

The Irish Catholic

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Bishop warns married priests are not the answer to 'crisis of faith'

Radical plan will see Masses cut by $\frac{1}{3}$

EXCLUSIVE
Chai Brady

Unveiling a new plan that will see Masses cut in a bid to enliven congregations and enhance liturgy, Bishop Dermot Farrell has said that the vocations crisis is really a crisis of faith that will not be solved by making celibacy optional.

Speaking exclusively to *The Irish Catholic* ahead of the launch of the plan, the Bishop of Ossory poured cold water on the idea of ordaining married men as a way to boost clerical numbers.

Dr Farrell warned that the issue facing parishes is much deeper than the shortage of priests. "It is a faith issue fundamentally. If you look at the shortage of vocations the issue there is the faith,

because people say 'why don't we ordain married men?' But if you look down the church on a Sunday, you say 'well where are they going to come from?'

"It's not going to be solved by just ordaining married men or even deacons. You look down the church and say 'well where are the deacons going to come out of?' It is a crisis of faith we're dealing with fundamentally," he said.

No comparison

On the Amazon Synod – where the Pope was requested to look at the issue of ordaining married men – the bishop insists that there is no comparison. It is, he says, "a completely different reality to what we have...in the Amazon, you have whole tracks of territory the size of Ireland

with one priest. We're a long, long, long way from there. We do not at the moment have a shortage of priests, what we have is a surplus of infrastructure and we can't go on maintaining that infrastructure or providing services in all of it as we have here before – nor indeed do we need to".

The former president of the national seminary at Maynooth says he is not hostile to the idea of married priests, but knows that it is not a magic wand. "I think that [married priests] is a possibility yes, certainly something that could be considered in the future, but as I said you still have the problem: where are they going to come from?"

Bishop Farrell revealed that from December 1, Sunday Masses in Ossory will be

» Continued on Page 3

Nun better than a Masters!



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Chancellor of St Patrick's College, Maynooth presents Sr Margaret Callaghan of Dysart Carmel, Fife, Scotland, with a Masters in Theology, specialising in Carmelite Studies. See also Page 13.

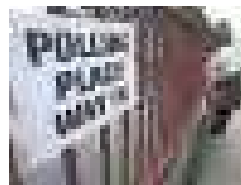
MICHAEL KELLY

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ELECTION FEVER

Will the North's voters hold politicians to account? PAGE 12



DAVID QUINN

Should the nuns tell the National Maternity Hospital to go elsewhere? PAGE 11



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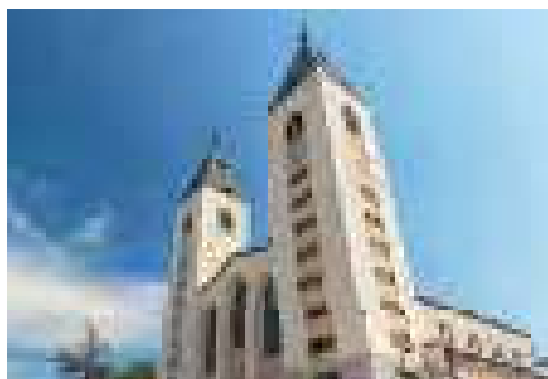
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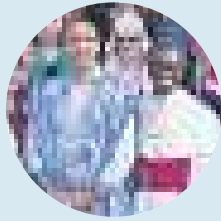


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Vocations will only arise from vibrant faith communities

Part, of course, from the divine guarantee *non praevalerunt* ('The gates of Hell shall not prevail'), part of the genius of the Catholic Church in facing the challenges of every era is the ability to read the signs of the times. Take the crisis of the Reformation. The huge renewal and reform of Catholicism that took place after that catastrophic event was the Counter Reformation and the Council of Trent (1545-1563) which undertook a root and branch reform of the Church's structures.

The conciliar fathers wanted to underline the importance of care for souls in the Church, so parishes with parish priests took on primary responsibility for education in the faith. To oversee all of this, the conciliar fathers saw the role of a resident bishop as key. Up to this point, it was not uncommon for bishops to live far from their dioceses and have only a passing interest in the people there.

Structures

Trent changed all of that and the system of parishes

and dioceses has served the Church very well. But, structures are only useful in as much as they serve the mission of the Church – that is to make Christ known to the world.

The job of the Church is to read the signs of the times. That's what Bishop of Ossory Dermot Farrell is talking about in his interview in this newspaper this week when he discusses some of the radical reforms in his diocese that are aimed at ensuring it is fit for the mission of the Church.

Of course, people will say that this is only happening in response to a shortage of priests and there is surely truth in this. But, some of the most important reforms in the Church have happened at times of the greatest necessity.

Much of the discussion about the Church in Ireland centres on a mentality that

thinks first and foremost about keeping the show on the road. Too often the solution is seen as resting in asking hard-pressed priests to say even more Masses.

This is not fair, practical or lifegiving. When the sacraments become a conveyor belt the faith of the people suffers and Mass becomes merely a chore to fit in to a busy week rather than the summit and source of the Christian life.

“Obsessing about vocations alone without seeing the wider crisis of Faith will not encourage young people to consider priesthood”

Ossory is cutting Masses by a third. This is

radical. But it is also an acknowledgement that fewer people are going to Mass.

And if faith is to be renewed it is going to mean these congregations of a few coming together to make more vibrant and credible faith communities.

Vocations are part of this. Bishop Farrell is correct in saying that the crisis of vocations is principally a crisis of Faith. Vocations will only come from a faith community. Obsessing about vocations alone without seeing the wider crisis of Faith will not encourage young people to consider priesthood or religious life.

Vocations only make sense in the context of another commitment in the journey of formed intentional disciples that must be at the heart of any authentic renewal and reform of the Church.

Clonard confraternity to close after 122 years

The women's confraternity at Clonard Monastery in west Belfast is to close after more than 120 years.

The 122-year-old Belfast association, which drew thousands of members when it was set up in July 1897, will meet for the final time on November 24 with a closing Mass.

Fr Peter Burns, Rector of

Clonard, said the women's confraternity now draws only “very, very small” numbers and after consultation with its secretaries and the women who still attend “the Redemptorist community decided it would be more honourable and fitting to bring closure and to do so with appropriate celebration and thanksgiving”.

School students offered helping hand in Religion

The annual Leaving Cert RE-Vision day is being called a “fantastic opportunity” for students taking Religion as an exam subject in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, according to organisers. Taking place on Saturday, November 23 from 9am–3.30pm, leading theologians will give exam-focused insight for the upcoming exam in June 2020.

It costs €30 with a discount fee of €20 for DEIS schools. A welcome tea/coffee and lunch is included.

Tickets are available through Eventbrite. On campus accommodation is available through the Maynooth Conference and Accommodation Centre. For more information email admissions@spcm.ie

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As many fellow Irish might relate, for my whole life my faith has been there, but it was just something that I could let off rather than something I was passionate about. Like I would say I was Catholic the same way I would say I have black hair. Then through a family friend I was invited to do NET. I can honestly say now after finishing my year that it was the best year of my life. NET helped me make my faith SO much stronger than it's ever been, and it's really helped me improve as a man of God.

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Hate crime laws are a 'secular blasphemy' says Mattie McGrath

Chai Brady

Moves to produce hate crime legislation have been likened to new "secular blasphemy laws", which threaten freedom of speech, according to a Tipperary TD.

Mattie McGrath spoke to *The Irish Catholic* after he made comments criticising legislation regarding hate speech in the Dáil last week.

During a debate on Blasphemy (Abolition of Offences and Related Matters) Bill 2019 Mr McGrath said: "In fact, we appear to be getting ready to put in place a kind of secular blasphemy law where it will be a criminal offence to say almost anything deemed offensive by the great and good who constitute the new elite in our society."

Elaborating, he told this paper that the political narrative on the issue "amounts to little more than an attempt to provide a veneer of legitimacy to the new dominant political prejudices".

"The new arbiters of free speech also have a peculiarly narrow definition of what constitutes 'hate speech' or indeed a hate crime. The new secular orthodoxy is ideologically puritanical and so it must have its defenders and legislative tools to defend it."

Currently there is a public consultation being conducted by the Department of Justice and Equality as part of a review of the legislation on hate speech. This will run until December 13.

The Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 which covers certain forms of threatening, abusive or insulting conduct intended to stir up hatred on account of person's characteristics will be focused on. This includes race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, membership of the travelling community and sexual orientation.

Mr McGrath expressed concern about proposed changes to legislation and their purpose, saying: "I

worry that we are now entering a period where genuine freedom of speech and thought is merely paid lip service while a new smothering conformity is smuggled in under the guise of respect for conscience."

Improvements

Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan has said the legislation is "weaker" than it should be, which is why the Government are seeking improvements. There have been 50 prosecutions under existing legislation over the last 30 years – with few convictions.

Speaking on RTÉ's *Drivetime* at the launch of the public consultation at the end of last month he said: "I don't want to interfere with the fundamental freedom of speech but at the same time I'm very concerned about what I'm hearing as to the manner in which minority groups in particular are being treated and the fact that offensive speech, hate speech is becoming common place in Ireland."

Married priests 'are not the answer'

» Continued from Page 1

cut by a third from 140 to 92 to ease the burden on hard-pressed priests.

The bishop is hopeful that the consolidation will also lead to improved liturgies with talent and resources pooled. "We can't keep multiplying the number of Masses, that doesn't make for good liturgy and also the other issue is if you have a small congregation: having multiple small congregations can be demoralising, it's much better from the point of view of people who walk into a church that there's a decent congregation there," Bishop Farrell said.

He insisted that "I suppose our problem is not the shortage of priests: the bigger issue is that we have far more infrastructure than we need".

Asked about potential resistance from parishioners, he stressed that the initiative has



Bishop Dermot Farrell.

come from a grassroots listening process. "I think it will be challenging, and it is challenging at the moment. I can't see that changing rapidly, there's not going to be an exponential increase in vocations."

"We're trying to speak to that, we're reading the signs of the times and trying to respond to that as best we can," he said.

See Pages 6 & 7.

75% reject female diaconate in online poll

Staff reporter

Three thirds of Facebook readers say they would oppose moves to open up the diaconate to women. While Pope Francis is reportedly considering the idea of allowing women to become permanent deacons only 25% of readers in a poll on the IC Facebook page said they would agree.

Permanent male deacons are now a feature of many Irish dioceses with men – often married with families – preaching, baptising children, officiating at weddings and burying the dead.

The issue of female deacons has been on the agenda since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) restored the ancient ministry for men.

However, successive studies by the Vatican and theological commissions have been unable to come to a conclusion about the role of women in the diaconate in the early Church.

Christ is the key, says hockey ace

Claire Fitzpatrick

One of the players at the heart of the women's hockey historic victory has said that faith is instrumental to her success.

Armagh-native Bethany Bell scored a crucial goal in a shootout to break the tie with Canada to end the match and

put the team on the road to their first ever Olympic games.

Speaking after the match Bethany, whose twin sister Serena is also on the team, revealed that she prayed moments before taking the crucial shot to keep her composure.

"When I went up to take the penalty, we were 3-1 down and it was something I kept repeating to myself – 'audience of one'. Because I knew if I missed, our dream was no longer going to be alive. It was something that gave me peace. I wasn't doing it for myself, I wasn't doing it for the team, I was doing it for God," Bethany told Ryan Turbidity on the *Late Late Show*.

She described her "audience of one" mantra as a tradition her and sister Serena have kept when playing and reflects their family's commitment to their faith. Both draw crosses on their arms displaying the letters 'AO1' as a way to remind them to keep their focus on their faith.

"We would really aim to play for an audience of one, which is Jesus. And our Faith is something that's very important to us," she said.



Photo: Sportfile

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PM Johnson's veteran plan shows 'contempt' for NI

Chai Brady

Boris Johnson has shown "contempt" for the people of Northern Ireland after pledging to protect British veterans from prosecution, according to a priest based in Fermanagh.

Under the proposals the Conservative party would amend the Human Rights Act so that it wouldn't apply to issues such as killings during the Troubles. This was announced on Armistice Day.

"It's an election ploy anyway, to gather votes from the military people and their fans and friends over there. It won't be accepted by nationalist people in the North, nor by the Dublin Government. It won't pass anyway, no matter what they try," said Fr Joe McVeigh who is based in Enniskillen.

"The people up here have suffered dreadfully over the years and haven't got justice or truth, there'll be no closure here until there's justice – people are still hurting," Fr Joe McVeigh said, "Tories want to get support at the present time, they're desperate for support for their Brexit."

Perspective

Criticising Boris Johnson, he added that the Prime Minister doesn't seem to grasp the situation, particularly from a Nationalist perspective.

The announcements come as six soldiers who were stationed in the North of Ireland during the Troubles are facing prosecution. The cases relate to two people killed on Bloody Sunday in Derry as well as the deaths of four others in separate incidents.

Political parties were quick to criticise the proposals, including Ulster Unionist, Sinn Féin and Alliance politicians. Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney said the move was "very concerning".

Limitations

He posted on Twitter: [The] governments and parties have agreed an approach on legacy and reconciliation in NI. There is no statute of limitations, no amnesty, for anyone who committed crimes in NI. The law must apply to all, without exception, to achieve reconciliation."

Speaking in Brussels on Monday he said that within the Stormont House Agreement "there is no amnesty for any one sector within Northern Ireland..."

The Human Rights Act is enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement, which would make following through with the proposals extremely complex. The UK's general election takes place on December 12.

Great Endeavour for her Volunteers



Frank Murphy, Blarney Credit Union, sponsors, presenting an Endeavour Award at the Scoil Mhuire gan Smal, Blarney Awards Ceremony, to Karen O'Farrell, who accepted on behalf of a group who raised funds to travel to Kolkata as Hope Foundation volunteers. Picture: Mike English

Sightsavers highlight transforming work

Sightsavers Ireland used a November 7 event in Dublin to introduce their inclusive education programme to corporate and major donors. Speakers including Salimata Bocoum the country director for Senegal and Dr Sinead Kane ambassador for Sightsavers Ireland spoke about the importance of education and inclusion to a

full house on the night.

Sightsavers launched an inclusive education project in three schools in Senegal in 2014, and say the project has been hugely successful and has led to a breakthrough government commitment to introduce inclusive education nationwide.

Through the project, children with disabilities are

supported to learn alongside their peers in mainstream schools.

Rents blocking young couples getting married – Bro. Kevin

Staff reporter

Landlords are "destroying" prospects for young people who are hoping to get married but can barely afford rent, according to the founder of the Capuchin Day Centre.

With the World Day of the Poor on Sunday, established by Pope Francis three years ago, Bro. Kevin said the situation for the poor in Ireland "is appalling" and even people who are working are struggling.

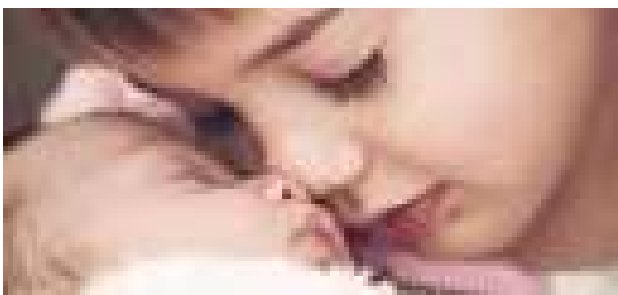
"I'm coming across here every day of the week, young couples thinking of getting married, and thinking where and how they're going to get a mortgage for a house. The landlords are absolutely destroying the young people and the people who are trying to make a living in our city at the moment, it's disgraceful," Bro. Kevin said.

Festivities

"Especially coming up to Christmas now, so many people will be on the breadline again, we have it every day of the week. Then you have all the stores highlighting the Christmas festivities and they can't afford to buy anything for their children."

Speaking of the Pope's visit to the centre last year for the World Meeting of Families, Bro. Kevin said he emphasised "dignity and respect for each human being".

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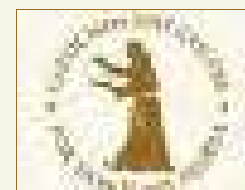
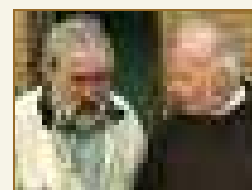
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A new, non-clerical Church can't just be a happy, hippy democracy

The clerical church is dying, says Fr Brian D'Arcy, now marking 50 years as an ordained priest, "and it's not such a tragedy." The celibate priesthood is over: the male priesthood is over. This is "a gift of the Holy Spirit" and out of such a transformation can come new seeds of life.

Well, he's a priest, and I'm not, so he probably knows more about this than I do – a statement which, in itself, acknowledges his ordained authority.

When I consider structures of organisation, I can only draw on my experience in the lay world, and in my working life, which now stretches over five decades. And my overwhelming experience is that the key issue in any organisation is leadership.

For any enterprise to thrive, there must be good leadership, and the leader must act with authority. That doesn't mean bullying, coercion, or silencing of opposing voices: but it does mean a sure touch and a firm vision.

Dictators

In the newspaper and print industry, I have known successful Editors who have been, in effect, benign dictators. An old Fleet Street adage had it that "the Editor is always right – even when he's wrong!" That's to say, in the final analysis, the staff must trust the Editor's judgement and decision, because he (or she) is the leader.

I always remember Maeve Binchy describing Douglas Gageby, the late Editor of the *Irish Times*, and the way he put his stamp on the newspaper – and commanded the staff, too. He only had to say "this will not do!" to have everyone, including Maeve, quaking in their boots.

In breathing in, you're...breathing in!

Following the controversy about yoga, after Bishop Cullinan said it was "not of Christian origin" (since it is essentially Buddhist), Eileen Gaughan, from Sligo notes in our letters' page that yoga and Christian meditation can work together.

Perhaps so. Personally, I'm always amused by the Jewish wisecracks which makes fun of 'the Jewish Buddhist', with some down-to-earth reflections.

If there is no self, whose arthritis is this? Be here now. Be someplace else later. Is



Mary Kenny

In business, in management, in education – the head teacher always sets the ethic in a school – and in all fields of administration, it is leadership that is essential. Head-hunters are paid vast sums of money to find the leader who will make an enterprise function well.

“A new Church will need leadership: weak bishops and dithering ecclesiastics won't cut the mustard”

The leader's job is manifold, but part of his, or her, task is to defend the organisation. You cannot show leadership and keep

attacking your own base. Corrections there must always be, but that's not the same as cringing self-abasement or siding with your opponents.

Fr D'Arcy may well be right in saying that a new, non-clerical church will arise. There may well be married priests, and quite soon. There could well be female priests, though not so very soon. But a 'non-clerical' church cannot just be a happy, hippy democracy. It will need leadership: weak bishops and dithering ecclesiastics won't cut the mustard.

The Church must indeed be led by the Holy Spirit, as Brian D'Arcy indicates. But it must also organise in the real world, and among "the crooked timber of humanity".



Believe in the science (sometimes)

● We are urged to 'believe the science' in the matter of climate change. Yes, of course we should examine all the scientific evidence about global warming.

Strangely, though, we are seldom told to 'believe the science' when it comes to the development of unborn life. The biological science is as clear as can be, as any ultrasound scan will show, but here it's 'choice' rather than scientific evidence that is upheld.

that so complicated?

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'Life has changed, and the

Extensive changes in Ossory are about being fit for mission, Bishop Dermot Farrell tells **Chai Brady**



To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often" – so wrote the recently-sainted Cardinal John Henry Newman. The Church in Ireland, much like the wider society, has experienced change of epic proportion in recent decades. While society has secularised at a fast pace, the Church's fall from a central position has been no less dramatic.

As the Church continues to face change – including an ageing clergy, fewer vocations and a decline in faith practice – the challenge for Catholics is whether one embraces and effects change or a spirit of passivity.

Bishop Dermot Farrell is just over 18 months at the helm of the Diocese of Ossory

and has been undertaking an extensive discernment process with priests, people and religious.

These conversations have led to the establishment of 13 pastoral areas, gathering parishes into groups with the aim of supporting each other and sharing resources.

"These groupings will permit our individual parishes to become stronger, more alive, and be in a position to offer an even greater level of service in their communities," Bishop Farrell writes in a pastoral letter to be read at all Masses this weekend.

He insists that the conversations that have been taking place have also explored practical aspects to the life of the Church, most immediately this will be seen in new Mass



times in every parish beginning on December 1.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* this week, Dr Farrell said the changes came about after widespread consultation. "What we have done is we have re-organised the Mass schedule across all of

the parishes so each pastoral area met, and decided the number of Masses that might be appropriate to their current needs".

Before the changes, there were 140 Sunday Masses in Ossory, from December 1, that will fall to 92 – a drop of a third.

Practically, Dr Farrell says, this will mean a parish might go from two Saturday evening Masses to one. Also, rather than duplicating Mass times, neighbouring parishes will work together.

However, it is clear that "it's not just about Masses".

"You're looking at baptismal teams, so rather than having three baptismal teams in say one small area you would have one baptismal team who would migrate from parish to parish.

"Basically anything that we can do together, the idea was that we do that together rather than separately, so the idea is that parishes work together," he said.

Synodal approach

Taking up the call of Pope Francis, Bishop Farrell said that "it was a synodal approach to the issue.

"We met as a diocese initially, with the laity and the priests, the idea was then that we would look at the diocese and try and identify pastoral areas, small units...The idea then was that each of those areas would go out and they would meet together with members, some people with each of the pastoral councils and the priests in the parishes, and each of them would look at the situation in the pastoral area and see where they could work together," he said.

The bishop is hopeful that the consolidation will also lead to improved liturgies because talent can be

focused and priests are not burdened with running from Mass to Mass in the same way as before.

When priests are working in a parish that is not his own, the idea is that they would be truly present. "They are encouraged to swap pulpits, while a priest is assigned to a particular parish as a parish priest, the recommendation is certainly a few times a year that he would actually celebrate Mass in the other parishes and the other priest in that parish would celebrate Mass in his parish. So that for example when he has to do a funeral, he's not just somebody who appears out of nowhere, that he is known to the people in that parish," according to Bishop Farrell.

“We can't keep multiplying the number of Masses, that doesn't make for good liturgy”

Ossory is facing the same challenges as other dioceses with the average age of priests in the late 60s and just four priests under the age of 50.

However, that is only part of the issue. "I suppose our problem is not the shortage of priests: the bigger issue is that we have far more infrastructure than we need.

"Going forward we will not be able – in time – to celebrate Mass every Sunday in every church that we have," he said. Already, there are some churches that do not have Mass every weekend.

"Ossory – and every parish in the country – was in a somewhat similar situation where you had parishes that had two to three priests and now have one priest, and we have some parishes that

we've no resident priest, in other words a parish priest is looking after two parishes rather than one: with a couple of smaller parishes which one man has been assigned to both," he said.

But what about resistance from parishioners? Dr Farrell is convinced that people "are very much grounded in reality. They know things have changed, that there are fewer priests available".

The seat of the diocese is the City of Kilkenny and like many urban areas it has plenty of churches. It is something the bishop is conscious of. "I can walk, which I do regularly, to all the churches in the city – the most it would take me is 15 minutes.

"There's 10 churches: do we need 10 churches? No. The answer is historically we have these and they're part of the history of the city but we can't keep multiplying the number of Masses [that priests say], that doesn't make for good liturgy and also the other issue is if you have a small congregation: having multiple small congregations can be demoralising, it's much better from the point of view of people who walk into a church that there's a decent congregation there," Bishop Farrell insists.

For Ossory, it is about trying to be proactive. "What I don't want is if a priest gets ill or a priest dies you're scrambling to provide services to that parish. There is a structure in place that can deal with things like illness should it happen suddenly, or if so – die suddenly, you're not wondering how am I going to provide for Mass here next Sunday," Dr Farrell says.

Time and again, the issue of ordaining married men comes to the fore when peo-

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Church must change too'



Bishop Dermot Farrell (also inset on right) is congratulated by fellow bishops after his ordination.

by just ordaining married men or even deacons. You look down the church and say 'well where are the deacons going to come out of?' It is a crisis of faith we're dealing with fundamentally," he said.

