

# The Irish Catholic

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## Dublin parishes moving to end over-the-top Communion

Chai Brady

The country's largest diocese is to push ahead with "crucial" plans to make First Holy Communion ceremonies simpler and more parish-based, despite fewer priests and parish pastoral workers.

Dublin Diocese is reacting after many priests and parishioners reported that smaller ceremonies – necessitated by Covid-19 postponements – were better because they focused on the importance of the Sacrament and less on the 'big day out'.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Director of Mission and Ministry in the Archdiocese of Dublin Patricia Carroll said the policy was informed by the parish "rethink" during Covid, as well as four years of consulting parishes.

"This was emerging out of the pandemic experience where parents gave positive feedback about the prayerfulness of smaller group celebrations and the engagement of families," Ms Carroll said.

"During the pandemic, parishes had to rethink the way they were approaching the sacraments so this is a continuation of that and a further development," she continued.

She acknowledged that the shake-up to parish life will be "a challenge", but added that "it's really crucial and important because much of the feedback from the sacraments review was about lots of energy being put into the day, highlighting the need for a more sustainable journey with families".

The plans were announced in *Accompanying Families: Sacraments of Initiation Policy Dublin 2022*, which stated that small groups are "highly valued, making for a more prayerful personal experience".

The archdiocese stated in order for parishes to deliver, it's "essential" there is ongoing training of people who will accompany families in parishes.

For Dublin-based Parish Pastoral Worker Christina Malone, the Covid-19 pandemic was a learning curve when it came to the sacraments.

"There was a lot of communication from the parish required, beforehand the schools were in charge and we were trying to keep track with them."

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## Pilgrims in the Kingdom...



Arriving for Mass at the Grotto, Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry, following the pilgrimage walk from Tralee is Sharon Leen, Kielduff, with her children Oisín, Édaein and Siún Leen, Aodhán Casey and Aoibhinn Leen. Photo: John Cleary

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# Dublin to make 'crucial' changes to Communion preparation

» **Continued from Page 1**

"I think the parishes have realised they have to take more ownership of what's happening and that we don't go back to the 'big event' celebrations, that you have one day and that's it," Ms Malone told *The Irish Catholic*.

"The magic doesn't happen on the day, what's important is the journeying with the families, that's

where the connection is made. The day takes care of itself," she said.

Ms Malone welcomed the plans but added it will be challenging to deliver, asking "is it just aspirational?"

"With aging priests, with volunteers that are tired – there's a lot going on in parishes. We had the synod, we had the taskforce in the archdiocese... Tiredness is a big thing," she added.

# Pope in the North is the unfinished business of reconciliation project

**M**uch focus in recent days has, rightly, been on the role that Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has played in reconciliation. The late queen has been a keen supporter of the Irish peace process and has played no small role in building bridges between both Ireland and Britain and the two communities in the North.

While obviously the head of state of Britain, she has played a largely neutral role and shunned the kind of tribalism that would seem to make her a point of division rather than unity.

It was gratifying this week to hear the peer Lord Brookeborough describe his last conversation with the late monarch in which she expressed the hope that the political stalemate in the North with the DUP boycotting the democratic institutions would soon be resolved.

I was present at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh in 2010 when Queen Elizabeth II welcomed the then reigning Pontiff Benedict XVI as part of his visit to Britain. In her opening paragraph, she said: "We deeply appreciate the involvement of the Holy See in the dramatic improvement in the situation in Northern Ireland".

## Peace process

Benedict in return also praised the peace process and consistently used the term "these islands" while recalling the warm relationship that now existed between Ireland and Britain.

Officials I spoke to in both London and Dublin at the time saw the visit of Benedict XVI and the warm reception he received – the Duke of Edinburgh had greeted the Pontiff off the plane – as part of a process that would see Queen Elizabeth visit the Republic, the President of Ireland make a state visit to Britain and the Pope be welcomed in the North, including by unionist leaders. The officials from both capitals who worked tirelessly on the peace process are nothing if not ambitious, after all.

It is only the visit of a pope to Northern Ireland that has thus far eluded us with the queen's Irish visit a huge success and President Michael D. Higgins received in London with open arms. In 2012 during the international Eucharistic Congress, the atmosphere in the Republic was seen as too hostile to consider a visit by



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Pope Francis celebrates Mass at Phoenix Park in Dublin on August 26, 2018.

Benedict XVI. The then Taoiseach Enda Kenny rather ungraciously made it be known that if the Pope insisted on coming he could, but that the then government would not issue such an invitation.

## “It was gratifying this week to hear the peer Lord Brookeborough describe his last conversation with the late monarch”

The World Meeting of Families in 2018, then, seemed like an opportune moment. The mood music was good: Pope Francis was popular in Ireland. Jeffrey Donaldson from the DUP said in an interview in this newspaper that he would look forward to a visit to the North by the Pope. That remark in particular proved hugely important and officials in Dublin, London and Belfast were keen on such a visit. Many of the northern bishops thought it a fait accompli.

## Conviction

But the Archbishop of Dublin at the time Diarmuid Martin was adamant and unmovable in his conviction that the Pope would not go north of the border. He was anxious, I'm told, that a papal visit to the north might distract from the Dublin-based World Meeting of Families. The Pope was visiting Dublin, he repeat-

edly said, not Ireland – this is despite the fact that the Dublin event was funded by a series of collections from parishioners north and south.

Dr Martin won out and Pope Francis – much to the disappointment of northern Catholics in particular – did not cross the border. It prompted Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown to wonder about the fact that despite all the process, there was still only one place on this island where a Pope could not visit.

Despite the best efforts of Pope Francis, the World Meeting of Families in Dublin was a rather underwhelming occasion. Rome-based journalistic colleagues of mine who travelled with the Pontiff marvelled that the seemingly winning for-

mula of a papal visit could not penetrate Dublin.

The Pope going north might have distracted from the Mass in the Phoenix Park and the small attendance, but a pope praying with the Church leaders in Armagh or being welcomed by unionists to Stormont might, in hindsight, have been a welcome distraction.

A pope visiting Northern Ireland is a remaining piece of the jigsaw in the vastly improved relationships on these islands.

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# Ukrainian bishop praises Irish kindness as struggle for freedom continues

Ruadhán Jones

Refugees from the war in Ukraine have benefitted from Ireland's "world-famous hospitality", Ukrainian Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski has said in a message.

He warned however that the struggle for freedom isn't over yet, while the cost of rebuilding will be "unimaginable".

The message from Bishop Nowakowski, Apostolic visitor for Ukrainians Resident in Ireland and Northern Ireland, was read out at Masses across the island on Wednesday as a day of prayer was held for the beleaguered nation.

In it, he railed against the "tyranny and oppression" that Russia wants to bring to Ukraine by their invasion.

"It is truly hard for us to believe that such a war could even be possible, with the kind of horrific brutality against the civilian population that we have seen in the last seven months," Bishop Nowakowski said.

However, he said Ukrainians are "inspired" to see how Western Europe has opened their hearts to the thousands of refugees.

"In this effort communities across Ireland have also extended their traditional and world-famous Irish hospitality to newly-arrived Ukrainians, for which I am particularly grateful," the Ukrainian bishop continued.

"The struggle is not over yet, and the cost of rebuilding will be unimaginable – broken lives and families, destroyed homes, villages, farmlands,

cities, infrastructure.

"But for now, we give glory to God for his many blessings, and for the grace he has shown us through the kindness and generosity of the wonderful people of Ireland."

The Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin said he welcomed the day of prayer, calling it a "powerful prayerful" gesture of solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

In recent days, the Ukrainian army has gained ground in the east of the country, reclaiming land from the Russian invading forces and Russian-backed separatists.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said troops have now retaken more than 6,000 sq km from Russian control in September, in the east and the south.

## Mother Teresa documentary aims to share saint's work with a new generation

Jason Osborne

A new documentary about Mother Teresa of Kolkata intends to share the saint and her work with a wider audience than ever before.

Produced by the Knights of Columbus and directed by Emmy-award winning filmmaker David Naglieri, *Mother Teresa: No Greater Love* will display the mission St Teresa carried out throughout her life, and its continuation in the work of her order, the Missionaries of Charity.

Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly told the audience at the US premiere September 11 that the film intends to reach a younger audience that might not be so familiar

with the saint's work.

Pope Francis praised the film in a letter dated August 25, in which he said, "Thank you for promoting this type of initiative that helps, in a creative manner, to make accessible the zeal for evangelisation, especially for the young generations promoting the desire to follow the Lord who loved us first".

Director David Naglieri said the process of filming new interviews and finding footage for the documentary took 11 months and described it as "very much the work of the Holy Spirit".

"We didn't want to do a chronological biography," he said, adding that the goal was to "show how her mission and her spirit continues today".

## Garth's goin' down to Glendalough...



Country singer Garth Brooks took a break from his Croke Park concerts to visit the ancient Christian site of Glendalough with his wife and fellow country singer Trisha Yearwood. The Office of Public Works pictured the pair, saying "Look who was spotted at Glendalough's monastic heritage site". Photo: Office of Public Works/Facebook.

### JOE WALSH TOURS

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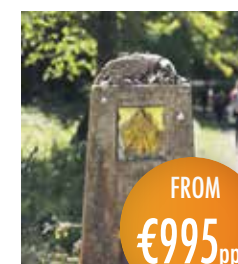


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# Rural priests lament difficulties of Govt's proposed ban on turf

Jason Osborne

As the energy crisis deepens rural priests have hit out at Environment Minister Eamon Ryan's proposed retail ban on turf, saying that it'd be "very hard" to ask people to switch due to the soaring cost of heating alternatives.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Limerick-based Fr Joe Tynan said that rural communities traditionally depended on turf

"both as a source of income for the person who's harvesting the turf, and also the people using it as a basic fuel, as a main form of heating".

"You're catching people at both levels, with the cost of energy and as a supplement for their income, too," Fr Tynan said.

He said that people do recognise that there's an energy crisis at the moment and that from an "eco point of view" there's a need to move towards "sustainable energy".

"But at the same time, these decisions are being made when there isn't an alternative in place," Fr Tynan said.

"That's one of the bugbears, these decisions are taken and put into plan, and it's usually somewhere down the line that you're meant to have some kind of alternative or compensation, but it never happens."

Fr Sean Heaney of Tullamore said that while those who use turf should be ok for much of this winter, having "stocked up", it'd be "very

hard" to ask people to switch to alternatives if the price of energy sources such as gas and oil continues to rise.

"With the energy crisis, I think it would be difficult to enforce any of the restrictions seeing as other forms of heating, oil and so on, are going to be so expensive," he said.

"I think it'd be very hard to ask people to switch to oil or gas at this stage because it's just become so very expensive for them."

## Increased investment in primary schools 'essential', says Catholic body

Ruadhán Jones

Increased Government investment in primary schools is "essential" or else schools will be forced to rely on the "bank of mum and dad", a Catholic management body has warned.

Capitation rates need an "immediate" increase of 50% to €275 per

pupil and an increase of 10% across other capitation rates, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) and other primary management bodies have said in a joint statement.

"Increased investment by the State is now essential so that school communities are not totally depend-

ent on voluntary contributions from already hard-pressed parents to provide basic requirements, such as heat, light and water in schools," the statement warns.

Even before the recent "alarming" rises in electricity prices, the price of heating oil has risen by nearly 115% in a year, and general inflation rates

are running at over 9%.

As a result, "schools cannot survive, let alone thrive, on the current rates".

Seamus Mulconry, CPSMA general secretary, said that the "bank of and mum dad" has been subsidising schools for years.

"The State must act to fulfil its

constitutional obligation to provide a free primary education," he added.

The primary management bodies who released the statement were: An Foras Pátrúnachta, CPSMA, Church of Ireland Board of Education, Educate Together, ETBI, NAMBE and the Muslim Primary Board.

## Cork nuns launch 'delightful' migrant solidarity garden

Staff reporter

The Mayor of Cork Cllr Deirdre Forde has launched a Solidarity Garden dedicated for use by migrant families on the grounds of Ardfoyle Convent, Cork.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles offered a plot of land which is now used by seven migrant families in Direct Provision to grow food crops from their home countries.

