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Lay-led funerals on the way under radical shake-up

Ruadhán Jones

Parishioners will have to get used to laypeople leading burials and other funeral liturgies due to the shortage of priests under new plans unveiled by Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy.

With few ordinations and an aging clergy, laypeople will become a key part of the jigsaw in providing ceremonies for grieving families Bishop Leahy told *The Irish Catholic*.

He said that in the Irish context "funerals have a huge social significance" which he said up to this point has always involved the priest alone presiding at liturgies.

However, he said, "there are lots of demands on priests where lots of funerals take place - and as the number of priests declines the laity could be involved in those moments. For instance, in leading prayers in the funeral home, at the graveside, or at removals if that is going to continue to take place".

While it was commonplace in the early Church for laypeople to preside at such ceremonies

around death, the move is likely to prove controversial with many families given how the Requiem Mass presided over by a priest has been part of the Catholic tradition for centuries.

In other parts of the world where there is a shortage of priests, laypeople often preside at a funeral liturgy of the word and the burial and a Mass is offered for the repose of the deceased at a later date when a priest is available.

Dr Leahy said that "at the moment" there is no immediate shortage that would mean that people who wish to do so would be unable to have a funeral Mass.

Church leaders are also facing the reality that many of those having funeral Masses and their families are not themselves regular Mass-goers. In this context, some families may find a liturgy presided over by a parishioner more appropriate than the traditional Requiem.

Many parishes in recent years have encouraged couples

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'Welcome sisters...'



Members of the Missionaries of Charity, established by Mother Teresa, gather after a Mass in Costa Rica after they were expelled from neighbouring Nicaragua along with other charities by the authoritarian government of Daniel Ortega. See page 25. Photo: Reuters

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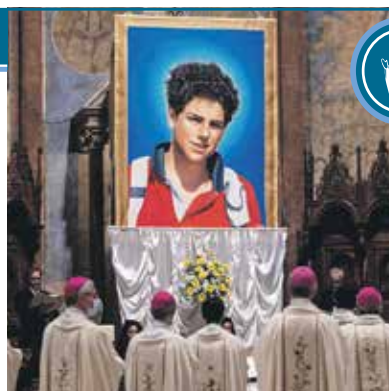
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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return in the autumn

Funding package just for North's integrated schools shows 'bias'

Chai Brady

The decision to give integrated schools in the North a £1.9 million funding package has been described as "bias" and disregards "the current emergency crisis within our education system".

Aontú's Gemma Brolly, who is a teacher based in Derry, said that while her party support integrated education as a choice for parents, they should not be prioritised for funding.

Mrs Brolly said the intent of the Integrated Education Bill is "to prioritise funding, with integrated education top of the

pecking order".

Before quitting as Northern Ireland Secretary of State last week, Brandon Lewis announced the integrated education funding package. He said that "Seeing greater integration of education across Northern Ireland is an absolute priority for me" and "My hope is that integration will soon become the norm and not the exception in schools across Northern Ireland".

Mrs Brolly said: "With undervalued staff on the brink of strike, underpay, endless damning reports, waiting lists and under resourced schools, surely the priority of the Sec-

retary of State, every governing body and representative should be to repair our education system in its entirety?"

"That is what we in Aontú will prioritise in education. We need inclusive and beneficial education for all. That is what we have worked for and what we will continue to work to achieve."

There are approximately 450 Catholic controlled schools managed by CCMS (Council for Catholic Maintained Schools) and some 450 controlled schools managed by CSSC (Controlled Schools Support Council).

Last month the CCMS said

it is "alarming" they were not chosen to participate in a conference focused on inclusivity early in the month, which was organised by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO). At the event integrated education was promoted.

In a letter to the Secretary of State at the time, Brandon Lewis, Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry diocese, who is the chairman of the CCMS said: "Given that the broad family of Catholic schools represents one of the largest providers of education in Northern Ireland, the notable absence of participation and involvement with the Catholic sector is alarming."

Prayer meeting moved politician Sajid Javid to quit

Jason Osborne

England's former Health Secretary, Sajid Javid, has said he made the decision to quit Boris Johnson's Conservative government after hearing a sermon on integrity.

Mr Javid told the BBC's *Sunday Morning* show that he heard the sermon at a prayer breakfast in parliament, which was delivered by Reverend Les Isaac.

"It might sound a bit strange but I was listening

to the sermon by this amazing man, Reverend Les Isaac – you know, he started *Street Pastors*," Mr Javid told the BBC's Sophie Raworth.

"I was listening to him talking about the importance of integrity in public life and, just focusing on that, I made up my mind."

"I went straight back to my office and drafted the resignation letter and went to see the prime minister later in the day," he said.

Lay-led funerals on the way under radical shake-up

» Continued from Page 1

wishing to get married to have a simpler ceremony rather than the Nuptial Mass if they or many members of the congregation are not Mass-goers.

Bishop Leahy acknowledged that "we [the Church] has not always given enough prominence to [the role of laypeople]... Since the Second Vatican Council there has been a recovery going on of the importance and significance of the baptismal priesthood, which everyone participates in through Baptism".

"Thankfully, in the Diocese of Limerick there are many fine laypeople with competencies and faith commitment and they will contribute much to the future shape of things," Bishop Leahy said.

It comes as other Irish dioceses are putting renewed

focus on the ministry of funeral teams – parishioners who liaise with grieving families about the liturgy, music and choice of readings.

"Some parishes do have bereavement teams and people have found them very helpful – even at the basic level of having laypeople welcoming the bereaved to the church and explaining what happens and helping them with prayers," Bishop Leahy said.

He said: "I think Irish people want the consoling moment of prayer, not just consolation for one another, but prayer to God and hearing God's prayers and blessings on them – and I think that is something that laypeople can bring to other laypeople in the context of a priest being unavailable at a graveside, removal or simply coming into the house".



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Govt dragging feet on Church housing offers, says charity

Ruadhán Jones

The pace of the Irish Government's response to religious orders wanting to donate land for housing "doesn't match what is wanted in a crisis", Sophia Housing have said.

Tony O'Riordan, CEO of the charity that helps religious orders to donate land for housing, told *The Irish Catholic* that orders show "extraordinary" generosity and good will, but the Government is slow to respond.

His comments come after An Taoiseach Micheál Martin said in the Dáil that "some religious orders" don't donate their land for social housing.

"Some religious orders donate their land for the use of social housing, for example," Martin said June 28.

"That needs to be acknowledged. There are others that do not, it has to be said."

Speaking to this paper, Mr O'Riordan said the it "would be a far better use of energy for the Government to expedite what's being offered" rather than criticising reli-

gious orders.

He cited the example of the Franciscans in Clara, Co. Offaly, who he said are "very frustrated" with the tardiness of the Department of Housing.

"The Franciscan Brothers have been in Clara for over 200 years and are now giving land and buildings free of charge," Mr O'Riordan said.

"It's no cost to the State... we have the support of Offaly county council and we're still waiting on the Department of Housing to approve that."

The Government isn't acting "at a pace and speed that is necessary in responding to those offers. The pace doesn't match what is wanted in a crisis."

On the part of the congregations, he added, "there is no reluctance at all" in offering land for housing.

"They want to meet the pressing need in society in the area of housing and homelessness."

In the Dáil, Mr Martin also questioned the reasoning behind Dublin City Council's decision not to allow Dublin diocese to zone Church lands for housing, saying "there needs to be balance".

Join the MACE race



Pictured are MACE sales director Peter Dwan, Oscar, Ashley and Odhran Scanlon from Granary, Co. Longford and Barry, as MACE retailers across Ireland are inviting customers and staff to donate between 15 minutes and 1 hour of their time to cycle on static bikes and raise much needed funds for Down Syndrome Ireland, MACE's official charity partner. Photo: Naoise Culhane.



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Ten Irish dioceses have divested from fossil fuels

Jason Osborne

Ten of Ireland's 26 dioceses have now withdrawn their investments from the fossil fuel industry, a key plank of the policy of Pope Francis on the protection of creation.

The Archdiocese of Armagh is amongst the latest dioceses to withdraw investment in favour of renewables and is encouraging others to follow suit.

Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all-Ireland Eamon Martin said that it is "clear" that many

members of the faith community, especially younger members, "feel we have a responsibility to take action with regard to the challenges of climate change and climate justice."

"From a faith point of view, God is calling us to be caring stewards of creation, to protect and nourish our planet and its resources, and not to selfishly waste them or ruthlessly and excessively exploit and destroy them."

"I support fully the decision of the directors of the St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust to continue

its commitment to a policy of divestment from fossil fuels, and I encourage others to consider similar action," Dr Martin said.

The Congregational Leadership of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland said that they also "accept the urgency of the call to cease investing in fossil fuel related operations."

"Our commitment to such divestment is immediate and without reservation," the congregation said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, *Laudato Si'* Officer for Trócaire, Jane Mellett said that it's

clear from the 2018 divestment of the Irish bishops' conference that "the bishops are committed to this, and for the remaining dioceses it just takes some time".

Sustainable

"By divesting from the fossil fuel industry, Church institutions are taking a practical step to ensure a more sustainable future for all."

"It is the right thing to do and it answers Pope Francis's call in *Laudato Si'* for 'Fossil fuels...to be progressively replaced without delay'," she said.

A further 35 faith institutions from seven countries announced their divestment from fossil fuel companies earlier this month. As well as the Armagh Archdiocese and the Sisters of Mercy, the northern province of the Christian Brothers also divested.

Organised by the World Council of Churches, Operation Noah, the *Laudato Si'* Movement, Green Anglicans and GreenFaith, this latest round of divestments comes from faith institutions in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Britain and the US.

Pro-abortion activism picking up at European Parliament

Staff reporter

The European Parliament (EP) is becoming a "focal point of pro-abortion activism" after parliamentarians passed a resolution decrying the US Supreme Court's overturning of Roe vs Wade according to

an Irish legal counsel based in Strasbourg.

The resolution adopted July 7 saw the EP criticise the US Supreme Court's ruling in Dobbs vs Jackson Women's Health Organisation, as well propose a new article to be added to the EU Charter saying, "Everyone has the right

to safe and legal abortion".

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, barrister and legal counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) International Lorcán Price said that while there were always "pockets of pro-abortion activism", it has picked up since the US Supreme

Court's Dobbs ruling.

"Previous parliaments never went that far, there were always pockets of pro-abortion activism but they've been growing in recent years, even before the Dobbs decision," Mr Price said.

"The Dobbs decision really has catapulted it to the front

of the agenda, and that's why we saw I think in many ways, the vote being taken last week and it was sadly passed with a fairly whopping majority."

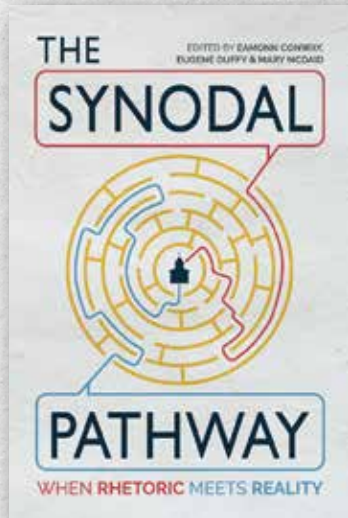
European parliamentarians passed the nonbinding resolution 324-155, with 12 out of 13 Irish MEPs voting in favour of the resolution.

The only Irish MEP not to vote in favour was Deirdre Clune, who wasn't in attendance.

While the resolution is non-binding, Mr Price said the "troubling" outcome is "very indicative of a really growing level of demand from the pro-abortion bloc".

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Senator criticises 'biased' surrogacy report

Ruadhán Jones

Senator Sharon Keogan has criticised an Oireachtas report that calls for Ireland to regulate international surrogacy, calling it "biased".

The Joint Committee on International Surrogacy recommended that an existing bill, the *Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Bill 2022*, be amended to include

international surrogacy.

The committee added that the commissioning parents should be allowed to apply to the courts to be recognised as the parents of the child.

Senator Keogan said the committee's report raises more questions than it solves, adding that it is "biased in favour of the recognition of international surrogacy".

"It takes commercial surrogacy as an acceptable given fact without any sub-

stantial reflection on this practice," Senator Keogan said.

"This report does not appear to seek guarantees of the human rights of women and children as defined in the relevant international texts," she continued in a statement.

Senator Keogan called for a "much more thorough examination" of the issue, saying the practice violates the rights of women and children.

Sun shines for St Brigid



Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty, Fr Willie O'Byrne PP and Fr Matthew Kelly CC are pictured outside St Brigid's Church, Kill parish, Co. Kildare, following a special ceremony to mark the church's bicentenary, July 10.

The chemistry of human relations...

Christians are enjoined to love one another, and to love their enemy as well. But that doesn't mean that everyone has to like everyone else. It's a simple fact that not everyone can like everyone else.

The accord that is struck between two people can depend on that intangible element known as 'personal chemistry'. As anyone who has ever worked in an office, a school or any organisations knows, one person can take a dislike to another for no particular discernible reason.

It's happened between me – and a parish priest. It's evident to me that Father dislikes me personally. In a social group, he quite openly ignores my presence – what people call 'ghosting' these days. The hostility is obvious in a number of ways, including the avoidance of eye contact.

Have I shown negative feelings towards him? Possibly – these little barbs between individuals are often mutual. I ran into him in a supermarket some time ago and we had a slight contretemps at the checkout.

Someone did write to the bishop to complain about Father's manner



Mary Kenny

of homily delivery – saying that he should speak more slowly in his homilies – and perhaps he suspects the complainant was me. Actually, it wasn't. I would be reluctant to 'snitch' to a bishop about a priest – yes, I still harbour that mentality, often repeated in soap operas that "there's nothing worse than a grass". If something annoys you about a person, either put up with it, or complain to their face. Don't go behind their back to a superior.

The priest in question is an academically clever man who was previously a lawyer: and I may have offended by saying he shouldn't mention politics in a sermon. I consider this 'feedback' but Father may have regarded me as a crank.

One way and another, the relationship between priest and parishioner is poor, and the chemistry is definitely on the negative side.

"Don't take it personally," I tell myself. "Human beings sometimes

clash." And I know that the priest on the altar transcends the individual person, to represent something else during the sacrifice of the Mass. The sacred is present, and something greater is transmitted through the flaws of our human nature.

The High Anglican novelist Barbara Pym wrote stories about the personal goings-on in a parish, especially focusing on the dynamics between women and the rector. When things get personally edgy in any parish, the phrase "it's like a Barbara Pym novel" is sometimes invoked.

But the Barbara Pym scenario does call to mind that human beings, including in religious settings, can be quirky, to say the least. Personal hostility, as well as personal favouritism, can always be an element in human relations.

Still, it's sometimes sad attending Mass with a feeling one is in an unfriendly personal atmosphere.

A more Iberian Ireland

Health experts are saying that with a series of heatwaves coming our way, we should switch to a more Mediterranean way of everyday life. We need to start our active days at 6am, do the shopping by 7am, and pull down the shutters at midday, maybe taking a siesta. Then re-start the working day around four or five, when the temperature cools down. Like the Mediterraneans, we're urged to drink less alcohol in the heat of the day.

I'm already seeing an increase in hat-wearing to protect from the sun – the baseball cap has given the hat a boost. I've spotted a parasol or two – or, rather, umbrellas masquerading as parasols. At a soirée on Monday night, I counted half a dozen ladies cooling themselves with a fan.

Wouldn't it be nice if we took up more Mediterranean practices like beautiful outdoor religious festivals that we see in Italy and Spain?



Men carrying a large crucifix during a procession in southern Spain. Could a hotter climate lead to a more Mediterranean religious culture in Ireland?

It was a family legend that a great-uncle of mine, Jim Conroy, who had a senior position as district judge and police commissioner in Sri Lanka – then Ceylon – in the 1900s, helped to pacify a rebellion and avert violence. He eloquently explained to the crowds that he was Irish and understood their woes. One day, Ceylon would have its own form of independence, just like Ireland.

Well, Sri Lanka did gain its own independence, first as a dominion and then as a republic, but it remains a troubled society, blessed by nature in its tropical position, but vulnerable to floods and humanitarian disasters. It is also a multi-national society composed of Sinhalese, Tamils, Malays, Chinese, the indigenous Vedda, and other groups. In addition, it is religiously divided between Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims, and religious intolerance has increased in recent years, with notably more attacks on Christians.

It would take rather more than Great-Uncle Jim's emollient words to bring peace and order to modern Sri Lanka, whose many divisions have reportedly been aggravated by social media.

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'Faith formation is everything', Dublin parishes say

Ruadhán Jones

Better faith formation and more investment in lay ministries is needed as a "top priority" in Dublin Diocese parishes have said.

All 197 parishes around Ireland's largest diocese have been meeting over the past month as part of the 'Building Hope' report, to discuss the rationalisation of resources and new parish partnerships.

As part of the meetings, Dublin diocese sought recommendations on what areas are in need of development.

The Irish Catholic has seen several parish submissions, with the need for "thoughtful and appropriate" faith formation emerging as a key theme.

"Adult faith formation is practically non-existent due to lack of resources and guidance," Dundrum parish said in its Building Hope submission adding that "faith formation is everything – there is a yearning/hunger to know more".

This view was echoed in Monkstown parish's submission, which warned that faith formation for adults was non-existent apart from homilies

at the various liturgies.

Iona Road parish also identified central online and in-person faith formation for adults as a "top priority".

"We have an educated population who will engage in thoughtful and appropriate development of their faith in a segmented way," the submission reads.

Another theme that emerged from the parish submissions was the "strong need" to develop active lay leadership.

Donore Avenue parish said that training should be offered to "allow people to become

confident and empowered in their ministry and parish. Such training would allow for people to get over any apprehension they might have in terms of undertaking leadership roles," the submission says.

In Knocklyon parish, there were a number of people who said there is a need "to develop properly trained lay prayer teams to cater for a future possible shortage of ordained ministers".

A number of the reports highlighted that active lay ministries are already in place for some parishes, but that more support was needed to renew pastoral outreach.

Sectarian flags erected outside church in NI

Liam Fitzpatrick

Community members removed paramilitary UDA and Paratroop Regiment flags erected outside St Comgall's chapel and school in Antrim, with some fearing a potential increase in sectarian tension around July 12.

Sinn Féin MLA Declan Kearney, representative of South Antrim, called the situation "provocative, insensitive and a clear attempt at intimidation" in a statement released on July 10.

"Last week the Chapel Corner was festooned with a variety of flags and bunting. Flags associated with the UDA, British Paratroop regiment and locally based unionist flute bands were erected in the immediate vicinity of St Comgall's chapel, school and car park.

"The Chapel Corner and surrounding residential areas

of Antrim Town are shared and neutral community spaces," he said. "It is absolutely intolerable that they continue to be abused in this way. However it is particularly outrageous that St Comgall's Chapel should be targeted with the offensive erection of paramilitary, paratroop and band flags."

Although Sinn Féin and DUP members worked with the PSNI to remove the paramilitary flags before a funeral service on Saturday, flute band flags were allowed to remain up in preparation for July 12th parades.

Mr Kearney called their presence outside the chapel "unacceptable and indefensible."

"No place of worship anywhere should be subjected to such disrespect or sectarian intimidation," he said. "Those responsible for what has happened here should be ashamed of themselves."

Down and Connor diocesan appointments announced

Chai Brady

The diocesan appointments for priests in Down and Connor have been announced this week. The appointments will take effect from August 5.

Fr Timothy Bartlett to be PP St Mary's, Belfast. Fr Conor McGrath PP St Colmille's, Belfast and, in addition, Director of Vocations.

Fr Eugene O'Neill to be PP St Patrick's, Belfast. Fr Michael Spence PP Holy Family, Belfast. Fr Vincent Cushman to be PP St Vincent de Paul, Belfast and Fr Pat-

rick Devlin to be PP Hannahstown.

Fr Anthony Fitzsimons to be PP Carnlough and PP Glenarm (Tickmacreevan). Fr Raymond McCullagh to be PP St Agnes', Belfast and Vicar Forane (West Belfast Pastoral Community).

Fr Michael McGinnity to be PP Ballymena (Kirkintola) and Vicar Forane (Ballymena Pastoral Community)

Fr Thomas McGlynn to be PP St Malachy's, Belfast. Fr Kevin McGuckien to be PP Coleraine, PP Portrush and Bushmills and PP Portstewart and Vicar Forane (North Connor Pastoral Community).

Fr James Madden O. Praem. to be

Administrator Sacred Heart, Belfast. Fr Paul Strain to be PP Glenravel and The Braid (Skerry).

Assistant priests include Fr Joe Davis CC Ballymena. Fr Paul Morely CC St Bernadette's and CC Holy Rosary, Belfast and Fr Robert Sloan CC Holy Family, Belfast.

Regarding hospital chaplaincy, Fr Darach MacGiolla Catháin will be chaplain to Royal Victoria Hospital and Belfast Trust residing at Derraghagh.

Retirements include Msgr Patrick Delargy, Fr Austin McGirr and Fr Dermot McKay.

Down by the river...



Cillian Clarke from the Bronx, New York, is pictured on his Baptism day with Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan, parents Meredith and Shane, brothers Niall and Declan and his godparents on Sunday July 10. His Baptism took place on Canon Island, Shannon Estuary, Co. Clare.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Achny clergy appointments revealed

The Diocese of Achonry has released their clergy appointments this week. They will come into effect the weekend of the 3-4 September.

Canon Pat Peyton PP Collooney to retire and reside in Ballymote as Pastor Emeritus.

Fr Martin Convey PP Straide to become PP of Collooney, meaning there will not be a

resident priest in Straide, but Fr Stephen O'Mahony PP Bohola will, in addition, become Administrator of Straide.

Msgr Tommy Johnston PP Charlestown, to become Administrator of Charlestown. Fr Gerry Davey Administrator of Carracastle will, in addition, assist in Charlestown.

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Issue of women divides in key Australian assembly



Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney and Jacinta Collins, national Catholic Education Commission chair, talk during the final day of the Second Assembly of the Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church in Sydney July 8, 2022. Photo: CNS

Marilyn Rodrigues

The second assembly of Australia's plenary council closed at the weekend after two days of catching up and passing almost all of the motions in its guiding document, including a revised version of the section on the equal dignity of women and men in the Church.

Members were noticeably tired after a long week, but the general mood in the assembly hall was buoyant as the final full day ended.

“Wherever they find themselves on the spectrum of what it is to be a Catholic woman, we’ve found a midpoint”

Francine Pirola, co-director of the Sydney-based Marriage Resource Centre, said the council had produced a “vastly improved” revision of the section of the document on women, which had been the focus of major disruption on July 6.

“Instead of being comprised of only two motions, all of the action items were separated out, so that was really good and felt a lot more respectful,” she said.

“The document was theologically more concise and accurate as well, so I think that made it easier for people to swing behind it,” she said. “Mostly the women who had previously been very distressed seemed to be happy with it.”

The council agenda was disrupted after more than 60 of the 277 council members staged a protest over issues regarding women in the Church, including the defeat of a motion to formalise support for the ordination of women as deacons.

Committee

Erin Gillard, a parishioner from Oran Park, said during a news briefing on July 8 that the revision by a four-member committee was a better reflection of the experience of women broadly in the Church.

“Wherever they find themselves on the spectrum of what it is to be a Catholic woman, we’ve found a midpoint,” Ms Gillard said.

“It was an opportunity for a foundation and a starting point. I feel like I can go home to my daughter now and say yes, the Catholic Church values women and men, and it is a good day in that respect,” she said.

