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FOUNDING FATHERS

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Turn churches red to highlight Christian bloodshed, bishops urge

Greg Daly

Parishioners should stand up for hundreds of millions of persecuted Christians by 'turning their churches red' later this month, Irish bishops have said.

"On Red Wednesday, we remember the horrific reality of religious violence and intolerance in our world and we state definitively that those who do not respect freedom of thought, conscience and religion must be held to account," Bishop Alan McGuckian of Raphoe told *The Irish Catholic*.

'Red Wednesday', which this November 28 will see major landmarks around the world lit up red, is an initiative of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). Knock Basilica will join cathedrals and parish churches across Ireland in the initiative, with parishioners being urged to pray the Angelus and wear an item of red clothing to unite in solidarity with persecuted Christians worldwide and to raise awareness of their plight.

"Christians constitute as a population 80% of all religious

persecution worldwide," Michael Kinsella of ACN Ireland told *The Irish Catholic*. "Up to 200 million Christians live in conditions which would be described as hostile to the Faith and to the existence of Christians, where the simple act of blessing oneself or saying a prayer can constitute a death sentence."

This fact needs to be recognised and acted upon, according to Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam.

"There has been an appalling lack of protest about the ongoing and severe persecution being faced by Christian communities in certain parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa," he said, stressing the urgency of standing with Christian communities that have been driven from their ancient homelands and face extinction.

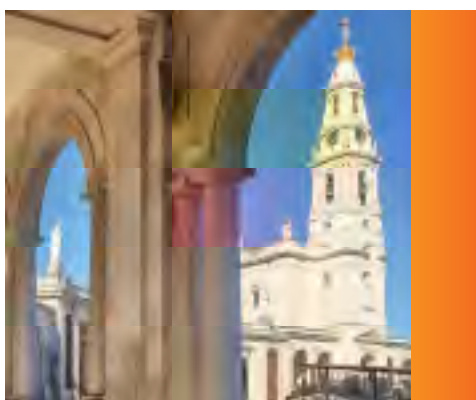
"It is essential that we support our fellow Christians through prayer and that we seek to raise awareness of their plight in our national media, and in other ways such as the Red Wednesday initia-

» Continued on Page 2

You're bound to remember this one...



Offering his credentials to Pope Francis on Friday, the new Irish ambassador to the Holy See, Derek Hannon, was delighted to present the Pope with copies of *Fáilte Pope Francis* and *Pope Francis in Ireland* as souvenirs of his visit to Ireland this year. Both were published by Columba Books. Photo: Servizio Fotografico - Vatican Media



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We Irish have a peculiar attitude to Faith in public



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

Sunday was a tale of two different countries and two very different ceremonies. In London, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II presided at commemorations to mark the centenary of the Armistice that brought an end to World War I (1914-1918). The prayers were led by the female Anglican Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally.

In Dublin, meanwhile, Michael D. Higgins was inaugurated as President of Ireland for the second time. It was a fairly drab ceremony overall with some traditional Irish music and the reading of a couple of poems. Just like London, there was a religious character to the Dublin ceremony. Prayers were led by the Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin, his Church of Ireland counterpart, a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, a former president of the Methodist Church in Ireland, a priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church, a member of the Religious Society of Friends, a Jewish rabbi and an Islamic cleric. A member of the Humanist Association of Ireland (HAI) also read out a statement extolling the virtues of humanism.

Representatives

Back in London, the ceremony at the cenotaph was decidedly Anglican in character. It was attended by a Catholic bishop, leaders of the various Christian denominations and representatives of other world religions. For the first time, there was also a humanist representative. All stood in reverent silence while the Anglican bishop presided.

Notwithstanding the fact that Anglicanism is the established Church in England, it was a poignant

ceremony crafted to ensure that it was inclusive of everyone while not losing the character of Anglican liturgy.

In Dublin Castle, the religious elements were so disjointed as to render that part of the inauguration almost meaningless.

“It's almost as if the mandarins who organise such ceremonies are embarrassed to have them remain Catholic events”

What are we to make of this? Is Ireland more diverse religiously than the UK? Is Britain by-and-large an Anglican churchgoing population?

The answer is, of course, 'no' on both counts. But, what is at play is that the British are confident enough in their own identity and also the shared idea of Britishness that they feel no need to render their ceremonials meaningless in a bid to be inclusive of everyone. Even though Anglicanism is in sharp decline in Britain, it remains the most natural way to conduct religious commemorations.

Not so in Ireland. Even though the religious landscape is changing rapidly, the vast majority of people still identify as Catholic. You'd never know it from large sections of the media, but about a third of Irish people go to Mass every Sunday morning.

The religious ceremony preceding

the inauguration of President Higgins screams of a society uncomfortable with its Catholic roots. Cut adrift from Catholicism, there is a mostly well-meaning desire to try to be inclusive of everyone.

This is a peculiarly Irish phenomenon and it's almost as if the mandarins who organise such ceremonies are embarrassed to have them remain Catholic events, but lack the imagination to give them a secular character. The compromise? Try to make it meaningful to everyone, and in so doing render the ceremony meaningless to the vast majority of people. Why not follow Britain's example? Why not have a religious ceremony at which everyone is present and respected but is decidedly the ritual of one tradition or the other? In reality, Sunday's inauguration was a haphazard mishmash of toing and froing that ended up being neither one thing or another.

Ireland in 2018 is a peculiar place when it comes to faith: not religious enough to want it to mean anything, but not faithless enough to send religion packing.

Michael Kelly is co-author of a new book with Austen Ivereigh *How to Defend the Faith – Without Raising Your Voice – it is available from Columba Books*
www.columbabooks.com



Need to highlight Christian persecution

» Continued from Page 1

“The aim must be to prompt political action to bring this persecution to a halt.”

Acknowledging that the term 'persecution of Christians' tends to conjure up

violent images from ancient history, Bishop McGuckian said while today's westerners can have difficulty thinking of our fellow Christians as victims of persecution, “the truth is that in our modern world Christians are more

likely than ever before to suffer being imprisoned, 'disappeared', sexually harassed, tortured or executed.”

Message

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore said it's important to communicate this reality. “The message is not getting out there, really. It's not in the mainstream media, the persecution of Catholics and Christians all around the world,” he said, adding that “it really should be making headlines”.

“They're our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted mercilessly for bearing the name Jesus Christ,” he continued. Describing the

numbers martyred, which may have been over one million since the year 2000, as “staggering”, he said: “It's across the board. Those who have been martyred, as Pope Francis says, haven't been asked beforehand whether they were Catholics or Protestants.”

“It is a small gesture of solidarity,” Elphin's Bishop Kevin Doran said. “Just as Jesus suffered for his fidelity to his mission entrusted to him by his Father, so in every generation, Christians somewhere suffer for their fidelity to Jesus,” he said, describing Red Wednesday as “our way of gathering at the foot of the Cross”.

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Limbo was harmful solution to a theological problem, says priest

Colm Fitzpatrick

The teaching of Limbo was a well-meaning attempt to solve a theological problem but caused many mothers to suffer, a leading theologian has said.

Prof. Eamonn Conway, a lecturer at Limerick's Mary Immaculate College, said the theological concept "caused a lot of harm", and that it was an attempted solution to protect the idea that faith was a free act, and that God wouldn't impose salvation upon us.

"I do understand why many people of a particular generation found this cruel and damaging. It wasn't intended to be so, it was intended to protect the freedom of faith," Fr Conway said, noting that it's not an idea Catholics are required to believe.

His comments come in the wake of a study from Queen's University Belfast in conjunction with the Irish Countrywomen's Association which explores the declining belief of Limbo and how it emotionally affected Irish women.

Testimonies

The study concludes that it is impossible to read through the body of testimonies as a whole without forming the impression that many Irish mothers suffered silently the

intense pain of miscarriage, of stillbirth, or of infant deaths.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, author of the study and Professor Emeritus in Economic History Liam Kennedy said that many women had "a guilt feeling about their infant not being able to go to Heaven" and that Limbo was imagined as a "dark place" or "void".

He speculated that Catholics themselves decided that it was an "unacceptable belief" as it was "regarded as a rather cruel doctrine, and not consistent with the idea of a loving God".

Sentiments

Echoing these sentiments, Prof. Conway said that he understands why people found the idea cruel, and that its true intent and meaning got lost.

"I think that's absolutely true. I think in its essence, it had a good, in that it was trying to protect the freedom of faith – that eternal life with God was not an imposition – but that got completely lost," he said.

The International Theological Commission states that there are strong theological and liturgical grounds for hope that God will save infants who have not been baptised.

Sligo singer launches charity single for Rwandan appeal



Singer and Bóthar ambassador Tommy Fleming with Bóthar Chief Operating Officer Niamh Mulqueen launching this year's Christmas Appeal and a first ever song released for the aid agency, 'Give A Little Bit'. Photo: Oisín McHugh True Media

One of Ireland's most popular singers has launched a charity single for the Christmas market after making a 20,000km round-trip to record it.

Multi-award winning Tommy Fleming travelled to Rwanda to record 'Give A Little Bit' – the 1977 hit by Supertramp – with local teenagers in support of Irish aid agency Bóthar's Christmas appeal.

The appeal is focused on widows of the horrific Rwandan genocide of 1994 and, particularly, on supporting the government's 'One Cow Per Family' programme aimed at reducing extreme rural poverty by providing every family with a cow.

Tommy, whose latest CD 'Voice of Hope II' was recorded live at Galway Cathedral in front of a sell-out 1,200 crowd, said that the entire Rwandan trip was an eye opener. "It's an amazing country. When you see get the stats, you just wonder how could a country get over this, how people could get on despite the fact that their neighbour slaughtered their children. But they are getting on."

Archbishop: Irish actions in WWI should be impetus for today's leaders

Staff reporter

The Archbishop of Armagh has said the suffering endured by the Irish – Catholic and Protestant – during WWI should act as an impetus for political leaders today to build a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Archbishop Eamon Martin became the first senior Catholic leader to speak at an Armistice Remembrance Service when he preached the sermon during choral evensong at St Anne's Anglican Cathedral in Belfast.

He was greeted by Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, representing his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

While thousands of Irish Catholics fought on the British side against the Germans, many felt ostracised when they returned home after the conflict.

Archbishop Martin referred to this when he reflected on the fact in his sermon that "sadly, because of the cruel twists and tensions of our history of conflict, the fact that Irish Catholics and Protestants fought and died, side by side, was neglected for too long – and perhaps conveniently – by all sides, both north and south of the border."

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Charities fight to stop 'anxious' refugees being made homeless

Chai Brady

Church-based charities are fighting to "ensure" refugees faced with homelessness in a direct provision centre in Dublin find accommodation before time runs out.

Clondalkin Towers houses almost 250 people, with 70 of them having received their refugee status.

Residents were told in October that the centre's management company Fazyard Ltd would be closing the facility on December 3. After talks with the Reception and Integration Agency they agreed to postpone the closure until summer 2019 on humanitarian grounds.

However, the company will continue to search for a tender in the meantime, and a meeting scheduled for the second week of January is expected to shed light on whether the direct provision

centre will be kept open.

"The postponement means we have six- to nine months to try and ensure that all those people won't face homelessness," according to the Assistant Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), David Moriarty.

JRS, with the assistance of the Peter McVerry Trust, have "intensified supports" and are running a housing clinic five days a week at Clondalkin Towers to help the 70 refugees find alternative accommodation.

Context

"Although we're operating on a longer timeframe which is very welcome and it is positive news for those residents, it is still a difficult context," said Mr Moriarty.

"We are still within a housing crisis, it is still very hard to secure property, but we're intensifying our supports right up until the end of this

year at the very least and then obviously we'll have to take stock in January and see what level of support is needed to ensure that none of the individuals who have status will face homelessness if the centre closes in summer."

He added that "there's considerable anxiety on the ground" as people are in education, looking for jobs and

have children in school. Many are also very active in parish life.

"If the centre was to close, there is going to be a significant negative impact on individuals and families who ultimately are dispersed."

Frank Brown, a parish pastoral worker in Clondalkin, said the closure would mean people in the asylum process

"are going to be relocated, and no one knows where".

A family who recently received the right to remain, moved into the centre this month, he said. "They're starting at the beginning of the process now, the Government is still moving people in even though they're talking about closing the direct provision centre."

Direct provision closure will sever community ties – resident

Refugees are "very scared" as they face been uprooted from their community or even being made homeless according to a representative of the centre's residents.

Naima Chaudhry, who is from Pakistan and has spent two years in the asylum process, said that the residents of Clondalkin Towers direct provision centre are fearful of the future, but have found some solace in the original deadline of closure being extended.

"The pressure has been taken off now they know they have time until June, they're going to be mentally more prepared for that," she told *The Irish Catholic*.

While people who have received refugee status have to find alternative accommodation, others face the prospect of being moved out of a community they have integrated in she said.

Ms Naima said: "There are families who have children in school, they'll be moving out and trying to find new schools. People who have got medical conditions will have to find new GPs. Obviously everybody has connections here...that's why they're scared."

"We were really happy to see that the community do support us."

Stars back Trócaire's Christmas Gifts campaign



Two of Ireland's best-known GAA families gathered to launch Trócaire's Christmas 'Gifts of Love' range as Joe and Aaron Kernan joined Martin and Mark McHugh in urging people to support the campaign. Trócaire revealed that generous people across the island of Ireland spent over €765,000 on the charity's gift range last year, allowing the development agency to bring support to more than 27,000 families living in some of the world's poorest countries.

Above photo: Donegal inter-county star and 2012 All-Ireland winner Mark McHugh with his son, Noah (1), All-Star brother Ryan and his father, Martin, a 1992 Celtic Cross medallist.

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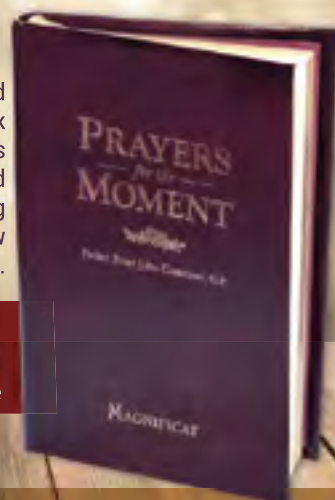
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Religious images top public stamp choices

Midnight Mass was a top choice among the public when asked for favourite Christmas traditions to feature on this year's Christmas stamps, according to An Post.

Out of six traditions picked by the public through polls and messages shared online, there were "two very strong religious images" according to Anna McHugh, An Post's head of corporate communications.

"One – attending midnight Mass – came out as one of the most favourite Christmas traditions, and the other one was visiting a Christmas crib," she said, adding that this year's booklet of Christmas stamps intends to draw together both religious and secular traditions.

"This year the booklet has six different stamp designs, so they're there for everyone; it's mainstream, they're not dividing up different kinds of images,"

Christmas stamp competition

● To celebrate the issue of this year's Christmas stamps, An Post is pleased to join with *The Irish Catholic* to offer readers the opportunity to win one of 10 €19 booklets of Christmas Stamps, on sale now in all post offices and online at anpost.com/Christmas.

To enter, please answer the following question: **Where was Jesus born? A) Jerusalem, B) Nazareth, or C) Bethlehem.**

Answers to be received by close of business on Friday, November 23 to Christmas Stamp Competition, The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2. The first 10 correct answers will win – please provide your name and postal address.

she said.

The booklet also includes stamps featuring the Star of Bethlehem.

Doctors who terminate have their own motives

What kind of a doctor is eager to perform abortions?

Perhaps that's a question for Health Minister Simon Harris.

To be fair to the medical profession, I don't think that most doctors do like to carry out abortions. Some may do so if they feel it's called for, clinically, but most – in my experience – do not want to spend their time in this depressing activity.

For this reason, in Britain, most abortions are now 'outsourced' to abortion 'charities' like Marie Stopes clinics and the BPAS. The National Health Service pays for the operations, but doesn't have to face doing them repeatedly in their own hospitals. There had been too many complaints about women admitted to hospitals with a threatened miscarriage placed next to a patient awaiting a termination.

Specialisation

I spent some time observing practices in London abortion clinics a few years ago and concluded that there were several types of medical personnel in this specialisation.

There are those driven by some kind of special enthusiasm for the service: they believe they are fulfilling a social mission, such as, in the case of one very practiced abortion gynaecologist I encountered, the belief that he was relieving London's housing problems. There is also the obsessive type who had an *idée fixe* about population control. He'll talk about reducing the population of India while doing terminations in Mayfair.

There is the confused idealist, who believes he is serving a cause: the doctor I encountered of this type



Mary Kenny

eventually turned to drink. He told me that he had done some late abortions that he never, ever wanted to repeat.

There are those who think they will be adored by women for their endeavours, and also savour a sense of control over life and death.

“The smart ones soon realise there is more social status and satisfaction in fertility and assisted conception”

Then there are those low status medics who do the abortion shifts because they can't get a better job. The smart ones soon realise there is more social status

and satisfaction – and money – in fertility and assisted conception and move to that speciality.

One of the most interesting accounts of an abortion doctor concerned the late Timothy Black who worked for Marie Stopes clinics in London. He was dubbed 'Lunchtime O'Bortion' by the satirical magazine *Private Eye*, because he boasted he could deliver an abortion to any woman in her lunchtime.

But when his own daughter had an abortion, and made a documentary film about her uneasy feelings about the experience, it caused him some grief, and he became a lot more thoughtful in his reflections.

Location, location, location



● When Sir Noel Coward [pictured], the peerless playwright and musical composer – hear his witty 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen' on YouTube – needed to excuse himself from company to visit the loo, he would say: "I must telephone the Vatican."

Why he chose the Vatican, rather than Buckingham Palace (where his great friend, the Queen Mother, could often be found) he never quite explained. He must have felt it was polite to give an important location!

Sir Noel wrote effusively in his diaries about his wonderful visits to Ireland in the 1950s, where he was always received with the greatest hospitality and delight by the Dublin theatre milieu, and indeed everyone he encountered. Rather in contrast to the general picture that 1950s Ireland was a place of unrelenting oppression.

Time to explore Great War records

It's interesting how the remembrance ceremonies for World War I has triggered family memories. Joe Duffy [pictured] on RTÉ drew out some remarkable memories from people who were now researching their own relatives.

It only occurred to me some days subsequently that, although I've read plenty about the 1914-18 war period – it's crucially linked to Easter 1916, historians now agree – I have never really explored my own family connection.

And it then registered with me that I had a maternal uncle, Gerard Kelly, who volunteered in 1917, and according to scraps of family conversation that I now recall,

had an active period in that war. I'm vague about where he served – it might have been somewhere like Mesopotamia – and subsequently he spent much of his life as a medical heart specialist in India. He had attained the rank of Major.



Uncle Gerard's role in the Great War wasn't much explored in the family, except for remarking that he was a very poor correspondent, and seldom wrote to my grandmother, who of course worried herself sick about him.

But somewhere, there will be a record, of Gerard Kelly from Galway, born 1899, and the centenary has now opened the way to do the research.



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Kick religion from presidential ceremony – IC poll

Colm Fitzpatrick

Almost 70% of respondents on *The Irish Catholic* Facebook page believe that the Irish presidential inauguration ceremony should no longer have a religious nature and instead become secular.

The results come in the wake of a poll which said: "Michael D. Higgins [pictured] has been inaugurated as the ninth President of Ireland. The event started with a religious ceremony including prayers and a blessing from Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and other faith leaders.



"Given the radical difference now between Church and State on issues like the family, marriage and the right to life, should the ceremony continue to be religious in nature or is it time for a clean break and a secular ceremony?"

67% of respondents, which represents around 870 people of the 1,300 polled, said the ceremony should be secular. Only 33% of respondents, which represents about 430 people, said the ceremony should be kept religious.

Agreeing that it should be secular, one commenter said: "It's an inauguration, not a wedding. Another event where a priest or bishop should not be allowed to attend."

However, another remarked: "Keep the prayers for the Office of the President. He is representing our country – that is above his personal beliefs."

'First step towards justice' for Ballymurphy Massacre victims

Chai Brady

The beginning of an inquest into the shooting of 10 innocent people during the Ballymurphy Massacre is the "first step on the road to justice" according to campaigners.

The inquest began in Belfast on Monday, with relatives of the victims gathering outside the Laganside Court and holding pictures of their loved ones.

Ballymurphy parish priest Fr Patrick McCafferty thanked God that after "terrible suffering" and after the "atrocities perpetrated against the people of this parish" the families have the chance of getting "vindication".

Over 47 years of campaigning, he said, the relatives had had the chance to "share their grief and experience, which was empowering".

"This generated a fresh impetus among the people to challenge this terrible murder of their loved ones."

The attacks occurred in west Belfast in 1971, from August 9-11. Ten people were



Families of those killed at Ballymurphy in 1971 make their way to court in Belfast on Monday for the first day of the inquest. Photo: Hugh Russell

gunned down by the 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment and one person is believed to have had a heart attack as a result of an altercation with soldiers.

Opening statements of the inquest will be heard throughout the week followed by personal statement from relatives of the victims. Evidence will then be heard from November 28.

Callum McCrae, the director of *The Ballymurphy President*, a film that aims to highlight events that occurred during the Ballymurphy Mas-

sacre, said that despite the long journey, the beginning of the inquest "was possibly one of the most emotional moments of the campaign".

"It means finally they're being listened to. It feels like this is the first day on the road to justice," he said.

Joint inquest

On Monday the counsel for the coroner Sean Doran QC explained that the joint inquest into the deaths would be broken down into "five incidents that occurred in Ballymurphy over a three-

day period".