"Witnessing the pleasure of the children laughing and playing as their parents garden is an unexpected and delightful reward," said Sr Maura Cranney OLA at the launch.

The initiative came from the Cork Migrant Centre (CMC) and has been facilitated by students and volunteers.

Fionnuala O'Connell, a youth project worker at the CMC, said in a statement that it has "really helped to create something positive for the families that they work with."

"The positive impact of being able to grow familiar foods, and then provide that food to their children not only helps them to keep their own culture alive, but also assists them with integration into life in Ireland," said Ms O'Connell.



Fionnuala O'Connell, youth project worker at the Cork Migrant Centre and Sr Josephine Aboagye OLA.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Kimmage Manor open to all for Culture Night

A public exhibition is due to take place in Kimmage Manor, home to the Irish Province of the Spiritans, as part of Culture Night 2022.

The exhibition will tell the story of the Holy Ghost Fathers in countries they've served in, such as Angola, Ethiopia and Kenya. To do this, it will draw on material held by the Spiritan Heritage

and Archive Centre, which holds records of the long tradition of overseas missionary work carried out by the Irish Province.

A tour of the Holy Spirit Church and its stained-glass windows will be on offer. Culture Night takes place on Friday, September 23, and you can register for the event at [www.spiritian.ie](http://www.spiritian.ie)

#### Former Tyrone coach and priest re-instated following probe

Fr Gerard McAleer, a Co. Tyrone priest and former GAA coach, who stepped down from clerical duties following a historical safeguarding complaint has been re-instated in his parish.

Fr McAleer voluntarily stood aside from his parish role at Donaghmore in 2018 following the complaint to Gardaí, which related to a time prior to his ordination as a priest in the 1980s.

The former principal of St Patrick's Academy in Dungannon was assistant manager of the all-Ireland winning Tyrone GAA football team led by Mickey Harte in 2003.

A spokesperson for the Archdiocese of Armagh confirmed a "full investigation" had been carried out by authorities on both sides of the border, and no further action was to be taken.

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# Peterson: why young men seek out his message

**I**t's cheering to see that Garth Brooks has, once again, had such a popular and rapturous reception in Ireland. Country and western music is a meaningful genre of ballad, lyric and narrative, reaching into human experience just as deeply as great opera. Its roots, moreover, are Irish, or at least partly Irish, the hillbilly notes brought from all over Ireland – and especially Ulster – by those cowboys of old.

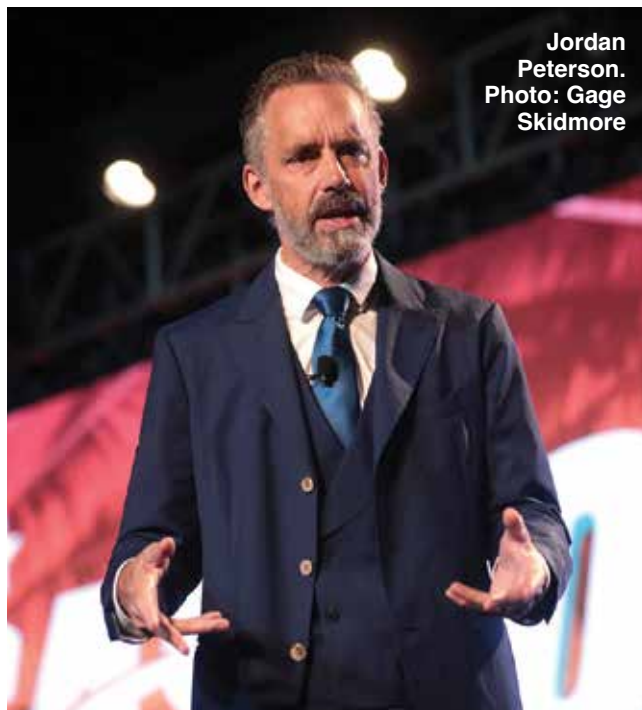
**“Why the mainstream silence over Jordan Peterson’s evidently highly successful appearance?”**

But it is significant to observe, too, that the Canadian psychologist and media personality Jordan Peterson had a huge audience – of an estimated 10,000 – at the 3 Arena at the weekend when he spoke. I have seen references to Prof. Peterson's gig on social media, but so far, I have read no public account of the proceedings.

Why the mainstream silence over Jordan Peterson's evidently highly successful appearance? Is it because he has been labelled 'conservative', and



**Mary Kenny**



Jordan Peterson.  
Photo: Gage Skidmore

anyone tagged conservative is now sometimes stigmatised as 'far right'?

## Western world

He has also been described as “the most influential public intellectual in the western world”. Surely, then, worth heeding?

Prof. Peterson, 60, first came to prominence in 2016

when he objected to an amendment to the Canadian human rights act regarding gender identity, which he described as enforcing “compelled speech”: by law, people would have to use designated pronouns of he/she/they. His YouTube broadcasts soon gathered millions of followers, and his personal appearances and

books, likewise.

Jordan Peterson obviously filled a space, and answered a psychological and intellectual need: to articulate what the ‘official’ culture was not saying, or perhaps not even permitted to say.

**“Young men need leadership and role models, and almost by chance, Peterson has stepped into that role”**

I think there is another subtext too: the need of young men – probably the majority of Prof. Peterson's followers – to find a source of masculine authority. Not a macho, domineering, tyrannical form of masculinity as we see in brutal and violent movies, but a calm, intellectually strong, rational and assured model of manliness in an era when the masculine is so often disparaged. Young men need leadership and role models, and almost by chance, Peterson has stepped into that role.

His gigs should be reported properly, because they evidently resonate with people. Incidentally, he describes himself as a “classical liberal”: but also – and perhaps this is the fatal error – a “traditionalist”.

## Capturing an era on canvas

There's a most rewarding exhibition of paintings by Estella Solomons currently at the National Gallery in Dublin: it is a true portal of Irish history, with oil portraits of characters from the national revival era like George Russell (AE), the Republican Alice Milligan, the poet Joseph Campbell, the writers Darrell Figgis (who composed the first Free State Constitution) and James Stephens, and her husband Seumas O'Sullivan (real name, James Starkey).

Estella Frances Solomons was born into a Dublin Jewish family in 1882 who were highly cultured, and deeply committed to the Irish nationalist cause. She herself hid IRA men on the run during the War of Independence, and Civil War. One picture shows a Rabbi, Abraham Gudanus, who helped Michael Collins make one of his famous escapes – dressed in Jewish rabbinical garb!

Estella was a vivid

portraitist, and besides the paintings on show, she portrayed Fr Michael O'Flanagan and Padraic Colum. One of her tutors was Phyllis Ryan, second wife of President Seán T. O'Kelly.

The Solomons family forbade their daughter to marry outside of the Jewish faith, so she and Seumas O'Sullivan (whose family were Methodists) waited to marry until their parents were dead. They were by then in their forties and it was, it seems, too late for children. They remained strong Irish nationalists all their lives.

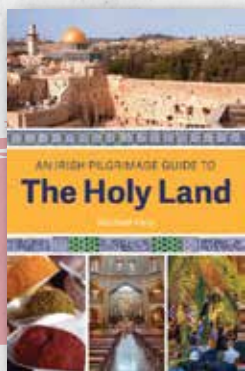
Estella's work reflects their circle, and also evokes peaceful scenes from a comfortable Dublin way of life a hundred years ago – although, regrettably for us, her work is still in copyright and thus there are no reproductions or postcards.

● I had the pleasure of visiting Ennis, Co. Clare, last weekend (and terrific Ennis Bookshop), where I heard a local Fianna Fáil councillor, Mark Nestor, much praised. He was due to become the Mayor of Ennis this year, but he declined the honour. He had been thinking of becoming a priest in his teens, but had been put off the idea, partly by the distressing accounts of scandals. His father, who sadly eventually took his own life, encouraged Mark to go into politics, and he did so, and became popular locally. He might have had a future in national politics, but now, at the age of 30, he has decided to join the seminary after all.

Thirty is an excellent time of life to make a commitment to a calling. It's mature enough to have had the experience, but still young enough to be energetically in life's prime. Big decisions are often more wisely made after reflection, time and testing.

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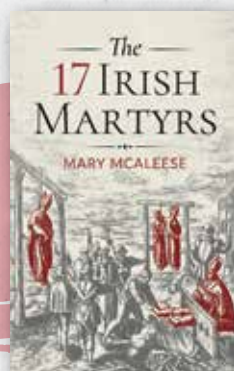
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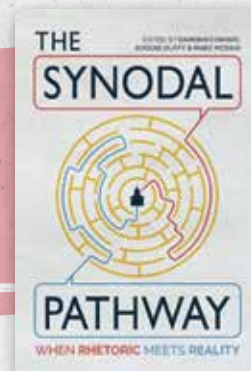
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# Kildare and Leighlin announces plans for lay-led liturgies to help overstretched priests

**Ruadhán Jones**

Training of lay people to prepare them to lead liturgies in the absence of priests will begin in autumn, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty has said.

Bishop Nulty envisages that the "lay leader" would, as part of a local team, "stand in on the priest's day off or during the weekdays of his holidays to lead the liturgy".

To facilitate this, he has asked the diocesan commission for liturgical formation to organise the training.

Priests are already "stretched" to cover every scheduled celebration Bishop Nulty warned in a pastoral letter.

Saying that all agree there are too many Masses, he asked parishioners to "be reasonable in the demands they make of" priests.

"If a priest gets sick or overstretched, where does that leave us," he continued.

Bishop Nulty's pastoral letter, entitled *Put out into the Deep Water*, also announced that the diocese will be divided into 19 localised parish clusters on an experimental basis.

"We must build a different type of Church", he said. "With this pastoral letter I'm reassuring you, you will not be on your own, there will be supports wrapped around you."

The bishop has called for discussions at parish levels to ensure the clusters are "operable and correctly assigned", with an October 15 deadline for responses.

After this, there will be further reflection on a "sustainable schedule" of local Masses to be agreed by parish clusters by November 27, before becoming operable February 26, 2023.

"I know changing schedules disrupts routine and traditions, but I am appealing to all to look on this with an open mind and a generous heart," Bishop Nulty said in his letter.

"I realise there will be a certain loss in these necessary changes, but also there is a gain of more enriching and life-giving celebrations."

He added that it is about "much more" than Masses, calling for "deep reflection" on the sharing of resources such as secretarial services or administrative support.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### PSNI investigating 'sectarian' attacks on Derry Catholics

Four houses and a car have been damaged during a "sectarian hate crime" on Catholics in a Derry village.

The PSNI are investigating reports of criminal damage after it was reported that around 11.50pm three masked men, one carrying a large stick, had broken the front living room windows of four houses while damaging the doors of three of these properties.

They also broke the windows of a vehicle parked outside one of the addresses in the Culnady area near Upperlands on Wednesday night, September 7.

"We are treating this as a sectarian hate crime and are appealing for your help in our investigation," the PSNI said in a statement.

### Kilmore launches St Felim's challenge to get youth active

The diocese of Kilmore's youth ministry is launching St Felim's five challenges, a programme for first year secondary students.

The programme is designed to encourage more parish involvement from young people, highlight the different social justice issues in Ireland and help develop students' personal and spiritual growth.

The five challenges include: taking part in a charity event; volunteering at Mass for a month; interviewing someone from a different faith-background and more.

There is an additional group project that schools can get involved in to win the St Carlos Acutis trophy. This is a written case study on a saint of the young person's choice which requires 1500-3000 words.



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# Aontú councillor assaulted by alleged pro-choicers

**Jason Osborne**

An Aontú councillor has spoken out after suffering a "vicious" and "unprovoked" attack, which he claims was based on his pro-life stance.

Councillor Emmet Doyle, member of Derry City & Strabane District Council, said that after entering a food establishment alone in the

early hours of Friday morning, a group of people "deeply opposed to my stance on the right to life" entered and proceeded to verbally abuse him.