Canossian Sr Melissa Dwyer, who served on the committee with Renee Kohler-Ryan, national head of the School of Philosophy and Theology at the University

of Notre Dame Australia, said she was pleased that both women also were part of the original drafting process.

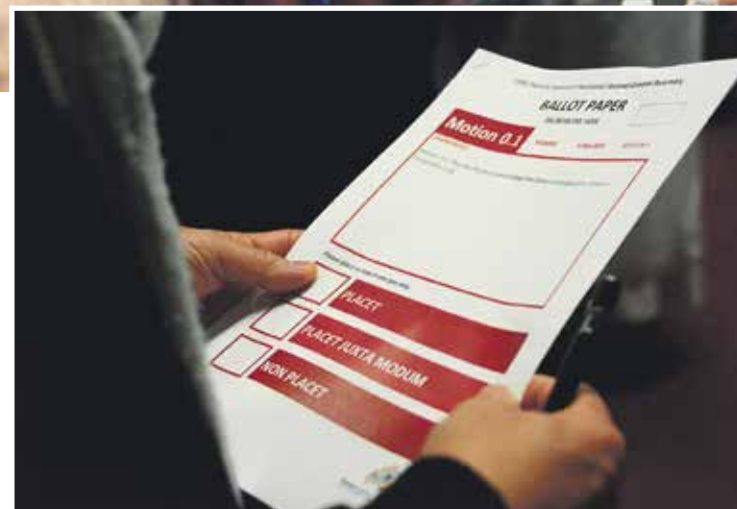
“So I’m confident that it’s a document that really honours the spirit in the room,” Sr Dwyer told *The Catholic Weekly*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

“Dr Kohler-Ryan said the greatest challenge and responsibility was trying to fully consider the diverse views expressed in discussions and written feedback”

“At the same time, I’m also confident that we’ve taken into consideration the original inspiration that came from those thousands of people that have been part in this journey all the way from the beginning of the different phases of listening and discernment,” she said.

Dr Kohler-Ryan said the greatest challenge and responsibility was trying to fully consider the diverse views expressed in discussions and written feedback.

“The wisdom of Christ’s Church, her Scripture and Tradition, shines a path that actually



A ballot is seen during the Second Assembly of the Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church in Sydney July 5, 2022. Photo: CNS

places demands on all of us,” Dr Kohler-Ryan said.

“Catholics are still to realise the ‘hour of woman’ that Paul VI spoke about at the close of the Second Vatican Council,” she said. “As the drafting team has expressed, there is still much work to be done.”

Flexible format

Following an emergency meeting of the bishops and the council’s steering committee on July 6, council members agreed to change to a more flexible format allowing for greater discussion and consideration of the issues presented in the plenary meeting’s guiding document.

Eighteen of the 19 motions considered on July 8 passed including all five motions in the

section titled ‘Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Women and Men.’

Earlier in the week, two motions in that section received simple majorities, but not the necessary two-thirds approval to achieve a qualified majority from the bishops, and so did not pass.

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe of Perth, plenary council president, addressed the assembly at the time, acknowledging it was a challenging moment for the body.

“There is a long way for the Church to go in the understanding of the proper role of women in the life of the Church,” said Archbishop Costelloe, who also is president of the Australian Catholic bishops’ conference.

“The way we move forward to properly understand God’s plan in



People participate in the Second Assembly of the Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church in Sydney July 6, 2022. The meeting was disrupted July 6 after more than 60 of the 277 members staged a protest over issues regarding women in the church, including the defeat of a motion to formalize support for the ordination of women as deacons. Photo: CNS

relation to women is important. As the people of God, we should understand that this moment is one of the calls of God to us," he said.

"It is clear from the plenary council journey that the Church, the people of God, is committed to understanding the proper role of women," he said.

“The third rite can be used in circumstances when there is no opportunity for individual confession, allowing a presiding priest to give general absolution”

Council members also passed a series of motions in sections titled 'Communion in Grace: Sacrament to the World,' and 'Formation and Leadership for Mission and Ministry.'

Among the motions were those about the sacrament of reconcili-

ation, review of the ministry of preaching and the development of vocation formation programs.

They include a request the council will make that Pope Francis consider whether the third rite of reconciliation "might have wider use on occasions when it is particularly appropriate, granted an understanding among the faithful of its distinctive nature and requirements."

Opportunity

The third rite can be used in circumstances when there is no opportunity for individual confession, allowing a presiding priest to give general absolution.

The motion that did not pass was a council request for an amendment to Canon Law to permit laypeople to preach at Mass.

Council delegates on July 7 passed all six motions they considered in the areas of church governance and ecology.

On integral ecology, the council formally recognised both the sacred duty to care for and protect the Earth and to affirm the promotion and defence of human life

from conception to natural death.

Included in the area of Church governance was a call for the establishment of diocesan pastoral councils across the country, the hosting of diocesan synods within five years of the conclusion of the plenary council, and the undertaking of broad consultation about the creation of a national synodal body for Church collaboration.

“I think everyone was happily surprised that we journeyed through the chaos [July 6] and were able to emerge and find a way forward, so it was really good outcome”

Selina Hasham, CEO of Harvest Journeys, a pilgrimage tour operator, said there was "undeniable grace present" throughout the week's conversations and voting deliberations.

"We were 277 in number, imperfect people, bishops, clergy, men and women, enacting an imperfect process, but through that great frailty I think the Holy Spirit was able to work," she said.

"People with many divergent views and myriad expressions of the way they live Church, but with faithfulness nonetheless, and that allowed God to work and let us reach a resolution, particularly on the women's issue. I think everyone was happily surprised that we journeyed through the chaos [July 6] and were able to emerge and find a way forward, so it was really good outcome."

The plenary council process began more than four years ago. A plenary council is somewhat like a national synod, but it can issue decrees that, once approved by the Vatican, are binding on the Church in that country.

Marilyn Rodrigues writes for The Catholic Weekly, Sydney.

Synodality: the experience from 'down under'

The second assembly of Australia's plenary council ran from July 3-9. A plenary council has wide-ranging power, and Australia has gone through an extensive process to get to this point. Here are some key questions and answers.

Q. What was the plenary council?

A plenary council is a gathering of the local Church; it has both legislative and governance authority and can pass binding resolutions or decrees.

The plenary council has been convoked under Canon Law and, according to its statutes, "aims to bring to fuller realisation within Australia the vision of the Second Vatican Council regarding the nature and mission of the Church."

Q. What has happened to date?

The plenary council has unfolded in a number of phases. The first phase, 'Listening and Dialogue,' was an open listening exercise in which the plenary asked Catholics, "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?"

Submissions were received from 12,758 individuals and 4,699 groups. People aged 50 or over made up 44% of individual submissions, while under-25s made up 14%.

Around 50% of participants in this first phase were female, 30% were male and the remainder did not state their sex.

The second phase took this material and transformed it into the 'national themes for discernment' through further writing and discernment groups, and from there transformed it into an *Instrumentum Laboris*, or working document.

The first assembly was held from October 3-10, 2021. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was held virtually.

The key themes discussed at the first assembly were conversion, prayer, structures, institutions, formation and governance. Of particular importance was the discussion of 'going to the peripheries' and listening to those hurt by the Church.

The discussion was at times quite vigorous, as the closing statement of the first assembly noted: "There is no shortage of passion and charisms among the community of believers."

The drafting committee was tasked with transforming the first assembly proposals from small groups and individuals into motions to be voted on at the second assembly. The final Framework for Motions was released in May.

Q. How did the second assembly work?

The second assembly opened with Mass at the shrine of St Mary MacKillop in North Sydney on July 3. The

closing Mass took place on July 9.

Each day, the 277 members gathered at St Mary's Cathedral College Hall to debate and vote on each of the motions in the framework.

All members who aren't bishops get a non-binding consultative vote on motions, which pass with a two-thirds majority. An approved motion is then referred to the bishops for a decisive vote the following morning, also on a two-thirds majority. The final decrees of the plenary council will be sent to Rome for review and approval before being published.

Q. Who participates in the plenary council?

The president of the plenary council is Archbishop Timothy Costelloe of Perth, president of the Australian bishops' conference. The vice president is Bishop Shane Mackinlay of Sandhurst.

Each diocese has nominated members to represent it at the plenary council. There are also steering committee support staff, theological advisers, canon lawyers and others to support the plenary's work.

Members of 'Catholic Religious Australia', the Church's seminaries and universities, Catholic agencies like St Vincent de Paul, and representatives from the Eastern Catholic churches and ecclesial movements are present.

Q. What were the issues?

The 'Framework for Motions' had around 30 motions, the full text of which are available on the plenary council website <https://plenary-council.catholic.org.au/>

Key issues include an apology for victims of child abuse; the promotion of women; moves to incorporate First Nations Catholics more into the life of the Church and to endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart; and an awareness of the need for ecological conversion.

Further motions propose to introduce a 'ministry of preaching' for laypeople at Mass, increase the use of the communal 'third rite' of reconciliation, and establish new governance structures.

Q. What does synodality mean?

The plenary council took place alongside a change of emphasis in the Church, driven by Pope Francis, in preparation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops on synodality in Rome.

The term synodality comes from Greek words meaning to walk together and signals a shift from a 'top-down' Church to one in which laypeople and clergy are co-responsible.

Listening, dialogue, attentiveness to the 'signs of the times,' spiritual discernment and openness to those on the margins are some of the hallmarks of the synodal approach.



Women embrace on the final day of the Second Assembly of the Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church in Sydney July 8, 2022. Photo: CNS

Shannon Campbell

The View



Charging your spiritual batteries

“Nemo dat quod non habet.” That was the advice of our Chaplain, Fr Dominic McGrattan, when I first took up my position as chaplaincy director. As a former lawyer he’s known to throw out the odd legal maxim. Not being a Latinist myself, he thankfully supplied a translation and “no one gives what they don’t have” has become my working (and life) motto.

“A retreat is a staple of the Christian life and is a tradition which traces its origins to Christ himself”

Fr Dominic’s point was that although I was beginning a new chapter in my working and professional life, and that I was to adhere to all of the standards you would expect in a secular sphere, my new role was something different. I wasn’t being called principally to be a manager of an organisation, but rather to minister in the service of God and the young people for whom I am responsible at university.

If I am to energise others in their faith lives, I must first draw energy from God. That’s why things like daily prayer, regular attendance at Mass, the Sacrament of Confession, spiritual direction and a good friendship circle are vitally important. Just as we’re told by cabin crew on an airplane to put the oxygen mask on ourselves first, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit before we can help others spiritually. St Paul says as much in Ephesians 5.

I must confess, with the demands of work and family life of late, I was feeling low on energy and if truth be told I was beginning to neglect the spiritual dimension. Providentially I was graced with a welcome opportunity to go on retreat to Rostrevor, in the heart of the Mourne. A retreat is a staple of the Christian life and is a tradition which traces its origins to Christ himself. Think of how the Gospel



writers tell us of how he would withdraw during busy spells in his ministry to a quiet space, to be alone with his Father to pray.

Facilitator

My retreat facilitator was Maria Garvey. A life coach who, among other things, founded and led the first L’Arche community in Northern Ireland, Maria now directs individual and group retreats in a cluster of holiday cottages in rural Co. Down. She’s based just a stone’s throw from the Benedictine monastery, whose rich liturgical and sacramental life can be tapped into by retreatants.

Maria speaks in parables and has an extraordinary capacity to intuit where you’re at both spiritually and humanly. For Maria it matters that people know

that they matter. That one-day retreat with time for quiet, nature walks, space for recollection and prayer, and meaningful conversation with Maria recharged my spiritual batteries.

“One of the most popular additions to our chaplaincy timetable this year was ‘Awaken’”

The idea of retreat is increasingly being appropriated by the secular world for management teams, sales forces and various boards. We should always remember that its origins are religious in nature, providing us with privileged time to step back from our many activities and reassess

how our lives are reflecting our baptismal call.

While going on retreat ideally involves a withdrawal from our normal environments and contexts, for many of us this isn’t always possible. My advice to students as they struggle to cope with the demands of lectures, assignments, exams, to say nothing of work and social life, is that they should integrate short moments of retreat into their regular routines.

Popular

One of the most popular additions to our chaplaincy timetable this year was ‘Awaken’. Every Wednesday evening students would gather for prayer time, reflection and music in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord. Afterwards they would come together for

food and social time. For such a simple, easy-to-organise offering we were overwhelmed by the positive response. It seems we tapped into a hunger among students for short moments of spiritual refreshment.

“My experience of reading *Let us Dream* was akin to a retreat with the Holy Father”

And there are other ways too. During lockdown I took up Pope Francis’ most recent book *Let Us Dream*. I am an avid reader and take pride in completing books and crossing them off my reading list. I cannot do justice in this short reflection to *Let us Dream*. What the Pope explains, with greater eloquence than I could hope to, is why we must – and how we can – make the world safer, fairer and healthier

for all people, now. It is a book that must be prayed with.

Perhaps lockdown afforded me the time to sit with it, and I found myself frequently pausing when I came across a phrase that struck me and I often remained on the same page for multiple days. My experience of reading *Let us Dream* was akin to a retreat with the Holy Father. I came away with a renewed sense that God calls us to pause and remove our shoes, for we are standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5), and that if we occupy that graced space, so too does our neighbour.

Light

“Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

“I was feeling low on energy and if truth be told I was beginning to neglect the spiritual dimension”

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Rediscovering the value of theology



Theology is an intimidating area for most Christians but it contains riches to reenergise the Church, Alister McGrath tells Jason Osborne

Theology gets a bad rap in many corners of Christendom today. Some think it too difficult, others too obscure, while still more think it to be just plain, old boring. Are these attitudes towards it warranted? Perhaps, especially when the dry academic writing of much of the present output is considered.

However, while that kind of theology is out there, it's not the beating heart of the subject, and it's a crying shame that anyone ever gets hung up on it. In an effort to right this misperception and to help people see why theology matters, prominent theologian and Christian apologist Professor Alister McGrath has penned his latest offering *What's the Point of Theology? Wisdom, Wellbeing and Wonder*.

Contrary to the oft-entertained misunderstanding outlined above,

Professor McGrath paints an enlivening picture of the subject designed to help all Christians see the "treasure chest" they have laying at their feet in the deposit of theology accessible to them. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Professor McGrath clarified immediately that far from deadening the adventure of the Gospel message, "theology safeguards the vision that's there right at the heart of Christianity, and if that gets lost, then Christianity gets lost as well".

Christian faith

"It's a way of preserving, protecting, explaining and proclaiming the central themes of Christian faith in terms that connect up with where people are today, but are still rooted in the past," Professor McGrath explains, continuing, "So it's a very, very important way of ensuring that the Church is

always energised by its core ideas and those ideas are always able to be translated into a language that the culture will understand."

To check my own thesis, I ask about people's concerns regarding theology – one of the topics that prompted Professor McGrath's writing of the book.

"I think the reason why people are hesitant [to get into theology] is because of the concerns they have and the ones that I think stand out really are first of all, that theology seems to use a very arcane language that nobody understands and doesn't really engage with real questions," Professor McGrath says.

“Another concern Professor McGrath has found people to have is that theology is very ‘western’, and that it doesn’t properly link up with the origins of the Christian faith”

"I think the point I make very clearly is that some theologians are like that and I want to concede that immediately, but you know, every professional

discipline is exactly the same. There are those who will use the technical language that doesn't connect up with the real world and then there are those...who are able to translate their specialist language into the language of everyday culture. Really what I'm saying is that theology is able to and ought to be able to speak the language of the everyday world to convey its great truths. That's the first point."

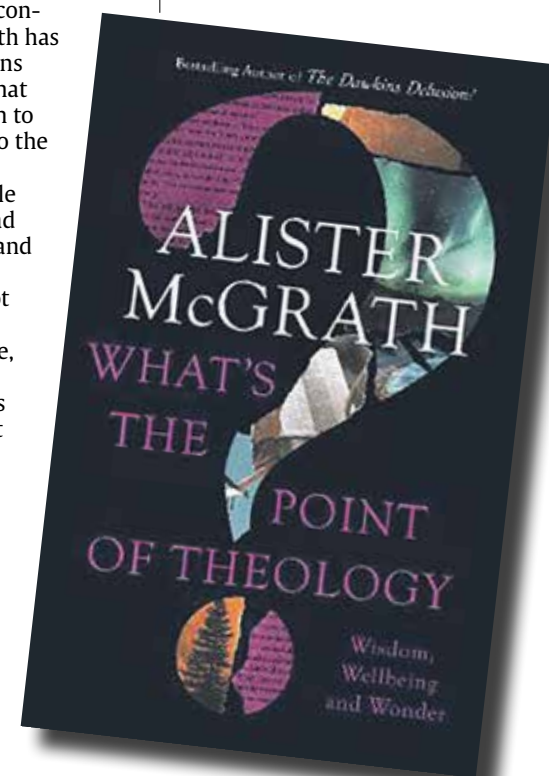
The second major concern Professor McGrath has found a lot of Christians to hold is the worry that theology doesn't seem to be "very well linked to the Bible".

"Of course, the Bible is read in services, read in personal devotion and that disconnection is very important to a lot of people, and again, my response would be, well look, I concede that some theologians are like that, but most are not. More than that, if you go back to the early Church, it's very, very clear that early Christians, bishops and people like that, were very, very clear that they were in effect taking the Bible and applying this to the life of the Church

and the life of the mind. In other words, they really were trying very hard to speak the language of faith based on the Bible and really trying to articulate what the Bible says. So again, that's a problem we may have now, but it wasn't there earlier," he says.

Western

Another concern Professor McGrath has found people to have is that theology is very "west-





Professor Alister McGrath

ern", and that it doesn't properly link up with the origins of the Christian faith. This concern is easily allayed, however.

"A point I would make is, well look, theology is very influential in the western world, but it began long before the West was invented. You know, we're going back to places like Alexandria in the Fourth Century, or Roman north Africa in the Fifth Century and basically, this is where theology emerged. The West didn't exist then. It had a big impact on the West, but it's not a product of the West," he says.

Misapprehensions

It's one thing to soothe misapprehensions regarding the usefulness of theology, it's another to go on the offensive on theology's behalf and argue that it's good to engage with. Professor McGrath with both this latest book and much of his career has been eager to help people understand what theology "does" and why it matters. He's keen to show that, as he puts it, in the hands of a "good practitioner" theology can be of immense value to the life of your everyday Christian.

"First of all, it...recaptures a sense of wonder that's there right at the heart of Christian faith.

That's so important in worship, it's so important in personal spirituality and theology if you like gives you a way of refreshing that vision, of making sure it never goes stale and it never gets lost. We need that if we're going to actually have something positive to say to the world. That's very important," Professor McGrath insists.

“When the latest scientific research agrees that engaging with a ‘big picture’ of the world might be a good idea in terms of happiness or well-being, it’s probably time to listen”

"Then secondly, it's also about well-being. I mean, psychologists are now very, very clear that having a big picture of reality, a sense that we're part of something bigger, a sense that we are somehow

doing something significant, that really is important for our mental wellbeing. The point I make in this book is that theology does give you this mental map that enables you to see that you are part of something bigger, that you can make a difference, that in effect, Christianity is giving you a secure base from which you can live a meaningful life and that's something really we need to hear".

Wisdom

"And then finally, I talk about the whole idea of creating wisdom. I think that's really important because, for an awful lot of people, theology sounds like knowledge. You know, just, yet another fact, yet another fact. Really, the problem is that in our day and age, we have so much information but we need wisdom instead. I quote Edward O'Wilson who says that we are 'drowning in information and starved of wisdom'. What theology does is say, 'Look, what we're talking about here is not endless facts, but actually is life-changing wisdom'. Something which actually enables you to see your place in life, to make connections and to live meaningfully. That's so important. I just tease out those three different elements to give people a good sense of why theology really

“I think that really is important, and one of the things I say in the book, which might be relevant here is that it’s good to go back and look at earlier theologians”

matters," he says.

Professor McGrath's view of theology as being beneficial for well-being is certainly corroborated by the data, with Professor Arthur Brooks of Harvard University revealing that adherence to a belief in the transcendent generally makes people happier (as reported by this paper). When the latest scientific research agrees that engaging with a "big picture" of the world might be a good idea in terms of happiness or well-being, it's probably time to listen. Professor McGrath hones in on this idea.

“Professor McGrath describes theology as ‘medicine for difficult times’, adding that it’s particularly relevant at the moment as ‘we’re going through difficult times right now’”

"I mean, in one sense, having a big picture of any kind actually is helpful. But of course, what I'm saying is that really the Christian big picture is particularly exciting and helpful. But why does it matter? Well, I think that people very often feel, as many do right now, that we're living in a chaotic, meaningless world in which there is no hope and we're just struggling to get by from one day to another," he says.

"I think what theology does is really to say, 'Look, there is this bigger picture'. Once you recognise that, you can see that there is meaning, even though it's not actually obvious in the world. That you matter, even though you may doubt it yourself. It's really saying, 'Look, the way you feel about things might not be reliable, there is something else which lets you see things in a very new perspective'.

"I think that really is important, and one of the things I say in the book, which might be relevant here is that it's good to go back and look at earlier theologians. For example, Augustine lived in the Fifth Century when the Roman Empire was falling to bits in front of his eyes and he was in effect just saying, 'Look, how on earth do we cope with the collapse of civilisation as we know it? And of course, he was able to give a very good answer and that's an answer we can learn from today."

Professor McGrath describes theology as "medicine for difficult

times", adding that it's particularly relevant at the moment as "we're going through difficult times right now".

For those who are won over by theology, or for those who, at the very least, think it worth considering, Professor McGrath says that there are a range of levels, kinds and styles of theology, and that it's a matter of entering at the shallow end.

"I think what you want to say is it's like getting into a swimming pool – you begin at the shallow end, and as you gain confidence you go deeper. My advice would be, for someone who's thinking of starting, find someone who is accessible, who in effect is trying to introduce you to this whole way of thinking and let them do that for you and then go further," Professor McGrath says.

"Now, I'm quite good at introducing theology. I'm not necessarily that good as a theologian myself, but maybe I could help them get into the shallow end and then they can say I now feel confident enough to read the big names, the really big guys out there. I think it's very important just to jump in at the shallow end and as you gain confidence to go into the deeper water. Let me reassure you, that there's a lot of good stuff there waiting for you."

Re-engage

It's Professor McGrath's hope that Christians do take up the challenge and re-engage with theology, as it's one of the keys for a re-energising of the Church in the West – with Professor McGrath adding that all he's trying to do is help people to see the "wonderful jewels" we've been ignoring all along.

"It's like reopening a treasure chest and seeing all these wonderful jewels, which actually you've been ignoring. It's about rediscovering – it's there, it's waiting to be discovered, and in effect, that's integral to the life and witness of the Church. So in effect, preaching, worship – all these things really will be re-energised by discovering theology. It does not mean you have to use the language of theology, it means that it gives you the resources you need to translate them into a language that the culture will understand," he says.

"But the other thing is, and this is a very big theme for someone like C.S. Lewis, is it's all about recapturing something that they knew about in the past and bringing it into the present, and that's the danger I think. We've lost something but it's something we can retrieve, it's something we can inject back into the life and witness of the Church and my little book is just a little plea really to try and do this because it can be done and it needs to be done."

What the demise of Boris says about character in politics



It wasn't his opponents but his chaotic, rule-breaking nature that pulled him down in the end, writes **David Quinn**

When Bill Clinton was American president, the issue of character loomed large. Was a man with such an obviously flawed character a suitable person for arguably the world's most important job? The answer came to depend very quickly on which side of the Democrat/Republican divide you fell.

