualified – unless, of course, there's some reason the committee simply doesn't want to recognise a pope.

John L. Allen Jr is Editor of *CruxNow.com*



# Peace conference proposes new approach toward North Korea



Catholic nuns participate in a Mass for peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula, at Imjingak Peace Park in Paju, South Korea, near the Demilitarised Zone separating North Korea from South Korea, June 17, 2011. Photo: CNS/Lee Jae-Won, Reuters



Dennis Sadowski

**P**articipants at a Catholic-led conference on peace on the Korean Peninsula said it might be time to rethink how to engage with North Korea, because economic sanctions and displays of military strength have not deterred the country from aggressively pursuing a nuclear weapons development program.

Such a reset, conference speakers said, could renew cross-border exchanges between North Korea and South Korea, see the wider delivery of humanitarian aid to the North, lead to greater opportunities for family reunification and eventual reversal of widespread human rights abuses.

The October 5-6 event at The Catholic University of America brought together leading advocates for peace in northeast Asia, including South Korean and American Church leaders, representatives of nongovernmental organisations, and academic experts to explore ways to overcome the deep distrust of the North and its young leader, Kim Jong Un.

The threat of North Korea's nuclear weapons program and what some called Kim's unpredictability prevailed during the two days of discussions. Nearly to a person, attendees

were wary of Kim's expanding military goals – with six missile test launches since September 24, including a flyover of Japan, and a possible nuclear test looming.

The annual series began in 2017, and presenters during the sixth conference said it was doubtful Kim would be willing to change course under threat from the United States. Instead, they called for creativity and widening the diplomatic field to include Japan and other nations in seeking to end 70-plus years of conflict.

## Korean War

Technically, the Korean War, which was fought from 1950 to 1953, continues. Fighting has remained on hold under a 69-year-old armistice. The Korean Demilitarised Zone is the most heavily armed border in the world.

South Korean bishops attending the conference stressed that the Catholic Church could play a major role as peacemaker in northeast Asia and be a bridge between North and South.

Bishop Peter Lee Ki-heon of Uijeongbu, South Korea, chairman of the Korean bishops' Committee for the Reconciliation of the Korean People, said the Church's moral call for peace must be unrelenting in the ears of policymakers.

While the Catholic Church in North Korea "practically has become vacant," he said it has not disappeared, and he called for persistent outreach from the Church to political leaders.

"Advanced weapons, including nuclear weapons, are being devel-

oped, and the resulting risk is on the rise, which necessitates greater needs for a diverse voice about war and peace," Bishop Lee told the conference.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the US Archdiocese for the Military Services praised the efforts of the South Korean Catholic Church to continue seeking peace at a time of escalating tensions.

During a 2018 visit to South Korea, he said, he found that the bishops were unanimous "in recognising the crisis on the Korean Peninsula cannot be resolved by military means alone".

## “The conference also heard from an official from the US State Department and another from South Korea's Ministry of Unification”

"Focusing only on the military response readily amplifies the arms race, exacerbating tensions and directing much-needed resources away from the root causes of the conflict: fear of the other and what they can do to threaten the survival of each side's way of life," he said.

The US archbishop was among the speakers who noted that economic sanctions "do not seem to have made much difference" on Kim's nuclear ambitions, and he said it was "time to look at other options".

The conference also heard from an official from the US State Department

and another from South Korea's Ministry of Unification.

Scott Walker, director of the Office of Korean and Mongolian Affairs at the State Department, said recent overtures by the US directly to Kim and through back channels have been ignored.

North Korea has maintained a lockdown of its borders because of the Covid-19 pandemic, further isolating the country from the world. Mr Walker said the lockdown and Kim's deeper alignment with China and Russia in recent months pose concerns for the US.

## Solution

The official held out hope that "we can find a peaceful and diplomatic solution with the DPRK," the initials for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name.

He added that "the United States harbours no hostile intent toward the DPRK and is willing to engage in dialogue with Pyongyang without preconditions".

Byoung-Sam Koo, director of policy planning at the Korean Ministry of Unification, said South Korea envisions a "denuclearised, peaceful and prosperous Korean Peninsula for peaceful unification that is built upon free and democratic order".

He laid out principles that the South Korean government under President Yoon Suk-yeol, who took office in May, views as necessary to unification including intolerance for military provocation, resolving differences through dialogue, and establishment of a foundation for unification based on confidence.

The diplomats' comments were

politely received, but the responses of conference participants throughout the two days indicated that efforts outside of official diplomatic circles are needed to build a foundation for peace.

Byun Jin Heung, chief researcher at the Catholic Institute of Northeast Asia Peace, which sponsored the conference with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, suggested the United States' recent invitations to the Kim government are too limited.

## “The 2023 conference is being planned for Japan, the first time it will be held in that country, according to conference organisers”

"An open window is not enough. ... We have to build a bridge that allows them to come across and have a discussion," he said.

"It could be religious leaders who start the conversation. It could be small steps. It doesn't have to be big right now," he added to applause during the conference's closing discussion.

The 2023 conference is being planned for Japan, the first time it will be held in that country, according to conference organisers. It was suggested by at least two participants that an invitation be extended to North Korea to send representatives, allowing for broader participation.



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Claiming a right that we deny others is a form of violence

**Dear Editor,** The ongoing three-year review of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act, is most lamentable. There is a complete absence of media scrutiny. Similarly, there is no avenue to include consideration of the views of those horrified by the desperation, cruelty and ultimately the unsustainability of our country, due to our birth-rate having fallen below replacement level. The process fails to value the concerns and voices of those most affected, those who are tormented by regrets, and those disturbed by what they have witnessed. Another issue is the HSE's so-

called MyOptions 'helpline'. Despite its name, this agency merely acts as a portal for only one option, abortion. One choice is no choice.

Should anyone step forward to maintain a presence outside of clinics involved, merely to offer an alternative choice and supportive help, they can expect to face 'safe access zone' legislation, designed to exclude any practical help. Of course, their presence might also provoke a reconsideration of Government policy and so cast doubt on the pretence that abortion is healthcare.

The exclusion, deception, and

double-speak surrounding this whole issue is astounding. Our innate desire to build a better world needs to include everyone. To claim as a right something that we deny to others is a form of violence. For the State to enshrine this in its laws is systemic injustice.

This situation can only continue to exist, if those of us who see the injustice and the incoherent rhetoric that surrounds it, can be relied upon to turn a blind eye.

Yours etc.,  
**Gearóid Duffy,**  
Lee Road, Co. Cork.

## Use of puberty blockers on children is barbaric

**Dear Editor,** Many thanks for publishing Baroness Nuala O'Loan's excellent article on the issue of children who say they identify as another gender [The Irish Catholic – September 29, 2022]. There are a few courageous prominent women who broach this topic publicly and highlight the dangers this ideology poses, particularly to children who are far too young to be making any profoundly life-changing decisions.

The surgical removal of genitalia or the use of puberty blockers to stop a young boy or girl's development is barbaric, it can not be condoned under any circumstance. Enough said.

Yours etc.,  
**Donal Farrell**  
Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow



## We must get our act together and be bold in our Faith

**Dear Editor,** I was a person who grew in faith during the pandemic, I chose not to listen to the hyped-up media who even got to the point of telling the Faithful to live such fearful lives. I am mad with the changes they made during the pan-

demic where leadership in the Church failed us.

They replaced holy water with that hideous anti-bacterial gel. First I blogged about it then I approached my parish and lastly I gave in where now I offer this to God and I say the grace

before my meal before I receive it. What has happened to our Faith?

I am 48 and only now realising that we must get our act together and be bold in our faith and have come to the conclusion that the Bible is just like an

instruction manual and the rest is up to us to be proactive in our prayers – be doers in our prayers or the world will forget that even God exists.

Yours etc.,  
**Noreen Doherty**  
Portlaoise, Co. Laois

## Bishops' plans for teachers 'doomed to failure'

**Dear Editor,** Your report on September 29 regarding the bishops' initiative to ensure that secondary school teachers of R.E. "have a solid grounding in the Faith" has a whiff of the theological Stalinism about it, reminiscent of the hierarchy's efforts in the late 1970s and early 80s to blackball Catholic graduates of TCD's then newly established School of Hebrew, Biblical and Theological Studies.

At the time, many schools run by religious orders wisely ignored the bishops' wishes and, come the academic year of 2023-24, it is to be hoped that schools of the same ethos will follow the good practice of their predecessors.

I'm assuming that the 60 theology credits soon to be required for teaching 'the Faith' will necessitate assent to the article of faith that, under limited circumstances, the pope is infallible (Vatican I, 1870). Apart from latter-day Ultramontanists, do today's historically and theologically literate Catholics really believe this pretentious claim?

It is but one illustration of the enormous difficulties facing the magisterium worldwide as it grapples with a series of crises largely of its own making. Symptomatic of this situation is the Irish bishops' measure. It is doomed to failure because they are addressing

a perceived difficulty by employing a discredited model of authority that is no longer fit for purpose.

Charles Darwin, contrary to popular opinion, never subscribed to the notion of the survival of the fittest. What he said is that adaptation to change ensures the survival of a species. If institutional Catholicism does not soon embrace radical change, it will die. What the bishops propose will contribute to advancing, not arresting, that now likely outcome.

Yours etc.,  
**Peter W. Keenan**  
Kinsale, Co. Cork

## facebook community

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

### Mercy Sisters to retain trusteeship of Mary I

I hope they stand their ground and won't give way to the profiteering statist and honour their view of charity, never swallow your morality for anybody. – **Kevin Cooney**

Great news. At least they're staying. – **Jacinta Newell**

### Catholic growth in North not translating to church attendance, Belfast priest warns

Culturally catholic but not Catholic in faith. It's an issue for the Church but a much deeper issue for those people themselves if they took the time to reflect on it. – **Noel Wilson**

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

## Doing the correct thing and taking religion out of schools

**Dear Editor,** As a long-retired primary school teacher, who also worked as a guidance counsellor and headmaster of a secondary school, and taught religion at both levels, I am constantly amazed at the attitude of our 'Church leaders'.