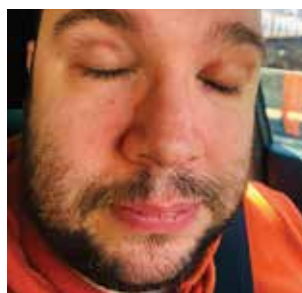
Upon leaving, Cllr Doyle was attacked, receiving a cut to his head, bruises and black eyes.

He said that despite the attack, "nothing will stop me serving my constituents. I won't be silenced".

"As an elected representative, I passionately defend what I believe in and act on behalf of constituents regardless of their views," he said in a statement addressing the assault.

"I would never think of physically attacking an opponent, we are all entitled to our views and the respect to communicate them."

Cllr Doyle said "our city



Aontú councillor Emmet Doyle displays his injuries.

centre should be safe for anyone".

"Violence is entirely unacceptable no matter the victim and I intend to ensure the perpetrators are identified and prosecuted."

Cllr Doyle thanked Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín, his family, party colleagues, constituents and council colleagues for the support he received in the wake of the attack.

## Gold medal for parish work...



Ann Nolan, recipient of the Benemerenti medal for her work in Graiguecullen-Killeslin Parish, is pictured with Fr John Dunphy PP (left) and Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty in Holy Cross Church recently.

## Hundreds gather to mourn murdered Tallaght siblings

**Chai Brady**

Hundreds of mourners gathered for the funeral Mass of three siblings killed in Tallaght, September 9.

The Mass for eight-year-old twins Christy and Chelsea Cawley and their older sister Lisa Cash (18) was celebrated by Fr Paul O'Driscoll, chaplain to the Parish of the Travelling People.

Fr O'Driscoll paid tribute to the siblings' 14-year-old brother, who raised the alarm at the time of the attack.

He said the boy's bravery was an inspiration to courage and love.

Delivering a reflection during Mass, Fr O'Driscoll said that the crisis caught the community unawares and leaves everyone asking the question "how could this be happening?"

"When the unexpected happens during a communal crisis, we are not alone," he said.

"We are with friends and neighbours and we all experience the same break in reality."

An address from Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell was read during Mass. He assured "all who are touched by this tragedy of my sympathy and prayer, and that of the people of the diocese".



## Niamh Uí Bhriain

### The View



# Good news from Germany court shows hope for pro-life defiance

I have been thinking more and more about what it means to be defiant in the face of what can seem like an overwhelmingly anti-life culture.

I don't use that phrase 'anti-life' casually, either. It is a theme touched on by Pope Francis and others who have reflected on the dubious default of the modern world to trend towards ending life as a solution to the pressing problems of society.

**“In 2019, the local authorities in the city Pforzheim, Germany banned even silent prayer and a Karlsruhe Administrative Court upheld that ban in 2021”**

Thus we have seen the persistent condemnation of large families, which has led now to a demographic crisis and the imminent decline of populations across Europe and Asia, and the devastating economic consequences that will follow.

We've seen the distortion of reality where the deliberate taking of life is dressed up as compassion – so that abortion and euthanasia, which target the most vulnerable amongst us, are sold as acts of kindness or as a progress, when instead each child aborted and each person euthanised is an expression of the increased hardening of society.

A culture that is anti-life will also always try to silence the voices that persist in defence of life – sometimes as an act of malice or petty triumphalism, and sometimes because it is well understood that however small the minority, a group of committed people who believe in the righteousness of their cause can change the culture and reverse the damage caused by the harmful and destructive notion that we can or should end lives to address our problems.

Here in Ireland we've seen a most dishonest campaign seeking to criminalise people for engaging in pro-life prayer at abortion centres – denying women and their unborn

babies the solidarity a peaceful presence can represent, and also denying them the opportunity of seeing that support and protection is available, whatever their difficulty.

It has been heartening to see that pro-life prayer groups and activists have not, to date, been deterred by the threatened legislation which seeks to criminalise them. Since Minister Stephen Donnelly's announcement of his draconian proposal, the pro-life vigils at abortion centres have continued – peaceful, usually prayerful, and defiant in the face of threatened punishment and even jail.

It's heartening too, then, to see that a German court has overturned previous rulings that prohibited pro-life prayer at abortion facilities. In 2019, the local authorities in the city Pforzheim, Germany banned even silent prayer and a Karlsruhe Administrative Court upheld that ban in 2021.

But now, in a ruling on August 31, a superior court, the Mannheim Administrative Court found that the “authorities could only make an assembly dependent on such a condition if public safety would be directly endangered if the assembly were held”.

They added that “this was not the case” in regard to the pro-life vigils.

### Freedom

Pavica Vojnovic, the German pro-life leader who took the case said that “the dismissal of the case obviously fails to recognise that freedom of expression is the foundation of any free and fair democracy”.

“What kind of society denies prayer to women and children in need? ... The fact that the Pforzheim authorities had banned even silent prayer near the abortion counselling centre is not proportionate. Having a belief is a fundamental right, as is the right to express that belief through peaceful assembly or to pray silently in public... Regardless of whether one shares their views in substance or not, there should be agreement that the fundamental rights to freedom of expression, religion, and assembly enjoy the protection of the basic law,” she said.

The victory in the courts speaks to the importance of persistence and defiance. It is all too easy to fold away our flags in the face of a loss like the repeal of the 8th, or the bullying tactics adopted by a government seeking to punch down at pro-lifers.

It also should nudge us to remember that even if the Dáil currently seems hopelessly weighted against pro-lifers, we represent a significant section of voters: approximately a third according to the referendum with many more sympathetic to pro-life messaging and themes.

**“Our hope for rebuilding this broken culture comes from the understanding that no law can ever make it right to take the life of an innocent child”**

In the coming weeks, Life Institute will launch a billboard campaign which will remind the public that the government's regime now counts at least 21,000 abortions in the numbers of fatalities, with that total increasing daily.

We will also be explaining, through a Time to Think campaign, that abolishing the 3-day waiting period for women seeking abortion might increase the annual total by up to 1,000 additional abortions per year – and we are asking voters to deliver a strong message to TDs opposing such change.

That is what real defiance is – persisting in speaking the truth even when a hostile culture doesn't want to hear it, in conjunction, of course, with developing new ways of communicating the pro-life message and reaching those who are open to hearing it – and those who are hostile.

Our hope for rebuilding this broken culture comes from the understanding that no law can ever make it right to take the life of an innocent child. We are defiant in the face of those who would silence our right to take that stand.

A 40 Days for Life event in Pforzheim, Germany.



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Parishes worry heating costs mean they won't be able to keep the doors open, writes **Chai Brady**

**P**riests across Ireland are considering a range of cost saving measures as the country enters a tough winter with energy providers ramping up prices due to the Europe-wide energy crisis. There are also fears that churches may have to close due to the soaring cost of keeping them open.

This is coupled with decreased income due to the pandemic, as many parishioners still have not returned since churches were closed.

As temperatures begin to drop and the Government scrambles to deliver reprieve to hard-hit households, with the plans to be formally announced in the upcoming budget, there is "extreme concern" among many parishes.

Fr John Joe Duffy CC of Creeslough, Co. Donegal said many churches are still reeling from the effects of Covid-19, saying "it's a struggle enough without energy prices rising".

"With prices increasing, it could bring about having to rationalise. It won't be having churches not staying open because of the non-availability of priests, cost may indeed see churches having to rationalise usage," Fr Duffy said.

**“In Killarney, Co. Kerry, Fr Danny Broderick PP of Milltown said they have been mentioning the costs to parishioners”**

"We're already having to dip into reserves, and that's how we're managing. During Covid, over a period of two years, we lost a substantial amount of income in church contributions, it's not all the way back up, maybe at 75% of what it was. What we have seen is falling income and rising prices in energy. Anyone with any sense of budgeting will know, that's very difficult."

#### Serious problem

Fr Paul Kivlehan Adm. of Balaghaderreen cathedral, Co. Roscommon, said energy costs are a "serious problem" describing it as a "journey into the unknown".

# ‘Extreme concern’ as parishes brace for winter energy costs

"We've been trying to hold off turning on the heat, it's been off all summer. We used to turn it on last year in the evening for an hour or two, we may have to look at cutting back on things like that," he said, adding they may have to turn the cathedral spotlights off.

Fr James MacKiernan Adm. of St Mel's Cathedral in Longford said he would be reducing the temperature in the church. "We'd normally keep it around 19-20 degrees, but we have to bring it back down to between 16-17 degrees to try and minimise the amount of oil that we're using," he said.

"Likewise for the lighting, we have different settings of lighting so we're trying to put on the minimum amount of lighting that's necessary for people to be able to move around safely and then for readers and the celebrant."

#### Funds

He added: "If we haven't the funds to pay for the oil then we'd certainly have to consider more drastic measures. I suppose in the past when we were kids there was no heat in churches so you had to wear extra clothing and so on because it was a very cold environment, but we'd hope we

won't have to resort to that."

In Offaly, Fr Joe Deegan PP of Clara described the energy crisis as an "ongoing concern".

"There's a lot of smaller country parishes where there is going to be difficulties in trying to cope with rising costs, I don't know how they're going to manage. Thankfully we're in a reasonably healthy situation at the moment but I can't see that continuing long term," Fr Deegan said.

#### Upgrading

The parish is currently trying to upgrade their heating system to reduce costs, with Fr Deegan saying there is a dearth of tradesmen to do the work. "As we're coming into winter season when we actually turn on the heating, I'm still trying to source a decent plumber to check the system," he said.

**“In Offaly, Fr Joe Deegan PP of Clara described the energy crisis as an ‘ongoing concern’”**

"I'll be encouraging people to wear heavier clothing during the winter. We've already started adjusting some of the doors and

putting in draft excluders and we're going to keep some of the doors we would normally use during the winter, the porches, closed and get people to use side doors."

Fr John Deignan, PP Sts Peter and Paul, Co. Athlone said they are "extremely worried" about costs but are confident they will be fine through the beginning of winter without having to take any extraordinary measures. However, they project that the combined heating and lighting cost of the cathedral will come to about €2,000 a week.

In Creggan parish, Co. Derry, Fr Daniel McFaul said they have a smaller chapel they will be using but said he was unsure how they are going to manage energy costs for larger events like funerals and weddings.

"They say it's going to take three times as much to heat the church this year," he said.

#### Hoping

"We're hoping to use the divine mercy chapel as much as possible, for daily Masses anyway. Depending on how prices escalate and depending on the cold spell, how severe that is – that will have an effect as well. We can't have people not feeling they

can come to the church because of the cold," Fr McFaul added.

In Killarney, Co. Kerry, Fr Danny Broderick PP of Milltown said they have been mentioning the costs to parishioners in the hope "they might be able to contribute a little bit more to keep it going".

However, he said that it's a "delicate operation" as everyone is in the same boat regarding increased prices and "people are struggling in their own lives as well".

**“In Creggan parish, Co. Derry, Fr Daniel McFaul said they have a smaller chapel they will be using”**

For Fr Tom Ryan PP Ennis cathedral, Co. Clare said that a lot can be achieved with good housekeeping regarding "timing of use as regards heating and lighting, closing doors".

"No doubt about it, with the cost of energy we'll be watching what we turn on and how long we turn it on for, because if the present cost continues to escalate, we won't be able to afford it," Fr Ryan said.

"We'll do our very best to keep churches warm and welcoming. After a couple years of lockdown, we longed to be together. And now that we can be together, we won't be stopped by the cost of heating and lighting," he added.

**Additional reporting by Jason Osborne and Ruadhán Jones.**

**“There's a lot of smaller country parishes where there is going to be difficulties in trying to cope with rising costs”**



# The Irish Catholic

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# Marriage still seen as important to lasting relationships – Accord



Pictured (from left) are Barbara Duff, Accord Dublin, Fr Brian Kavanagh, National Marriage Appeal Tribunal and Accord Counsellor, Brenda Drumm formerly of the Catholic Communications Office, Jim Fitzpatrick from Open Democracy and moderator Julie Ryan taking part in a panel discussion.