Democrats declared that Mr Clinton's character flaws didn't really matter, while Republicans said they made him unfit for office.

“Mr Clinton served in office from January 1993 until January 2001. The #MeToo movement was still years away”

President Clinton, if you recall, was embroiled in scandal because of his sexual relationship with a much younger White House staff member named Monica Lewinski. He lied under oath about the relationship.

This was allegedly not his first extra-marital relationship either. Other women from his past had previously emerged to claim they had affairs with him and at least one accused him of rape, which was never proven.

Mr Clinton served in office from January 1993 until January 2001. The #MeToo movement was still years away. In today's climate if a man in such a high office was accused of sexual misconduct he would almost certainly be forced to resign. The relationship with Ms Lewinski alone would have done it because she was much younger and less powerful than he was. Many workplaces now forbid senior staff having relationships with subordinates because of the power imbalance.

But in the 1990s, Mr Clinton had plenty of defenders who minimised his behaviour and said it didn't really matter. Furthermore, they accused



Outgoing British prime minister Boris Johnson. Photo: CNS

the Republicans seeking Mr Clinton's impeachment of sexual prurience and prudishness in wanting to know so much about his affair with Ms Lewinski.

I raise all this because it is relevant to the controversy about Boris Johnson. He has been forced to resign as Conservative party leader, and soon as prime minister, because of his character flaws. He lies easily and thinks the normal rules of life don't apply to him. What has incensed the public most of all is that during the height of lockdown when people were barely allowed out of doors, he attended office parties in 10 Downing Street.

Final straw

The final straw for his own party is this: he appointed Chris Pincher as deputy chief whip despite knowing that Mr Pincher had groping allegations made against him.

Critics of Mr Johnson always said he was too flawed a person ever to be Prime Minister. Journalist, writer and Tory supporter, Max Hastings, said in 2019 (the year Mr Johnson won the British general election in a landslide), that his premiership would “almost certainly reveal a contempt for rules, precedent, order and stability”. Mr Johnson would “come to regret securing the prize for which he has struggled so long, because the experience of the premiership will lay bare his absolute unfitness for it”.

Mr Hastings is, of course, a Remainer, and a huge critic of Brexit, like many other of Mr Johnson's opponents in the Conservative party.

Outside the Tories, Mr Johnson is almost universally loathed by British establishment figures, the Labour party obviously, and by the liberal-left media, including the BBC.

They cannot forgive him for delivering Brexit and for securing a huge

Tory majority in December 2019.

But all this said, they were correct about his character flaws. His chaotic, rule-breaking nature pulled him down in the end, and not anything his opponents could do to him.

Nor were the scandals that toppled him at the very serious end of the scale. It was the cumulative nature of them, plus the anarchic nature of his government.

At the same time, it is almost certainly the case that his position would be secure if he wasn't losing so much support among ordinary members of the public. The Conservatives lost two recent by-elections by large margins and this was making Tory MPs very nervous about their political futures.

“You have to suspect that if Mr Clinton had been a Republican, they would have been singing a very different tune”

When Mr Clinton was embroiled in scandal, the American public didn't seem to care much. Perhaps this was because, while Mr Clinton's behaviour was worse, objectively speaking, than Mr Johnson's, the latter's breaking of lockdown rules showed a contempt for ordinary people in a way that Mr Clinton's, as bad it was, did not.

Mr Clinton also benefited hugely from a good economy.

But it is interesting all the same to see the excuses Mr Clinton's supporters made for him at the time. For example, an editorial in the London *Independent* minimised his lying, made light of his alleged affair with Paula Jones and her allegations against him, and declared his relationship with the young Monica Lewinski, “consensual”.



Members of the media wait outside 10 Downing Street in London for the announcement of the resignation of Boris Johnson. Photo: CNS

You have to suspect that if Mr Clinton had been a Republican, they would have been singing a very different tune.

This brings us to the big question; does character in a politician matter, and does it matter so much that given a choice between an incompetent politician of upstanding character, and a competent politician of low character, we would pick the former over the latter?

Character flaws

In Ireland, many people were willing to overlook the character flaws of Charles Haughey partly for tribal reasons, but also because of his skills as a politician. Mr Haughey was often contrasted unfavourably with Garrett Fitzgerald (‘Garrett the Good’), but Mr Fitzgerald mismanaged the economy with disastrous effects in the 1980s, partly due to pressure from his Labour coalition partners.

The British public knew some of Mr Johnson's flaws before they gave him a huge election victory in 2019 because he ‘got Brexit done’. It doesn't matter what we think about that over here, the fact is that a majority of the British public supported it, and didn't trust any other major politician to pull it off. They didn't trust the British establishment, full stop and trusted the proven chancer, Boris Johnson more.

But in the end his flaws began to overwhelm his government.

It is probably all a matter of degree. Politics in general is not just about good policies, it is also about competent delivery. We are willing to overlook certain character flaws if a politician is good at their job and is doing what they promise and if we think opposition parties have bad policies or incompetent politicians.

“But when the flaws of a politician becomes too much, voters reach the limits of their patience, and that is what happened in the case of Boris Johnson”

The ideal is good character, sound policies and competent delivery. But you can't always get everything in one package, and therefore voters are often reluctant to make the perfect the enemy of the good and will overlook certain flaws in their leaders.

But when the flaws of a politician become too much, voters reach the limits of their patience, and that is what happened in the case of Boris Johnson.

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

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Knights guide St Plunkett's relics in annual procession

Ruadhán Jones

The Knights of St Columbanus and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre took part in the annual procession of the relics of St Oliver Plunkett which took place in Drogheda July 3.

The procession, marched through the Co. Louth town from the Holy Fam-

ily Church, Ballsgrove, to St Peter's Church for Mass at 4pm.

The procession included members of religious orders and lay faithful, with men and women young and old accompanying the relics.

Participants included Deputy Mayor Cllr Kevin Callan, Lieutenant of Ireland Peter Durnin and

Supreme Knight, Brendan McCann.

Mass was celebrated by Bishop Michael Router, auxiliary bishop of Armagh, while the homilist was Canon Benny Fee, PP Clo-noe, Co. Tyrone. Canon Eugene Sweeney and the other priests of the parish concelebrated along with visiting clergy.



Knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem with Bishop Router are from left: Chevaliers Thomas Kilduff (Cavan) Raphael Kelly (Dublin) Mark Kane (Galway) Rodney Leonard (Trim), Peter Durnin (Drogheda), Gerald Tallon (Dublin) and Frank Hurl (Dublin).



The Knights of Columbanus at the annual procession of St Oliver Plunkett's relics.



Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh Michael Router celebrates Mass in St Peter's Church, July 3.



Mayor Cllr Kevin Callan and knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre process through Drogheda town.



Ned, John Joe and John of the Knights of Columbanus pictured with the relics of St Oliver Plunkett.



The procession reaches St Peter's Church.



‘Our churches must be field hospitals for Ukrainian refugees’



The Church in Ireland has given great welcome to refugees, the Ukrainian apostolic visitor to Ireland tells **Ruadhán Jones**

Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, recently appointed by Pope Francis as apostolic visitor to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic community in Ireland, has visited the country twice. The first time was in the 1990s – the second time was just a couple of weeks ago, when he came to assess the situation of displaced Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

It was largely a fact-gathering mission, to see how many people had come, what their situation was and to speak to Irish bishops regarding some of the pastoral challenges the Church is facing. It was a historic visit all the same, as the situation for the Ukrainian community has changed dramatically in the last few months.

“However, while noting the great welcome, Bishop Nowakowski doesn’t underplay the great many pastoral needs among those who have fled”

“On February 22, these were ordinary, middle class mainly European citizens who had normal lives, who were looking forward to a good future,” Bishop Nowakowski tells me, speaking about the almost 40,000 Ukrainians who have fled to Ireland to escape Russia’s invasion.

“On February 24, the beginning of the full-scale invasion changed not only their lives but certainly the lives of Europeans dramatically,” he continues.

The newly-appointed visitor (in the Eastern Catholic Church, a visitor has a long-term role in overseeing communities that do not have their own bishop) praises the “very hospitable” welcome given by the Church and Government to these victims of war.

However, while noting the great welcome, Bishop Nowakowski doesn’t underplay the great many pastoral needs among those who have fled. The role of the Church must be “to provide hope, to provide a place of comfort where people can come and gather... and to let them



Britain's Prince Charles and his wife, Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, leave the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in London March 2, 2022, with Canadian-born Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family. Photo: CNS.

know they’re not alone”, Bishop Nowakowski explains.

“I think that’s the big thing, to be a place where they can come and talk. We know that not all of those who are arriving in Ireland would be Ukrainian Catholics or even Catholics. But I think our outreach, our care is for all of those who are in need for humanitarian aid reasons, but also to provide comfort.”

The Ukrainian bishop, who also serves as leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family of London, compares the role of churches to those of lighthouses: “I think that’s what our churches have to be, that beacon that people can come to when they need us and for us to be ready to welcome them.

“As Pope Francis has said, we need to be like field hospitals, there to tend to the wounds of those who show up. I think that what I found in my first very quick visit, I was only there for

three days, was the overwhelming response of the churches, not only Fr Kornitsky’s parish in Dublin but elsewhere that the churches are there for people who have fled harm’s way and are facing uncertain futures.”

Mission community

Fr Vasyl Kornitsky is the chaplain to Ireland’s only Ukrainian Catholic community, based in the parish of Our Lady of Consolation, Donnyrne, Dublin. Speaking to this paper last week, Fr Kornitsky said there is a “big need” to establish mission communities for Ukrainian Catholics outside of Dublin.

Bishop Nowakowski was more circumspect, joking that he is still at a stage where he’s having to study the geography of the island of Ireland.

“I think it would be a little bit premature to speculate on that,” he says. “I think one of my first plans is to come and meet with the bishops and

look and see where the larger concentrations of displaced people have arrived and what maybe is needed for them,” he says.

“I’m going to have to rely on the wisdom and guidance of the local bishops and the local parish priests and where the need is greatest – is it mainly in Dublin, is it in other places? I know that we have small communities that were there before the invasion near Cork and perhaps in Limerick.”

“His appointment as apostolic visitor provides a new challenge for the Ukrainian Catholic bishop, one which he is looking forward to working on”

He says that consideration is being given to mission communities or temporary communities where pastoral care can be offered. Where exactly these may be is a decision which will be explored and discovered with the bishops of Ireland.

Bishop Nowakowski has great empathy for the situation of Ukrainians who have had to leave their home country. The bishop’s own family emigrated from Ukraine to Canada in the late 1800s.

“That I’m here today is the testimony to the fact that somebody helped them while they were in Canada, helped them on their journey,” Bishop Nowakowski says. “I’ve always remembered that and tried to be mindful of what those people gave my family.”

He is also conscious of the difficulties of culture shock, having grown up in Canada before living and working in Ukraine for almost 11 years: “Even

though I’m technically Ukrainian, growing up in Canada does not prepare you for a life in what was still the Soviet Union when I started living and working there.

“And I think of all the people who helped me live and adapt to some of the challenges I had, with the language – I can’t really say I was fluent when I arrived – and in understanding ordinary things like healthcare... I think of all those people who really helped me, otherwise who knows what those things would have been like,” Dr Nowakowski finishes.

His appointment as apostolic visitor provides a new challenge for the Ukrainian Catholic bishop, one which he is looking forward to working on. Bishop Nowakowski had a chance to celebrate divine liturgy with Ireland’s Ukrainian Catholic community, which provided him with a great deal of insight into their needs.

Challenging time

“I think it’s a very exciting time for the Ukrainian community in Ireland, but it’s also a very challenging time, because everybody still has family and friends in Ukraine and we’re constantly on our social media devices to find out how people are, what’s the situation and how we can be helping our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

“I think we also have to understand that, the people I spoke with who had just arrived in Ireland, I would say the majority of them were grateful for the hospitality they’ve been receiving from the Irish people and the Government, but the vast majority of them have said, I just want to go home.

“And that longing and calling to be able to go home, even if there’s nothing to go home to, is something we do need to care for,” Bishop Nowakowski concludes.



Bishop Nowakowski (left) with Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell at Archbishop’s House, Drumcondra, Dublin, on the bishop’s recent visit to Ireland.

Ireland and the silent victims of modern-day slavery



There is an underbelly of human trafficking that is not being tackled in Ireland, which has led to severe exploitation of adults and children, writes **Liam Fitzpatrick**

Growing up impoverished and abused in East Africa, Amelia hoped overseas work would help her escape her oppressive home. When a local woman offered her a job as a housekeeper, Amelia enthusiastically accepted the offer, pledging that she would obey the lady, pay her way in travel fees, and never tell anyone about her journey.

She never became a housekeeper. Instead, Amelia was trafficked as a prostitute, withstanding sexual and mental abuse that still pains her to this day. She endured physical violence that should have hospitalised her and was forced to have

an abortion.

Amelia was a victim of modern-day slavery in, among other countries, Ireland.

"These things are happening in Ireland, but they're going unnoticed by people in their own communities who don't realise that these people are being trafficked," Mayor of Drogheda Michelle Hall said. "This is an underbelly that we don't really understand."

Human trafficking

It was reported in June that a woman in Drogheda approached An Garda Síochána, claiming that she was a victim of human trafficking and her organs were going to be harvested. Gardai are currently investigating her claims.

A few weeks prior, An Garda Síochána reported that a "significant number" of people working in a Meath factory were found to be undocumented victims of labour trafficking, exploited by an international crime ring.

These tales are just some of the many harrowing stories that the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) tries to prevent from happening again in the organisation's June 21 report, titled 'Trafficking in Human Beings in Ireland – Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission'. According to the IHREC website, the 185-page report is designed to "ensur[e] that Ireland meets the European Union and other international standards on tackling the scourge of human trafficking".

Sadly, Ireland doesn't meet the EU's standards on tackling modern-

day slavery. In fact, Ireland's record on human trafficking is one of the worst in the EU.

It wasn't always like this. In 2013, the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act was amended in accordance with EU standards, increasing the scope of acts that could be considered "exploitative" and allowing evidence to be given remotely, regardless of the witness' location.

“2020 saw Ireland drop to the Tier 2 Watch List level, a designation shared by Djibouti, Pakistan and Haiti, among others”

The international community celebrated this victim-first approach to human trafficking legislation, and that same year the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) designated Ireland as a Tier 1 country, a designation reserved for nations that "demonstrate appreciable progress each year in combatting trafficking".

However, as time progressed, Ireland's position as a world leader in human trafficking prevention began to decline. In 2018, the Island dropped to Tier 2.

In that year's TIP report, the State Department made its reasoning for dropping Ireland one level clear: "The government has not obtained a trafficking conviction since the law was amended in 2013; it initiated only three prosecutions in 2017, and had chronic deficiencies in victim identification and referral".

2020 saw Ireland drop to the Tier 2 Watch List level, a designation shared by Djibouti, Pakistan and Haiti, among others. It's the only country in Western Europe with that designation, and one of two in the EU (Romania being the other).

Although the government did launch an anti-trafficking public awareness campaign, increase funding for training and victim assistance, and establish a national anti-trafficking forum, Ireland fell to Tier 2 Watch List level because "the government has not obtained a trafficking conviction under the anti-trafficking law since it was amended in 2013, which weakened deterrence, contributed to impunity for traffickers, and undermined efforts to support victims to testify."

"The government investigated and prosecuted fewer suspected traffickers, did not prosecute any labour traffickers, and victim identification decreased for the fourth year in a row," according to the State Department. "The government continued to have systemic deficiencies in victim identification, referral, and assistance, and lacked specialised accommodation and adequate services for victims."

Protecting children

JP O'Sullivan, network and communications manager at Mecpaths, an organisation founded by two Sisters of Mercy and dedicated to protecting children from modern day slavery, offered a long list of reasons why Ireland's human trafficking record has plummeted.

"The reason that we've fallen so far over the last couple of years is under-responsiveness, lack of

coordination, lack of education, awareness and training of frontline professionals, lack of coordinated policing, and lack of government responsiveness, cross-departmental responsiveness with the Department of Justice and the Department of Children," Mr O'Sullivan said.

This lack of education and coordination extends to the private sector, where more than 70% of trafficking victims are exploited, according to data from Human Rights First, an American advocacy organisation. Industries with the highest rates of labour trafficking include domestic work, agriculture, sales, foodservice, and health/beauty services.

“Undermine the confidence of a non-EU national who is working illegally to report an exploitative employment situation to a WRC inspector”

However, the Workplace Relations Committee (WRC) has routinely failed to both recognise instances of human trafficking and report them to the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB), according to the report.

In 2021, the WRC carried out almost 5,000 less inspections than the committee did in 2020, with many of the 2020 inspections being criticised by non-profit groups for engaging in joint inspections with Gardai that could "undermine the confidence of a non-EU national

“In Ireland, there is no gender-specific housing for victims of trafficking, meaning the male violence Ms Hall fears not only exists, but runs rampant in those centres”

who is working illegally to report an exploitative employment situation to a WRC inspector”.

Only two-thirds of inspectors are trained to recognise trafficking, and the industry with the highest rate of trafficking, domestic work, only had two inspections over the year.

Mr O'Sullivan recommended increased education, calling for mandatory training for the warning signs of human trafficking to include all sectors where workers might interact with victims, rather than just the police force.

“At the moment, An Garda Síochána are the only designated authority that can formally identify a victim of trafficking,” Mr O'Sullivan said. “That needs to be broadened out to include all frontline professionals, the people that will be interacting with potential victims of trafficking, so everybody from social workers to medical staff, private security, and transport networks.”

Female victims

Although labour trafficking is majority male, sexual exploitation “almost exclusively affects women (96%),” according to the report. As such, the Department of Justice reported that, since 2009, female victims comprise over 70% of those trafficked to Ireland.

“Women are always more vulnerable, more prone to poverty... obviously in a patriarchal society, we're under the influence of male violence,” Ms Hall said.

In Ireland, there is no gender-specific housing for victims of trafficking, meaning the male violence Ms Hall fears not only exists, but runs rampant in those centres.

“[Me] and the kids are living around so many things like, domestic violence, like men beating up women in the centre, people just getting to other people's rooms to steal money and belongings and we are just living around all of this,” an anonymous survivor wrote. “Even the kids they are really, really upset.”

Dr Yonkova, head of the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the INREC, believes this cannot stand.

“We have to include a gender-specific accommodation for victims of human trafficking,” she said. “It is absolutely substandard what is happening now with accommodating victims of trafficking.”

Sexual assault survivors often face secondary victimisation, or exposure to further emotional harm because of institutional factors like repeated visual contact between the trafficked and the trafficker, unnecessary forced recounting of traumatic events for evidence and in a trial, and aggressive interrogation about the facts of a victim's exploitation.

These triggering aspects of the justice system outraged Judith Lewis Herman, an American psychiatrist who wrote in her article *Justice from the Victim's Perspective* that “if one set out intentionally to design a system for provoking symptoms of traumatic stress it would look very much

like a court of law”.

“The cross examination is extremely tough, bordering on re-victimisation,” Dr Yonkova said. “People who are coming forward to give testimony have to be really well-supported to endure, to not fall apart from the process of the criminal justice system.”

“Some survivors report [cross-examination] is so tough, they compare it to the whole ordeal of human trafficking,” Dr Yonkova said.

In the IHREC report, survivors recalled mixed interpretations of An Garda Síochána's role in preventing or causing their secondary victimisation:

“The first date they had my interview I spent about 5 hours 30 minute [...] It brought back everything that [I] was running away from, you know,” one survivor wrote. “But they wanted me, there was this kind of, I would say there was a force in it. Like, they wanted to have every detail as soon as possible.”

“They [An Garda Síochána] did an extremely excellent job I would say... I loved the fact that everyone, they were understanding you know, they were patient,” another survivor recalled.

Even though An Garda may have the best intentions, a lack of empathy and training among guardsmen risks exposing victims of human trafficking to situations in which they are forced to relive horrific, traumatic circumstances. That said, An Garda has taken steps to “build and improve trust” between officers and victims of sex trafficking, a move that the organisation hopes will lead to increased identification of victims and awareness about trafficking more broadly.

“In recent years, traffickers have found a new, innovative, and harder-to-track method of recruiting victims, particularly child victims, and exploiting them – the internet”

“National, intelligence-led operations such as these are of course necessary for detecting perpetrators of trafficking but most importantly they are essential in proactively detecting and identifying victims of trafficking,” the report stated.

Children also face specific challenges from human trafficking. The Irish Government has not identified a victim of child trafficking in the last two years – raising concerns that poor identification practices and possible errors in data collection may allow children subjected to exploitation to remain undetected.

“We clearly are faced with the possibility that we under-identify, or do not identify sufficiently, robustly, minor victims of human trafficking, which is very dangerous because the



JP O'Sullivan of anti-human trafficking group Mecpaths.

consequences for child victims are severe,” Dr Yonkova said.

“Children are innately vulnerable,” Mr O'Sullivan said. “Anywhere vulnerability exists, so too will somebody seeking to exploit that.”

In recent years, traffickers have found a new, innovative, and harder-to-track method of recruiting victims, particularly child victims, and exploiting them – the internet.

“Internet platforms are now a central part of the modus operandi of traffickers,” Dr Yonkova said.

Children

Children are particularly at risk, said Mr O'Sullivan and Dr Yonkova, calling out the rise in internet use among children during the Covid-19 pandemic and the dangers of online predators. The report notes that children are at higher risk of trafficking when contacted through social media sites because of the “relatively higher level of anonymity” the sites afford traffickers.

“We've seen a 1,000 percent increase in the use of the internet since the outbreak of Covid, and as we know, children have moved into online learning spaces and those predators are circulating within those spaces also, to groom and to exploit,” he said.

“If human trafficking was to be disrupted, the Covid restriction would have disrupted it significantly,” she said. “And it didn't. This means that the online dimension of human trafficking is thriving, and the traffickers are becoming even more proficient in exploiting the loopholes, the lack of regulation, and the freedom of expression, all of this for their gain.”

The FBI estimates that around 500,000 child predators lurk on the internet every day – with some esti-

mates claiming that figure could be as high as 750,000.

The report specifically calls out the ‘Dark Web’ and difficult-to-find online advertisements as two main methods traffickers recruit victims and find those wishing to exploit them, especially across the Irish/Northern Irish border.

However, some online efforts by traffickers operate in plain sight. Using “legal and well-known holiday accommodation platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com),” traffickers can set up “temporary brothels” to exploit their victims.

“Mr O'Sullivan reiterated his position on education as one of the most important steps the Irish Government can take to end trafficking”

“How could internet providers, internet platforms, how could they be involved in the fight against human trafficking instead of being seen as facilitators of trafficking in human beings?” Dr Yonkova asked.

Though the report acknowledges that “Ireland is a mixture of both insufficient and promising practices,” there are steps the Irish Government can take to combat human trafficking on the island, both by enacting sweeping policy reform and taking ground-level action against the crisis.

Brussels called for renewed action against migrant smuggling, increased communication between EU and non-EU countries, and

enhanced cooperation with Europol.

“[T]he commission sets out a renewed commitment and a strong policy framework to protect vulnerable individuals from being trafficked, to empower victims, to bring perpetrators to justice, and to safeguard our communities,” one EU communication stated “Women and children are at the centre of this commitment.”

Mr O'Sullivan reiterated his position on education as one of the most important steps the Irish Government can take to end trafficking.

“In terms of prevention, it's very much about education, training frontline professionals,” said Mr O'Sullivan.

Dr Yonkova believes that developing “innovative measures and approaches,” including a “national referral mechanism,” is Ireland's best chance at reversing course.