The court will examine a period of time in Belfast when there were approximately 12 explosions, 59 shootings, 17 deaths, 25 injuries, 13 rioting incidents, 18 arson attacks and numerous reports of civil disorder, Mr Doran said, adding that "we ought not to lose sight of the context of when these deaths occurred".

"That is not to say however that the context provide shield or buffer against scrutiny."

The inquest is expected to last up to six months.

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Welsh govt 'hypocrites' for free abortion move

Colm Fitzpatrick

A leading pro-life group has said the announcements that the Welsh and Irish governments will provide free abortions to women from the North of Ireland are a "shocking and outrageous attack" on unborn babies and the democratic process.

The Welsh government announced on November 9 that they will provide free abortions for women from the North of Ireland.

Bernadette Smyth, director of Precious Life, said: "What hypocrisy! Wales has a devolved government yet they are completely disrespecting and disregarding our devolved government in Northern Ireland. Abortion is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland."

"Therefore, any change to our pro-life laws is for our elected representatives at Stormont to decide. However, as recently as 2016 our government voted to uphold our laws in Northern Ireland that safeguard mothers and unborn babies."

Ms Smyth added that these attacks on Northern Irish laws show utter disrespect and disregard for democracy.

New film remembers Edith



A *Rose in Winter*, a film which recounts the extraordinary life of Carmelite nun and philosopher St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, formerly Edith Stein, was played at Geneva's United Nations Office this month. Well-known German actress Anje Kruse said that characters like Edith Stein can encourage people to "go for their goals, to go for their dreams, to fight for their rights" and ultimately create peace.

Nuala O'Loan

The View



Hammering away at an already cracking health service

There can be no doubt that Ireland's health care services are struggling, as are many of those who work for them. Here are a few facts:

The *Irish Independent* reported this week that 500,000 public patients are waiting to see a specialist. "Some 138,584 of these patients spent the whole of 2017 on the waiting list. Half of these patients have been waiting for an outpatient appointment since the middle of 2016. The number of patients needing surgery also rose last month to 81,468 – up from 80,595 the previous month."

There are staff shortages right across and inadequate resources to run the system.

On September 11 this year the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (the INMO) announced that hospital overcrowding was the worst ever recorded in August, with 7,911 patients having to wait in corridors on trolleys or chairs for a bed to become free. 969 of those patients waited at University Hospital Limerick.

The INMO also pointed out that it was no coincidence that Limerick had 70 unfilled nursing vacancies. That was during the summer. It does not bode well for the winter which is nearly upon us. In their press release the INMO said that they were asking the HSE to present plans for dealing with the winter crisis, including which hospital services they plan to curtail to meet extra demand.

Vacant posts

On August 1 it was reported that the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) believes that there are nearly 500 vacant consultant posts in the public health sector. The IMO has also said that 700 of the 2,600 GPs on the HSE's medical card scheme – between 25 and 35% of all GPs in most counties – are expected to retire by 2023. In Kilkenny, Mayo, and Leitrim it is between 40 and 50%.

The IMO has indicated



that cuts to consultants' pay and GP services are causing a recruitment crisis that will impact on patient care. Peadar Gilligan, president of the IMO, said "the recruitment and retention problem in Ireland is now at crisis point".

Add to this the range of problems created by the tragic and terrible cervical smear failings which have already led to so many deaths, and the need to compensate so many cancer victims who lost precious treatment time through the failure to diagnose, and who must now seek compensation from a new tribunal to be set up.

“There has been no planning, no attempt to resolve issues around access to necessary equipment”

Minister for Health Simon Harris was reported in the *Irish Times* on October 17 as saying that "the cost of establishing and operating the proposed new tribunal for dealing with the cases of women affected by the cervical screening controversy will be 'significant'". These women are entitled to compensation, though it can never compensate them or their families for what they have lost.

At this time, when medical practitioners are so clearly struggling to provide a service, the Government

and all the main political parties are forcing through the Dáil legislation to introduce the abortion services for which the people of Ireland voted in May this year.

Having had no consultation with GPs on the ground, abortion is to be introduced as a GP led service on January 1, 2019. Over 600 doctors called on the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) to call an urgent EGM to discuss this. The ICGP has responded that it cannot call the meeting until December 2, after the Abortion Bill has passed. They will not assist their members.

The Minister was able to meet the ICGP and the National Women's Council in October. He has not met the hundreds of GPs challenging what is happening.

There has been no planning, no attempt to resolve issues around access to necessary equipment, no strategy, no consideration of the implications for GP's professional insurance, no training under way and above all no flexibility, so as properly to protect doctors, nurses and midwives who have a conscientious objection to providing abortion and to referring patients to other practitioners.

No medical practitioner should be forced to participate in what the Abortion Bill describes "a medical procedure which is intended to end the life of a foetus". A foetus is a

baby in the womb. Referring means sending a patient to someone else to end the life of the baby.

There is absolutely no protection for pharmacists.

“There is a risk that that pressure creates further stress, which will inevitably have an adverse effect”

This is not a minor issue. As healthcare practitioners contemplate their future, they may conclude they have no future in the Irish healthcare system. Ireland

cannot afford to lose any of them, such is the level of current shortages and pressure on services.

When any system is under pressure cracks develop in the structures. When people are under constant pressure, and forced to do that which they believe to be wrong (referring to another practitioner a patient who wants an abortion), there is a risk that that pressure creates further stress, which will inevitably have an adverse effect, firstly on the medical practitioner and then, ultimately on the patient who may need that practitioner's services

for any one of hundreds of reasons other than abortion.

Politicians can give effect to the referendum without placing an intolerable burden on so many GPs, nurses, midwives and pharmacists. If they want abortion why not invite abortion practitioners such as Marie Stopes to come into Ireland and do what they need?

At least that would allow medical practitioners who wish to do so to continue to practice without fear of losing their jobs because, in conscience, they cannot be involved in any way in abortion.

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The empty trenches of Ireland's public memory

Our shifting views towards World War I show how fickle we can be, writes **David Quinn**

It is now commonplace for Irish pupils to learn the famous poem by World War I poet, Wilfred Owen, 'Dulce et Decorum Est'. Owen was killed on the Western Front in 1917.

Owen's poem mocks the idea that it is "sweet" to die for one's country. His poem has now shaped the view of World War I held by generations of people, namely that the war was a futile, pointless waste of life driven by an overly romanticised view of your own country and how heroic it would be to die in



battle for it.

The TV comedy *Blackadder Goes Forth*, made in the 1980s, reinforced this view along with the attitude that

British soldiers were "lions led by donkeys".

But the Owen view did not begin to predominate until the 1960s, that is, about 50

years after the end of the war. Before then, other wartime poets sold far more widely than Owen, for example, Rupert Brooke, who also died in the war, and who reassured people that their loved ones had not died in vain.

Hew Strachan, a historian of World War I, challenges the Owen view. He emphasises that both during and after the war many veterans regarded it as the greatest experience of their lives. He says in his book *The First World War* that, "boys were often told of an intensity of experience whose loss their fathers regretted".

The writer and veteran H.C. McNeile wrote of his time in the war: "Cementing everything, crowning everything, the spirit of camaraderie, of good fellowship."

Disservice

This seems inconceivable to us now, but that is because we are so accustomed to the Wilfred Owen view. His, however, was clearly not the attitude of all veterans by any means, and it is disservice to them to insist that they had fought in vain when clearly they felt otherwise.

Our view today is also coloured by the first day of the Battle of the Somme, when 20,000 soldiers of the British army died. Thankfully, this was a completely untypical day, a disaster of epic proportions.

Over the more than four years of the war, over six million men served in the British army, and about 10% of the total were killed, including about 35,000 Irish men from the whole island.

In the Republic of Ireland, we have an increasingly ambiguous attitude towards World War I. It used to be totally unambiguous: if you were an Irish nationalist then it was verging on treachery to have fought for the British army in that conflict.

Irish Catholics who did, had to keep quiet about it. It was more understandable that Irish Protestants would join the British army, but in our minds the fact that they would, only showed where their true loyalties lay.

“Our view today is also coloured by the first day of the Battle of the Somme, when 20,000 soldiers of the British army died”

Today, however, attitudes are changing fast. Thanks to books like Pat Kenny's *To Raise the Fallen*, which deals with Fr Willie Doyle SJ who served and died as a chaplain in the war, practicing Catholics can see that serving in the British army might not have been so alien, after all.

The more general public is now far more aware than before that thousands of Irish Catholics, as well as Irish Protestants, fought in that war and gave their lives for what they believed was a good cause, namely fighting Germany. Irish Catholics who fought in the British army (in both world wars) could see that Germany was the greater evil in both cases, especially in the Second World War.

But there still remains

an unavoidable ambiguity because just two years ago we were celebrating and remembering the Easter Rising of 1916 when rebels fought and killed British soldiers and looked to Germany as an ally. They had no special love of Germany in the main, but they saw Britain as the oppressor we had to liberate ourselves from, and Germany as a friend, based on the maxim that "the enemy of the enemy is my friend".

“Our political leaders seemed keen to give the impression that the Great War was also our war”

Very soon we will be marking the War of Independence when we were fighting and killing British soldiers again.

It is natural, therefore, that we should have an ambiguous attitude towards the British army. Yes, Irishmen, including Irish Catholics, served in it many times, but it also killed many Irish people and was the main instrument of British rule here.

Last weekend we were, of course, marking the centenary of the end of World War I. Our political leaders seemed keen to give the impression that the Great War was also our war and appeared to regret past attitudes towards the Irish men who volunteered to fight in the British army.

President Higgins spoke of an "official amnesia that left a blank space in our public memory".

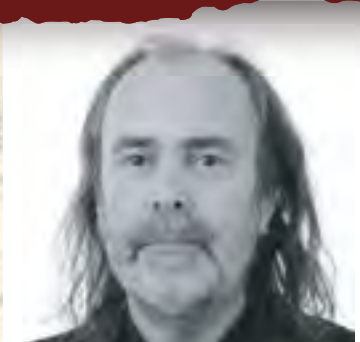
It is very hard to believe, however, that the current generation of politicians, had they lived just a couple of decades ago, would have been fighting that "official amnesia". (What was Michael D Higgins doing to counter it in say, 1988?)

On the contrary, today's politicians would have simply gone along with the conventional wisdom of the time, which was to assume there was something suspicious at best about fighting for the British army back then.

The sudden change of heart shows how fickle we can be. And it also forces us to ask whether an "official amnesia" exists about anything today? Here is just one example: during the marking of the centenary of the 1916 Rising, the Faith of many of the rebels was almost completely forgotten. Why?

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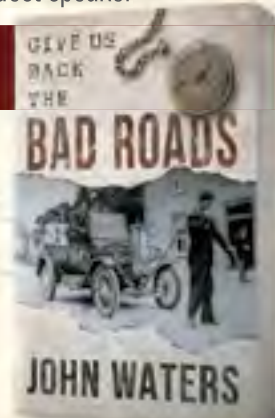
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Don't be afraid – be 'missionary disciples', says Primate



Aine Bradley (Donegal) who received a BAC in Theology and Arts and Fr Hilary Wainya Licence in Theology.



Nick Menezes from Dublin who received a Higher Diploma in Theological Studies and Chris Ambale from Kenya who received a Licence in Philosophy.



Fr Ruben Padila and Florence Krauth who both received a Diploma in Spiritual Direction.



Archbishop Eamon Martin with Dr Denise Ryan who received a Licentiate in Philosophy with her daughter Ciara from Celbridge, Co Kildare.



Jennifer Kiernan (Longford), Gareth Cummins (Maynooth) and Elizabeth Rea (Donegal) who received BAs in Theology and Arts.

Colm Fitzpatrick

The Primate of All Ireland has asked over 200 Maynooth graduates to become "missionary disciples" and spread the message of the Gospel to others. Conferring 232 lay women and men with academic awards in Theology, Philosophy and Education on November 10, Archbishop Eamon Martin said that with their new knowledge, the graduates should be open and willing to share it with others.

"Share with others what you have learned; continue to explore your questions in dialogue with others, and be open to facing many new challenges that continue to bombard us from every angle," he said.

During the ceremony addressed to the graduates and their families, Dr Martin also paid tribute to the late Emma Mhic Mháthúna, who was a former student of the Bachelor of Arts and Theology at the Pontifical University. "Like many of you here today, Emma balanced the challenging demands of raising her family with her academic programme, but, sadly, as we know, for personal reasons she reluctantly had to withdraw from her studies."

The President of St Patrick's College has expressed his intention to have an award dedicated to her to assist mature students who wish to return to education.



Marian Bradley (Belfast), Maire Gormley (Derry), Arthur Kennedy (Coleraine), Caren Collins (Belfast), Hugo Mac Oscar (Maghera, Co. Derry) and Margaret Webb (Carrickfergus) who all received a Diploma in Spirituality and Spiritual Direction.



Grainne Walsh, Fiona Mallon and Rebecca Egan who all received Bachelor in Theology and Arts. Photos: John McElroy



Eimear Carroll from Dublin and Leah Griffin from Kildare who were awarded Higher Diplomas in Theological Studies.



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JOHN 1:14

Aid to the Church in Need – A world in which Christianity can thrive everywhere

Europe's forgotten founding

At a time when Europe's future is uncertain and nationalist currents are on the rise, it's worth reflecting on the ideas that first underpinned the European movement, according to Dr Alexander O'Hara.

An honorary fellow of St Andrew's University in Scotland, and one of Europe's leading experts on St Columbanus, Dr O'Hara is this week giving the 2018 European Cultural Heritage Lecture on 'Making Europe: Columbanus, Robert Schuman, and the Idea of Europe'.

Mentioned by both Pope Francis and the Taoiseach in their papal visit speeches at Dublin Castle and twice during the Pope's homily at Mass in the Phoenix Park, St Columbanus has been called the first European, recognising a common European identity while at the same time clearly identifying as Irish.

"Columbanus has a very strong sense of Irish identity," says Dr O'Hara. "He's the first

An Irish saint championed the idea of Europe in the Dark Ages and inspired today's European movement, writes **Greg Daly**



person to write about Irish identity, he's the first Irish person that we have a body of literary work from, so even on that point of view he's very important in terms of Irish identity."

Born in the mid-6th Century, Columbanus spent several decades at Bangor Abbey in Co. Down, before seeking permission to travel to the continent, where he dealt with a succession of kings and founded monasteries at Annegray, Luxeuil and Fontaine, before founding the monastery of Bregenz on Lake Constance in what are now the Austrian Alps, eventually founding his last community

in Bobbio in Lombardy.

At the same time, Dr O'Hara explains, the self-consciously Irish missionary had a clear sense of Europe as a distinct place with its own cultural identity, rather than a merely geographical or physical concept.

"He does have a sense of the whole of Europe. He just mentions the term twice in addressing two Popes, but still it's quite significant given the period," he explains. "It really fits in to Schuman's thing, that European supranationality kind of fits on top of national identity, and is complementary to it; it's not in competition with it."

Robert Schuman, the visionary statesman whose May 9, 1950 speech proposing a European Coal and Steel Community is recognised to this day as the charter document of the modern European movement, famously referred to Columbanus in July 1950 as an "illustrious Irishman" who "willed and achieved a spiritual union between the principal European countries of his time".

"He is the patron saint of all those who now seek to build a united Europe," he said.

The Irish saint's achievements were all the more striking given he was working in the shifting world of the early medieval period in the centuries after the fall of Rome, Dr O'Hara points out.

"One of the impressive things about Columbanus is that he was dealing in quite a complicated political world, quite a fragmented world, where these ethnic groups were really coming to the fore: he's dealing with the Franks, he's dealing with the Lombards," he says.



Language

A common language – Latin – contributed immeasurably to this, Dr O'Hara says, as, he thinks, does the fact that the monk seems to have been able to lay claim to royal blood.

"It's also really interesting that new research suggests, I think very convincingly, that Columbanus was from the royal dynasty of the Ui Barriche in southern Leinster. That's quite convincing, because one of the Ui Barriche kings retires to Bangor Abbey in the mid-6th Century," he says.

"There were close ties with Bangor and there was a kind of game of thrones going on in southern Leinster at this time where it may have been politically expedient for him to get out of Leinster," he continues. "But that can also explain why Columbanus was so confident in terms of dealing with kings at this kind of level."

It's sometimes observed that one of the hallmarks of Catholic thinking is that it can prefer a both/and approach to an either/or one, and for Dr O'Hara it's clear that the saint was capable of straddling unlikely boundaries.

"What puzzled me, dealing in this area for the last few years, is that there's certainly a kind of revisionist trend in scholarship where they're trying to minimise Columbanus' influence or impact. The argument basically goes that he was an immigrant and an outsider – they're basically

trying to minimise his agency, saying that he was at the hands of the king," he says.

While the monk would indeed have been an immigrant, Dr O'Hara explains, this wouldn't have stopped him from being an important and influential figure, given his noble background and facility with the common tongue of the era.

“There were close ties with Bangor and there was a kind of game of thrones going on in southern Leinster at this time”

"What I've tried to do, I suppose, in my work, is to see that it's not either Irish or Frankish, but there's a kind of complementarity there," he says.

Another revisionist trend in scholarship around Columbanus is to downplay the notion of him as a missionary, Dr O'Hara says. The thesis in its essentials, he says, is that "Columbanus wasn't a real missionary because he didn't go past the *limes* of the former Roman empire and didn't try to convert the heathen, like say the Slavs – he'd a chance

to go to the Slavs, and didn't, and so wasn't a real missionary".

Looking carefully at Columbanus' writings and the evidence from his monastic foundations, however, strongly points to him as almost a modern figure, a missionary within notionally Christian lands.

"Columbanus established five monasteries, three in Burgundy, one in Bregenz which was short-lived and didn't last very long, and then the final one was in Bobbio," he says. "I basically found out that there's common patterns in terms of the topography,



Dr Alexander O'Hara.

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fathers



St Columbanus and Gall in a boat on Lake Constance.

where they're located. They're often at the convergence of three roads. They're often in association with thermal or healing springs. Then they're often at ancient pagan cult places.

"That's another thing that's often been downplayed in a sense," he notes. "Annegray is fascinating because there was a Roman fort there anyway. It's at the convergence of three roads, and you also have a Diana bas relief, possibly from a shrine to the goddess Diana, who was often associated with hunting and forests.

"What's really interesting is if we compare the archaeology of what was found there with how Columbanus writes about witchcraft, magic and people going to the woods and celebrating basically pagan feasts. It was still a world of syncretic religion, still a world where you had baptised Christians but they were still going to the woods: they still had these cultural practices which in his eyes would have been deemed pagan."

This crops up, he says, in the Penitential of St Columbanus, the saint's systematic manual of penances for those confessing sins, in which he makes it clear that Christians ought not to be feasting at pagan sites in the forests.

If one were to talk of a patron saint of European unity, St Columbanus might then

seem to be an obvious candidate, but one might wonder nowadays, in the aftermath of the famous refusal to explicitly cite Europe's Christian heritage in the abortive European Constitution and the Lisbon Treaty, why anyone would have thought the movement to European unity should expect such patronage.

“There was also the fact that unlike Europe's other key founding visionary Jean Monnet, Schuman was a deeply unassuming visionary”

"I knew very little about Robert Schuman until 2015, where I was taking a train from Vienna across Austria to Luxeuil for the 14th Centenary celebrations," Dr O'Hara admits. "That was at the height of the migration crisis. The train was packed with refugees, who were all trying to get to Germany and to Sweden. There was a sense that this was really historic."

It was only when he got to Luxeuil for the conference to mark 1,400 years since Columbanus' death that he learned more about the conference that marked 1,400 years since his birth, he says.

"When I got to Luxeuil I just heard much more about

Schuman's involvement in the 1950 congress, and all the political wheeling and dealing that was going on around that time, and how basically at this academic congress to mark the 14th centenary of Columbanus' birth, Schuman was making alliances and it was a very high profile political event," he says. "That really led me to think more about the idea of Europe."

He'd long been aware of how the concept of Europe occurs in Columbanus' writings, he says, but had no sense of how significant Catholic thinking had been to many of the founders of the European project.

"The idea of Europe was something obviously in Columbanus' writings that crops up, but I'd no idea of how influenced Schuman was by the neo-Thomistic movement, Jacques Maritain, Catholic Social Teaching, so that's something that I've tried to bring in for this lecture," he says.

"For me personally a lot of it is new. The stuff about the connection with Sean McBride and the Con Cremin memorandum – that's new, but that's not my own research," he says, pointing to various behind the scenes aspects of the conference, as well as how John A. Costello made reference at the conference to Columbanus and a Europe united under Christian values with Sean McBride saying: "If we remove from Europe her Christian civilization, what remains will not be very important."

Reiterating how little he had known about the Christian Democrat roots of the European movement, he observes that it's not really given the attention it deserves and says he was glad to hear President Higgins referring to it and to the Columbanus conference at Luxeuil when he spoke at Strasbourg in 2015.

"You really don't hear much about it," he says. "Recently I was reading Tony Judt's massive tome *Postwar*, and that's not in there at all. There's very very little about Christian Democracy. Certainly, Schuman hardly ever turns up."

Part of the reason why Schuman is less well known than he should be may come down to his Christian humanism having become somehow unfashionable, he says. "I personally learned a lot from Alan Fimister's book *Robert Schuman: Neo-Scholastic Humanism and the Reunification of Europe*. He says in a sense part of why Schuman is not really known is because some of his unfashionable ideas, and particularly his Faith and the faith element was such an important part of his life."