Some of the speakers at the gathering to mark Accord's 60th anniversary are pictured chatting during a break, September 10. Pictured are Jim Fitzpatrick (left) from Open Democracy who spoke on the role of public interest journalism, Julie Ryan who was a moderator at the event, Barbara Duff from Accord in Dublin and Bishop Denis Nulty Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and President of Accord. Photos: John McElroy

## Ruadhán Jones

**M**arriage is still seen as important to long-lasting relationships by the majority of Irish couples, a survey commissioned by Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service has shown.

Some 56% of the 700 people surveyed said marriage is still important to the longevity of relationships, with men (62%) and people aged 55+ (66%) most likely to believe this.

However, there is an age-divide, as just 46% of people under 35 agreed that marriage is important for long-lasting relationships.

Meanwhile, in a statement, Accord said that the overall "ratings for relationships were very positive in Ireland", with almost 90% of couples rating the level of trust in their relationship as very strong.

A further 80% rate their relationship happiness as very strong, and over 70% rate their quality of communication within their relationship as very strong.

The demographic that rated their relationship satisfaction the highest was those over the age of 55, and those who have been in a relationship for over 30 years.

However, 81% of people flagged money issues and 57%

of people under 35 cited a lack of access to housing as great sources of pressure the research conducted by Amárach Research shows.

About one-in-10 have attended couple counselling in one form or another, and one-in-five would consider it (who have not attended before).

Younger people are the demographic most open to relationship counselling, especially women, those together for less than ten years, and those who rate their relationship poorly.

The results were released on Saturday, September 10, as Accord celebrated the 60th anniversary of its founding with a day of discussion and prayer in Maynooth.

Accord facilitators, counsellors and clergy gathered to mark the occasion, with Mass celebrated by Bishop Denis Nulty, President of Accord CLG.

The survey showed that Accord is the best-known relationship counselling provider, and is primarily known for its services regarding marriage.

Over a third of respondents would recommend Accord to those experiencing problems in a marriage or relationship.

Accord offers a professional counselling service to explore, reflect upon and work to resolve difficulties that arise in their lives.



Alison Flannery from Amárach Research, who presented findings of a survey commissioned by Accord at the event on Saturday.







Many feminists also reject this worldview and see it as a threat, writes **David Quinn**

**T**eacher Enoch Burke is in prison at the time of writing for contempt of court. Mr Burke is an evangelical Christian who refused to use the new gender pronoun and name of a pupil in his school in Co. Westmeath, which has a Church of Ireland ethos.

After the pupil announced their new gender and name, Mr Burke confronted his then-principal at a school event in June after which a disciplinary procedure was launched against him. He was barred from entering the school, but decided to turn up anyway and sit on his own in one of the classrooms.

The school retaliated by having an injunction served against him legally barring him from entering the school. He ignored this too and was then arrested. He has said he will continue to ignore the injunction and therefore has been found guilty of contempt of court. Theoretically, he will remain in jail until he says he will obey the law. Mr Burke has said he will remain in jail forever, if need be, rather than violate his conscience by going along with an ideology he does not agree with.

**“A person might say they are neither male nor female because they reject the division of the human race into only two genders”**

His lawyer says the case is about freedom of conscience. The school says it is about his refusal to stay away from the school until his disciplinary procedure is heard.

Even if Mr Burke is not in jail directly because of his refusal to use the pupil's new gender pronoun, clearly the two things are linked and the case brings up the very thorny issue of what a school – primary or secondary – should do when a pupil, backed by his or her parents, wants to be called by a new name and gender pronouns.

In the case that is in the news, the pupil has declared themselves to be ‘gender non-binary’, and wants to be known by the pronouns ‘they/them’, rather than ‘he/him’.

A lot of this terminology probably confuses ordinary people, so

# Parents must be properly consulted about gender ideology in schools



let me try and explain. The vast majority of us are accustomed to using the pronoun ‘he’ and ‘him’ for someone who is biologically male, and ‘she’ and ‘her’ for someone who is biologically female. This seems like absolute common sense and a simple reflection of reality. You are born into a particular sex, there are only two of them, and that is that.

But now we have something called ‘gender ideology’ which insists that even though we have a biological sex, we might not identify with that, or we might be ‘trapped in the wrong body’. While we might physically be male or female, we identify as the opposite sex (or ‘gender’) and want to be treated and addressed accordingly.

## Declare

Therefore, a person might be physically male but say they are a woman and declare they now want to be called ‘Patricia’ rather than ‘Patrick’ and that their new pronouns are ‘she/her’. A person who is physically female might do the same thing, only in reverse.

But another twist is that a person might say they are neither male nor female because they

reject the division of the human race into only two genders. They don’t want this binary ‘choice’. Therefore, they say they are ‘gender non-binary’, and because pronouns like ‘he’ and ‘she’ would identify them as male or female, they want instead to be known as ‘they’, ‘them’. They will probably also pick a name that is neither male nor female as such, a name that is more gender-neutral. (For example, ‘Pat’ can belong to either sex).

**“Schools, Catholic or not, are going to have to think very long and hard about these issues”**

Enoch Burke rejects the thinking behind all this and does not want to be forced to go along with it.

Many feminists also reject this worldview and see it as a threat to women’s rights. They cite actual cases of male sex offenders who say they are women being allowed into women’s prisons.

They don’t like men who identify as women being allowed into women’s changing rooms and toilets.

They oppose men who identify as women being allowed to play

women’s sports and they dislike the growing practice to drop the word ‘woman’ altogether sometimes in favour of the gender-neutral ‘person’. Thus, we now see growing use of the phrase ‘pregnant person’ rather than ‘pregnant woman’.

What should a Catholic school do when a pupil wants to be known by a new gender pronoun and name?

At one level it is simply being polite to go along with them, especially when they have the full support of their parents. What’s the harm?

## Complicated

But things are much more complicated than that. What happens if the pupil is physically a boy and now wants access to the girls’ toilets, changing rooms and sports teams? Is this fair on the girls? There is a definite clash of rights here. Have all the other parents in the school been properly informed about these implications? Are they happy about it? Can a compromise be found?

In addition, once pupils are told to refer to their classmate by a new name and pronoun, you are effectively teaching them a radically new theory of gender.

You are teaching them that your biological sex does not determine your gender.

## Spectrum

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment wants all pupils at Junior Cert level taught that gender is a spectrum, and we are not simply male and female. What do parents think about that?

**“Enoch Burke rejects the thinking behind all this and does not want to be forced to go along with it”**

Also, once you start teaching gender ideology, directly or indirectly, will other pupils also want to be known by a new gender? The number doing so has been increasing hugely in the last few years. There seems to be a copycat effect.

Finally, when a child identifies as a different gender, they might in time be put on puberty blockers, almost certainly followed later by sex hormones, and later on they could regret what they have done (this happens) and blame the school for helping to put them on this path in the first place by recognising them as a different gender to their biological one.

Schools, Catholic or not, are going to have to think very long and hard about these issues and parents need to be very widely consulted and involved in a debate that hears properly from both sides of the argument and not just gender ideologues.

**“Mr Burke confronted his then-principal at a school event in June after which a disciplinary procedure was launched against him”**



# 70 years and five popes – Queen Elizabeth II



Britain's longest reigning monarch met with five popes over the course of her life and reign, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

**I**n a telegram late on September 9, Pope Francis offered his condolences and prayers upon the death of Queen Elizabeth II (96), Britain's longest-reigning monarch and the head of the Church of England.

In a telegram addressed "To His Majesty the King, Charles III", her son who immediately ascended to the throne, the Pope said he was "Deeply saddened to learn of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, I offer heartfelt condolences to Your Majesty, the Members of the Royal Family, the People of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth."

**“She travelled to the Vatican five times, the first in 1951 before she ascended to the throne”**

"I willingly join all who mourn her loss in praying for the late queen's eternal rest and in paying tribute to her life of unstinting service to the good of the nation and the Commonwealth, her example of devotion to duty, her steadfast witness of faith in Jesus Christ and her firm hope in his promises," Pope Francis said.

Ascending to the throne in 1952 at the tender age of 25, Queen Elizabeth II met five different popes during her lifetime. Each of these meetings was significant; the queen was not only head of her state, she was also the supreme governor of the Anglican Church of England and her titles included "defender of the faith".

She travelled to the Vatican five times, the first in 1951 before she ascended to the throne. The most recent was a visit paid to Pope Francis at the Vatican in April 2014, when she gifted the Pope a food hamper filled with local delicacies and a bottle of Balmoral whiskey.



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and Pope Benedict XVI greet guests as they walk through the gardens at the Royal Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh, Scotland, September 16 2010. Photo: CNS/Reuters.

She was also the first British sovereign to welcome a pope to England when she greeted Pope John Paul II in London in 1982, while Pope Benedict XVI visited in 2010.

Here is a look back at some of the visits and their significance.

## Pope Francis

On April 3, 2014, on what was the royal couple's first overseas trip in three years, Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, met with Pope Francis in the Vatican.

The royal visit took place as the Vatican and the United Kingdom were marking the

100th anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. Formal ties were broken in the 1570s after Pope Pius V excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I, who had reasserted the Church of England's independence from papal authority.

The Vatican described the meeting as "official, but informal".

After a 17-minute private meeting, the Pope and the queen exchanged gifts. Pope Francis presented the couple with a facsimile of Pope Innocent XI's order extending the cult of St Edward the Confessor.

St Edward, king of England in the mid-11th cen-

tury, is venerated by both Catholics and Anglicans. Then, saying it was "a gift for you personally", Queen Elizabeth gave the Pope a large basket of food from the estates surrounding her homes; the items included an assortment of honey, a dozen eggs, a haunch of venison, shortbread, juice, preserves and Balmoral whiskey.

## Pope Benedict XVI

Pope Benedict XVI's first meeting during his four-day visit to the United Kingdom in September 2010 was with Queen Elizabeth II in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Pope Benedict said it was a "very cordial meeting, characterised by the sharing of several profound concerns for the well-being of the world's peoples and for the role of the Christian values in society."

Queen Elizabeth received the pope in Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, a former Augustinian monastery, along with more than 400 distinguished guests.

She expressed her delight at welcoming Pope Benedict to the United Kingdom, recalling with great pleasure "the memorable pastoral visit of the late Pope John Paul II to this country".

## Pope John Paul II

Queen Elizabeth met with Pope St John Paul II three times over a 20-year period, twice in the Vatican and, perhaps most notably, once in England in 1982.

"For the first time in history," said Pope St John Paul II after he stepped off the airplane in May 1982, "a Bishop of Rome sets foot on English soil."

The visit, it was quite firmly emphasised by both states, was a pastoral one rather than official. No formal representative of the queen was at the airport, and there were no government officials. Nonetheless, Queen Elizabeth welcomed Pope John Paul II to Buckingham Palace for tea.

Two years previously, in October 1980, Queen Eliza-

beth and Prince Philip had conducted an official visit to the Vatican where they were greeted by the Polish pope.

The queen visited Pope John Paul II once more in the year 2000, having in the intervening years attended a Catholic service at Westminster Cathedral in London for the first time since ascending to the throne in 1952.

Both Pope John Paul and Queen Elizabeth expressed their hopes that the jubilee year held to mark the end of the second millennium would bring progress in Christian unity and in assistance to the world's poorest people.

## Pope John XXIII

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip had an audience with Pope John XXIII at the Apostolic Palace on May 5, 1961. The pope expressed his "deepest personal esteem" for the queen for bearing "the weight of such vast responsibilities with so much simplicity and dignity".

## Pope Pius XII

One year before Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne, she met Pope Pius XII as a princess in 1951. Footage from the visit is available online, showing the young princess as she steps out of the plane from Malta for a short holiday in Rome.

**i Additional reporting by the Catholic News Service.**



Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, holds up a bottle of whiskey as he and Britain's Queen Elizabeth II present gifts to Pope Francis during a meeting at the Vatican April 3, 2014. Prince Philip, the longest-serving consort of any British monarch, died April 9, 2021, at age 99, Buckingham Palace, 17 months before Queen Elizabeth II. Photo: CNS.