Referral mechanism

“My number one recommendation now would be to replace the old national referral mechanism with a new, modern one that reflects the realities – is adequate to the realities [of human trafficking],” Dr Yonkova said.

Though there is a lot of uncertainty around human trafficking in Ireland will finally bring much needed justice to the victims of trafficking.

“We hope this report acts as a catalyst for change and look forward to working to bring about the reforms that are so necessary to: prevent trafficking; ensure perpetrators are held accountable, and; that supports are improved for all victims to assist them in their recovery from this awful crime,” the report stated.

Comber celebrates 150 years of worship

Jason Osborne

The Parish of Newtownards and Comber, Co. Down, celebrated 150 years of worship in Our Lady of the Visitation Church, Saturday, May 29.

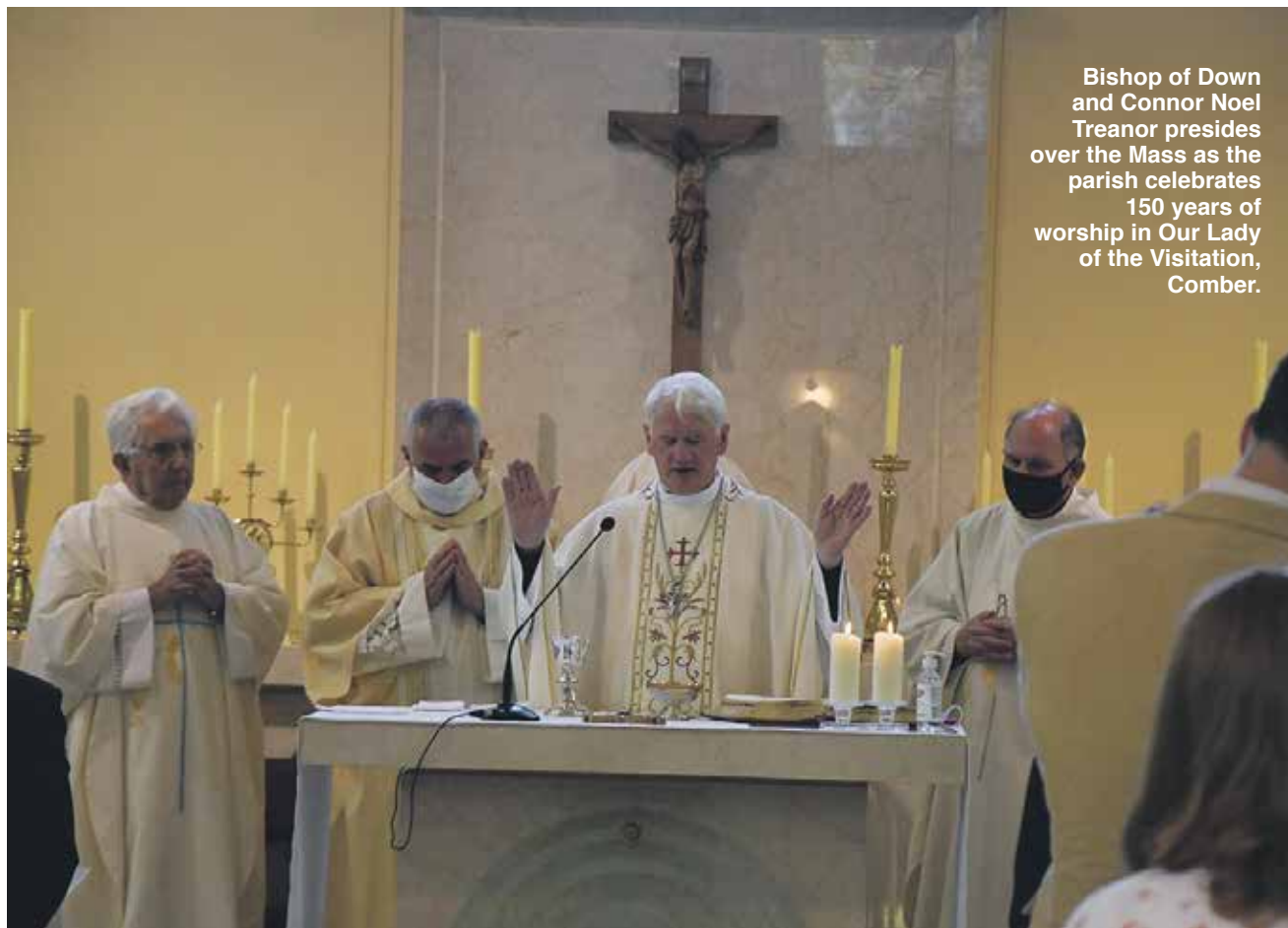
Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor attended on the day, con-celebrating Mass with a number of priests and deacons of the diocese.

Parishioners, former priests of the parish and friends from other faith backgrounds in the Comber region came together to

celebrate the longevity and witness of the church, while in a nearby church hall, guests were invited to view an exhibition of the church's history.

The children from the neighbouring St Mary's primary school contributed clay models and artwork to the exhibition while the older students wrote about the church and their memories of it.

Afterwards guests retired to McBride's on the Square where they enjoyed a celebratory dinner to end the day.



Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor presides over the Mass as the parish celebrates 150 years of worship in Our Lady of the Visitation, Comber.



The procession of the clergy before the Mass to celebrate 150 years of worship in Our Lady of the Visitation, Comber.



The parish of Newtownards and Comber folk choir sing during the celebration of the Mass.



Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor delivers the homily during Mass.



(From left to right) Fr Joseph Gunn, Fr Dan Whyte, Mr Tom Black, Bishop Noel Treanor, Mrs Carrol Black, Deacon James McAllister, Fr Eugene O'Hagan and Fr Michael Spence are pictured outside Our Lady of the Visitation Church, Comber.



The parish folk choir with Fr Gunn, Fr Whyte, Bishop Treanor and Deacon McAllister.

Out&About

Dominican nuns going all white



LOUTH: Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin is pictured with the Dominican nun's community in Drogheda having celebrated the anniversary Mass for Mother Catherine Plunkett, first prioress of the convent in 1722.



KILDARE: Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey blesses the graves at Two Mile House. Earlier, Dr Dempsey was presented with a crosier crafted from bog ewe to mark the anniversary both of his episcopal ordination and the silver anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, July 3.



KILDARE: Bishop Dempsey has a laugh with the community of Two Mile House after Mass and the blessing of the graves, July 3.

IN SHORT

Addiction in Ireland 'frightening' – Bishop Router

Addiction to drugs and alcohol are a "frightening aspect" of contemporary life in Ireland, Bishop Michael Router has said.

Speaking as the second episode of the Irish bishops' *Leave Your Mark* podcast series was launched, Bishop Router said the series can highlight the problems that exist and show how people have overcome addiction.

"Addiction is a frightening aspect of life in Ireland today," Bishop Router said July 6.

"The rise in the abuse of drugs and alcohol is well documented and many parents,

families and communities have suffered and are struggling to respond.

"This series of podcasts and videos produced by the Irish Bishops Drugs Initiative will help to highlight the problems that exist, and how those who have struggled with addiction have overcome their challenges.

"It will provide guidance and hope to people that there is a way out of addiction and that there are services to turn to when needed," Dr Router finished.

In episode two, Darren Butler and Michael Murphy discuss the Venerable Matt Talbot, and the impact of the Matt Talbot Addiction Recovery Group from Collon, Co. Louth.

Declining home ownership a clear danger, says Alone

The ERSI's report on declining home ownership shows that the decline is a "clear and present danger" to older people, Alone have said.

The charity, which supports older people to age at home, warned that the proportion of older people experiencing poverty could more than double.

The CEO of Alone Seán Moynihan said in a statement that the findings were concerning, but not surprising.

"Alone is already seeing the difficulties being experienced by older people who have retired and do not own their own home," Mr Moynihan continued.

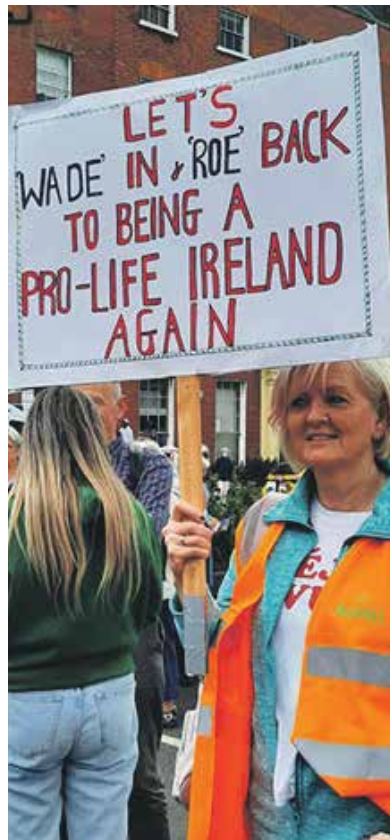
"Nearly half of older renters pay more than 35% of their income on rent, the largest proportion of any age group.

"At Alone we often work with older people on the brink of homelessness as a result of being unable to find suitable, affordable rented housing."

Alone have urged Government not to delay further in implementing change, as already one in four applicants for social housing are aged 50 and upwards.

"The effects of the private rental market are more severe on older people," said Mr Moynihan.

"The future Ireland that this report presents is a very bleak vista for those who do not own their own homes."



DUBLIN: Sinéad Tracey of Leitrim Cares Pro-Life Group is pictured with her home-designed sign at the Rally for Life, July 2.



CAVAN: The Cavan Famine and Aids Appeal committee are pictured with a cheque of funds raised for the annual appeal. Pictured are: (front row from left) Sheila McNulty, Cavan, and Anne Fitzpatrick, Killygarry; (back row) Liam De Paor, Cavan, John Sorohan, Ballinagh, Ray Faden, Ballyconell, Michael Lee, Butlersbridge, Michael Cassidy, Belturbet, and Mel Doherty, Cavan.



LOURDES: Bishop Ger Nash lights the Ferns diocese farewell candle following a successful pilgrimage in Lourdes last month.



LOURDES: The Ferns ladies relax before the Blessed Sacrament procession in Lourdes. Pictured are Katherine Mahon, Bridie Kavanagh, Mary O'Sullivan, Alice Whitty, Anne Caughfield and June Hearn.



KERRY: Bishop of Kerry Ray Browne is pictured with Fr Denis O'Mahony following the Jubilee Mass for Fr O'Mahony, June 24. Pictured (from left) are: Fr Jeremiah Corley, Deacon Francis Whyte, Fr Seamus O'Connell, Fr Amos Ruto, Bishop Browne, Fr O'Mahony PP, Fr Brendan Walshe, Fr Pat Crean Lynch, Fr Sean Cremin and Fr Vitalis Barasa.



DUBLIN: Ms Rita Coleman, who retired recently after 41 years dedicated teaching service at St Fiachra's Senior and Junior Primary Schools, Beaumont, is pictured with Fr Robert Smyth, Mr Kieran Creaner (Principal) and her brother Fr William Coleman.



MAYO: Anna and Paddy help out at Mary's Meals stand in Knock, following the charity's first every pilgrimage to the International Marine and Eucharistic shrine, July 2.

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



KERRY: The community of Derrylea, Oakpark, Tralee take a seat following their community Mass, celebrated for the first time since Covid-19 began. Photo: John Cleary.



KERRY: After two years lockdown, community Mass was celebrated for the people of Cilleen, Derrymore. Photo: John Cleary.



WICKLOW: Mary Immaculate, Refuge of Sinners, Rathmines' youth group took advantage of the summer weather for a rosary and ice-cream hike up Bray Head, July 3.



TYRONE: Áine Louise Quinn is pictured with Eugene McGonagle and Fr Roland Colhoun having received the Fr Stephen Kearney award, acknowledging her contribution to the liturgical life of the parish during her primary school years, July 3.

ANTRIM

Singing for Boys Summer 2022 takes place August 8–12 in St Dominic's Grammar School. The 5-day course is aimed at boys aged 8–16 who want to improve their singing voice and musical skills, and concludes with a performance in St Peter's Cathedral. Contact schola@downandconnor.org.

ARMAGH

Pope Francis has announced that the second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly will be celebrated on Sunday 24 July, the Sunday nearest the memorial of Ss Joachim and Anne (26 July). Grandparents and the elderly are encouraged to join at any of the Masses at St Patrick's Cathedral on the weekend of 23/24 July as special prayers will be offered.

CARLOW

Adoration takes place in the Cathedral of the Assumption Monday to Friday from 5pm–6pm.

CLARE

The annual service of remembrance and wreath laying will take place at the World War 1 Memorial in the Clare Peace Park (opposite Glór Theatre) on Saturday July 16 at 2pm.

CORK

St Thérèse the Little Flower Faith Camp takes place Monday July 25–Thursday July 28 in the Town Hall, Mitchelstown. It runs 10am–3pm daily. Cost is €50 per child, €30 for each additional child in the family and it is for boys and girls aged 6–12 years. For more information and booking forms, visit www.mitchelstown-parish.ie.

DERRY

The Sr Clare rosary, dedicated to the Derry nun who died in an earthquake in 2016, continues every Monday evening at 8.30 pm in St Joseph's Room at the Carmelite Retreat Centre, Termonbacca.

DONEGAL

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament continues in St Pius X adoration chapel, located in the grounds of

Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny, night and day from Sunday 1pm to Friday 9pm. Committed adorers spend one hour there for a particular hour each week. If anyone would like to commit to a regular hour's adoration, please contact Mary on 086-0870446 or Bridget on 086-0630729.

GALWAY

Galway Cathedral's annual series of international summer concerts, continue throughout July until August 11. They take place on Thursday evenings at 8pm. Full details on the concert series' dedicated website: recitals.galwaycathedral.ie

KERRY

Killarney Faith Summer Camp takes place July 18–22 for children ages 5–12. Activities include drama, arts and crafts, music, sport, prayer and games. €40 per child (siblings €25). Contact Sheila on 0877796966.

KILDARE

Youth 2000 summer festival takes place August 11–14 at Clongowes Wood College, Clane. The Youth 2000 Summer Festival is a four day Catholic event run by young people for young people from all across Ireland. For more information visit youth2000.ie

KILKENNY

The Mass at Foulkstown Cemetery, St Patrick's Parish, will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday, July 28. The parish asks that parishioners inform relatives and friends, especially those who are away from home.

LONGFORD

The Longford pilgrimage to Lourdes will take place from August 14–August 19. Anyone who would like to go should contact Sr Simon on 086 240 1295.

LOUTH

The blessing of the graves in Dowdallshill, Dundalk will take place July 17 at 3pm.

MAYO

Pioneer Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine will take place on Sunday July 17 with friends of Matt Talbot and of Cuan Mhuire. Priests

are available for the Sacrament of Confession from 10:30am until the Anointing of the Sick in the Basilica at 2:30pm. Pilgrimage Mass at 3pm followed by rosary procession (weather permitting). Further details: www.pioneers.ie.

MEATH

The Meath diocese pilgrimage to Knock will take place at the start of the Knock Novena Sunday August 14. The pilgrimage will be led by Bishop Tom Deenihan. The anointing of the sick takes place outside the Basilica at 2.30pm and is followed by Mass at 3pm.

MONAGHAN

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

OFFALY

Raymond O'Donnell, organ, and Michael Vignoles, uilleann pipes, will perform in the Church of the Assumption on Tuesday July 19 at 8am as part of the Tullamore International Summer Organ Series. Admission: €15.00; concessions €12.00

ROSCOMMON

Achonry diocesan youth gathering takes place in St Nathys College on Sunday July 17, beginning 5pm. Guest speaker will be Leitrim GAA manager Andy Moran and Bishop Paul Dempsey will celebrate Mass. The evening concludes with BBQ and Music. See www.achonrydiocese.org/youthministry or register on eventbrite.ie

WATERFORD

The diocese of Waterford and Lismore's youth pilgrimage to Medjugorje takes place August 3–10. It costs €725 per person and is open to those aged 16–35. For more info / to book a place contact: Roisin Browne 083 3002123 / Annmarie Browne 086 4572353 / Declan Browne 083 4865213.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Journalist accused of inciting destruction of abbey in Spain

● The Vox political party in Spain has filed a complaint against a journalist who encouraged blowing up the basilica and abbey located on the grounds of the Valley of the Fallen memorial complex northwest of Madrid. The complex is the site of the largest cross in the world.

Spanish journalist Héctor de Miguel from Cadena SER, a PRISA Group radio station, was cited in a legal complaint for a hate crime and for offending religious sentiments, covered in Articles 524–526 of the country's penal code, because during a radio program he encouraged blowing up the abbey in the Valley of the Fallen with dynamite.

Pope names new nuncio to Mexico

● Pope Francis has named Maltese Archbishop Joseph Spiteri, nuncio to Lebanon for the past four years, as the new nuncio to Mexico.

The Vatican announced the appointment July 7.

The position will be a

homecoming of sorts for the 63-year-old archbishop; he had served as first secretary in the Mexico City nunciature in the late 1990s before transferring to the nunciature in Portugal in 1998.

UK bishop says lack of clear moral compass led to Boris's downfall

● Boris Johnson's lack of "a clear moral compass" was the underlying cause of his downfall, a Catholic bishop said.

The British prime minister announced his resignation July 7 following a mutiny of more than 50 government ministers over his response to allegations that a senior member of the government had sexually assaulted two men in a London club.

Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth told *Catholic News Service* that Johnson lost credibility because he misled members of Parliament about how much he knew about similar complaints of sexual misconduct against Chris Pincher before he appointed him as the government's deputy chief whip in February.

China deploys auditors to monitor religious activities online

● The Chinese Communist Party is seeking to expand its apparatus to monitor and curb religious activities in cyberspace through training and deploying hundreds of "auditors" across the country, triggering concerns from rights groups.

Under the guidance of the Communist Party, the Ethnic and Religious Commission of Guangdong Province in southern China

held a test for the first group of auditors for the state-run Internet Religious Information Services in early June, the *China Christian Daily* reported.

Ucanews.com, reporting on the *China Christian Daily* story, said the result of the test was announced at the end of June and showed 127 people qualified for auditor posts.

Cardinal brings hope to suffering during Africa trip

● While many people were disappointed that Pope Francis was unable to make his long-awaited visit to Congo and South Sudan, Cardinal Pietro Parolin assured the people that the Pope had not given up on visiting them.

"I did not come on my own behalf but rather to bring you Pope Francis' affection," the Vatican secretary of state told Catholics at a parish in Juba, South Sudan, July 7.

"I come, like John the Baptist, to prepare his arrival. The Pope wants to come to South Sudan, he is planning a trip to Juba but the visit is intended for the whole country, to meet all the people," he said, according to Vatican News.

Christian mechanic sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan

Christian mechanic Ashfaq Masih has been sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan after allegedly saying that Jesus Christ is the only true prophet.

Reading out the 12-page judgment July 4, Khalid Wazir, additional session judge of the Lahore High Court, sentenced Mr Masih to death and fined him 100,000 rupees (€1,246).

Mr Masih, 34, was arrested in 2017 after he got into a disagreement with a customer at his motorbike repair shop in Lahore after the man refused to pay his bill.

The customer asked to be excused from payment on the grounds that he was a devoted Muslim, but Mr Masih refused the request on the basis that he was a Christian and wasn't interested in the customer's religious status.

In a not-guilty plea seen by 'Church in Chains', Mr Masih said the man "refused to give me money and said, 'I am a follower of Peer Fakhir [a Muslim ascetic] and don't ask for money from me.' I told him that I am a believer in Jesus Christ and I don't believe in Peer Fakhir and please give me my labour".

That man went on to tell Mr Masih's rival bike shop owner, who accused Mr Masih of blasphemy and informed the police.

"Muhammad Naveed who is also a motorcycle mechanic and had started a shop in front of me and was jealous



A supporter of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) Islamist political party hurls stones toward police during a protest in Lahore April 13, 2021, after the arrest of a Muslim leader who heads a party known for holding mass demonstrations on the issue of perceived blasphemy. Photo: CNS.

because my business was doing well and had a good reputation in the area," Mr Masih said in the same statement.

"We had already fought a few days before the incident. And he had threatened me with dire consequences."

Under Section 295-C of Pakistan's penal code, defiling the name of Islam's prophet Muhammad carries a mandatory death penalty.

Mr Masih denies he had broken any laws.

According to the same document, Mr Masih said he is innocent of what he called

"quite baseless, false and frivolous" charges.

Mr Masih was accused of 'disrespecting' the prophet Muhammad and was arrested after he allegedly said that for Christians, Jesus was the 'true prophet'.

Nasir Saeed, the director of the Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS), a charity which supports persecuted Christians in Pakistan, slammed the judgment in a statement.

"I don't remember any case where the lower court decided to grant bail or freed anyone accused of the blas-

phemy law. The judges are aware that such cases are made to punish and settle personal grudges with the opponents, especially against the Christians," Mr Saeed said.

"Because of pressure from the Islamic groups, lower courts' judges are always hesitant to free the victims but make popular decisions to save their skin and shift their burden to the high court.

"He is innocent and has already spent five years in prison for a crime he never committed."

Australian council in crisis after motions fail to get enough bishop votes

The agenda for the Second Assembly of Australia's Plenary Council was disrupted July 6 after more than 60 of the 277 members staged a protest over issues regarding women in the Church, including the defeat of a motion to formalise support for the ordination of women as deacons.

A sense of crisis among plenary members, lay and clerical, became evident as the protest occurred and in its aftermath. As the scheduled lunch break commenced, the Council's Steering Committee met to discuss the next steps, while, in a separate room, more than 60 members met, led by Francis Sullivan and John Warhurst.

Both laymen have been prominent in calling for significant changes to Church governance and in issues such as the Church's practice and relationship with LGBTQ persons.

During Plenary Council assemblies, consultative votes are exercised by the 277 lay, religious and clerical members; deliberative votes are exercised by the Australian bishops.

The protest occurred after the outcome of the bishops' votes on "Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Women and Men."

One motion, including the consideration of women for ministry as deacons

"should Pope Francis authorise such ministry," received a qualified majority among consultative voters but fell just short of a qualified majority among deliberative voters – bishops – and did not pass.

Motions passed by the bishops will be sent to the Vatican after the assembly; if approved by the Vatican, they become binding on the Church in Australia.

A second motion did not receive a qualified majority on either the consultative or the deliberative votes, and so was not passed.

European Parliament calls on Vatican to support Cardinal Zen

The European Parliament has called on the Vatican "to give full support to Cardinal Zen" and told the Holy See it should "strengthen its diplomatic efforts and its leverage on the Chinese authorities".

In a resolution passed on

July 7, the parliament condemned the arrest of the 90-year-old former bishop of Hong Kong by Chinese authorities and demanded that all charges against him be dropped.

Cardinal Zen was charged

in a Hong Kong court on May 24 with four other prominent democracy advocates who were all trustees of the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, which helped pro-democracy protesters to pay their legal fees.

In the non-binding resolution passed July 7, the EU parliament decried the arrest of Cardinal Zen as "an attack on the freedoms guaranteed in the Hong Kong Basic Law, including the freedom of religion or belief".



Edited by Jason Osborne
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Bringing care to the Congo



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, greets a sick woman during his meeting with religious congregations in Kinshasa, Congo, July 4, 2022. Photo: CNS.

Missionaries of Charity expelled from Nicaragua

The government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, which has been in power for 15 years, expelled 18 Missionaries of Charity from the Central American country on July 6.