Instead of focusing on faith formation, they are worried about the 'quality of Catholic teaching in schools'. I doubt if it is vital to read James Fowler's *Stages of Faith* to understand that the process of handing on the Faith has little or nothing to do with the R.E. class in school, most often taught by teachers who themselves have no faith. The bottom line is that if children are not 'brought up in the Faith' they will not have any faith.

In the many countries that I have visited, the Christian Initiation of children depends on the proven record of the parents' faithful commitment. Children could not receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation or Eucharist if their parents were not faithful members of the parish community.

In the Irish dioceses, there is no challenge for any new-born or child in second or sixth class, or for their parents. If faith-formation sessions were to be established in every parish, it would be interesting to see how many parents would go to the trouble of bringing their children along at say Wednesday evening at 7 o'clock.

My own view is that our Church leaders will continue to depend on the present system, even though they know that in fact it is counter-productive. The only thing that will initiate a positive response is when the State will do the correct thing and take 'religion' out of the schools.

Yours etc.,  
**Pat Seaver,**  
Farranshane, Co. Limerick.

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, October 13, 2022

## Personal Profile

How God guided  
a searching  
young man

Page 32



# How to be a better spouse



**J**ust as in any state of life, it's very easy to grow complacent and lazy in marriage. I've been married for just over a year now, and I already see how easy it is to slip into bad habits – scrolling rather than talking, streaming rather than interacting – the ways to neglect your spouse, and yourself additionally, are endless.

On the flip side, in marriage, the opportunity to be brought out of yourself abounds like never before. It's not always pleasant or comfortable to get over yourself for another person, but with God's help and your own effort, it is possible, and ultimately results in a deeper, more



## Marriage is full of grace for those who seek it, writes Jason Osborne

meaningful life as any life truly lived for others does.

My wife and I have benefitted enormously from the advice of those who've gone before us in marriage, with many devoted, loving married couples normalising all sorts of faults, failings and laziness for us with their anecdotes. However, still more useful for us was their advice regarding

how to keep that flame of grace and romance lit in marriage. Through life's ups and downs, they told us, it's possible to keep growing in love for one another if you both rely on God's strength rather than your own.

Aware that many readers have been married for far longer than I and know better how to avail of the opportunities marriage offers,

I seek only to share some pieces of advice with those who haven't been so lucky as we. A word or two of sage guidance when you need to hear it can be a helpful thing, and so it's in that spirit that I'm offering to others what we've received.

### Put God first

"Put God above all else and all else will fall into place," we were told. It may seem like nebulous advice, but it's no less true for it. Putting God first doesn't ensure things will be easy, but it does ensure you'll know why you're struggling and striving, and equip you with the knowledge that God is right there with you in the

thick of things.

How does one put God first? We're still struggling to do so ourselves, but it is probably simpler than many of us make it out to be. Firstly, if doubts or persistent questions about God or the Faith have been preventing you from engaging with him or the Church, your first port of call should be to actively set about finding answers to your questions. "Ask, and it will be given you," Jesus tells us. He wasn't lying, but it takes honest and sincere searching on our part – not lazy questioning with no good-will effort to find an answer. It can be very hard to pray when

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## Family News

## AND EVENTS

## FOUR WOMEN CHOSEN TO RUN WORLD'S MOST REMOTE POST OFFICE IN ANTARCTICA

Four women are to travel to a distant part of Antarctica to take up jobs including running the world's most remote post office and counting the island's penguins.

Clare Ballantyne, Mairi Hilton, Natalie Corbett and Lucy Bruzzone beat a record number of applicants to become the team responsible for managing historic site Port Lockroy, on Goudier Island.

The team will abandon home comforts to live and work in the region without running water or a flushing toilet.

Newlywed Corbett, who will be in charge of running the gift shop, will leave behind her husband for the trip, which she dubbed a "solo honeymoon".

As well as dealing with sub-zero temperatures and almost constant daylight, the women will share the island with a colony of gentoo penguins, which Ms Hilton will be in charge of monitoring.

## CHINESE VASE SOLD AT AUCTION FOR OVER €9M

The owner of a Chinese vase initially estimated at €2,000 saw its price soar at auction to more than €9 million, according to French auction house Osenat.

The sale took place in Fontainebleau and the vase was part of a collection of furniture and various works of art.

The seller, who lives in French overseas territory, is a lady who inherited the vase from her mother, who herself inherited it from her mother, a great Parisian collector in the last century.

The object was part of the possessions left by the seller's mother when she died, in her flat in Saint-Briac-sur-Mer, on the Brittany coast. The saleswoman was far away, she did not even see the vase, she had it transported to Paris from the Brittany coast.

"It's a crazy story," said auctioneer Jean-Pierre Osenat.

Estimated by experts at €1,500 to €2,000, the vase was won with a bid of €7.7 million, giving a price – including costs – of €9.121 million.

## SCIENTISTS STUMPED BY HOLES IN SUE THE T-REX'S JAWBONE

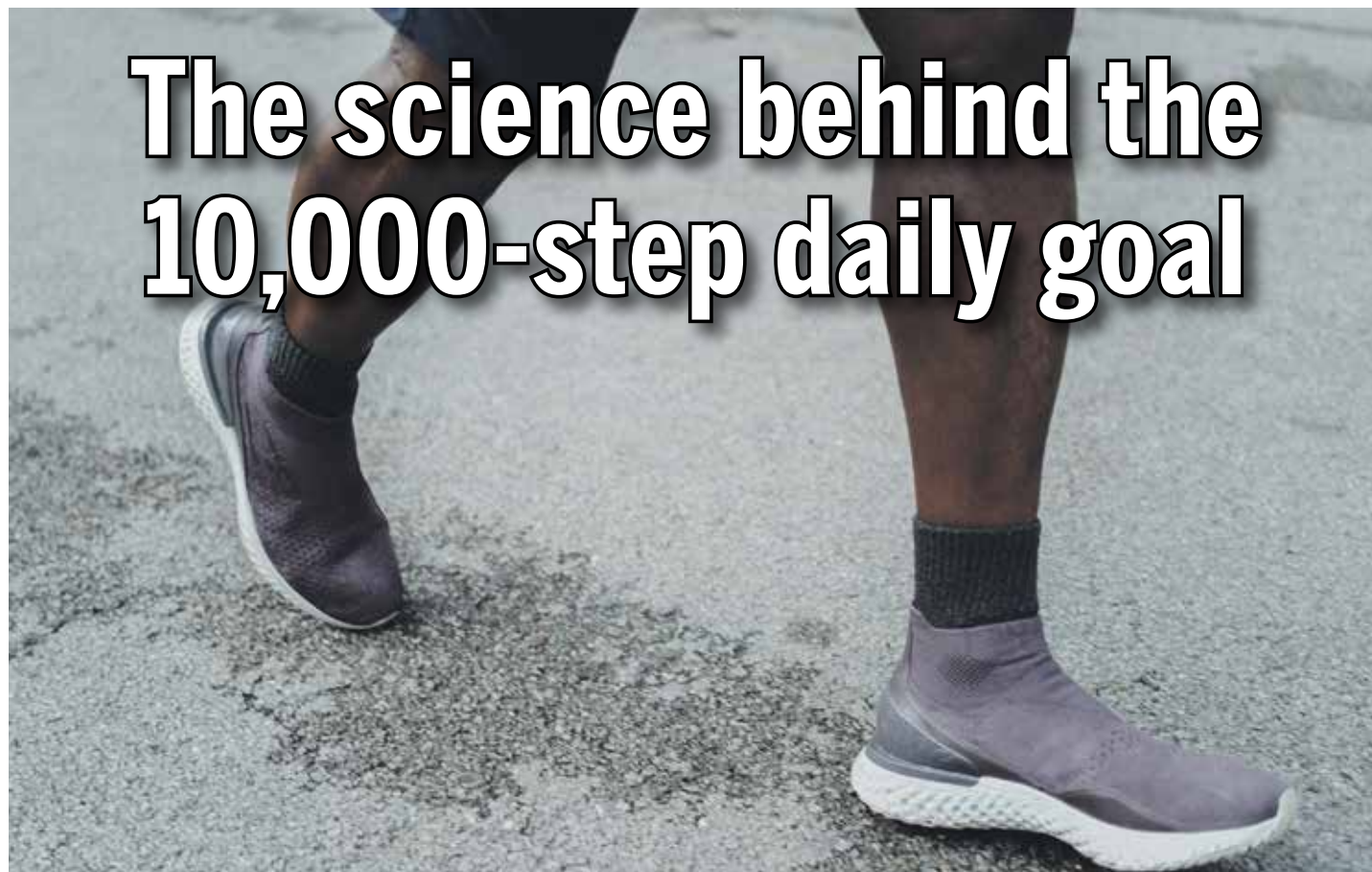
Sue, the biggest and best preserved Tyrannosaurus rex ever unearthed, whose fossils are displayed at the Field Museum in Chicago, was not invulnerable. A prime example of this is the series of circular holes in Sue's jawbone that continue to baffle scientists.

New research seeking an explanation for these holes has managed to rule out one major hypothesis, though the answer remains elusive, Reuters reports.

Researchers said a close examination of the eight holes – some the diameter of a golf ball – on the back half of Sue's left lower jawbone, or mandible, determined that they were not caused by a type of microbial infection as some experts had proposed.

The holes were found to differ from bone damage caused by such an infection, said Bruce Rothschild, a medical doctor and research associate at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, lead author of the study published last week in the journal *Cretaceous Research*.

## The science behind the 10,000-step daily goal



We are often told of the health benefits of walking and in more recent years a target for adults of 10,000 steps per day is regularly touted. In truth, there is no hard science behind this, though in the last few years more studies have shed light on the relationship between walking and its clinical benefits. In fact, only last month one of the largest and best designed studies to date has provided us with greater insights.

**“Researchers found that for every 2,000 additional steps a day, risk of premature death, heart disease and cancer was lowered by about 10%”**

So what are the benefits of walking and how much should we do? Well, firstly, it's important to know there is no clearly defined optimal number of steps per day. In fact, the recommendation of 10,000 daily steps first appeared in Japan shortly before the 1964 Tokyo Olympics when there was increased interest in physical fitness. Several companies developed a pedometer called 'Manpo -Kei' which translates into '10,000 steps' and walking clubs sprung up recommending this as a target. Over time, this gradually became accepted among walkers globally.