There was also the fact that unlike Europe's other key founding visionary Jean Monnet, Schuman was a deeply unassuming visionary who refrained from writing his memoirs and even burned many of his personal papers.

"One of his closest friends wrote a biography of him, but it's often dismissed as hagiography," Dr O'Hara says. "But certainly, when he retired he basically collected some of the political speeches he gave into this *For Europe*, and his political philosophy really comes across strongly in that, his reading of Jacques Maritain, he was very well versed in Thomas Aquinas, so this is something that I'm trying to get across in the lecture."

The lecture inevitably touches on topical issues, and Dr O'Hara says he was delighted to hear Pope Francis alluding to Columbanus when in Ireland. Indeed, speaking in Rome in 2015 at the invitation of Emma Madigan, Ireland's then ambassador to the Holy See, he says he mentioned Pope Francis's talk to the European Parliament the previous year.

"That was stirring stuff," he says. "The whole EU thing can be quite complicated,

but Fimister's thesis is that in ways the impulse from the beginning was these Christian democrat politicians, all from kind of contested areas in Europe – Lorraine in Schuman's case, the Rhineland for (Konrad) Adenauer, Trentino for (Alcide) di Gasperi.

"They're all devout Christians, they're all reading the same stuff, they're all particularly influenced by the papal social teaching, and see economic integration as one step to something more."

“Columbanus himself is often forgotten, perhaps overshadowed by his namesake Columba – also known to us as Colmcille”

Since then, of course, other visions of Europe have come into play, and different concepts of Europe, ranging from utopian federalism to economic minimalism have been introduced, but the roots of the project nonetheless remain Christian humanist ones, praised by a succession of Popes and with Pope Francis having pointed to

when warning that a Europe that forgets the visions of its founders is a Europe in danger of losing its soul.

In Ireland, meanwhile, Columbanus himself is often forgotten, perhaps overshadowed by his namesake Columba – also known to us as Colmcille – but possibly simply because he saw his mission on the continent as taking him away from Ireland and entailing leaving Ireland behind.

"We have his very moving letter for which he writes in Nantes back to his community in France, and it's a beautiful document. He's just devastated because he thinks he's going to be sent back to Ireland. He really has the sense that he's gone for life," Dr O'Hara says.

i Dr Alexander O'Hara can be heard speaking on 'Making Europe: Columbanus, Robert Schuman, and the Idea of Europe' at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin on November 15 at 6pm. Tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/lecture-making-europe-columbanus-robert-schuman-and-the-idea-of-europe-tickets-52237535876>.

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worldwide

War is over – what next?

It comes as no surprise to find that the pages of the edition of *The Irish Catholic* dated November 16, 1918 were dominated by news of the armistice, which had been signed five days before and which terminated the fighting of the First World War.

While legally the conflict did not end for many months, following the negotiation and signing of the peace treaties involving the various belligerents, such technicalities were understandably overlooked in the first days of peace that Ireland, and much of Europe, had known for four-and-a-half years.

Nowhere was the sense of euphoria more evident than in the paper's 'London letter', a weekly column that provided extensive coverage of events within the Catholic Church of England and Wales, with particular emphasis upon the words and deeds of Cardinal Francis Bourne, the-

100 years on

Ireland greeted the First World War with a mixture of relief and uncertainty, writes **Gabriel Doherty**



then Archbishop of Westminster.

It noted that the "dominant note" of public sentiment was "an intense satisfaction that the Kaiser had met his deserts; that the 'mad dog of Europe' had been muzzled at last". In the churches, the column continued, "there was a deep and fervent feeling of thanksgiving that God had heard the prayers of the faithful, and that at last the cause of right and justice was to triumph".

One senses, however, that much of the public reaction to the news was less to the taste

of the columnist: the behaviour of officers on the streets, it seems, was indistinguishable from that of rank-and-file soldiers, and many female members of the armed forces joined in the merry-making, with some seen "riding on the top of taxis".

One senses that such behaviour might have prompted the observation that had the expression of relief at the news "been more dignified, more restrained, it would have rebounded more to England's credit".

It is interesting to note that the paper had no such cen-

sure for the public response in Ireland to the news, primarily, it seems, because the evident joy so widespread in England was little in evidence on this side of the Irish Sea, at least among Catholics.

Based on the paper's coverage, the general tenor of the reaction to news of the armistice in Ireland seems to have been simple relief that the killing was over, perhaps tinged with uncertainty over the future of the country.

Even this emotion was tempered, however, by the realisation that even after the guns fell silent, many continued to die from the wounds they had received in battle, including chaplains who had been caught in the line of fire.

One such figure was Fr Walter Montagu SJ of Portstewart, Co. Derry, who, the paper sorrowfully recorded, passed away in the days following the ceasefire as a result of injuries incurred while participating in the Allied advance in October – the third such death among chaplains of the English province of Jesuits.

Difficulty

The paper faced a genuine difficulty from a Catholic perspective in reporting on the Armistice. If the war indeed had been a just one, as the paper insisted, with the Allies on the side of right confronting "the blood-stained Kaiser, loaded with the execration of the human race", in comparison to whom Attila the Hun himself was but "a mild prototype", then why had the Holy See remained neutral during the war, and why was that neutrality welcomed, indeed championed, by *The Irish Catholic*?

These questions had been left hanging ever since the start of the conflict, and continued to admit of no easy answers even now, after its conclusion.

One strategy the paper had used to hide its discomfiture was to condemn those who themselves assailed the Holy See for its neutrality. While English papers had been occasionally singled out for criticism on this basis, the principal focal point of the attack was the anti-clerical Italian press, which never passed up an opportunity to undermine the credibility of the Vatican in the eyes of the Italian general public.

Much of this press, of course, had found the need to reorient itself earlier in the war, when the government in Rome in effect switched sides from the Central Powers to the Allies, but once the general alignment of forces in the



US President Woodrow Wilson.

war had become established, subsequent events were invariably viewed through an anti-papal prism.

“One strategy the paper had used to hide its discomfiture was to condemn those who themselves assailed the Holy See for its neutrality”

To take but one example, these titles had just reported that the victories of Italian

forces over their Austrian enemies, most recently at the battle of Vittorio Veneto (October 24 to November 3, 1918), had caused the Pope much anguish, bolstering, as they did, the prestige of an Italian state which the Vatican still regarded as illegitimate, given its annexation of the Papal States nearly 50 years before.

(As an aside, a fascinating study of the involvement of Irishmen fighting in the ranks of the papal forces in various battles during the *Risorgimento* has just been published by Donal Corcoran under the title *The Irish*

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Londoners celebrate the end of war on Armistice Day, 1918.

Brigade in the Pope's Army 1860: Faith, Fatherland and Fighting. It is an inherently interesting subject, expertly addressed.)

The personal response from Pope Benedict XV to such charges was given in a letter to Cardinal Basilio Pompili, Vicar General of Rome, significant portions of which were repeated verbatim in *The Irish Catholic*.

In it the Pope expressed his delight at seeing the restoration of peace (and, implicitly, the Italian victory); reiterated his previously stated position, that that "territorial questions between Austria and Italy be settled according to the just aspirations of the populations" in the disputed areas (the implementation of which principle, it was widely believed, would work to the advantage of Italy); and noted that the Holy See was one of the first entities to recognise the independence of the various states into which the Austrian Empire had dissolved (thereby hastening the collapse of that Empire).

“It was Piłsudski who emerged as the victor of the struggle, and it was he who dominated Polish public life until his death in 1935”

The triumph of Italy in the war without doubt had an impact on subsequent rela-

tions between the state and the Vatican, which, over time, became markedly less frigid. This process was to culminate in the signing of the Lateran Treaty, which normalised relations between the two, just over a decade later – but much water (some of it bloodied) was to flow under the Ponte Sant'Angelo before that reconciliation.

In the meantime, however, the victory celebrations, and the celebrations attending the birthday of King Victor Emmanuel III, acted as a portent of this rapprochement. *The Irish Catholic* endorsed the perceptive observation from the Rome correspondent of the *London Times*, that the enthusiastic, and ecclesiastically-sanctioned, involvement of religious groups in such festivities pointed to a more harmonious relationship between the two sources of authority and loyalty in the city – but it immediately insisted that such gestures “in nowise compromise the claim of the Holy See to its rightful possessions”.

In fact, as time would tell, this is exactly what they did come to mean.

If attacking the enemies of the Pope was one ‘coping mechanism’ by which the paper reconciled its support for the war, and its refusal to tolerate criticism of the Pontiff, another was its emphasis upon those issues where there was consensus between the Holy See and the Allies.

As has seen previously in

this series, foremost amongst these was the cause of Poland. The date of the Armistice on the Western Front also marks the occasion upon which Poles celebrate the regaining of their national independence after well over a century of domination by the powers that had partitioned her at the end of the 18th Century – Russia, Austria-Hungary and Prussian-dominated Germany.

It is not immediately apparent from this edition of *The Irish Catholic* that the paper appreciated just how significant the events of the previous week had been from a Polish perspective – although given the confusion that prevailed in Warsaw and the other Polish territories this was a common mistake, shared across Europe.

“President Wilson had made it clear that the right to self-determination was only enjoyed by nations”

The paper did, however, give front page coverage to a report from Reuters, which quoted a recent letter from Pope Benedict XV to Monsignor Aleksander Kakowski, Archbishop of Warsaw. In this the Pope wrote that “History has written in letters of gold what Christianity and European civilisation owe to Poland, but it also records how badly she has been rewarded.”

This last point was clearly a reference to the damaging wounds inflicted by the partitions, and Benedict emphasised how his predecessor, Clement XIV, had ploughed a lonely diplomatic furrow in his contemporary condemnation of the dismemberment of the country.

Interestingly, however, Benedict only singled out the subsequent actions of the Russian government for censure, expressing the hope that the nationalities (including the Poles) previously subject to Tsarist dominion “may now decide their own fate and develop and prosper according to their respective ideals and resources”.

Oddly enough, in the power struggle that was even then developing within Poland between the forces of the emphatically Catholic Russophile Roman Dmowski and the German-aligned socialist Józef Piłsudski, this remark, whether intentionally or not, implicitly favoured the latter. And it was, indeed, Piłsudski who emerged as the victor of the struggle, and it was he who dominated Polish public life until his death in 1935 – with many a clash



Pope Benedict XV.

with the Church during those years.

But this was for the future. For the moment *The Irish Catholic* was content to note the promise from Benedict to Monsignor Kakowski, that he would be made a cardinal at the next consistory – a sure sign that not alone he, but his country's cause, was riding high in the Pontiff's esteem.

Given the ultramontane nature of Polish Catholicism, there is every reason to believe that such favour helped to sustain the Poles during the difficulties they faced during the post-war period, not least in the fight against Russian Bolshevism that culminated in the famed Battle of Warsaw in August 1920.

In this hour of victory,

amidst these grand turns in geo-strategic politics and international relations, thoughts inevitably began to turn towards home, and the Ireland of the future. In this context *The Irish Catholic*, in common with most of the rest of Europe, invested an enormous amount of emotional capital in the figure of President Woodrow Wilson, the “great American statesman to whom, under the Providence of God, Europe and the cause of democracy in general owe it so largely that they are delivered from the menace of Prussian militarism”.

It is difficult now to recapture the millenarian expectations that his name inspired at this time. Leading America's re-engagement with the ‘Old World’ after a century

and a half of self-conscious isolationism, his name recognition and moral authority was second to none.

It was he who, through his rhetoric, had done so much to shape public discussion as to the issues underpinning the conflict – of which none was dearer to the hearts of Irish Catholics than the principle of national self-determination.

But if there was a problem in reconciling of the paper's endorsement of the ‘just war’ interpretation of the conflict with its championing of the cause of the Holy See, the policy of which had implicitly repudiated such a viewpoint, there was also a difficulty in its endorsement of the ‘traditional’ cause of Irish home rule while at the same time lionising a statesman whose name was indelibly associated with national independence.

President Wilson had made it clear that the right to self-determination was only enjoyed by nations – and could Ireland legitimately lay claim to such a status, and such a right, if it was prepared to settle for mere autonomy (and rather limited autonomy at that) within the United Kingdom?

It was thus clear that *The Irish Catholic* had much work to do if it was to catch up with the intellectual currents sweeping across the continent of Europe, and the mood of militancy on the island of Ireland – and the first measure of same was now just over a month away, with the seminal general election of December 1918.

“Given the ultramontane nature of Polish Catholicism, there is every reason to believe that such favour helped to sustain the Poles during the difficulties they faced during the post-war period”

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Nothing now stands against a liberal abortion regime

Last week, the Government's abortion Bill progressed with alarming speed through one of the most crucial stages of the parliamentary process, Committee Stage. It now returns to the Dáil where a significant proportion of the 180 amendments that were proposed will again be discussed before it passes to the Seanad and finally becomes (unjust) law.

However, the Minister for Health, Simon Harris, repeatedly made clear during the Committee proceedings that the Bill will not be changed at any substantive level and ruled out any attempt to incorporate within the Bill anything remotely resembling a pro-life position.

That he did so even before he had heard a single word in defence of the pro-life amendments demonstrated early on that he had no intention of engaging in any kind of meaningful dialogue.

There are several striking, disturbing and stand-out moments from last week that highlight just how far and how quickly our political 'representatives' have travelled since the passing of the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013.

Perhaps the most bewildering aspect overall was the repeated and almost glee-



The abortion bill is being rammed through the Oireachtas heedless of the views of huge numbers of voters, writes Denise Kelly

fully unrestrained contempt that members of the Committee and the Minister displayed toward even the most humane of amendments, including pain relief for unborn children at 20 weeks gestation.

This attitude was further reflected in the astounding confession by the Minister at the committee's first meeting, when he proudly announced that he "detested the language of the Eighth Amendment".



Minister for Health Simon Harris.

Let us just remind ourselves of the language that the Minister "detested".

"The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."

Sadly, that level of visceral loathing was echoed in most of the contributions, particularly those that attacked, undermined and misrepresented the 16 pro-life amendments that were tabled by those TDs brave enough to stand their ground and argue their case.

All of this, as mentioned above, is a far cry even from 2013.

During one Dáil debate on the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill in June of that year, the then Fianna Fáil Health Spokesperson, Billy Kelleher, made what would prove to be an irony-laden statement when he declared:

"It has been noted that when legislation was introduced in Britain in 1967 the outcome was more liberal than envisaged. That may be the case there but there is no chance of a liberal abortion-on-demand regime creeping into this country in the context of our constitutional

obligation as legislators to vindicate the life of the unborn."

How right he was. Indeed how clear it now is that Deputy Kelleher's statement has also, if unintentionally, confirmed what we in the Pro Life Campaign and others have been saying for years; in the event that the Eighth Amendment goes, nothing will stop the introduction of an extreme abortion regime.

“One in three people voted in favour of protecting life in the referendum but these are being deprived of proper representation”

The Committee proceedings of last week have amply proven that point.

They also confirmed the fact that proposals once considered to be on the furthest extremes of the 'abortion rights' agenda are now 'mainstream' in the sense that

none of the political parties in the Oireachtas are willing to defend the pro-life position of 723,632 voters, to say nothing of the substantial number of reluctant 'Yes Voters.'

What is truly lamentable is the fact that even yet, those who could stand up will not stand up. The possibility of a revolution for life is receding ever further, hastened by political expediency and a betrayal that even many Yes voters have already come to regret.

One in three people voted in favour of protecting life in last May's referendum but these voters are being deprived of proper representation in Leinster House. What all of the developments of recent weeks and months point to is a need for those who believe in restoring a culture of life to work towards new and better representation in Dáil Éireann. We must set about bringing this about without delay.

i Denise Kelly is a spokesperson for the Pro Life Campaign.

A Heart for the Homeless

The true story of Merchants Quay Ireland



It all started with two Franciscan friars and a cup of tea in 1969. And Ireland's most beloved charity has spoken the language of the human heart ever since – here for the homeless and hungry for more than four decades, thanks to the caring donations of everyday people. The age-old spirit of compassion and respect is still at the heart of MQI's ethos (see the insert in this paper) – never to give up on human dignity, especially if they've lost belief in themselves. This is the story of Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI).

Their Daily Bread

It all started in 1969. Brother Salvador Kenny, the tailor who made the friary habits and sacristan Brother Sebastian Tighe began serving tea and sandwiches to homeless



men who took refuge in the Adam and Eve's church during the day.

Even after the Brothers moved the Tea Room to a converted garage at the back of the friary on Cook Street, it still wasn't enough to keep up with the numbers coming to the door. The grace and generosity of the Irish people has always been woven into the fabric of MQI's work. In 1989 the friars gave Father Sean Cassin two rooms at the front of the friary to set up

as a counselling and drop-in centre. Demand was instant. In 1991 the Merchants Quay Project started by Fr. Cassin was granted charitable status.

An 800-year tradition

Said Brother Philip, "In a sense we've been doing this for 800 years – no one would ever be turned away... I'd see the young people waiting outside for breakfast, looking so desperate." It's thanks to the donations of caring, compas-

sionate people that MQI continue to be here for Ireland's most vulnerable – to be sure nobody is forgotten.

100,000 chances to change a life

Today, the Riverbank drop-in centre in Dublin offers food, showers, fresh socks and underwear, a friendly ear and practical support six days a week to rough sleepers coming in from a cold pavement or doorway, people suffering from mental illnesses and those struggling with addiction. Over 100,000 meals were served to the lost and the forgotten in 2017 – that's 100,000 chances to change a life and turn it around. Your insert describes how MQI staff and volunteers do whatever it takes to move clients from the streets into long-term housing. To help this lifesaving, life-changing work, please donate whatever you can to MQI today by using the insert response or online at www.mqi.ie or by phone at 01-5240139.



Come for Tea and a Tour at Riverbank:

Join the MQI team for free refreshments and private tours of the good work you make possible...

MQI's compassion for the hungry and homeless is balanced by the need to honour their dignity and privacy. In this spirit you're invited to **Tea and a Tour at Riverbank** when the homeless centre is not being used by clients. Once a month, after early-morning rough-sleepers have come and gone from breakfast, the staff and volunteers have a training meeting. **This is an ideal time to show you around Riverbank. Because without you, MQI couldn't open at all.**

In the quietness, staff

would like to show you the kitchen where over 100,000 meals are prepared and served, the showers where rough-sleepers get warm and clean and the dental surgery where the pain of rotten teeth is treated.

See where MQI's nurse tenderly dresses wounds on legs and feet that walk miles each day.

MQI would like you to hear the success stories too. Many visitors are most surprised at how lives can be changed, because homelessness and addiction don't have to be a dead-end.

To book your places on the next tour, please ring **Emma at 01 524 0965.**

To think it all started with a simple cup of tea... and with kindness and compassion.

Out&About

Pilgrims hear an 'upward call'



ITALY: Dominican Sisters from Limerick City and Fr Conor McDonough OP accompanied 18 young adults from around Ireland to Italy for a five-day 'Upward Call' pilgrimage that incorporated prayer and silence, seminars and discussions, and a great deal of food and fun.



DUBLIN: Fr Fergal celebrates his first Mass in Rollistown Parish church, Co. Dublin. His ordination took place in Ashbourne chapel on September 30 and was the Bishop of Meath's – Bishop Tom Deenihan – first ordination.



INDIA: The Apostolic Nuncio in India, Archbishop Giambattista Diquattro, stands with Fr William Coleman, PP Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath, in New Delhi following the presentation of a donation from the Diocese of Meath for flood relief in Kerala.

IN SHORT

'Gooch' encourages young generation to read history

Speaking at the launch of a new novel for young people, *Leo's War*, GAA star Colm 'Gooch' Cooper said he wishes he had taken more time to explore history when he was young.

This novel, written by author Patricia Murphy, is based on the true story of one of Killarney's heroes, Msgr Hugh O'Flaherty 'The Vatican Pimpernel'. During World War II in Nazi occupied Rome Msgr O'Flaherty was responsible for setting up and running the now famous Rome Escape Line through which he gave refuge to over 6,000 people being hunted by the Gestapo.

Mr Cooper said: "Like most people of my age in Killarney, I knew nothing of this great man and his humanitarian work during the war in Rome," he said, but since the setting up of the Hugh O'Flaherty Memorial Society and the publication of various books

including 'Leo's War', he now makes time in his schedule to learn more about Msgr O'Flaherty.

"This ordinary Killarney Mon [Presentation Monastery National School] boy who attended the same school as I did, but went on to do extraordinary things in the service of others".

This is the latest of Ms Murphy's novels under the heading Hands on History for young readers.

She said: "I was delighted to include the Monsignor's story in my latest novel and to see in the local O'Flaherty Schools Literary Competition that such young students are readily applying the Monsignor's humanitarian principles to today's world circumstances."

Since 2017, all the schools in the Killarney Parish have been including a Hugh O'Flaherty Day in their calendar of events.

The Killarney launch took place as part of the 2018 Hugh O'Flaherty Memorial Weekend (November 2-4) which is supported by Killarney Chamber of Tourism and Commerce and Kerry County Council

Community Support Fund.

Carlow remembers seven 'courageous' missionary Mercy sisters

Bishop Denis Nulty hailed seven Sisters of Mercy who set out from Carlow to establish a convent in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on November 4, 1843 – 175 years ago.