On the Amazon Synod – where the Pope was requested to look at the issue of ordaining married men – the bishop is clear that it is comparing apples with oranges. It is, he says, "a completely different reality to what we have...in the Amazon, you have whole tracks of territory the size of Ireland with one priest. We're a long, long, long way from there. We do not at the moment have a shortage of priests, what we have is a surplus of infrastructure and we can't go on maintaining that infrastructure or providing services in all of it as we have here before – nor indeed do we need to".

He is not hostile to the idea of married priests, but knows that it is no magic wand. "I think that [married priests] is a possibility yes, certainly something

that could be considered in the future, but as I said you still have the problem: where are they going to come from?"

"I suppose, ultimately, it's about reading the signs of the times, when that comes we have to read the signs of the times in terms of how we're going to deal with that situation in another point in time," he says.

On the issue of the female diaconate – much debated at the moment – Dr Farrell returns to the theme of reading the signs of the time and interpreting them "in the light of the Gospel. That's an essential task for the Church in any diocese.

Pope Francis is certainly looking at that [women deacons] and

he had a commission looking at the historical evolution of the role of women in the Church. I think what he did indicate was that he was going to look at that with a slightly different criteria in the months ahead, so I suppose we await that.

“What we have is a surplus of infrastructure and we can't go on maintaining that”

There is no obvious hint of nostalgia or sentimentality in the Bishop of Ossory, more a sense that change is simply a fact of life. "I'm ordained 40 years next year: when I think of the enormous change that's taken place over my lifetime in the priesthood that's having a huge impact on the role and the understanding of the Church in the diocese here in Ossory and

indeed in Ireland.

"It's reflected in the number of candidates that present for the priesthood. When I went to Maynooth, I think there were 64 in my class – that's far more than in seminary formation in Ireland today.

"That situation is always going to have an impact on the form of ministry, and how it's going to be taken in a changing environment, and that environment – I've no doubt – will change in the years ahead. So how do you understand the role of the priest? I would have understood the role of the priest 40 years ago and today is somewhat different," according to Dr Farrell.

He is not naïve about the task ahead. "I think it will be challenging, and it is challenging at the moment. I can't see that changing rapidly, there's not going to be an exponential increase in vocations.

"We're trying to speak to that, we're reading the signs of the times and trying to respond to that as best we can," he says,

ple consider the challenges facing the Church. But for Bishop Farrell, the issue is much deeper than the shortage of priests.

He is frank: "That is a Faith issue fundamentally. If you look at the shortage of

vocations the issue there is the faith, because people say 'why don't we ordain married men?' But if you look down the church on a Sunday, you say 'well where are they going to come from?'

"It's not going to be solved

ADVERTORIAL

Pope Francis: 'What am I leaving behind?'

Pope stresses importance of reflecting on your 'final farewell'



Photo: Jeffrey Bruno / Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

Everyone would do well to reflect on their "final farewell" from earthly life said Pope Francis during a morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"It will do us good," he added.

"What am I leaving behind?"

When Pope Francis asked this at the Mass, many may have been wondering about the impact their own lives will have. Perhaps you are too. One thing you can leave behind is a life changing gift to your preferred charity in your

Will. This ensures your legacy lives on, while supporting the charity you care for and helping save lives long into the future.

And it's clear many people do already generously give to causes close to their hearts. The Irish Catholic's own research shows 97% of readers regularly donate to charity.

However, with so many different charities carrying out so much good work, choosing one to support is certainly not an easy decision to make.

"Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons." – Pope Francis.

One charity fighting poverty is Ireland's own Concern Worldwide. In fact they state their mission is to: End extreme poverty – whatever it takes.

Concern was founded in 1968 by John and Kay O'Loughlin-Kennedy – in response to the famine in the breakaway province of Biafra in Nigeria.

On Friday 6th September 1968 the MV Columcille

set sail from Dublin to Sao Tome – a Portuguese island off the coast of Nigeria. The 600 tonne ship was full of vital supplies of powdered food, medicines and other life saving items for the people suffering the horrific famine in Biafra. This single shipment was only the start of an aid mission which became 1 flight every day over the next 11 months.

Since then Concern has helped transform lives in 48 of the world's poorest countries, including:

- Rwanda, 1994: Concern was one of the first Irish charities to respond to the Rwandan Genocide.
- Haiti, 2010: Within 1 year of the earthquake, Concern had helped over 1,000,000 people in the country.
- Syria, 2013 – present: Concern's emergency programmes meet the urgent needs of the newly displaced and help those with longer term needs.
- Nepal, 2015: After the severe earthquake, Concern provided non food items, kits and material for makeshift accommodation, repaired 14,500 homes and helped almost 80,000 people.

As you can see, no matter what the crisis, Concern always helps those in the

most desperate need no matter how hard they are to reach. In 2018 alone they responded to 66 different emergencies. And helped an incredible 24.2 million people around the world.

Fiona from Co. Louth has left a gift for Concern in her Will. Here she explains why: "I have two children and if they were in need, I would hope that somebody, somewhere would reach out to help them. With my legacy, I will be that person for somebody's loved ones – you could be too."

If you join Fiona and leave a gift to Concern, your legacy can help end hunger, for good. And will help people like Nala*.



Nala before and a few months after receiving therapeutic food sachets.

Photo Before: Jennifer Nolan / Concern Worldwide. 2018 (April), Somalia. Photo After: Mohamed Abdiwahab / Concern Worldwide. 2018 (July), Somalia.

Nala lived with her mother and two brothers in a camp for displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia. Her mother was pregnant with Nala when she and her sons fled their village which was attacked. Even in the safety of the camp, Nala's mother struggled to find food for herself and her children.

So Nala never gained weight properly.

At nine months old she was barely bigger than a newborn. Fortunately this was when the family came to a Concern supported nutrition centre. Nala was diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition and fading fast. She was immediately given therapeutic food sachets. As you can see after a few months of receiving help, Nala was thriving.

“Charity is at the heart of the Church, it is the reason for its action, the soul of its mission.” – Pope Francis

It's people like you, leaving Concern a gift in their Will, who have helped save Nala.

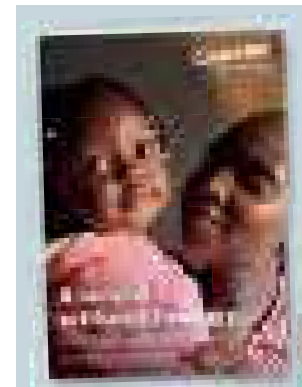
To discover how a gift in your Will can help end hunger, please request your complimentary copy of 'A World Without Hunger' – Concern's legacy booklet.

Inside you'll read how others who were desperately in need have been helped by gifts left in the Wills of people just like you. The booklet also answers many of the common questions people have about leaving a gift in their Will. And explains how to start the process. Naturally, requesting your free booklet does not oblige you

to support Concern in any way or do anything else.

“I am proud to know that even when I am gone, by including Concern in my Will, my support will continue to help save lives.” – Colm O'Byrne, Co. Galway.

* Name changed for security reasons.



To get your free, no obligation copy, please contact Concern's Legacy Manager, Siobhán O'Connor. Just call her on **01 417 8020** or send an email to **siobhan.oconnor@concern.net** or write to 52-55 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2

Nuala O'Loan

The View



Mary McAleese is wrong – the Church is no empire of misogyny, it's where I am nourished and inspired

There has been much discussion of misogyny in the Church following Mary McAleese's most recent assertion that the Church has become a "primary global carrier of the toxic virus of misogyny", and "a male bastion of patronising platitudes to which Pope Francis has added his own quota".

She had previously described the Catholic Church as one of the "last great bastions of misogyny" and has said "it's an empire of misogyny".

So, what is misogyny? It can be important to be clear when one makes allegations of this kind. It is defined as dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women. I have to say that I have not experienced dislike, contempt or prejudice over the years in the Church.

Yes, there are those

people who dislike others and there is an historic sense of the superiority of the male of the species across the world. But I say again I have not experienced misogyny over the years in my membership of the Church or in the work which I have done in the Church.

Challenge

I have experienced challenge, and – on occasion – frustration when I have thought that if both lay men and women were given a greater role, the outcome might be more in keeping with the teaching of the Gospel. I think that particularly in the context of the Church's handling of

child sexual abuse. However, that has changed beyond recognition now.

The fact that ordination is not currently available to women, and that ultimate decision making is reposed in the ordained, is a very real impediment to women who wish to play a greater role in the Church. There are two issues here: ordination and decision-making.

However, the problem is the conjoining of ordination and decision-making, which affects equally both men and women. I think that the Church would benefit a great deal were it to separate the two and to create an accountable structure for decision-

making involving both those who are ordained, and the lay men and women of the Church.

I have been privileged to travel the world and to see the Church at work across the globe. I have seen men and women – ordained, consecrated and lay – working very far from the centres of power challenging real misogyny, domestic violence, human trafficking and discrimination against women in societies in which women are often grossly under-represented in the corridors of power, in governments, parliaments and in the professions. So many of them are women, often religious sisters who work, and have worked, in situations of great difficulty and danger. They do the work of what I would call the operational Church.

Things are changing in what I would call the executive decision-making Church.

“Women contribute to the Church across the world in probably a million ways”

A few examples from the past year or so: in April last year Pope Francis appointed three female consultants to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Their role will be to give advice or opinions on questions which are under consideration.

After the October 2018 synod on youth, the bishops' final recommendations called for women to hold positions of responsibility and decision-making in the Church as "a duty of justice".

In July this year for the first time Pope Francis appointed seven women to the Congregation for Religious to play their role in reviewing major policy recommendations before they are approved by the Pope.

In May this

year three nuns and one lay woman were appointed the first female consultants in the office of the Synod of Bishops, which prepares major meetings of world bishops to advise the Pope held every few years on a different topic. Not on the synod yet, but getting there, and it will give them an influence on the preparation of synods.

So, things are changing. Women do now walk the corridors of the Vatican and they are listened to, though much remains to be done.

And you know, the reality is that those who make the decisions are actually able to lead, only to the extent that we all, lay men and women, allow them to do so. We have the right and the ability to walk away, to take another path and it was always thus.

This talk of misogyny seems to me in some ways to present as a conflict in which a battle for power in the Church is being played out. I do not believe in that battle. I do not want to see a power struggle in my Church. I believe in the slow, sure work of the Holy Spirit. I am not naive, but what happens in the Church in terms of decision-making, while gravely important, is no less important for me and for many of the women (and men) I know, than the daily battle to live in the love of Christ; to be, as we are called to be, the hands, the feet, the eyes, of Christ in the world today.

Women contribute to the Church across the world in probably a million ways – they give of their time, their energy, their giftedness and their talents. They are influential and make great contributions. They do now hold positions of power,

albeit not as ordained people. I know of women who act as chancellors of dioceses, (a role traditionally reserved for monsignors), of women who lead on

safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, women who teach in our schools, women who are catechists, who act as ministers of the Word and of the Eucharist – bringing Christ to the elderly, the sick and the vulnerable, women who sit on parish finance committees, women who sit on diocesan boards as trustees, women who serve on pontifical commissions, and in other posts in the Vatican. I know of women who serve, often in dangerous situations in far countries. I know of women who lead for the Catholic Church in its work on social justice here and across the world.

“Women do now walk the corridors of the Vatican and they are listened to”

My decision to be part of the Church is a decision informed by the belief that Christ founded the Church, that it is his Church, that it has evolved over the years into something which is quite different from the Church in those years before and after the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Yes, our Church and those who belong to it have many human faults which we should seek to remedy, and we do need to solve the conundrum of ordination being inextricably linked to decision-making, but the reality is that much vital decision-making takes places across the world in many different circumstances, and the decisions made are not limited to the ordained.

I do not believe that the Church which I have known for so long is "an empire of misogyny". It is the place in which I have been nourished, enabled and inspired. I have seen local, national and international recognition of the contribution of women to the Church. It is my hope that we can work positively, men and women together, in the ongoing evolution of the Church.

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Mary McAleese.

The Night Café:

Bringing comfort to fragile lives in the hardest hours of all

In the damp cold of a winter night in Dublin, the quays are quiet. Businesses are closed and the pubs have long since emptied. At Merchants Quay Ireland, though, the lights are still on. Here, over fifty of Ireland's most vulnerable people are bedding down for the night.

This is Merchants Quay Ireland's Night Café, an emergency shelter set up in 2015 in response to the homeless crisis. It provides a refuge to men and women who would otherwise be left to sleep on the streets.

A last resort

"It's a last resort", says Mick, part of MQI Night Café staff. "If it wasn't for the Night Café, there'd be up to 60 people out on the streets. We have men here in their eighties, we have women, 18-year-olds. All of them would be sleeping on the streets."

The Night Café is more than a place to bed down for the night. There's a hot meal,

a shower, and a fresh set of clothes for clients coming in out of the cold and the rain. Staff provide advice and support, and make appointments for clients with the doctors, nurses, and mental health care team that operate in MQI during the day.

The service sees around 2,000 people each year, and though they have all come here for one reason – safety – their journey here shows how anyone can end up homeless. There are people who work but are homeless because they cannot afford rent. Others have left their home due to family breakdown. Many, but by no means all, struggle with addiction and mental health issues.

Whatever their story, staff at MQI respond to their need with compassion and empathy. When the doors open at 11pm and clients file in, staff greet each person by name, with a smile and a hello. Conversation with clients had in previous nights are picked up again. There is a bond of

trust between all those at the Night Café.

"A lot of people here are either vulnerable, or they're not from Dublin", says Leah, 23, who has been coming to Merchants Quay Ireland for six months. "This is where you come when you're rock bottom. I was years sleeping in a tent in places around Wicklow. The staff are nice, you build up sort of a bond with them. You get to know them, and they support you."

This theme is picked up by Mick, the Night Café staff member.

“Over fifty of Ireland's most vulnerable people are bedding down for the night.”

"Clients can come in here, relax, get something to eat, have a nice hot shower, talk to a member of staff, maybe even have a bit of a laugh, and if they have something serious going on, whether it's health or welfare, or maybe they've been mugged, we take care of them".

After arriving, clients take a hot meal from the counter, and sit down to eat. There is chat, but the feeling in the room is one of exhaustion. Many people here have been walking around all day, with-

out a place to rest. As a result, their limbs ache and their feet blister. This is often worst in winter, when the damp and cold seeps through clothes.

Moments of mercy

Another staff member, Sandra, speaks about the small comforts that the Night Café can provide.

"Sometimes it can be as simple as dressing the wounds on someone's feet. Just even to help that person feel a little bit better. I'll do the best I can, because God help him, he's walking the streets all day and we're here to do a job with empathy. That's what I love about my work. You're helping someone, even if it's only putting a bandage around his feet to make him feel a little bit better".

By the early hours of morning, most clients are asleep. Staff are only a few feet away, keeping watch, and sometimes quietly chatting to the few clients who can't sleep. It's this sense of security that many clients value most, knowing they can sleep soundly and are safe. Later in the morning, around 7am, they'll be woken by a gentle tap on the shoulder from staff. Breakfast will be served, and then it's another long, hard day ahead.

With a cold winter to come, staff at Merchants Quay Ireland know that demand for the Night Café will be great. The bad weather brings more pressure for clothes, for showers, and for hot meals, even



just for shelter. Yet the work will go on. In some ways, it is simple work – a hello, a short conversation – but its impact for some of Ireland's most vulnerable people is profound.

Another Night Café client, Warren, sums up what the Night Café means to people caught in homelessness.

"When you're homeless, the years are short and the days are long. Imagine yourself, you've been out there all day, walking. Sometimes walking becomes a bit too much and you just want to sit down but you can't because you'll be moved on. You're hungry and you have no money. You have no one to call, you have nowhere to go during the day. The Night Café allows you to do all those things. It allows you to lay down. It allows you to sleep. It allows you to eat. It allows you to have a shower and rest, and maybe you can forget the things of today and dream of something tomorrow. Something better. So, yeah it gives you a chance to dream a little bit."

For tender mercies big and small, MQI thanks you.

Please know our door is always open to you. You are invited to visit our Riverbank Centre where we have private tours for our supporters and friends. Also, on December 15th, Merchants Quay Ireland will be holding a carol service in Adam and Eve Church on Merchants Quay to thank all those supporters who help keep the lights on and kettle warm. You'd be very welcome to join us. For more information contact Emma Murphy on 01 524 0965 or emma.murphy@mqi.ie.



Nuncio unites embassies for charity bazaar

Claire Fitzpatrick

The Papal Nuncio is leading diplomats in helping “protect the vulnerable” in Ireland as he announced the charities that will be supported at this year’s International Charity Bazaar (ICB).

Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo told ambassadors and their spouses at his residence last week that they’ll be supporting four charities that cover a range of ages and circumstance.

At the Bazaar, 41 embassies and Ireland will celebrate multiculturalism and international community, manning stalls offering regional foods and souvenirs, and 11 countries will perform native song and dances. The money raised will be donated to charities, with some €800,000 already distributed to charities on this year’s roster.

According to ICB President, Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Papal Nuncio to Ireland, the spouses of ambassadors select charities “based on what is most relevant for the time and the country”.

ICB was founded 12 years ago by the wife of



Some of the staff and Ambassadors from the various embassies at the launch in Dublin. Photos: John McElroy

the Ambassador of Pakistan to Ireland as a relief initiative to Pakistan earthquake victims. The event’s success encouraged its continuation, through which now the Diplomatic Corps in Ireland and local communities unite to raise money and awareness for those suffering in Irish society.

This year, ICB has chosen to fund Room of Our Own - Modh Eile Domestic Abuse Service by COPE Galway CLG, Nationwide Friendly Call Service by Friends of the Elderly, Beads of Courage by Childhood Cancer Foundation and

Let’s Cook & Learn by Cottage Autism Network Wexford.

Dr Okolo describes the current mission of the ICB as not just ambassadors wanting to connect with local communities, but people who are genuinely investing in charities who help Irish people, adding that “these are efforts to support people in difficult situations”.

The ICB will take place on November 17 at RDS Industries Hall from 11am to 2.30pm, entrance fees are €5 but children have free admission.



Virginija Umbrasienė and Egle Sakalauskienė from Lithuania.



Nigerian Ambassador to Ireland Dr Uzoma Emenike.



Nail A. Al-Jubeir Ambassador Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia chatting with Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo.



Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo chatting with Olena Shaloput (chair of the ICB committee) and Jorma Von Wiren (member of the committee).



Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo speaking with Ambassadors and embassy staff at the launch.

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Should the nuns tell the National Maternity Hospital to go elsewhere?



The establishment never misses opportunity to demonise the nuns and to blacken their reputations, writes **David Quinn**

Dr Peter Boylan, one of the chief campaigners in favour of repealing the Eighth Amendment, has been on the warpath again over the relocation of the National Maternity Hospital from Holles Street to the Blackrock Campus of St Vincent's hospital where it will be co-located.

St Vincent's was, of course, founded by the Sisters of Charity. The Sisters are handing over the hospital and everything associated with it to a trust, but permission to give away the land to this trust has yet to be given by the Vatican.

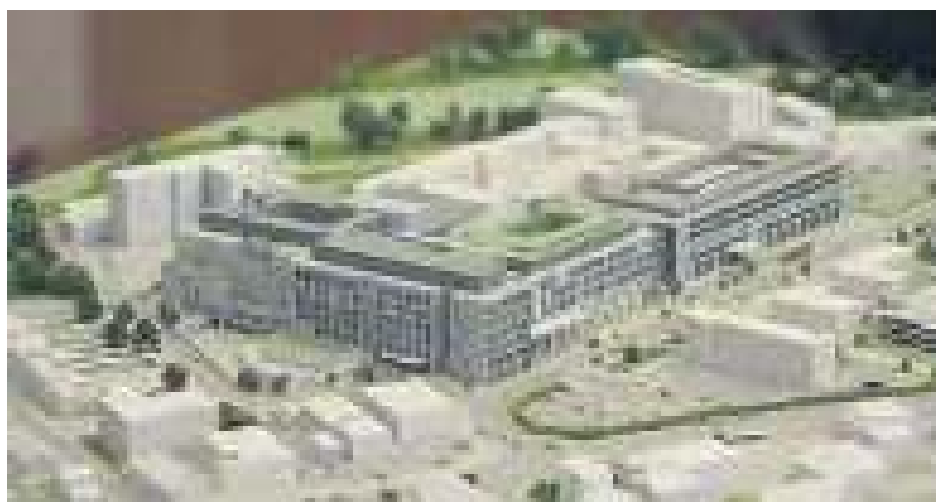
This is what has Dr Boylan up in arms. It also provides very useful publicity for his new book, *In the Shadow of the Eighth*.

Peter Boylan seems to seriously believe that unless the land is fully handed over to a body that has absolutely no connection with the Catholic Church, then the relocated maternity hospital will not be allowed to perform abortions. Would that this were so. In fact, St Vincent's hospital has already said it will carry out any procedures legal in the State, including abortion, and the Sisters of Charity have not stood in their way.

Parcel of land

The State should in fact be grateful that the nuns are making such a valuable parcel of land free to the National Maternity Hospital, and should simply say 'thank you'. But no, this is yet another opportunity to demonise the nuns and to blacken their reputations.

It is not even accurate, as people like Labour's Alan Kelly has said, that the Sisters of Charity still owe millions to the redress scheme set up to compensate victims of



A model rendering of the planned new maternity hospital at St Vincent's.

abuse in the residential institutions. In fact, they have fully paid their €5m contribution either directly or in kind.

Nefarious plot

In other words, the effective gift of land to the National Maternity Hospital is purely gratis, but still they find themselves condemned, and suspected of running a deep and nefarious plot to somehow stop abortions being performed at the hospital.

Perhaps the Vatican will, in the end, stop the transfer of the land, and the land will somehow, in some nominal way, remain in the ownership of the Sisters of Charity. But even if that happens, the fact that St Vincent's has already said it will perform any procedure that is legally allowed, surely means the Sisters will have no way in practice to stop abortions taking place in the new maternity hospital, even if they wanted to.

“It is yet another opportunity to demonise the nuns and to blacken their reputations”

Perhaps instead they should call the whole thing off and tell the National Maternity Hospital to go elsewhere? Imagine the uproar then, however. They would find themselves demonised more than ever.

Sometimes when we are too familiar with something we learn to treat it with contempt or else take it for granted. We have done both of those things with the female religious orders (and the men's congregations also).

But we need to stop and consider how completely astonishing the women's religious congregations are

in both historical and world cultural-terms. There is nothing else like them, and has never been.

Nowhere else in the world at any time in history have so many groups of women, on such a systematic basis come together to found organisations run exclusively by women and then gone on to found and run huge, international networks of schools, hospitals and other charitable outreaches and have been doing so for centuries.

“People are being constantly reminded of the negative side of their legacy”

There is no reason why anything like this should ever have happened. It has not happened in any other part of the world, in any other religion or culture to anything like this extent at any other point in history that we know about.

Suddenly, remarkable Irish women like Mary Aikenhead, Nano Nagle or Catherine McAuley, and their counterparts in many other parts of the Catholic world, decided to leave behind their former lives and devote themselves to helping the poor in different ways. They did this voluntarily and without any guarantee of success. They did so at a time when our part of the world was a far riskier place than today with poverty and disease absolutely endemic.

They then drew other women to join them in their enterprises, and eventually the Sisters of Charity, the Presentation Sisters and the Sisters of Mercy became very large-scale operations indeed, doing enormous good work.

All of this was taking place within an organisation

organisation, another religion, another culture, that has given rise to so many female-run organisations doing so much good work and doing so voluntarily.

In fact, when you think about it, feminists ought to applaud female religious congregations. Feminists say women can do anything they like when they set their minds to it and are given the necessary freedom.

Experiments

Well, these female orders have proven this time and again, and they were doing so long before anyone else. Indeed, to this day, there is still nothing else like them. You still won't be able to come up with exclusively female-run organisations doing such extraordinary things.