The most recent study looked at 78,430 adults (average age 61) from the UK biobank who wore activity trackers to measure their walking and observed health outcomes at a mean follow up of 7 years. Participants were free of cardiovascular

## Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



disease at baseline. Researchers found that for every 2,000 additional steps a day, risk of premature death, heart disease and cancer was lowered by about 10%. For dementia, there was a risk reduction of about 25% starting at about 3,800 steps with this rising to 50% at 9,800 steps. While it also likely that there may be further benefits beyond 10,000 steps, there were too few study participants to examine this.

## Step rate

About 10,000 steps a day translates into 8km though an important factor is the walking pace or step rate. For the first time, this study looked at the potential benefit of the highest 30 minutes of walking activity and found that brisk walkers (80-100 steps per minute) had a 35% lower risk of dying, a 25% reduction in heart disease or cancer and 30% lower risk of dementia. In practise, the average person takes about 3000-4000 steps daily but this research points to benefits from increasing your walking intensity over and above total steps. This has also been suggested by other studies, so it's important to know that every step counts and also that benefits start with the first steps!

So how does walking actually improve health? Well, walking increases circulation, including

to the brain, lowers blood pressure and helps to maintain muscle tone and strength. It is also helps to maintain or increase your bone density. Walking also burns about 280-350 calories per hour so it helps to prevent weight gain.

There are several things you can do increase your walking. For example, consider using stairs rather than lifts or escalators, parking further away from usual stop off destinations or getting off public transport earlier and walking the rest of the way. Try and find time for walking too by taking breaks from work or watching TV. Some studies show that keeping a track of your daily step count using your phone or



other device may increase your walking by up to 2500 steps per day. Focusing on things in the distance while walking has also been associated with an increase in walking speed by 23%.

What about where you walk? Interestingly, a recent study of young adults found that those who were allocated to complete walking through forest versus city areas had decreased negative moods and improved affect. Walking in forest and also green urban areas has also been associated with a big-

ger decrease in heart rate and lower levels of stress/anxiety. Indeed, it can be a time for calm reflection as noted by the German philosopher Nietzsche and encapsulated in his remark that "all truly great thoughts are conceived while walking".

So if walking is beneficial what about dancing? Nearly 20 years ago, a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* identified an association between dancing in older adults and a reduction in dementia risk by up to 75%. However, not all forms of dancing seemed to offer the same benefits. For example, moves that don't involve memorised sequences such as the 'foxtrot' and require more split second decisions may be more beneficial as they may recruit more neural pathways and increase cognitive reserve.

**“Dancing has also been found to alleviate some of the motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease”**

In particular, dancing has been associated with improved memory, attention and body balance and increased hippocampal and grey matter in the brain, areas important in cognition. Dancing has also been found to alleviate some of the motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

To conclude, the message of keeping physically active and its benefits couldn't be overestimated. So make sure to keep up your walking steps!

**Dr Kevin McCarroll is a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, St James's Hospital, Dublin.**



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plagued with doubts, and so it's helpful to draw on the vast trove of helpful and enlightening writings available today from those who've dealt with the exact same questions you and/or your spouse may have.

Once those are resolved though, the Church's prescription for a holy marriage, centred on God, has remained unchanged for centuries. Pray together, find fellowship with other Catholics and striving couples, and offer yourselves in service to God, each other, your children and your community.

**“They are windows through which we can see God in our daily life together, and perhaps more importantly, through which he can reach into our lives”**

When it comes to prayer, my wife and I try to read the Gospel every morning, speak to God together and sit in silent prayer for 15 minutes. When we manage to make the effort, we try to go to daily Mass to enjoy the source and summit of the Christian life, the Eucharist. We try to pray the rosary, too, when we can manage it – with one of us praying it aloud while the other does some necessary chore like the dishes and joins in the responses. A better couple than us would do these things every day, regardless of how they felt, but we're a work in progress.

The point being, the Church has prescribed these things and more to all of the Faithful for centuries now, and our marriage has benefitted enormously by making what effort we can with them. They are windows through which we can see God in our

daily life together, and perhaps more importantly, through which he can reach into our lives.

### Communication is key

This world is founded on the relationship – and communication – between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and your marriage is founded on the relationship between husband and wife. The marriage will be strong and vibrant as long as honest, deep communication is there, and will fade when it isn't.

There are two sides to the communication coin: speaking honestly and listening deeply. To begin with listening, learning how to listen and really hear what your spouse is saying is key when it comes to sustaining a healthy marriage. Oftentimes, we merely bear with the other person's talking, waiting to jump in with our own points. Other times, we fixate on one point the other person made that we didn't like and ignore the rest. Neither of these are really listening to what your spouse is saying. True listening is to remain open and attentive to what they have to say, because more likely than not their experience



is valid and has something to say about you.

When it comes to communicating your own perspective, St Paul's words to the Ephesians should be kept in mind: “Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it” (even though the words are addressed to husbands, it applies equally to wives!).

The goal of honest communication shouldn't be to tear down your spouse or score a point against them; it should be to rebuild them and your marriage. If they've been neglecting you in some way, the focus should be on what you and your marriage need, rather than on criticising them. As St Paul said, no one “ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it”. Christianity is very clear on the fact that a husband and wife are one flesh, and so the goal of communication should be to nourish and cherish your other half.

### Rekindle romance

A key piece of advice we received was to make an effort with weekly date nights (circumstances allowing, obviously). The romantic side of marriage will always be threatened by the humdrum monotony of daily life, and so it's important you both make an effort to tend to this flame.

As long as circumstances allow, set aside Friday, Saturday, or any other evening of the week to a date – be it to the cinema, a spa, for a lovely dinner or otherwise. It might seem a trifling thing, but it's an important, regular reminder that marriage isn't just about grinding out the days together. It's an important symbol of the fire behind the love that unites you.

# Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



There's nothing like a weekend away. Last weekend, we went to visit friends in the mountains of Kerry. We usually spend most of our free time by the sea, so the mountains made for a dramatic change. Our friends' cottage was at the very end of a lonely breen, just before the wild mountainsides of the MacGillycuddy's Reeks open up before you.

As we arrived, the kids looked up in awe at the brooding mountains, which disappeared into wispy cloud above. After settling in, we got ready for a hike up towards a mountain lake. The older kids were fit and able, but with a couple of smallies in tow, we really weren't sure if we'd make it. Before long, our four-year-old started to flag, but I was able to persuade her into a sling on my back. She weighs much the same as a bag of coal, so this significantly increased the amount of exercise I was getting as we tramped up into the wilderness! Yet we were still able to make steady progress.

Each time that we would stop to take a breather, we would look back to see that the view expanded below us. We could soon see Kenmare Bay glittering in the distance, and the jagged mountains of the Beara peninsula. High, craggy peaks loomed above us, desolate and lonely, but for a scattering of mountain sheep. Before long, there was no sign of humanity in sight, not even a distant farmhouse.

The kids soon become utterly absorbed by these dramatic and alien surroundings, and the older ones even began to beg me to try for one of the higher peaks, which suddenly seemed so alluring to them – now that they had tasted the magic that draws people to the mountains.

Yet the lake was the limit of what was safe and possible, given our gang of kids and the fact that the light would fade before too long. We trudged on through a boggy valley, increasingly weary, hoping as we reached each new crest that the lake would miraculously open up before us. After several disappointments, at last, one such ridge revealed the spectacular lake, with a huge

waterfall running down to it over hundreds of feet of mountain rock. It was framed on one side by an enormous dark cliff, perhaps a thousand feet high.

Upon seeing the lake, the kids broke into a run towards its glittering shore. We were all soon entranced by this lonely lough, which spoke of something strange and



ancient. Yet the gusts that came down from the peaks above became increasingly violent and cold. The sun was sinking lower to the west. We soon began our descent towards the cottage, grateful that every step was now assisted by gravity, instead of hampered by it. The little girl on my back soon fell asleep as we followed the track down the mountainside, to the warm cottage, where a hearty meal waited for us.

### Mountain fever

The kids had caught mountain fever. I knew the signs well, from my own youth, when my friends and I would often feel drawn to disappear up the Kerry mountains, sometimes for days on end. After dinner, even as the dusk deepened, they went scrambling up the little rocky peaks near the cottage and shouted gleefully across the cavernous valley, thrilled to hear their own voice echoing back. The next day, there was even time for another swim on the way home, for even as we slip further into autumn, the seas and the wilds are still open to us.



# How God guided a searching young man

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

**F**r Simon Nolan O.Carm. was a young college student, he found his faith life to be drifting. But then a profound experience of God's love at a weekend spent with the Carmelites revealed a religious vocation. Now, he is prior of Whitefriar St. in Dublin and Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth.

In the late 80s-early 90s, Fr Nolan says he was "a fairly serious, fairly searching young man" studying philosophy in University College Dublin. Although he was involved in his parish as the organist, he felt he was "drifting".

**“Having completed his degree in philosophy, a number of professors encouraged the young Fr Nolan to apply for scholarships to study abroad”**

"Part of me felt I was nearly just involved in the parish because of the music, it was keeping me in," he tells me. "I was searching in terms of my faith life."

Then, his parish priest recommended Fr Nolan attend a training



Fr Simon Nolan O. Carm.

course on liturgy and music in the Carmelite retreat and conference centre in Gort Mhuire, which was at the time a thriving centre for study of the liturgy.

"At the time I went very reluctantly... I was saying oh no, I'm far too busy, it's coming up to exams, I haven't got the time," Fr Nolan remembers. "My parish priest encouraged me to go for at least the first evening and see how it goes. So I did and something started there at that weekend. I had a sense of something quite special happening."

"I suppose I might call it an experience of the love of God or something like that. I wasn't sure at the time, but something of significance happened then. It

seemed to click in with where I was at the time."