Carlow County Museum, Carlow County Council, St Leo's College and the Mercy Convent in Carlow combined to commemorate the seven nuns who journeyed at the invitation of Bishop Michael O'Connor.

Bishop Nulty, speaking before unveiling a plaque at the convent gate on Dublin Road with Sr Kathleen Kennedy from Carlow and Sr Sheila Carney, Pittsburgh, said: "We acknowledge, recognise and give thanks for the contribution the Mercy Sisters have made to Irish life and culture – and life and culture far beyond these shores." He described them as seven very brave women.

A costumed drama about the sisters' journey to Pittsburgh was performed by students – which they conceived, developed and presented under the direction of Janice de Bróithe.

Carlow convent accepted seven posthumous honorary Doctorates of Humanities for the Carlow founding seven from Carlow University.

Sr Sheila Carney spoke of the contribution that each of the seven made to Pittsburgh and how they used their talents: Frances Warde (administrator), Josephine Cullen (educator), Agatha O'Brien (business), Elizabeth Strange (artist, writer and translator), Aloysia Strange (educator), Veronica McDarby (portress) and Philomena Reid (music teacher). She said: "It took the town of Carlow to raise these courageous, generous women."

The event was attended by members of the order from Ireland and abroad, family members of the seven sisters, past and current staff and students of St Leo's, public representatives, members of the public, friends and benefactors of the Mercy Sisters.

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



DUBLIN: Rose Hogan RSM, Celine McEvoy RSM, Josephine Bourke RSM and Kathleen Somers RSM attend the launch of 'In God Alone' a film about the founder of the Sisters of Mercy: Catherine McAuley.

DUBLIN: Deirdre Fiorini and Frances Kennedy RSM attend the launch of the film *In God Alone* based on the founder of the Sisters of Mercy Catherine McAuley. The 23-minute film highlights the actions of Sr McAuley who gave all in service of others.



KERRY: Colm Cooper, Patricia Murphy and Colm O'Suilleabhain launch Patricia's new novel *Leo's War* in Killarney. The book is about one of Killarney's most inspirational heroes, Msgr Hugh O'Flaherty, who helped save 6,000 people being hunted by the Gestapo during World War II. Photo: Don MacMonagle



DUBLIN: Anna Nicholls RSM, Denise Fox RSM, Mary Reynolds RSM, Sue Clarke, Mary Moorhead and Mary Reynolds RSM enjoy the official launch of 'In God Alone', the short film on the life and work of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy.



CARLOW: A section of the crowd celebrating the seven Sisters of Mercy who set out from Carlow to establish a convent in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on November 4, 1843, gather with Bishop Denis Nulty to witness the unveiling of a plaque at Leo's Convent.

DUBLIN: The Lassus choir sing at the annual concert of remembrance in Haddington Road Church to mark the 100th anniversary of the armistice at the end of World War I. The programme was focused on the celebration of peace time at the end of the war.

ARMAGH

An evening of Advent Meditation in music, prose, poetry and prayer will take place in The Market Place Theatre on Tuesday December 11 at 7.30pm. Living in uncertain times, the question is: 'How do we live for the Kingdom in a time of turmoil and how do we get our priorities right?' Prof. Francis Campbell will join reflection. Free event but please contact the Market Place Box Office for tickets on 028 37521821.

CLARE

Youth 2000 prayer meeting every Friday at 7pm in the Poor Clare's Oratory, Ennis. Join other young adults for prayer and reflection followed by tea and chats in the Friary.

Mothers' Prayers in Cloughleigh Church every Tuesday evening from 7-7.45pm. During Mothers' Prayers there is prayer for children and all who need prayers. New members are always welcome. Info contact Noreen at 085 1530051.

CORK

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

DERRY

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

DUBLIN

Adoration Hour of prayers for healing and individual blessings in St Laurence O'Toole Church, North Wall parish (www.north-wallparish.ie). Monday nights at 8pm starting November 5 until December 17. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament there will be reflective music, prayers, and silence.

Life to the Full (Jn 10: 10) Book Club on Thursdays in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay 7-8.30pm. Join other 20-30-year-olds to meditate, share and discuss life, faith, purpose and how to live life to the full. Info: st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie or www.facebook.com/lifetothefullbookclub

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

The Encounter: Join other young adults for a night of live acoustic music, reflective prayer in adoration, with guest speaker on life, Faith and purpose followed by socialising, pizza and refreshments on Friday, November 23 at 8pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay. Email: st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie and www.facebook.com/theencounterdublincity

DONEGAL

A prayer vigil for road traffic victims and their families and the blessing of emergency services and cars will take place in St Patrick's Church, Ballyshannon at the 6.15pm Mass on Saturday November 17. Candle lighting for each victim: requests to have a candle lit can be made to one of the priests or the parish office

at: 0719851295. Also prayers for grieving families, friends and communities.

FERMANAGH

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

KILDARE

Family Cell Meeting: A cell meeting for parents/carers/expectant parents and babies/toddlers in Our Lady's Parish Centre on Tuesday afternoons 1-2pm. Volunteers will lead the meeting, prepare refreshments and help with the toddlers. For meeting dates and information: Kate 086 4132511. Email: leixlipparishcells@gmail.com Website: www.parishcellsireland.ie

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

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.

MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday evening at 7.30pm in the parish centre.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday November 16 and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085 7746763.

ROSCOMMON

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

WATERFORD

Celebrate the Feast of Christ the King on Sunday November 25 in the Edmund Rice Chapel from 2pm to 5.30pm. Organised by Word of God Outreach.

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 Meeting, Tuesdays, 7.30pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre beside St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Assyrian Church leader and Pope pray for peace

● Pope Francis has spoken about the “great suffering” that many Christians are enduring in the Middle East, and prayed for peace in the region, especially in Iraq and Syria, in a meeting with Mar Gewargis III, the Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East.

He said many Middle Eastern Christians are following in the footsteps of Christ, as they are forced to leave their homelands to escape violence.

Pope Francis noted that the Christians fleeing persecution belong to different communities. “They are forging fraternal relationships among one another,” he said, “and thus becoming, for us, witnesses of unity.”

Bangladesh Catholic youth group celebrate 12 years

● Magis Bangla, the Bangladeshi chapter of an international Catholic youth movement sponsored by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), is marking its 12th anniversary in the country.

The November 8-10 celebrations at Jesuit-run Novojyoti Niketan (Home of New Light) in Gazipur district near capital Dhaka include a gathering of more than 150 current and former members of the movement, meditation, formation sessions and cultural programmes.

‘Go for the Greater’ is the theme of the celebrations.

Over the years, Magis Bangla has aimed to transform and transmit Christian values and spirituality with cultural and intellectual foundations for Bangladeshi Catholic youth, according to Pradeep Perez, the movement’s coordinator.

Nashville abuser priests named

● The Diocese of Nashville in the US has published the names of the 13 former priests who served in the diocese who have been accused of sexually abusing a minor as part of its ongoing commitment to transparency, accountability and pastoral care.

Of the 13, nine are dead and two are in prison. None are in active ministry.

Nashville’s diocesan

newspaper said the names were being released after consultation with the priests’ council and Diocesan Review Board, which is made up almost entirely of laypeople not employed by the diocese.

The list is posted on the diocese’s website, www.dioceseofnashville.com, and includes the priests’ assignments based on official diocesan records.

‘Pray hard’ after California shooting spree

● After a shooting spree last week at a country-music bar in Thousand Oaks, about 40 miles from the heart of Los Angeles, Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles asked people to “pray hard” for the victims and their families.

Thirteen people, including the suspected gunman and a 29-year veteran of the Ventura County Sheriff’s Department, died in shooting at the Borderline Bar & Grill on what was college night, with lessons on country two-step dancing.

The bar is popular with students at nearby California Lutheran University, and also attracts students from Pepperdine University in Malibu, Moorpark College in Moorpark and California State University-Channel Islands in Camarillo.

Suspected gunman, Ian David Long, had legally purchased the weapon used in the shooting.

Myanmar clergy expelled by militia

● A third group of Catholic clergy have been expelled from Myanmar’s Shan State by a China-backed ethnic minority army.

A priest from Kengtung Diocese in Shan State and three nuns from the Sisters of Charity congregation were ordered by the United Wa State Army (UWSA) to leave the Wa hills bordering China.

Local officials sealed off St Paul’s Catholic Church in Mong Pawk parish and told the clergy to pack their belongings and leave the region, according to Church sources.

Survivors decry Vatican making US bishops wait on abuse vote

Following Monday’s shock announcement that the Vatican has requested the US Catholic Bishops to delay voting on new standards for bishop accountability, survivors of sexual abuse and bishop accountability activists decried the move as “totally unacceptable”.

Terence McKiernan, co-director of BishopAccountability.org, called the move a “pre-emptive strike” by the Vatican against US bishops as they seek to respond to the current crisis of sexual abuse and its cover-up “in a modest way”.

Peter Isley, a survivor of clerical sexual abuse who now works with the organisation Ending Clergy Abuse, said the decision from the Vatican effectively means: “We care more about our organisation and our princely titles and positions” than enacting measures of accountability.

New standards

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is gathered in Baltimore this week for its General Assembly, in which they were expected to enact new standards of conduct and account-



Protesters gather outside the hotel in Baltimore where the US Conference of Catholic Bishops was meeting during its fall general assembly.

ability for bishops engaged in sexual abuse or its cover-up. At the start of Monday’s meeting, however, USCCB president Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, announced that he had received a request on Sunday afternoon to postpone the vote until after a global summit on the crisis at the Vatican in February.

According to DiNardo, the request came from Canadian

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for Bishops.

At a press conference outside of the Marriot hotel overlooking Baltimore Harbour, where some 300 bishops representing the nation’s 195 Catholic dioceses were meeting inside, McKiernan was joined by co-director Anne Barrett Doyle who said: “When the Vatican intervenes, it’s a signal that pro-

gress will be less than we hoped.”

McKiernan and Doyle both recalled the 2002 USCCB meeting where the bishops enacted a “zero tolerance” policy against priests found guilty of abuse. At the time, the US bishops had to appeal to Rome to amend canon law in the US to accommodate the new policy – a move that some within the Vatican opposed.

“The Vatican was very unhappy with ‘one strike you’re out’, Doyle recalled. “They feared there would be, yet again, dramatic change.”

“On one hand it’s disappointing that Vatican officials continue to feel no urgency about this crisis,” David Clohessy, the ex-national director of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), said.

On the other hand, new policies that bishops are proposing are largely meaningless,” he continued. “Overall the Vatican should be encouraging local bishops just step up more rather than discouraging bishops who want to take some steps, however minimal, toward reform.”

Bishops’ commission calls for protection of workers in light of technological change

Politicians must act to assist workers as technology continues to transform jobs across Europe, said a committee of the European Union bishops’ commission.

Work is sustainable only “if it does not harm or destroy the livelihood of others and if it uses generously and equitably the gifts of creation”, said the social affairs commission of COMECE, the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community.

The commission issued the report, ‘Shaping the future of work’, to “contrib-

ute with a socio-ethical reflection to the current debate on the future world of work in Europe”.

Problems

It outlines problems facing the world of work in the EU today, highlighting factors such as the blurring of boundaries once separating professional and private life, the decreasing availability of traditional middle-class jobs and the difficulty young people have finding permanent positions that come with health

and pension benefits.

The “polarisation” of the job market with the disappearance of blue-collar jobs – with many being “relocated to a country with cheaper labour costs or replaced by robots or algorithms” – and the increased demand for highly-skilled labour is a serious problem that EU politicians must address, the bishops said.

The goal is to make work accessible and sustainable for all, built on an economy that centres on the people it is meant to serve, they added.

Political group to defend life in Mexico

The new umbrella group, Suma de Actores Sociales (SUMAS), is calling Mexican citizens to stand up against efforts by president-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador to legalise abortion, euthanasia and marijuana.

SUMAS was launched in Mexico City and unites 700 organisations around the country.

Juan Dabdoub Giacoman,

a founding member, said the new group seeks “to join together the greatest number of associations possible who are willing to fight to defend life, the family and the freedom of Mexicans”.

Dabdoub Giacoman denounced an “ideological onslaught” by the president’s team and their members in congress.

Mr Lopez Obrador won the

Mexican presidential elections on July 1 with 53% of the valid votes and will take office on December 1.

The Morena party, of which the president is a member, gained the majority in both houses of the federal Congress. The new lawmakers took office on September 1.

Party members have introduced initiatives to legalise abortion throughout the

country.

Currently, abortion is illegal on a federal level except in cases of rape.

Olga Sánchez Cordero, a Morena senator whom the president has appointed as the next Secretary of the Interior, has said that in the coming months she would promote the legalisation of abortion, marijuana, and euthanasia measures.



Edited by Chai Brady
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California's burning inferno



Firefighters battle flames during a wildfire that burned dozens of homes in Thousand Oaks, California. Photo: CNS

Congo bishops call for support of miners expelled from Angola

Catholic bishops have urged help for half a million Congolese deported from neighbouring Angola under a crackdown on informal diamond mining.

The bishops said they were alarmed by news of human rights violations by Angolan security forces and said the expulsion of "successive waves" threatened peace along the two countries' 1,300-mile border.

"Thousands of children, women, elderly, sick and handicapped, as well as able-bodied men and women, are being roughly unloaded like vulgar goods, day after day, in areas of great insecurity," said the Kinshasa-based bishops' conference.

"We call on the Congolese authorities to begin a direct, open dialogue with the Angolan government to ensure the return

of Congolese is organised and conducted in conditions that respect their dignity and conform to the international humanitarian law both countries have signed up to as United Nations members," they said in a statement.

The bishops also urged Catholics to "share the little they can" with those returning.

Security

Angolan police commissioner Lambert Mende told the British news agency Reuters that his country was entitled to "safeguard its national security and natural resources" and said most Congolese had "left of their own free will".

In an October 26 statement, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees confirmed the mass deportations had

already brought "serious human rights violations by security forces on both sides of the border", leaving at least 330,000 people "in an extremely precarious situation".

The Congolese church's charitable agency, Caritas, reported on October 27 that more than 500,000 deportees had arrived in several provinces. Of those, nearly 207,000 had converged on the single town of Kamako, heavily outnumbering local inhabitants.

A US nun from the Daughters of St Paul, Sister Bernadette Reis, told Vatican Radio on November 2 that Catholic parishes had offered food and shelter to incoming people.

She added that local resources were "completely disproportionate to the number in need".

Chinese cardinal hands personal plea to the Vatican

A well-known cardinal from China, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, flew to Rome to hand Pope Francis a seven-page letter appealing for him to pay attention to the crisis facing his country's underground Church.

The former bishop of Hong Kong said underground clerics have cried to him since the Vatican-China deal on the appointment of bishops.

"They said officials have forced them to become open, to join the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and to obtain a priest's certificate with the reason that the Pope has signed the Sino-Vatican provisional agreement," said Cardinal Zen.

"Some priests have escaped, and some have disappeared because they do not know what to do and are

annoyed. The agreement is undisclosed, and they do not know if what officials say is true or not," he said.

Community

Cardinal Zen said the China Church was facing new persecution and the Holy See was helping the Chinese Communist Party suppress the underground community.

He was in Rome at the

beginning of this month to hand his letter to the Pope. "I want to talk to the Pope again and hope he will consider again, but this may be the last time," he said.

In his letter he described how the underground Church had seen money confiscated, with clergy having relatives disturbed by the authorities, going to jail or even losing their lives for the Faith.

Vatican roundup

Pope recognises martyrdom of Christian Brother

Pope Francis has recognised the martyrdom of De La Salle Christian Brother James Miller, who was born in Wisconsin and was shot to death in Guatemala in 1982.

The recognition of the martyrdom of Bro. James, or Bro. Santiago as he also was known, clears the way for his beatification; the date and location of the ceremony were not immediately announced.

Bro. James was born September 21, 1944, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. He met the Christian Brothers at Pacelli High School there and, at the age of 15, entered the order's juniorate in Missouri. Some websites refer to him as 'Brother Fix-it'.

Publishing news about a variety of sainthood causes on November 8, the Vatican also said Pope Francis had recognised as "blessed" a 15th-Century Augustinian brother, Michael Giedrojc.

The recognition amounted to the "equivalent beatification" of Brother Giedrojc, who was born in Lithuania and died in Krakow. With the Pope recognising that over the course of centuries the brother has been venerated by thousands of Catholics, the normal process leading to beatification is not needed.

Prisoner creates new Vatican stamp

As the Christmas season draws near, the Vatican postal service prepared a unique set of commemorative stamps designed by a talented, yet unlikely, artist: a prisoner serving a life sentence.

The Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office announced that its 2018 Christmas stamps will feature images of the Annunciation and of Mary holding baby Jesus painted by Marcello D'Agata, an inmate at Milan's Opera prison.

A brochure for the stamps from the Vatican post office said that choosing artwork painted by a prison inmate was a response to Pope Francis' call for compassion toward

the imprisoned and for efforts to help them see that prison is not just the end of a life of crime but the beginning of a new life.

The Vatican post office took part in a similar program for burgeoning artists at the Milan prison where D'Agata honed his painting skills.

Mauro Olivieri, head of the Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office, said that entrusting the design of the new Christmas stamps to an inmate serving a life sentence was "a sign of hope, trust and faith in one's neighbour and in his ability to understand the evil that was committed and to rehabilitate".

Supply water not guns, Pope tells governments

It is a horrible disgrace that in the 21st Century, millions of people still do not have access to clean drinking water and so many become ill or die from contaminated water sources, Pope Francis has said.

"Unfortunately, in many countries where people do not have normal access to safe drinking water," what is not lacking "is the supply of weapons and ammunition, which continue to deteriorate the situation", the Pope said in a message addressed to an international conference discussing the issue.

"The corruption and special interests of an economy that excludes and kills too often prevails over efforts that, in solidarity, should guarantee access to water," he wrote.

The conference was based on the need for better governance in guaranteeing access to drinkable water for everyone.



Michael Sainsbury

Although China and the Vatican signed a provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops in September, persecution of Chinese Catholics continues.

Some believe there is considerable pushback against the Vatican-China deal from inside China's United Front Work Department, the Communist Party-controlled religious bureaucracy, especially at a more localised level.

"Many officials at a local level feel they need to change in their old ways to deal with religions. This means a more difficult job and less power," said Francesco Sisci, a long-time Italian media correspondent in Beijing and now a senior researcher at Beijing's Renmin University.

"So, they are not happy," he said. "So, they are sloppy or try to sabotage Beijing. If they undermine the agreement, they can recover some of their previous power. It is a proof of Beijing's determination in the agreement that problems are only scattered in a very few places and are not very widespread."

Controversy

The latest controversy for Catholics is the detention of at least four priests: Frs Zhang Guilin and Wang Zhong from the Diocese of Xiwanzi and Frs Su Guipeng and Zhao He from the Diocese of Xuanhua. The men were detained during October and November – both dioceses are in Hebei province.

Their sin appears to be a refusal to join the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, the government-sanctioned organisation that works to control Church leaders. A number of publications have reported the detained bishops have been subject to detention house arrest and indoctrination classes.

As well, the cross from the bell tower and the spires of a church in Shangcai County in central Henan province were destroyed; the church was sealed, reported Asia News, a Rome-based missionary news agency.

The campaign to 'sinicise' religion has been officially underway since the annual meeting of the ruling Communist Party's Central Committee in October 2017. Then new rules and regulations on religion were introduced in February and March.

The State Administration for Religion Affairs, which oversaw the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the government-sponsored bishops' conference, was disbanded, and its activities and staff were put under the direct control of United Front Work Department. This is the arm of the party responsible for policy on



A woman holding a Rosary prays at St Joseph Catholic church in Beijing.

Targeting of Catholics in China may be pushback from low-level politicians

religions, and it answers directly to top party leaders.

Many people hoped the deal with the Holy See would see an end to the string of cross removals, church demolitions and the detention of clerics.

"What is happening actually is an application of the new regulations about registrations of priests and churches" implemented earlier this year, Sisci said.

Lawrence Reardon, associate professor of political science, University of New Hampshire, noted that the current campaign is not focused just on Catholics, but is indicative of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's continuing campaign to control all religion.

"The lower levels have been given the green light and are continuing to tighten controls over Islamic, Protestant and Catholic official and unofficial communities," he said. While the Buddhist and Daoist communities

seem unaffected, he said, the United Front Work Department is going after "commercial activities".

"I think the centre does always have the capacity to control their organisations in the periphery, so you get some overly zealous cadre going after 'miscreants' in order to ensure that UFWD won't target them as being too lax," he said.

"The top has told them to tighten the screws, and the provincial/local levels are adding more 'torque' to ensure compliance and keep Beijing away," he said.

"The impression I have is that the UFWD is very happy to add more 'torque', as they fear religious revival coming from abroad and from within."

The September 22 deal between the Vatican and Beijing allowed Pope Francis to veto Beijing's candidates for bishops for the first time since 1951. Seven previously illicit bishops – and one who is dead – were forgiven and recognised by

the Pope.

One surprise about the provisional agreement was the lack of any decision by Beijing on the fate of 30 Vatican-appointed bishops who never registered with the patriotic association. The Vatican has said discussion on the official status of these underground bishops continues.

"I would be surprised if any official 'reconciliation/recognition' occurs. Still, the state might turn a blind eye to their work"

In the past, many of them have vowed not to join the patriotic association. But many are getting old, and while there is no official list, Sisci believes there may be "just a handful" who are below age 75, the age at which canon law mandates bishops submit their resignation to the Pope. Francis does not have to accept the resignation.