The public are being constantly reminded of the negative side of the legacy of these congregations.

But we could do this to any group of people. It would be extremely easy, for example, to tarnish the reputation of all doctors by shining a spotlight on the way the medical profession ran mental hospitals in sometimes the most appalling ways, the manner in which they ran coercive eugenics programmes, or the contribution some of them made to disgusting medical experiments conducted in Nazi Germany and other dictatorships.

But to do that would be unfair and unjust unless the positive side of their history was also given. In the case of the nuns, all we seem to be acquainted with now is the dark side of their legacy, and not the huge good they did, and do, or the fact that women's congregations are a miracle in themselves, something quite without precedent in the world.



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The SDLP, who saw themselves as the moral voice of many Northern Catholics, now inhabit the same political space as their erstwhile competitors, writes **Pól Ó Muirí**

By the standards of Catholic bishops in the North, the statement was robust. Issued at the end of October in response to the introduction of new laws on abortion and same-sex marriage, the bishops decried what had been ordained by Westminster. The changes, the bishops said, could lead "to potentially one of the most liberal and unregulated abortion regimes in the world".

They said bluntly: "The unavoidable truth is that our locally elected

Will Catholic voters in the North hold their elected representatives to account?

representatives had the time and the power to prevent this draconian Westminster abortion legislation being introduced over the heads of local citizens but chose not to do so. It is the duty of citizens to hold their elected representatives accountable for the decisions they have made."

That statement was echoed at the time by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Right Revd Dr William Henry, who said: "It remains surprising that some parties have been willing to allow the UK Parliament to legislate for the people of Northern Ireland without consideration of the devolution settlement, and we are disappointed that the recall of the Northern Ireland Assembly today was dismissed by some as a political stunt."

"It has always been the position of the Presbyterian

Church in Ireland that decisions on devolved matters, including the sensitive issues of abortion and same sex marriage should remain the responsibility of our locally elected MLAs."

Concerns

While Church leaders raised their concerns over the nature of the new laws and the way in which they were introduced, lobby groups in favour of change have welcomed same-sex marriage as "a huge cause for celebration" and praised Westminster for "addressing these grave and systemic human rights abuses" in its abortion legislation.

A few short weeks after those statements from Church leaders, a general election has been announced to Westminster and voters and representatives have another chance to get to know



each other. The electioneering has begun and it promises to be one of the most interesting campaigns fought in a long time. In the green corner, the SDLP and Sinn Féin have formed a pact that is not a pact, that is to say, they have come to an arrangement, a nod is as good as a wink, you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours, kind of settlement but have not formally said that they are co-operating.

The immediate fruits of the pact that dare not speak its name is that the SDLP have stood aside in North Belfast and given the Sinn Féin candidate and Belfast's Lord Mayor, John Finucane, a clear run at the sitting MP, Nigel Dodds, of the DUP.

“The two main unionist parties, the DUP and the UUP, are also chopping and changing constituencies in an attempt to maximise their vote

In turn, Sinn Féin have stepped aside in South Belfast which will give the SDLP's choice, Claire Hanna, an excellent chance against Emma Little-Pengelly, the sitting MP and also a member of the DUP.

Both nationalist parties are presenting the non-pact pact as an attempt to remove pro-Brexit unionists and replace them with anti-Brexit nationalists. (Ironically, Ms Hanna had quit as the SDLP's Brexit spokesperson over the party's ties to Fianna Fáil.)

In a similar vein, the two main unionist parties, the

DUP and the UUP, are also chopping and changing constituencies in an attempt to maximise their vote.

And that brings us to the bishops' call to "hold their elected representatives accountable for the decisions they have made" and the Presbyterian exhortation that local politicians legislate locally. The difficulty is, of course, does the humble voter have any chance of influencing events and having their concerns, moral and other, recognised?

Political space

From a nationalist perspective, there is no longer a choice. Sinn Féin and the SDLP both now share the same pro-choice, pro same-sex marriage and anti-Brexit platform.

The SDLP who, rightly, saw themselves as the moral voice of many Northern Catholics now inhabit the same political space as their erstwhile competitors. The party which for generations was the default choice of Catholics who did not support the IRA are distinguished from Sinn Féin in only one small way – SDLP MPs will take their seats at Westminster while Sinn Féin will continue their traditional policy of not taking theirs.

The SDLP's stance might have held more sway until both they and Sinn Féin acceded to Westminster's legislation on changes to laws that were supposed to be a devolved matter only. What is the SDLP's pitch to be – we will use what little influence we have to frustrate Brexit and resume our former role of scrutinising Westminster legislation on issues pertinent to Northern Ireland? What is to stop Westminster rolling over

the SDLP's concerns on issues in the future just as they did with the DUP during the summer?

Indeed on the issue of Brexit, how can nationalists argue with a straight face for special consideration on the issue? They have accepted that laws in Northern Ireland be brought into line with those in Great Britain. Why not then accept the Brexit vote, held on a UK basis?

How do you argue against the UK leaving the EU as a political unit after accepting that your own wee corner of the UK should have the same laws as England, Scotland and Wales?

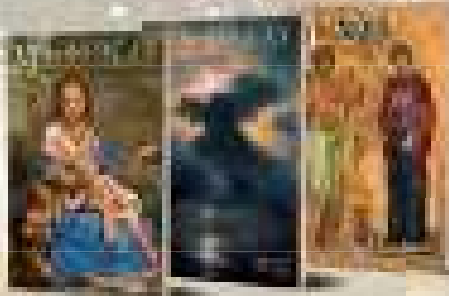
Similarly, for many Protestants who vote unionist, the Westminster vote may seem farcical. For all its posturing, the DUP, who opposed abortion and same sex marriage in the local Assembly, were turned over in Westminster.

The issues were decided by politicians who have never campaigned in the North. Indeed, while two Labour MPs sponsored the changes to the laws, the British Labour Party has announced that it will not run general election candidates in Northern Ireland, saying it would be "irresponsible". Is that democracy or diktat?

The poet Michael Hartnett in his poem, *A Farewell to English*, wrote about his "meagre voice" as he undertook the enormous task of abandoning poetry in English and writing verse anew in Irish.

That meagre, moral, voice is one which many voters, Catholic and Protestant, will recognise as they undertake the enormous task of trying to craft a creative voice in a political system that is deaf to their concerns.

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Archbishop urges 230 Maynooth graduates to spread Good News



Five Doctorate in Theology (PhD) degrees were awarded at Saturday's graduation to Yusuf Bamai, John Paul Leslie, Colette Maloney, Michael Semo Temgo and Gobezeayehu Yilma. These graduates are pictured with Rev. Prof. Michael Mullaney, President of St Patrick's College, Rev. Dr Pádraig Corkery, Head of Moral Theology, Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin and Prof. Séamus O'Connell, Director of Postgraduate Studies.



PhD graduates partaking in the ceremony.



John Gerard, a seminarian, with his scroll.

Chai Brady

Graduates of Theology, Philosophy and Education were urged to spread the Good News and find a "shared vision of lasting peace" in a society struggling with issues and questions regarding human trafficking, direct provision, migration, gangland violence and more.

The 230 people that graduated on Saturday from St Patrick's College, Maynooth, were conferred the academic rewards by Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin, who

is the chancellor of the pontifical university.

The archbishop referenced Pope Francis' address at a gathering of theologians in Naples, in which he suggested that meeting society's challenges, a good pontifical university "will be characterised by evangelisation and dialogue".

"He [Pope Francis] stressed that the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus and of God's love needs time and the space for interaction and dialogue, so as to fully understand the problems of today and to discover ways of resolving them," said Archbishop Martin.



Graduate Seán O'Rourke pictured with his parents and Archbishop Eamon Martin after receiving a Higher Diploma in Theological Studies.



A guest at the celebration embraces a graduate after she had received her qualification.



The Academic Procession enters the College Chapel.

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Mary McAleese.



As a newspaper, we report fair and accurately without fear or favour, writes **Michael Kelly**

Former president Mary McAleese has been at pains to deny that she misrepresented the views of Pope John Paul II on human sexuality.

It's a serious matter that requires a serious response.

When *The Irish Catholic* first broke the story last week that Mrs McAleese – during an address in Trinity College Dublin – gave the audience a false impression of the writings of the Polish pontiff there were immediate calls from distinguished Catholics from the world of politics, law and academia for her to do the right thing and admit the fact that she had got it wrong. Instead Mrs

Unpacking Mary McAleese and Pope St John Paul II

McAleese has doubled down on the slur on John Paul II's memory which would see him as an advocate of female submission to the point of marital rape, and launched a full-scale offensive on those who dared to question her speech.

Within hours of the story appearing, she had written to the owner of this newspaper; ignoring the usual convention of writing to the editor – claiming that “*The Irish Catholic* has become a fetid trough of fake news concerning things I am alleged to have said which I did not”. Mary McAleese also complained to two archbishops and the Papal Nuncio about *The Irish*

Catholic story.

In the same correspondence with the proprietor, Mrs McAleese says she stands “accused of misrepresenting his [Pope St John Paul II] views on the sex act by taking them out of context by people who have done precisely that since they clearly did not bother to check the context in which I used his words”.

Source

Context matters. That's why when we found it hard to believe that an academic of Mrs McAleese's standing would make such an error selectively quoting John Paul to make a straw man argument, we decided to go

straight to the source. We watched again the video of the TCD event on the Voices of Faith website. All two hours, 19 minutes and 32 seconds of it.

In the video, Mrs McAleese is asked by Ursula Halligan: “How would you describe the role of women in the Church today?”

She replies: “Absolutely, even more invisible, deliberately made invisible, deliberately meant to stay invisible. Structurally the architecture of the Church is designed to create and maintain the invisibility and the powerlessness of women, to corral us.”

“If you'll just bear with me could I just read a little

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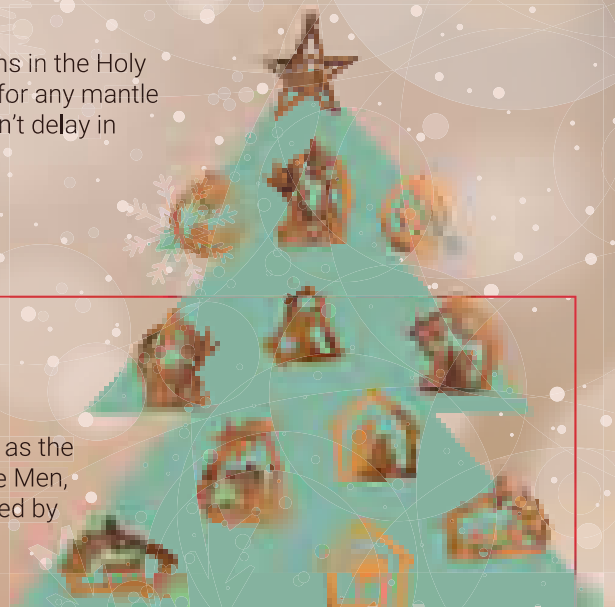
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section from the writings of Pope John Paul II? This is a recent Pope, so we're not talking about the Dark Ages, we're talking about a recent Pope, from his book *Love and Responsibility*."

Mrs McAleese continues: "This is his description of marriage, of sex and marriage. Just listen: 'it's the very nature of the act that the man plays the active role and takes the initiative, while the woman is a comparatively passive partner, whose function it is to accept and experience, for the purpose of the sexual act it is enough for her to be passive and unresisting, so much so that it can even take place without her volition, while she is in a state where she has no awareness at all of what is happening, for instance where she is asleep or unconscious.'"

“Mrs McAleese has attempted to change the goal posts by talking about rape in the moral teaching of the Catholic Church”

The crowd were heard to gasp and murmur at this.

Mrs McAleese ended her quotation from the writings of Karol Wojtyla before adding: "That is how we are treated in the Church: expected to be asleep, unconscious, while men get on with doing what they have to do. And here's the sequel to that: Fr Seán Fagan called Pope John Paul out on that and said the obvious, he asked a question. He said "can this really be Catholic Church teaching, it sounds like rape!"

"What happened? Pope John Paul becomes a saint, Seán Fagan becomes silenced. That's our Church," Mrs McAleese added to gasps from the audience.

* * * * *

You'll note that Mrs McAleese prefaced her selective quotation from *Love and Responsibility* by stating that "this is his [John Paul II] description of marriage, of sex and marriage". However, in a letter published in the *Irish Times* the following day responding to Dr Tom Finegan from Mary Immaculate University of Limerick who called Mrs McAleese out on her "shoddy scholarly treatment" of the deceased pontiff, she insists "it is very clear Dr Finegan did not check the context in which I used the passage".

Mrs McAleese goes on to claim that "it was explicitly stated by me that I was not talking about the sex act at all but by analogy using the passage to describe the position and role of women in the Church generally with men seen as dominant initiators and women as passive receivers".

Yet, it's hard to reconcile that with the video recording which shows that Mrs McAleese prefaced the quotation by stating that "this is his [John Paul II] description of marriage, of sex and marriage".

Fulminations

So, what exactly did John Paul II say in *Love and Responsibility*? In her letter to the proprietor of this newspaper, Mrs McAleese went on to add "I suggest the editor and his contributors check it.

"They will find their fulmi-

nations are based on poor fact checking," she insisted.

Of course, like all good newspapers, *The Irish Catholic* did check the facts before publishing the story. The same was true of the eminent academics who contributed to the story.

We went to the source (*Love and Responsibility*, pp 271-2) and it is clear that the future Pope is writing as phenomenologist and presenting the sexologist approach to the biological facts of sex. He then goes on, after the part quoted by Mary McAleese, to make strong statements about the mutuality of marital love even on the physical level and the responsibility of the husband to make sure that sex is mutual and mutually-pleasurable and the moral rights of the woman in this.

It is a turgid enough style of writing, but to say that abstract demonstrates John Paul II's view of women in sex or his view of women in any context is simply wrong.

“Does the secular media have any ethics or do they just report who says what in an era when media need to discern the truth from the fake?”

To say that the abstract quoted by Mary McAleese, and by Fr Seán Fagan in *Responding to the Ryan Report* which is repeated in Angela Hanley's new book on Fr Fagan is representative of the thinking of John Paul II in this area is patently unfair,

intellectually unfair and academically unfair.

Mrs McAleese has attempted to change the goal posts by talking about rape

in the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, but this is another straw man. The heart of the matter here is that with academic freedom comes privilege and responsibility and she has whether by will or error abused that privilege.

Critique by all means, we need a Church open to critique and rigour, but what perspective does Mary McAleese hold that thinks she is beyond question?

“To say that abstract demonstrates John Paul II's view of women in sex or his view of women in any context is simply wrong”

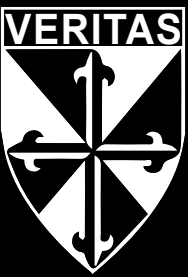
Does Trinity College, one of the top universities in the world, stand over such shoddy scholarship from its Chancellor? The so-called 'paper of record' the *Irish Times* didn't bother to check the facts nor did RTÉ. Does the secular media have any ethics or do they just report who says what in an era when media need to discern the truth from the fake?

Ultimately, especially in the age of video, our words have to mean what they mean. Another president in another place has become infamous for using words and then he and his media aides saying that the media has misinterpreted what he said.

The meaning of what Mary McAleese said was clear to the women in Trinity who gasped at the words of a Pope apparently advocating marital rape; they were clear too when prominent Catholics such as Senator Rónán Mullen and Baroness Nuala O'Loan criticised them for being unfair and out of context, and they are clear to the professional journalists in this paper who have checked the sources. Who among us would want to be part of a Church that taught such a thing?

One of the biggest winners in publishing with Donald Trump in power have been the publishers of dictionaries: people want facts, not alternative facts, bluster, straw men.

As a newspaper we believe in reporting accurately and fairly and so to be labelled a "fetid trough of fake news" by a powerful, wealthy former president for fair and accurate reporting is a badge of honour for a newspaper that prides itself on being both counter-cultural and ethical.



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Out&About

On Mission in Clare



CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan takes part in Eucharistic celebration with Neocatechumenal Way group who were on mission in Ennis parish.



LAOIS: Young people and parishioners gather at the annual bereavement Mass in Portlaoise Parish Church. Photo: Agnieszka Kaczmarek



CORK: Cork and Ross Bishop Fintan Gavin celebrates Autumn Station Mass at the home of the Crowley family at Lackanashinnagh, Enniskeane, with Fr Tom Hayes PP. Photo: Colum Cronin

IN SHORT

'Light Up a Memory' Mass in Cork

As November is traditionally a month to remember the deceased, this year the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have given an open invitation to join them for a special memorial service at their annual 'Light Up a Memory' Mass.

Every year, the order invites mission friends to send the names of loved ones for remembrance and the list is kept on the altar throughout the month. The 'Light Up a Memory' Mass is a beacon in the winter darkness, marking the end of the month of remembrance by honouring treasured memories of those held dear.

Since the first candlelight memorial service in 2014, the annual MSC 'Light Up a Memory' Mass has become a much-

loved occasion. Bereavement touches us all and the service is a very special way for families to remember together. MSC are glad to welcome familiar faces of old friends on the night, while many visitors come specially to celebrate the service. "The church looked stunning," said one of last year's attendees. "It was so warm, inviting, and very appropriate for the occasion. It was also lovely to see so many MSC priests concelebrating Mass."

It will be celebrated on Saturday, November 30 at 6.30pm in the Sacred Heart Church on the Western Road, Cork.

Viewers from all over the world are also welcome to join the service on the live stream at www.mscomissions.ie. Last year, hundreds of mission friends tuned in to pray with the congregation at the Sacred Heart Church. "That was lovely," said one online viewer. "I'm so glad I got it!"

For further information, contact the MSC Missions Office by phone on 021 4545704 or by email at info@mscomissions.ie.

Armagh celebrates 'Week of Witness'

A special 'Week of Witness' will be celebrated in the Archdiocese of Armagh to give thanks to those who have given witness to their faith in the past and those who continue to do so today. Events will take place this month from Monday 25 to Friday 29.

On Tuesday 26, Jean Harrington will give a lecture in The Magnet Pastoral Centre, Dundalk at 7.30pm on 'Martyrdom in the 21st Century'. Jean is the author of *Murder in the Missions* – a true story which was published earlier this year.

On Wednesday 27 (Red Wednesday),

Archbishop Eamon Martin will lead a special 'Liturgy of Witness' in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, at 7.30pm.

People are invited to wear something red to remember all who have given and all who continue to give great witness to their faith. After the Liturgy, Archbishop Martin will launch a new book in The Synod Hall titled *Not Might nor Fear – Prayers and Reflections on the new Statue of St Oliver Plunkett* edited by Canon Benedict Fee.

On Thursday 28, Archbishop Martin will celebrate the 10am Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral and during the Mass, special prayers will be offered for all who give witness to their Faith in the world today.

After the Mass, the Archbishop will join with all the young people who are to be confirmed in the Cathedral Parish this year, in leading a 'Walk of Witness' within the Cathedral.

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



CARLOW: Bishop Denis Nulty meets with chaplains from the Kildare and Leighlin community schools.



ANTRIM: Religious celebrate the 25th anniversary of the St Joseph's Young Priests Society branch in Ballymena. It was founded by Msgr Sean Connolly. Priests that were born in the parish and also serving in the parish: (l-r) Fr Paddy McKenna, Fr David Delargy, Fr Hugh Boyle, Fr Aidan Kerr, Fr Aloysius Lumala, CC. Fr Damian McCaughan, Msgr Sean Connolly, Fr Liam Blayney, Fr Dermot McCaughan, Fr Kevin McGuckien and Fr Paddy Delargy, PP Ballymena.



DUBLIN: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin institutes eight candidates for the permanent diaconate, a lector/reader, and one candidate for priesthood at a ceremony in Ballyroan parish, Rathfarnham.

ARMAGH

An evening of Advent Meditation in music, prose, poetry and prayer will take place in The Market Place Theatre on Tuesday, December 10, at 7.30pm.

FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Tuesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly, at 7.30pm: www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly. There is also a St Peregrine Novena Mass in Holy Cross Church, Lisnaskea on Tuesday nights at 7pm. www.churchservices.tv/lisnaskea

CLARE

Cloughleigh Oratory will continue to pray the Novena Prayer to St Anthony every Tuesday morning at the 9.30am Mass.

Masses for the Holy Souls Mass will be offered every day in November for all those whose names are on the deceased list of Ennis Parish.

CORK

The Hail Holy Queen Conference takes place in the Firgrove Hotel, Mitchelstown on Saturday, November 23, at 9.30am. Featuring: Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, James Mahon, Fr Colm Mannion OP, Fr Marius O Reilly, Kathy Sinnott, Méabh Carlin. Confessions and Mass will take place.

Medjugorje prayer meeting in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament every Wednesday night at 8pm in Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay, Cork. Prayers for healing first Wednesday of every month.

David Quinn of the Iona Institute will give a talk entitled "What we owe to Christianity" on Monday, November 25, in the Munster Arms Hotel, Bandon, Co. Cork. Doors open at 7.30 pm.

DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Monday to Friday, 8-12pm and 3-9pm.

St Maria Goretti Prayer Movement: Prayer for healing for victims of abuse and reparation for the Church. First Holy Hour of prayer in the Immaculate Conception Church, Trench Road Derry at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell, on the third Tuesday of every month.

DUBLIN

Our Lady of Knock prayer meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month in St Gabriel's Nursing Home, Glenayle Road, Ratheny, Dublin 5, from 8-9pm.

Ewe Thina: We Walk God's Way. Join other young adults (20's & 30's) for reflective hikes around Dublin Area. Monthly event. Contact st.pauls@dulindiocese.ie

GALWAY

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

KERRY

Weekly Monday prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, from 8-9.30pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

KILDARE

Praying, reading and sharing the following Sunday's Gospel in Resurrexit, Kilmeague, every

Wednesday from 8-9.30pm. See www.resurrexit.ie for details, or ring 087-6825407.

KILKENNY

Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday at 5pm in St Patrick's Church, College Road, Kilkenny (opposite St Kieran's College).

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

Mass in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will take place at 10.30am every first Saturday of the month in St Malachy's Church, Anne Street, Dundalk. Organised by the Legion of Mary, Presidium of Our Lady of the Listening Heart. Spiritual Director Fr Bede McGregor OP.

A Centre Prayer Meeting is held at Mount Oliver (near Ballymascanlon, Dundalk) every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm. Contact 00353 863623361 from the North of Ireland or 0863623361 from the Republic of Ireland.

MAYO

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Church of St Joseph and the Immaculate Conception Bohola every Wednesday from 10am until 10pm.

49th Annual Eucharistic All Night Vigil takes place on Saturday, December 7, in Knock Basilica. Chief Celebrant: Archbishop Okolo, with Fr Brendan Walsh, SAC, and Fr John Regan, SAC. Commencing at 10pm, with Confessions. Phone 094 93 8810.

MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday afternoon at 3pm in the parish centre; on the 2nd Monday of each month, the group meets on Mondays at 7.30pm for its Lay Apostle meeting.

Adoration in St Patrick's Church, Stamullen, after 10am Mass every Thursday until 5pm, and in St Mary's Church, Julians-town, on Wednesdays from 9am and after 10am Mass.

ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

WATERFORD

A day of praise and healing celebrating the Feast of Christ the King, Sunday, November 24 in the Woodlands Hotel, from 10am-6pm. Guest Eddie Stones. Mass celebrated by Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan. Led by Word of God Outreach group - contact Tom 087 2701311

WEXFORD

Taizé prayer services, first and third Friday at 8pm in Good Counsel College Chapel, New Ross.

WICKLOW

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

St Patrick's Prayer Group, Wicklow town, meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Care Centre.