Inspired by that weekend, Fr Nolan got in contact with the Carmelites and for the rest of his time in college engaged in discernment with the order. "That was probably when I could identify a strong sense of a calling, that I wasn't even sure was a calling at the time. But the more I went on, it developed and became stronger," Fr Nolan says.

Having completed his degree in philosophy, a number of professors encouraged the young Fr Nolan to apply for scholarships to study abroad. But while he always had a great love of philosophy, and was sure he wanted to go on with it, joining the Carmelites was his priority.

"I went to the novitiate, which was in Kinsale, Co. Cork at the time," he explains. "Our novitiate was very much a spiritual year and it was a wonderful year in many ways for me. At the end of that, I really didn't know what would happen. But the order decided to send me for more philosophy!"

**“After being ordained, Fr Nolan engaged in a number of different ministries, often with an academic or philosophical bent”**

Fr Nolan went on to receive his licentiate in degree in philosophy, specialising in St Thomas Aquinas, before spending a number of years studying theology. After being ordained, he left for Rome and completed his doctoral studies in philosophy.

"There was some sense leaving university that philosophy was my thing," says Fr Nolan. "I had a great interest in it, even from an early age, in my teens, philosophy is what I wanted to study, but I had an open mind when I joined the order whether I'd go back to it. But it's what I specialised in and kept it up ever since."

After being ordained, Fr Nolan engaged in a number of different ministries, often with an academic or philosophical bent. Initially, he ministered in Whitefriar St, where he met people from all over the world.

Then, after studying in Rome, he taught philosophy first in the Milltown Institute. When that closed down, he moved to Maynooth. In the meantime he fulfilled a number of roles within the Carmelite order, including the positions of formation director and later vocations director.

"Now, in recent years, I'm into

my second term as prior of Whitefriar St," Fr Nolan says. "I have been doing the teaching in a more part time way, having really done it for 10 years full time. That was my job, if you like, with the Carmelites and then in the last four years or so I continued to teach part-time."

"And then I had the role of prior in Whitefriar street, which is a very busy place, you've the church, the parish, the community centre, many things that are going on there that I'm involved in. That's my main ministry at the moment."

Whitefriar St has a special place in Fr Nolan's life, as it was there that he first ministered as a deacon and where he was ordained: "It's a wonderful place. I loved the time being around there as deacon and I was ordained there, and I had my couple of years and I loved it. I always hoped I'd go back and it's great to be back there again, it's still a wonderful place to be and to minister."

Now, Fr Nolan will be combining that ministry with a new one in St Patrick's Pontifical University Maynooth (SPPU), where he has been appointed Dean of the Philosophy department.

"I've taken up the post in Maynooth and I'm combining it with Whitefriar St, so it's a busy time ahead. But so far so good, I've been in Maynooth on campus since 2008, but I was mainly teaching in the university side of things."

"It's a very exciting time to be joining there [SPPU], because they reconstituted the philosophy faculty in 2019 and they've taken on a number of staff and faculty in philosophy. There's a real sense of new life and it's a privilege and an exciting time to be asked to lead it and build on the great work that's already been done particularly by my predecessor Tom Casey."

**Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to [ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie)**

## Living Laudato Si'

Jane Mellett



## Help communities respond to climate crisis, watch *The Letter*

**I** had the pleasure this week of attending the premier of a new movie about *Laudato Si'* called *The Letter – A Message for our Earth*.

Launched in the Vatican on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, October 4, *The Letter* is a powerful movie which tells the story of four people from very different backgrounds and the roles they are playing to care more deeply for our common home.

Arouna from Senegal is living on the front lines of the climate crisis, Rhidiyma from India, is a young climate activist, Dr Greg Asner and his wife Robin are marine biologists based in Hawaii and Chief Dada is an indigenous leader from the Amazonian region.

It is a letter from Pope Francis which brings these characters together to a meeting in Rome. The movie takes viewers on a journey from Brazil to India to Rome and deep into the heart of the ecological crisis.

The movie is stunningly made by award winning director Nicholas Brown. Making a movie about *Laudato Si'* is not an easy task – the encyclical does

not exactly have a plot – so the movie tries to bring the essence of *Laudato Si'* into a dialogue with Pope Francis and voices from around the world. The real story is about the movement of hearts that is needed to address the damage caused by the human abuse of God's creation. It is a rallying call for the whole earth. Pope Francis wrote *Laudato Si'* for everyone living on this planet and this is reflected in *The Letter* as the four voices represent the communities of the indigenous, science, youth and the voice of the poor.

Dr Greg Asner, who represents the voice of science, said: "The climate crisis cannot be solved by technology... it's all of you... We need you." He said we all have a role to play in addressing the ecological crisis. Science can't solve it. We need each and every person to take action. "Take this message out!" Dr Asner said, "Caring for our common home starts with you. Respond to *The Letter* by helping your community hear its message."

This is the task now – to host as many screenings as possible of *The Letter* around the country. Dr

Lorna Gold, chair of the Laudato Si' Movement, also stars in this movie as the one who brings the four voices together for a meeting with Pope Francis. At the launch in Rome this week Lorna said, "*The Letter* is a wonderful tool for conversations and dialogues needed for change... we have to allow our hearts to be broken by damage done to earth but then pick ourselves up to create another future."

In Trócaire we will be encouraging parish communities, educational institutions, retreat centres, community centres and households to arrange a screening of *The Letter* and to get a conversation going about how everyone can use their gifts and talents to contribute to the solutions that are needed urgently in order to protect our common home. Resource packs will be available and there is lots of information on this website: [www.theletterfilm.org](http://www.theletterfilm.org)

You can also view the movie there for free via YouTube originals.

Consider hosting a screening in your local parish community. For support email [jane.mellett@trocaire.org](mailto:jane.mellett@trocaire.org)

*Jane Mellett is the Laudato Si' Officer with Trócaire*



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Community stands 'shoulder to shoulder' after Creeslough disaster

The weight of tragedy was particularly heavy last week.

**Nine News** (RTÉ One, Friday) led with the explosion at the filling station in Creeslough, Co. Donegal, and such a cloud hung over this small community. At that stage the enormity of the disaster was just filtering through, and though there were no casualty figures the mood was ominous. As the weekend moved on the full extent of the tragedy became clear. On that programme and in several others local priest Fr John Joe Duffy was a sad, calming and serving presence – “there are no words” he said, as he struggled to find any that would match the situation. By his side his Bishop Alan McGuckian, was likewise in a sombre mood – “shocking beyond words” he said, as he thought of those who would get bad news about their loved ones that night.

### Difficult time

Presbyterian Minister Rev. Susan Moore of Milford reflected on this “really difficult time”, while local TD Joe McHugh saw how important it was for people to stand “shoulder to shoulder”. Scenes of workers trawling through rubble in search of survivors is something we usually associate with natural disasters abroad, but last week it came to our door and it was intensely immediate and personal.



Crowds attend a vigil in Castlefinn, one of the many held across Donegal over the weekend after the Creeslough tragedy. Photo: RTÉ

It was fitting that RTÉ, at short notice, facilitated Mass from St Michael's Church in Creeslough on their news channel on the Saturday evening. On **Sunday Sequence** (BBC Radio Ulster) presenter Audrey Carville spoke of “the saddest of weekends”, while Rev. Susan Moore spoke again, of “the community that clung together”. They were joined by Capuchin Friar Phillip Baxter from Ards Friary in

the village, who spoke of “the path of resilience and of compassion... in the community” and how “to enter into the depth of the pain without fear of getting lost there”.

The depth of pain after suicide must be one of the worst. Joan Freeman is a long-time campaigner in this area and she was Joe Duffy's latest guest on **The Meaning of Life** (RTÉ One, Sunday). She said “I absolutely

believe in God” and prayed regularly. She was proud of her faith, it was a great support in times of floundering and she said that in general faith was good for people's mental health. She had a traditional Catholic upbringing but wasn't a “holy Joe”. She saw the Church as a “platform” or “conduit” for her relationship with God, and didn't agree with “an awful lot” in the Church. She had set up Pieta House, the suicide counselling charity after feeling helpless in dealing with someone who had suicidal ideation. Towards the end of life, when people were suffering, she thought the focus should not be on “assisted dying” but on looking after the person in question. Answering the question all guests are asked, about what she'd say if she met God at “the pearly gates”, she'd say “Thank you” initially and later, over a glass of wine, she'd ask what her purpose in life had been.

### Thinker

Another independent thinker we should value is journalist Mary Kenny (of this parish and many others!) who frequently offers balance to the prevailing, often ideologically driven, narratives in our society. On the occasion of her new book *The Way We Were* she was interviewed by Siobhán Garrigan on **The Leap of Faith** (RTÉ Radio 1, Friday).

## PICK OF THE WEEK

### SONGS OF PRAISE

**BBC One Sunday October 16, 1.15pm**

Rev. Kate Bottley joins the bishop of Salford to discuss the 60th anniversary of the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) with music from Manchester Cathedral and the local area.

### G. K. CHESTERTON: APOSTLE OF COMMON SENSE

**EWTN Monday October 17, 2.30pm, also Wednesday 7am**

Dale Ahlquist gives an overview of Chesterton's popular ‘Fr Brown’ detective stories, featuring Fr James R. Kolp as Fr Brown.

### MONDAY NIGHT LIVE

**RTÉ One Monday October 17, 10.35pm**

Monday Night Live looks at the issue of housing, which has dogged Ireland since the 2008 financial crash.

Without minimising any of the scandals she thought the values of Catholic Ireland were seen in too negative a light – she instanced hateful comments about Catholicism on Twitter and found our intellectuals consistently hostile, though many had benefitted from a Catholic education. She found it all disproportionate, especially when she had so many people telling her about the wonderful nuns and priests who lived lives of integrity and service in health and education, especially in missionary roles.

She wasn't blind to the many problems. Catholic Ireland wasn't a classless society and there was, she found, a ‘tremendous pursuit of respectability’. The

abuses weren't just an Irish Catholic thing – she found, for example, that unmarried mothers suffered stigma in places like France and Sweden where they were even sterilised. She instanced sadistic headmasters in private boarding schools in England. Siobhán Garrigan suggested the Church should have been more prophetic, held to a higher standard. Mary Kenny didn't disagree but pointed out that the Church was made up of ordinary men and women with all the usual human failings – “a bracing truth”.