Prof. Reardon said that while the Vatican has not forgotten about these bishops, "it is trying to find a way to finesse a just resolution of their cases".

He said this was always going to be "a step-by-step process, and the two sides have just gone through the initial phase...who knows how long this will take? I'm assuming the Vatican is looking for a comprehensive solution so that the mainland Church can undergo reconciliation and reunification."

Underground

Michel Chambon, a researcher at Indiana's Hanover College, is not so sure. "I doubt that the state will do much about the underground bishops – at least officially," he said.

"I would be surprised if any official 'reconciliation/recognition' occurs. Still, the state might turn a blind eye to their work, as it has done in the past, to let them continue their pastoral work, as long as they keep a low profile."

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun, retired bishop of Hong Kong, flew to Rome in late October and handed a seven-page letter to Pope Francis, appealing for him to pay attention to the crisis facing the so-called underground Church in China according to ucanews.com on November 9.

Cardinal Zen reportedly said that because some parts of the provisional agreement on bishops had not been made public, Catholics practicing their Faith clandestinely did not know what they should do when government officials told them they must join the patriotic association because of the deal.

"The September 22 deal between the Vatican and Beijing allowed Pope Francis to veto Beijing's candidates for bishops for the first time since 1951. Seven previously illicit bishops – and one who is dead – were forgiven and recognised by the Pope"



Xi Jinping.

Vatican tells US bishops to delay vote on sex abuse response



Dennis Sadowski

At the urging of the Vatican, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops will not vote on two proposals they were to discuss at their Baltimore meeting regarding their response to the clergy sex abuse crisis.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president, informed the bishops as they opened their autumn general assembly on November 12 that the Vatican wanted the bishops to delay any vote until after a February meeting with the Pope and presidents of the bishops' conferences around the world that will focus on addressing clergy abuse.

Affected are proposed standards of episcopal conduct and the formation of a special commission for review of complaints against bishops for violations of the standards.

Cardinal DiNardo said he was disappointed that no action would be taken during the assembly, but that he was hopeful that the delay "will improve our response to the crisis we face".

The cardinal's announcement came two days after Pope Francis met with Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the US, at the Vatican. Archbishop Pierre returned to the US on November 11 in time for the first day of the US bishops' general fall assembly in Baltimore.

However, at a midday news conference, Cardinal DiNardo said the request to delay action came from the Congregation for Bishops.

The assembly planned to move forward with discussion of both proposals from the bishop's Administrative Committee.

Authority

The Administrative Committee consists of the officers, chairmen and regional representatives of the USCCB. The committee, which meets in March and September, is the highest authority of the USCCB outside of the full body of bishops when they meet for their autumn and spring



Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, centre, leads the opening prayer during the autumn general assembly of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. Also pictured are Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the USCCB, and Msgr J. Brian Bransfield, general secretary.

general assemblies.

In response, Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago suggested the general assembly move forward with its discussion of the two proposals. He also called for a special assembly in March to weigh and vote on the measures after being informed by the outcome of the February meeting in Rome.

"It is clear that the Holy See is taking seriously the abuse crisis in the Church," Cardinal Cupich said, adding that the February meeting was a "watershed moment" in Church history.

"We need to be clear where we stand and tell our people where we stand," he said.

Later in the morning session, just before the assembly adjourned for a day of prayer and penitence, Cardinal DiNardo opened his presidential address pointing to the weakness within the Church that has led to the clergy abuse crisis.

Repeatedly citing the words of St Augustine, he said "in order that weakness might become strong, strength became weak".

He called for action to lift the entire brotherhood of bishops from a place of weakness that has allowed the clergy sex abuse crisis to exist. While there were to be no votes on specific action at the meeting, he said the deliberations the bishops would undertake would set them on the route to healing for the Church and for victims of abuse.

He also held up his own weakness to victims, saying: "Where I have not been watchful or alert to your needs, wherever I have failed, I am deeply sorry."

Cardinal DiNardo urged the bishops to root themselves in the life and

"We must always remember that there is a thing called trusting faith and it leads us on our current journey. This trusting faith provides us roots, roots for a living memory"

teaching of Jesus to lead the Church and the victims of abuse to healing. He also called for the bishops to focus on the needs of victims so that "our example not lead a single person away from the Lord".

He also said that the bishops must be as accountable as anyone else in ministry in the Church and that they, like priests and other Church workers, must adhere to the same standards of conduct identified in the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People".

"Whether we will be remembered as guardians of the abused or of the abuser will be determined by our action beginning this week and the months ahead. Let us draw near to Christ today sacrificing him our own ambitions and promptly submit ourselves totally to what he demands of us both in love and justice," he said.

In his seven-minute address, the cardinal said that he read that St Augustine warned there are two extremes that pose dangers to the faithful –

despair and presumption.

"We and the faithful can fall into despair believing that there is no hope for the Church or good change in the Church. We can also believe that there are no hopes for healing from these sins," he said.

"Combating the evil of sexual assault in the Church will require all our spiritual and physical resources"

"But we must always remember that there is a thing called trusting faith and it leads us on our current journey. This trusting faith provides us roots, roots for a living memory. Our people need this living memory of hope," he said.

Presumption can lull the Church into inactivity, he added, "by presuming that this will blow over, that things simply return to normal on their own. Some would say this is entirely a crisis of the past, and it is not. We must never victimise survivors over again by

demanding that they heal on our timeline."

While the majority of abuse incidents occurred decades ago, the pain among victims "is daily and present", he continued and warned against leaving behind people who have been hurt by clergy.

"In justice we must search for every child of God whose innocence is lost to a horrific predator at any time decades ago or this very day," Cardinal DiNardo said.

He explained that healing can result through forgiveness, adding, "let us not only be willing but also ready and eager to ask for forgiveness".

"Combating the evil of sexual assault in the Church will require all our spiritual and physical resources," he said. "We must draw near to Christ in our sorrow, in humility and in contrition to better hear his voice and discern his will. It is only after listening that we can carry out the changes needed, the changes the people of God are rightfully demanding."

Letters

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

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

Is it time for secular presidential inaugurations?

This is precisely what Atheist Ireland are now campaigning for, but in the interests of equality for all applicants as opposed to the above reasons. Also looking for removal of religious oaths in swearing in ceremonies for judges. Next it will be removal of Bibles in courts of law. Pretty soon it will be a secular Angelus and anything else that offends human rights. – **Louise Nolan**

Keep the prayers for the Office of the President. He is representing our country. That is above his personal beliefs. – **Dolores Power**

It should be secular because the position of President should be open to all, religious or not. – **Peter Hinchcliffe**

I believe we should keep religious ceremony in the inauguration, pushing God out is never the way to go. It's just a pity we haven't a president who actually believes in God. He couldn't possibly believe with the ideals and friends he has. – **Lily Whelan**

Church record on children challenged pro-life case: top philosopher

Wasn't just the sex scandals – no one has confidence in the leaders of the Irish Catholic Church. The clergy always set themselves apart as an elite looking down on the people in the pews. The church hierarchy are no longer fit for purpose. The days of lording it over the laity are over. – **Jim Nisbet**

What is a church for?

Jesus is always at home in our church all he asks is you pay him a visit now and then. – **Lucy Ann Kiernan**

The building is the House of God. The people are the Church. Sometimes we hear people blaming the Church for this and that. But what they are actually doing is pointing the finger at themselves. Houses of God are sanctuaries of Jesus Christ. Yes they should be looked after by the people of God, because Jesus is present in every one of them. – **Brendan Gallagher**

I find my views have changed on this over the years. I now feel we need sacred spaces that are there for just that – prayer, worship etc. and the odd concert so long as it's classical. The rest should go to the parish hall – **Robert Gallagher**

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.

Letter of the week

Minister's directives can't be operationalised

Dear Editor, On the evidence of last week's proceedings at the Select Oireachtas Committee on Health, Minister Simon Harris is determined to force healthcare professionals who object to abortion on clinical and/or conscientious grounds to refer women seeking abortions to colleagues with no such objections. Has he considered how this can be operationalised?

How can a GP or community pharmacist comply with this forced referral obligation without access to a list of colleagues willing to perform or participate in abortions? But if such a list must be compiled anyway, why not simply make this available to the

public and obviate the psychological and moral distress introduced by the referral interlude?

For healthcare professionals working in the hospital setting, the accommodation of conscience rights takes a different form but, again, this can be done without undue burden. Already, many pregnant nurses and pharmacy staff are accommodated in relation to handling cytotoxic chemotherapy, because of the (low) risk that exposure to these drugs could harm their unborn children.

If staff who object to work practices with very low risk of harm can be accommodated, surely colleagues who

object to inducing the certain death of their unborn patients can, and should, be similarly accommodated?

In a week when the Taoiseach traduced conscientious and committed healthcare staff across the country, it seems counterproductive, perhaps even vindictive, for Minister Harris to persist with his ideological crusade to coerce many dedicated healthcare professionals into a choice between violating their integrity and leaving the vocations to which they have given their lives.

*Yours etc.,
Séamus Ó Cearra,
Drogheda, Co. Louth.*

Parishes working alongside Direct Provision Centres

Dear Editor, I was both saddened and heartened in equal measure when I read of the people under threat of eviction from the Direct Provision Centre in Clondalkin, and the response of the parish to their plight ('Shellshock for parish as refugees face homelessness' IC 25/10/2018).

As a regular visitor to a small number of Direct Provision Centres over the years, I am encouraged by the parish's act of protection

toward the 225 asylum seekers and refugees in Clondalkin Towers, West Dublin.

There are about 34 Direct Provision Centres scattered in urban and rural areas across this State, each one located in a given parish and diocese. There is a general public silence regarding asylum seekers and refugees in our communities that stands in stark contrast with the call of the Gospel. I reiterate these people are

our neighbours living in our parishes and dioceses: Did local Catholic communities, for example, support asylum seeker families to attend WMOF 2018?

In the midst of this silence, I am grateful for the decision taken by the Combined Catholic Parishes of Clondalkin to support their neighbours in Direct Provision. Through the intervention of the parish priest and parish pastoral worker, by a letter to the

Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, the decision to close down the centre will be delayed to allow for a calm and measured resolution. This protects children and families from being moved during the school term and winter. May I make a plea that such attentiveness becomes a greater part of our ministry to the stranger?

*Yours etc.,
Sr M.M. McCarron,
Rostrevor, Co. Down.*

King Herod hasn't gone away, you know

Dear Editor, In a few weeks' time, millions of people in this state will celebrate the birth of a baby. Billions will celebrate the same worldwide.

While these celebrations are going on our politicians are planning to legislate without a mandate to make it legal to stop the heartbeats of thousands of babies in this State.

We, the people of this so-called democratic state, stand idly by. Such hypocrisy.

We also stand guilty of indifference.

King Herod is very active with his spin doctors and his agents active in every country.

History repeats itself.

*Yours etc.,
Pat Costigan,
Portlaoise, Co. Laoise.*



Generosity of Archbishop John Charles McQuaid

Dear Editor, Further to Mary Kenny's mentioning of the large donation given to the Travelling community by the Archbishop of Dublin John Charles McQuaid (IC 25/10/2018), I would like to recall a similar fine gesture by the late John Charles.

In the 1950's there was a protracted strike by the Deep Sea dockers in Dublin Port. The Marine, Port and General Workers Union which represented the dockers was under

extreme pressure as funds had run out, and there was no money to cover strike pay. The Stevedores sensed the situation, and reckoned one more week would break the strike and finish the union.

John Charles, who was a good friend of the General Secretary of the union, Jimmy Dunne, heard of the dire situation the union was in, and offered Jimmy the vital week's strike pay, on the condition that he would not be

revealed as the source of the dig out at that time. The offer was accepted by Jimmy Dunne, on condition that the Archbishop would not interfere in union matters again.

The strike had a successful outcome soon afterwards.

The late John Charles, a noble man, who understood the ordinary man.

*Yours etc.,
Donnchadh MacAodha,
Roosky, Co. Leitrim.*

Around the world



USA: As part of their Autumn break doing projects in the Indianapolis area, members of the University of Notre Dame marching band perform a special concert for more than 100 people at A Caring Place, the adult day care programme of Catholic Charities Indianapolis. Photos: CNS



GUATEMALA: A child, part of a caravan traveling from Central America to the US, drinks water from a faucet in Tecun Uman.



HOLY LAND: Palestinian children receive treatment at Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem. US Christian leaders expressed “grave concern” about the Trump administration’s decision to stop financial assistance to six East Jerusalem hospitals



USA: Women mourn during the procession to transport the body of Sgt Ron Helus from the hospital to the county medical examiner’s office in Thousand Oaks, California. Sgt Helus of the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office was killed responding to a November 7 shooting at a bar in Thousand Oaks that left 12 dead.



VATICAN: Pope Francis is pictured with Prince Frederik and Princess Mary of Denmark during a private audience.



YEMEN: A nurse looks on as he weighs a malnourished girl at a treatment centre in Sanaa. Every 10 minutes, a child in Yemen dies from a preventable illness resulting from malnutrition, according to a report by UNICEF.



DUAL CITIZENSHIP



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

I live on both sides of a border. Not a geographical one, but one which is often a dividing line between two groups. I was raised a conservative Roman Catholic, and conservative in most other things as well. Although my dad worked politically for the Liberal party, most everything about my upbringing was conservative, particularly religiously. I was a staunch Roman Catholic in every way. I grew up under the papacy of Pope Pius XII (the fact that my youngest brother is named Pius, will tell you how loyal our family was to that Pope's version of things).

We believed that Roman Catholicism was the one true religion and that Protestants needed to convert and return to the true Faith. I memorised the *Roman Catholic Catechism* and defended its every word. Moreover, beyond being Faithful church-goers, my family was given over to piety and devotions: we prayed the Rosary together as a family every day; had statues and holy pictures everywhere in our house; wore blessed medals around our necks; prayed litanies to Mary, Joseph, and the Sacred Heart; and practiced a warm devotion to the saints. And it was wonderful. I will forever be grateful for that religious foundation.

I went from my family home to the seminary at the tender age of 17 and my early seminary years solidly reinforced what my

family had given me. The academics were good and we were encouraged to read great thinkers in every discipline. But this higher learning was still solidly set within a Roman Catholic ethos that valued all the things religiously and devotionally I'd been raised on. My studies were still friends with my piety. My mind was expanding, but my piety remained intact.

Expressions of the Faith

But home is where we start from. Gradually though through the years my world changed. Studying at different graduate schools, faculties, being in daily contact with other expressions of the Faith, reading contemporary novelists and thinkers, and having academic colleagues as cherished friends has, I confess, put some strain on the piety of my youth. It's no secret; we don't often pray the Rosary or litanies to Mary or the Sacred Heart in graduate classrooms or at faculty gatherings.

However academic classrooms

and faculty gatherings bring something else, something vitally needed in church pews and in circles of piety, namely, wider theological vision and critical principles to keep unbridled piety, naïve fundamentalism, and misguided religious fervor within proper boundaries. What I've learned in the academic circles is also wonderful and I am forever grateful for the privilege of higher education.

But, of course, that's a formula for tension, albeit a healthy one. Let me use someone else's voice to articulate this. In a recent book, *Silence and Beauty*, a Japanese-American artist, Makoto Fujimura, shares this incident from his own life.

Coming out of church one Sunday, he was asked by his pastor to add his name to a list of people who had agreed to boycott the film, *The Last Temptation of Christ*. He liked his pastor and wanted to please him by signing the petition, but felt hesitant to sign for reasons that, at that time, he couldn't

articulate. But his wife could. Before he could sign, she stepped in and said: "Artists may have other roles to play than to boycott this film." He understood what she meant. He didn't sign the petition.



Artist Makoto Fujimura.

But his decision left him pondering the tension between boycotting such a movie and his role as an artist and critic. Here's how he puts it: "An artist is often pulled in two directions. Religiously conservative people tend to see culture as suspect at best, and when cultural statements are made to transgress the normative reality they hold dear, their default reaction is to oppose and boycott.

"People in the more liberal artistic community see these transgressive steps as necessary for their 'freedom of expression'. An artist like me, who values both

religion and art, will be exiled from both. I try to hold together both of these commitments, but it is a struggle."

That's also my struggle. The piety of my youth, of my parents, and of that rich branch of Catholicism is real and life-giving; but so too is the critical (sometimes unsettling) iconoclastic, theology of the academy. The two desperately need each other; yet someone who is trying to be loyal to both can, like Fujimura, end up feeling exiled from both. Theologians also have other roles to play than boycotting movies.

“What I’ve learned in the academic circles is also wonderful and I am forever grateful for the privilege of higher education”

The people whom I take as mentors in this area are men and women who, in my eyes, can do both: like Dorothy Day, who could be equally comfortable, leading the Rosary or the peace march; like Jim Wallis, who can advocate just as passionately for radical social engagement as he can for personal intimacy with Jesus, and like Thomas Aquinas, whose intellect could intimidate intellectuals, even as he could pray with the piety of a child.

Circles of piety and the academy of theology are not enemies; they need to embrace.

“Academic classrooms and faculty gatherings bring something else, something vitally needed in church pews and in circles of piety, namely, wider theological vision”

Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today



Donal Harrington
Explores the
heart, head and
hands of faith

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Did you get Mass?

Fr Joe McDonald

It's a great phrase 'Did you get Mass?' Often its thrown in as a question or sometimes offered as another box ticked in a list of 'things to do': 'I was in such a flurry, so many things to do, but thankfully I managed to 'get' Mass'. It would be silly to make a big deal of this because it's just a manner of speaking but this and a few other things combined got me thinking. Somebody said to me recently that they came to Mass to try and say 'a mouthful of prayers', and I also know that for others coming to Mass, is at least in part, about meeting friends. It is all this and more. If there was an analysis of why people come to Mass there would be a whole host of reasons given

from sense of duty to deep faith, including a raft of social, psychological and spiritual reasons in between. I have been thinking about how routine can deaden our sense of what is special and beautiful.

What I mean by this is illustrated in how often we use the phrase 'I love you'. There was a time, maybe it was 'a generational thing,' when the phrase was not used often. This is not of course to suggest the love was not there. Nowadays the phrase is said much more readily, and in some ways it is true, it could not be said often enough, but is it reasonable to ask the question, could we over use it, could we exhaust the words, could we cheapen the phrase?

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This week's Cornestone

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PARISH INITIATIVES

Did you get Mass?

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Fr Joe McDonald writes about attitudes and understandings of mass, shifting the question from ‘did you get mass?’ to ‘do you get mass?’

Could we ‘sicken’ ourselves of a particular song, playing it over and over again? Could we watch the same movie so many times that we feel we could act a part in it? Could we have too much icecream? I think we know that the answer is yes. Now here is an interesting question. Maybe it’s not so much ‘did you get’ Mass, as in did you fit it in, almost did you catch it? Rather the real question might be ‘do you get Mass’, as in do you understand Mass, do you appreciate or value it? This invites us to be more concerned with presence than being present. It suggests that there might be more to Mass than simply showing up. As part of the faith community,

rather than bemoan at times that we did not get anything out of that Mass, to be honest enough with ourselves, to ask what did we put into that Mass? The danger for all of us who come to Mass regularly, and perhaps it is a particular danger for priests, is the danger of familiarity. Could it be, for us who believe, that Mass could become just another weekly duty or chore? Perhaps it’s timely to remind ourselves, including, and maybe especially the priest, regarding what actually happens at Mass.

“We come in tentatively, a little bowed, maybe more than a little burdened.”

I do not intend to attempt, in this little column, to pen a theology of the Eucharist, but in as direct a way as possible to enable us, myself included, to reflect on what exactly happens from we greet each other at the beginning of the ceremony to the final ‘being sent out’, all of us, to love and serve the Lord. I think there is a movement, a dynamic, or my favourite word for it, there is a dance at the Eucharist. We come in tentatively, a little bowed, maybe more than a little burdened. We come hungry and thirsty, not for belly food but the food that lasts forever. It has no sell by date or use by date, for it is eternally fresh. When we go out we are commis-



sioned, hopefully charged up, for a task. That task is to be an ambassador for the Kingdom of God. However, for a moment let’s concentrate on what happens in the middle, or at the climax of the Mass. It is here that the ‘treasure not made of gold’ lies. If familiarity takes over here, then this is a real tragedy.

“Why is it that we term the Mass the greatest prayer on earth?”

Why is it that we term the Mass the greatest prayer on earth? Surely this is an

outlandish claim that cannot be justified? Not when we remember that this is about body and blood, real flesh, real living life blood. The body and blood of Jesus. The body of Jesus battered, bloodied and tortured. The physical suffering of Jesus on the way to, and on Calvary, coming after the darkness and mental anguish of Gethsemane remind us of the fullness of the sacrifice he made. However, the sad reality is that many people, including those



who know the story of Jesus, and also those who, at least in their head know about his passion, do not really know why this happened. We miss this central truth even though it is contained in the actual words of consecration said at every Mass. The phrase of course is ‘for the forgiveness of sins.’ Wow!! So, when we attend Mass we are called not to spectate or observe but to give ourselves to the action of the sacred story. So the sufferings of

Jesus are directly connected with our sins. The sins that trap and enslave us, that rage, that bitter tongue, that destructive jealousy and all the other things that bind us up, destroying our freedom and making us unhappy. Jesus suffers and dies to conquer all this. So we gather to say sorry, to listen to God’s word, to be fed in the depths of our soul but it would be a pity if we failed to gaze in deep gratitude at Jesus present amongst as he promised. It’s in the gaze, at the consecration, that we can be sure, that all that binds us, especially sin, will not have the final say, because Jesus beat sickness, suffering, pain and above all sin, our sin, forever.