According to the newspaper *El Confidencial*, the nuns were taken by the General Directorate of Migration and Immigration and the police from the cities of Managua and Granada, where they had been serving the poor, to the border country of Costa Rica.

Of the 18 sisters, there are seven Indians, two Mexicans, two Filipinos, two Guatemalans, two Nicaraguans, one Spaniard, one Ecuadorian, and one Vietnamese.

The dissolution of the Missionaries of Charity and another 100 NGOs in Nicaragua was approved June 29 by the National Assembly on an "urgent" basis and without any debate.

The National Assembly, Nicaragua's legislative body, is controlled by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, led by Ortega.

The sisters were welcomed to the Diocese of Tilarán-Liberia in neighbouring Costa Rica by Bishop Manuel Eugenio Salazar Mora.

"It's an honour for our Diocese of Tilarán-Liberia that the soles of your feet should tread on these lands," the prelate wrote about the sis-

ters on Facebook.

"We pray for the Church in Nicaragua, for its bishops, priests, men and women religious. Sisters, welcome to these lands; our diocese has open doors to receive you. Thank you for your example, dedication, and service to the poorest of the poor," he said.

"May St Teresa of Calcutta continue to intercede for your intentions. Long live Christ the King!" he concluded.

Attorney Martha Patricia Molina Montenegro, a member of the Pro Transparency and Anticorruption Observatory, told *ACI Prensa* that "the dictatorship" of Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, "is characterised

by granting citizenship to foreigners accused in their own countries of being criminals and expelling honourable people who are also Nicaraguan nationals".

The lawyer charged that "the dictatorship has a frontal war against the Catholic Church of Nicaragua and its objective is to completely eliminate all those institutions related to the Church".

"The expulsion of the Sisters of Charity is one more illegality of this regime that is protected by laws that have been denounced by civil society and citizens as unconstitutional," she said.

Our Sunday Visitor announces launch of new CNS in 2023

Scott Richert, publisher of *Our Sunday Visitor*, said July 6 the Indiana-based Catholic publishing company would fill the void left behind by the closure of the domestic operations of *Catholic News Service* in January 2023 with OSV News.

He made the announcement at the Catholic Media Conference in Portland and described the new venture as a new Catholic news service.

"The best is yet to come," he told the

group of Catholic journalists and communication leaders in a brief announcement prior to the afternoon's keynote address during the July 4-7 annual conference of the Catholic Media Association.

Mr Richert said that after the US Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the CNS closure May 4, effective at the end of the year, he and his colleagues have been asking "not should OSV do something, but what should OSV do.

OSV News is the answer," he said, adding that it would be a "new renaissance" in Catholic media.

Our Sunday Visitor, founded in 1912 in Huntington, Indiana, produces a weekly print newspaper, periodicals, books, parish resources and church envelopes for parishioners' church contributions.

The newspaper and its online site frequently publish CNS content as a client of the news service.

Vatican roundup

Vatican rep warned Catholic missionaries of Hong Kong crackdown

● A Vatican representative in Hong Kong warned Catholic missionaries there to be prepared for a tougher future as China tightened its control over the former British colony, said a Reuters news report based on interviews.

Reporting on the Reuters story, ucanews.com said Archbishop Javier Herrera-Corona, the unofficial Vatican representative in Hong Kong, had four meetings with 50 Catholic religious orders before he ended his six-year term in March. He warned the missionaries during these meetings, Reuters reported July 5.

The 54-year-old Mexican prelate left Hong Kong after he was appointed apostolic nuncio to Congo and Gabon Feb. 5.

The private meetings were held over several months beginning last October. During the sessions, the Vatican envoy urged missionary groups to take appropriate measures to protect the property, files, and funds of their missions, people familiar with the meetings told Reuters. Their identities were kept secret due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Archbishop Herrera-Corona told his colleagues that "the freedoms they had enjoyed for decades were over. Change is coming, and you'd better be prepared," he was quoted as saying. "Hong Kong is not the great Catholic beachhead it was."

Women to help Pope choose future bishops

● Pope Francis has said he would announce the appointment of two women to the Vatican committee that elects bishops.

In comments to Reuters published July 6, the Pope said "two women will be appointed for the first time in the committee to elect bishops in the Congregation for Bishops".

In the July 2 interview in the Vatican, Francis did not identify the women or say when their appointment would be announced officially, instead saying he was "open to giving [women] an opportunity" and wanted to open things "up a bit".

The Congregation of Bishops, a department of the Roman Curia, recently

changed its name to the Dicastery for Bishops, in line with the new constitution that underpins the reform of the Vatican by Pope Francis.

The new constitution, titled *Praedicate evangelium* ("Preach the Gospel"), provides that any member of the Faithful can also lead a Vatican dicastery or other bodies, "given their particular competence, power of governance and function".

Asked which Vatican department could perhaps be headed by a lay man or woman, Francis suggested that they could include the department for Catholic Education and Culture and the Apostolic Library, according to Reuters.

Archbishop Gänswein moved by Benedict XVI's words on heaven

● The personal secretary of Pope Benedict XVI, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, could not hold back tears as he recalled what the pope emeritus once told him about his journey to heaven.

The scene took place at the Nymphenburg Palace in Munich, Germany, during a June celebration organised by the Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI Foundation for the 95th birthday of the pope emeritus. The event was broadcast in German on EWTN.

Archbishop Gänswein was visibly choked up as he recalled that Benedict XVI once told him that "I would never have believed that the last stretch of the journey that would take me from the Mater Ecclesiae monastery (where he currently resides) to the gates of heaven with St Peter would be so long."



LetterfromRome



John L. Allen Jr

Some years ago, veteran Italian journalist Massimo Franco wrote a book about US/Vatican relations called *Imperi Paralleli* ("Parallel Empires"), arguing that the intersection between Washington and Rome has driven a great deal of history over the last two centuries.

At the moment these parallel empires are intersecting again, each gripped by a maddeningly complicated legal drama.

Trial of the century

In the US, it's the January 6 Committee, while in the Vatican it's the "trial of the century," featuring charges against a cardinal and nine other defendants for financial crimes. As fate would have it, both procedures held their first public hearing on the very same day – July 27, 2021, so we're coming up on the one-year anniversary for each.

In some ways, the two exercises couldn't be more different.

Most importantly, the January 6 committee is partisan in the strictest sense of the term. It was created on a party line vote and it's composed of seven Democrats and only two Republicans, both of whom have been censured by their own party for participating.

The Vatican trial, on the other hand, isn't really "partisan" in the conventional sense, because financial reform is one of the few issues that actually unites conservatives and liberals in the Catholic Church.

Perhaps Catholic liberals may be more inclined to trust the trial because Pope Francis launched it, while conservatives may be more skeptical, but even that's inexact. I know plenty of deeply conservative prelates who'd be delighted to see Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu, the star defendant in the case, found guilty, since they associate him (fairly or not) with a corrupt "old guard" in the Vatican.

Here's another dissimilarity: If the Republicans take control of the house after the midterm elections, the January 6 committee probably will be dead as a doornail. With an estimated 200 more witnesses to be heard, the Vatican trial may not only outlive this papacy, but the next one.

Yet watching the two dramas play out simultaneously, there are nonetheless three striking parallels.

First, one has the impression that while the vicissitudes are of tremendous interest to an inside-the-beltway crowd, they haven't galvanised broad public interest.

When the January 6 committee scheduled a prime time hearing last month, the broadcast drew about 20 million viewers, which is basi-

What the January 6 hearings and the Vatican trial have in common



A man in Washington demonstrates near the US Capitol January 6, 2022, the first anniversary of the attack on the US Capitol by supporters of former President Donald Trump. Photo: CNS.

“The impression is that while the trial may indeed document real wrongdoing, it's also designed to make sure that higher-ups are insulated from the fallout”

cally the same number of Americans who watch the news every night no matter what's going on. CBS actually saw its prime-time numbers drop in comparison to a re-run of the sitcom "Young Sheldon" the week before.

Out of prime time, viewership essentially disappears.

As for the Vatican trial, news agencies continue to report on the latest developments. On Friday, the trial held its 24th hearing, with testimony coming from a defendant named Nicola Squillace, an Italian lawyer, who appeared to contradict other defendants who've claimed they didn't know key details of the Vatican's failed effort to buy a choice piece of London real estate.

However, those same news agencies will also tell you that such coverage is hardly lighting up the scoreboard in terms of traffic numbers or ratings.

The broad disinterest is likely

for a similar reason, and it points to another parallel: Insiders may care about the details of such matters, but ordinary people just want the big picture – and, honestly, most of them feel they already know it.

Americans

Did Trump incite the January 6 violence? Sure, most Americans probably would say, and the debate is over what to make of that. Some would say Trump was justified in trying to "stop the steal," many others would say he subverted the constitution and ought to be held accountable.

Likewise, is there financial corruption in the Vatican? For most Catholics, that's like asking if water is wet or if the sky's blue – hardly something they need months of testimony and countless witnesses to prove.

Perhaps the most fundamental parallel, and one that also helps

explain the yawns both procedures tend to generate, is that in both cases, there's a sense that achieving justice isn't the only iron in the fire.

With the January 6 hearings, it seems clear that another key aim is to discredit Donald Trump and thereby to blunt the prospect of his return to power, either *de facto* as the Republican kingmaker right now or *de jure* with a new presidential bid in 2024.

In the case of the Vatican trial, it hasn't escaped anyone's notice that the failed \$400 million land deal at the heart of the case was approved at every stage by Pope Francis's most senior aides, yet none of them have been charged or even treated as suspects. (That's with the exception of Becciu, but he was defenestrated by Francis before the trial even began.) Francis himself actually made some of the key decisions, including to pay off one of the Italian financiers involved rather than to pursue legal charges.

The impression is that while the trial may indeed document real wrongdoing, it's also designed to make sure that higher-ups are insulated from the fallout.

None of this should be read as denigrating the careful, painstaking work of the investigators, prosecutors, members of Congress and

judges in these two proceedings, most of whom doubtless are doing their very best to get to the truth. No doubt future historians will look back at both of these procedures as goldmines in terms of helping to document turbulent moments in the lifespans of these two parallel empires.

“If that's how you see it, then maybe 'Young Sheldon' really is the better choice after all”

Yet despite best efforts and good intentions, many Americans, and many Catholics, can't help looking at those procedures in part as political theatre, in which people are playing assigned roles leading to a pre-determined outcome – and, honestly, not particularly compelling theatre at that.

If that's how you see it, then maybe "Young Sheldon" really is the better choice after all. For me, frankly, I'd rather be watching baseball.

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



Elise Ann Allen

Sri Lanka's top Catholic prelate has urged the country's political leaders to make good on their promise to resign this week, and he's voiced hope that a new government will be able to bring the South Asian nation out of its current woes.

Speaking to *Crux* about the unrest that led Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to announce their resignations Saturday, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo said he thought "it was a good thing that the crowds descended on the city".

Leadership

"They made their leadership understand that they don't have any confidence in them, and therefore the leadership was forced to make a decision" and announce their intention to step down, he said.

However, Cardinal Ranjith voiced doubt that President Rajapaksa and PM Wickremesinghe will follow through on that promise, saying "the leadership in this country has a bad record of promises being kept, so we are all waiting anxiously to see whether he, the president, will keep his promise to resign".

"We are skeptics of our political leaders and their promises," he said.

For the past few years Sri Lanka has been in the midst of a massive economic and political crisis that has had a crippling effect on the economy and the population, with poverty rates and inflation soaring as people struggle to afford basic necessities such as food and fuel, and essential medicines become increasingly scarce.

With its economy in a complete state of collapse, Sri Lanka has become dependent on aid from India and other countries as its political leadership has attempted to negotiate a bailout with the International Monetary Fund.

The crisis has caused political turmoil and mass protests from citizens, who on Saturday, in the most chaotic day yet in months of unrest, stormed the residences of both President Rajapaksa and Mr Wickremesinghe, setting fire to one of the buildings.

In response to the chaos, both President Rajapaksa and Mr Wickremesinghe announced their resignations, with the president pledging to step down Wednesday and Mr Wickremesinghe saying he would resign when a new government is formed.

With Sri Lanka's decline worse than most financial crises in the developing world, Cardinal Ranjith for months has spoken out against corruption and called for the resignation of the country's political leadership, urging them to take responsibility for the current situation.

In terms of what comes next, Cardinal Ranjith said that for the people

Sri Lanka cardinal urges politicians to stick to resignation



Women religious march with black flags during a protest in Colombo, Sri Lanka, May 28, 2022. Photo: CNS.

to trust any potential new government that's formed, "They must see that effective steps are taken to get over the economic crisis".

“One area of extreme necessity is medicine and healthcare, he said, noting that currently, ‘many hospitals have no medicine, and they have to be imported from overseas’”

"The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has resulted not only from the Covid disaster, but also from a series of decisions, unfortunate decisions, made by the president and his government," Cardinal Ranjith said, saying leaders in the banking sector, especially, "have made serious mistakes and as a result, our foreign reserves have gone down to zero, and our gold reserves have reduced drastically".

Sri Lanka can no longer afford basic services such as gas and electricity,

and unemployment rates have skyrocketed, he said, insisting that "All this has happened due to mismanagement, bad planning, bad decisions".

"We are waiting so new people will take the bull by the horns and make the decisions necessary," he said.

In the midst of the country's crisis, Cardinal Ranjith said the Church has been on the frontlines in providing support to those most in need, operating largely through its diocesan Caritas network, with some help from international Caritas branches.

Through Caritas, the Church in Sri Lanka has arranged programs "to identify the most affected families in the areas of our dioceses, and to organise immediate support for sustenance, as well as short-term support for self-help programs in order to generate food and other items they need," Cardinal Ranjith said.

One area of extreme necessity is medicine and healthcare, he said, noting that currently, "many hospitals have no medicine, and they have to be imported from overseas".

"We need support from overseas, governments and individual organisations to purchase some of the

medicines necessary for our people, especially our children, and to send it down to Sri Lanka as donations," he said, and appealed to the international community to get involved.

As things move forward, Cardinal Ranjith said the Catholic Church and leaders from other religious communities – including Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims – are working together to provide relief to the population, and they plan to form a close relationship to any new government that is formed "in order to keep social acceptance and social peace".

Support

"They will need the support of religious groups, so they will certainly approach us on many issues, and we are willing to cooperate with them as much as possible, as long as they look into the welfare and wellbeing of our people, the general people," he said.

Cardinal Ranjith, who has been among the most vocal advocates seeking answers to who was behind the 2019 Easter bombings that killed some 270 people in three hotels and three churches throughout

the country, said he will continue to press for progress in identifying those responsible.

Saying there have been certain indications that perhaps some within the government were in some way involved in the attacks, Cardinal Ranjith said the Catholic community wants "further investigations to be conducted on that angle of the story".

"Until we are sure of what really happened, we cannot be satisfied. We want a new government to help us understand what really happened on that Easter Sunday," he said.

"Our struggle will go on, and whoever comes will have to deal with it because even the whole country is very interested in knowing that" Cardinal Ranjith said, saying he is hopeful a new government will be more forthcoming, "because we have to struggle. We won't get it free on a plate, but we will struggle for it, and we will do it with whoever comes to power."

Pope Francis in his Sunday Angelus address voiced his closeness to the people of Sri Lanka amid the current turmoil, saying they "continue to suffer the effects of political and economic instability".

"Together with the bishops of the country, I renew my appeal for peace and implore those with authority not to ignore the cry of the poor and the needs of the people," he said.

“We need support from overseas, governments and individual organisations to purchase some of the medicines necessary for our people, especially our children, and to send it down to Sri Lanka as donations”

Letters

Letter of the week

Young Irish have so much to contend with

Dear Editor, I read St Vincent de Paul's plea to the Government regarding the cost of living crisis with despair. Not that the charity was causing me woe in terms of the content of their suggestions – all of which were worthwhile and positive – but that the Government seems to struggle to get anything right.

The housing issue has been around for a decade, everything is shooting up in price and working people are being forced to use food banks. The leader of Fine Gael says

he represents the “people who get up in the morning”, say that to the working poor.

Young people have so much to contend with in our modern Ireland, no prospect of owning their own home as most of their money goes on extortionate rent, dismal wages if you're not in IT or one of the sciences, the costs of energy bills, food and petrol are rising and by the time they're older the pension age will probably be about 70! We talk about young people getting married later

and later and having less or no children, some of the above may explain why this isn't happening.

All of this and we're hearing about the long-fabled metro that will go from Swords to Charlemont and cost just more than €10 billion. Talk about diversionary tactics. This Government will be throttled in the next election, there is absolutely no doubt about that.

*Yours etc.,
Donal Dunne
Lucan, Dublin*

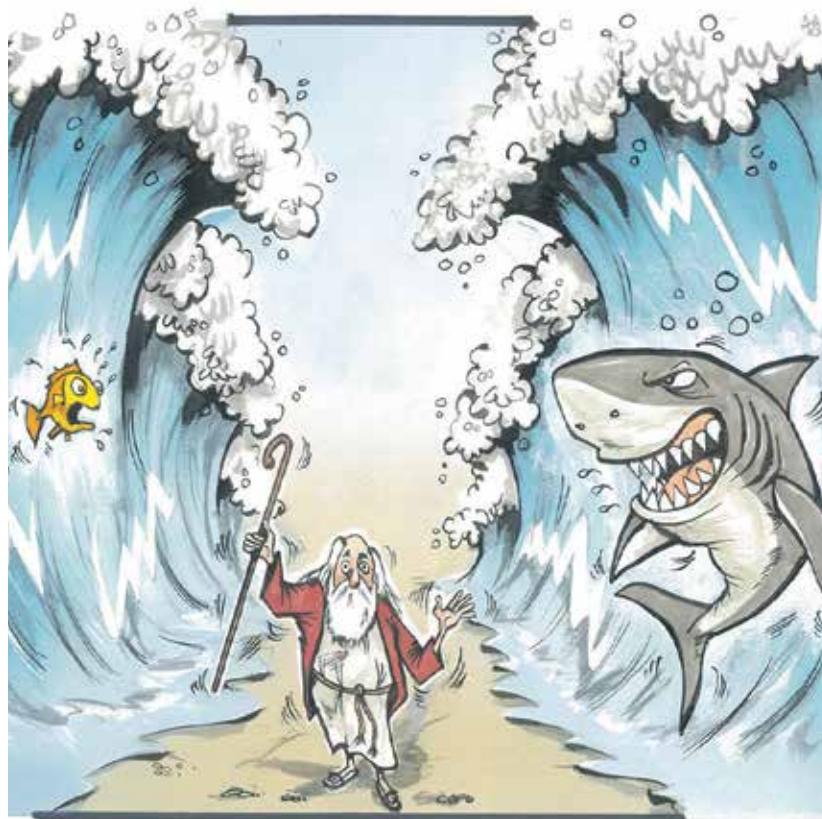
Clergy were afraid what they might be told

Dear Editor, I have just read the report from the diocese of Meath and it makes me sad to see that which I was already aware of which is that no real attempt was made to consult the laity at parish level as asked for by Pope Francis. The very least we could have hoped for was that we be asked to pray to the Holy Spirit for his help. I asked at parish and diocesan level for this to be done but without any success.

If this was done from the start at least people would have been aware of what was happening and we could have received the grace from the Holy Spirit to help.

I have spent my life in organising and know that there would have been plenty of help from the laity but I was told that the Irish people were not ready for this but I am afraid that it was the clergy who were afraid of what they might be told. When I asked about clericalism “it was the laity who were being clerical and not the clergy”, this to me seems strange to say the least.

*Yours etc.,
Sean Connell
Navan, Co. Meath*



Roe vs Wade nails lie that abortion is a human right

Dear Editor, In its recent reversal of the 1973 Roe vs Wade decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that there is no such thing as a right to abortion under the United States' constitution. While the decision does not in itself ban abortions in the US, the ruling is to be welcomed as it nails the lie that there is a

human right to abortion, and gives lawmakers in individual US states the power to ban this barbaric procedure.

We can see the carnage that the legalisation of abortion on demand has wrought on countries such as the United States and Ireland. Since the Roe vs Wade decision in 1973,

which legalised abortion on demand in the US, more than 60 million babies have lost their lives through abortion. Since abortion on demand was legalised in Ireland in 2019, more than 20,000 babies have lost their lives through abortion. These are horrific figures.

Thankfully, to save lives, in many states in the US

lawmakers have already passed state laws to protect unborn babies from abortion. This humanitarian move is something our national lawmakers should not be afraid to emulate.

*Yours etc.,
Sean O Domhnaill,
Galway For Life, Galway*

An intriguing article on the concept of cheap grace

Dear Editor, As someone who grew up in the pre-Vatican II Church, I found Fr Rolheiser's article on 'cheap grace' [The Irish Catholic – June 30, 2022] very intriguing. In those days, committing a mortal sin and being damned was easier than falling off the proverbial log.

It was especially easy in the sexual area in which we were told there was no such thing as a light matter. If we sinned mortally, we had to confess as soon as possible and tell all our mortal sins in

terms of kind and number. Until we had been absolved in Confession, no matter how sorry we were for our sins, we dare not receive Communion; we would have been committing a sacrilege.

Now, I agree with Fr Rolheiser that our wounds get in the way of our experiencing God's love, but I think the Church was responsible for some of those wounds. If the Church based its approach – as Fr Rolheiser does – on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, then

turning to God even for selfish reasons would do, and there would be no need for Confession. However, other parts of the Gospel – “enter by the narrow gate”, “depart from me you cursed”, “unless you forgive, you will not be forgiven”, “unless you believe...” etc., etc. – seem to suggest a more demanding picture. Confusing!

*Yours etc.,
Oliver Broderick
Youghal, Co. Cork*

facebook community

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

Fr McVerry hits back at housing minister's Church comments

Darragh O'Brien is just diverting attention away from the Government's failure to face the housing crisis. Now that the Church is going through a very difficult time because of the scandals he thinks it is fair game to ignore all the good the Church has done in the past and kick them when they are down. – **Brendan Kennedy**

That housing minister will use any excuse to try to divest himself of responsibility. – **Neil Carmody**

The brass neck of Darragh O'Brien making this statement when he knows perfectly that the Government has failed the people. The pity is that there are a lot of people out there who will repeat this all over the place believing it to be true. Even though we all are fully aware that lots of politicians lie and try to blame everyone else for their failures, they still succeed in influencing people especially when it is against clergy or the Church. – **Sheelagh Hanly**

Good for you Fr McVerry say it as it is. – **Eilish Higgins**

The current unused land and property owned by State, via various agencies, is a scandal. Darragh O'Brien is putting the focus on not just the Church but, other groups rights to what they own. Let's wake up to facts and, no more excuses, build homes for a nation of too many families, “living in squalor”. – **Dick Brazil**

The hoarding of development land drives the prices up and up and up. Doesn't matter who owns the land: the State, a Church or a private person. – **Ton Bangert**

Dublin diocese asks parishes to devise partnership models

Whilst the physical world is changing God's word remains the same. I hope that as a Church we don't succumb to the radical left agendas we are seeing in modern times and that they start influencing our church out of pressure which is aimed at destroying our faith and traditions. God's word cannot be changed nor should it be diluted or rewritten to please a secular ideology. – **Stephen Walsh**

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

Church has no authority to ordain women

Dear Editor, We have a number of calls from the laity for women priests, this shows how little the laity understand their Faith. St John Paul II said the Church has no authority to ordain women priests and this is a truth to be held by the Faithful.

If people do not want to accept this teaching let them go and join one of those communities that have so-called women priests, or found their own, not be imposing their opinions on the Church founded by Christ.