# The pressure to conform to a Catholic image



Popular images of the practicing Catholic ought not to be mistaken as essential elements of the Faith, writes  
**Jason Osborne**

**F**or the younger generations of Catholics, the internet is now an inextricable part of their experience of the world. I believe I grew up in the last years that weren't entirely permeated by the internet, largely via smartphones, and so I enjoyed some blessed peace, quiet and space to develop as a child, without the attitudes and opinions of the world crowding in on me.

**“A lot of Catholic content online has rolled with this trend and contributed to its popularisation, too”**

That time is gone now, for both me and for them. The internet is, for better or for worse, a necessary part of life in today's world. That being the case, it's equally fair to say we live in a hyper-connected age, in which fashions, trends and the aforementioned attitudes and opinions have unprecedented access to us, and as a result, are forming young minds and behaviours in a hitherto unseen way. This process is no less at work among young Catholics than it is among their secular counterparts, although the kind of content they're being formed by is likely to be slightly, if not entirely different.

tions of this I've noticed in recent years, although maybe it's always been the case and I was just too young to notice, is that of adopting more traditional ways of behaving and dressing, particularly among young men. What does that involve? Wearing suits (often tweed), smoking pipes or cigars and abandoning some modern behaviours with which there's not necessarily anything wrong – such as using technology, in some instances.

## Freeform age

It's important to note that there's absolutely nothing wrong with any of this, and that it's quite an understandable development in such a fluid and freeform age. A lot of young men, particularly converts and reverts to Catholicism, are looking to clean up their act as they age – much as I was and am – and adopt new ways of looking and being as they do so. Donning a suit instead of a tracksuit, appreciating the wind in your hair and the sun on your face instead of getting lost in another app, can all be outward manifestations of an inner rebellion against laziness and addiction, and that's to be commended.

A lot of Catholic content online has rolled with this trend and contributed to its popularisation, too. Two major Catholic presences: Matt Fradd's Pints with Aquinas and Sam

are replete with images of beer steins, pipes, tweed suits, cigars and more. Again, all of these elements can make for wonderful pastimes, interests and appearances, and they're often to be found alongside very wholesome Catholic content in online circles such as these.

While I never took to the pipes or cigars, I did go through a phase of wearing a suit to Mass, as often as I could. It can be a good way to make an effort for the most special moment we can be a part of in this life, but the reality was that as a young man with limited income and a more limited collection of suit jackets, trousers and shirts, it was quite unsustainable. Did this mean I was allowing earthly circumstances to dictate the effort I was making for God?

**“Following Christ should make us more like him, and if it makes us more like anyone else, that's a happy coincidence”**

Of course not, and I believe that the issue with the prevalence of a popular image of an active, engaged Catholicism is that slowly but surely pressure will accumulate to adopt that image, whether the pressure is internal or external. Externally, you may be unlucky enough to encounter people who make no pains to disguise their judgement of you for not 'making the effort' for Mass or any other holy occasion, while internally, you may wonder whether, by not adopting the image, you're as engaged with your faith as those who don the tweed suit and season their Catholicism with steins



Again, this isn't so much bashing the image I've described as criticising the possible side-effects of such an image becoming popularised, as it seems to be. Wonderful men who've done great service to Christendom, such as C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and G.K. Chesterton are the archetypes of the image I've been describing, but I feel it's worthwhile saying that we don't all have to look and act like the recent giants of Christianity, so much as their master: Christ.

Following Christ should make us more like him, and if it makes us more like anyone else, that's a happy coincidence. A popular St Catherine of Siena quote goes, “Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire,” and it rings true. Moving closer to Christ brings you closer to yourself than anything else, and the pressure you may feel to conform to a certain image of Catholicism, as the one I've described, is most assuredly not a required stepping-stone on the path to the saintly-state.

help and self-actualisation advice as people quite unconsciously thirst to discover the person God made them to be. We as Catholics can only help them do that if we embody Christ in all of our beautiful diversity, shunning the narrow boxes that the world seeks to press us into. Humans have a nose for falsity in some ways, filled with the desire for the good as we are and an image-based Catholicism unlikely to pass the test.

## The niche

If you're a regular tweed-wearer, pipe-smoker, internet-eschewer or enthusiast of any of the other activities that fit into the niche I've described, take this article as by no means denigrating your loves. However, if you're coming across these accessories on-or-off-line and wondering whether they're an essential part of Catholicism in the 21st Century, rest assured that they're not. The Church needs saints in t-shirt on TikTok and making the pioneer



# Queen Elizabeth: A Protestant monarch applauded by Catholics as a fine Christian



Queen Elizabeth II speaks with Pope Francis during a meeting at the Vatican in 2014. Photo: CNS



**In a secularising world, her religious faith has indeed been a beacon, writes Mary Kenny**

**W**hen Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne in 1952 she would have been regarded as essentially a Protestant monarch.

This was factually the case. Every British monarch since the Hanover dynasty in the 18th Century has been pledged to defend the Protestant faith; up to the reign of George V (acceded 1910) the affirmation was not only Protestant – it was quite directly anti-Catholic, repudiating “Rome and all her superstitions and idolatries”. Edward VII loathed this formula, but in 1901, the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury forbade him from altering it. He begged his son, George, to have it amended, and he did, to the simpler: “I am a faithful Protestant and will uphold the Protestant succession.”

At her solemn coronation, Elizabeth, too, was sworn to uphold the Protestant faith.

And yet, by the time of her death, Elizabeth was universally described just as a Christian, with a strong personal faith which was deeply meaningful to her. She prayed every night of her life and she attended church every Sunday, unless there was a serious impediment. Every Christmas, in her broadcast, she spoke about her Christian faith, and how much it sustained her. And Catholics came increasingly to see her not as a ‘Protestant’ monarch, but as a woman of faith who shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ – and did her best to live by that gospel.

In one sense, Elizabeth’s life was a kind of ecumenical journey, as Christians opened up more to one another – especially after Vatican II – and came to respect one another’s faith values. Barriers were broken down – not all, but many – as Elizabeth showed undiminished warmth toward family converts to Catholicism, like the Duchess of Kent and Lord Nicholas Windsor. And Catholics freely attended Anglican services, and began singing hymns that had been associated with the Church of England, or, the Methodists and Evangelicals – great compositions such as *The Lord is My Shepherd*, *Bread of Heaven* and *Amazing Grace*.

**“Elizabeth had to tread that delicate line of keeping steadily to her own Christian ideals, while accepting that the values of society were changing; she had to remain principled and yet non-judgemental”**

## Road bumps

And Elizabeth’s own pathway through life contained those lessons, and road bumps which correct us and teach us humility. One of the measures of her evolution was in the sound of her voice. In the early years, it was the high-pitched, slightly autocratic tone of an upper-class Englishwoman. Lord Altrincham – the writer John Grigg – provoked national fury when he described the Queen’s voice, in 1957, like that of “a priggish schoolgirl... a prefect and a recent candidate for Confirmation”. He attacked the “tweedy entourage around her”, as well.

**“We can all learn from those who criticise us, and as the experience of life rolled on, she had many adjustments to make”**

Malcolm Muggeridge had also described the young Queen as “dowdy, frumpish and banal” and both men were physically assaulted by members of the public for their utterances. Royal persons do not usually respond to criticisms and Elizabeth said nothing. But she took the correction, and gradually, her voice moderated to something less didactic.

She was taught to be controlled but she could introduce subtle notes, and even more subtle pauses when she spoke. On the 2011 state visit to Ireland, she apologised for “things we wish had been done differently” and with a faultlessly-timed pause, adding “– or not at all”: that was a Queen’s speech which spoke volumes.

We can all learn from those who criticise us, and as the experience of life rolled on, she had many adjustments to make.

She had been brought up to deplore the dissolution of marriage. Her uncle, Edward VIII – shockingly – abdicated to marry a twice-divorced American. The Church of England anathemised this, as did the Church of Ireland, Scotland, Canada and New Zealand. Famously, her sister, Princess Margaret, was restrained from marrying a divorced man in 1955. No divorce could be presented at court, or be admitted to the Royal Enclosure at Ascot, until 1968.

## Prohibitions

Elizabeth had upheld these Christian prohibitions against divorce, and yet, she had to see three of her own offspring divorce. She had to accept that her son and heir would marry a divorcee, and that her grandson, like the Duke of Windsor, would wed a divorced American.

Elizabeth had to tread that delicate

line of keeping steadily to her own Christian ideals, while accepting that the values of society were changing; she had to remain principled and yet non-judgemental.

She was to be humbled by her own failures: there were critics who said that she must have erred as a mother if three of her children had failed marriages, and her favourite son, Andrew, had behaved so unedifyingly. All these matters, she would have pondered in her heart.

**“In a secularising world, her religious faith has indeed been a beacon”**

But the duty of a Christian is to accept the criticisms, and just keep on keeping on as best one can. As she did. Just as Christians have to forgive: she extended a hand of reconciliation to Martin McGuinness, even though it was known that he had been involved in Lord Mountbatten’s assassination.

The British Crown is still a Protestant institution, and the prohibition remains against any Catholic succeeding to it (there are reckoned to be over 50 Stuart Catholic claimants). Charles III has said that he will vow to be “defender of faiths” – in the plural – rather than simply of the Church of England, and we shall see if that comes about.

Yet who could have predicted that Elizabeth II, so identified as a Protestant monarch at the start, could have been, finally, so appreciated by Catholics as, simply, a genuinely fine Christian? In a secularising world, her religious faith has indeed been a beacon.



# Elizabeth II was determined to mend UK-Ireland relations



We have lost a model for peace and reconciliation, writes **Baroness Nuala O'Loan**

**T**hese have been sad days for so many people in Britain and across the world. In her 70 year reign and her 96 years of life, Queen Elizabeth II seems to have become 'the queen' for so many countries - even leaders of republics like France have spoken in the last few days of her as 'the queen', not the Queen of England or the UK, but simply 'the queen'.

One might wonder why. I think that, to some degree, it is because she gave so generously and warmly of herself in all her work. As a little girl it was not anticipated that she would become queen. It was only when her Uncle David abdicated and her father became King George VI that her life changed utterly. Then she became the heir to the throne, with all that that entailed.

The model presented by the queen over those 70 years has been one of true fidelity to her faith, concern for her people and commitment to her duty. It has seemed to me that she sacrificed so much in the course of her reign, always putting country first.

## Faith

She was a woman of great faith - we all know that. She was a very private woman. When she spoke publicly, it was as the queen: she was 'Defender of the Faith' and Supreme Governor of the Church of England. She spoke of her faith, particularly at Christmas, but for the most part she simply lived it, reaching out to those of other denominations and faiths - she met five Popes during her life (see page 12) and when she died Pope Francis praised her for "her steadfast witness of faith".

It was steadfast - she had her share of challenges and real difficulties as we all do. She was not overcome by them, seeming always to trust in God and carry on.

She understood her role as monarch as being her primary duty. As a result, it seems to me that she made enormous sacrifices in



Queen Elizabeth II flanked by then-President Mary McAleese laying a wreath at the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin in 2011.

terms of her private life. Before she acceded to the throne she had been a young mother of two little children with some freedom. Becoming queen changed her life utterly.

**“It was steadfast - she had her share of challenges and real difficulties as we all do”**

She knew that as queen she must travel and be seen by people. The long weeks of touring in other countries, away from her children must have exacted a real toll on her, Prince Philip, her children and her wider family, yet she knew that to know her as queen the people needed to see her, and that she also needed to know of them. That meant she had to be away a lot. We know that she loved her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I think that the breakdown of relations between the two princes, William and Harry, must have been a source of great grief to her, their grandmother. It is to be hoped that it can be healed.

It must have been really challenging to wake up morning after morning and know that people would be waiting for you, that your visit would mean so much to them, as was the case, and yet there was

rarely time to really speak to people. Always the officials were at her side, gently moving her on; keeping her to schedule yet limiting the opportunities for real engagement.