Scripture

Reflecting on Scripture is an important part of the Christian faith. Often, however, we Catholics do not allow ourselves the time to really reflect on the Word of God. This weekly series will explore the Second Reading from the coming Sunday’s Mass. While originally written to the early church communities, Scripture is the living Word of God, so each week we can read what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today.

Hebrews 10:11-14,18

All the priests stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking sins away. He, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place forever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting until his enemies are made into a footstool for him. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings.

Spend some time in prayer with the reading.

1. Find a quiet place, and give yourself fifteen minutes without distractions. Read the section once, and then pause for reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and response to the passage.
2. Read the passage a second time. Ask yourself: What do I find challenging about this reading? Is there anything that I can try to do differently in my life as a response to it? What is the message in this reading for our parish? Write down anything that comes to your head.
3. Pause in silent reflection, and then read the passage a third time.



Family, saints and money



Dominic Perrem comments on our relationship with money.

Being around small children, you're never too far removed from wonder. "Is the moon going to follow us home?" one of them asked as we drove. I made a bumbling attempt at explaining distances and perspective...we went around a corner and there it was, following us! I love the wonder that children have – it's worth much more than the dull facts of celestial bodies I can tell them.

We all grow up and become used to the marvels little children see and set our sights on 'grown-up' matters – and they can be dull. The moon we can just enjoy and ponder – but money, for example, is a current fascination for our eldest. It seems wonderful to him! He's learned that, with money, one can buy most things... it's only a

little sidestep from there into 'I want to make some money'. While I'm delighted at his enterprising ways, it occurred to me that, alongside explaining the mechanics of money, I should try to help him understand it – and point his interest in the right direction.

Jesus told a brilliant parable about the rich man who dreamed of tearing down his barns in order to build larger ones. It was told to him in a dream that he was about to die – not live to enjoy his wealth. The message seems straightforward enough: 'you can't take it with you'. But, while that is easily said, it is one of the hardest things to live out. 'Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will wear,' Jesus told his disciples, 'Your Father in heaven knows you need these things.' I find that easier said than done – I am checking to see what I have – can we afford new kiddie shoes this month? Or our rent? We tell the children always: 'all we have is from God.' But, money can seem an enemy as we approach the end of a month.

It's good to have the feast of All Saints at this time in the calendar as Christmas spending looms large for families. 'How much should we spend on each other?' is the real question. Some of us have been saving; I knew a family who put all their 20c coins in a jar for Christmas (it added up to hundreds by December!) But, whether you have a solid Christmas budget or not, Christmas revolves around money – and money

becomes our method of loving each other.

“These stories go on and on – and the common theme is: ‘give all you have away!’”

What did the Saints make of money? Most saints were poor – some came from wealthy families, like St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, and gave up all of that wealth and comfort for God. Our own St. Patrick came back to the land of his enslavement to serve the people there (that's us!). We know he could have lived comfortably in Wales – but he chose to come. Others, like St. Columbanus, gave his life to bring the faith across Europe. These stories go on and on – and the common theme is: 'give all you have away!'

Now, this is a pretty good analogy for money. As we grumble at big businesses wanting to squeeze our spending and appeal to our desires for bling in the shops, we can remember something really good: our spending is an effort to give. In most cases – give all we have! You know what I mean...But, that's why these companies are so excited; they are appealing to the true desires in all God's people's hearts: to love others and give all

away in love. Sounds like our faith, right?

If you don't believe me, then think about Team Hope – a wonderful charity – and the Christmas Shoebox appeal. Each year tens of thousands of shoeboxes are shipped – each of them unique and with personalised gifts – to the poor around the globe from here. Nothing could reveal our hearts to us more clearly: we really want to share what we have. When it comes to money, we are striving to give away what we have to those we love this time of year – preparing our homes, planning to host and care for others. If that's what money is for – I'm much happier. In fact, I think we are happiest when we give, as that's God's nature in us. This is what I want my children to know; that you must give it all away, whether it is money or your time and energy – and this is what it's for – if you have it!

The only worry for my kids is that one of them might be like St. Brigid: she famously gave her father's gem-encrusted sword to the poor. Without his permission. At that point, so we understand, he decided the religious life was preferable for her and kicked her out. So, if you want to hand my car keys, my precious old Nintendo or my nice old pipe to someone, children... I promise not to be cross. Feel free to be saints!

Fish & Tips

Daily Ideas for Disciples



The mission is summed up in iCatholic tag-line – Create Gather Share – the hope for iCatholic.ie is that it will become the equivalent of the RTE player or BBC iPlayer for the Irish Church. They have an extensive selection of high-quality videos from a huge range of religious and parish communities across Ireland and beyond. Check it out today at www.icatholic.ie. This is what the it says on the iCatholic website: The iCatholic model is based on two simple actions: 1) Together we all put in our own content. 2) You draw out the selection you want for your website etc. Please contact us if your agency – e.g. diocese, order, church group – has an interest in having your own channel on iCatholic and/or making use of the iCatholic player. To see examples of how iCatholic content can appear on your website please see

our FEEDS page. Our hope for iCatholic.ie is that it will become the equivalent of the RTE player or BBC iPlayer for the Irish Church (or if you prefer our own Netflix). All we need for this to happen is for church groups to make use of iCatholic. It is as simple as that. As well as on-demand video, we have also undertaken live streaming – notably special live programmes for Primary Schools but we also do evening broadcasts. We alert people – via Facebook and Twitter – when our next livestreams are upcoming. We would value any feedback or suggestions. We would especially appreciate people helping to spread the word and you are always welcome to share our content on your own website or via social media.

People of God



St Vincent de Paul

Born in Pouy near Dax, in the south-west of France in the region known as the Landes, on 24th of April 1581. The third of six children. He always kept the outlook of 'a man from down the country' on the world and on things in general, even spiritual matters. There were few who valued the presence of women as he did, both in society and in the Church, most likely due to the memory of his mother and sisters. With big dreams, he needed money. Allegedly, Vincent was captured by Turkish brigantines and sold into slavery while he was at sea. His third owner, a renegade Christian, became nostalgic for his faith and his native land after hearing him sing psalms and the Salve Regina. Together they travelled back to

France where Vincent then continued his studies.

Vincent is primarily recognized for his charity and compassion for the poor, though he is also known for his reform of the clergy. He founded the Congregation of the Mission in 1625 and spent the rest of his life caring for the poor in and around Paris. With the wealth of many laywomen who helped him to visit, feed, and nurse the sick poor, Vincent co-founded the Daughters of Charity in 1633 and was devoted to active charitable works.

From A Short Life of St Vincent de Paul, Columba Books

EVANGELISATION

Faith: heart, head, hands



Donal Harrington focuses on the meaning of ‘faith’ in the commonly used phrase ‘faith community’.

‘Faith community’ is a good term for parish. Parish is a community where faith is awakened, enriched, nourished, supported and deepened. But faith community is more than just another term instead of parish. It is more than a description; it is an aspiration. It is what the parish wants to become, a community that is growing in faith. But what exactly is the parish hoping for? What does this faith look like, the faith it nourishes? The focus here is on the individual person, the faith of each member of the community. Here we are applying the ‘bigger picture’ to the individual. Growing in

faith, and as members of the faith community, we grow into the bigger picture – the bigger picture that church is all about. The language we use leaves something to be desired. What do we call ourselves as individual people of faith? We call ourselves ‘Catholics’, or ‘parishioners’, or ‘lay people’. It is not strong language. It does not communicate much about the goal, the aspiration. A Catholic or a parishioner is what I am. But what am I becoming? What is the faith that I am aspiring to? Faith is not something static, something I either have or do not have. Faith is a process, a journey, a task, a challenge, a becoming.

“I think the word ‘disciple’ is as good a word as there is, even if it is not part of ordinary discourse.”

The word ‘Christian’ is stronger. It has a sense of a calling and it has a sense of becoming. The parish is a community of disciples. I think the word ‘disciple’ is as good a word as there is, even if it is not part of ordinary discourse. A ‘disciple’ is



a follower. The word means somebody who has chosen. A disciple is resolute, is committed, on a journey, growing into discipleship. It is not only the language that can fall short, but also the reality. Here we may observe the different forms that a ‘weak’ faith takes. Faith can be on a tangent to a person’s real concerns. It can be in a compartment of its own, with little or no connection to other parts of life, such as family or work. Maybe it comes into play only occasionally. Maybe it is unsure of itself. There is faith that is private, ‘for me’, with little interest in a community of faith. There is faith that is passive, happy to avail of services provided by others, wanting no further involvement. There is a faith that is complacent, stuck in routine, institutionalised, comfortable. There is what one theologian speaks of as a merely ‘believed-in

faith’. Are we living as disciples, or do we just believe in discipleship and, under the cloak of this belief in discipleship, continue in ...the same unchanging ways? Do we show real love, or do we just believe in love and under the cloak of belief in love remain the same egoists and conformists we have always been?15 What follows will tease out what the ‘end product’ looks like, when faith becomes all it can be. Earlier I mentioned research which indicated that the parishes that are successful in reaching out are the parishes that demand high standards of themselves. And this is part of it. A parish where faith is ‘merely believed in’ – or largely private, or mainly passive, or deadened, or tangential to life – is hardly going to attract. Parish is meant to be a place of high expectations when it comes to faith. It is a community that challenges

itself with the demands of discipleship, always aspiring to a deeper faith.

HEART, HEAD, HANDS

To describe Christian faith in its full reach, I want to explore the image of ‘heart and head and hands’. A fully rounded Christian faith includes faith in the heart, faith in the head and faith in the hands. The story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10) is a good example of these types of faith. Martha’s faith is expressed in what she does, in her hands. Mary’s faith, sitting and conversing with Jesus, is more of the heart and head. The two women are like external and internal aspects of faith. And it is probably true that, for most people, faith tends to be mainly one or other of the three. Some people work out of their heads, others out of their hearts, others out of

their hands. That is the main way in which their faith is expressed and the main way it is nourished. At the Reformation, there was a sharp contrast between faith and works, heart and hands. But it was never meant to be either/or. Another contrast was between head and heart. Catholic discourse often spoke of faith as the mind’s assent to truths revealed by God. Protestant discourse spoke of faith as the heart’s surrender to God’s action. Again, it was never meant to be either/or. Head, hands, heart are mutually supportive aspects of a fully rounded faith. Faith in the hands incarnates faith in the heart and head. Faith in the heart deepens faith in the head and hands. Faith in the head enriches faith in the heart and hands. If any of the three stands alone, or if any of the three is neglected, faith is not fully rounded, not whole.

Sacraments

Early church practice

Dr Fáinche Ryan

The fact that the followers of Jesus celebrated communion so regularly teaches us that they did not see this meal as the annual Passover one but as a new ritual, and a meal to be set in the context of the numerous meals shared between Jesus and his followers both before and after the resurrection. It was a remembrance of these fellow-ship meals, and at the same time a memorial of the Last Supper. This brings further challenges, for if Jesus ate with everyone, not just those who shared the customs of the Jewish people, not just those who were part of the community, what are the implications for current Eucharistic practice? Jesus practiced something we might call open table fellowship, or

a ‘divine indiscriminate welcome’, and so we might again wonder who was at that last meal?2 Yes, the twelve, but the presence of other disciples, cannot be ruled out. The earliest accounts that we have of the meetings of the followers of Jesus show us clearly that there was never an ideal celebration of the Lord’s Supper. In 1 Corinthians 11:17-32, we see Paul incensed at what the Church in Corinth is doing. The Church has always been a gathering of saints and sinners. We can learn a lot from this letter of Paul to the Church at Corinth. Firstly, we learn that an actual meal was shared, and an important part of the meal was the blessing of the bread and the wine, in remembrance of what the Lord Jesus had done. This meal, however, seems



to have been far removed from the practice that Paul expected of followers of Christ. We read of gluttony, and of people in need being ignored. Paul admonishes the Church – this is not what the Lord meant when he said, ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’

We are also reminded of the eternal dimension of the meal – in our gathering and eating we are not concerned merely with the present time but with life after death, when we will be judged, and disciplined by the Lord. We will be judged both by how we celebrate

and how we live. This is the earliest description of the Lord’s Supper. We can see that although the memory of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection was still fresh in people’s minds, it was never easy to live as a Christian.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, November 15, 2018

Youth Space

The treat
of going on
retreat

Page 34



*Dear
Santa,
I would
like...*



In years gone past, choosing a Christmas present for your child rarely raised any moral conundrums or worries about what long-lasting effects it may have on their development.

A quick glance at history's most popular presents from the 1950s-1980s attests to this – gifts most desired at Christmas ranged from Hot Wheels and Kerplunk to Barbie Dolls and Furbies.

But while these toys have a warm place in the memories of many adults throughout the world, presenting them to a child today could be perceived as an old-fashioned move.

Of course, this is mostly due to radical technological advancements in the last 20 years or so, which have assigned



Choosing to buy your child a mobile phone is a complex and difficult decision, writes Colm Fitzpatrick

once-modern items like the Gameboy or Robosapien to the vintage dustbin. In their place are now mobile phones, laptops, drones, and a whole host of other products that the popular imagination couldn't even envisage would exist today.

The benefits of these items have changed the world, revolutionising how we communicate with others and experience our lives.

But alongside these positive influences, technological advances have also come with a price. We hear more and more often about the insidious effects the internet can have on us, which includes addiction, a shutting off from the world, and an unhealthy obsession with some of the darker sites on the web.

All of this can be facilitated by a neat gadget, small enough

to fit into your hand: the mobile phone.

The mobile phone has taken the globe by storm in the last few decades, so much so that not owning one today is a glaring anomaly. Indeed, according to Statista, a website that collates statistics and studies from more than 22,500 sources, the number of mobile phone users in the world is expected to pass the five billion mark by next year – that's about 70% of the global population.

No phenomenon

This isn't a phenomenon restricted to adults either, children usually carry a mobile phone too but the age at which they should have one is still

a hotly debated topic. To give a loose idea however, across Europe, about 46% of children aged nine to 16 own one.

These broad statistics create a problem every household has to deal with, especially at Christmas, where the yearning for a phone from an eager child becomes a never-ending, pervasive moan. But is it a simple decision to just follow the status-quo and ignore your gut feeling, or should you think twice about buying a phone?

For Prof. Eamonn Conway, of Limerick's Mary Immaculate College, phones can drastically alter children's attention span, creating a self-imposed prison from the outside world.

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Family News

AND EVENTS

Winter festival frolics

With Christmas just around the corner, it's the perfect time for the whole family to start celebrating, so why not begin with the Wexford Winterland Festival?

Parents and children alike can take part in the action-packed programme of events which includes The Winterland Parade and The Christmas Express. Opening on November 24 and continuing right through until January, you'll get the chance to wander through The Enchanted Forest, The Elves' Village, The Workshop and Santa's Reindeer Stables before meeting Santa Claus himself at Santa's North Pole Experience.

Alongside meeting Mr Claus, you can also get your skates on and twirl, jump, pirouette, or glide around the rink at Wexford on Ice which will have stability aids on-hand for less experienced skaters.

With a little something for everyone, excitement for Christmas is sure to build!

WATER-TIGHT SLEEP: While we all know that not getting enough sleep can be bad for your health, a new study has shown that an extra negative effect needs to be added to this long list. Research from Pennsylvania State University, which examined the effect of insufficient sleep on hydration levels among adults from the US and China, has shown that sleep deprivation may cause dehydration. Scientists found that people who regularly got six or fewer hours of sleep each night had more concentrated urine than those who got about eight hours per night.

"Short sleep duration was associated with higher odds of inadequate hydration in [American] and Chinese adults, relative to sleeping 8 hours," the authors explain.

The study suggests that if you're not getting enough sleep and you feel bad or tired the next day, you should drink extra water.



Cold-fighting pyjamas

When it comes to hitting the hay on these winter nights, nothing can be more of a deterrent to sleep than feeling cold. While it's common to buy an electric blanket to keep you warm, heating up your pyjamas before you get into bed is also a great option.

The Pajamas Warming Pouch is a heated pouch that will keep you cosy all through the night. The pouch has integrated heating elements that reach 48°C and a thermal satin interior that retains heat, resulting in toasty warm pyjamas in 10 minutes. The heating elements automatically maintain the temperature regardless of what's inside and the unit only draws 50 watts-less than most light bulbs.

Despite the name, the pouch can also be used for towels, socks, or gloves for an extra layer of warmth. This would be the perfect present for those who feel the chills at night!



A last gift for loved ones

There's something I like about November, tucked in between the beauty and colour of October and the hustle and bustle of December. November reminds me of the inevitability of death as the last few withered leaves lose their fragile hold on the branches, clinging on for one last flash of glory.

November is also the month where we remember all of those who have moved on from this life, the faithful departed and the souls in Purgatory. I think there may be a little less focus in recent times on the whole concept of the Communion of Saints which, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church means that "the faithful who are still pilgrims on earth are able to help the souls in purgatory by offering prayers in suffrage for them especially the Eucharistic Sacrifice".

There is also mention of giving alms, gaining indulgences and doing works of penance. I love thinking about the fact that we are still very much connected to those who have died and that there is still an opportunity to help them and to demonstrate our solidarity and love.

Details

When I was a child, I lived very near a graveyard. I used to love strolling around on a summer's day, stopping at one grave or another to admire the flowers and to read the details about the different people who had died. My own mother and father are now buried there.

This year I was determined to continue with the Catholic tradition of striving to gain indulgences for those who have died by visiting a cemetery and praying for the dead between November 1 and 8.

I think many Catholics may not even know what an indulgence is. It's the remission

A parent's perspective



Maria Byrne

before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. These indulgences are applicable to the Holy Souls; they've often been misunderstood or dismissed as bordering on superstitious. However, explained in simple terms, it's easy enough to understand that even if our sins are forgiven, we may not have fully atoned for past transgressions.

I think children understand this if you present an example like one I came across on an internet blog, Life Teen, which suggests that if you broke your friend's iPhone screen, they might forgive you but would still expect you to pay for the phone repair.

"The physical act of travelling to a funeral reminded me of the last loving deed a Christian can carry out for their loved ones"

C.S. Lewis described Purgatory as a divine "washroom" which sounds a little funny. In the *Catechism*, Purgatory is described as "a final purification" for all those who die in God's grace and mercy but without the necessary holiness to enter the eternal joy of heaven.

I find it fascinating but comforting to realise that if I find myself in Purgatory after my death, my loved ones can still continue to assist me

spiritually. It's the reason that my husband and I piled the children into the car every evening at the beginning of the month of November to drive to a variety of graveyards.

I'm sure we must have looked a little suspect meandering down country lanes and tumbling out of the car, at 11pm some nights, making our way through the shadows to gravesides lit by the car headlights.

Familiar with spooky Halloween tales, the children were a little jumpy but were reassured that there was nothing to fear. We were there to gain our indulgences and the short journey and the bit of extra effort required added to



the sense of the importance of remembering and praying for those who have died.

An aunt of mine passed away recently. She was my mother's sister and had moved to Edinburgh as a young woman. To travel to her funeral, some family members, including my 29-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter, travelled by car and ferry to Scotland, crossing the country to arrive at her family home.

There was something about that road trip, to join in prayers for the eternal rest of my aunt, that was both powerful and therapeutic.

The physical act of travelling to a funeral reminded me of the last loving deed a Christian can carry out for their loved ones. My late mother was an amazing woman with a tremendous love for God and for her faith but she urged me, my father and my brother and sisters not to neglect to pray for her soul after she died.

"Our prayers after her death and our father's death some years later were the last loving acts our family could participate in"

To our family she was the best wife and mother in the world but she didn't want any presumption of instant access to heaven or to be eulogised for her sanctity.

Our prayers after her death and our father's death some years later were the last loving acts our family could participate in. Ireland is well known for the way we deal with death and our openness to talking about it.

It would be sad if we focused too much on "the good send off" but failed to remember to pray for our departed brothers and sisters who still continue to be members of the Communion of Saints.

My father used to say "You pray for me and I'll pray for you".

This assistance through the power of prayer, especially during the Mass, which is the highest and most effective form of prayer in the Church, shouldn't end just because those we care about have died and is a tradition that we should continue with our own children and grandchildren.

» Continued from Page 31



"Increasingly educators at every level, primary, secondary and third level, recognise the impact of the 'digital distraction' and the impact this has on young people's ability to concentrate and to be present to the world around them. I teach a lot of teachers and teachers are continually coming up against this now. It's a real challenge in schools and education," he says.

"So, parents do need to give it very serious consideration. Maybe banning them or trying to restrict them isn't the solution, but certainly trying to have quality family time, Pope Francis has spoken a lot about this, have quality family time that provides attractive alternatives to an online world that can be very diminishing and damaging actually."

Advice

In this sense, a parent's paramount responsibility when they finally give their child a phone is to make sure it doesn't preoccupy their lives and distract them from their needs or goals. But despite all the parenting advice imaginable, it doesn't solve the niggling question of what age your child should be given one. What exactly is the magic number?

There's been discussion aplenty about this issue in the past 10 years or so, but one notable voice worth listening to in the Irish world is that of UCD academic Dr Mary Aiken. The cyberpsychologist, who specialises in the impact of technology on human behaviour, argues that children under about the age of 14 should not have a smartphone.