Yours etc., David Kelly, Crumlin, Dublin 12

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, July 14, 2022

Personal Profile

We don't need to 'reinvent the wheel' to attract young Catholics

Page 32



Cultivating an attitude of gratitude

The pandemic was a real wake-up call for me when it comes to gratitude. I spent the better part of lockdown thinking and complaining bitterly about the sorry state of affairs, which was natural enough, but the inexcusable factor is that I was well aware during that time of how much I had going for me. A comfy place to live it out, my then-fiancée (now wife), family, friends and work I enjoyed ensured I was kept happy and busy.

It alerted me to a larger pattern that I've remained aware of since, affecting not just myself but many, and that is a distinct



Our faith tells us that we have much to be grateful for but we rarely live as though that's the case, writes Jason Osborne

lack of gratitude in the face of much to be thankful for. Something in me, and something in us I suspect, clings desperately to our gripes instead of the gifts we've received, even when we know it to be wrong. As usual, C.S. Lewis put it best in *The Great Divorce* when he spoke about the choice facing us:

"Hell begins with a grum-

bling mood, always complaining, always blaming others...but you are still distinct from it. You may even criticise it in yourself and wish you could stop it. But there may come a day when you can no longer. Then there will be no you left to criticise the mood or even to enjoy it, but just the grumble itself, going on forever like a machine...In each of us

there is something growing, which will BE hell unless it is nipped in the bud."

If any of this resonates with you, don't worry, because our faith and the science of the day both prescribe a remedy: gratitude.

Gratitude

The word "gratitude" is derived from the Latin *gratia*, which, depending on the context, means grace, graciousness or gratefulness. A source no less esteemed than Harvard Medical School argues that in positive psychology research, gratitude is "strongly and consistently" associated with greater happi-

ness. They list some of the effects of gratitude as such; feeling more positive emotions, savouring good experiences, improving health, dealing with adversity and building strong relationships.

While the positive effects of gratitude may sometimes be a bit difficult to get a concrete hold on, with "greater happiness" being a bit nebulous, there is an increasing body of research to back its effects up. A study published in *Psychological Science* found that when people focused on thanksgiving, they were better able to be patient, while a study in the *Review of Communication* showed that gratitude has posi-

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Family News



AND EVENTS

SHAPESHIFTING MICROROBOTS BRUSH AND FLOSS TEETH

A shapeshifting robotic micro-swarm may one day act as a toothbrush, rinse, and dental floss in one.

The technology, developed by a team at the University of Pennsylvania, is set to offer a new and automated way to perform the mundane but critical daily tasks of brushing and flossing.

The building blocks of these microrobots are iron oxide nanoparticles that have both catalytic and magnetic activity. Using a magnetic field, researchers could direct their motion and configuration to form either bristle-like structures that sweep away dental plaque from the broad surfaces of teeth, or elongated strings that can slip between teeth like a length of floss.

In both instances, a catalytic reaction drives the nanoparticles to produce antimicrobials that kill harmful oral bacteria on site.

Experiments using this system on mock and real human teeth showed that the robots can conform to a variety of shapes to nearly eliminate the sticky biofilms that lead to cavities and gum disease.

The team shared their findings in the journal *ACS Nano*.

UK ANTI-OIL ACTIVISTS TARGET 'THE LAST SUPPER' COPY

The UK group 'Just Stop Oil' has said activists glued themselves to a painting at the Royal Academy in London, which was the fifth such protest in a week.

A number of people from the activist group sprayed paint under and stuck their hands to 'The Last Supper' – a full-scale copy of Leonardo Da Vinci's famous work – dating from around 1520.

Two supporters of Just Stop Oil also glued themselves to John Constable's 'The Hay Wain' at the National Gallery in central London.

Three other paintings, including one by Vincent van Gogh, were targeted at other galleries in London, Manchester and Glasgow.

Just Stop Oil wants the UK government to end approval of new oil and gas licences.

ONE MILLION MUSLIMS EXPECTED FOR LARGEST HAJJ SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN

The biggest hajj pilgrimage since the coronavirus pandemic began kicked off last week, with hundreds of thousands of worshippers expected to visit and circle Islam's holiest site in Saudi Arabia's Mecca.

One million fully-vaccinated Muslims, including 850,000 from abroad, are allowed at this year's hajj, which is a break from two years of significantly curtailed numbers due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

At Mecca's Grand Mosque, pilgrims perform the *tawaf*, the circling of the Kaaba, the large cubic structure draped in golden-embroidered black cloth that Muslims around the world turn towards to pray.

Many chose to perform the ritual ahead of last week's official hajj start date.

White-robed male worshippers and women in colourful abayas walked side by side on the white floors near the Kaaba, the majority without a mask even though authorities said last month that masks would be mandatory at the site.



The ocean of God

To talk about what matters most in life we often have to turn to metaphor because words are inadequate to the task. James Finley has an evocative metaphor that captures an essential truth about the human condition. He suggests that we spend a great deal of time walking on the outer circumference of the inner richness of our lives. In other words, we spend most of our time focused on doing, attending to the next thing that draws our attention, seeing the world through the lens of the ego only, and we keep our distance from our true centre where we can simply be who we truly are.

“The greatest difficulty is to begin, to take the first step, to launch out into the depth of the reality of God as revealed in Christ”

Another way of describing this very human tendency is to say that we keep ourselves busy in shallow waters and rarely make the effort to dive deeper into our spiritual lives. When we first begin to meditate we begin to apprehend what we are missing and, if we remain faithful to our practice, we begin to plumb the depths of silence. Meditation teaches us that, as John Main says “we have to put our whole heart into this work of the Spirit if we are genuinely to respond to the call to leave the shallows and enter into the deep, direct knowledge that marks a life lived in the mystery of God”. But as our practice develops we begin to find ourselves more and more living out of “his depth dimension of divine presence” and we discover that everything and everyone

Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



mediates the love of God.

Meditation changes our way of seeing, broadening our perspective beyond my needs, my desires, my preoccupations, my concerns; we come to see “beyond mere appearances, into the depth and significance of things”. We begin to see the bigger picture, to understand that all of life is inter-connected, grounded in the divine.

John Main writes that “Meditation opens up for us this precious form of knowledge, and it is what enables us to pass beyond mere objectivity – merely looking at the mystery of God as observers – and to enter the mystery itself”.

He goes on to say: “[W]e come no longer to look for God's presence in the externals of our life but to recognise him in them because our eyes are opened interiorly to his indwelling spirit. We no longer try to grasp hold of God, to possess him. Rather we are grasped by his presence, interiorly and exteriorly, because we know that his presence is all pervasive and the ground of all that is.”

The greatest difficulty is to begin, to take the first step, to launch out into the depth of the reality of God as revealed in Christ. Once we have left the shore of our own self we soon pick up the currents of reality that give us our direction and

momentum. The more still and attentive we are, the more sensitively we respond to these currents. And so the more absolute and truly spiritual our faith becomes. By stillness in the spirit we move in the ocean of God. If we have the courage to push off from the shore we cannot fail to find this direction and energy. The further out we travel the stronger the current becomes, and the deeper our faith. For a while the depth of our faith is challenged by the paradox that the horizon of our destination is always receding. Where are we going with this deeper faith? Then, gradually we recognise the meaning of the current that guides us and see that the ocean is infinite.

And here again we see how powerfully a metaphor can speak to the heart and get us to the heart of the matter. Seeing God as an infinite ocean opens up our understanding and helps us to appreciate what happens to us as we remain faithful to our daily practice. Each time we sit in



meditation we get into the boat again and allow ourselves to be carried by the current in which we live and move and have our being. We cease striving to move in a particular direction but we become attentive to and sensitive to the currents of the Spirit. We find ourselves becoming less wilful and more willing. We learn

to trust in the wisdom of the current.

It is unsettling at first – we think we are moving closer to the horizon but after a while we apprehend that the horizon is always receding. And so we begin to attend to the journey rather than strive continuously for a wished-for destination. We come to appreciate that the ocean, which is God's love, is infinite.

“So, step into the boat each morning and evening and leave the shore behind for the full time of your meditation”

We launch our boat into this infinite ocean twice each day by saying our mantra continuously, returning to it over and over again each time we are distracted by thoughts of doing, of achieving something, anything. As our meditation practice deepens we come to appreciate that, as John Main says, ‘there is only one step between us and God.’ So, step into the boat each morning and evening and leave the shore behind for the full time of your meditation.

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

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tive effects on our mental, emotional and physical health.

Meanwhile, other studies have found that receiving expressions of gratitude in the workplace can result in higher job satisfaction, as well as better sleep, fewer headaches and healthier eating, while expressing gratitude can help others perceive that a constructive relationship can be formed with you – resulting in better relationships.

“However, one of the most interesting examinations of God’s thought concerning gratitude on our part, at least in my opinion, comes as Jesus cleanses ten lepers in the Gospel according to Luke”

If this snippet demonstrates the backing gratitude receives from the scientific community, what about that of our faith’s? Exhortations to thank God for his goodness and to embody gratitude positively pour from the Bible and from the traditions of the Church. St Paul tells us to “give thanks in all circumstances” for this is the “will of God in Christ Jesus for you”. Similarly, Psalm 118:24 tells us to rejoice and be thankful for no other reason

than that “this is the day which the Lord has made”.

God’s take on gratitude

However, one of the most interesting examinations of God’s thought concerning gratitude on our part, at least in my opinion, comes as Jesus cleanses ten lepers in the Gospel according to Luke. Traveling between Samaria and Galilee, ten people suffering the dreadful scourge of leprosy implore him to “have mercy on us”.

Seeing them, Jesus tells them to present themselves to the priests, but “as they went they were cleansed”.

“Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, ‘Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’ And he said to him, ‘Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.’” (Luke 17:15-19)

Interestingly, while all ten lepers showed humility, obedience and faithfulness in carrying out Jesus’s orders – they were on their way to the priests as he instructed when the cure began to take effect, hence they presumably hastened on their way – only one could not contain his gratitude and dashed back to Jesus to fall at his feet.

While we don’t know the nine’s exact movements or thoughts after they leave the picture, we do know that they gave Jesus cause to question sorrowfully where they were

as the Samaritan fell at his feet in thanksgiving.

Fostering gratitude

The testimony of both science and faith agree that gratitude is both good for us, and proper to us. How does one then go about fostering it? As mentioned, it’s entirely possible to acknowledge that ingratitude, griping and complaining are bad for us and yet still to behave as such. Indeed, sometimes it’s very difficult to behave otherwise.

“Pay attention: If we’re caught up in a mental negativity-rut, chances are we never give ourselves an opportunity to notice all of the good things that we truly have to be grateful for”

If this is the situation you find yourself in, or even if it’s milder still, as with so much else, growing in gratitude is a matter of practice. Here are a couple of suggestions to get you started.

● **Balance petitionary prayer with thanksgiving:** If the end of our lives saw scales take account of our petitions on the one hand and our thanksgiving on the other, I suspect the petitions would far outweigh the thanks. Make a conscious effort in prayer to thank God as often as

you petition him, if not more often.

● **Keep a gratitude journal:** A good habit to get into can involve writing down three, or however many, things you’re grateful for each day. Over time, as you look back through your journal, you’ll come to see you have a concrete record of things you’ve been grateful for, and that you indeed have blessings to count.

● **Pay attention:** If we’re caught up in a mental negativity-rut, chances are we never give ourselves an opportunity to notice all of the good things that we truly

have to be grateful for. Get into the habit of being present and paying attention, that you might start to notice the strong legs carrying you to and fro as you will, or the sun on your skin. If it’s not these things, you surely have something else to be grateful for right at this moment.

G.K. Chesterton said “Children are grateful when Santa Claus puts in their stockings gifts of toys or sweets. Could I not be grateful to Santa Claus when he put in my stockings the gift of two miraculous legs?” Our attitude should be just so.



We don't need to 'reinvent the wheel' to attract young Catholics

Personal Profile



Liam Fitzpatrick

Sleepless night-induced eyebags aside, most college students enjoy their first true taste of freedom in third-level education, seizing the opportunity to grow and develop before the 'adult world' whisks them back to reality.

But for Michael Tierney, college caused him to "drift" from his Catholic upbringing, meaning he relied on Christ, as most cultural Catholics do, in times of desperate need—testing periods.

“As he got older and left for college, Mr Tierney's adherence to Catholicism began to wane”

"I stopped going to Sunday Mass when I was in college, and I would only pray occasionally in pretty desperate circumstances," he laughed. "If I needed help for an exam."

Now 26 years old, Mr Tierney has reaffirmed his connection to Catholicism, working in a faith camp and spreading his passion for the Gospel to anyone he can. At a time when the Synod's top priority is reversing the trend of youth disengagement, Mr Tierney hopes that his story, one of genuine con-

nection with Christ, proves young people want to - and are - returning to the Church.

Drifting

The 26-year old Mr Tierney is from Co. Offaly, where he grew up in "the traditional Catholic household". Although he believes the Catholic ethics he learned in that environment have stuck with him his whole life, he recalls never having had a one-to-one connection with Christ.

"I was brought up with good morals and a basic understanding of the teachings of the Gospel, but I never had a personal encounter with Christ when I was young," Mr Tierney said. "And I didn't even know how to, you know, go about having that or experiencing that."

"God for me was always like this 'just judge' king figure who condoned the right thing and punished the wrong," he said. "I never really knew him as a friend, as a brother."



Michael Tierney (left) pictured at the pre-synodal assembly. Photo: John McElroy

As he got older and left for college, Mr Tierney's adherence to Catholicism began to wane. Even though he "always believed that God existed," he admitted that he "just kind of ignored it" while in school.

"In my teens, I would still go to Mass and say my prayers because my family wanted me to, because that was the ritual. But, when I went to college, and I was away from home and my family, I fell out of practice with my faith."

"I didn't know the love of Jesus for me, I hadn't experienced that in a deep level in my soul," he said. "I just drifted away. I felt no need to nourish myself, didn't see a need for that."

Rebirth

After Mr Tierney graduated from college, he continued on his path, teaching English in a small Spanish secondary school. Though he went because he "wanted to enjoy himself" before returning to the

workforce, Mr Tierney finally had his personal "rebirth into the Faith" on his travels.

"I went out partying a lot. I met a bunch of people who weren't exactly good influences on my life," he said. "After a couple of months, I didn't really like the job I was working in anymore... I felt quite isolated in the region of Spain I was living in."

"One night, about seven or eight months into my stay, all of this just kind of hit me and I felt this total lack of meaning in life. Then, I felt the call strongly to turn back to God, and I called out to him."

That night, Michael made a promise, a "recommitment" to the Church.

“I think, to some extent, most of them would have anticipated that move to go deeper into the Faith”

"I promised him that I would go back to the Church, go back to him," Mr Tierney said. "And it wasn't just out of fear, it was sort of in the knowledge that his way was the right way, and that's the path I should have been following."

He acknowledged that experience as a formative moment in his return to the Faith.

"After that night, I didn't go to Mass suddenly every day again, but I knew something very fundamental had changed in me... My mindset was instantly different," he said. "I couldn't go back to the lifestyle I was living before."

Though he was confident about his family's approval, Mr Tierney was nervous about his friends' reactions to his renewed conviction toward Catholicism—a fear he acknowledges was unfounded.

"My friends, most of them actu-

ally have been supportive, which surprised me," he said. "I think, to some extent, most of them would have anticipated that move to go deeper into the Faith."

With that support, Mr Tierney's spirituality increased exponentially.

"With each passing month, my faith was growing," he said. "Suddenly, I was meeting young people in the Faith, I was going to Mass again... I recommitted to things like praying my daily rosary again."

Mr Tierney's revival eventually pushed him into pursuing a year at Holy Family Mission, a residential community for young Catholics that exposed him to "a taste of missionary life."

"I learned a lot about myself, what it was like to live in a community," he said with a laugh. "I got the edges knocked off me!"

Future

Mr Tierney believes the "great beauty and richness" in the history of Catholic teachings can help the Church bring in even more new young members and keep them engaged.

"Any young person I've met in the Faith, it's the same thing. They're not offended by what the Church teaches— they just want the Church to stand up - of course in a very compassionate, very human way - but to not be afraid to be what the Church is."

He advised against grand-sweeping reforms, instead believing that smaller, parish-level actions can make a big impact in the retention of young people.

"We often think we need to reinvent the wheel here, like 'Oh, what's going to attract them, do we need to change this, do we need to change that,'" Mr Tierney said. "The Church just can't be afraid... Trust in God, trust that he will bring them, and don't be afraid to go out and start up these initiatives at the parish level."

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

Sweet Treats

Kiley Britten



Roasted rhubarb and elderflower cake

Elderflower cordial can be found in most stores, making this a delightfully easy yet impressive summer cake to whip up for a party or just as a nice dessert.

Ingredients

For the roasted rhubarb

- 400g rhubarb, cut into 4-5cm slices
- 100g caster sugar
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 3 tbsp elderflower cordial

For the cake

- 115g butter at room temperature
- 95g ground almonds
- 150g caster sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 3 eggs; 2 whole and 1 white only
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp elderflower cordial, plus extra for brushing
- 100g plain flour, sifted
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 130g full-fat natural yogurt
- Elderflowers to garnish (optional)

For the elderflower cream

- 300ml double cream
- 4 tbsp elderflower cordial
- 75g full-fat natural yogurt

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 200°C/Gas 6. Butter two 20cm round cake tins and line the bases with baking parchment.
2. To roast the rhubarb, place on a non-stick baking tray, then top with sugar, lemon juice, zest and cordial. Cover with foil and roast in the oven for 25 minutes or until soft. Remove from the oven and reduce the temperature to 180°C/Gas 5. Strain the rhubarb from the poaching liquid, reserving the syrup.
3. Cream the butter using a mixer, then add in the sugar. Turn up the speed slightly and continue mixing for about 5 minutes until very light and fluffy. Turn the mixer speed down slightly, then add the eggs, egg white, vanilla extract and cordial and mix.
4. Combine flour, almonds, baking powder, and

bicarbonate of soda in a bowl. Turn the mixer to low speed - so it's just stirring - then spoon in the flour and almond mixture in four batches, alternating with spoonfuls of yogurt and finishing with a batch of the flour and almond mixture. Mix until just combined, no streaks remaining, then add ¾ of the roasted rhubarb and 1 tbsp of its syrup to the batter and fold in.

5. Divide the batter evenly between the cake tins and bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes. Remove the cakes from the oven, leave them to cool completely in the tins, then carefully remove from the tins.

6. For the filling, whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl and fold in the remaining roasted rhubarb, along with the elderflower cordial and yogurt.

7. To assemble, place one of the cakes on a plate and prick all over with a skewer or fork. Brush elderflower cordial over the cake. Spoon half the cream onto the cake and spread it to the edges. Place the other cake on top, poke holes, and brush with cordial. Spoon the remaining cream on top of the cake.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



It was hard to turn away from the drama in London

The story that intrigued me most in the media last week was the political upheaval in Britain – an engaging turmoil somewhere between high drama and low circus.

So, it was timely for the recently returned **Sunday Morning Live** (BBC One) to look at the question of moral integrity and leadership. Former Conservative minister Edwina Currie thought integrity was necessary but it wasn't all that was required – you had to get results, and she instanced political leaders who were people of integrity but had failed politically. Having a great 'titanic' leader wasn't enough either, as teamwork and trust was needed. Trust worked in both directions – she wanted leaders to trust people more, to let people take more responsibility for their own actions.

Integrity, she said, was about how you behave, not about the claims you made, but in making this point she made what I thought was an ill-judged claim – that the Churches "condoned child abuse"! Yes, members of the clergy sinned as always, Church leadership was often found wanting, but the abuse was never 'condoned'. I thought the Anglican Bishop of Buckingham Dr Alan Wilson might have taken her up on that but he didn't. He said leaders must be connected to



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces his resignation at Downing Street in London on July 7. Photo: CNS

reality and must have "moral backbone". He didn't want leaders who would fight fire with fire, who would "out-Putin Putin" – he didn't want to live in a world like that.

Author and professor Stefan Stern thought the necessary qualities of leadership varied to some extent with the context – styles of leadership had to be adaptable. Leaders, he said, needed a 'repertoire of behaviour' – it wasn't a one-trick thing. He didn't question the need for integrity but could envisage situations when a leader couldn't tell the whole truth – e.g. in war time. He didn't like the myth-making around populist leaders but instead favoured service, candour, results, teamwork and humility.

For Ruth Yimika Afolabi, founder and CEO of the Magnify Collective (exploring faith, feminism and fashion), integrity and character were key – we needed to trust our leaders to tell us the truth, we needed to know they were working in our best interests. Even in business choosing the charismatic candidate mightn't produce the best results.

Presenter Sean Fletcher steered the discussion well, and drew attention at one stage to the danger of career ambition coming before service. Later he asked if people of faith had more of a foundation for moral integrity, but surprisingly that theme wasn't developed.

However, it did get a better airing in a similar

discussion on **Sunday** (BBC Radio 4). We were told that several bishops had called for a "moment of renewal" in the current upheaval and that the Anglican Bishop of Manchester Dr David Walker had said that the next Prime Minister must have "a clear moral compass". Prof. John Milbank of the University of Nottingham thought religion helped to give us a sense of shared values, a sense that the good is "something objective, not something we made up". He thought as a society we lacked a common view on what constitutes "human flourishing". Fair enough though I thought he overstated it when he said "we simply don't agree about anything whatsoever". Sometimes, I find we agree

PICK OF THE WEEK

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC 1 Sunday July 17, 1.15pm

Claire McCollum goes to Loch Ness to find out about the legend of St Columba's encounter with the monster! In Inverness, two priests from Nigeria tell of using the social media platform TikTok to attract younger people to church.

FILM: CHARBEL

EWTN Sunday July 17, 9pm

(2009) An intimate biography of St Charbel Makhluf, a Lebanese monk known as a healer and miracle worker who dedicated himself fully to sharing and humility, uniting both Christians and Muslims.

Film: Risen

Film 4 Tuesday July 19, 6.55pm

(2016) Joseph Fiennes stars as a Roman legionary officer who meets Jesus after the Resurrection.

on certain basic values but diverge when it comes to the practice.

Another guest was Claire Foster Gilbert of the Westminster Abbey Institute which promotes moral and spiritual values in public life. She called for perspective – this current crisis wasn't like the civil war, but this didn't excuse the current goings on. She thought the 'growing' of trust was hard work and that integrity was like "a muscle you have to exercise".

Presenter William Cawley reflected on this "food for thought" – but isn't it disappointing how we don't get many deep discussions about ethics in politics on mainstream media in the Republic, apart from an occasional interview and short seasons of **The Leap of Faith** on RTE

Radio One?

Still in the public space, on **Times Radio Breakfast** (Sunday) there was discussion on the continuing fallout from the Roe vs Wade reversal, and for the most part you wouldn't think a pro-life view existed. Presenter Calum Macdonald did say that apart from the protests, millions would also be celebrating. His guest, activist Lauren Rankin, called for a "summer of rage", feared "criminalisation of pregnancy, of miscarriage, of ectopic pregnancy" and suggested "this isn't a particularly divisive issue, it's just framed that way". Unbelievable.

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Music

Handel fans are in for a real treat

With its Dublin HandelFest running in Dublin Castle over the weekend – Friday July 15 to Sunday July 17, the Irish Baroque Orchestra (IBO) continues its devotion to the composer who lived in Dublin for almost a year across 1741/42.

Conducted by Peter Whelan, tomorrow's 7.30pm opening event in the Castle's St Patrick's Hall, has IBO joined by choral group Sestina and reflecting the city's vibrant musical scene in the first half of the 18th Century with works by Johann Sigismund Kusser (John Sigismund Cousser) and Henry Purcell.