✉ [boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com),  
@boreganmedia

# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Bambi in bovver boots

We're in America. A singer stands before an audience. She looks like an extra-terrestrial with her shaven head. People start to cheer. Then they boo. She recently refused to sing at a venue if the American National Anthem was played. She's also torn up a photograph of the Pope on live TV.

The camera flashes back to her childhood. The first song that appealed to her, she tells us, was ‘Scarlet Ribbons’. When she heard it, it was like an angel coming in the window.

*Nothing Compares* (15A) is Kathryn Ferguson's thought-provoking documentary about the troubled chanteuse Sinead O'Connor. It's got everything in it except the song the title indicates, *Nothing Compares*

*2U*. The estate of The Artist Formerly Known As Prince – who wrote it – refused permission. Shame on them.

### Force of nature

Love or hate Sinead – and there seems to be no middle ground with this lady – she's more like a force of nature than a person. She's outspoken on every issue you might care to mention, and some you might prefer not to. Her life story is like the story of the latter part of the 20th Century.

Ferguson's film takes us from the Ireland of her youth where, as Fr Brian Darcy puts it, “People felt they could go to hell for eating a sausage on a Friday”, to a country that legalised divorce, same-sex

marriage, and abortion.

Much of the film will be disturbing to readers of this paper, especially when she denounces what she calls the “religious patriarchy” behind institutions like the Magdalene laundries.

With an amazing amount of footage from her early career, the documentary captures her contradictions. How can someone who looks so delicate speak so irately? The reason, she says, is because she's inhibited. She lets it all out when she performs.

Or pontificates. A friend of mine says he prefers her doing the former. “I wish she'd keep her voice for singing,” he says. Such a voice can go from “a whisper to a shout in a half-second”.

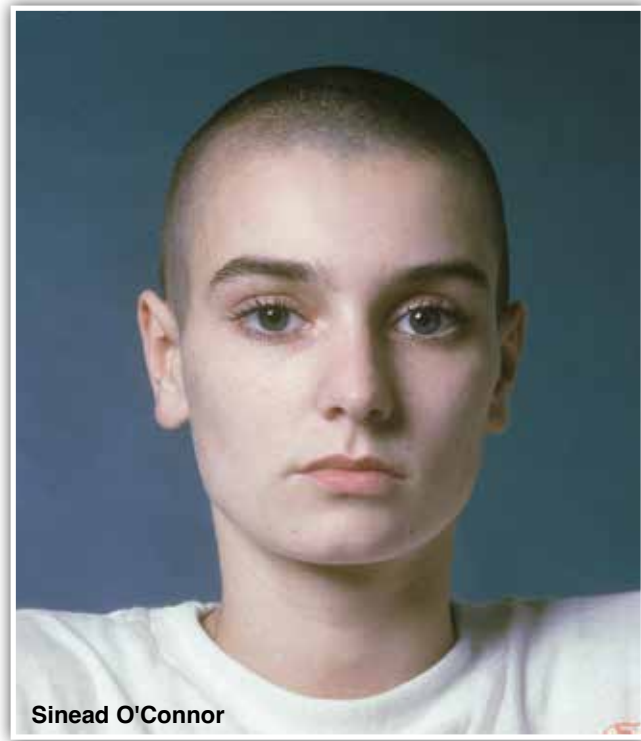
She skips octaves for fun. We see her belting out songs in the days when she was mistaken for a skinhead, when punk rock was all the rage. This was raw passion, her voice like a primal scream.

### Sensation

She was a worldwide sensation at that time. Everything she touched seemed to turn to gold.

Things changed when she attacked America. It was one thing to irritate the Irish powers-that-be with her pronouncements, another to take on ‘Uncle Sam’. This was a bigger demographic. She was biting the hand that fed.

Her actions led to career suicide.



Sinead O'Connor



# Pray continually and never lose heart

**T**he message of today's Gospel (Luke 18: 1-8) is clearly expressed in the opening line. Pray continually and never lose heart. We are prepared for this lesson by the First Reading which gives us a picture of Moses at prayer. A battle was being fought and as long as Moses kept his arms raised in prayer, Israel had the advantage. But whenever he grew tired and his arms fell, the battle swung the other way. His friends came up with a plan. They propped up his tired arms until the end of the day and the battle was won.

To express persistence in prayer Jesus told a parable about a poor widow looking for justice from a corrupt judge. In the fashion of the time, judges were notoriously corrupt and expected a bribe before passing a judgement. This poor widow could not afford the bribe, but she had one weapon, her persistence which wore down the judge's reluctance to give his judgement.

This parable is one of these "how-much-more" stories. If persistence can win a favour from a corrupt judge, how much more will a kind, loving God answer our prayer for a favour. But sometimes God might delay the answer.

## We expect instant answers

Waiting patiently is not a virtue that comes easily today as technology has increased our expectation of instant answers. We are accustomed to instant coffee or soup, tablets for a speedy relief of pain, water on tap, heating or light at the flick of a switch, or impatiently hopping on the zapper from one channel to another. With this mentality we want instant answers to our prayers. But, would it be for our good if we got all we ask for without delay? The parable notes that God sometimes delays the favour. There is a line in the Old Testament responding to the question of why it took all of forty years for the exodus of the Israelites to the promised land. "It was to humble you, to test you and to know your inmost heart" (Deut 8:2).

If we got an instant answer to every prayer, we might not appreciate it. We might think that it is due to the power of our own prayer, not God's doing. When God delays an answer, it humbles us. A

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester  
O'Flynn  
OFM Cap.



child with no toys appreciates a gift far more than the rich child who takes a gift almost as his/her right. We need to be humbled to appreciate the depths of our dependence on God.

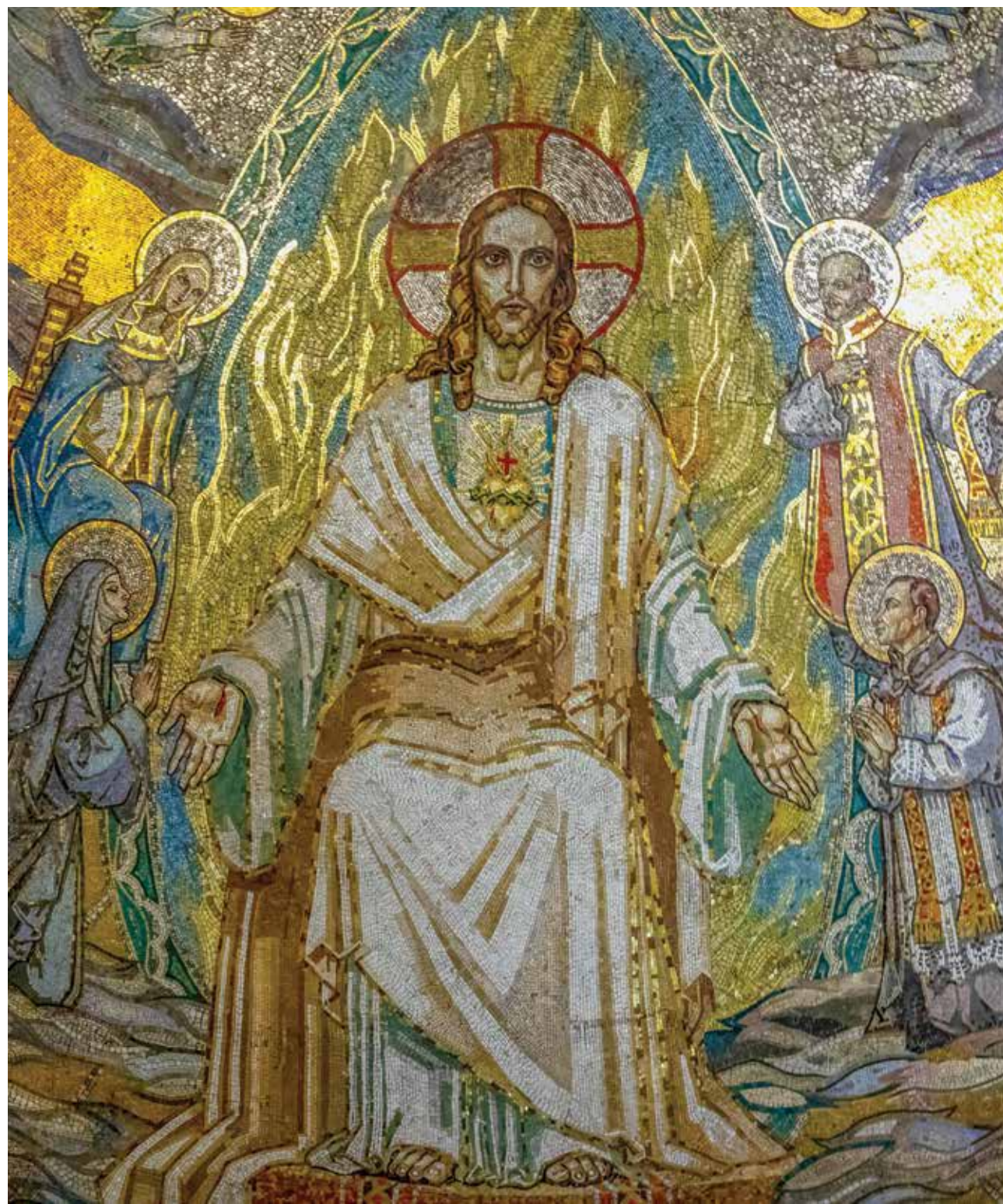
God's delay might be a way of deepening our faith. As Thomas Merton explained, in daylight we can see the objects that are near at hand, but it is only in the darkness of night that our vision stretches to see the distant stars. God wants to stretch our vision and deepen our faith. Sometimes a sports trainer pushes a team through the pain barrier to test their commitment. That is where he knows their inmost heart and determination. A group of people who have been through hardship together are drawn into a deeper relationship than if it had been easy and superficial.