It's important, she says, to draw a distinction between the mobile phone and the smartphone; the former of which has basic functions while the latter gives the ability to access the online world. While it would be acceptable to give your eight-year-old child a 'dummy' phone, Dr Aiken stresses that giving a child of the same age a smartphone would be irresponsible.

"Now certainly they could have a dumb phone, like a flip-up Nokia or whatever when they're eight or nine so their parents can text or call them or so that they can reach out to their parents during that period, but the smartphone is very specific," she says.

"If you give a child a dumb phone – there's no internet connection,

there's no apps and blue lights from the screen and there's no camera – then immediately you've eliminated a whole range of problems that can be associated with teenage development."

And this is really where her protective stance emerges from – that activities associated with smartphones can be corrosive to a child's development, altering them emotionally, physically and cognitively in unexpected ways.

“You don't suddenly become mature at 14, but it serves as a pointer to parents”

"We can look at an increase in anxiety and depression with young people – a 70% increase over the last 20 years. We've seen an increase in Ireland with eating disorders; we've seen increases in cyberbullying; we've seen increases in negative behaviours associated with the use of smartphones" she explains.

One of these dangerous behaviours, she says, is that of young people checking their mobile devices in the middle of the night, which interferes with their sleep cycle, ultimately leaving them consistently exhausted. This practice will inevitably have a destructive effect on their mental health.

"The one factor I would drill it back to is sleep deprivation. So what we're seeing is young people are not getting the proper amount of sleep that they require...they're on their devices before they go to sleep, and therefore that's interfering with their ability to go to sleep. In one study three out of five kids were waking up during the night to check



in on cyberspace," she says, noting that looking at the world with sleep-deprived eyes makes it seem like "a very bleak place".

Dr Aiken's advice is certainly worth heeding, especially given that we are in a period where we have very little research that can actually provide an evidence-based policy in the area of how children engage with technology. With the absence of clear scientific recommendations of how often and when children should be using smartphones, a conservative stance on the topic is probably for the best.

"My conservative approach is based around, you know people like Bill Gates who has said they would not give a smartphone to a child under the age of 14 and it's an arbitrary age because in psychology we don't deal with definitive hard ages. You don't suddenly become mature at 14, but it serves as a pointer to parents that there is an issue about developmental maturity at stake here."

Prohibition

In the same way the legal prohibition of drinking alcohol stands at 18 with some wiggle-room for parents, Dr Aiken says our approach to smartphone use should follow the same model.

"That serves as a guideline for parents to say, 'Well this is what the State recommends', but that doesn't stop a parent deciding they're going to have a pint of beer with their son at 17. It's a discretionary decision for parents to make in terms of parenting, but it certainly points to the fact that parents shouldn't be encouraging their children to drink at 13 or 14 – it's a recommendation," she says.

This is not to argue, Dr Aiken adds, that children can't use technology is an appropriate way, but it's vital to realise that the smartphone is a "very complex piece of technology" and should only be given to a child who is "mature enough deal with it". Good luck explaining that to your child at Christmas!

❶ Dr Mary Aiken is author of *The Cyber Effect* which explores how cyberspace is changing the way we think, feel and behave.

Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



Our eldest, Caoimhe, was working in Derry yesterday so I hopped in the car and headed over to catch up with her over a cup of coffee. We only had about 45 minutes together but it was good to see her and have a chat face to face. Realistically, Caoimhe probably won't be home again until December so every opportunity matters.

At one stage I went through a bit of stress about not seeing enough of our girls now that they are away from home. I really struggled with the idea that I may only see them for a weekend once every three or four weeks at best. I do miss them but it doesn't do me any good to focus on that.

In reality, although we only see each other every few weeks, we are in daily contact. The family WhatsApp group on our mobile phones buzzes regularly through the day with some update, funny story or daft question. Thanks to modern technology our lives are very interwoven. When we want a chat we can FaceTime or Skype if a regular call is not enough.

All of this supports our connectedness – but it didn't create it. I am very aware of a sense that the six of us are 'one body'. We are each individual and we are each members of this particular family.

Diarmuid has been talking about building models of molecules in chemistry class and the different strength of bonds within the molecule. I have an image of the six of us built into a Cahill family molecule with unbreakable bonds! Because of that connectedness I feel as if we are present to each other even when we are apart. That connection is something that sustains us and brings us a deep sense of being loved.

Loneliness

November has got me thinking about all of this. We are praying for those who have died. It is important to remember, to allow ourselves time to think, to grieve, to acknowledge loneliness and loss.

However – and I have said this before but it is worth repeating – we also need to remember that we are people of the Resurrection. We are not defined by death. If we are truly

Christian then in November we are also invited to remember with joy the lives of those who have gone before us. We are invited to reject the idea that death has been the end of them. It is not always easy but our faith asks us to believe that we are one body in faith and nothing can break the connection between us – not even death.

“Surely our God is the one who has defied death, broken its power through the resurrection of Jesus?”

Perhaps we need to be careful of the imagery that influences us. November, with its encroaching darkness is not the most uplifting of months. In November when we pray for those who have died what are the images in our minds? Do we think of our loved ones as struggling in Purgatory? What is our image of God? Is God the harsh judge? Or is God the one who gathers up those who are broken, who sends us his own Son in order to show us the over-whelming depth of his love for us?



Surely our God is the one who has defied death, broken its power through the resurrection of Jesus?

I believe it is important to remember and pray for those who have died. As people of the Resurrection we are invited to pray with confidence and hope. Our love for those we have lost is only a fraction of God's love for them. I think we need to trust in God's desire to enfold them in divine love.

This November I would suggest that we are invited to trust that our loved ones are with God, made new, delighting in God's presence – and always close to us, a bond unbroken.



Gerry Doherty reflects on his spiritual journey with Youth 2000

"I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord!" (Phil. 4:4)

These were the words that have stayed with me since the night my 16-year-old self had first arrived at the Youth 2000 Summer Retreat in Cistercian College, Roscrea on August 16, 2014. I want to tell you why this phrase is the embodiment of Youth 2000, and through it, how Youth 2000 can do the same for you.

Around the time of my first Youth 2000 retreat, I was going through a period of challenge in my faith, being asked what I believed in and why it was worth wasting my time in 'an angry, finger-pointing, narrow-minded make-believe sky daddy' by peers who had only recently adopted the stance of either not believing in God, or else rejecting him. You could imagine what an experience this must be to a teenager who was previously naïve to the concept of atheism and antitheism.

Opportunity

I was lucky enough that God intervened for me through my father bringing home a church bulletin one sunny afternoon in mid-July 2014, from which I discovered the Youth 2000 retreat.

This was the perfect opportunity for me as I got to travel further down my own country, meet people who I consider very close friends now, reflect among others who believed, and experience God

in a way I never thought I could before. The atmosphere felt nearly overwhelming with anticipation and joy as I first walked into the main hall at the retreat, nearly 1,000 young people there, all to celebrate God in their lives. It was a sight I thought nearly impossible after all the critique and rejection of God I had seen amongst young people at home, most of whom only feigned belief to keep their school and their parents off their backs.

“In Youth 2000, you get a better opportunity to finally realise how you can be happy in him”

The mixture of talks on Confession, understanding God's will, the power of the Eucharist, and devotion, along with share groups, music, community and reflection was all I needed to better understand how God works in my life and how to approach the human challenges that my beliefs

could face.

From that weekend on, I was led on a path of discernment of how I could best tell the world about that love and renewed understanding God gave to me from that weekend on; leading to the decision that I would undertake a joint honours degree in Catholic Theology and Modern Irish at Trinity College, Dublin.

What I noticed was that just as St Paul says in Phillipians 4:4, "I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord", God's wish is for us to be happy in his love, and in Youth 2000, you get a better opportunity to finally realise how you can be happy in him.

Even on a regional retreat (one of four provincial retreats that are put on twice a year in between the National Summer Retreat (Roscrea) and Christmas Retreat (Newbridge), or the national retreats themselves), there is always something for everyone there. It ranges from talks on all aspects of the Faith and being able to discuss these ideas with others in share groups, being

able to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, dancing and singing in an unprejudiced area, letting your inner happiness in God come out (don't worry, everyone will love the enthusiasm as that is what it's all about), great meals, plenty of social time for you to meet and bond with other Catholics and create (what has been for me at least) some of the best friendships in my whole life so far.

Friendships

I especially say that they are some of my best friendships as you can still be in contact with these people no matter what corner of the country (or world) you are from and remain so strong in your bond, in comparison with the friends you meet almost on a daily basis, who may stray away from you a few years later since your lives both lead elsewhere.

This is because you will have this eternal link in common with one another, namely God, and you can celebrate him in your lives with with one another, always becoming

like a family to one another (no joke, this is usually what happens, again as per God's will).

Outside of my own family, I don't think I would have ever experienced this kind of love and union with anyone or any group in as healthy a manner as I do with Youth 2000 as I owe it to them to leading me on the path to welcoming the love of God all that more and getting to experience this peace.

To conclude, I feel that I am travelling well on the path of Phillipians 4:4, for I have become happier in my life, a lot more happier in the Lord, and if I can receive this love and understanding, I'm very well sure that you definitely can so too!

If you ever want to say hello to me or have a chat if you are a newcomer, you will always find me at the national retreats and I will be the fella' going about with the blond hair, gold Fáinne pinned on his left-breast pocket, who speaks in an unmistakably Northern accent.

The treat of going on retreat



Children's Corner

Colm Fitzpatrick

You can walk through the hole...of a tiny piece of paper!

Since we were kids, all of us have made innocent bets with our siblings, parents or friends that we will be able to achieve something they won't expect us capable of. Often these bets are very funny and, to give an example, might look like: "I bet you I can eat this whole cheeseburger in less than five minutes". Wagers like these are commonly known as 'proposition bets', and some historical figures have even made a living from winning them.

Alvin Clarence Thompson (1893-1974) was a well-known American hustler, and garnered such a notable reputation that he became known as Titanic Thompson. He travelled the country wagering at cards, dice games, golf, shooting and famously, proposition bets.

One of his favourite wagers was betting that he could throw a walnut over a tall building. Those accepting the bet didn't realise that he had weighted the hollowed shell with lead beforehand meaning he could throw it with ease. His wagers have amused people across the world and

certainly highlight the importance of thinking outside the box.

While trying to emulate Titanic Thompson is not recommended given his questionable and shady lifestyle, he does show how proposition bets intrigue people, and give them a sense of wonder.

Comfort

Luckily, there are plenty of proposition bets you can try out in the comfort of your own home. One that always invites scepticism is the wager, "I bet I can cut a hole in this piece of paper large enough to walk through". Of course, no one will believe you can do it – but this wager is possible and quite simple to execute. All you need is a piece of A4 paper and a pair of scissors.

Fold the paper in half lengthwise. Cut the

paper horizontally but not all the way through, alternating which side you cut from as you go down starting with the folded side ending with the same cut (starting on the folded end) as you started with. Then, cut through the folded parts of the paper except for the first and the last ones. This keeps your paper together in a big circle. Now unfold the paper revealing a very large hole – large enough to walk through! If you find this part difficult, make sure you ask a parent or sibling for help, as it can be a little tricky.

Once you have made the hole in the paper, you can walk through it, much to the disbelief and amusement of those who are watching. This is great to perform at family events or gatherings, like Christmas, and will certainly have everyone in hysterics.

With this proposition bet under your belt, you can begin to learn even more.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Why are most TV cops dysfunctional?

It seems almost obligatory these days for TV cops to be dysfunctional in their personal lives, even deranged at times. Defenders may say it's gritty realism, accusers may call it destructive nihilism.

I've been following **Informer** on BBC1, Tuesday nights, and the main policeman, Gabe, played with nuance by the versatile Paddy Considine, is certainly a troubled soul and morally ambiguous in the extreme. He handles informers in counter terrorism operations, often leaning heavily on vulnerable minor offenders to get them to 'snitch'.

But his own undercover past is catching up with him, and it seems he had infiltrated a white supremacist group in the past and gets drawn back into this world.

There was a disturbing scene in last week's episode where he treated an Asian pizza delivery man like dirt just to keep his street cred with his racist 'friends'. An acquaintance from this ugly world was trying to rehabilitate with the help of a Christian community centre, but Gabe, treated him with contempt and pushed him over the edge, dismissively tossing his Bible at him and leaving him drink though he knows the guy is trying to stay off it.

The storyline is intriguing, cleverly worked around flashbacks after a mass shoot-



Paddy Considine stars in BBC1's *Informer*.

ing and the acting especially good, but the whole thing leaves a sour taste.

Thinking I might get back to more innocent times (ha!) I watched an older crime drama **Murder in Suburbia** (2004), now getting a re-run on Virgin Media 3, Wednesday evenings.

The plot featured charity fraud, wife swapping, adultery and a lesbian relationship – at 7 pm in the evening, despite the watershed. Parents beware! Admittedly the language wasn't even close to being as rough as in *Informer*, and there was

nothing graphic, apart from the stabbing in the opening scene – when a crime drama starts with a woman walking through a deserted park at night you know it's not going to end well. The acting is rather ropey, except for Lisa Faulkner and Caroline Catz, who went on to make a bigger impression in *DCI Banks* and *Doc Martin*.

Impression

Also making an impression was Helena Connolly, guest on last Friday night's **Leap of Faith** on RTÉ Radio 1. Helena has just launched

what sounds like an attractive book, *Prayerful Ireland*, a combination of her photographs of prayerful places around Ireland combined with extracts from Scripture.

She's had a varied career so far, working with the dioceses of Clogher and Kerry in youth and liturgy ministries. Growing up in a Catholic family in the border area, she had a strong identity as a Catholic though she did admit to falling away somewhat from the Faith when she was studying music in Queens University. Now she was passionate for the Word of God to be heard.

Music is a major part of her life – from gigging with bands in the past to writing spiritual songs and being involved in liturgical music.

She sang live, a touching song 'Where You Lead', inspired by her grandparents and drawn from her CD 'The Reason Why'. She had important messages about religion and young people – she found



Very Rev. Dr William Morton.

PICK OF THE WEEK

EWTN ON LOCATION

EWTN, Saturday, November 18, 9am

'United in Love: The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Catholic Church' at the Napa Institute 2018 Conference in Napa, CA.

EWTN ON LOCATION

EWTN, Saturday, November 17, 2pm and Sunday (night) 3am

Helen M. Alvaré 'On Sex and Marriage: The Dizzying Contemporary Gap, and a Reasoned Catholic Response' at the Napa Institute 2018 Conference in Napa, CA.

HITLER'S PEOPLE

RTÉ2, Sunday, November 18, 8pm

'Conformity 1933/34' – an intimate and revealing portrait of the German people under Hitler.

them attracted to pilgrimage (e.g. to Taizé and Lourdes) and to the idea of faith linked to service. She found them drawn to social justice and to being with other young people in faith. All in all it was a relaxing, easy-going and positive interview.

The second item on the show also featured an artistic woman, Ciara Ní Cheallacháin, the creative person behind the art installation currently in St Patrick's Cathedral – a stunning display of 36,000 paper leaves, each one representing an Irish life lost in the First World War.

I was glad the focus was on what the Very Rev. Dr. William Morton, Dean of the Cathedral, called "the sheer magnitude of loss", and the ongoing need for reconciliation and healing. He hoped the installation would inspire

visitors to constantly pray for peace.

And as if we needed any confirmation of this need, there was last week's mass shooting in Thousand Oaks, California. News reports emphasised relatives of victims saying, "no more thoughts and prayers, we want gun control!" I can understand the frustration, but how about thoughts, prayers and gun control? Or prayers for gun control, allied to political action? But then, if more effective regulation didn't happen after the Sandy Hook massacre of schoolchildren what could possibly be a game changer?

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Aubrey Malone

Film

Crime and punishment on the streets of Chicago

Widows (15A)

Almost every line in this film is gold. And almost every character, no matter how small, is exquisitely drawn. A kind of distaff *Goodfellas*, it takes off when Harry Rawlings (Liam Neeson as, surprise, surprise, a villain) gets killed during a heist. Or does he? The money is burned. Or is it? These questions are answered in surprising fashion.

His widow Veronica (Viola Davis) is left with a debt. Jamal Manning (Brian Tyree Henry) was meant to get some of the money. He isn't pleased. He tells Veronica to sell everything she owns to make it up. She doesn't want



Viola Davis and Elizabeth Debicki feature in *Widows*.

Excellent
★★★★★

to do that.

Instead she recruits three other women whose husbands were killed in the heist to rob a premises. Harry had targeted it before his misfortune. He's left the plans behind him. Veronica scrutinises them. They could get her out of a fix.

The idea of a woman who's never been involved in crime taking to it with the kind of relish she does here might have come across as far-fetched in another actresses'

hands. Not Davis. With her dead-eyed stare she convinces us right off the bat that she would have no trouble navigating such terrain. This is the kind of role she gobbles up before breakfast.

Desire

Veronica isn't your average action heroine. She's motivated by fear and grief rather than the desire to become a Sigourney Weaver or an Uma Thurman. Likewise her three colleagues, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki and Cynthia Erivo aren't exactly household names but they give guilt-edged performances.

Manning is running for mayor. His rival is corrupt politician Jack Mulligan (Colin

Farrell). This is a world of venality where sex is procurable for the right fee and one's enemies can be rubbed out by a Glock pistol in the blink of an eye. Manning's brother Jatemme (Daniel Kaluuya) is even more lethal than he is, which is saying something.

Steve McQueen directs. He grabs you by the throat from the first frame and doesn't let go until the action-packed finale. Gillian (*Gone Girl*) Flynn co-wrote the tension-soaked script with him.

Edited to perfection, *Widows* is structured with a series of interlocking scenes and flashbacks. McQueen threads them together in a mosaic that oozes atmosphere.

His cast of characters com-

prises both career criminals and those reluctantly drawn into walks on the wild side by dint of the fact that life dealt them cards from the bottom of the deck. Themes of sexism, racism and political chicanery are mixed in with the bone-chilling violence.

Farrell brings his usual professionalism to the role but his Irish-American accent could have done with being more Irish. He also needed more presence. He should have put on some weight to achieve this. Not as much as he had in *Horrible Bosses*, maybe, but enough to let you know he's in a room before he speaks. Great actors have this kind of power. Colin has a bit to go yet.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Irish life today as seen by Irish writers

The Wrong Country: Essays on Modern Irish Writing
by Gerald Dawe
(Irish Academic Press, €22.95)

Derek Hand

Gerald Dawe's collection of essays offers a very engaging assessment of Irish writing in the last 100 years. His survey of the scene, filtered through the lens of his being a lecturer and poet, brings enthusiasm to the task, making unexpected links between well-known writers, while also importantly bringing to light those artists from the past who have fallen between the cracks of literary history.

Any reader with a passing interest in Irish writing will find much to savour here. Informative introductions to writers and their work give a solid grounding in which to understand their various achievements.

The title of his collection, *The Wrong Country*, gives expression to Dawe's underlining anxiety about the contexts in which Irish writing has emerged, the psychological pressures of invisible borders and landscapes, both real and imagined, ravaged by the reality of political violence.

Ireland's history has



Patrick Kavanagh among the potato fields of his native Monaghan.

always demanded a response from its artists, and artists have continually met that challenge and responded in their own inimitable ways.

Again and again, Dawe makes clear that the work of art is a place where in all uncertainties and conflicts and questions can come creatively together, and if not be definitively answered, then simply given articulation. This in itself, in Dawe's estimation, is vitally important.

Readers get a very concrete sense of the nature of the writing under scrutiny: its themes and concerns and stylistic flourishes. The often employed method of com-

parison means that as in the case of contemporaries Derek Mahon and Seamus Deane, a diversity of perspectives to the same historical moment and its predicaments is presented allowing a fuller understanding of the writing to materialise.

Voice

The same is true of Dawe's reading of Eavan Boland and Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's poetry as each is shown to creatively give voice to questions about politics and identity and gender. An essay on John McGahern suggests how poetry was fundamental to his prose aesthetic and how



Eavan Boland.

poetry often plays a central part in some of his work.

Stewart Parker is presented as a critical voice on the north of Ireland's divisions and violent diversions: his wit and his commitment to a social realism, evidence of a desire to complicate straightforward sectarian interpretations of *The Troubles*.

The essay on the 1950s generation of writers is revealing in its focus on writers such as Patrick Kavanagh and Brendan Behan. Dawe sympathetically exposes the tension between the demands of the public persona and the requirements of the artist who must struggle to be loyal to the demands of their art.

Acts of recovery conjure up names such as Ethna Carberry, Joseph Campbell and George Reavey, and in the

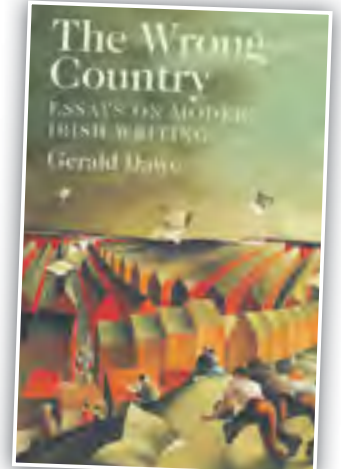
process deepen our knowledge of the various types of writing linked to the 'story Ireland'.

The revelation that iconic hunger striker Bobby Sands was a keen admirer of Carberry's nationalist poetry, even though it was imbued with the heightened emotions, stylisations and language of the 19th Century, makes clear the kind of strange cultural, historical and literary world that Ireland often inhabits. Indeed, the north of Ireland haunts Dawe's critical imagination: the nuance of class and allegiance emerge from the pages here, as does a profound mourning for a pre-troubles world that has disappeared.