The former's Serenata da camera *The Applause of Mount Parnassus* was actually written for Dublin Castle

and Queen Anne's birthday in 1711 while Purcell's *Great Partent Hail*, text by Nahum Tate, was commissioned by Trinity College for the centenary of its matriculation ceremonies in January 1694. Both works are included on IBO's new album *The Hibernian Muse* – Linn Records CKD 685.

The Castle's Chapel Royal is Saturday's 6pm venue for IBO's 'Young Artists Showcase' with Handel, John Dowland, Matthew Locke and Purcell. The idea behind this programme is the charting of music in England from the Renaissance to Handel's time.

Sunday afternoon in the Chapel at 2pm has soprano Aisling Kenny and alto Laura Lamph exploring four of Handel's Italian duets with



An image of the music sheet of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* from the British Library. Photo: CNS

thematic links to *Messiah*. It also revives the only surviving cantata – *Dove sei dolce mia vita* – by Philip Percival (1686-1748), director of Irish State Music and responsible for the high standard of music

in Dublin Castle in the early 1700s.

Dublin HandelFest ends on Sunday evening 17, at 7.30pm with Peter Whelan directing Part 1 of *Messiah* in the Chapel Royal. This

scaled down version with single strings and just four voices – Aisling Kenny, Laura Lamph, Rory Lynch and William Gaunt – IBO tells us will "breathe new life into part one of this epic work".

Coming originally from Pressburg, now Bratislava, then in Hungary, Kusser (1660-1727) moved with his family to Stuttgart when he was 14. Later sojourns in Paris and Versailles brought him under the influence of Jean-Baptiste Lully, *maitre de Musique* to Louis XIV. Back in Germany, Kusser spent periods in Hamburg, Nuremberg, Augsburg and Württemberg.

He travelled to London in 1704 and three years later arrived in Dublin, becoming chapel-master in Trinity College in 1711 and then 'Chief Composer and Master of the Musick, attending His Majesty's State in Ireland'. Said to

have influenced Handel, and allegedly a 'quarrelsome fellow', Kusser died in Dublin in 1727.

A partnership between Irish Youth Musical Theatre and the NSO gave Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita* a 'full house' at the NCH recently. With plenty of zest through conductor John Rigby, director Séimí Campbell and choreographer Laura Murphy, the role of Argentina's first lady, Eva Perón, was shared between established Rebecca Storm and fledglings Anna Kearney, Sarah Snee and Anna Gallagher.

Each made a vibrant mark with Harry Lambert the resourceful Che and Evan Byrne a commanding Juan Perón. However, with diction less than clear, much of Tim Rice's libretto was lost in the over-miked presentation. Still, the audience loved it.

Pat O'Kelly



The art of listening to God

St Luke seems to have been fascinated by food! Even the Risen Lord asked the stunned disciples, “have you anything here to eat?” (Luke 24:41). Luke recalls ten meals, each with a distinctive setting and a special message. The last supper and the welcoming banquet for the return of the prodigal son are the best-known meals. This Sunday’s Gospel (Luke 10: 38-42) features a meal in the house of his friends in Bethany.

The sisters, Martha and Mary, represent two ways of serving the Lord. Martha represents the active life, cooking the meal, helping, doing good for others. Mary represents the contemplative life, giving priority to sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to the word of the Lord. On that particular occasion Mary chose the better part. But there were other times when Martha’s contribution was more important. For instance, when their brother Lazarus died, Martha seems to have coped much better than Mary. There is a time for giving and a time for receiving. The contribution of each one finds a place in the liturgy of Mass. Like Mary, we sit and listen to the word of the Lord. Like Martha, we offer the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands. Both of them are celebrated as saints.

Parable

Last Sunday we heard the parable of the good Samaritan. The priest and Levite passed by the wounded man on their way to the prayer service in the temple, whereas the half-pagan Samaritan was moved with compassion and proved to be a loving neighbour. In that instance the active life was the more important part. But in today’s Gospel, Martha, the active sister is told: “You worry and fret about so many things, yet few are needed. Mary has chosen the better part.”

What Jesus said to Martha might be said to many of us. For many people the development of their prayer has to begin with quietening the mind, making space for God in our time and attention. Often, our fears and anxieties are about things which are not all that important. We cannot see the forest because of the trees. Learn how to be quiet and still. The Lord said, “When you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O’Flynn OFM Cap.



secret place.”

Learn how to trust, how to let go and let God. “Be still and know that I am God.”

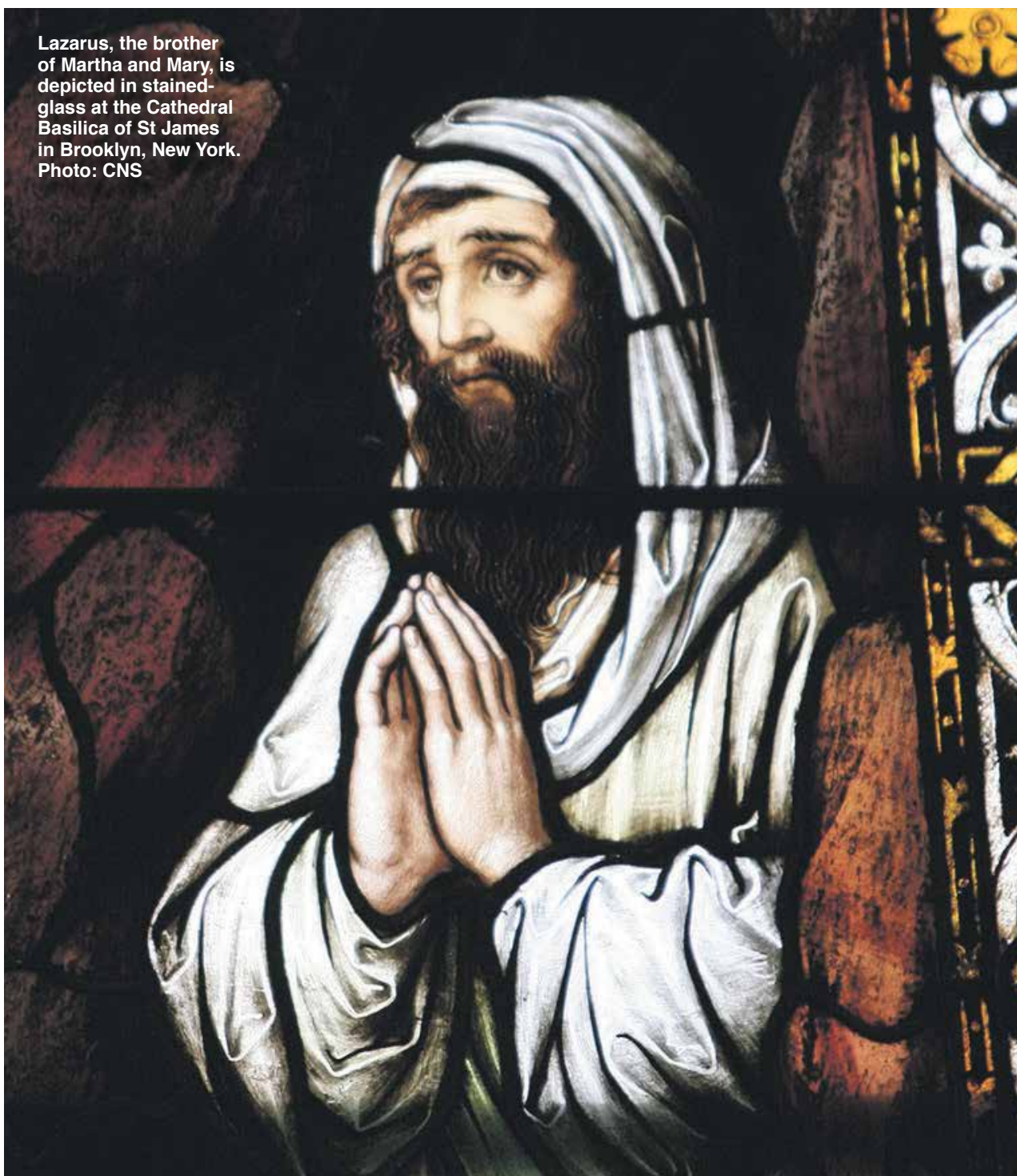
There is a beautiful description of the prayer of listening in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The scene is the well in Samaria where Jesus chats with a local woman. “The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realise it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him” (2560).

“In this digitised, noisy, crazy, pressurised world of today, silence is a rare commodity”

For me, it was an eye-opener to read that my relationship with God doesn’t start when I put some time apart for it. God was already waiting for me. All he asked of the Samaritan woman was her empty bucket. All God asks of me is some empty time. There are 86,400 seconds in a day. How many do I set aside for God? I fret and worry about so many things, yet few are needed. The Catechism quotes from the prophet Jeremiah: “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out cisterns for themselves that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13). Jesus, at the well, asked the woman for her empty bucket. “Whoever drinks the water that I shall give will become a spring of water within, welling up for eternal life” (John 4:14).

In this digitised, noisy, crazy, pressurised world of today, silence is a rare commodity. Search for that quiet place within yourself. Shut the door. Leave your distractions outside for a few minutes. Relax your breathing. The Lord is here waiting for you, thirsting for you. Just God and you.

Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, is depicted in stained-glass at the Cathedral Basilica of St James in Brooklyn, New York. Photo: CNS



Listen, think, remember, pray. Value this time when you are alone with God. Remember, you are God’s work of art. You are precious in his eyes. God is with you. God is in you. Discover who you are. Learn to love this rich silence where you sit like Mary of Bethany at the feet of the Lord and listen to his word.

World-famous

A great saint of our time, Mother Teresa of Kolkata, managed to combine the active service of Martha

with the contemplative listening of Mary. As she became world-famous, many wealthy people would give her a business card with an address to call if she ever needed help. In return, she would give her business card with the address of the spiritual wealth of peace. She called it her five-finger exercise.

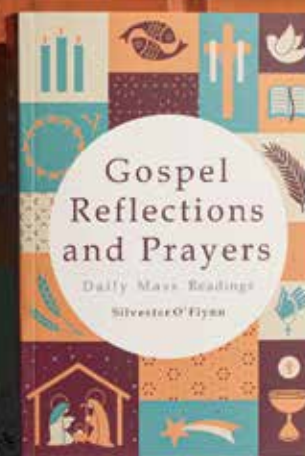
The fruit of silence is prayer: the fruit of prayer is faith: the fruit of faith is love: the fruit of love is service: and the fruit of service is peace.

Prayer

O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you
like a dry weary land without water.
So, I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory. (Psalm 62)

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Coping with our own souls

We have many photographs of Thérèse of Lisieux. Her sister Celine loved using a camera and took many photos of Thérèse, but there's an interesting thing to note in those photos. The British Carmelite Ruth Burrows once did a study of those photos and commented that in all of them, Therese is always somehow alone, by herself, even when in a group photo.

“Yes, that's true for all of us, was true for Thérèse of Lisieux, and was true for Jesus”

Here's the anomaly. Thérèse was a warm, friendly person with good social skills, who was loved by many. Yet in almost all the photographs of her, even when she is pictured together with family members whom she loved deeply, there is always a certain loneliness, an aloneness, that's evident. However, the loneliness she exhibits there is not the aloneness of someone at odds with family and community, but a certain distance of soul, something that might be termed moral loneliness. What is this? Can our souls be lonely even while we are bathed in friendship, love, and family?

Yes, that's true for all of us, was true for Thérèse of Lisieux, and was true for Jesus.

Looking at the Gospel narratives that describe Jesus' passion and death, we see that what they



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

emphasise is not Jesus' physical suffering. While those sufferings must have been horrific, the gospels never dwell on them. What they highlight is Jesus' emotional suffering, his aloneness, his loneliness of soul as he endured his suffering and death. They point out how, in his neediest hour, while alone, abandoned, betrayed, misunderstood, humiliated, and in effect unanimity-minus-one, he was suffering more in soul than in body.

Agonies

Luke's Gospel tells us that his agony took place in a garden. This too is revealing. Jesus had agonies elsewhere, in the temple, in the desert, and in his hometown, but his most searing one took place in a garden. Why a garden? As we know, in archetypal literature, gardens are not for growing vegetables, but for delight. The

archetypal garden is the mythical place of delight, where lovers meet, where friends drink wine together, and where Adam and Eve were naked, innocent, and didn't know it. The Jesus who sweats blood in the garden of Gethsemane is not Jesus the Teacher, Jesus the Magus, Jesus the Healer, or Jesus the Miracle-worker. In the garden, he is Jesus the Lover, the one who delights in love and who suffers in love – and it's to this garden of suffering, intimacy, and delight to which he calls us.

The gospels emphasise that what Jesus suffered most deeply in his crucifixion was not the pain of being scourged and having nails driven through his hands, but a deep loneliness of soul that dwarfs even the most intense physical pain. Jesus wasn't a physical athlete, but a moral one, doing battle in the arena with the soul.

What's moral loneliness?

I first encountered this term in the writings of Robert Coles, who used it to describe Simone Weil. What it suggests is that inside each of us there's a deep place, a virginal centre, where all that's tender, sacred, cherished, and precious is held and guarded. It's there that we are most genuinely ourselves, most genuinely sincere, most genuinely innocent. It's where we unconsciously remember that once, long before consciousness, we were caressed by hands far gentler than our own. It's where we still sense the primordial kiss of God.

“What's to be learned from Jesus' struggle with moral loneliness?”

In this place, more than any other, we fear harshness, disrespect, being shamed, ridiculed, violated, lied to. In this place we are deeply vulnerable and so we are scrupulously careful as to whom we admit into this space, even as our deepest longing is precisely for someone to share that place with us. More than we yearn for someone to sleep with sexually,

we yearn for someone to sleep with there, morally, a soulmate. Our deepest yearning is for moral consummation.

But this isn't easy to find. Rare is the perfect moral partner, even inside of a good marriage or friendship. And so we perennially face a double temptation: Resolve the tension by settling for certain compensations, tonics, that help us make it through the night or, perhaps worse, because the pain is too much to live with, giving ourselves over to bitterness, anger, and cynicism, thus denigrating the great dream. Either way, we sell ourselves short and settle for second best.

What's to be learned from Jesus' struggle with moral loneliness? This: he refused both the road of compensatory tonics and that of soul-hardening cynicism. He stayed the course and carried the tension to term.

Moral loneliness

Our own moral loneliness can be tyrannical. However, that's not a license or invitation to begin jettisoning commitments, responsibilities, morals, and whatever else it takes to try to find that elusive soulmate for whom we yearn so deeply. What Jesus (and persons like Thérèse of Lisieux and Simone Weil) model is how to carry that tension ideally, how to carry our solitude at a high level, and how to resist, no matter the pain, calling second-best by any other name than second-best.

“Looking at the Gospel narratives that describe Jesus' passion and death, we see that what they emphasise is not Jesus' physical suffering”

BookReviews

Peter Costello



An Irish culture flamed upon the night



Robert O'Byrne at work.

Left without a handkerchief,
by Robert O'Byrne
(Lilliput Press, €18.00/£16.00)

Ian d'Alton

The title of this erudite, elegant and elegiac book from 'The Irish Aesthete' blog writer Robert O'Byrne captures the essential "grand tragedy" that befell the Irish gentry in their "twilight", to quote Mark Bence-Jones. Here O'Byrne takes advantage of a tight focus and a circumscribed range to shine the spotlight on a traumatic period – the Civil War – for this peoplehood marooned on the wrong side of the Irish revolution.

The War of Independence between 1919 and 1921 had seen many Big Houses burnt, seemingly because of the sympathies and backgrounds of their owners – usually unequivocal loyalists and with military connections.

The burnings in 1922 and 1923 were a little different. Many houses were destroyed because their owners had now swung behind the Treaty settlement and the hope of restoration of law and order under the Free State government.

That was symbolised by those of the southern loyalist community who accepted nomination to the Free State Senate. It might have been a symbol, but it had real-life consequences as these individuals and families put themselves in the firing-line.

The attacks were not so much a stroke for national freedom, as an attack on the persons and property of members of the second chamber of new national assembly, the Oireachtas.

O'Byrne is expert in putting flesh on stone bones, and his genius is to weave people and place into one coherent whole. He senses well the idea of how these houses were seen by their inhabitants, as little (and sometimes not-so-little) places apart, enclaves in an Ireland different to theirs – in Elizabeth Bowen's words "Sometimes for days together a family may not happen to leave its own demesne"; or Joseph Hone's "High on the hill behind two white gates, we were a world and a law unto ourselves".

The Anglo-Irish may be inescapably tied to the landscape – but it is so often a relationship of murderous love. This book is about burnings; their back-stories and after-words.

The author takes ten 'Big Houses' – most of them in the south and west of the island

– and tells the tale of their destruction by fire in the civil war period. As this reviewer has noted in a conference paper in 2019, fire held a particular terror for the owners of country houses. It was to the Big House as kryptonite to Superman.

Accidental burning was a constant threat – 76 Big House fires are recorded in Munster and Connacht, for instance, from the late 18th to the mid-20th centuries. Fire, by opening the house "to the Irish sky", in J. G. Farrell's formulation, enabled the landscape to reclaim what was its own, through the agency of those other fundamental elements of water, wind and earth.

The ritual of destruction often required the occupants to watch the funeral-pyre. In June 1921 Lord and Lady Bandon had to witness the burning of Castle Bernard; the feisty elderly countess defiantly sang *God Save the King* in her nightdress on the lawn as the Castle behind her burned. In Molly Keane's novel *Two days in Aragon*, Sylvia Fox is unluckier: tied to a laurel tree she has to face the house as it is consumed by fire "...so that she might watch her own soul burning".

This beautifully-written book with atmospheric photographs locates the destruction of these ten houses within the context of the families and individuals who constructed them, lived in them, and ultimately had to leave them.

The Irish gentry has always been good for a rattling yarn or two, or more, and O'Byrne takes full advantage of the colourful cast of characters that often seemed to be acting in their own domestic dramas to try and explain the whys and wherefores of the burnings. He has not only dug deep into public archives, but also has had valuable access to the private papers of many of the featured families.

One most valuable part of his structure is to examine the aftershocks – the quest, often bureaucratic, complex and fruitless, for compensation and redress, the attempts to rebuild, the enforced and often unhappy exile of those driven out and, most poignantly, the devastating effect of loss on those whose stewardship had accidentally coincided with war and conflict.

It is perhaps little comfort that the cultural vandalism as a result of destruction – Ardfer Abbey in Kerry is a particularly egregious example described by O'Byrne – might be seen as a sort of comeuppance for a class responsible for so many house destructions during the evictions of earlier centuries.

The saint in a



A Poet in the House:
Patrick Kavanagh at Priory Grove,

by Elizabeth O'Toole
(Lilliput Press, €15.00/£13.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

Elizabeth O'Toole's memoir is a fascinating snapshot of Patrick Kavanagh in his later years, in very different circumstances than people often imagined him in.

Kavanagh was born near Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan, on October 23 1904. After attending the local national school he assisted his father in a shoe-repairing business and a small farm.

A rhymist from his earliest years, three of his poems were published in the *Irish Statesman* in 1925 and thereafter his poems began to appear in English journals. From 1931 onwards he was a frequent visitor to Dublin where he became known in literary circles as the 'farmer poet'.

After a brief spell in London Kavanagh returned to Dublin in 1939 and contributed to *The Bell*,

which was edited by Seán Ó Faoláin, with Frank O'Connor as the poetry editor. He eked out a precarious existence as a freelance journalist writing features and book reviews for the three daily newspapers. He also contributed a gossip column in the *Irish Press* and book reviews and reports for *The Standard*.

“Among them was Archbishop John Charles McQuaid, who visited him, sent him generous remittances by courier”

Kavanagh became established as a character-about-town, tall, shabbily-dressed, wearing a battered hat and thick horn-rimmed glasses, walking like a ploughman and with a pronounced Monaghan accent. While enjoying this notoriety, he resented intrusive familiarity and cultivated a gruff rudeness to ward off un-

wanted company.

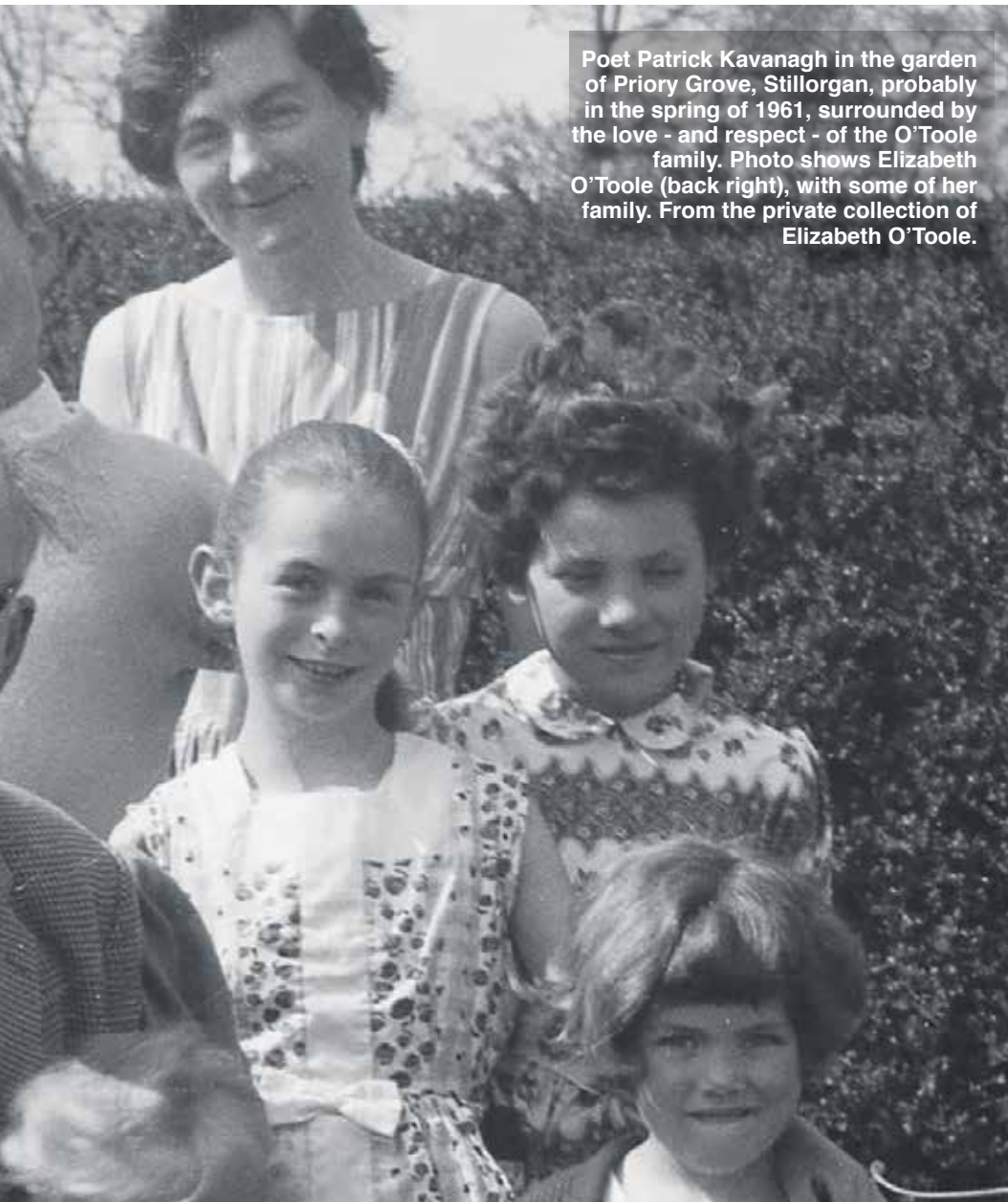
In the magazine *Kavanagh's Weekly* (April 12 to July 5 1952), which he wrote with his brother Peter (who paid the printer), he irritated and alienated so many influential persons and institutions that after its closure he was virtually unemployable in Ireland. His life hit rock bottom between the spring of 1954 and that of 1955 when he was involved in a high-court libel action against *The Leader* – his foolish attempt to win at the libel game. Then by March 1955 he was suffering from lung cancer.