Westminster, for all its flaws, is a better version of democracy than what we have in Dublin



We should save money and just let Micheál Martin vote 44 times on each Dáil vote, writes **John McGuirk**

Watching the House of Commons in recent weeks, at the height of Brexitmania, probably the most unfamiliar part of it to those of us who observe Irish politics was the way in which the result of so many important votes was unpredictable. It simply wasn't certain, even to the experts commenting on the television, whether Boris Johnson would win or lose each crucial vote as it came up.

This kind of drama simply does not happen in Dáil Éireann, where the outcome of every vote is known well in advance, and a very strict party whip system means that our politicians are so accustomed to voting for things that they don't really believe in that hardly any of them question it any more. It is not uncommon for Boris Johnson or Jeremy Corbyn to see 20 of their own backbenchers voting for the other fella in a commons vote. That kind of free thinking is unimaginable in Dublin.

Familiarity

Perhaps it is this predictability, and this familiarity, that has bred such contempt for our democratic institutions in those who serve in them. Since they all know how votes will go before they are even called, what does it matter if a TD votes twice, or three times, for an absent colleague?

The truth is that Irish TDs take part in votes seven or eight times a day and to most of them, it probably doesn't even occur to them to ask what they are voting on. The bell rings, they walk in, and they push whatever button their party whip tells them to push.

It was Charlie McCreevy, years ago, who said that when he was on the backbenches, he wished he could just have sent a pair of shoes to the Dáil, and taken a holiday, because his job was just to stand



At Westminster, MPs have to vote with their feet – in the Dáil, they simply press button (inset).

where he was told.

In those days, you had to stand in a line to vote. Today, as we know, you just push a button. A child could do it, because there is no thinking involved. Most of our TDs get paid a six-figure sum to read a list telling them whether to push green or red on every vote, and that's the end of it.

Is it any wonder then, that they don't take it seriously? Most of them aren't even required to think about it. The vote could be something that affects you, and your family, very seriously, or it could be on a major point of constitutional significance, and most of our elected politicians don't even have the freedom, within the system, to think about it. All they do is vote the way they're told.

In such an environment, it shouldn't be a surprise that so many of them apparently treated votes in the Dáil as something they could skip and get a friend to cover

for them.

Neither should it be a surprise that Michael Healy-Rae (who is hardly alone in this) would sign into the Dáil in the morning, collecting his expenses for a day's work, and then appear at a funeral in Kerry before lunchtime. Michael has not yet explained the mechanics of this, but it's safe to say that unless he can be in two places at once, he has some explaining to do.

Foregone conclusion

But then, would we have it any other way? The fact of the matter is that fewer people in Kerry will be annoyed at Healy Rae skipping a vote to make a funeral than would be grievously offended if he skipped a funeral to make a vote, especially when the result of the vote was a foregone conclusion anyway.

So, what exactly is the role of a back-bench politician in Ireland? Isn't the truth that the decisions

made in the Dáil would be the same if we just sent Micheál Martin and told him that because of the election results, he is allowed to push his preferred button 44 times on every vote? Leo Varadkar, because of the votes for Fine Gael, could push his button 50 times, and so on, for every party in the house.

“The bell rings, they walk in, and they push whatever button their party whip tells them to push”

We wouldn't even need elected Ministers. Just let the Taoiseach appoint people from outside politics to run health, and education, and finance, and so on. There's a real argument to be made that the country would be better run.

The fact is that your TD doesn't

vote in the Dáil according to what he or she thinks best for the country, or according to what's best for his or her constituency. They vote instead according to what their leader says.

The problem here is not the law, or the constitution, which says nothing about party whips. It is simply a culture that has been allowed to develop here, and it has disastrous effects.

It leads to fewer politicians willing to say what they think, or come up with new ideas, because they must stick to a party line. It makes it harder to stop bad policy, because politicians know that they will never be punished if they just shut up and do what they are told.

It leads to contempt for the democratic process, because the votes don't even matter, so it's easy just to get your friend to push the button for you.

One does not have to admire Brexit, or think the UK is in a good place overall compared to Ireland, to recognise that the Westminster system, for all its flaws, is a better version of democracy than what we have in Dublin. Politicians there vote with their consciences and aren't afraid to argue for what they think.

In Ireland, they care so little that it makes no difference who even pushes the button. Remember that when they call to your door.

“The fact is that your TD doesn't vote in the Dáil according to what he or she thinks best for the country, or according to what's best for his or her constituency. They vote instead according to what their leader says”

Gift guide 2019

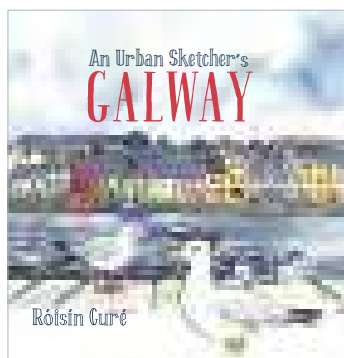
The Sacred Life of Everything Sr Stan & Sile Wall



In Sr Stan's latest work, she encourages us all to tap into awe-inspiring every day moments and find a greater sense of presence. After all, if you take the time to pay attention to the world around you, you'll discover the sacred in the ordinary and mundane.

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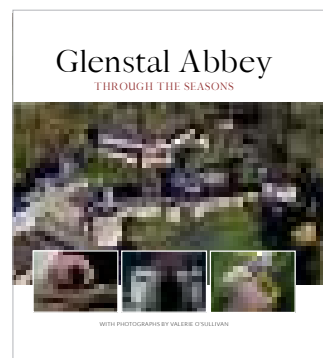
An Urban Sketcher's Galway Róisín Curé



Local artist Róisín Curé has captured snapshots of life in Galway in bold ink and vibrant watercolour. Accompanied by a memoir of Róisín's life in Galway, this book also provides local insights and a quirky first-hand account of the history surrounding iconic elements of the city's urban landscape.

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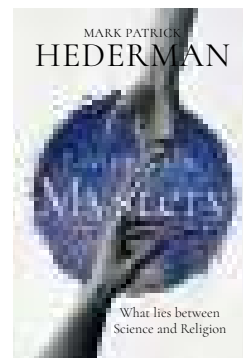
Glenstal Abbey Through the Seasons Valerie O'Sullivan



Experience the lives of Ireland's Benedictine monks through magnificent photographs from award winning photographer Valerie O'Sullivan and tales from the monks themselves in this book; a work of art uncovering what life is like at a modern monastery.

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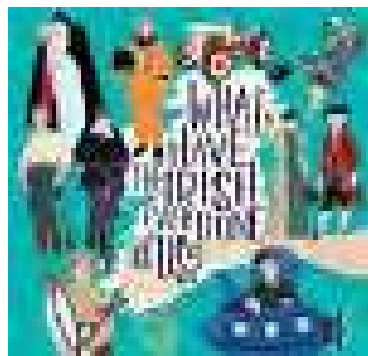
Living the Mystery Mark Patrick Hederman



Life is a mystery quite beyond the comprehension of our normal understanding. Having lived as a Benedictine monk for over fifty years, Mark Patrick Hederman has learned how to engage with mystery. Here, he sets out to explain how to bring a new sense of the sacred into your life.

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What Have The Irish Ever Done For Us? David Forsythe



For centuries, the Irish have had an impact on the world far beyond what you would expect for a tiny nation on the edge of Europe. What have the Irish ever done for us? Find out in this light hearted book filled with tales and quirky illustrations of Irish who have changed the world.

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A Farewell to Poetry Gabriel Fitzmaurice



Gabriel Fitzmaurice, one of Ireland's most exceptional poets and the great characters of the Irish arts, selected his favourite poems for this collection of his poetry. Including selections for adults and children, it's a perfect finale.

was €19.99 **€17.99**

Mythical Irish Beasts Mark Joyce



Ireland's mythology is bursting with mysterious creatures and this beautifully illustrated book is the perfect way to explore our magical heritage. In these pages, Mark Joyce brings the reader on a fantastic journey through Irish folklore with his stories of monsters and enchanted creatures.

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Freedom from Evil Spirits

Pat Collins CM



Written from Fr Pat Collins' own encounters with evil through his work as an exorcist, the pages of this book offer practical advice on how to overcome afflictions such as depression and anxiety.

was €12.99 **€8.99**

GAEILGE A Radical Revolution

Caoimhín De Barra

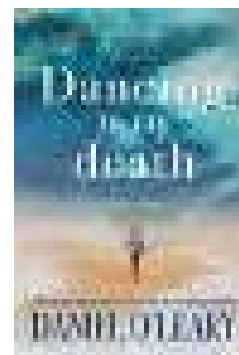


Everything you think you know about the Irish language is wrong. As a historian of languages, Caoimhín De Barra offers both academic and personal insights into Ireland's complex relationship with its national language.

was €14.99 **€9.99**

Dancing to my Death

Daniel O'Leary

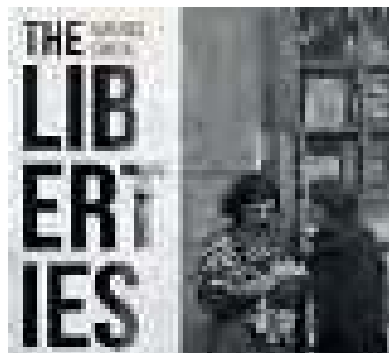


Daniel O'Leary's final masterpiece is an account of his cancer diagnosis and the emotional rollercoaster of facing his own death. During his illness, Daniel found clarity about what is important in life – something which can only emerge when people really explore what Christianity means to them.

was €16.99 **€11.99**

The Liberties

Maurice Curtis

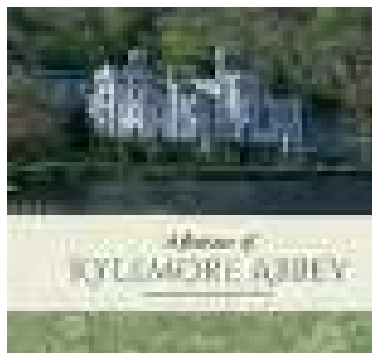


The Liberties, at the heart of the city centre, can be described as the soul of Dublin. Tour with author Maurice Curtis through this culturally and historically significant area of Dublin 8. You'll not only experience the breathtaking landmarks, but also the rich community.

was €19.99 **€13.99**

A Flavour of Kylemore Abbey

Valerie O'Sullivan

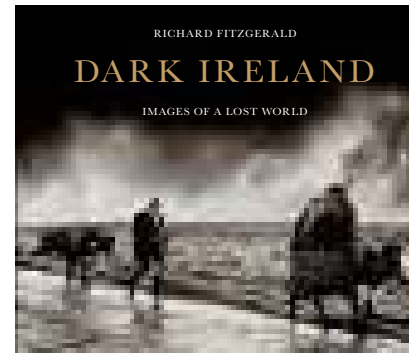


Kylemore Abbey has been enchanting visitors since 1920 and the Benedictine Nuns who call it home are renowned for their food and baking. As well as offering a range of unique recipes, readers will also have an exclusive glimpse into one of Ireland's most intriguing estates.

was €24.99 **€16.99**

Dark Ireland

Richard Fitzgerald



Richard Fitzgerald, one of Ireland's most outstanding photographers, has created a unique album that is both compelling and graceful; a fond tribute to an earthier time and place. Through haunting photographs readers today can transport to a different time, reliving days of the past.

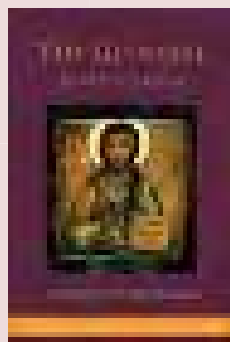
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The Glenstal Book of Prayer

Simon Sleeman OSB

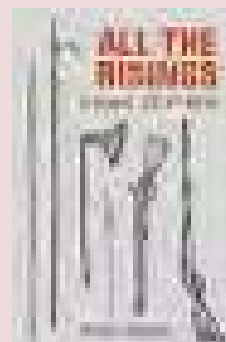


Coming as it does from an Irish monastery, this book of prayers reflects the Celtic tradition with its earthy, popular and devotional prayers. Comprising of four sections, the Liturgy of the Hours, popular prayers, ritual prayers and Psalms, there is something for everyone.

was €12.99 **€7.99**

All The Risings Ireland 1014 - 1916

Kevin Kenna

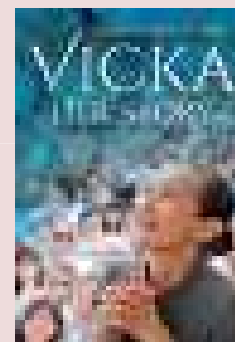


On nine principal occasions, Irish resistance fought against the dominant forces that controlled the country's destiny. Now in this book, journey through the events that shaped history from the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 to the 1916 Rising.

was €14.99 **€8.99**

Vicka Her Story

Finbar O'Leary



In conversation with Finbar O'Leary, Vicka - the eldest of the Medjugorje Visionaries - gives the fullest account yet of her story, highlighting the extraordinary experiences with Our Lady. She discusses her relationship with the 'Queen of Peace' as well as the messages she's received.

was €9.99 **€5.99**

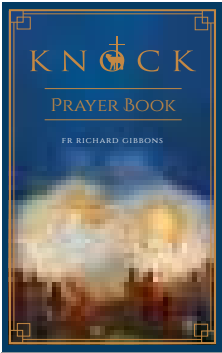
Awakening Inner Peace
Sr Stan



Designed for a reader who wants to escape the stresses of everyday life, this modern book of hours is the perfect antidote, providing readers with short, inspiring prayers, poems and biblical quotes they can turn to whenever they need a quiet moment.

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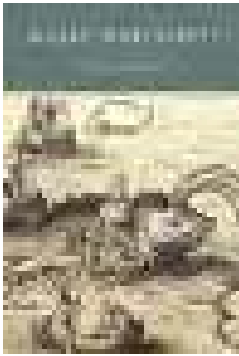
Knock Prayer Book
Fr Richard Gibbons



Fr Richard Gibbons, rector at Knock Shrine has personally chosen this collection of prayers to inspire those who may not get the chance to pray, have forgotten how to or would just like something simple and accessible to help them journey along the pilgrim road of life.

was €14.99 **€9.99**

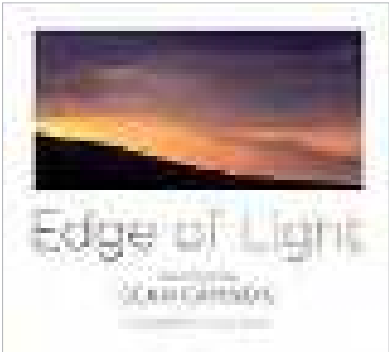
Early Irish Saints
John J Ó Ríordáin C.Ss.R



This collection of short essays on fourteen well-loved early Irish saints presents a very readable combination of historical fact, folklore and legend which echoes the traditional faith of the people who kept these stories alive for over a millennium.

was €12.99 **€8.99**

Edge of Light
Sean Canon



Across the arc of his photographic life Sean Cannon brings you Achill Island in its many moods. For those who have visited or intend to visit Achill, this intimate collection of images specially chosen by Sean celebrates 30 years of photography exhibited in the Western Light Art Gallery.

was €29.99 **€19.99**

Native Irish Dogs
Shane McCoy. Photography by Colin White



When it comes to dogs, Ireland boasts a broad and diverse range of breeds whose origins are uniquely Irish. From the iconic Irish Wolfhound to the lesser-known Glen of Imaal Terrier, the native dogs of Ireland are ancient breeds with diverse histories and mythologies.

was €16.99 **€11.99**

Give us Back the Bad Roads
John Waters



In *Give Us Back the Bad Roads*, John Waters begins seeking to outline the facts of his departure from Irish journalism, and finds himself thanking his lucky stars to have escaped from the ideological cesspit the Dublin media had become.

was €19.99 **€13.99**

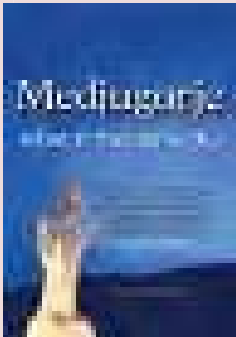
Glencairn Abbey
Valerie O'Sullivan



Experience the mysticism and rhythm which abounds in daily life at St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn. Through a series of images and words we get an opportunity to see behind the scenes of the only Cistercian monastery for women in Ireland since the Reformation.

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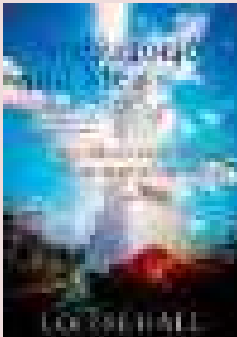
Medjugorje What it means to me
Louise Hall



The deeply personal stories collected in this book detail how these Irish individuals found themselves visiting Medjugorje, their experiences and encounters with God whilst there and the impact it has had on their lives today.

was €11.99 **€6.99**

Medjugorje and Me
Louise Hall



In this compilation of personal testimonials about Medjugorje, more of Ireland's own come to share their story. Contributors come from all walks of life, but as in the previous edition all were changed for the better in this holy place.

was €11.99 **€6.99**

Meeting with Our Lady of Medjugorje
Finbar O'Leary

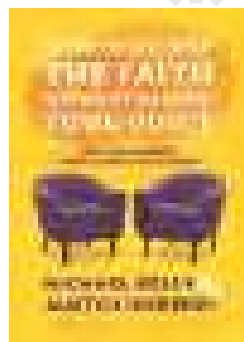


Through in-depth interviews with the visionaries of Medjugorje, this book gives a deep insight into the past and current events taking place in this small village. These beautiful interviews bring Our Lady's message to the modern world, helping the reader get closer to God.

was €9.99 **€5.99**

How to Defend The Faith

Michael Kelly and Austen Ivereigh



If you've ever struggled to defend your beliefs on controversial topics like abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage and the use of condoms in the fight against HIV, this book is here to help you reframe the debate and help people understand why the Church teaches what it does.

was €14.99 **€7.99**

Tired of all the Bad News

Fr Bryan Shortall

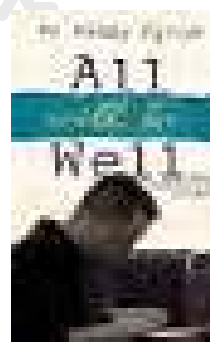


In this collection of homilies, blogs and stories, Fr Bryan Shortall, a Capuchin priest working in Dublin, aims to bring a bright and positive message to the reader, because too much negativity plays havoc with our spirit.

was €12.99 **€5.99**

All will be Well

Paddy Byrne



Midlands priest Fr Paddy Byrne draws on his years of parish ministry to outline the current challenges we face, while offering hope through reflections, parables and prayers to help readers overcome life's obstacles and lead them towards a positive future.

was €14.99 **€7.99**

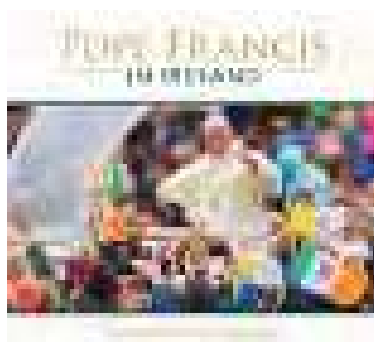


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Pope Francis in Ireland

Ed. Mags Gargan



Written in partnership with *The Irish Catholic*, this beautiful book covers the day-to-day events of the WMOF from August 21-26, offering in-depth analysis, personal reflections from participants and a photographic diary of the Pope's visit.

was €24.99 **€11.99**

Dublin- A Photographic Essay

Eddie Mallin

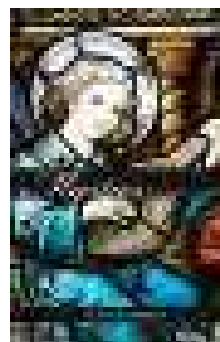


Created over the past ten years, this collection of photography includes images of Dublin's urban cityscape, its beautiful coastal seascapes and luscious parklands. The black and white images capture the feeling of the streets, allowing readers to view these familiar scenes through a new lens.

was €24.99 **€12.99**

Mystics The Beauty of Prayer

Craig Larkin, S.M.

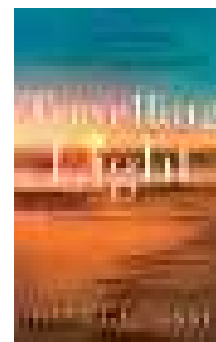


Sts Augustine, Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila are among the subjects of Mystics. Their challenges and their spiritual journey are not only insightful to the reader, but also a source of guidance for those who seek to understand the mystery of God.

was €12.99 **€6.99**

Travelling Light

Daniel J. O'Leary



Do you feel a call to be happier? Are you prepared to take the time and the trouble to discover this new way of living? The aim of this book is to empower you to respond 'Yes' to both questions, so don't wait to deepen your life – start now.

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In their contrasting ways two much-loved priests offered selfless pastoral service to different faith communities, writes **Martin O'Brien**

The diocese of Down and Connor was both in mourning and in thanksgiving last week after the deaths on the same day of two of its most beloved and distinguished priests, Fr Des Wilson and Msgr Ambrose Macaulay.

They were known and respected throughout Ireland and beyond: Fr Wilson for his work as a community activist in Ballymurphy and a peacemaker and Msgr Macaulay for his distinction as an ecclesiastical historian.

Both passed to their eternal reward on November 5 and Bishop Noel Treanor, his predecessor Dr Patrick Walsh and retired auxiliary bishop, Dr Anthony Farquhar led the mourners at their funerals.

Fr Des (94), who was brought up in the Ormeau Road area of south Belfast died in Nazareth House Care Village after a long illness while Fr Ambrose (85), a native of Cushendall, Co. Antrim, died in his sleep at his home not far from St Brigid's Church, in the south of the city, where he was parish priest from 1989 until his retirement in 2010.

Ask anyone and they would say both men were like chalk and cheese. Des, the contrarian social justice campaigner with an eye for publicity who recalled to me in an interview for this newspaper in 2014, that he had been ostracised by then Bishop of Down and Connor William Philbin in the 1970s and summarily removed from his listing in the Down and Connor directory. (He was only rehabilitated after the arrival of Bishop Cahal Daly to Down and Connor in 1982.)

Interview

Ambrose, the shy reserved ever orthodox son of the Church with a reputation in particular for his wonderful ministry to the dying and their families, who only ever gave an extensive newspaper interview in his life to *The Irish Catholic* in 2016 when I persuaded him of an opportunity to publicise his last and acclaimed book *The Catholic Church and the Campaign for Emancipation in Ireland and England* (Four Courts Press).

However, looking at both men in the round, it might be just too easy to make too much of the obvious differences between them.

They were certainly very different but more in style and approach than in anything else and while it might be tempting in this culture of lazy labelling to see one as a 'progressive' and the other a 'conservative' that might be a tad trite and a disservice to

the depth of both.

In substance, they were priests to the core, preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, intellectuals of calibre, humble and devoted pastors to their flocks, loyal to their Church and loved by those they touched, as evidenced by the huge crowds who attended their wakes, the removal of their remains and their funerals in St Brigid's and in Corpus Christi, Ballymurphy respectively on Friday and Saturday last.

They were men of simple tastes with no interest in personal advancement.

“He was a voice for the voiceless”

By coincidence, the Gospel reading at each of their funerals was the story of The Beatitudes. It seemed so right and fitting.

Both were masters of the written word: Ambrose the historian and author of six books of Church history spanning mainly the 18th and 19th Centuries in Ireland and Britain, and Des, the author of

several books including his autobiography *The Way I See It* and columnist for more than 30 years in the *Andersonstown News*.

Fr Ambrose's sudden death struck me personally because he was a friend, guide and confidant for more than 40 years. We met first in October 1973 when I arrived as a fresher at Queen's University where he was Catholic chaplain and spiritual guide and supporter-in-chief of the QUB GAA club which I immediately joined.

Fr Macaulay, as I always referred to him, had a central role in my life. He was celebrant at our wedding and at our eldest child's wedding, he baptised our first grandchild in 2017 and was our parish priest for more than 20 years.