“Readers get a very concrete sense of the nature of the writing under scrutiny”

This is very much a personal journey undertaken by Dawe. He ranges where he likes and where he thinks an interesting idea or moment might lie, waiting to be illuminated. And they are illuminated.

As a poet himself he brings an attention to language and detail that sheds light on the work of each of the writer's discussed. His essay on the



upsurge of 'creative writing' courses in Ireland is timely in this context. He acknowledges their worth, but also rightly raises questions about the long-term consequences of this professionalisation and institutionalisation of art.

Perhaps what really matters to Gerald Dawe, and what draws him to his chosen writers is the sense that knowledge – and particularly the knowledge that writing might give expression to – does not come dropping slow, but it is rather hard won.

It is that struggle toward some sense of enlightenment that is on display in Dawe's take on Irish writing over the last 100 years.

Dr Derek Hand is head of the School of English at DCU.

Ryanair: capitalism – as good as it gets?

Michael O'Leary: Turbulent times for the man who made Ryanair

by Matt Cooper
(Penguin Ireland, €14.95 / £14.99)

Frank Litton

Michael O'Leary stands out among Ireland's entrepreneurs. Is this because of his great success? His personality? The fact that so many of us have flown with his airline?

Matt Cooper's account of this "prince among men" will find many readers. Well-written, well-informed, balanced, it deserves to.

Machiavelli tells us a prince succeeds in the hostile and uncertain world because he has the 'virtu' to take on 'fortuna' and shape it to his ends. Cooper is a good guide to O'Leary's *virtu* and how he deployed to wrestle great wealth and much fame from fortuna.

O'Leary's *virtu* had little connection with the virtues his Jesuit teachers sought to inculcate, shaped as it is by the exigencies of capitalism rather than the demands of the gospel. While capitalism as a system thrives on unfettered markets,

every individual capitalist wishes to restrict competition, form cartels, or best of all, attain a monopoly.

And for all sorts of reasons, some plausible, some not, governments have been willing to facilitate them with regulations and restrictive licensing. The history of the airline business provides a standard case study.

Our national airline Aer Lingus, working in cahoots with British Airways under the benign protection of the Government allowed little or no space for competition, as O'Leary's friend, mentor and employer, Tony Ryan, discovered. The airline he established to take on the incumbents lost money, then more money and more again.

Profligacy

O'Leary was brought in to see what could be salvaged from the mess. Ryanair was spending money with a profligacy that only monopolies or quasi-monopolies like Aer Lingus could afford. O'Leary stopped that. His tactic was a relentless, detailed attention to the reduction of costs.

His strategy was to take advantage of the changing culture that

was bringing neo-liberalism centre of the stage. The needs of the system now took priority over the interests of the individual capitalist. Reagan and Thatcher led the way breaking up cartels, dismantling monopolies.



Michael O'Leary.

A wind of change was blowing, arriving in Ireland as a gentle breeze, it was sufficient to shift, with the help of lobbying from Ryanair, the Minister of Transport, Seamus Brennan, from his office's traditional role as the guardian of the *status quo*. He

allowed space for Ryanair to grow.

When Peter Sutherland, EU Commissioner for competition, dismantled the restrictions that inhibited competition among airlines in Europe, fortune smiled on O'Leary.

O'Leary steered his Principality to its present dominant position. He may speak his mind loudly and with a regrettable vulgarity, but his views derive from a clear understanding of the rules of the game and what it takes to win it.

“While he has much to be proud about, pride does not distort his judgement”

He combines a keen attention to tactics with a strong strategic sense. He has the courage to play the long game and ignore the siren calls of the stock-market.

Humility figures high among the virtues that brought him success. While he has much to be proud about, pride does not distort his judgement. He can learn from mistakes, retreating from well entrenched positions, as in the cases

of customer care and the recognition of unions.

His success owes much to the managers he assembled to run the business. These are not collaborators, but lieutenants, who are regularly challenged to justify themselves at weekly meetings which, it appears, are not showcases for "emotional intelligence". The workforce are rewarded with competitive wages and managed with indifference to any other satisfaction they could find in their work.

Personal disclosure: I have a daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Thanks to Ryanair we can visit them regularly and they us, with airfares frequently lower than the cost of a taxi to the airport.

While the dealings with Ryanair might not be convivial, as I look around my fellow passengers, it is hard not to conclude that the outcome is a substantial enhancement of conviviality as we travel to find enjoyment in the company of others.

While one might wish to escape capitalism altogether, competitive capitalism serves us better than cosy cartel capitalism.

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.

A tonic for restless minds, perfect for the bedside

Beautiful Thoughts for Beautiful Minds

by John Scally
(Currach Press, €14.99)

Peter Costello

For a long time I have valued collections of poems, short stories and essays as the best kind of bedside books. They provide just enough to allow the old brain to run down and come to rest, and to allow me to drift away into sleep. The latest book by popular lecturer and sports biographer John Scally will be an addition to this essential category.

The royalties from this rest-inducing book are to be donated to Epilepsy Ireland. There is another aspect of the brain, but one which many people still do not understand and some are still fearful of.

If the amusing stories that he provides serve to help the cause of epilepsy care and treatment in Ireland all the better.

Anecdotes

This is a collection of anecdotes or little snatches of life. One of these relates that at the end of a very long and uninspiring homily the priest announced that he wished to meet the board of parishioners in the sacristy after Mass. When it came time for the meeting the priest noticed a parishioner who had been at the Mass.

"You're not a member of the board," he said.

To which the man in question, recalling the homily, replied, "I certainly am – I was



never more bored in my life!"

Great. This is a sample of the materials gathered here, wry observation and gentle humour, just what many of us need at the end of what may well have been a bad day.

Some of the anecdotes grew into complete short stories, but all of them reflect a sharp but kindly eye of modern life as it is lived.

Domestic cooking, Kylemore Convent style

A Flavour of Kylemore Abbey

by the Sisters of the Community
(Columba Books, €24.99)

Peter Costello

When this book came to hand, I turned over the pages to see what made this cook book different from all the others that flood the market. My attention was immediately taken by a recipe for Frangipane Mince Pies, the last one in the book. This is simply delightful, a tempting new version of the traditional Bakewell tarts made at home by my late mother that were a childhood delight. This version sound like a very tasty variant on the traditional item of Christmas fare and I cannot wait to eat one.

These are the recipes for the food used in the community refectory and in the visitor café. They represent the sort of old fashioned domestic cooking that was once enjoyed by the whole country, but which in the ready-made world of today has largely vanished.

But it is domestic cooking raised to a new level though, but one which is still a possibility for all homes, without the fancy ingredients and even fancier styling of the TV cooks.

Daily life

It comes to mind that no less a person than St Térésa of Avila wrote about "domestic spirituality" among the pots and pans of daily life – this is what the nuns of the Kylemore community have achieved in this



Sr Genevieve, Kylemore Abbey's chocolatier.

delightful book.

The book has additional feature pages devoted to pictures of the nuns' daily life and the lovely surroundings and amenities of the Abbey. Here we can see the calm, contented nature of their elective yet workaday faith.

The book provides food for both body and soul.

WebWatch

Greg Daly

Batting myths of clerical abuse

With the abuse crisis continuing to rock the Church at its highest levels, some thoughtful material is starting to be produced online grappling with the issues of abuse and concealment.

Commonwealmagazine.org has published one of the most insightful and impassioned pieces in James Heaney's article 'Our myth, their lie'.

"Ten years ago, I believed a myth," he begins. "In the beginning, there was Vatican II. It was good but messy, and the Bad Catholics hijacked it to undermine doctrine. They took over seminaries and turned them into cesspools where heresy was mandatory and depravity rampant. Then Pope John Paul II came along. He drove out the Bad Catholics and cleaned up the seminaries."

"Too late! The Bad Catholics had already committed terrible crimes, which were covered up without the Pope's awareness," he continues. "In 2002, their abuses exploded into public view, and the JPII Catholics got blamed for crimes committed by a dying generation of clerics. The JPII bishops took it on the chin, but they fixed the problem with the Dallas Charter."

Horrors

"Then Benedict XVI, the great theologian, appointed orthodox bishops who would carry forward the renewal. The horrors of the Scandal were behind us. The two primordial forces of the postconciliar church, orthodoxy and



Prof. Stephen Bullivant.

While Heaney's article is important, it's worth reading too Prof. Stephen Bullivant's blogpost at stmarys.ac.uk arguing 'Why "Catholic exceptionalism" won't help solve the abuse crisis'. Prof. Bullivant runs through recent investigations around Pennsylvania State University, the BBC, and Chicago's public school system, and observes that most purported answers to clerical abuse tend to fixate upon ways the Church is unique.

Conceding that these distinctive features may well have contributed to the problem, Prof. Bullivant expresses scepticism that they can explain it, noting that "it seems to me to be dangerously – genuinely dangerously – misguided to suppose that all or even most of the Catholic problem must be due to more-or-less uniquely Catholic factors."

"After all," he says, "college football teams, state-funded broadcasters or school staff rooms are not obviously examples of organisations committed to, say, mandatory celibacy or a particular hermeneutical approach vis-a-vis Vatican II."

heresy, had fought a great battle, and orthodoxy had been vindicated," he writes, before showing in spectacular fashion just how wrong this essentially American narrative of the Church reform has proved to be.

Looking at the experiences of his own diocese, he says events have shown that bishops' theological leanings proved utterly irrelevant to the question of whether or not they would tackle abuse.

"We'd believed there were two sides in the Church: orthodoxy and heresy. We often cheered for the clerics on our

'team' and booed the other guys. But we were wrong. Everyone in the chancery was working together...against us," he writes, scorning claims of 'lavender mafias' and such and observing that the only consistent pattern was that "the closer they were to power, the more my shepherds collaborated to keep the sheep deaf, dumb, and victimised".

Reflecting on what factors in clerical culture and Church structure might have helped catalyse abuse, and what might need to change, this is a remarkable article.

The digging continues – Francis will be pleased!

Flying home from Rome, asked about Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò's allegations relating to erstwhile Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Pope Francis urged journalists to do their job and dig into the subject.

The work continues, with some of the more interesting recent pieces being the publication – again at commonwealmagazine.org – of Fr Boniface Ramsey's 'The case of Theodore McCarrick: a failure of fraternal correction', and Robert Duncan's fascinating catholicnews.com piece 'Former nuncio to US heard rumours

of McCarrick misconduct in 1994'.

Inviting the question of who knew what when, it's worth reading these in conjunction especially with Andrea Tornielli and Salvatore Cernuzio's 'Vatican insider' lastampa.it piece 'McCarrick, Benedict's first request (and not sanction) in 2007', Cardinal Marc Ouellet's open letter to Archbishop Viganò, as published for example at vaticannews.va, and Elise Harris's cruxnow.com piece 'Like a lightning rod, Sodano figures in McCarrick/ Viganò saga too'.

Classifieds

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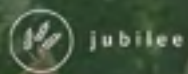
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This time I ask for a
special one. (mention here)
Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and
place it within your own broken
Heart where your
Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes,
it will become your favour,
not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

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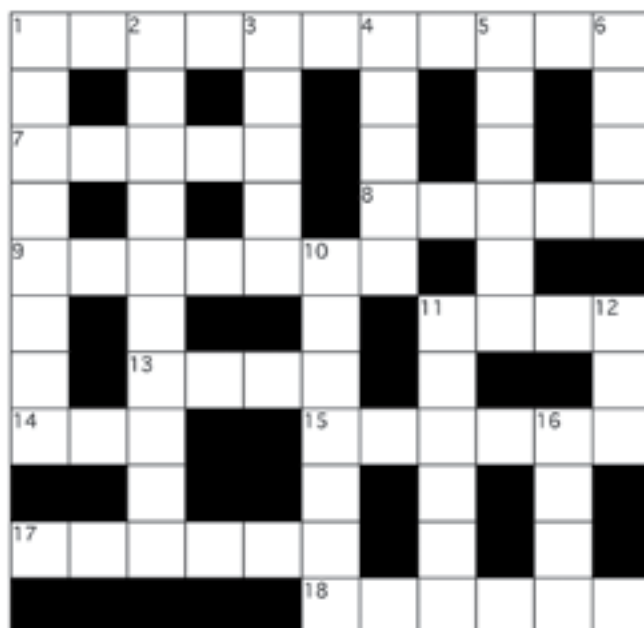
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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 258



ACROSS

- 1 Capetown is in this country, and the rugby Springboks come from here (5,6)
- 7 Mumbai is in this Asian country (5)
- 8 Clever (5)
- 9 You should not do this to an itch (7)
- 11 Male deer (4)
- 13 Skinny (4)
- 14 Ocean (3)
- 15 You might have a score of forty love in this sport (6)
- 17 Black animal with a broad white stripe (6)
- 18 Shouted (6)

DOWN

- 1 Use them to cut paper, for example (8)
- 2 Get the meaning (10)
- 3 It pumps blood around your body (5)
- 4 The opposite of stale (5)
- 5 Baby (6)
- 6 Female relative (4)
- 10 A hundred years (7)
- 11 Type of shoe you might wear in summer (6)
- 12 Oxygen is one (3)
- 16 Ireland is often called the Emerald ____ (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.376

Across – 1 Jet 3 Like peas in a pod 8 Strict 9 Plant pot
10 Emily 11 Yacht 13 Bring 15 Needful 16 Stiffen 20 Harry
Potter 21 Weigh 23 Chloe 24 Senorita 26 Bean sprouts

Down – 1 Jesse window 2 Terrible 3 Lucky 4 Explain 5 Annoy
6 Impact 7 Art 12 Transferred 13 Bough 14 Gutsy 17 Full stop
18 Oregano 19 Vienna 22 Hares 23 Cooks 24 Sub

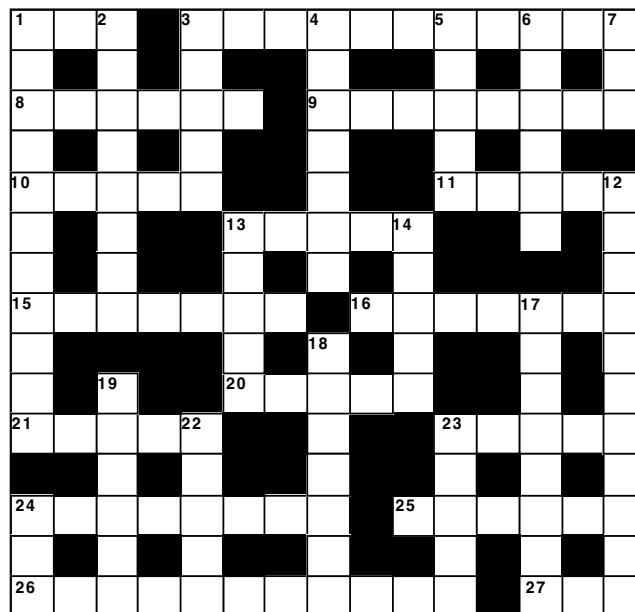
CHILDREN'S No.257

Across – 1 Schoolyard 6 Intelligent 7 Pill 8 Corner
13 Restart 15 Ray 16 Film 17 Fossil 18 Petal

Down – 1 Slippers 2 Hotel 3 Lilac 4 Anger 5 Dance
9 Octagon 10 Nearest 11 Recycle 12 Farm 14 Skirt

Crossword

Gordius 377



ACROSS

- 1 Sweet potato (3)
- 3 One at the back when naval commissions are issued? (4,7)
- 8 Risky (6)
- 9 & 11a Might the rider hitch around Hitler's Germany? (3,5,5)
- 10 Furze or whin (5)
- 11 See 9 across
- 13 Fish of the carp family (5)
- 15 Make a pin hold up this sea mammal (7)
- 16 Alter a holy rug to an approximate degree (7)
- 20 Rock used as a roofing material (5)
- 21 Some fish have unusual halos (5)
- 23 Italian island famous for its Blue Grotto (5)
- 24 Real bile, perhaps, but dependable nonetheless (8)
- 25 & 18d Make the visitor dangle around in this Danish tourist attraction (6,7)
- 26 Religious type distributed to ten places (11)
- 27 Attempt (3)

DOWN

- 1 Such girls duly agonise about letters (5,6)

- 2 Justice is not served when one is caught in a French wind (8)
- 3 Firearm (5)
- 4 Went to bed at the end of one's career (7)
- 5 Engine or car (5)
- 6 Dried grape (6)
- 7 Chap from the heart of Claddagh (3)
- 12 Collective term for the three persons of divinity (4,7)
- 13 Pieces of wood balanced on the tops of cricket stumps (5)
- 14 American elk (5)
- 17 Lends a hand when all one's serving staff are unconscious? (5,3)
- 18 See 25 across
- 19 Survey cardinals regarding what may cause hay fever (6)
- 22 Depart (5)
- 23 The cold heart of a French illegal (5)
- 24 Tear letters from a headstone (3)

Sudoku Corner

258

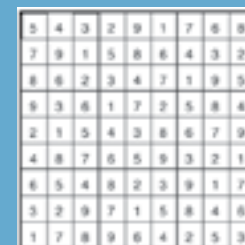
Easy



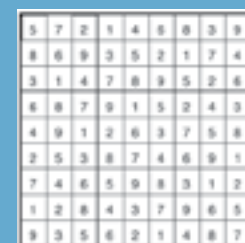
Hard



Last week's Easy 257



Last week's Hard 257



Despite contemporary influences, we aren't immortal

EVERY YEAR ON November 1, after All Saints' Day Mass, the community of the Pontifical Irish College heads to the Campo Verano Cemetery, just outside the walls of Rome, in order to pray midday prayer at the college burial vault. It's a good way to begin the month of November by remembering those members of the college community who have gone before us to God.

Here are buried staff members, students and friends of the college. This year, looking at the names and dates of those interred, I noticed how until the 1930s it was not an uncommon thing for a seminarian to die in Rome during his studies. The community could expect to bury a seminarian twice a decade between the 1870s and the beginning of World War II.

The reasons are easily understood. Improvements in medical science and hygiene, vaccinations and the development of antibiotics have changed things utterly. Prior to these advances, the death of a colleague in his 20s due to natural causes would not have been an unusual event for a clerical student in Rome.

Nowadays, many of the afflictions and injuries which



would have felled our ancestors have either been eliminated or are easily treated. Anyone with a familiarity with the literature or history of that time knows that people were concerned about their growing old at ages that we would now describe as 'middle-aged' and were keenly aware that even the mildest of illnesses could take a fatal turn.

Whilst death is one of the proverbial certainties of human

existence, our perception and experience of mortality does change. Compared to previous generations, death in the prime of life is relatively rare. Now, we have all lost friends and family too soon, but we are often inclined to think of these deaths as being an aberration rather than part of the normal existence.

Circumstances

It also seems as though the death of a younger person these days is more likely to be tragic in circumstances rather than natural.

Because of this, we are less inclined to recognise our own mortality unless death or illness hits us particularly closely. Because death in early and mid-life is more often experienced as tragic, we also put more emphasis on the extraordinary mercy of God for those in difficult situations, rather than thinking of those ordinary spiritual and sacramental

means by which our forebears routinely prepared themselves for death.

Our improved health is an unambiguous blessing. However, in this fallen world we cannot welcome even the greatest blessings without presumption blinding us to our true situation. Our modern life encourages us to consider ourselves immortal, and to put off the serious business of preparing for death. I don't mean to suggest that our spirituality should have a morbid fixation on death or that we should reduce the Christian life purely to consideration of what happens in the world to come.

Rather we should understand that being prepared for death means nothing other than being right with God and neighbour here and now. As Pope Francis recently said when celebrating Mass for deceased cardinals and bishops, "the journey of life is shaped by its ultimate goal".

The Christian tradition reminds us that we best live our life knowing that it has its fullest meaning in the context of our death and in the light of eternity.

Remembering the 1918 flu victims

● In this decade of commemorations it's worth remembering that the experience of World War I shaped the celebration of All Souls' Day. In 1915, Pope Benedict XV gave permission for all priests to celebrate three Masses on that day.

This was because of the huge numbers of young soldiers and civilians who had already lost their lives. The war would go on to claim an estimated 16 million lives.

What is less remembered is that the so-called Spanish flu pandemic of 100 years ago would dwarf that death toll by taking between 50 and 100 million lives. They too should be remembered.



IF THESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE TO CLOSE DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS, THE CHILDREN DO NOT HAVE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION

In an isolated, desert area of Pakistan a number of village primary schools face closure because there is now no money to maintain the buildings or pay the teachers. The local population is extremely poor, having to rely on monsoon rains to grow their crops. In some years the monsoon fails and villagers have to leave their homes to seek temporary, seasonal work in other areas. The government education system does not as yet reach such isolated places, but until last December several village primary schools there were run by a charitable organisation. Sadly that organisation no longer has the means to help and this has left these village schools facing closure. Some of the schools desperately need repairs and refurbishment but the dedicated teachers have continued to work temporarily without salaries so that the children can continue their lessons.

Can you help The Little Way Association save these village schools so that poor and deprived children can receive an education?

All donations, large or small, can help with necessary repairs and refurbishment. These schools are desperately needed, if the children are to have a better future.

Your contributions go to the missions without any deduction.



"True glory is that which will last eternally, and to reach it, it isn't necessary to perform striking works but to hide oneself and practice virtue in such a way that the left hand knows not what the right is doing." – St Therese

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