## Growth takes time

As with everything else, the growth of prayer takes time. Jesus told many stories about things growing. The plants which are destined for long life are usually slow starters. The oak tree, which will stand for hundreds of years may take all of two years to advance from an acorn to a tiny fingerling. The builders of a great hall in Oxford used oaken beams for the rafters, while at the same time they planted a stand of oaks nearby, estimating that the rafters would last six centuries and the mature trees would then be at hand nearby to provide replacements. Plants which peep from the earth a few weeks after planting will not last more than a few months. Nature teaches us to wait patiently, for lasting growth takes time to harden.

## From my will to thy will

Growth in prayer will be seen in the transition from "My will be done" to "Thy will be done". This is not a statement of abject resignation, but a calm and confident handing over to God's loving care, trusting that God's will is surely what is best for us. At the shrines of petition and miracles, quite often the answer to prayer is the deep sense of joyous resignation that God's love



is very near, even if the miracle requested does not happen.

This calmness is inherent in the revelation of the Lord to the fourteenth century mystic, Dame Julian of Norwich: "I will make all things well. I shall make all things well. I may make all things well, and I can make all things well; and thou shalt see thyself that all things shall be well."

Persistence in prayer is the confidence to wait from Good Friday until the Easter Day when all is made well, however long it takes. The day in between is the Sabbath, a time of rest and calmness. It may seem long in our calendars, but to God, a thousand years is like a single day. Perseverance in prayer helps us to grow into God's way of

## Today's Psalm of trust

I lift up my eyes to the mountains:

from where shall come my help?

My help shall come from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble!

Let him sleep not, your guard.

No, he sleeps not nor slumbers, Israel's guard.

The Lord is your guard and your shade;

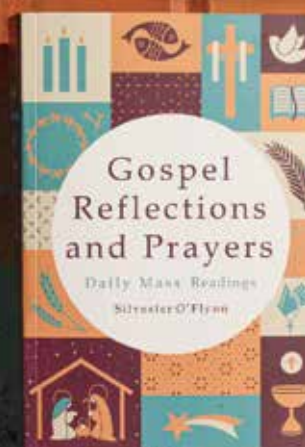
at your right side he stands. By day the sun shall not smite you

nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard your going and coming both now and forever. (Psalm 120)

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# How to pray when we don't feel like it

If we only prayed when we felt like it, we wouldn't pray a lot.

Enthusiasm, good feelings, and fervour will not sustain anyone's prayer life for long, good will and firm intention notwithstanding. Our hearts and minds are complex and promiscuous, wild horses frolicking to their own tunes, with prayer frequently not on their agenda. The renowned mystic, John of the Cross teaches that, after an initial period of fervour in prayer, we will spend the bulk of our years struggling to pray discursively, dealing with boredom and distraction. So, the question becomes, how do we pray at those times when we are tired, distracted, bored, disinterested, and nursing a thousand other things in our heads and in our hearts? How do we pray when little inside us wants to pray? Especially, how do we pray at those moments when we have a positive distaste for prayer?

## Secrets

Monks have secrets worth knowing. The first secret we need to learn from them is the central place of ritual in sustaining a prayer-life. Monks pray a lot and regularly, but they never try to sustain their prayer on the basis of feelings. They sustain it through ritual. Monks pray together seven or eight times a day ritually. They gather in chapel and pray the ritual offices of the



**Fr Rolheiser**

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

Church (Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Vespers, Compline) or they celebrate the Eucharist together. They don't always go there because they feel like it, they come because they are called to prayer, and then, with their hearts and minds perhaps less than enthusiastic about praying, they pray through the deepest part of themselves, their intention and their will.

**“Monks pray together seven or eight times a day ritually”**

In the rule that St Benedict wrote for monastic life there's an oft-quoted phrase. A monk's life, he writes, is to be ruled by the monastic bell. When the monastic bell rings, the monk is immediately to drop whatever he is doing

and go to whatever that summons is calling him to, not because he wants to, but because it is time, and time is not our time, it's God's time. That's a valuable secret, particularly as it applies to prayer. We need to go pray regularly, not because we want to, but because it's time, and when we can't pray with our hearts and minds, we can still pray through our wills and through our bodies.

## Pure heart

Yes, our bodies! We tend to forget that we are not disincarnate angels, pure heart and mind. We are also a body. Thus, when heart and mind struggle to engage in prayer, we can always still pray with our bodies. Classically, we have tried to do this through certain physical gestures and postures (making the sign of the cross, kneeling, raising our hands, joining hands, genuflec-

tion, prostration) and we should never underestimate or denigrate the importance of these bodily gestures. Simply put, when we can't pray in any other way, we can still pray through our bodies. (And, who is to say that a sincere bodily gesture is inferior as a prayer to a gesture of the heart or mind?) Personally, I much admire a particular bodily gesture, bowing down with one's head to the floor which Muslims do in their prayer. To do that is to have your body say to God, “Irrespective of whatever's on my mind and in my heart right now, I submit to your omnipotence, your holiness, your love.” Whenever I do meditative prayer alone, normally I end it with this gesture.

**“We tend to forget that we are not disincarnate angels, pure heart and mind. We are also a body”**

Sometimes spiritual writers, catechists, and liturgists have failed us by not making it clear that prayer has different stages –

and that affectivity, enthusiasm, fervour are only one stage, and the neophyte stage at that. As the great doctors and mystics of spirituality have universally taught, prayer, like love, goes through three phases. First comes fervour and enthusiasm; next comes the waning of fervour along with dryness and boredom, and finally comes proficiency, an ease, a certain sense of being at home in prayer that does not depend on affectivity and fervour but on a commitment to be present, irrespective of affective feeling.

## Marriage

Dietrich Bonhoeffer used to say this to a couple when officiating at their marriage: Today you are very much in love and believe that your love will sustain your marriage. It won't. Let your marriage [which is a ritual container] sustain your love. The same can be said about prayer. Fervor and enthusiasm will not sustain your prayer, but ritual can. When we struggle to pray with our minds and our hearts, we can still always pray through our wills and our bodies. Showing up can be prayer enough.

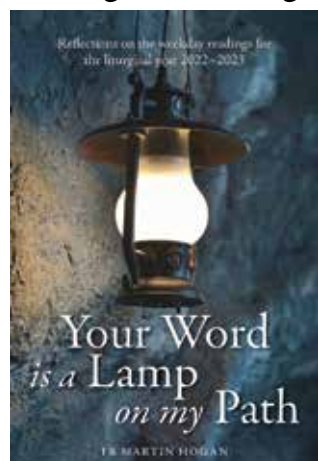
In a recent book, *Dearest Sister Wendy*, Robert Ellsberg quotes a comment by Michael Leach, who said this in relation to what he was experiencing in having to care long-term for his wife suffering from Alzheimer's. Falling in love is the easy part; learning to love is the hard part; and living in love is the best part. True too for prayer.

**“Our hearts and minds are complex and promiscuous, wild horses frolicking to their own tunes, with prayer frequently not on their agenda”**



# BookReviews

## Thoughts for the day, day by day



**“Your Word is a Lamp on my Path”: Reflections on the weekday readings for the liturgical year 2022-2023**

by Martin Hogan  
(Messenger Publications,  
€19.95/£18.95)

**Peter Costello**

Martin Hogan is the curate at Finglas, Finglas West and Rivermount. Readers can imagine just how busy he must be in his pastoral work. The service to the city comes after some 30 years teaching Scriptures at Mater Dei Institute of Education.

He has also written a dozen books reflecting on the daily readings at Mass. These readings are, I suspect, the main source of experience of the span of the Scriptures, so that what they hear at Mass about their meaning is very important.

It is a pity that the attendance of young people is not greater on Sundays – but then again, now the morning is the time for sport as Saturday is used for family activities. It might well be that a copy of this book left lying around the home might

be casually taken up and read, with some interesting suspects, if only to enlighten students as to why the books they have for school are filled with so many echoes of the Scriptures. Indeed the Scriptures are an important element, but not the only one, in the creation of Europe's secular culture for 2,000 years.

As Fr Hogan observes following the readings opens up many new areas of thought and belief. As the psalms say “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

But if we are guiding ourselves by a lamp we have to be careful. For though the lamp light shows what is at our feet, by contrast it plunges what it does not reach, the world that surrounds us, to into even greater darkness. It is a reminder that we encounter the real world in daylight and must be even more careful.

The comments on the readings, which naturally enough begin on the first day of Advent, November 28, are not over long at all, less than a page, and can be read in a minute or two. How long it might take to *comprehend* the words is another matter. Absorbing the meaning of a text is often not something that should be taken for granted merely by reading through them.

However, the comments Fr Hogan offers are not intended to be the only thing that might be said. The texture of religious writing is open to very varied understandings. Readers will be encouraged by what he says to attempt to find how the readings impinge on their own lives and circumstances. Thus fruitful encounters are encouraged.

## A lost voice revived

**The Horse of Selene**  
by Juanita Casey, with  
an afterword by Mary  
M. Burke  
(Tramp Press, €16.00/£12.99)

**Peter Costello**

We are so flooded these days with works of modern genius, that all too many books once admired, or widely read, or necessary in some way, are driven down into forgetfulness.

These books from the past are the victims of a kind of culture war, the vigorous modern against the reflective past – not a new conflict of course, as Swift and others wrote about in the 18th Century. Irish publishers have little interest these days in recovering these books.

Tramp Press, with an interest in female writing, is a firm that

does. Its latest recovery is the single novel by Juanita Casey published by Liam Miller at the Dolmen Press in 1971 – a far cry from the global publishers of our day who only want to publish international mega-sellers.

The book is perhaps over conscious of trying to be literary, but it recovers aspects of Irish communities, the west of Ireland island cultures, and the Travelling community by a writer sensitive to Synge, Yeats and Joyce. Perhaps not to everyone's taste, in its relish for the quasi-pagan. But still an Irish novel with an unusual flavour well worth having back in print. And in any case small and active presses need to be encouraged, as they are often the forcing bed of true literature.