I was privileged to be among the members of the Queen's GFC Past Members' Union – led by Sean O'Neill, the Down GAA legend and close friend of Ambrose – who carried his coffin from his home a little of the way to St Brigid's for the removal at which Fr Edward O'Donnell,

his successor as parish priest there, recalled his devotion to St John Henry Newman.

Fr Ambrose's close friend and successor as chaplain at Queen's, Fr Joseph Gunn, the parish priest of Bangor, delivered the homily at the funeral.

It was an especially poignant occasion because parishioners had been looking forward to honouring Fr Ambrose at an event on November 15 (now cancelled) marking his central role in the building of the new St Brigid's Church 25 years ago.

“They were priests to the core, preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, intellectuals of calibre”

It can't have been an easy occasion for Fr Gunn. He had driven Fr Ambrose to retired Bishop Walsh's home where the three of them had lunch the day before his death.

Fr Ambrose had regularly said Sunday Mass in Donaghadee in Bangor Parish, and had done so just two days before his passing.

Fr Gunn told mourners, who included his close friends Cardinal Sean Brady and Msgr Ciaran O'Carroll, the rector the Irish College in Rome and more than 50 priests: “He managed to make being a parish priest look easy! His guiding principle was never to divide people and he always tried to be merciful in his estimation of people.”

He added: “An essentially shy man, he relished company and was a warm and generous host, a marvellous raconteur who loved fun. He welcomed and encouraged young priests such as myself

when we were starting out. Priestly fraternity was in his bones.”

Fr Gunn continued: “Since his sudden death I have been casting around for a phrase to somehow encapsulate what it was that made Ambrose the priest, relative and friend that he was. I think that ‘joyful hope’ sums it up very well.”

Msgr Macaulay is interred close to the front of St Brigid's.

Meanwhile, in West Belfast it is difficult to convey the love and esteem for Fr Des Wilson.

Ciaran Cahill, co-ordinator of Springhill Community House, the project which Fr Des founded, said: “We feel a huge loss that will never be filled. Fr Des was a father figure to many. We have lost a priest; we have lost a father.”

“Fr Des said Sunday evening Mass here every week until the start of the year. The pastoral care he gave was incredible. Only God knows the number of times he gave money to people out of his own pocket to put food on the table or for coal to heat a home.”

At his funeral his friend of almost 50 years, Fr Joe McVeigh, the Fermanagh priest and republican, delivered a 28-minute homily that received a standing ovation from all in the Church including the three bishops, with Bishop Treanor getting to his feet first followed by Dr Farquhar and Dr Walsh.

“They were loyal and loved by all”

One wonders what Bishop Philbin and his right-hand man, Canon Pdraig Murphy would have made of it all.

Fr McVeigh told the congregation that included Gerry Adams TD: “Fr Des was a man with a vision of how the Catholic Church should be – a

Church in which the leaders stand with the powerless, a Church that abhors any kind of authoritarianism and clericalism. He often said that the Church of the future should be a Church of small communities made up of people who want to keep the vision of Jesus alive.”

He said: “I am pleased to say that in recent years Bishop Noel and Des became good friends and a close bond had grown between them. Des was really happy about that.”

The chief celebrant at the Mass, Fr Patrick McCafferty, the parish priest of Corpus Christi said in his introductory words of welcome: “Fr Des was a voice for the voiceless. His was a fearless voice. His strong defence and championing of this community was articulated out of his deep understanding of the Gospel and its radical demands.”

The congregation included more than 25 priests and four Indian-born members of the Missionaries of Charity from Armagh whose founder St Mother Teresa of Calcutta withdrew her sisters from Ballymurphy in controversial circumstances in 1973.

Fr Wilson's funeral was held in Corpus Christi at his request and he was interred in Milltown Cemetery.

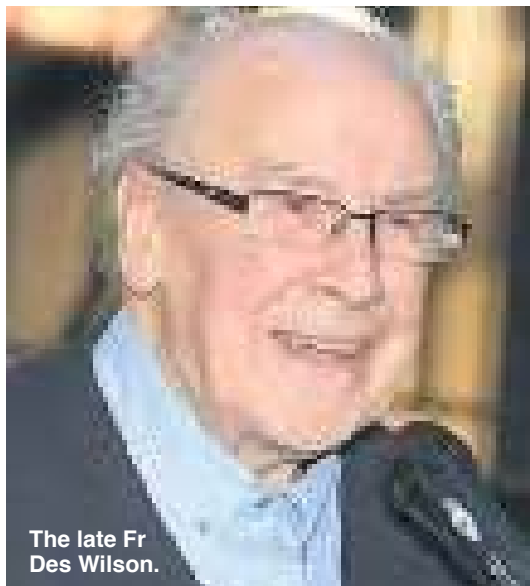
Ambrose and Des, priests and servants to the last, they helped to encompass the genius and inclusivity of our Church. May their gentle souls rest in peace.

① Martin O'Brien's feature length interviews with the late Fr Wilson and Msgr Macaulay, entitled 'I believe in the Church' and 'I have a duty to recall the past' published respectively on July 31, 2014 and December 8, 2016 may be accessed at irishcatholic.com



The funeral of Msgr Ambrose Macaulay

Humble and devoted pastors to their flocks



The late Fr Des Wilson.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Religious urge governor to stop execution of inmate

● Sr Helen Prejean, Bishop Joe Vasquez of Austin, Texas, and the Catholic Mobilising Network have been joined by celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Rihanna, Meek Mill and Kim Kardashian West in urging Texas Governor Greg Abbott to stop the scheduled November 20 execution of death-row inmate Rodney Reed.

A group of Texas lawmakers and more than two million petition signers also are pressing Abbott to spare Reed.

The basis of their objections is that Reed, who has spent nearly 22 years on death row, could be executed for a crime he possibly didn't commit, pointing to new evidence they say could exonerate the 51-year-old convicted in 1996 of raping and killing 19-year-old Stacey Stites.

Don't exploit tragic case to push euthanasia – UK group

● An anti-euthanasia group in the UK is calling for the continuation of laws against assisted suicide, as the family of an elderly woman acquitted of murdering her husband wants the laws relaxed.

"It is sad to see this case being used to try and justify a campaign to rip up long held universal protections, by treating those who are terminally ill, disabled, or have chronic conditions differently in law," said Dr Gordon Macdonald, chief executive of Care Not Killing.

"We know from the handful of places that have made such a change vulnerable people often feel pressured into ending lives prematurely."

A jury cleared Mavis Eccleston, 80, of the murder and manslaughter of her husband Dennis, 81, in September, the BBC reports.

Pope restructures dioceses after Amazon synod

● Following a proposal made during the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, Pope Francis restructured several dioceses in the Brazilian Amazon to better address the needs of local Catholics.

The Vatican announced that the Pope restructured the Archdiocese of Belem do Para, essentially dividing the

ecclesiastical territory in half to create the Archdiocese of Santarem, which borders the Brazilian state of Amazonas.

He also divided the territorial prelature of Xingu, "and erected two new ecclesiastical regions: the Diocese of Xingu-Altamira and the territorial prelature of Alto Xingu-Tucuma", the Vatican said.

Group which exposed China organ trafficking awarded

● An award named after Mother Teresa was given this week for outstanding efforts in social justice to a US-based non-profit that has unmasked forced organ harvesting in China.

Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) was the recipient of a Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice. The award was formally presented at an event in Mumbai, India. "DAFOH is honoured to be chosen to receive a prestigious Mother Teresa Memorial Award 2019, for raising awareness and sensitising both the global medical community and the public about #ForcedOrganHarvesting and genocide in China," the organisation said in a tweet.

Bishop calls for end to child labour in Philippines

● A Catholic bishop in the Philippines is drawing attention to the ongoing problem of child labour in the country, urging a cooperative effort to eliminate the factors driving children into often dangerous working conditions. "The situation of the suffering children and those who are deprived of their rights and dignity leave a great challenge to us as a Church and as a society," said Bishop Roberto Mallari of San Jose, according to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' news website.

The government has introduced a plan to combat child labour and says it hopes to reduce the numbers of working children in the country by 30% by 2022, but the bishop has said the factors contributing to child labour are complex.

Bishops plead for peace after resignation of Bolivian president

The Bolivian bishops have urged an end to the vandalism that has taken place following the resignation of president Evo Morales on Sunday.

Supporters of Morales have clashed with police in several cities.

In a November 10 message, the bishops' conference, along with several civic groups, encouraged "Bolivians to peace and to not commit acts of vandalism or revenge or anything we could regret. We all have a grave obligation to defend the lives of all Bolivians".

They also pointed out that "what's happening in Bolivia is not a coup d'état, we say it before all Bolivian citizens and the entire international community".

"In the name of God we tell you: stop the violent acts and let us preserve life and the peace. Let us maintain the peaceful spirit that has reigned in the people in this time," they said.

Morales resigned on November 10 after weeks of protest regarding a disputed October 20 election. The socialist leader had been in power since 2006.

According to the electoral commission Morales won on the election's first round, but the opposition claimed fraud.



People in La Paz, Bolivia shout slogans during a protest against Bolivia's President Evo Morales. Morales resigned on November 10 after nearly 14 years in office.

The Organisation of American States said on November 10 that there was "clear manipulation" in the election, and that it was statistically improbable that Morales had won by the margin needed to avoid a runoff.

Armed forces

Within hours of the OAS report, Morales resigned, after being encouraged to do so by the head of the Bolivian

armed forces.

In both La Paz and El Alto, Morales' supporters have clashed with police, and more than 20 people have reportedly been injured.

The deputy head of the Senate, Jeanine Anez, has said she will serve as a caretaker president until elections are held.

Morales has been offered asylum by Mexico.

The Bolivian bishops and

civil leaders said, "We call on the National Police and the Armed Forces of the nation to urgently fulfil their constitutional role in defence of property and people, preserving the lives and freedom of everyone."

"We are all in agreement in proposing to the National Assembly of Bolivia a constitutional and peaceful solution in order to shortly have constitutional president with the task of forming a new electoral tribunal and bringing us to new elections so that the entire people may express their opinion in freedom and peace," they continued.

Luis Fernando Camacho, an opposition leader, reportedly placed a Bible on the Bolivian flag in the presidential residence after Morales resigned, saying, "Pachamama will never return to the Palace. Bolivia is Christ's".

Bishop Krzysztof Bialasik Wawrowski of Oruro said that when the news of Morales' resignation came, "at that moment all the people gathered together to celebrate this fact, practically as a victory, because we were already living in a dictatorship and the people knew that they didn't want to become like Venezuela".

Brazil carnival puts Jesus as central theme for 2020

One of Brazil's most traditional samba schools – the popular associations that organise annual Carnival parades in the country – announced that the theme of its 2020 performance would be the story of Jesus taken to a Rio de Janeiro slum.

Estacao Primeira de Mangueira also announced its performance song, which alludes to the increasing police brutality and to the violence suffered by minorities in Brazil.

Written by the composers Manu da Cuica and Luiz Carlos Maximo, the

song talks about a boy in a favela, or slum. He has a "black face, indigenous blood and the body of a woman" and is the son of an "unemployed carpenter" and of "Mary of Sorrows Brazil".

Song

The narrator of the song said the boy, who ages as the song progresses, struggles against oppression and can be met "where love finds no barriers". In another part, the song says "Favela, get the vision/ There's no future without sharing/ And no Messiah with

a gun in his hand", a possible allusion to President Jair Bolsonaro's promises of loosening gun control legislation and of reducing punishment for police who kill suspected criminals. Bolsonaro's middle name is Messias.

Another possible reference to Bolsonaro is the title of Mangueira's parade theme, 'The truth will set you free', which was – with a slight difference in the Portuguese wording – one of Bolsonaro's campaign slogans in 2018.

Indian bishop denies claims of fathering children

A bishop in southern India has dismissed allegations of being a womaniser and fathering two children; he says the claims are a retaliatory response from priests opposed to his administrative reforms.

Ucanews.org reports that Bishop Kinnikadass William of Mysore told a news con-

ference: "There is no truth in the allegations. A group (of priests) are behind it because of administrative reforms I introduced."

The 54-year-old bishop spoke to the media after 37 of the 100 odd priests in the diocese wrote to the Vatican and its papal representative in India, plus other heads of

Church bodies in India.

The letter alleged that Bishop William has had sexual relationships with at least 10 women. He is the father to two children, ages 12 and 5, it said. The letter, also circulated in media, sought action against the bishop.

"If the allegations were true, I would not have been

made a bishop," Bishop William told media.

His detractors say he also has misappropriated diocesan funds. The priests allege his 12-year-old son studies in "a highly expensive residential school affordable by the rich and the elite. The mother is unemployed."



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
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Londoners get that sinking feeling



To demonstrate climate change in London, a mock-up house sinks into the River Thames. Photo: CNS

Most US Catholics in support of couples cohabiting before marriage

Nearly three quarters of Catholics in the US are not opposed to couples cohabiting before marriage, despite the Church's moral teaching.

A new survey by the Pew Research Centre reports that Americans as a whole are very accepting of unmarried couples living together, even if they have no plans to marry. Additionally, Pew found that a shrinking percentage of adults are getting married, and an increasing number of adults have decided to cohabit.

Only 14% of adults surveyed said they did not believe that it was ever acceptable for two unmarried adults in a romantic relationship to live together. An additional 16% said that they agreed with cohabitation only if there were plans for the couple to one day get

married.

Of the people surveyed, 69% said they believed it was acceptable for an unmarried couple to live together, without any plans to eventually wed.

In 2002, the National Survey of Family Growth found that while 54% of adults between the ages of 18 and 44 had ever cohabited with a romantic partner, 60% had ever been married. By 2017, the number of adults who had ever been married dropped to 50%, while the number of adults who had cohabited rose to 54%.

Pew found that race and religion played a role in whether or not a person was approving of the ideal of cohabitation. A total of 72% of white respondents said that cohabitation without a plan to get married was

acceptable, with an additional 13% saying they approved of cohabitation without a plan to get married. Of black survey respondents, 23%, the largest of any ethnic group, said that they did not think cohabitation was ever acceptable. Only 55% of black respondents said they approved of cohabitation without planning on getting married.

Religion was a factor as well. Catholics and white mainline Protestants had nearly identical rates of approval of cohabitation – the survey found that 74% of Catholics and 76% of white Protestants who do not claim to be born-again or evangelical were okay with an unmarried couple cohabitating.

Conversely, this figure dropped to 47% for black Protestants and 35% for white evangelical Protestants.

Bishops mark 30 years since fall of Berlin Wall

Catholic bishops from the European Union marked 30 years since the breaching of the Berlin Wall with tributes to those who worked for peaceful change, as well as warnings against resurgent "ideologies behind the building of walls".

"The fall of the Berlin Wall was one of the most important events in European history of the last decades, a moment full of emotion," the

Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, or COMECE, said.

"But not all the expectations that the fall of the wall brought forth have been fulfilled. It is also true that the ideologies behind building the wall have not fully disappeared in Europe and are still present today in different forms."

The statement said the Berlin Wall had symbolised

"the ideological division of Europe and the whole world", adding that its breaching during mass protests on November 9, 1989, had "opened the way for regaining freedom" after communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe.

"Having been separated by a concrete wall for more than 28 years, people – relatives, friends and neighbours – living in the same city were able to meet each other, celebrate

and express their joy and hopes. From this moment the world looked different," said the document, signed by representatives of 26 bishops' conferences.

"We acknowledge the process of healing and reconciliation is delicate and difficult. Even today, for some of the victims of the oppressive regimes of the past, this process is far from completed."

Vatican roundup

Be courageous in ministry, Pope tells bishops

● Bishops from New England have shared with Pope Francis some of the joys, challenges and sufferings of the Church in the US.

Nearing the end of their *ad limina* visits to the Vatican to pray at the tombs of the apostles and report on the status of their dioceses, the bishops spent two hours last week sitting in a circle in the papal library conversing with Pope Francis.

Auxiliary Bishop Robert Reed of Boston said that the conversation included "the role of women in the Church" and how to give them "a real seat at the table" when decisions are being made; immigration; priestly formation and the need for men preparing for priesthood in the US to learn Spanish; the growth of secularism; and the importance of God's mercy and encouraging Catholics to avail themselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The overriding theme was *vicinanza* or closeness, Bishop Reed said: "You must be close to God in your prayer and your personal life; you must be close to your priests as a father and walk with them; and you must be close to your people."

At the end, the Pope told the bishops they must be courageous in their ministry.

Treat atheists as children of God – Francis

● Christians who preach the Gospel must see people who do not know Christ as children of God and not as non-believers worthy of hostility and contempt, Pope Francis has said.

The example of St Paul's mission in Greece and his encounter with the pagan culture there serves as a reminder that Christians should "create a bridge to dialogue" with other cultures, the Pope during his weekly general audience.

"Paul does not look at the city of Athens and the pagan world with hostility but with the eyes of Faith," he said. "And this makes us question

our way of looking at our cities: Do we observe them with indifference? With contempt? Or with the faith that recognises children of God in the midst of the anonymous crowds?"

Continuing his series of talks on the Acts of the Apostles, the Pope focused on St Paul's visit to Athens, a city that "still held the primacy of culture" and was "full of idols".

The paganism of the Greeks did not cause the apostle to flee, the Pope explained. Instead, "Paul observes the culture and environment of Athens from a contemplative gaze that sees God dwelling in their homes, in their streets and squares."

Diocesan headquarters of accused bishop raided

● A diocese in northern Argentina was raided last week as part of a fraud investigation into the rule of Bishop Gustavo Zanchetta, a man close to Pope Francis who also faces charges of sexually abusing seminarians.

The Economic Crime Unit of the city of Oran, in Salta, raided the headquarters of the Diocese of Oran for alleged fraud against the state from 2013 to 2017.

According to a local newspaper *El Oranense*, the procedure was carried out under great secrecy, and officials left with several folders.

Bishop Zanchetta resigned in 2017, allegedly for health reasons. Soon after, Francis transferred him to Rome, and later acknowledged that he did so after having accepted his resignation due to the bishop's "despotic" behaviour.

He is facing charges of defrauding the state and "aggravated continuous sexual abuse".

Over 20 seminarians have testified to the misbehaviour of the bishop, which included paying visits to the seminary late at night, sitting on the beds of seminarians and giving them alcohol.



Letter from South Sudan



Elise Harris

As South Sudan religious leaders push peace, Pope dangles a visit

After Tuesday's deadline for South Sudan to implement a peace agreement was again postponed, the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), which unites representatives from all major Christian denominations in the country, including the Catholic Church, urged people not to lose hope.

One global figure obviously cheering for a happy outcome is Pope Francis, who, two days before the deadline, dangled the possibility of a visit to the battle-scarred nation next year.

On Sunday, the Pontiff announced his desire to visit South Sudan in 2020, saying: "The South Sudanese people have suffered too much in these last years and awaits with great hope a better future, above all the definitive end to conflicts and a lasting peace."

He urged leaders to work tirelessly for an "inclusive dialogue" and encouraged the international community not to neglect accompanying the nation on the path to national reconciliation, voicing his "special affection" for the nation.

For their part, representatives of the SSCC said on November 9 that as political solutions appear impossible, "The question on the minds of South Sudanese everywhere is, will our leaders through their actions demonstrate a genuine will for peace?"

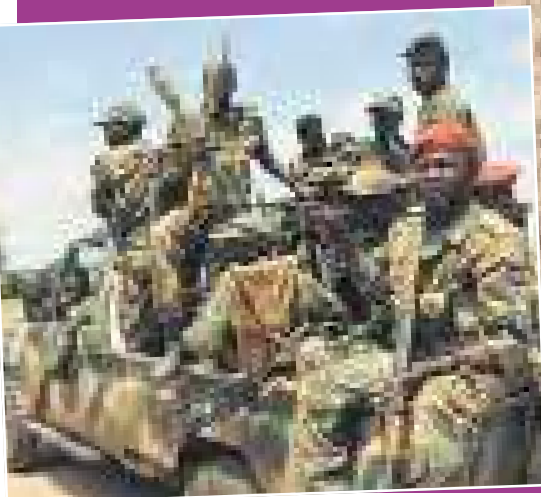
The religious leaders insisted that the will for peace "is not measured only by deadlines and technical agreements", but "it is a question of the heart and the political will".

"The people of South Sudan," they said, "have begged their leaders to find a peaceful way forward, to look beyond political interest, emotional turmoil and historic grievances, and to hold their duty towards the people of the country as a sacred calling."

* * * * *

Just eight years old, South Sudan's short history has been marred by a three-year civil war and subsequent humanitarian crisis in which food shortages have soared, millions have been displaced and lack access to basic necessities.

Several attempts at a ceasefire failed until a deal was finally brokered in October 2018 and signed by South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Vice-President Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon, who, for the past five years, have been the faces of two sides of a conflict fuelled by corruption, tribalism and poverty.



Pope Francis kneels at the feet of South Sudan President at the conclusion of a two-day retreat at the Vatican for African nations political leaders. The Pope begged them to give peace a chance. Left, soldiers with the People's Liberation Army patrol the camp of Lalo following heavy fighting in late October near Malakal, South Sudan. Photos: CNS

The official deadline to implement the deal was May 12, but both sides backed a six-month extension as they continue to work out details. However, last week Kiir and opposition leader Machar agreed to postpone forming a coalition government for 100 days in order to resolve security and governance issues.

Francis has been a vocal supporter of peace efforts in South Sudan

For the past three years, Francis has been a vocal supporter of peace efforts in South Sudan and on multiple occasions has invited South Sudan's religious and political leaders to the Vatican.

In 2016 he met with South Sudan's Catholic bishops at the Vatican and announced plans to visit the country with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in 2017, but security conditions prevented it.

Since then, he has shown continued interest. In February 2018, he called a day of prayer and fasting for South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; in 2018, he met with the country's Catholic bishops again during a visit to Rome, when they met the Pope and visited offices of the Roman Curia; and earlier this year, Francis hosted the South Sudanese president and opposition leader for a spiritual retreat at the Vatican, where he kissed their feet in pleading for peace.

In July, members of South Sudan's National Pre-Transitional Committee, tasked with implementing an October 2018 peace agreement, travelled to Rome to continue discussions on how to implement the peace plan. They were hosted by the Sant'Egidio Community, one of Francis's favourite so-called "new movements".

In their November 9 statement, the SSCC said the fact that a peace agreement was reached is proof

of the willingness of both parties "to stop the unnecessary violence as a prerequisite for lasting peace, and it has resulted in a ceasefire", allowing humanitarian aid to reach those in need.

However, they stressed that the journey to peace "is far from over. ...the duty to fulfil obligations in the agreement remains more strongly than ever", they said, adding that "the urgency of the situation and what is at stake must never be forgotten".

It's critical for parties to work together for an inclusive peace

Noting that the current "crossroads" pivots on security and border issues, the SSCC praised progress already made and urged leaders not only to focus on the politics, but the human lives at risk.

"It is critical that parties work together to lay the building blocks for an inclusive peace" and to

ensure that those who perpetrate violence against civilians "are held accountable", they said.

Urging leaders to move forward with implementation of the peace agreement, the SSCC said that as a body of churches, they are united in their desire to help South Sudan's political leaders guide the country and are committed to working together "to address the root causes of the conflict".

Putting the delay in a positive light, they said the 100-day extension can serve "as an opportunity to dialogue and implement the unresolved issues in the agreement".

"People of South Sudan, not withstanding all our challenges and pain...let us be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer," they said, also encouraging citizens to turn their attention to those in need.

Elise Harris is Senior Correspondent with Cruxnow.com



Nick Mayrand



Left: Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, is pictured in an undated photo; above, flowers decorate the grave of Dorothy Day at Cemetery of the Resurrection in the Staten Island borough of New York.

While US Catholics currently claim 13 official American saints, experts at Marquette University's Raynor Memorial Libraries are doing their part to aid efforts to determine whether that number may soon grow to include Dorothy Day.

Day co-founded the Catholic Worker movement in New York city in the 1930s following her conversion to Catholicism. Day's model for integrating service, piety, and activism lives on today in more than 200 Catholic Worker communities around the globe.