She was, I think, a woman of great courage - 'the Troubles' existed throughout decades of her reign, and, whilst she always avoided politics, she was clearly determined to do what she could to mend the difficult relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom.

## Troubles

The Troubles affected her and her family very profoundly in 1979 when 79-year-old Lord Louis Mountbatten, a 15-year-old boy from Sligo, Paul Maxwell, Mountbatten's grandson 14-year-old Nicholas Knatchbull and the Dowager Lady Braebourne were all murdered by an IRA bomb in their boat, as they enjoyed a day on the sea off Mullaghmore. Others were seriously injured. It was a terrible event, and brought the queen and her family right into the suffering experienced by so many during the Troubles.

Since then she has worked with three Irish presidents to heal the wounds of division, firstly with President Mary Robinson. Then in May 2011, as a guest of President Mary McAleese, she laid a wreath, bowing silently and solemnly, at the monument to those involved in the 1916 Easter Rising, visited

Croke Park where 14 civilians were killed by British forces in 1920, and spoke movingly at the state banquet in Dublin Castle addressing those assembled in Irish, "A Uachtarán agus a chairde" - "president and friends", she spoke at length about the mutual history of these islands and then said: "to all those who have suffered as a consequence of our troubled past I extend my sincere thoughts and deep sympathy." It was a very significant moment.

**“It must have been really challenging to wake up morning after morning and know that people would be waiting for you”**

When writing to the two presidents Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese, she signed her letters "Your good friend, Elizabeth R" She welcomed President Michael D. Higgins on his state visit to Britain in 2014, and on her death he said, of that visit, that together they had "set out a new forward-looking relationship between our nations - one of respect, close partnership and sincere friendship".

## Significant

In 2017 in Belfast she shook the hand of former IRA Commander

Martin McGuinness. Another very significant moment.

She worked for peace and she encouraged those who worked for peace.

I met her on a number of occasions - at lunches, garden parties and receptions, and when I received my DBE from her in 2008, an unexpected recognition of my work as Police Ombudsman. She was 83-years-old, yet she stood alone and unsupported for hours pinning awards onto people's jackets. She had a word for everyone, seemingly unprompted by anyone. When my turn came, I was astonished when she asked me a question about a particular political issue which was causing problems at that time. To carry that level of information and to engage in that way was extraordinary. I was glad to have got an update on the issue that day, so I was able to answer her question. She always seemed to be so well informed and to understand so much!

After her great state funeral, I contemplate her family's loss, and I remember a good woman, who in her constancy, commitment and courage lived her faith day by day no matter what happened. Her son, echoing that faith, said in his first public address as king, "Darling Mama, may flights of angels sing thee to thy rest".

May she rest in peace.



# Veteran journalist launches new book on Irish Catholicism

## Chai Brady

About 80 people attended an intimate gathering in a Dublin bookshop for veteran journalist and author Mary Kenny's book launch.

The way we were: *Catholic Ireland Since 1922* focuses on Mrs Kenny's experience of Ireland and the role played by Catholicism in Irish society.

Mrs Kenny was in discussion with author and *Irish Times* journalist Derek Scally who wrote *The Best Catholics in the World*. They spoke about the legacy of Catholicism in Ireland and whether Irish people should feel proud or ashamed of the past. RTÉ broadcaster Sean O'Rourke moderated the September 7 event.

The book was published by Columba Books.



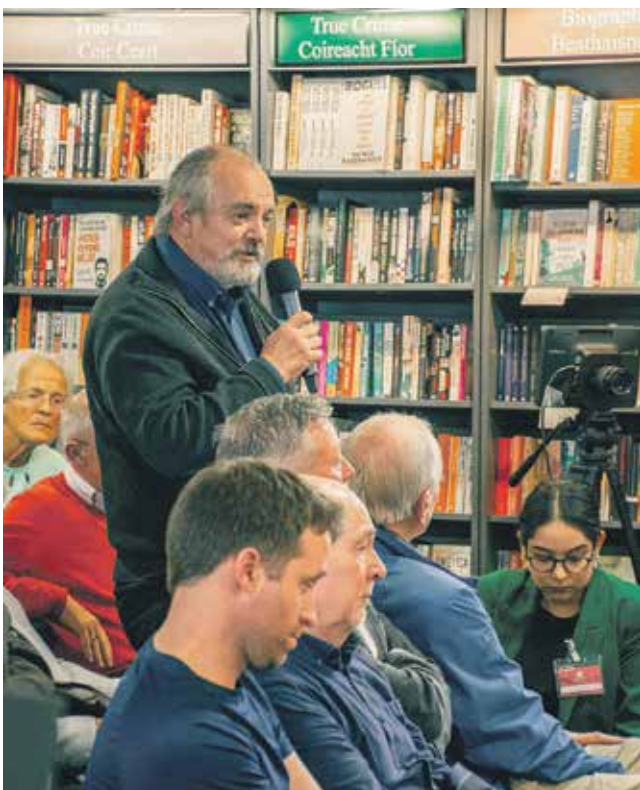
Author and veteran journalist Mary Kenny in discussion with *Irish Times* journalist Derek Scally (right) with RTÉ broadcaster Sean O'Rourke moderating at the launch of Mrs Kenny's new book *The way we were*. Photos Alexis Sierra.



A young attendee asks a question during the Q&A session at the launch of *The way we were* in Hodges Figgis in Dublin City Centre.



Author Mary Kenny speaks to an attendee at her book launch in Dublin.



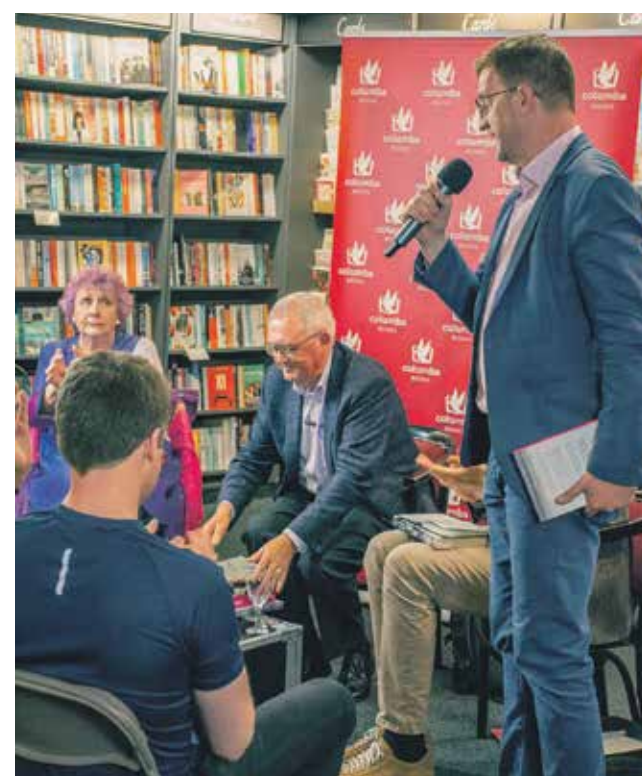




Mary Kenny signs her book.



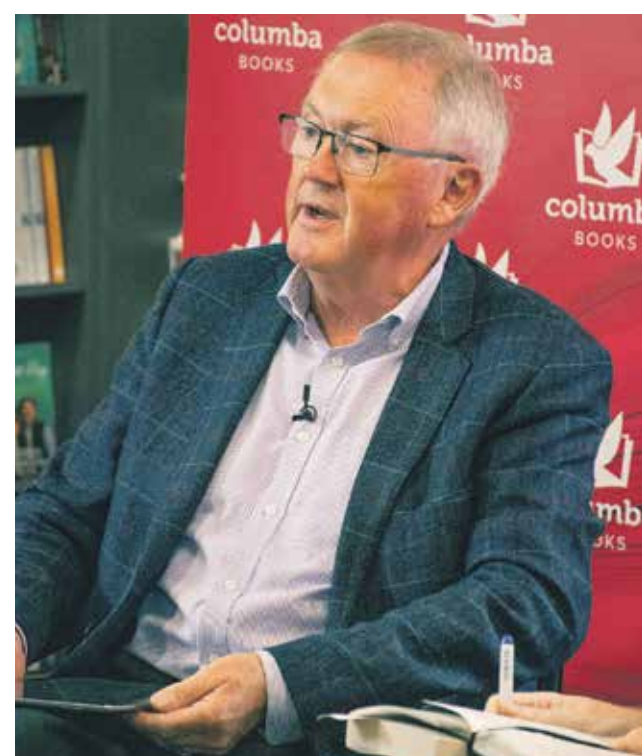
Mary Kenny and Derek Scally in discussion.



Publisher of *The way we were* Garry O'Sullivan of Columbia Books introduces the speakers at the launch.



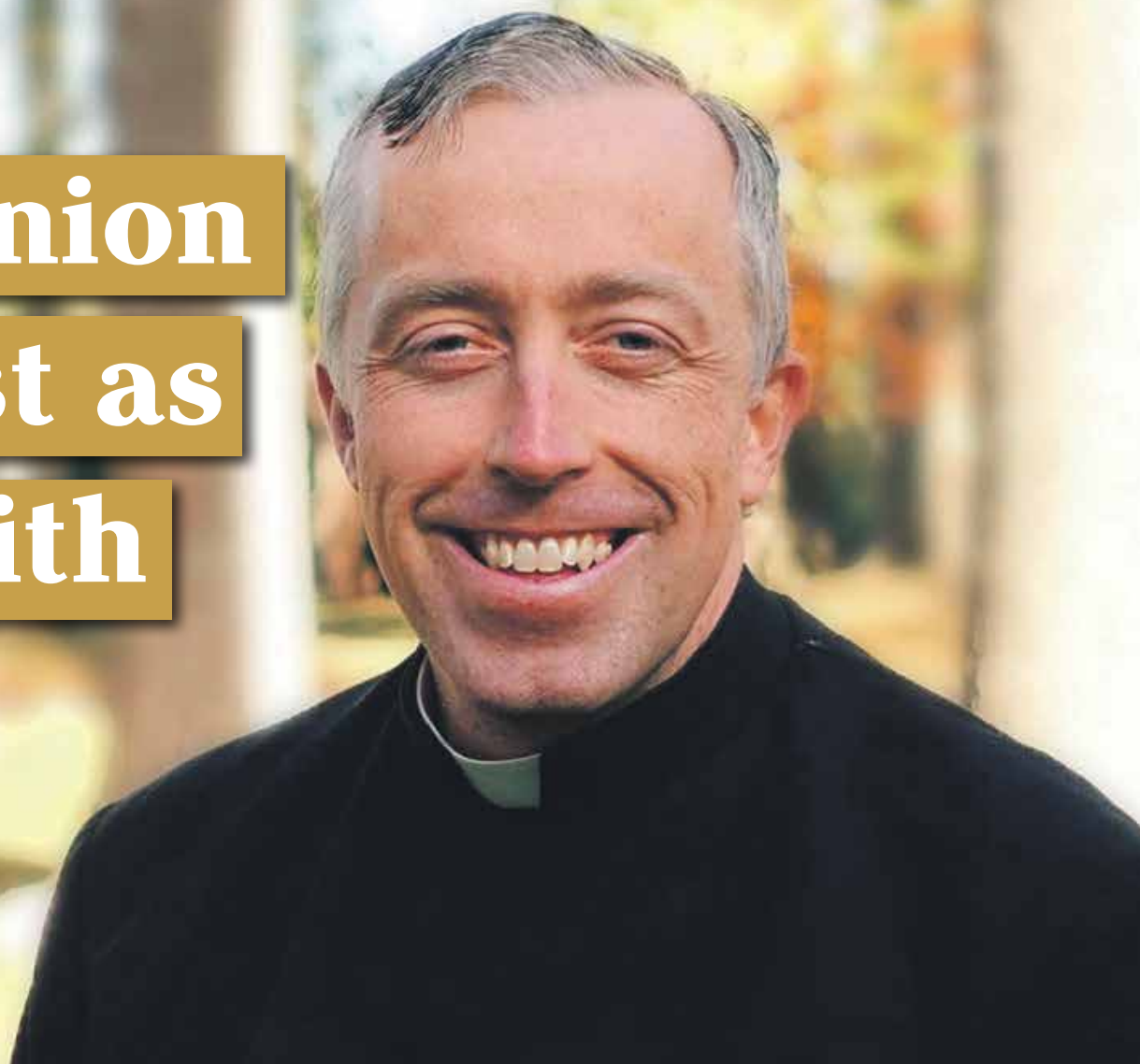
The room begins to fill up before the launch.