## St Benedict still has meaning for our times

**In the School of Saint Benedict: Benedictine Spirituality for Every Christian**

by Dom Xavier Perrin  
OSB  
(Gracewing, €11.99/£9.99)

**Peter Costello**

**T**he author of this little book is currently the superior of Quarr Abbey, beautifully situated overlooking the sea on the Isle of Wight. This was where the Benedictines of Solesmes in Sarthe in the Pays de Loire (where the Benedictines were re-established after the French revolution) were exiles to between 1901 and 1922. However he was born in France and joined the Benedictines at Sainte Anne de Kergonan. He was appointed Prior Administrator and has been the superior of Quarr since 2013.

This book, first published in French back 2020, has now been translated into English by two writers associated with Quarr Abbey. It is intended as a straightforward, uncomplicated account aimed at a general audience of lay people. Simply and clearly he presents what a reader would want to know.

It is in three parts. He begins properly enough with a series of chapters recounting the life and vocation of St Benedict, and the creation of the original rule.

In presents a necessarily elementary history of the Benedictine family since the 6th century, which moves from the Venerable Bede, through other notable figures down to the martyrs of the Atlas Mountains, the monks of Tibhirine, in 1996. This section presents the great variety of vocations encompassed by the Benedictine ideal.

### Preparatory

But these sections are preparatory to the third section, which represents the core of the book I suspect for Dom Xavier. He discusses how it is possible to follow the spirit of St Benedict while living in the world.

The world of work and life in the world today seems so

inimical to any kind of spiritual or even intellectual pursuit that living according to any kind of inner rule where so many are, in effect, enslaved by global companies in one way or another seems quite impossible. But Dom Xavier proposes how in fact it can be done, concluding indeed with joy in Christ. This book itself is of a size and nature that facilitates this approach.

The author himself, born in Tours, studied French literature at the University of Rennes in Brittany and the history of art at the Sorbonne. His whole vocation is reared on this broad foundation of Western culture, which he continues to foster by encouraging the continuation of Gregorian Chant.

**“He begins properly enough with a series of chapters recounting the life and vocation of St Benedict, and the creation of the original rule”**

The following passage from the conclusion to his book provides Dom Xavier with an opportunity to sum up not only his theme, but the whole long Benedictine tradition.



“Putting oneself in the school of Saint Benedict, being inspired by his spirit – or, as we say, by his spirituality – even when living in the world, is possible if we follow the advice Pope Francis expressed in a forceful and original way in his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* at the beginning of his pontificate. ‘Time, he declares there, ‘is greater than space’. Giving priority to time, means, in the Pope's words,

being concerned about ‘initiating processes rather than possessing spaces’.

### Building

Following Saint Benedict, then, is not so much about building a monastery as about initiating a process of conversion which has its source in the powerful graces of our baptism and its destination in our heavenly homeland. And stability in the ‘workshop of



Quarr Abbey today, a continuing tradition.



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 witness to a disaster for civilisation

**Orpen at War: a novel**  
by Patricia O'Reilly  
(The Liffey Press,  
€22.95/£19.95)

**J. Anthony Gaughan**

This is an illustrated biographical novel featuring dozens of Sir William Orpen's paintings and drawings largely of the Western front in the Great War, in which he was engaged as an official war artist.

Orpen, even then recognised as one of Ireland's most important artists, was born on November 27, 1878, at Blackrock, Co Dublin. He was educated at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art and at the Slade School of Fine Arts in London. His many distinguished fellow students at the Slade School included Augustus John who became one of his life-long friends.

Orpen taught at the Dublin Metropolitan School from 1882 to 1894. His best-known students were Leo Whelan and Seán Keating, artists in whom his style can be recognised later. He became the most successful commercial portrait artist of his generation.

Following the introduction of conscription in 1916, Keating attempted to persuade Orpen to return to Ireland, where the authorities had failed to impose it. However, Orpen declared his commitment to Britain, the country to which he owed his reputation and fortune. He enlisted and was assigned to rank of major in a war scheme established to produce a pictorial record of the war and to supply pictures for propaganda purposes.

## Researched

In this novel, rightly described in the blurb as 'beautifully written and expertly researched', Patricia O'Reilly colours in Orpen's experiences in war-ravaged Northern France. She begins by setting out a tableau of his embarking for the continent. He and the hundreds of other troops filing on to the transports are described singing, 'It's a long way to Tipperary'!

In France Orpen was billeted in Amiens, where in a batman-driven Rolls Royce he ventured out to record



Zonnebeke.

the devastation after battles and bombings.

## Portrait

Orpen completed a portrait of a number of senior officers, including Field Marshal Douglas Haig, and Lieut. Colonel Arthur Lee, Censor in France. He painted the war-torn landscapes, bombed villages, rat-infested and slime-covered trenches and dug-outs and nurses ministering to the wounded. He was shocked at the conditions the rank-and-file soldiers had to endure and the pitiful appearance of most of them, particularly after gas attacks.

However, he was well-aware that this was not an area the War Office expected him to intrude into with his paintings. Orpen's war ended with his splendid paintings: *A Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay*, *The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors* and *To the Unknown British Soldier in France*.

Orpen returned to France after the war and produced portraits which illustrated the horrors and suffering of the war. Then he published *An Onlooker in France* (1921), which recorded his disdain for military discipline and respect

for the soldiers and airmen who had been his companions and subjects. Resuming his civilian career, he maintained studios in London and Paris and through his portrait practice achieved a huge income.

**“Orpen declared his commitment to Britain, the country to which he owed his reputation and fortune”**

Orpen married Grace Knewstubb on August 8, 1901. They had three daughters. He also had two mistresses and he was a serial womaniser. In colouring in this aspect of his life the author places few restraints on her imagination.

Orpen's last years were blighted by illness. Not the least of his challenges was what is now known as post-traumatic stress, doubtless caused by his experiences in war-time France. He was always a heavy drinker and he used this to cope with his condition and became a confirmed dipsomaniac. This, and

his notorious philandering, caused him to be estranged from his friends and extended family before he died on September 29, 1931.

## Paintings

Like so many Irish painters, following his death Orpen's paintings increased in value year after year. His portrait *Gardenia St George with Riding Crop* sold at auction for nearly two million pounds in 2001.

Whatever doubts one might have about novelising real people, this book is an

agreeable read and, will also (thanks to the colour illustrations which the publisher, not the author, decided to introduce into the text) act as an introduction to an important artist.

Patricia O'Reilly had been told by another Irish publisher in turning down the book, that no one wanted read any more about the Great War. And in any case the subject been “overdone”. On what planet, one wonders, are some people born and reared. The Great War was a disaster for civilisation.



Orpen dressed for war.

**“Whatever doubts one might have about novelising real people, this book is an agreeable read”**

the spiritual craft' defines a 'space' which is very important for monks and nuns, guaranteeing them the solitude and silence where their particular vocation can flourish. But the Benedictine 'spiritual craft' cannot be reduced to the possession of a space, however precious a monastery may be as a symbol of the mystery of the of Christ and the Church. This craft involves an evangelical process of configuration to Christ, characterised especially by divine praise and fraternal communion."

**“His whole vocation is reared on this broad foundation of Western culture, which he continues to foster by encouraging the continuation of Gregorian Chant”**

And from elsewhere in the book we will already have gathered that by fraternity he includes sorority. There is a place for all in the Benedictine world.



# Classifieds

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](mailto:advertising@irishcatholic.ie)

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.



To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact [cian.dikker@focusireland.ie](mailto:cian.dikker@focusireland.ie) or phone 01 881 5962

**FOCUS**  
Ireland



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Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services

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

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**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](mailto: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.

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For more information, please request your free copy of Concern's legacy guide. Contact Siobhán on 01 417 8020, email [siobhan.oconnor@concern.net](mailto:siobhan.oconnor@concern.net) or visit [www.concern.net/legacy](http://www.concern.net/legacy) - finding out more does not, of course, oblige you to leave a gift.

Concern Worldwide, a company limited by guarantee. Registered Company Number: 39647, Registered Revenue Number: CHY 5745, Registered Charity Number: 20009090, Registered in Ireland, Registered address is 52-55 Lower Camden St, Dublin 2  
Image: Roge Wavio (29) of Kalacha, Marsabit, Kenya holds produce she has grown with support from Concern. Photographer: Jennifer Nolan / Concern Worldwide

## 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

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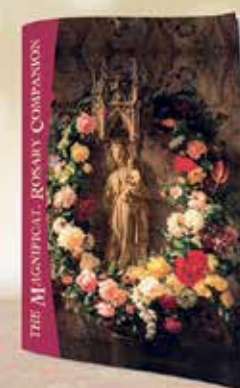
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[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

Please pray for the beatification of

### Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

## Children's Competition



Win 1 of 6 €50 Gift Cards  
and 1 Voucher for Dublin Zoo

We want to hear from you!

Tell Christian TV Ireland a funny  
little story, your morning and  
evening prayers or what stories  
your mummy and daddy tell you  
before bedtime.

We'll be picking the best to share  
on our programme.

Have a think and send your responses to:

**CHRISTIAN TV IRELAND**  
UNIT 9A, PLATO BUSINESS PARK  
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Submission Deadline: November 1

Open to children up to 12 years of age.  
Judges' decision final.