On the occasion of her November 8 birthday, *Crux* caught up with Marquette's team for their perspective on a key part of Day's canonisation cause's current phase – an in-depth digitisation and review of Day's unpublished writings. Members of Day's Catholic Worker movement also spoke about her potential canonisation and her challenging witness for a polarised US Catholic Church.

Phil Runkel, archivist for Marquette's Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection in Milwaukee has been gathering and organising Day's papers and other related materials for more than four decades.

His life's work has built a collection of thousands of primary documents that started with a single shipment in March of 1962 from Day herself, who chose Marquette because, according to Runkel, no one else had asked yet.

Presence

Marquette's director of libraries had made the initial request for manuscript materials in 1957. William Ready had met Day on a number of occasions and had become increasingly convinced that he was in the presence of a saint. In Runkel's view, Day's willingness to send her materials to Ready was also due to the efforts of Marquette's long-serving journalism dean, Jeremiah O'Sullivan.

O'Sullivan had welcomed Day to campus to speak in the 1930s and had penned a glowing letter to her after the lecture. Some of O'Sullivan's students

were responsible for starting Milwaukee's first Catholic Worker community.

Today, Marquette's expansive collection includes Day's diaries, appointment calendars, article and book manuscripts, and correspondence with individuals such as Daniel and Philip Berrigan, Thomas Merton and Eileen Egan. Runkel has worked particularly hard to recover materials from Day's early life, a task made difficult by the substantial fire that occurred at Day's Staten Island house in the early 1930s.

“Don't call me a saint, I don't want to be dismissed that easily”

Interest in the Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection has been high in recent years as Day's official canonisation cause has picked up steam following her designation as a Servant of God at the turn of the century. In 2015, Pope Francis highlighted Dorothy Day's witness in his address to Congress during his apostolic voyage to the US, naming her alongside Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr and Thomas Merton.

A year later, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York announced that Day's process was moving into the canonical inquiry phase, featuring a theological review of her published writings and a historical commission tasked with examining her unpublished materials.

As a result of the latter, Marquette's Head of Special Collections and University Archives,

Amy Cooper Cary, has been coordinating with the Dorothy Day Guild, an organisation of the Archdiocese of New York that focuses on Day's cause. In what Cary describes as a “true collaborative effort” between Milwaukee and New York, an ambitious project to digitise and transcribe thousands upon thousands of pages of Day's unpublished writings has unfolded over the past two years.

This digitisation process involves, in Cary's words, a “whole flotilla of people” including Runkel, Marquette students, and the Guild's many transcribers. At the conclusion of the project – Cary hopes to see it wrapped up by mid-2020 – the resulting materials will be shipped to the Vatican as an important part of Day's ongoing canonisation cause. In addition, the digitised files will be made available to the public as an extension of Marquette's special collections.

Conversations about Day's canonisation cause frequently turn to Day's famous line: “Don't call me a saint, I don't want to be dismissed that easily.” Some marshal the line in support of their critiques of the movement to canonise Day; others believe it paradoxically strengthens her cause.

Curiously, according to Runkel, researchers have yet to locate this oft-cited remark. Runkel suspects that Day said it when she received an award at DePaul University in the 1970s, and that it may have appeared in a local community

newspaper, but he has yet to find it.

Kate Marshall, founder of the House of Hagar Catholic Worker community in Wheeling, West Virginia, says that for her, Day's famous line is not so much a referendum on official canonisation, but that “part of what she meant is to not dismiss who God will use so easily, because what is not so easy to swallow is that the answer is us!”

“Walker refers to himself as ‘agnostic’ about Day's official sainthood”

Turning to the current climate of polarisation in society, Marshall believes that she “cannot think of a more needed time for Day's canonisation”. For Marshall, Day's life “teaches us that when we live out the Corporal Works of Mercy, suddenly many of the labels that make us question each other and divide us – clean, dirty, holy, unholy, left, right – fall away as more meaningful God questions surface: are you hungry? Is your soul thirsting? Can I visit you?”

Ted Walker, a former co-managing editor of the New York edition of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, has a different perspective on Day's potential canonisation and its ramifications for US Catholics.

Walker refers to himself as “agnostic” about Day's official sainthood, noting that he tries to keep before him Dorothy's dynamic tension of practicing a fervent devotion to the Church while at the

same time constantly challenging the Church to do as the Church preaches.

This does not mean that Walker is entirely closed to the idea of canonisation; he explains that “if I believe in the movement of Dorothy's canonisation, I do so because of the folks at Marquette and the folks in NYC who are actively guiding this process”.

Emphatic

Walker is also emphatic about the potency of Day's witness for a suffering Church today: “I believe Dorothy is a model not only for how to be Christian in addressing the myriad problems and suffering in the US, but also how to be a lay Catholic within the Church, which has its own myriad of suffering and problems.”

Identifying as both a seminarian and a Catholic Worker, Nic Cochran sees Day's potential canonisation as a welcome validation of Day's life as one of “authentic witness to the Gospel”. He sees her as the “patroness of tension” capable of being a “bridge between two worlds that are often separated in American Catholicism: liturgy and social justice”.

For Cochran, “Dorothy was neither/both a traditionalist or a progressive Catholic, and that's precisely why she is a saint”.

Day's canonisation process is still far from the finish line, but that doesn't mean she isn't influencing lives today.

📍 Nick Mayrand is a Journalism Intern at Cruxnow.com

Dorothy Day would be a saint for a ‘polarised’ world

Letters

Letter of the week

How can we support US Democrats?

Dear Editor, Conor Donnelly (Facebook Community) referred to Catholics being told to vote for Republicans in the US. I wonder if he is aware that no Democratic candidate can be accepted unless he/she supports abortion, which means that those voting for a Democrat are endorsing abortion.

I fail to see how any practising Catholic can now support the Democratic Party in the US. Since President Trump was elected he has made strenuous efforts to curtail

the funding for abortion both in America and overseas, where aid was only given if abortion was promoted.

Regarding abortion, it is disappointing that in Fr Bill Dailey's otherwise excellent article (IC 31/10/19) he did not list abortion in his reference to 'real evils in the world'. When it is acceptable to kill innocent and helpless babies, how can there be respect for any life. St Mother Teresa said that abortion was the greatest evil in the world and I am sure that I

am not the only one who agrees with her. Just because abortion is now legal in Ireland it does not mean that we do not have a duty and obligation to speak up and say that it is not being done in our name. Otherwise we are complicit in this dreadful evil.

*Yours etc.,
Mary Stewart,
Ardeskin,
Co. Donegal.*

Contemporary yoga must be reconsidered

Dear Editor, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan came under the spotlight last month for his critical comments about yoga and mindfulness. It's true that the Christian meditative and mystic traditions can have a huge impact on one's spiritual life by drawing us closer to God and making us more holy.

However, to deny that

there are no goods to be found in other forms of meditation is damaging. There are so many Christians throughout the world who use yoga as a means to deepen their Faith and commitment to Christ.

I think one important aspect of this whole conversation that needs to be highlighted is that people

on both sides of the debate are using the word 'yoga' but are using it in different senses. Yoga with a capital 'y' stems from the Indian holy texts called the Vedas.

However, yoga in the western world is so fundamentally detached from that original idea that to compare the two is laughable. The yoga that

most people practice today is just a series of breathing exercises and stretches – and nothing much deeper than that. Don't worry, yoga teachers are not in cahoots with the devil.

*Yours etc.,
Peter Morrow,
Naas,
Co. Kildare.*

It's vital to have real people in your life

Dear Editor, I was touched to read Maria Byrne's article 'Not good to be alone' (IC 24/10/19) which addressed the topic of loneliness. She mentions that while online social media sites like Facebook do have their benefits in terms of interacting and connecting with others, ultimately they cannot replace physical human interaction.

It doesn't matter how many 'friends' you have on these sites or how much traction your posts get – what matters is who you have in your life in the real world. The online world has given young people a false sense of security but when the devices are switched off, who do they turn to?

Maria recommends taking your children to gatherings where they can meet other people and have genuine interactions, like a catechism class. It in an environment like this that young people can begin building up long-lasting friendships.

*Yours etc.,
Colette Fitzmaurice,
Arklow, Co. Wicklow.*

Former President's analogy was most tenuous

Dear Editor, I was shocked to read that Mary McAleese has compared St John Paul II to a misogynist who condoned rape. Anyone familiar with his work would be aware that he was an erudite theologian who praised the sanctity and beauty of sex.

He would never have even remotely suggested that sex is permissible when a woman is unconscious. His lectures on the Theology of the Body raised up what sex is and means: it's a union of two free

persons engaging in the conjugal act, opening themselves up to each other and the possibility of life, all under the tutelage of God.

In the last few days, Ms McAleese has come out defending her comments and has suggested they've been misinterpreted by Catholic media. She says she was using the quoted passage as an analogy to describe the position and role of women in the Church – as passive receivers.

If that's the case, it's a very convoluted and tenuous analogy and it gave the impression to its listeners that this is an attitude or belief that St John Paul II endorsed. She should think more carefully next time she makes a public engagement!

*Yours etc.,
James McArdle,
Tallaght,
Dublin 24.*



Great hopes for The Two Popes

Dear Editor, I rarely get excited about movies but the new film *The Two Popes* has really got me intrigued.

It's going to be released in a few weeks and tells the story of how Benedict and Francis must find common ground to forge a new path for the Church. It's received rave reviews already by film critics but it would be nice to see how a Catholic audience reacts to it.

*Yours etc.,
Matthew Connolly,
Newry,
Co. Down.*

facebook community

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

Liberal reforms are no recipe for Church reform

None of these 'reforms' address the central question of why people in the Western world think they can live life perfectly well without God. Outside of this question the churches are just competing for the same shrinking audience by doing a bit of interior decorating. – **Charles Glenn**

Good that Michael Kelly is not afraid to challenge the untested assumptions that are coming from ACP and others. Sometimes 'priesthood' as it is currently exercised is the problem. Ordaining more people, including women, into priesthood as it is often exercised and understood is not the solution. – **Martin O'Flaherty**

All you have to do is look at the decline among liberal Protestant denominations to see that this would not be a cure-all. – **David Kelly**

Look at the Church of England. Countless married priests, women priests, women bishops. Church attendance is not improving but declining steadily. Irreligion is increasing in the UK. I have seen this myself as I lived in the UK for 17 years. – **Niall McCormack**

Calls for McAleese to admit error on John Paul II slur

Oh Mary, why don't you have some sense? Please say something that will restore my confidence. – **Mark McIntyre**

Excellent reporting by Michael Kelly. If Ms McAleese wants to retain any credibility, she must now either verify her statement or correct it publicly. Dr Vincent Twomey summed up the position very well in the report. – **Matt Moran**

God help us. She is now installed in Trinity College and the media will give her plenty air time to bash the Church. – **Mary Murphy**

The confused values of the offending teacher

In fairness, any teacher that has sex with a student is thick. It's probably not going to end well. That said, I'm not sure I agree with a jail sentence in this case. – **Adam Conroy**

A teacher should know that you don't get involved sexually with a student. – **Marion Murphy**

Unprofessional though her conduct was, the blokes I knew at 16 would have thought they really 'scored'. Most of the fellows I knew were sexually active at that age – and preferred getting in some mileage with women who were a bit older. – **Elizabeth Colette Melillo**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



▲ **VATICAN:** A woman holds a sign in support of women deacons as Pope Francis leads his general audience in St Peter's Square.

◀ **INDIA:** Carmelite sisters pray with a group of auto-rickshaw drivers during the Gospel Journey Campaign in India's Kerala state. Photos: CNS



ITALY: Fans display the flag of Ireland with an image of Pope Francis during a soccer game in Rome.



LEBANON: A woman reacts during an anti-government protest in Beirut. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese are hitting the streets across the country to demand an end to rampant corruption and poor public services.



THAILAND: A woman displays a t-shirt depicting Pope Francis at a souvenir shop in Bangkok. Pope Francis will visit Thailand from November 20-23.



USA: Fr Robert Boxie III and Fr Matthew Fish speak on a panel titled 'Shepherds to a Wounded Flock: How our Priests See the Crisis', at The Catholic University of America in Washington.



Living out a vocation

What does it mean to have a vocation? The term gets battered around both in religious and secular circles and everyone assumes its meaning is clear. Is it? What's a vocation?

Karl Jung defined it this way: "A vocation is an irrational factor that destines a man to emancipate himself from the herd and from its well-worn paths."

Frederick Buechner, a famed preacher, says: "A vocation is where your deep gladness meets the world's hunger."

David Brooks, a renowned journalist, reflecting on vocation in his recent book, *The Second Mountain*, gives us these quotes from Jung and Buechner and then writes: a vocation is not something you choose. It chooses you. When you sense it as a possibility in your life you also sense that you don't have a choice but can only ask yourself: What's my responsibility here? It's not a matter of what you expect from life but rather what life expects from you.

Moreover, for Brooks, once you have a sense of your vocation it becomes unthinkable to turn away and you realise you would be morally culpable if you did. He quotes William Wordsworth in support of this:

*My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me;
bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be,
else sinning greatly.*

Friendship

Brooks suggests that any number of things can help awaken your soul to its vocation: music, drama, art, friendship, being around children, being around beauty and, paradoxically,



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

being around injustice. To this he adds two further observations: First, that usually we only see and understand all this clearly when we're older and looking back on life and our choices; and, second, that while the summons to a vocation is a holy thing, something mystical, the way we actually end up living it out is often messy, confusing, and screwed up and generally doesn't feel very holy at all.

Well, I am older and am looking back on things. Does my vocational story fit these descriptions? Mostly, yes.

As a child growing up in the Roman Catholic subculture of the 1950s and early 1960s, I was part of that generation of Catholics within which every Catholic boy or girl was asked to consider, with considerable gravity, the question: "Do I have a vocation?"

But back then mostly that meant: "Am I called to be a priest, a religious brother, or a religious sister?" Marriage and single life were, in fact, also considered vocations, but they took a back seat to what was considered the higher vocation, consecrated religious commitment.

So as a boy growing up

in that milieu I did, with all gravity, ask myself that question: "Do I have a vocation to be a priest?" And the answer came to me, not in a flashing insight, or in some generous movement of heart, or in an attraction to a certain way of life. None of these. The answer came to me as hook in my conscience, as something that was being asked of me, as something I couldn't morally or religiously turn away from. It came to me as an obligation, a responsibility. And initially I fought against and resisted that answer. This wasn't what I wanted.

“Religious life and priesthood are merely one vocation. There are countless others, equally as holy and important”

But it was what I felt called to. This was something that was being asked of me beyond my own dreams for my life. It was a call. So at the tender age of 17 I made the decision to enter a religious order, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and

train to become a priest.

I suspect that few counsellors or psychologists today would put much trust in such a decision, given my age at the time; but, looking back on it now, more than 50 years later, in hindsight, I believe this is the purest and most unselfish decision I've ever made in my life.

And I've never looked back. I've never seriously considered leaving that commitment, even though every kind of unsettling emotion, obsession, restlessness, depression, and self-pity have at times haunted and tormented me.

I've never regretted the decision. I know this is what I've been called to do and I'm happy enough with the way it's turned out. It's brought me life and helped me serve others. And given my personal idiosyncrasies, wounds, and weaknesses, I doubt I would have found as deep a path into life and community as this vocation afforded me, though that admittedly can be self-serving.

Concept

I share my personal story here only because it might be helpful in illustrating the concept of a vocation. But religious life and priesthood are merely one vocation. There are countless others, equally as holy and important. One's vocation can be to be an artist, a farmer, a writer, a doctor, a parent, a wife, a teacher, a salesman or countless other things.

The vocation chooses you and makes the vows for you – and those vows put you at that place in the world where you're best placed to serve others and to find happiness.

QUESTIONS of faith

Each week Colm Fitzpatrick looks at interesting and sometimes controversial questions people have about Catholicism...



Does the Church have a stance on vegetarianism?

Now more than ever, people are freely opting for a plant-based lifestyle not only to improve their health but also for moral reasons. It's estimated that about 11% of the global population is vegetarian and this number is increasing daily given society's changing attitudes towards meat consumption.

For Catholics who are considering a meat-free life, does the Church have any instruction on this form of living?

Official Church teaching doesn't say much about vegetarianism but there is plenty of theology on the topic that can point us in the right direction.

While some people claim that Jesus was a vegetarian, this argument falls flat on its feet when you read the Bible. Jesus, for example, participated in the Passover meal which required a lamb to be slaughtered, which was then eaten. He also promoted fishing (Lk 5:2-7) and the miracle of the multiplying loaves and fish reinforce his acceptance of eating animals.

Permission

Others have pointed to the Book of Genesis where God gives Adam and Eve permission to eat plants alone (Gen 1:29). If they were instructed to only eat greenery, then we should abide by this injunction.

However, this teaching is supplanted with another after the Great Flood when God says: "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything."

This clearly shows God's explicit go-ahead to consume meat.

A plausible counter-argument to this point is that permission was only granted after the Fall, but that ideally humans were only intended to eat plants.

It's a rich and thought-provoking discussion – and the Church has made its voice clear on the morality of eating meat.

"God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image. Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure." (CCC 2417)

“It is likewise unworthy to spend money on animals that should, as a priority, go to the relief of human misery”

While the Church supports meat consumption in principle, this doesn't always mean that doing so is moral. Plenty of meat today is produced in an unethical fashion causing immense pain and suffering to the animals involved.

This activity is wholeheartedly condemned by the Church.

"It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly. It is likewise unworthy to spend money on them that should, as a priority, go to the relief of human misery. One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons." (CCC 2418)

Although a Christian can argue that eating meat is both theologically and morally sound, it's important to remember that animals still need to be treated with dignity.

Anything less than this disrespects a creation that God has deemed "very good".

Got a question or comment?
Email colm@irishcatholic.ie

Family & Lifestyle

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Saving for Santa



For children, Christmas is a magical day in the Christian calendar where gifts, toys and sweets miraculously appear in large, overstuffed stockings. However, behind the innocent smiles of children overwhelmed by the presents before them, is usually the worry of a stressed parent unsure of their financial future.

Although Christmas is a time where we can reflect on our faith and celebrate the year just passed with family and friends, more often than not, our minds tend to be preoccupied with costs rather than carols during the festive season.

This mentality is understandable given how commercialised the festive season has become – there is immense



Christmas spending doesn't require breaking the bank, writes Colm Fitzpatrick

pressure to fork out on the best gifts for your children and close relatives as well as splurge out on fancy décor and indulgent food.

The amount spent during this period isn't by any means small. Retail Ireland, for example, estimated that the average Irish household spent around €2,700 on Christmas last year, which requires saving at least €225 a month per

annum. At a time in Ireland where rent prices are sky-rocketing and Brexit looms on the horizon, it's vital to make every penny count.

However, having an enjoyable and luxurious Christmas isn't a project doomed for failure. By implementing some money-saving tips now, you'll have some extra dosh to splurge out on the day.

1. Brush up on budgeting

It probably goes without saying that budgets can make all the difference to the success of Christmas festivities – and by saving properly you might be able to buy that special item you know someone wants. If you don't know how much is in your bank account and aren't tracking your spending habits, then funds could be bone-dry once January hits. Budgeting isn't a task just for accountants and professional number-crunchers; there are plenty of online budgeting tools that make the process simple and understandable. Once you have a better idea of how much you can afford to spend, then you

can take the right steps to make sure you don't go over budget.

2. Curb the credit card

Buying Christmas cards should be the least of your worries – the real cards to fret over are the ones that can throw you into deep debt quickly. It can be tempting to overspend and rack up the costs on a credit card at this time of year. Credit cards are essentially loans enabling people to live beyond their means, and if not used wisely, will create immense financial pressure down the line. Only try to buy items with the money that is in your bank account, and if this isn't an option, look into the possibility of an interest-free loan. Summarised down to a

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Family News

AND EVENTS

A MAGICAL HO-HO-HO

Christmas is a time of awe and wonder, and there's no better place for children to experience this than at a magic show performed by Santa! Taking place in Brigit's Garden, Galway, from December 8-23, Santa and his little helper will mesmerise kids and their families, along with the added touch of Mrs Claus who will also be present.

A visit will last approximately 2½ hours, with Mrs Claus and other activities for the first 1½ hours, followed by Santa's Christmas Magic Show. A ticket includes delicious mulled apple punch for all the family on arrival; making Christmas decorations with Mrs Claus in the thatched Roundhouse; a festive treasure hunt around the award-winning Celtic Gardens, along with a host of other perks.

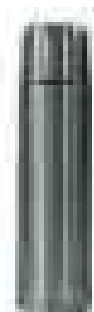
This professional but intimate production takes place in the cosy surrounds of the Hazelroom in Brigit's Garden. See brigitsgarden.ie.

RUNNING LIFE'S RACE

Most people dread the thought of running: it's time-consuming, energy-draining, and odour-inducing. Is it even worth your time? The answer is a resounding yes. According to academics in Australia who collated scientific literature investigating the potential links between running and death risks, any amount of running is better than none at all. The findings, which appear in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, show that a link between any amount of running and a 27% lower risk of all-cause death. This finding applied to both females and males. Moreover, the team linked running with a 30% lower risk of death relating to cardiovascular disease and a 23% lower risk of cancer-related death. The correlation even applied to people who only ran once per week or less frequently. Individuals who ran at low speeds of under 6 mph and those who ran for less than 50 minutes also saw this reduced risk.

ASK FOR A FLASK

Flasks are pretty underrated gadgets; they have the unyielding power to keep your beverages hot throughout the whole day without the need of any clever electronic buttons or wires. With the days becoming chillier as the winter season begins, the desire for your coffee or tea to remain at optimal temperature is needed now more than ever. There's no need for cold slurps from a take-away cup or an office mug when a flask can house your hot drinks for hours on end. New ones can even hold meals and not just boring, traditional soup but also more solid foods like curry or beef stroganoff. Trips to the microwave are redundant now given that you can simply open the lid of your flask and tuck in. They're cheap, reliable and can make a big difference to your working life.



Cautious optimism for new Alzheimer treatment



The fight in the battle against Alzheimer's got some positive news last month when the results of a drug trial raised hope and promise for a potential new ground breaking therapy. Disappointedly, the search for new medicines to treat Alzheimer's has been a story of gloom and failure spanning more than 15 years when the last treatment was brought to market.

Indeed, there are currently only two medications which can help in Alzheimer's though their effect is small and not all patients benefit. They also only act to correct the effect of neurotransmitter imbalances in the brain without slowing down disease progression.

Despite dozens of trials, none have resulted in any clinical improvements with negative studies nearly becoming par for the course. That's why the announcement that the company Biogen are planning to submit their new drug Aducanumab to the FDA next year for approval for early Alzheimer's was gladly welcomed albeit with caution.

But is this another false hope or should we be optimistic? After all, several other similar drugs failed to deliver results and the initial study findings for Aducanumab were also negative.

The hallmark of Alzheimer's is the build-up of two abnormal proteins in the brain (amyloid and tau) which aggregate into plaques and tangles. While only initially affecting brain areas important in making new memories, as it spreads causing more damage it results in the devastating effects of Alzheimer's. Studies suggest that these changes may even begin to occur up to 15-20 years before any clinical signs emerge but nobody really knows why it happens.

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



Drugs trials to date have largely focused on trying to reduce amyloid build-up in the brain in Alzheimer patients. Indeed, the drug Aducanumab is an antibody that binds to amyloid in an attempt to reduce its accumulation and hence slow down the disease.

“In essence, high dose treatment showed a reduction in clinical decline by between 23-27% as well as a 40% drop in functional loss as measured by study scales.”

Researchers studied the effects of a monthly infusion of Aducanumab given to those with very early Alzheimer's in two studies each involving just over 1500 patients. While a preliminary analysis predicted study failure, additional data that became available (after the study was stopped) and included about 2000 patients who had a full 18 months of treatment had positive findings.