RTÉ journalist Sean O'Rourke who moderated the discussion at the book launch.



# In communion with Christ as a priest with autism



The body of Christ has many autistic members and Fr Matthew Schneider LC is keen to raise awareness of that fact and minister to them, hears **Jason Osborne**

**F**r Matthew Schneider LC, was already ordained a priest just over two years when he was diagnosed with autism at the age of 34. Initially shaken by the development, Fr Schneider says researching the condition helped him to appreciate his strengths and what he has to offer the Church and the people he ministers to.

**“Doing very well in academics growing up, he was saddled with the nickname ‘Schneider-paedia, like Wikipedia or encyclopaedia’ during his years studying theology”**

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Canada-born but US-based priest Fr Schneider says that although he always recognised that he was “a little different” it wasn’t until he was assigned as chaplain to a K-12

school that he was posed concrete questions.

“My first assignment was chaplain to a K-12 school as a Catholic priest, and, especially with the littler kids, I really wasn’t picking up on their social cues at all, and I didn’t do a good job as chaplain. That’s what actually led to my autism diagnosis a few years later,” Fr Schneider says.

“When I was diagnosed, at first, I really felt down. I thought, ‘Oh, my life is a disaster’. I just felt, ‘Oh my goodness, I have this huge condition and that’s something I have to worry about now’. I was all worried driving home from the psychologist’s in the car.

“But then, over the next few weeks, I took up reading a lot on autism...and that helped me realise both the strengths and weaknesses of it. It helped me realise, ‘Ok, like I’m not going to pick up always on the social cues as good as other people, but in other things, I can be very good’,” Fr Schneider explains.

## Theology

Doing very well in academics growing up, he was saddled with the nickname “Schneider-paedia, like Wikipedia or encyclopaedia” during his years studying theol-

ogy. Being particularly strong in that regard, Fr Schneider realised that could translate well into certain ministries and hence his posting as a theology professor made good sense.

**“Another way in which Fr Schneider’s autism affects him is light sensitivity he says, while admitting that it’s not too bad for him”**

“I know my theology backwards, forwards and upside down. I’m able to teach it and explain it well to others. I’m able to grasp the social cues enough for being a professor. I might not be great if I was chaplain to a school or pastor to a parish, in that sense. It would be more of a challenge there,” he says.

Asked about what his experience of autism is like, Fr Schneider says that “a lot of it is just realising that so many other people do so much subconsciously

that I was doing consciously”.

“That’s not to say one’s right or one’s wrong, it’s just how our brains work, and the fact that it’s conscious, it’s going to be not nearly as good because we’re generally better at our subconscious processes than our conscious processes,” he says.

He offers as an example the fact that for his entire life, his brain has been sending a message beneath the level of his conscious awareness instructing his heart to beat, “and it hasn’t missed it once”.

“We can consciously control our breath too but most of the time we aren’t, we’re just breathing, we aren’t thinking, ‘Breathe in, breathe out’, right? Whereas at the same time, for a lot of social cues for most people, it’s like going through subconsciously, and then you can consciously work it out, whereas for me a lot of times, I’m consciously working it out in normal interactions, and so it can be more difficult and it can be more exhausting. Working as a professor, it works fine. I think I’m fine with that, and that’s where I am right now,” Fr Schneider says.

## Light sensitivity

Another way in which Fr Schneider’s autism affects him is light sensitivity he says, while admitting that it’s not too bad for him.

“I have a few other things like I’m somewhat sensitive to light. Autistics tend to have some kind of variation in sense experience. I’m somewhat sensitive to light, I’m not super sensitive. I’m fine with normal lights in my office,

but I go outside, I’m always the first one to put on sunglasses. I’ll be outside and I’ll be in sunglasses and 95% of the other people won’t be yet, because it’s not that bright, but to me it’s already bright enough. But that’s again, not way out there, but it is a little bit different in that regard.”

**“Foremost among them is the importance of consistency and repetitiveness for autistics when it comes to religion”**

He’s quick to compliment his parents on how they raised him, with both of them being “just very much ok with those differences”. With Fr Schneider coming from a computer engineering background, the psychologist that diagnosed him said that had he continued on in that world, it’s likely he wouldn’t even have been diagnosed.

“Even the psychologist when I was diagnosed said had I stayed at computer engineering and gone into a tech-type job, I probably never would have been diagnosed and would have been able to more or less function without the diagnosis.

“Because in a lot of tech jobs, the quirkiness, the lack of social skills, there’s a certain stereotype to the computer programmer or the engineering guy who designs it, and because of that stereotype,



which is a little bit more quirky and a little bit less good at reading social cues, which is a lot of where my experience of autism comes out, it's more accepted in a field like that than it is in a lot of other fields."

“Sensory issues are also a big topic when it comes to the autistic experience of Catholicism, and religious services in particular”

The easy way in which some forms of autism can slip below the radar is perhaps to be expected, as Fr Schneider says that he often thinks of it as “like a different brain structure,” in that a lot of it is that there isn’t the same degree of subconscious filtering that other people have.

When it comes to the experience of Catholicism as an autistic, Fr Schneider says that of course it’s similar in many ways, but that there are some key differences. Foremost among them is the importance consistency and repetitiveness for autistics when it comes to religion.

“I think for example in Mass, one of our struggles can be executive functioning, which is kind of like scheduling out and ordering things, and so because we like that consistency and that repetitiveness, we know what’s going to happen. Like, for example, myself, when I was in college, I went to an event at a Protestant evangelical-type Church because I had a friend who was a part of it, and it just felt like you didn’t know what was coming next which made it a more difficult experience to have, whereas I go to Catholic Mass and I know, ‘Ok, here’s this part, this part, this part’.

“I wrote something for a broader Christian audience and it said even if you just want to maintain Protestant theology, if you’re autistic, you’re probably going to work better in a liturgical one, like an Anglican service versus an evangelical service where you don’t know, are we going to have a song next or are we going to have preaching? Are we going to have an altar call? Whereas, as much as there are issues with Anglicanism theologically, for an autistic, that kind of experience of a very consistent liturgy is a huge help for us in the Mass and things like that,” he says.

Sensory issues are also a big topic when it comes to the autistic experience of Catholicism, and religious services in particular. Fr Schneider says that there’s a “huge issue” with aspects of Church-life being too loud or too bright for autistics in attendance. Fortunately, though, there are parishes in the US putting measures in place to make Mass and other services more accessible for those with autism.

“A decent number of parishes in the US have started a sensory-friendly Mass or reverse-cry room. The idea for the reverse-cry

room is – I don’t know how common it is in Ireland, but in the US, most churches, at least the newer ones, were built with a back room that was originally designed as a cry room, like, the baby’s crying in Mass, you take the baby into the back so that it doesn’t disturb everybody else.

“But what they can do is at one Mass, you take that and reverse it, because that back room is separate from the rest of the Church as far as sound and things for that reason, you can take that, turn down the volume on the speaker, turn down the lights in there, and make it a sensory-friendly experience for a few autistics in the parish, so they can come to Mass without feeling overwhelmed in that sense. It doesn’t really cause much of an issue to the rest of the parish in that regard, either.”

**Catholicism**

Keen to make the autistic experience of Catholicism more visible and to provide resources for those with autism, their families and friends, Fr Schneider wrote a book called *God Loves the Autistic Mind: Prayer Guide for Those on the Spectrum and Those Who Love Us*. In it, he explains some aspects of the autistic experience of prayer, which I was eager to ask him about.

“There’s a number of things in prayer just in how we experience it because, for example, for us a lot of times, we will stim [repetitive or unusual movement or noise], we’ll do some kind of motion to actually calm ourselves,” Fr Schneider explains.

“So like, the idea of – they have the verse.....”Be still and know that I am God”, and a lot of us

“He offers as an example the fact that for his entire life, his brain has been sending a message beneath the level of his conscious awareness instructing his heart to beat, ‘and it hasn’t missed it once’”

think of prayer, you have to have a very still posture, but if for you, rocking back and forth in a chair or moving your hands actually stills your mind, you’re actually being stiller in a way and following through on that prayer, more than were you forcing yourself to sit perfectly still.

“He does this because, after his diagnosis, he realised just how little was out there for Catholic or Christian autistics”

“Because your mind is not calmed down from that [effort to still yourself], your mind is disturbed by that. Or, for example, a lot of times we have that difficulty understanding social cues, and that can be a challenge as we first start going into deeper prayer beyond just vocal prayer, like saying the Our Father or the rosary, to an intimate dialogue with God. But once you get to a certain stage, we can actually go faster because we don’t have that filter that the others have. We

struggled at first, but now that’s actually like, it allows us to be closer to God in a way,” he says.

In terms of the autistic dialogue with God that Fr Schneider alludes to, he says that Jesus communicates with him and other autistics in “an autistic way”.

“I think in that sense, all of us see Christ in different ways. I think myself being a member of the Legionaries of Christ, I’m going to see it in a way related to my community and to me, there are aspects that are autistic in just how Jesus communicates to me in an autistic way.

**Conversational**

“Like, as an autistic, normal conversational English is almost like a second language with non-autistics, because the social cues, the non-verbal communication is so different – with autistics and non-autistics. But speaking with Jesus, because Jesus comes to us as we are and he communicates to us in a way that corresponds to who we are, like he communicates to someone else in Chinese or Spanish, he’s going to communicate to me in a way that matches my autistic English, and not necessarily a way that kind of, forces me out of my normal state into that,” he says.

As mentioned, Fr Schneider is using his gift for writing and catechesis to educate the Church and the world on the interaction of faith and autism, and he does so through social media, Youtube and his writings. He does this because, after his diagnosis, he realised just how little was out there for Catholic or Christian autistics. That helped him to realise that he ought to use his platform to be public about it and contribute to the body of writing.

“I also think it’s good to destigmatise different psychological conditions. There’s a bishop who talked about how he’s taking a break because he’s so depressed and he needed to get into therapy more, and those kinds of things are good I think because it helps people out.

“And then I think in my own ministry, it also led me to realise, ‘Ok, I’m probably better at being a professor than being a pastor or a school chaplain or something like that’. I can do other things as well like writing a book, talking about autism, helping out those on the spectrum at the same time and those kinds of things with my ministry, so I think in that sense there’s two aspects of the ministry,” Fr Schneider says.





# Killeshin volunteers rewarded for worthy service

**Ruadhán Jones**

Presentations to parishioners in Killeshin, Co. Carlow, were made in thanksgiving for the time they give to their local church, Saturday,

September 10.

Mass celebrated by Fr John Dunphy took place in Holy Cross Church, Killeshin, in honour of volunteers who take care of the church and maintain the local Mass rock.



Eamon and Geraldine Brennan with their grandchildren Eoghan and Naoise. Photos: John Reid



The Hennessy family were acknowledged for their ongoing commitment to Holy Cross Church.



Members of the Holy Cross altar society who clean the church every week receive a painting of the church. Pictured are Geraldine Hennessy, Siobhan Galligan, Annette Monaghan and Vera Bolger.



Larry, Orla and Lisa McHugh.



Maureen and Gerry O'Regan with grandson Páidí.



Karen and Eoin Barry with their son Peter.



Clare Moran accepted a print of the Mass Rock painting on behalf of the Moran family for their service to the local Mass rock in Keelogue Killeshin.



Aoife Mullins accepted this gift on behalf of her grandmother Margaret Mullins former sacristan of Holy Cross Church for her devotion to her ministry.