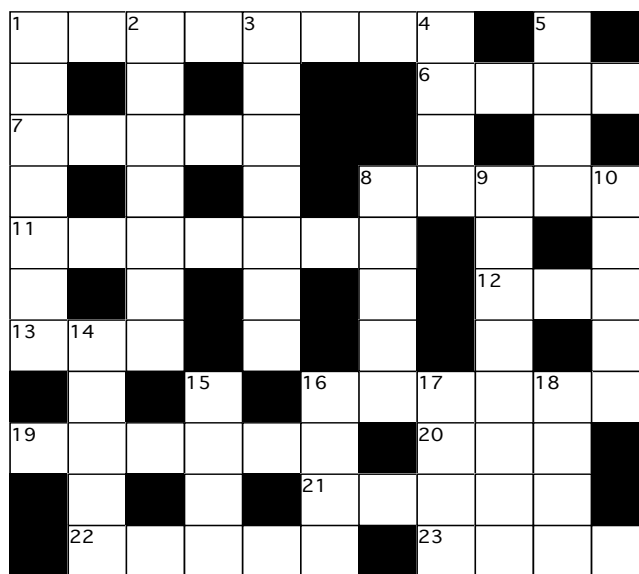


Classifieds: 01 687 4094

# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Children's 454



### Across

- 1 A driver must pay to travel on this piece of motorway (4,4)  
6 Slightly open (4)  
7 You wear them on your fingers (5)  
8 The name of one month (5)  
11 The Titanic sank when it hit one (7)  
12 A soldier will say this to an officer (3)  
13 Farmyard bird (3)  
16 You move one when you wink (6)  
19 Movies are shown here (6)  
20 You might use this word when speaking to your father (3)  
21 Look at just one thing for a long time (5)  
22 Not long (5)

- 23 Beef or mutton, perhaps (4)

### Down

- 1 There is a type of sweet called \_\_\_\_\_ Delight (7)  
2 Old lamp (7)  
3 Politeness and attention we should show to other people (7)  
4 Moist (4)  
5 Cab (4)  
8 Great pain (5)  
9 You can take a ferry from this port in Wexford to Wales or France (8)  
10 Tempted into a trap (5)  
14 Ways out (5)  
15 Brave person (4)  
16 Direction opposite to West (4)  
17 Type of cheese (4)  
18 A thought (4)

## SOLUTIONS, OCTOBER 6

GORDIUS NO. 579

**Across** – 1. Recollects 6. Ibis 10. Trump 11. Gallantry 12. Fiddled 15. Punch 17. Iota 18. Chip 19. Civil 21. Padlock 23. Radio 24. Flee 25. Mink 26. Act up 28. Embassy 33. Imaginary 34. Amuse 35. Amen 36. Intermezzo

**Down** – 1. Ruth 2. Crucified 3. Loped 4. Eagle 5. Tale 7. Baton 8. Seychelles 9. Rat Pack 13. Lisa 14. Dislike 16. Scarlatina 20. Velasquez 21. Pompeii 22. Comb 27. Thane 29. Maybe 30. Alarm 31. Pawn 32. Veto

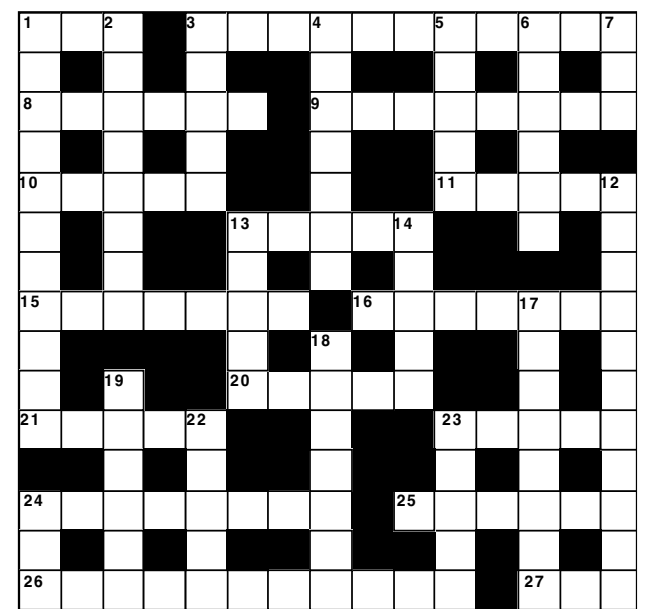
CHILDREN'S No. 453

**Across** – 1. Adam and Eve 6. Parent 7. Laid 8. Always 11. Taste 13. Decide 16. Engine 17. Repair 18. Errors 19. Tea

**Down** – 1. Applaud 2. Arrow 3. Annoy 4. Eagles 5. Empire 9. Ali-Baba 10. Steered 12. Tailor 14. Elect 15. Geese

## Crossword

Gordius 580



### Across

- 1 Peaked headgear (3)  
3 Alternative name for mercury (11)  
8 Tailed primate (6)  
9 Feline found in laneways (5,3)  
10 A complete change of direction (1-4)  
11 Part of the body made of regurgitated wines (5)  
13 Newport is in this preserved county in Wales (5)  
15 Ease or consolation (7)  
16 Sweet, sticky liquid (7)  
20 Condescend (5)  
21 Vestige (5)  
23 Black and white bear (5)  
24 Most jovial (8)  
25 Small cake you may wish to eat toasted (6)  
26 Forty winks that will make you look better (6,5)  
27 Unit of Japanese currency (3)

### Down

- 1 One receiving the Holy Eucharist (11)  
2 Swinging lever in a clock (8)  
3 Female monarch (5)  
4 Geoffrey, author of "The Canterbury Tales" (7)  
5 Notions (5)  
6 Unoccupied, empty (6)  
7 Soak flax in order to make linen (3)  
12 Weapon used in riot control (5,6)  
13 Wounded by a bull (5)  
14 City that gives its name to a holy shroud (5)  
17 "Daddy Longlegs" (8)  
18 Being so crucial, it upset the VIP a lot (7)  
19 Brightly-coloured flower (6)  
22 Public order, decree (5)  
23 Slightly overweight (5)  
24 A task for a Biblical character (3)

## Sudoku Corner

454

### Easy

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

### Hard

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

### Last week's Easy 453

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

### Last week's Hard 453

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



## Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



# Better to wave and seem deranged than cause offence

**"YOU'RE GETTING** very big in yourself", said the senior cleric to me, a few years after I was ordained. I had been out in the car, and so had he, and he waved at me and I hadn't waved back. So he was letting on to be offended: I had a "big head" and had to be brought down to size!

Of course, further conversation revealed that the incident had happened miles from home, and that he had been driving away from me around a roundabout when I had failed to return his wave. Eventually he had to admit that perhaps he was over-stating things. It did show me, though, how sensitive fellow-drivers can be to perceived slights, particularly in rural Irish parishes.

It's different in the USA, where you could drive for miles, and days, and never receive a wave, nor be expected to give one (except an occasional one-finger comment on poor driving skills). In a small country like Ireland, however, we live at a different scale. Not only must we observe other cars, but their drivers also (and even their passengers sometimes).

## Driving

I have learned that when driving around the parish or motoring close



to it, a salute is given to every other road-user, whether recognised or not. This is on the basis that while I may not know them, there's a fair chance they will know me, at least well enough to be offended. When I recognise the other driver, much more is needed — a full-hand wave, maybe even a turn of the hand if it's someone I see a lot of or get along with. And a similar greeting is given to passengers, who reciprocate accordingly. Generally, it's better to wave and seem a bit deranged, than not to wave and cause offence. Or at least that's what this rural pastor has learned to do.

My new parish(es) are well served by the Wild Atlantic Way, which threads its windy way

through them. This designation is much envied in other parts of the country for its tourism potential, but it's not always all it's cracked up to be. You have heard of the Wild Atlantic Way, but have you ever heard of Wild Atlantic Drivers? They are a sight to behold, bombing

along roads designed for horse-and-carts at breathtaking speeds, often in the middle of the road, if not on its wrong side. Their reaction to oncoming drivers, timidly doing local errands, is scarcely-disguised fury. "Who are you to limit my scope to just one side of the road?", their angered faces seem to scream, as with bad grace they slow down and return to the side of the road the law recommends.

## Brakes

It's a moment when good brakes are of the essence, and whispered (or screamed) prayers to the guardian angels are needed. So far, these have not gone unheeded, thank God. Your prayers will help too, until the Wild Atlantic Way gets its own patron saint (hopefully not me!).

## Composing bidding prayers

I have a new job. I compose bidding prayers for people in parishes, via our diocesan website. These 'prayers of the Faithful' for Mass are supposed to be simple, not mini-homilies. And I am warned to use very few "hard words", so that young people and even children can use them. I upload the prayers each Monday, but update them as the week goes on, as the daily news unfolds. You are welcome to use them also, printing them from our diocesan website, [www.corkandross.org](http://www.corkandross.org) (on the right of the homepage). Tell me what you think of them, email: [frbernard1984@gmail.com](mailto:frbernard1984@gmail.com)

## May Sheila rest in peace

I had my first funeral in the new parish, fewer than three weeks after arriving. That's always a difficult moment for a priest, especially when he finds himself burying a stranger. I was fortunate that the deceased nonagenarian had invited me for a chat a week earlier, where she told me the story of her life. Advice was given too: I should visit the school, she suggested, and get the children involved in Mass. Maybe I should go to the GAA matches as well, she added. Well, two of three wouldn't be bad, we agreed! May Sheila rest in peace.



## LITTLE WAY PAKISTAN FLOODS APPEAL

### Flood-hit victims urgently need our help

Bishop Khalid Remat, of the Apostolic Vicariate of Quetta, is urgently asking for our help for 3,600 of those in great need as a result of the very heavy monsoon rains. He writes to The Little Way Association: "Those whose homes were damaged or destroyed need above all food and clean water. Polluted water is likely to cause, especially to children and pregnant women, pneumonia, diarrhoea, dengue fever, on top of the malnutrition they are enduring.

"Our project, upon which ten volunteers and ten members of staff will work free of charge, will aid flood victims in the districts of Sibi, Loralai and Pashin. With your help 600 families will be provided with food items such as wheat flour, cooking oil, sugar, tea, pulses, rice and milk packs. The families will be given drinking water, high energy biscuits, soap, washing powder and other hygiene products."

## PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN TO HELP SOME OF BISHOP KHALID'S PEOPLE

**THE SITUATION IS DESPERATE.** Your gift will be forwarded **WITHOUT DEDUCTION** to Bishop Khalid to provide food, and basic essentials to help the flood victims to overcome their sorrow and hardship. Please give whatever you can. Thank you.



*"Our Lord does not look so much as the greatness of our actions, but at the love at which we do them."*

~ St Therese

## PLEASE HELP FEED THE HUNGRY

Please spare a thought for the millions who die each year of hunger and disease in mission lands. Your donation will relieve the pangs of starvation, and every euro you send will be forwarded to a missionary priest or sister for food for the hungry.

## 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 €6 or more for each Mass

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

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€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED**  
€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**  
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**  
(Please state no. of Masses.....)  
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

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