In essence, high dose treatment showed a reduction in clinical decline by between 23-27% as well as a 40% drop in functional loss as measured by study scales. Brain imaging also showed a significant reduction

in amyloid plaque burden making this the first ever study coupling amyloid clearance with a reduction in the clinical decline of Alzheimer's.

However, findings were significant in just one of the two studies with Aducanumab, whereas only a positive trend was identified in the other. But two different drug doses were used and a larger proportion of patients in the negative study were on the lower dose. Furthermore, in a subset treated with the higher dose the results appear to be positive.

The findings are to be taken with some caution as similar drugs in past trials that reduced brain amyloid failed and there



were also some inconsistencies in some of the study's outcome measures. It also hasn't been published in a peer reviewed journal and more details are awaited. For a while, trying to reduce amyloid in the brain was also felt to be dubious as it may have been a marker of other problems rather than the primary pathology.

Despite this, there is a real prospect that Aducanumab might be approved for use next year in the US though a further trial may be needed to substantiate the results first. Of interest, this study enrolled people with very early Alzheimer's (some even

pre-dementia) who ordinarily would not have been diagnosed but for sophisticated tests not widely available.

The implications of any drug that could slow down Alzheimer's (where the average life expectancy is about 7-10 years) couldn't be overstated. With the advent of tests to pick up disease earlier, instituting a therapy that could even slow down the rate of decline modestly would be huge.

Research is also underway to develop blood tests that might pick up preclinical disease. At present cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) testing can be used to help diagnose Alzheimer's at a very early stage with negative testing also indicating a very low risk of disease in the short to medium term.

On a positive note too, the age at which Alzheimer's develops has increased in the West. It is often asked is there anything that can be done to try and prevent it. For some, genetic factors increase the risk such as having two first degree relatives with the disease. But studies also consistently point to lifestyle factors. High blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, lack of exercise, poor education, smoking and depression all increase risk – probably because they impact negatively on brain function and might even trigger changes in midlife.

To conclude, there is a realistic hope that the landscape for the treatment of Alzheimer's may change radically in the next few decades.

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

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useful adage: don't spend what you don't have.

3. Be heat smart

During winter, it can be tempting to turn up the heat full blast without thinking about the costly consequences. But before you make that move, there are plenty of ways to stay warm around the home without incurring expensive bills. Make sure to wear warm clothing if you're feeling chilly, invest in some high-quality blankets, close up any cracks in your window frames and use draft stoppers on your doors. Even with these implemented however, the cold can still creep in and force you to switch on the heat. It's worth researching cheaper energy providers online to save some cash – and they're usually hassle-free.

4. Shop online

It's always important to support local businesses who don't sell their products online – like crafts stores or fruit shops. But, if you're interested in finding the best deals, shopping on the web is your best bet. Instead of walking aimlessly around the high street, you can search multiple websites in a matter of minutes and find exactly what you're looking for with a low price-tag. Most websites now have discount codes for signing up, cutting even more money off the cost price. Alongside special events like Black Friday, which takes place on November 29 this year, browsing the internet will significantly help you in saving money.

5. Competitions

The internet isn't just your friend when it comes to online shopping, it's also filled with an assortment of competitions ranging from hotel nights away to concert tickets. Most people don't even make an attempt to win a prize because they consider themselves unlucky – however it's really just a numbers game. Good fortune isn't required to win if you're entering as many as you can. With

absolutely nothing to lose, it's worth sitting down the odd afternoon and entering into some. Who knows what you could win?

6. Have a crafty Christmas

All gifts don't have to break the bank, and while it's hard to find a cheaper alternative for a new blender or laptop, there are some gifts that can be made rather than bought. If you have knitting in your arsenal, why not make a jumper or cushion? These types of gifts tend to stay in the family heirloom long after other bought items are thrown-out and forgotten. Even creating something as simple as a family collage or photo album can be deeply appreciated, and the effort is minimal. If you're struggling with what to make, try surfing the web to get inspired!

7. Cherish charity

A decade ago, purchasing items from a charity shop may have been frowned upon and reserved for the 'lower-class' – but today, charity shops are all the rave. This is primarily due to the popularity of vintage clothes fashion and a new consciousness around



environmentalism. Rather than participating in a throw-away culture, charity shops allow buyers to find used clothing and give it a new lease of life. These high-street troves are filled with both quirky and branded items, meaning that your presents will stand out among the rest. Not only will buying from a charity shop help you to save money, but you'll also be doing a good deed by supporting an important cause.

8. Secret Santa

Secret Santa – exchanging presents anonymously among extended family and friends – is one of the best ways to slash the costs at Christmas. Instead of buying a gift for lots of people, you only have to purchase one. To carry this out, organise a group chat or meet-up with the social circle you want to do it with. Each person secretly chooses another person in the group, and that selection is who they buy for. The great benefit of Secret Santa is that you can spend your time buying a present specific to your selection, rather than running haphazardly around shops to find items for a whole group of people.

While these tips won't solve all of the financial conundrums you will face during the Christmas holidays, they will go a long way in helping to cut the costs. If you are feeling too stressed about how to cope over the festive seasons, it's worth speaking to a financial adviser and also confiding in trusted friends. There's no shame in asking for help or support in times of trouble or need. Above all, it's important to remember that Christmas isn't about spending the most money or owning the most opulent decorations. It's about appreciating our lives and giving thanks for all that we have. For Christians, it's also about the birth of a young boy born in a stable who entered the world for a truly profound reason.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



Ten-year-old kids are complex creatures. There is but a short period in life when you fervently believe in Santa, but also can operate a computer proficiently. If there were a Venn diagram with circles entitled, 'Computer skills' and 'Santa Claus' the age in the intersection would be 10.

A 10-year-old is at a remarkable juncture in life. They are able to do things that adults do, such as reading books, writing, doing maths and playing competitive sports. Yet, while the grown up world is accessible to them, so is the fantastical world of childhood, in all its unselfconscious innocence. One moment, a 10-year-old can be beating you in chess. Then next, they are hitting a tree with a stick, imagining themselves to be a knight battling a dragon.

My boy turned 10 recently. Such milestones bring inevitable pangs of nostalgia. I remember bringing him home from hospital as a newborn baby as though it were yesterday. That means that his 20th birthday is tomorrow. By then, he will be a young man, out in the world on his own. It seems miraculous that such metamorphoses can happen in a just few short years.

Among his desired tenth birthday presents were football goals, a laptop, a rugby jersey – and a kitten. We had been thinking of getting a cat anyway, and it seemed a good idea to give our very caring boy special responsibility for it. We took him to an animal shelter where we were greeted by the usual melee of barking and mewling. Amid the chaos, one tiny creature stood out, and chose us. She purred the instant he held her, nestling in to him. As a ginger kitten found in a scrapyard, it was perhaps inevitable that we

named her Rusty.

The day before his birthday, we brought the kitten home. On the journey back, she would only settle with him. She purred all the way home in the car as he comforted her in her carrier. A beautiful birthday weekend followed, in the company of family and friends. We even went to see the rather bigger cats and kittens in the wildlife park, since the lions there now have four playful cubs.

The first two decades of our lives are astonishing. We journey from the womb to adulthood, growing rapidly in body and mind each day. My son stands at a fulcrum in these years of explosive growth. The innocence of childhood pervades for now, but I can already see a gathering urge to grow up. This manifests in the form of desires to explore further afield independently, to understand the world more deeply and to test and increase his skills and capabilities.

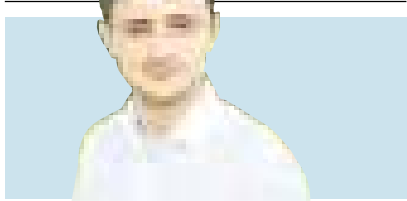
He and his friends are always playing sport, building dens, or making bows and arrows with penknives. Around the house, this useful boy lights the fire, helps with the hoovering and even can make delicious scrambled eggs for the whole family. His skills at singing and sport are remarkable. New capabilities will continue to burst forth, along with a corresponding desire for freedom.

Before kids arrive, we rightly concern ourselves with careers, buying a home, travel, finding someone to marry. Yet once kids come on the scene, once glittering things begin to appear relatively tawdry, next to the awesome and joyful task of helping our children to grow up well. Seeing them grow each day, above all in love and kindness, remains the joy and honour of my life.



A fall in the right direction

Personal Profile



Colm Fitzpatrick
speaks with a criminal
turned faith filmmaker

Most conversion stories sound mundane. They might involve having an interesting conversation, listening to a great sermon or reading a persuasive book. But the story of Alan Field's journey to God plays out more like a movie than a real-life experience. From criminal turned movie-writer, his story is one worth listening to.

Born in Liverpool, faith played little role in Alan's early life. His parents were divorced and while he was baptised, he says "religion wasn't in my family".

Growing up, he spent many years in the "criminal world" of Liverpool and Glasgow. It was during this time that a freak accident caused him to re-evaluate his faith.

"In the criminal years I was in and around so much violence where death occurred, and found myself owning a gym, which accounted for the membership of around 30-40% of the criminal fraternity," he explains.

"At this time I went off on a trip to Thailand and within three days had fallen from a 70ft waterfall, which saved not only my life, but saved my soul."

Alan believes that God saved him on the waterfall as a plummet from that height meant certain

death. With a second chance at things, Alan decided to focus his efforts on making faith films.

"I knew God had a plan for me, and that was to write, and make films, and I have continued this path since, having to find more about myself, and God at every step," he says.

Alan had written alongside Jimmy McGovern for the first series of *The Street*, which won numerous awards for the best drama series. After this, he co-wrote and produced a feature film called *Act of Grace*. However, he began to focus on Christian films and documentaries as faith became ignited.

With this intention in mind, Alan decided to walk the Camino de Santiago and made a documentary

called *The Road to Santiago*. It was on this trek that he heard about the annual pilgrimage from Derry, Dublin, Belfast and Cork to Knock.

"This pilgrimage began over 30 years ago as a peace pilgrimage during The Troubles, after a vision by one of the original members at Medjugorje. In the vision he saw 4 bolts of lightning with Our Lady at the centre and for many years believed this to be the destruction of Ireland and the Catholic Faith," Alan explains.

"It was after one pilgrimage had started from Derry for peace with the local Cursillo group there that the word began to spread, and Belfast began their pilgrimage, then Dublin, and four years ago Cork began their pilgrimage - only then was it realised this was the vision

being realised, four corners of faith coming to Our Lady at Knock, this was about hope." Now thousands walk the pilgrimage each year.

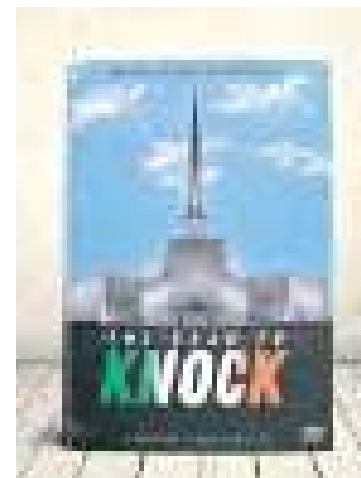
Alan decided he wanted to make a film about this pilgrimage which teaches us about the importance of the Rosary and praying. Titled *The Road to Knock*, the film captures the story of how the religious site came to be so well-known today and includes different pilgrims' testimonies about their experience of doing the walk, along with Alan's own feelings about it.

“Making faith films “suits” Alan because it joins his two great passions in life, and is a great way to evangelise.”

"I hope [Irish viewers] would get to understand more about Knock, Our Lady of Knock, about the history of Knock, about the hope there is when seeing groups of young and old, male and female, all walking from different parts of Ireland and coming together in unity and love," he says.

Making faith films "suits" Alan because it joins his two great passions in life, and is a great way to evangelise. He notes that even if one person is reading your story, you might not know the impact it could have on them.

"...When I receive emails from people who have bought the films I've made expressing their emotion after watching it, then that's the reward, the payoff so to speak, that anyone doing the Lord's work seeks - not the praise, that belongs to God - but the emotion in the words that someone might write to you," Alan says.



When he's not making inspirational films, Alan speaks out about his conversion story in the hope that others will listen to his important message about a God that saves and wills the good for everyone, even those on the margins.

"I have gone into prisons, and spoken to Christians and youth groups to tell my story from the criminal days to the waterfall and about my being given another chance at redemption.

"The story I tell is one of a simple twist of fate, from the streets of Liverpool to the hope and dreams that many can share with their own belief of destiny and of faith."

Most people begin their faith journey after being plunged into baptismal waters, but it seems Alan started his after escaping from the ravaging currents of a waterfall. Unlike the one in Genesis, it's a fall that changed his life for the better.

For more information about *The Road to Knock*, see: <https://www.noaharkproductions.co.uk/>

Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson



Spiced sticky toffee pudding - an indulgence!

This is a cosy, decadent dessert perfect for those cold evenings as the darker weather sets in. It isn't as difficult as you might think to make this lightly spiced version of the sweet gooey classic. It is worth looking for Medjool dates, they have a rich caramelised flavour compared to that of regular dates which makes them ideal for this ultimate treat!

Ingredients

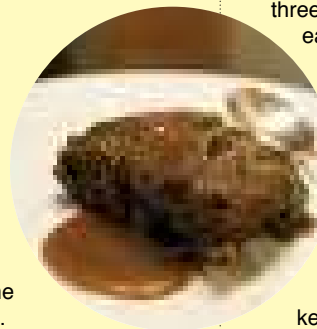
For the cake:

- 200g Medjool dates
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 175g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 medium eggs, beaten
- 100g unsalted butter
- 100g light muscovado sugar
- 2 tbsp black treacle
- 100ml milk
- 1½ tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg

For the toffee sauce:

- 100g unsalted butter
- 100g light muscovado sugar
- 1 tbsp black treacle
- 200ml double cream

Pit and chop the dates and place them in a bowl. Pour over 160ml of freshly boiled water and leave the dates to soak for 20 minutes. After this add the vanilla extract and mash the softened dates with a fork. Set aside. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°F/Fan/Gas mark 4. Grease and line the base of a 20x30cm baking dish. Then assemble the dry ingredients by sieving the flour into a bowl along with the bicarbonate of soda, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir gently to combine. In a separate bowl using an electric whisk, beat the butter and muscovado sugar together on high for about two minutes until creamy. Reduce speed to medium

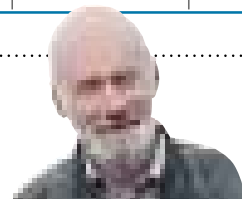


and add in the beaten eggs, a little at a time. Once combined, beat in the treacle. Be aware that the mixture may look curdled at this point. Working in three batches, fold in the dry ingredients from earlier alternating with the milk. Start and end with the flour, so flour-milk-flour-milk-flour. Finally, stir the dates gently into the mixture. Pour the mixture into the prepared dish and bake in the oven for 30-35 mins until a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean.

About 15 minutes before your cake comes out of the oven, start making the sauce. Melt the butter, sugar, treacle and cream together on a low heat, stirring to keep it smooth. While the cake is still hot out of the oven, pour over half the sauce and allow it to sink into the sponge for 15 minutes. Best served warm with a drizzle of extra sauce and some vanilla ice cream or custard. You can heat up any leftovers in the oven for 15 minutes and they will be even more indulgent as the sponge absorbs more of the sauce.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



A TV week overshadowed by a big loss

With the debate about married men becoming priests stirring it up at the Amazon Synod, we got to hear a somewhat related story closer to home last Friday.

Nationwide (RTÉ1) featured the intriguing and uplifting story of Fr Seán Hyland from Portlinton. He married Liz, they had two children Seana and Ciaran, but sadly the children died very young, and later Liz died of cancer. Eventually Sean decided to become a priest and apart from ministering as a priest he has also developed his interest in the relationship between science and religion, speaking in schools and developing a website *whisperingofmysoul.com*.

He has also written a book of the same name, which, I suspect, will now become very popular.

The show also highlighted the annual pilgrimage of St Macdara on Oileán Mhic Dara, off the Connemara coast. Presenter Mary Kennedy (soon to leave *Nationwide* unfortunately) spoke fluently in Irish as well as English as she interviewed the enthusiastic locals.

The pilgrims (a wide variety of ages) included composers Bill Whelan and former Galway hurling captain Joe Connolly. The ancient island church was described as an 'architectural gem' – a striking



The late Gay Byrne.

ing artistic reconstruction on the mainland will in future act as a substitute when the weather is too bad for people to get to the island.

Longevity

One of the big media news items of last week was the death of Gay Byrne. My sympathies go out to his family and friends. He was a consummate broadcaster and you'd have to admire the longevity (if not always the quality) of his *Late Late Show*, probably the longest running chat show in the world. His long running radio show was a landmark broadcasting phenomenon as well, and listening to all the tributes early last week it was obvious that he was very generous and supportive of new talent.

His work with the Road Safety Authority may well have saved many lives, and his TV series *The Meaning of Life* at least got people thinking and talking about the big issues.

The tribute programmes were rather self-congratulatory I thought, especially in relation to RTÉ. It seemed so many of the clips showed the Catholic Church and conservative people in a bad light. And that was the aspect of the show I disliked most – a tendency to mock many of the old ways, to make fun of those of a conservative leaning along with a childish prurience when it came to sexual matters.

From the 60s on we seemed to have moved from having a Church that over

emphasised sex to a media that took over the same function with the *Late Late Show* an enthusiastic vehicle for that change over.

And yet this tendency existed side by side with openness to many other aspects of genuine religion – I particularly remember Gay's interview with St Mother Teresa. (That strand of the *Late Late Show* tradition continued with last Friday night's positivity towards religious faith by the Barr sisters from the Irish women's hockey team).

Too much of the coverage was a smug 'Oh how mature we are now after casting off the Catholic shackles', while so many other items on last week's News and chat programmes suggested we have let the pendulum swing too far in the other direction – with stories of bullying,



Dr Peter Boylan.

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTÉ Radio 1 Extra LW, Sunday, November 17, 11am

Mass for missionaries, with members of Misean Cara and music from the In Caelo Choir from Newbridge, Co. Kildare. The Celebrant is Fr Cornelius Nwaogwugwu.

BORN HOMELESS: DISPATCHES

Channel 4, Monday, November 18, 10pm

Dispatches explores the issue of pregnant mothers who find themselves with no place to call home.

COMING TO CHRIST: YOUNG ADULTS AND THE CHURCH

EWTN, Friday, November 15, 7pm

Susan Conroy concludes her mini-series by focusing on specific saints and how their examples lead to true happiness for the soul.

kidnapping, torture, children murdering children and human trafficking.

As a society we may not be as mature and progressive as we think.

Deserving of special mention, on last Thursday's **Live-line** (RTÉ Radio 1) broadcaster Aidan Matthews delivered a poetic reflection, describing Gay Byrne as "the fairest presider" over our society's "cultural punchups", and referencing "a clerical culture that wasn't all bad and a secular one that isn't all good".

It was unfortunate timing that RTÉ's financial woes became a hot issue almost immediately after the death of Gay Byrne.

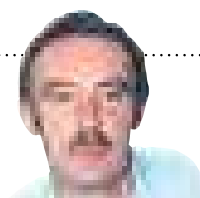
The good programmes make me lament the difficulties, the indifferent raise a shrug of the shoulders and

the poor programmes drain away my sympathy. My enthusiasm for RTÉ's role in public interest broadcasting wains when I see so much bias in certain areas of news and current affairs.

There was a particularly blatant example of this yet again last Saturday morning when Dr Peter Boylan, prominent pro-choice campaigner, was given yet another soft interview, palsy and mostly unchallenging, this time on **Marian Finucane** (RTÉ Radio 1).

The bubble expands, the echo chamber sounds louder than ever.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
[@boreganmedia](https://twitter.com/boreganmedia)



Aubrey Malone

Film

The height of human endeavour splashed on wide screen

The Aeronauts (12A)

Every so often – if you're lucky – you see a film star who takes your breath away and immerses you in their ambience. Felicity Jones is that person here.

She's Amelia Wren, the widow of an aeronaut. She's trying to prove to herself that she can overcome her fears of travelling in an air balloon after he died in one.

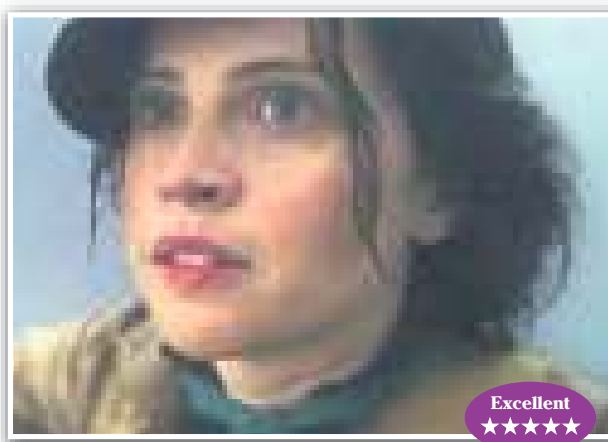
She reaches so many layers of expressiveness it's difficult to even think about listing them. Her face is like a prism reflecting any emotion she wants to put into it. It's a face of an overwhelming translucence. One won-

ders what Leonardo Da Vinci would have made of it. I dare you not to be captivated by it after seeing this film.

She isn't the only wonderful thing about it. Eddie Redmayne, reuniting with her after their dual Oscar nominations for *The Theory of Everything* (he won), is also exemplary as her co-pilot. He plays the scientist James Glaisher.

He donates many scenes to her. Great stars sometimes show their quality by allowing their co-stars to shine. He bounces her vulnerability off his own insecurities.

As the film begins in 1862 they're embarking on a mission to fly higher than anyone has ever done before. At this point she behaves more

Felicity Jones stars in *The Aeronauts*.

like a giddy entertainer than a pioneering meteorologist but after they run into trouble her initial flightiness – no pun intended – is replaced by immense reserves of grit.

The director Moss Hart once said of Julie Andrews: "She has that British strength that makes you wonder why they lost India." Jones has it here. Watching her hitting the

apex of the balloon to puncture it so she can create an air bubble is a real 'top 'o the world, ma' moment (as James Cagney might have put it).

We see many films these days with high-tech special effects in space capsules and whatnot but as the scholar Lope de Vega put it, all you really need for drama is "two boards and a passion". Or in this case, two aeronauts and a passion.

It's man (and woman) against the elements, a resounding parable of resilience. Not many directors could keep us gripped for 100 minutes on such a flimsy plotline but Tom Harper, with the aid of flashbacks and George Steel's enchanting cinematography, does so here.

It's a delightful film in every possible way. It conveys both exhilaration and fear as the indomitable pair fight storms, falling air pressure and their own demons.

As someone who gets vertigo from licking air mail stamps I found myself on the edge of my seat for the scenes where they're whirled out of the balloon to almost certain death before miraculously rescuing themselves.

We take weather forecasts for granted today, forgetting the people who risked their lives to make them possible.

You'll remember them after seeing this. And you'll remember the face of Felicity Jones. I could look at it forever.

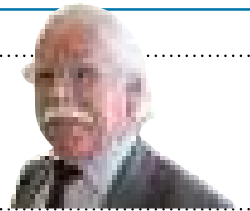
Those eyes...

Excellent
★★★★★



BookReviews

Peter Costello



The United Nations assembly.



Ireland: A voice among the nations

by John Gibney, Michael Kennedy & Kate O'Malley (Royal Irish Academy, €30.00)

Joe Carroll

Ireland's foreign policy over the past 100 years may seem secondary to how the country has evolved politically, economically and culturally, but this book shows how closely they are intertwined. This is "an official history of Irish foreign policy, presented through text and images," according to the Introduction, rather than "an institutional history of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade."

The authors, from the Royal Irish Academy, are not diplomats so they can take a critical approach at times to official decisions, which is welcome. The large photographs and illustrations with informative captions give the format of the book a coffee table aspect useful for display in embassies, but the images add greatly to its value. They are so well chosen that they could almost be a 'Foreign Policy for Dummies'.