Owing to the poor recompense he received for his literary work and a 'serious drink problem' his life in Dublin became more and more precarious. Numerous well-wishers assisted him. Among them was Archbishop John Charles McQuaid, who visited him, sent him generous remittances by courier.

With the help of Michael Tierney, President of UCD, the Archbishop ensured that he was hired by the College as an extramural

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.

battered hat



Poet Patrick Kavanagh in the garden of Priory Grove, Stillorgan, probably in the spring of 1961, surrounded by the love - and respect - of the O'Toole family. Photo shows Elizabeth O'Toole (back right), with some of her family. From the private collection of Elizabeth O'Toole.

lecturer. However, he had no friends in the English Department. But there were friends in the Bohemian world such as John Ryan and *Envoy*, and also on *The Irish Farmers Journal* where he had a column for years, that now receives little attention from critics. But in this book we have something very different: a contented poet in a domestic situation, where the poet's many human qualities shine through.

No one was more generous to Kavanagh at that time than the O'Toole family in the Dublin suburb at Stillorgan, where he was a house guest for six months in the spring and winter of 1961.

This is how Elizabeth O'Toole describes how he arrived for his sojourn with the family: "It was a winter night after Christmas. There had been a relentless downpour of sleet and rain all day. It was bitterly cold, chilling to the bone. Hearing our car, I ran out to welcome my hus-

band, Jimmy. In the half-dark I nearly fell over a sack on the doorstep. I bent down to pick it up. It was soaking wet, and it wasn't a sack at all. It was Patrick Kavanagh."

“In so doing he also provides a gossip account of the bohemian life-style of the Dublin literati of the 1950s and 1960s”

The O'Tooles treated Kavanagh as one of their own. He was given facilities to exercise his skill as a cobbler, to compose his poetry, to engage in his other literary pursuits and to attend to his correspondence. He developed a bond between himself and the four O'Toole children and enthusiastically joined in all the family outings.

The result, vouched for by Elizabeth O'Toole, was a ge-

nial, happy and relaxed Patrick Kavanagh far from his popular profile as an angry, embittered curmudgeon. One of Elizabeth's other abiding memories of her close association with Kavanagh was the poet's conviction about the presence of God in everything.

In an *Afterward* Brian Lynch adds a useful corrective overview of Elizabeth O'Toole's memoir and that of her daughter, Margot. In so doing he also provides a gossip account of the bohemian life-style of the Dublin literati of the 1950s and 1960s.

Leading poets

When he died on November 30 1967, Patrick Kavanagh left a *corpus* of literary work which marked him out to have been one of the leading poets in the Ireland of his time.

Only now is the deeply religious nature of his poetry receiving full recognition, revealing him to have been a sort of saint, if a saint in a battered hat.

Journalism can be a dangerous calling

Line of Fire: Journeys Through A Media Minefield,

by David O'Donoghue
(Orpen Press, €17.00/£15.00)

Joe Carroll

The “media minefield” that the author negotiates had its dangers like being thrown on the breadline at short notice but mainly it is a humorous telling of a bleeding on provincial newspapers, a stint in RTÉ and then into the world of freelance foreign correspondent in France, Belgium and the Netherlands before ending up with the doomed Century Radio in Dublin.

When the freelance income dropped, he switched to the international trade press and also to teaching radio journalism in Britain.

Along the way he keeps the reader amused with anecdotes about newsroom mishaps and embarrassing moments with interviewees. He also interjects some moralising about the hypocrisy of politicians and even of fellow journalists.

“His main recollection is that at the press conference in the Irish embassy, the new leader had extra cushions piled in his armchair to appear bigger than Brian Lenihan in another armchair”

The son of a Cork bank manager, the author went to Blackrock College and drifted into journalism via a provincial paper, in his case the *Midland Tribune* based in Birr. With that experience he landed “the big job” in Dublin, the RTÉ newsroom. Well, not so big as he found out.

He found he was doing the tough stints like the “graveyard shift” when he and Charles Mitchel had to wait until the late news while the other staff were in the pubs. He and Mitchel got on well. When the well-known newsreader got letters from lonely older women looking for advice, he simply sent them a photograph of a much younger Charles saying “best wishes”.

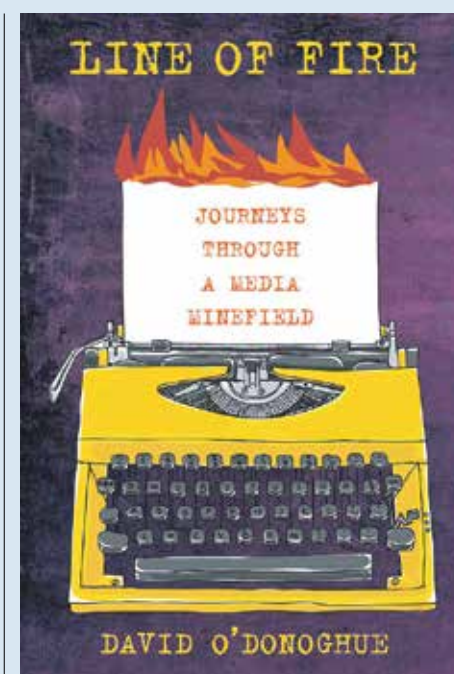
“I never give advice,” he advised.

Another colleague filing to a Canadian news channel on the death of Eamon de Valera invented his dying words as “I did my best for Ireland”. This was even picked up by some Irish newspapers.

He was part of the RTE team covering the kidnapping of the Dutch industrialist, Tiede Herrema. This meant sleeping in the RTÉ caravan in a field in Monastererevin. When Herrema was released the press were to be driven in army lorries to his press conference. Oddly only the ITN lorry moved and the British TV team scooped the rest.

But the author tipped off his newsroom that the captured kidnappers were on their way to the Bridewell so RTÉ got exclusive pictures of Eddie Gallagher and Marion Coyle arriving in Dublin.

Another RTÉ colleague, then in the Official IRA, was ordered to set fire to the bus used by the South African Springboks during their tour of Ireland in January 1970. He and an armed



accomplice broke the windows of the bus outside the Shelbourne Hotel, but were chased away by Special Branch men who fired shots over their heads.

He later reported for duty in RTÉ and was given the job of editing the report of the incident. That is the version he gave the author shortly before he died years later. Oddly enough two onetime heads of news in RTÉ in its early days were former chiefs of staff of the IRA in the 1940s.

After stints for RTÉ in Belfast the author landed a job in Paris with Agence France Presse, translating French news stories for the English language service. He covered Charles Haughey's first overseas visit to Paris after becoming Taoiseach in 1979.

His main recollection is that at the press conference in the Irish embassy, the new leader had extra cushions piled in his armchair to appear bigger than Brian Lenihan in another armchair. An embassy official later confirmed off the record that this was true.

Self-financing

After a spell in exotic Singapore, the author got a job in the Netherlands with EuropaTV, a new pan-European TV station, financed by RTÉ, four other national stations and the European Commission until it got enough advertising to be self-financing. It was to produce multilingual programmes with a wide appeal.

One of his interviews was with a maverick Dutch priest who had been elected to the European Parliament and wanted the Pope charged with murder because the Church's ban on condoms had led to thousands of deaths through AIDS especially in Africa. Then Europa TV ran out of money and closed down.

The author was lucky enough to get a job with the new national radio station opening up in Ireland called Century Radio but bad luck struck again and the station closed in November 1991 after running out of funds. Ever resilient, the author studied for a PhD which he turned into a book on Nazi broadcasts to Ireland in World War II, and became a parliamentary reporter in Dáil Éireann. At last he was out of the line of fire.

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

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 or phone 01 881 5962

FOCUS
Ireland

Operation Smile

Charity Regulatory Authority No. 20054588 Revenue Number: CHY 15661

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

Operation Smile envisions a future where health and dignity are championed through safe surgery.

Get in touch with Kristen Bell, Legacy & Fundraising Manager, on

01 667 6659 or kristen@operationsmile.ie or visit operationsmile.ie/LastingSmile

CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS

PADRAIG, 66, single, leaving cert, Longford, non smoker, social drinker, happy, glass half full guy. Wishes to meet female for dating, romance, view to RC wedding. Please note I am not covid vaccinated. Please reply to Box #5071 or splitcans@yahoo.com.

GERARD M HOPKINS FEST

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS WEEK Newbridge, celebrating Hopkin's vision and inspiration. Poetry, lectures, art, music, conservation. Frankie Gavin, Saturday the 23rd at 8pm. Barry Magovern, Wednesday the 27th at 8pm. Newbridge College Theatre (abbottviv@gmail.com). Christian culture needs celebrating!

SERVICES

ALL UNWANTED home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

Remembering
**MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS**

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**We will pass
on the flame
of faith.**

For over 130 years, *The Irish Catholic* has been a voice of hope and inspiration for Catholics in Ireland. Help us pass on the flame of faith by remembering us in your Will.

Phone 01 6874028
info@irishcatholic.ie

The Irish Catholic



By choosing to leave a gift or a donation at any time, you are choosing to share God's love with those who need it most.

To learn more about the Holy Father's official charity for overseas mission, call Fiona on 01 497 2035 or visit www.missio.ie

MISSIO
IRELAND

GOAL

Please remember GOAL in your Will

45 years on we continue to deliver lifesaving support to the most vulnerable people in our world. Leaving a gift in your Will is priceless.

Contact Courtenay on 01 2809779 or via email at cpollard@goal.ie

Registered Charity No. 20010980; CHY 6271

Students for Life is seeking a dynamic and motivated individual for their role as Student Outreach Officer. This is an exciting opportunity for a suitable candidate who is deeply committed to pro-life activism.

Part-Time Role: 15 hours per week
Closing date: Wednesday, 20th July 2022
Apply here: jobs@vie.ie

Go to www.studentsforlife.ie/jobs for more job details



STUDENTS FOR LIFE.IE

prolife
campaign

We're looking for a Media Officer to join our human rights organisation.

We have an opportunity for an ambitious and passionate individual to help drive and foster good media relationships in order to achieve positive pro-life change across Ireland. As a Media Officer you will lead in planning, organising, communicating, and delivering media content across traditional and new media platforms.

Location: Initially remote working with some work based in Dublin
Closing date for applications: Wednesday, 20th July 2022
Apply here: jobs@vie.ie

See more about the job at <https://prolifecampaign.ie/media-officer/>

The Irish Catholic

PREPAID CLASSIFIED AD COUPON

Please print your advertisement in the coupon, placing ONE word in each space. Below, please print your name and address. Do you require a Box Number? YES ☐ NO ☐ (Please tick ✓) Box Number €6 extra.

STATE UNDER WHICH HEADING YOUR AD IS TO APPEAR:

Minimum charge of €24.60 (inc. VAT) for 5 lines (25 words). Extra lines €4.92 each.

No. of insertions: _____ weeks

Miracle Prayer €40

1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					€29.52
7					€34.44

Name and contact detail form MUST be filled out

Name

Address

Landline Mobile

The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.

I enclose Cheque/PO: €.....I wish to pay by Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Laser ☐
My Visa/Mastercard/Lasercard number is:

.....

Expiry Date:Signature

Phone: 01 687 4094

The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

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

Email Anna Sadlier at anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie or call 01 679 3188



www.hospicefoundation.ie



Your heart for the homeless



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

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

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

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering

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

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

Will the MSC Missions

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

Please help us with a gift in your Will

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

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

Trócaire

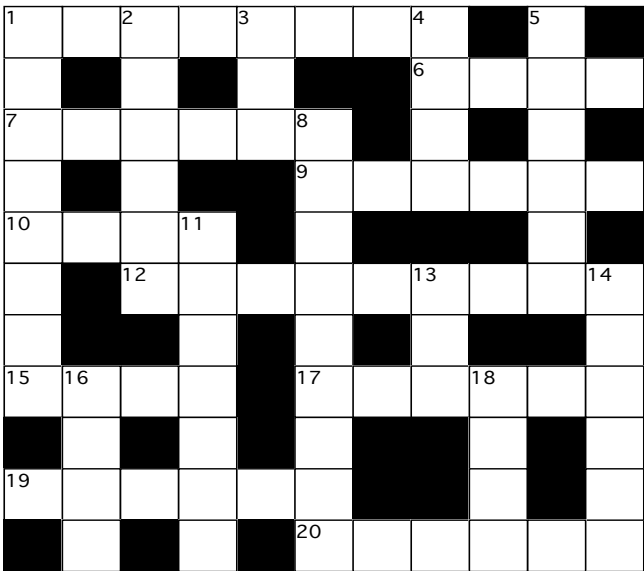
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

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

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 441



Across

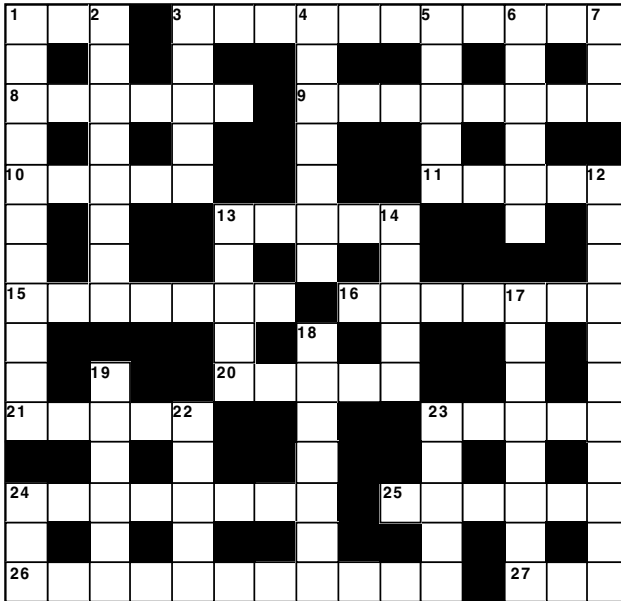
- 1 Person who tells jokes for a living (8)
- 6 Type of cheese (4)
- 7 "It doesn't matter which of the two you use - _____ will do" (6)
- 9 Reply to a question (6)
- 10 It's made of coral (4)
- 12 A practice session before staging a play (9)
- 15 Write this to remember what to buy when you go shopping (4)
- 17 We need this gas to live (6)
- 19 These people make bread and cakes (5)
- 20 Newspaper boss (6)

Down

- 1 Happy, in a good mood (8)
- 2 Mum (6)
- 3 You can change the colour of hair or material with this (3)
- 4 Headlines (4)
- 5 Use it to take photographs (6)
- 8 A jockey tries to make it run as fast as it can (9)
- 11 You could pluck it from a bird (7)
- 13 A beam of sunlight (3)
- 14 "That one is shorter, this one is _____" (6)
- 16 This Russian ruler was nicknamed 'the Terrible' (4)
- 18 A baby of this animal is called a kid (4)

Crossword

Gordius 567



Across

- 1 DNA is distributed also (3)
- 3 Marine area in the Atlantic, a breeding place for eels (8,3)
- 8 & 23d Scottish hero who learned patience from watching a spider (6,5)
- 9 Impending, about to happen (8)
- 10 Virile (5)
- 11 Spanish-style snacks (5)
- 13 Ancient Greek famous for his fables (5)
- 15 Coming from the Holy Land is a mixture of ale, Iris (7)
- 16 Unyielding (7)
- 20 The name of a fish in a movie title (5)
- 21 Sea creature cooked which is cooked to make calamari (5)
- 23 Khaki or tan, perhaps (5)
- 24 Such wine may make a goat pine (8)
- 25 Interred (6)
- 26 Inflammatory (11)

Down

- 27 Dried grass (3)
- 1 Rancorous, bitter (11)
- 2 Stylish (8)
- 3 Expression of regret (5)
- 4 Espy briefly (7)
- 5 & 12d The weather on this feast is supposed to represent what will come in the next forty days (5,8,3)
- 6 The Himalayan guide may phrase it differently (6)
- 7 Behind at sea (3)
- 12 See 5 down
- 13 Permit, let (5)
- 14 The oldest city in Northern Italy, associated with St Anthony (5)
- 17 Scold (8)
- 18 Beg earnestly (7)
- 19 Administrative body whose members are typically government-appointed (6)
- 22 As above; same again (5)
- 23 See 8 across
- 24 An explosive sound from Dad (3)

SOLUTIONS, JULY 07

GORDIUS NO. 566

Across – 1 Dip 3 Triceratops 8 Utopia 9 Amicably 10 Hooch 11 Totem poles 13 Tot up 15 Relaxed 16 Quipped 20 Seine 21 Felix Mendelssohn 24 Muscadet 25 Psycho 26 Birds of prey 27 Nun

Down – 1 Daughters of Charity 2 Protocol 3 Thigh 5 Ascot 6 Orbits 7 Spy 13 Treks 14 Prune 17 Publican 18 Hilltop 19 Closer 22 X-rays 23 Pasty 24 Mob

CHILDREN'S No. 440

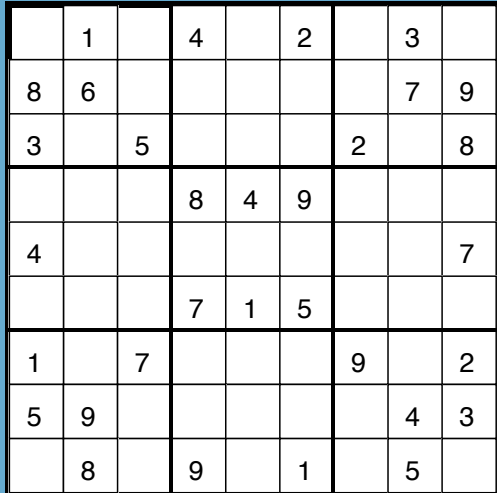
Across – 1 Three points 6 Ancient 8 Sir 9 Knitted 10 Easel 13 Untidy 16 Enough 17 Tunnel 19 Lid 20 Genius

Down – 1 Tracksuit 2 Receipt 3 Elected 4 Nurses 5 Spiral 7 Tide 11 Avoids 12 Engine 14 Inn 15 Yells 18 Use

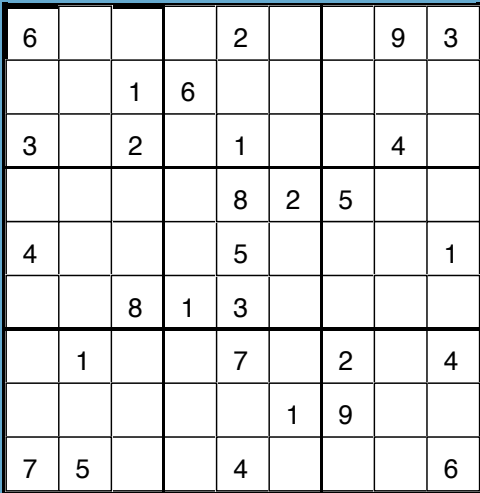
Sudoku Corner

441

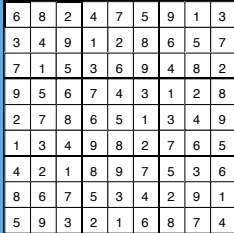
Easy



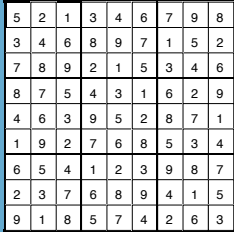
Hard



Last week's Easy 440



Last week's Hard 440



Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



Grasping the nettle and cutting Masses

THIRTY YEARS AGO, I was invited along with a colleague to lead a parish mission in Newfoundland on the east coast of Canada. It was an interesting and memorable experience. Newfoundland has very close connections with Ireland and indeed most of the population spoke with distinct Irish accents. Many of the family names were ones associated particularly with the south east of Ireland from where many Newfoundlanders or 'New-fies' can trace their roots. One of my more painful memories of that mission is that it was the first time I heard stories of child abuse, some of them involving Church personnel. Newfoundland was one of the first areas in the western world to expose incidents of child abuse involving priests and religious. A film called *The Boys of St Vincent* was released in 1992 and it told the story of child abuse in a Church-run orphanage in Newfoundland.

In the years since leading that parish mission I have maintained an interest in Newfoundland and the Church there. Sadly, the story around child abuse got much worse over the past three decades and has reached a point where the Archdiocese of St John's has now declared bankruptcy, having been held respon-



sible for paying tens of millions of dollars in compensation to victims. Church attendance has dwindled and the diocese had no choice but to sell off all its assets including parochial houses and church buildings themselves. I understand a group of Catholics came together to buy the cathedral from the diocese so that it could continue to be a church. Priests are renting houses to live in and some have taken up part-time jobs to make ends meet. The familiar infrastructure of the Church is being dismantled. It is hard to imagine what that must be like for the Catholic people in Newfoundland.

In Ireland, we in the Catholic community have been similarly devastated by the effects of child abuse and other related revelations during the past thirty years. To my knowledge, no diocese in Ireland has had to declare bankruptcy although some have had to pay out significant sums in compensation and legal costs. Our congregations are also dwindling and as the new Bishop of Galway has noted, the Covid pandemic has escalated the decline in our congregations by about ten years. Every diocese is involved in conversations and listening processes about how we can respond to our changed pastoral landscape. We will have to grapple with many different aspects but one thing that strikes me is that our present physical infrastructure ie., churches and Church-related

buildings are much too big for our present needs. Despite many reductions in recent years, we still have far too many Masses for the numbers attending. We may not be forced to sell our Church owned buildings for the same reason as the community in Newfoundland but we will still have to grasp the nettle sooner rather than later. These are difficult questions and many people will be stung as the nettle is grasped. Nobody will want to see the closure, or even the scaling back of services within their local church. The question of parish identity or identity of a particular church community within a parish is hugely significant but the stark reality is that the present number of churches and Masses is unsustainable.

Prayer for a parish church

Lord keep this Church the right kind of Church that it is. Keep it be from being the wrong kind, the Church of the cold shoulder or the Church of the sharp tongue or the Church of the closed mind. Let it be always the Church of the open mind, a Church of care for the broken heart, a Church of mercy for the faltering step, a Church that mirrors God's love for his people and the timeless compassion of Mary, God's mother, help of the half defeated. May this Church be a Church that understands, "We must love one another or die"

— Fr Ronan Drury RIP.

The long and the short of it!

Two Belfast men, a Catholic and a Protestant, were chatting one day about betting on the horses. In relation to this matter the Catholic man told his Protestant neighbour about the power of lighting candles for a successful outcome. Well, your man listened with great interest and decided to give it a try. Unfortunately, after many unsuccessful attempts he eventually complained to his Catholic friend. The Catholic man enquired if he was lighting the long candles or the short ones.

"The short ones" replied his friend.

"Ah! That explains everything" said the Catholic. "The short ones are for the dogs to win!"



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU

Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends 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:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU**
€..... **UKRAINE APPEAL**
€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state no. of Masses _____)
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

To donate online go to
www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

IC/07/14