From 1920 to 1950 foreign policy was focused on Ireland's relationship with Britain and the efforts to achieve a fuller sovereignty as a member of the Commonwealth and still a dominion. At first the only overseas posts were London, Washington and Geneva where membership of the League of Nations pro-

Ireland makes her place in the world

vided valuable international contacts. By 1930, representation was widened to Paris, Berlin and the Holy See.

The arrival of Fianna Fáil to power in 1932 with Éamon de Valera taking over as Minister in the department as well as head of government, widened foreign policy as he used his chairmanship of the League's council to take positions on big issues such as sanctions against Italy for aggression in Abyssinia and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

Neutrality

The next period from 1939 to 1948 was dominated by the struggle to maintain neutrality during the 'Emergency' marked by "limited and discreet cooperation with Britain". The price for neutrality was post-war isolation as the Soviet Union vetoed Irish membership of the new United Nations Organisation.

In 1948 Seán MacBride of Clann na Poblachta succeeded de Valera in Inveigh House and it is noted that his "high-handed style clashed with the experienced officials". But he shook up the Department, appointed ambassadors from

outside including the first woman, Josephine McNeill, set up a cultural and information section closely linked with the new Irish News Agency for anti-Partition propaganda. MacBride was also active in the new Council of Europe which reduced Irish isolation from European efforts at cooperation.

The period 1955-69 was notable for Ireland's belated entry into the UN and the activism of the new Fianna Fáil minister, Frank Aiken, and Irish diplomats in the work-

ing of the General Assembly and for a term in the Security Council where American wrath was felt against the Irish vote in favour of discussing the possible admission of Communist China.

Next phase

The next phase from 1969 to 1973 was dominated by the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland and the negotiations to join the European Economic Community. While the former put much strain on relations with London, the latter saw

both countries cooperating closely in a successful entry into the EEC.

From this point, Irish foreign policy is nearly all about advancing enthusiastically into a more integrated Western Europe and its economic benefits while keeping increased security cooperation at a discreet length.

An invitation to join NATO in 1949 had been turned down because of the disputed frontier with the United Kingdom although MacBride later offered to join if the US would

pressure Britain into ending Partition.

There is a brief reference to the closure of the embassy to the Holy See in 2011 "due to cutbacks" arising from the financial crisis. The authors add that "this was also a period when Irish relations with the Holy See were strained due to the Catholic Church's handling of a range of clerical sexual abuse scandals in Ireland". The readers can draw their own conclusions.

“MacBride later offered to join NATO if the US would pressure Britain into ending Partition”

The later years do not have the spirit of adventure which marked the new state's entry into the wider world. There are now more than 90 diplomatic missions abroad and cultural and development aid programmes which do the country credit.

It is a long way from 1919 when the Sinn Féin delegation to the Paris Peace Conference took up residence in the Grand Hotel when refused recognition at the Versailles carve-up of the post-war Europe. The Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1922 opened the door to that wider world albeit as a dominion. The rest, as they say, is history, 100 years later.

The second city

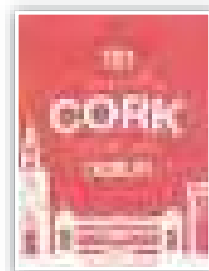
101 Reasons why Cork is Better than Dublin

by Jim Fitzpatrick (Mercier Press, €6.99 / £5.99)

Peter Costello

Dubliners will need a lot of persuading that there is any substance in Jim Fitzpatrick's notion that Cork is a better place: if it is why are so many Corkonians in Dublin?

The rivalries of the two cities are based on long standing notions. Fitzpatrick, who is keen to look askance at Irish life, feels it's time that they were updated: "Cork is more



kefir cocktails than Tanora these days".

This is unconvincing. All this shows is that Cork, like Dublin, will fall for any heavily promoted product with a topical feel – Tanora after all is a product of Coca-Cola, what could be more global?

As for the on trend kefir as a cocktail, will its health promoting properties survive the addition of all that local gin? Times will tell.

Still, this amusing little book will top-off many a stocking in a few weeks, along the banks of both the Lee and the Liffey.

Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.

The unique Irish enthusiasm for Lourdes

The Village of Bernadette: The Irish Connections – Lourdes Stories, Miracles & Cures

by Colm Keane & Una O'Hagan
(Capel Island, €14.99)

Peter Costello

Lourdes has long been a premier destination of Irish pilgrims. It has answered to something in the Irish psyche. This is the theme that the husband and wife writing team of Colm Keane and Una O'Hagan have taken for their latest book.

But their main focus is on the cures that have been attributed to the intercession of the saint among Irish pilgrims over the decades since the 18 visionary encounters back in 1858.

These are sketched out in the introduction which is followed by a biographical account of Bernadette herself, the years of her wretched childhood, in poverty, often separated from her family, but driven by an urge to learn to read so as to finish her catechism and make her first communion. She came from a devout family, for whom their faith was a central feature of their lives.

But they also emphasise that Bernadette's later years were by no means untroubled. She was often badly treated. She was vulnerable to



Night fall over Lourdes with the promise of a new day for all.

those who wished, for many reasons, to exploit what she had experienced.

In the four central chapters they discuss the development of the pilgrimage, its enormous appeal to many

millions of visitors every year, and to the cures and favours – all filtered through an Irish sieve, which will make the book of special interest to all who have been to Lourdes or plan to go.

The final chapters is devoted to a discussion of the varied sources they used, which will help the reader appreciate their efforts to authenticate what they say – especially important in any

controversial matter.

The cures have always been carefully examined. Readers will be able to judge for themselves just how convincing the accepted evidence is. Critics have,

in the past, pointed to the fact that the cures are often psychosomatic – possible reversals that could be attributed to natural processes.

“They discuss the development of the pilgrimage, its enormous appeal to many millions of visitors every year”

They discuss well-known Irish visitors from John F. Kennedy to John D. Sheridan and many others less likely. These too will be of especial local interest.

As with previous books by these authors, this is a deeply felt, warmly sympathetic and humane book, from which many readers, no matter how much they think they know about Lourdes, will learn many new things.

One small criticism: the cover is quite misleading. The chalet illustrated resembles none of Bernadette's childhood homes. It appears more Alpine than Pyrenean, more like the home of Heidi's grandfather than anything the saint knew. Publishers have to carefully brief their artists, given the number of historical anomalies that appear in the art work on covers these days.

Depressing undertones in murder mystery on the border

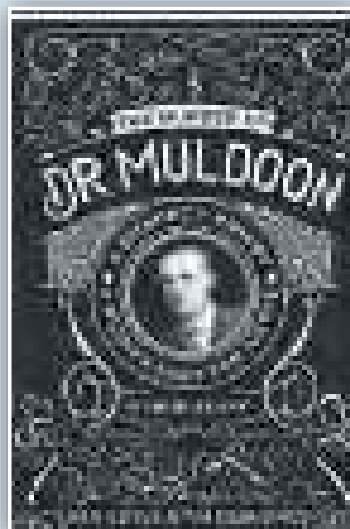
The Murder of Dr Muldoon
by Ken Boyle & Tim Desmond
(Mercier Press, €12.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

Dr Patrick Muldoon was a GP in Mohill, Co. Leitrim. On March 18, 1923 he attended his weekly Sunday-night card game at the parochial house with his friends Canon Michael Masterson and Edward Geelan, clerk of the District Council. On his way home he was waylaid by three men and one of them shot and fatally wounded him.

Later it transpired that it was John Charles Keegan who murdered Dr Muldoon. He was an activist during the War of Independence. Following the Anglo-Irish Treaty, he joined the Irish Free State army. However, soon afterwards he defected and became a member of the Anti-Treaty IRA.

He was a psychopath and was responsible for some of the worst atrocities which occurred in the Leitrim – Longford area during the closing months of the Civil War.



After his capture by the army he was incarcerated with Éamon de Valera and Austin Stack in Arbour Hill Prison in Dublin. He was released under the General Amnesty of November 1924.

However, after his release the Civic Guard took a case against him and a colleague and they were convicted of obstructing

three unarmed Civic Guards in the exercise of their duty. For this both served six months in Mountjoy Prison.

Keegan departed to the US in late 1925. He returned home in 1964. Despite many appeals to President de Valera, it took him seven years to acquire a military service pension. He seems to have been ostracised by his former comrades.

Assailants

In 1966 an Old IRA march taking place in Mohill was held up, as participants objected to Keegan's presence. He spent his final years in England and died in Leeds in 1977.

Fr Edward Ryans was also implicated in the murder of Dr Muldoon. It was claimed that he drove the doctor's three assailants into Mohill on that fateful night.

Fr Ryans was ordained in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, in 1911.

He ministered in a number of curacies: Annaduff and Aughavas in Co. Leitrim and Abbeylara and

Rathcline in Co. Longford.

From its very beginnings he was a staunch supporter of the Sinn Féin movement. He was president of the Executive of the Sinn Féin Clubs in South Leitrim and was regarded as the architect of Sinn Féin's famous victory in the South Longford by-election in 1917.

“This is a tragic story with depressing undertones not adverted to here. It is also a cautionary tale”

Later Fr Ryans served as a judge in the Sinn Féin courts in the area. During the War of Independence he was actively involved with the IRA and, during the months preceding the Truce, was on the run from the crown forces.

Fr Ryans opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty and was actively involved in the Anti-Treatyite campaign. In the meantime for serial serious misconduct in his personal life and his political

activism he was dismissed from his curacy by his bishop.

In April 1923 he was before the court on charges for possession of arms, ammunition and explosives.

Ryans escaped conviction by claiming that his brother, then in the US, was responsible for hiding the cache of arms.

Following his arraignment in Court, to the great relief of his clerical colleagues he himself emigrated to the US in October 1925.

Returning home a few years later, he unsuccessfully attempted to be reinstated in his diocese. He then emigrated to England, where he died in 1964.

This is a tragic story with depressing undertones not adverted to here. It is also a cautionary tale.

It illustrates how the lawlessness induced by revolution provides the opportunity for persons with flawed characters to cause immense harm both to individuals and to the community at large.

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



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Archdiocese of Dublin

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The purpose of this role is to enable parish teams to reach out to teenagers and develop their relationship with God within the parish community.

The successful candidates will work as part of a team supporting parishes to engage teens in parish life in a way that is relevant to them. Youth Evangelisation Workers will create and animate local youth events and develop the recruitment of local leaders in conjunction with the local parish leadership teams.

Candidate Requirements

- Recognised third level qualification in the theology/pastoral ministry/religious studies;
- Experience of youth work/ministry;
- Knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching, Laudato Si and justice outreach;
- Have a solid praxis in the Roman Catholic tradition;

- A gift in music ministry and leading others in music is preferred;
- Up-to-date IT skills with proficiency in the use of social media;
- Full clean driving licence and the use of a car is desirable;
- Strong team player skills and has a demonstrated history of designing imaginative programmes

If you think this role is for you, submit your application by emailing your CV and covering letter to Judith.maxwell@dublindiocese.ie by 5pm on Monday 18th November 2019.

Recruitment Process

Candidates successful at the short listing and short listing interview stage will be required to submit two references and be asked to prepare a presentation on a given topic in advance of attending for the second interview. Successful candidates at this stage will be asked to undergo a medical assessment and be Garda Vetted.

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LIVE IN HOUSE companion required for active elderly gentleman. Preferably spiritual, musical, able to drive. South Co. Dublin. Reference required. Tel. 0851441747.

WARRENTOWN REMEMBERED

WAS YOUR DAD, grandad or other relative a student in Warrenstown College, Co Meath? If so the 'Warrenstown

Remembered' book is the ideal Christmas present! 550 pages, hardback. Packed with great warmth, stories and photos. Priced €30. Details Jimmy Gibbons on 087 7486611 or 01 8259342.

ALTAR RAIL NEEDED

TWENTY FOOT plus wooden altar rail or similar needed. Condition not important. Please phone 089 4019826.

CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS

FINDING IT difficult being a Catholic on your own when everyone else is partnered up? You too can find someone special and 'Heavenly Partners' can help you find them. Call today: 01 568 6558.

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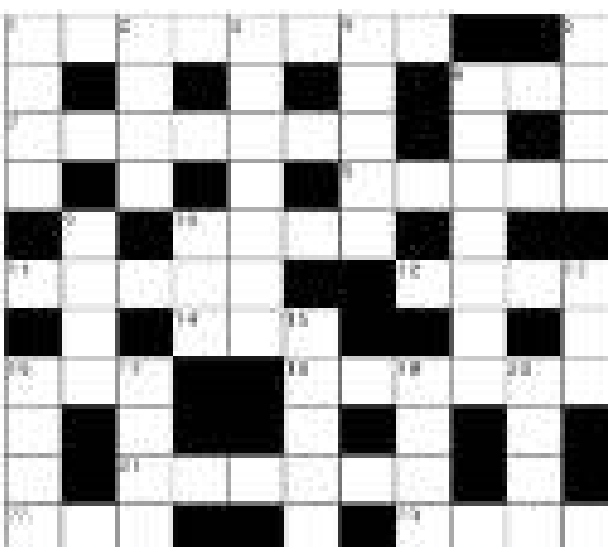


IrishCathNews

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 308



ACROSS

- 1 This way into the house is not at the front (4,4)
 6 Ocean (3)
 7 You might find apple trees here (7)
 8 Exactly the same (5)
 10 Someone who is not telling the truth (4)
 11 Female fox (5)
 12 Snare (4)
 14 A hen lays it (3)
 16 Also, as well as (3)
 18 Dried grape, often used in baking (6)
 21 Red fruit used in salads (6)
 22 Notice with the eyes (3)
 23 Tidy (4)
DOWN
 1 Your own web page, which you might update each day (4)
 2 Rooster (4)
 3 Giving out cards (7)
 4 Command (5)
 5 Bucket (4)
 6 Each of these shapes has four equal sides (7)
 9 The King of the Beasts (4)
 10 Christian name of Mr Lee, the member of Blue who was on 'Strictly Come Dancing'. (3)
 13 Use it when frying (3)
 15 Fantastic (5)
 16 Points a gun at a target (4)
 17 The twentieth of October, for example (4)
 19 Type of metal (4)
 20 A thought (4)

SOLUTIONS, NOVEMBER 7

GORDIUS No. 428

Across – 1 Archangels 6 Ache 10 Porto 11 Crime wave
 12 Foxtrot 15 Octet 17 Hell 18 Rite 19 Vista 21 Adverse
 23 Vixen 24 Abel 25 Ague 26 Anvil 28 Scapula 33 Intestate
 34 Irene 35 Sure 36 Sacramento

Down – 1 Alps 2 Carbon tax 3 Aloft 4 Gecko 5 Lair 7 Chart
 8 Eventually 9 Revolve 13 Road 14 Thieves 16 Breviaries
 20 Subaltern 21 Analyse 22 Sofa 27 Voter 29 Clear 30 Priam
 31 Haka 32 Peso

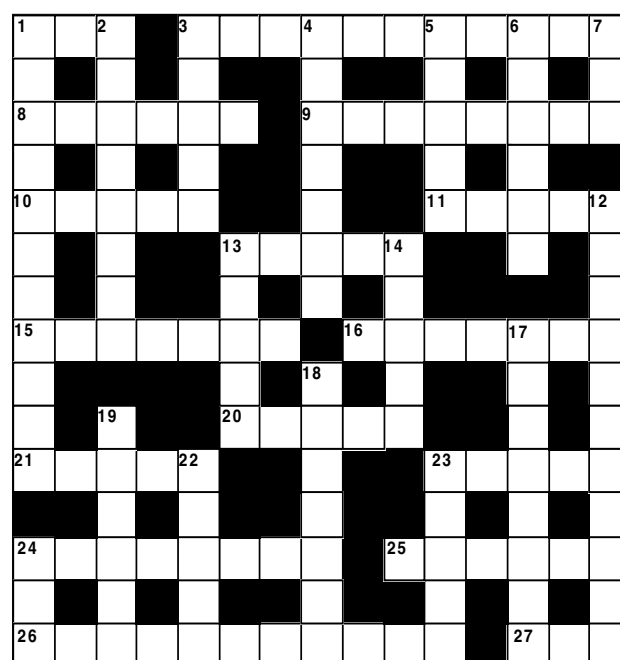
CHILDREN'S No. 307

Across – 1 Chopsticks 6 Raffle 7 Stand 9 Cheap 10 Robin
 13 Noses 14 Respect 16 Grey 17 Crater

Down – 1 Carpenter 2 Office 3 Silver 4 Coat 5 Spin 7 Sprinter
 8 Dinosaur 11 Basket 12 Happy 15 Ear

Crossword

Gordius 429



ACROSS

- 1 Float up-and-down in the water - like little Robert? (3)
 3 Will this boxer tell you how heavy the lamp is? (11)
 8 Where planes land, disturbing the unwary (6)
 9 Nice (8)
 10 See 6 down
 11 To become instantly popular on social media, start talking rubbish every new day (5)
 13 He saw the 1 down, causing some confusion to a cardinal (5)
 15 Leaves the competition with archery weapons at the ready (4,3)
 16 Put money into a bank account (7)
 20 Sweetness from bees (5)
 21 Wretched dwelling (5)
 23 Opt to be slightly overweight (5)
 24 Tore nave asunder to bring it up to date (8)
 25 Many, having lived longer, can be less welcoming (6)
 26 The necessary resources to divert a white whaler (11)
 27 Scarlet (3)

DOWN

- 1 Biblical shrub that was hot stuff! (7,4)
 2 Single-storey dwelling (8)
 3 Many find comfort in a tenancy agreement (5)
 4 Unfortunate (7)
 5 A precise part of reflex actions (5)
 6 & 10 a How could the Magi engrave this object of worship? (6,5)
 7 It's a small bird, whichever way you look at it (3)
 12 Deeds permit changing how an animal may be afflicted (11)
 13 Part of the body you need in order to hum (5)
 14 Shabby, run-down (5)
 17 Joint in the upper body (8)
 18 Examine (7)
 19 Drive from a meeting-place (6)
 22 The Bank of Mississippi (5)
 23 Skulk with a novice behind part of the ship (5)
 24 Fight in the middle of a 23 down (3)

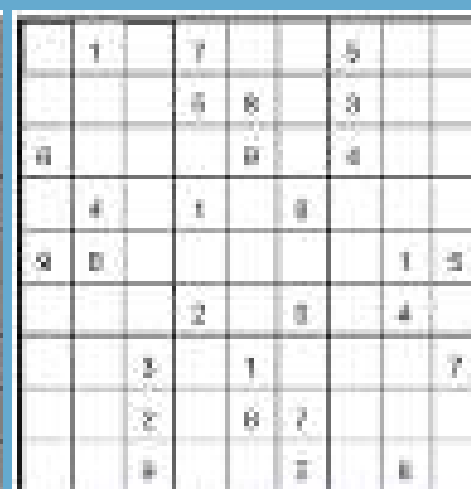
Sudoku Corner

308

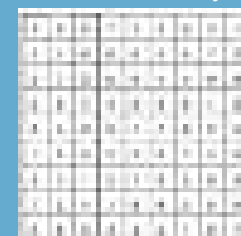
Easy



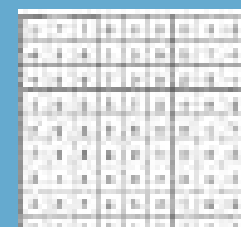
Hard



Last week's Easy 307



Last week's Hard 307



Please make a little room
 in your will for people
 who are homeless

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 Department for Social
 Services
 Tel: 01 454 504
 Email: info@mscmissions.ie
 www.mscmissions.ie

FOCUS
 Ireland



Everything Family & Life does to save babies and strengthen the family relies on you and our other generous friends. This work has never been more needed.

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

Please help us with a gift in your Will

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MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
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When you remember
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 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.

Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



When prayers can replace on-the-run handshakes

I RAN INTO a resident of this parish recently, who asked me to sign a Mass card for him. A pen was procured, the signature added and details of the Mass intention noted.

He explained who the person who had died was – the grandmother of a lady who is on one of our ministry teams. I thanked him for that detail, adding that I would sympathise with her when next I saw her. To which he replied, “oh, of course, Father, you’re very busy,” before scampering off.

You might wonder if there’s a line or two missing from the above conversation, and if so, you’re not alone. I had to think awhile why a comment on my presumed busyness followed on from my undertaking to sympathise with a parishioner. And then the penny dropped: he was expecting me to say I would attend the lady’s funeral, the next day, in a church over an hour’s drive away.

Funeral rule

I am sure many priests would have done that, good pastoral priests, responsive to their parishioners and attentive in the hour of grief. But I don’t.

My funeral rule is simple: I have



to know the person who has died before I’ll attend their funeral. In every other case, I will sympathise with the bereaved in person, either in their home or outside the church as they come to Mass. Or if the loss has occurred in a family I was close to in a previous parish, I will write a personal note to the

family. But only rarely will I attend the funeral of someone I did not personally know.

I used to be a serial funeral-goer, and I acknowledge that funerals in Ireland are great social occasions, places where you can meet a fair variety of people and have the chance to catch up with

them at leisure. I also acknowledge that attendance at a funeral means a lot to mourners; I know from experience how much.

On the other hand, it was the experience of being in the ‘mourning seat’ that took the gloss off funerals for me. I did very much appreciate the kind people who turned up to sympathise with me on the loss of each of my parents, but I also appreciated those who got in touch in other ways, those who penned a personal letter or sent a thoughtful card, and also those who marked the little and large anniversaries that followed the death-days.

Comfort

I have learned from my friends that there are many ways of sympathising. And I choose not to travel for hours and then queue up in distant churches for a quick handshake and a word of comfort.

I fear that more and more, this is all attendance at funerals boils down to: a fleeting moment, without a prayer or hardly a thought for the person who had died. A personal letter, or a prayer, might bring as much comfort. Too much funeral-going might be bad for our carbon footprint anyway!

Along a very familiar road...

A Gaeltacht undertaker taught me his rule of thumb for devising the route the funeral cortege should take. “An cóngaireach chun an teampall,” he said, “an timpeallacht chun na reilige” (the shortest route to the church, the longest to the grave). In some places this last journey is made very long indeed, around and around the church.

In my present parish, I have learned a different method of devising a route. When the corpse is taken to the church, the funeral director finds out the route the family took to go to Mass, and follows that way – a beautiful continuity.



YOUR GIFT COULD SAVE A CHILD’S LIFE



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
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I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **HUNGRY, DEPRIVED CHILDREN**

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If you wish to give by credit or debit card please log onto
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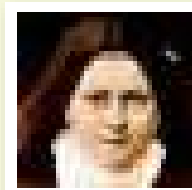
**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS
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IC/11/14

The Little Way Association receives numerous requests from missionaries throughout the world asking for help to feed, support and educate needy, deprived children. They tell us of families so poor that they cannot afford to send their children to school, of orphaned children left alone with no one to love or care for them, and of street children, totally abandoned, hungry and homeless, experiencing much anguish and hardship during their most tender years. The whole future of these children often depends upon whether a missionary can find sufficient funds to care for them.

Please can you spare a donation, large or small, for children who need help to overcome poverty and make a better life for themselves and their families.

Every euro you send will be gratefully received and sent **WITHOUT DEDUCTION** to enable a missionary priest or sister to carry the love, care and compassion of Christ to a deprived, abandoned or orphaned child.



“Do not fear. If you are faithful in pleasing Jesus in little things, He will be obliged to help you in the greater things.”
- St Therese

YOUR NOVEMBER MASS IN THE MISSIONS FOR THE HOLY SOULS

Remember the Holy Souls in November. We will be pleased to send your Mass intentions to missionaries. By helping poor priests in this way you are aiding the work of the Church in mission lands.

We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass.

Our benefactors will be glad to know that in addition to the daily Mass offered for their intentions, Mass is offered each day for their deceased relatives and for all Holy Souls.

HELP FEED THE HUNGRY

Please spare a thought for the thousands who die each year of hunger and disease in mission lands. Your donation will be forwarded to a missionary without deduction for food and medicines for the hungry and sick.