# Out&About

## Meeting the 'Living stones'...



**HOLY LAND:** Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem – Lieutenancy of Ireland arrive in the Holy Land for their 10-day pilgrimage to meet with the 'living stones' and view the projects which the Order supports financially to maintain a Christian presence in the Holy Land.



**HOLY LAND:** Tour Guide Bader Abu George Rafadi, Dame Veronica Holohan, Chevalier Jim Holohan, Dame Eleanor Hurl, Chevalier Dr Frank Hurl, Archdiocese of Dublin, pictured in Cana.



**HOLY LAND:** Chevalier Thomas Kilduff, Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem – Lieutenancy of Ireland meeting with Bishop William Shomali the General Vicar and Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem and Fr Tarek Abu Hanna, Vice Rector Beit Jala Seminary near Bethlehem to discuss the funding of seminarians and their studies.

### IN SHORT

#### Concern appoints new CEO

Concern Worldwide have appointed Accenture senior executive, David Regan, as its new Chief Executive Officer, following an extensive recruitment process.

Mr Regan has served in a number of voluntary roles with the Irish charity in the past. He was elected as chair of the board and in more recent years also served as a member of the board's programme, monitoring and evaluation committee.

Announcing the appointment, Chair of Concern's Board Donal D'Arcy praised Mr Regan's passion for social justice, adding that he has a "wealth of experience".

"David has worked across many different countries and cultures and is widely respected for his leadership, commitment and professionalism," Mr D'Arcy said in a statement.

"His experience with Accenture's public sector clients around the world includes organisational strategy and transformation and major technology programmes."

#### Irish Govt gives €3.2 million for Horn of Africa crisis

The Irish Government will distribute €3.2 million in funding to respond to the effects of drought in the Horn of Africa.

Almost half of this money will be given directly to Irish charities, including Trócaire, Concern and Christian Aid Ireland, to meet the needs of those worst affected by food insecurity in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

The funding comes on top of €74 million already allocated to the humanitarian response in the Horn of Africa over the last 18 months.

Minister for Overseas Development Aid and Diaspora Colm Brophy recently visited the region, meeting with Irish religious to discuss the extent of the crisis.

Announcing the funding, Minister Brophy said: "This drought is unprecedented and has left millions of people without any means to provide for themselves.

"We urgently need our international partners to step-up to save lives."

#### Columbarium coming to Ards Friary

Planning permission has been granted for Donegal's first columbarium at Ard Mhuire Capuchin Friary.

Bro. Philip Baxter submitted for planning permission earlier this year. Donegal County Council recently approved the application, meaning that people who wish to be cremated can have their ashes interred in the grounds at the Friary.

Speaking on Highland Radio, Bro. Baxter said that people often come to Ards with the intention of scattering ashes on or near its grounds, so being able to inter ashes there now is a great development.





**MAYO:** Richard Staunton led a group of pilgrims from Malta on the Tóchar Phádraig Pilgrim Path recently. They are pictured here on Church Island.



**SOUTH SUDAN:** Sr Orla Treacy is pictured with Minister Colm Brophy, who has responsibility for Overseas Development Aid and Diaspora, on his visit to Juba, South Sudan, September 3.



**DUBLIN:** Smiling students from St Mary's Secondary School, Baldoy, receive their Leaving Certificate results, September 2.



**CLARE:** Bishop Fintan Monahan visits the Poor Clares Ennis, rounding off the diamond jubilee celebrations for Sr Francis Collins, September 2.



**CORK:** Minister for Education Norma Foley visits St Joseph's national school, Charleville, with TD Michael Moynihan, September 6.



**ROME:** Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey (left) and Bishop of Kilmore Martin Hayes (right) are pictured with Cardinal Mario Grech at the recent course for new bishops, September 2.



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



**KILDARE:** Candidates for the diaconate for the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin are pictured with Bishop Denis Nulty in Solas Bhride, September 2.



**LOUTH:** The friars and the voices of St Augustine presented Sarah Collins-Dowdall with a card and voucher for her retirement as an altar server after eight years serving in the Augustinian church in Drogheda, September 5.



**ENGLAND:** Graduate of St Mary's University College, Belfast, Ciara Fowler, who has taken the name Sr Cooley, is pictured making her first profession with the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph, September 5.



**GALWAY:** Bishop of Clonfert Michael Duignan conferred the Papal Honour *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* on Eamon Lally, Sean O'Dwyer and Terry Doyle. They are pictured with family and friends, September 4.

## ANTRIM

Pathways adult Faith development programme, a two-year, part-time course, is now enrolling for 2022-2023 intake. The course runs one Saturday per month (10am-4:30pm) from October to June, either in-house at Drumalis, Larne or online via Zoom. To register, contact 028 28276455/28272196 or email maura@drumalis.co.uk.

## ARMAGH

The Dromantine retreat and conference centre is hosting an understanding suicide workshop. It runs from 9.30am-4.30pm Saturday September 24 at a cost of £40. Contact Jacinta/Louisa on 048 3082 1964 or admin@dromantineconference.com

## CORK

Cobh cathedral Alpha course to explore questions of faith begins September 15 and will run for 12 weeks. For more information or to book contact: Fr Tom 086 161 5216 or cobhalphalpha@gmail.com.

'Life in Spirit' Seminar commencing Friday night September 23 and subsequent Friday nights in Glash Community Hall, Glash, Newmarket P51W024. For more information contact Pat on 087 250 5528.

## DONEGAL

A triduum in preparation for the feast of St Padre Pio (St Pio of Pietrelcina) will take place at the Franciscan Friary, Rosstownlough from Tuesday September 20 until Friday 23. There will be Mass, homily and blessing with his mitten at 7.30 pm each evening. Preacher: Fr Pius McLaughlin OFM, who met Padre Pio.

## DOWN

Adoration takes place every Wednesday 2-4pm in Christ the Redeemer, Lagmore.

## DUBLIN

An auction in aid of Monks-town Schoolhouse restoration takes place Friday September 16 at 7:30 pm in Monkstown Church. Viewing on Thursday 15 from 2-4pm and 7-9pm and Friday 16 from 2-4pm. Auction includes antiques, paintings, silver,

jewellery, collectables, books and treasures of every description.

Mass for the anointing of the sick will take place on Sunday September 25 in St Patrick's Church, Ringsend at 3pm.

## FERMANAGH

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will take place each Tuesday from 10.30am-9pm at the Crypt Chapel, St Michael's Church, Enniskillen.

## GALWAY

Poor Clares Galway are hosting a monastic experience day, Saturday September 24 from 10am-5pm. If you are under 40 and would like to know more about the Poor Clares' way of life, contact vocations@poorclares.ie.

## KERRY

A Season of Creation free Zoom talk takes place September 22, focusing on the vital role of soil and water with speakers: Thomas O Connor, organic farmer and Talamh Beo, and Catherine Seale-Duggan, Local Authorities Water. To register, visit www.dioceseofkerry.ie.

## KILDARE

An African Mass is held on the third Sunday of the month in St Brigid's Church, Kildare at 2pm.

## KILKENNY

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

## LIMERICK

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in the Adoration Chapel Abbeyfeale, every Friday after 10am Mass until 8pm.

The Glenstal Liturgical Conference takes place October 29-31 on the theme 'Recovering Liturgical Space'. The conference explores different aspects of the community's liturgical experience when gathered in the space of worship. Cost: €95 for a single day, €230 for the full conference. Contact litcon@glenstal.org to book or for more information.

## LOUTH

Cancer prayer support group for men and women who have or have had cancer takes place Wednesday

September 21 and 28 in the "Bethany" House of Prayer, 34 Point Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth A91 WOC 9. A time of relaxation, meditation and prayer followed by tea/coffee from 11am-12 noon. Contact: 00353 429 331 602. No fee – donations gratefully accepted.

## LEITRIM

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

## MAYO

A weekend dedicated to Padre Pio will take place in Knock International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine September 17-18, including a seminar on Padre Pio's life and legacy on the Saturday.

## TYRONE

Youth 2000 country barndance takes place Saturday, September 23 at the Mellon hotel, Omagh. From 6pm-late, includes dance lesson, dinner, barndance. Cost is £30/€35, strictly for 18s and over. Wild west attire suggested. Contact office@youth2000.ie.

## WATERFORD

The Chosen: Season 2, a nine week zoom series, takes place Tuesdays October 4 to November 29 from 8-9:15pm. Registration is essential, contact events@waterfordlismore.ie

## WESTMEATH

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

## WEXFORD

A 'Come and See' vocations discernment residential weekend will take place in Ballyvaloo Retreat Centre, Blackwater from September 16 to 18. It is open to men 18 and over who would like to know more about the priesthood as a beautiful way of life and vocation from God. For further information contact Fr Billy Swan at: billyswan68@hotmail.com





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Ciborium with Eucharist stolen from Colombian cathedral

● Fr Gonzalo Marín García, a priest of the primatial cathedral of Colombia in Bogotá, said in a statement released September 6 that a ciborium containing the Eucharist that was used for daily Mass has been stolen from the cathedral.

Fr Marín said the Archdiocese of Bogotá wanted to inform the general public “that in recent days a small ciborium where the Eucharist is reserved and is for daily use was stolen”.

The priest explained that the liturgical vessel is “approximately 15 centimetres in height” (about 6 inches) and was “recently manufactured,” so “it was not part of the artistic, religious, and patrimonial collection kept in the cathedral”.

Fr Marín reported that a complaint has already been filed with the authorities, so that a “corresponding investigation” could be conducted.

### Local diocese prays for victims of Canada stabbings

● Following a stabbing spree in rural Canada that left at least 10 dead and 18 injured, the local Catholic diocese is praying for victims and first responders.

“Please keep in your prayers the victims and families who have been touched by this senseless violence and who are now grieving and struggling

to cope with the loss of their loved ones,” Bishop Stephen Hero of Prince Albert wrote September 6.

The attacks were carried out September 4 on the James Smith Cree Nation, an Indigenous community, and in nearby Weldon, in Saskatchewan province about 40 miles southeast of Prince Albert.

### Filipino mall exhibits more than 50 images of Our Lady

● The oldest major shopping centre in the Philippines exhibited more than 50 Marian images to celebrate the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The exhibition “Salamat Maria: Tribute to the Beloved Mother’s Birthday” was inaugurated September 1 and was open until September 10 at the Ali Mall in Quezon City.

Ali Mall property manager Aileen Ibay said in a September 7 statement: “Together with our partner Marian devotees, we open this exhibit to show the love of our community to Mama Mary in time for the celebration of her birthday.

“It is our aim to strengthen the fervent faith of mall-goers and ignite devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary,” Ms Ibay said.

### US pro-life groups condemn new all-trimester abortion clinic

● An abortion clinic outside Washington, DC, is preparing to open its doors to women seeking abortions into the third trimester of pregnancy.

The co-owner identifies as a former Catholic.

Partners in Abortion Care, located next to the University of Maryland (UMD) in College Park, will offer abortions up to 34 weeks of pregnancy — six weeks before birth — beginning this autumn. Thirty-four weeks is considered roughly 10 weeks past the point of viability, when a baby can survive outside the womb.

“90% of Americans reject late-term abortion in the third trimester,” SBA Pro-Life America President Marjorie Dannenfelser responded in a press release.

“At 34 weeks, unborn children are able to recognise familiar songs and stories and prefer looking toward faces. There is no question they are human.”

## Pope honours nun killed by Islamist terrorists in Mozambique

Pope Francis in his Angelus address on Sunday honoured an Italian missionary sister who was killed by Islamist terrorists in Mozambique.

Speaking from the window of the Apostolic Palace on September 11, the Pope said: “In this moment of prayer, it is dear to me to remember Sr Maria de Coppi, Combonian missionary, killed in Chipene, Mozambique, where she served with love for almost 60 years.

“May her witness give strength and courage to Christians and all the people of Mozambique.”

Sr Maria de Coppi was shot and killed last week as terrorists ransacked and burned the Catholic mission where she served in Mozambique’s Diocese of Nacala.

The Italian priests and sisters who served at the mission were able to evacuate 68 students who were living at the mission before the church, boarding houses, rectory, and school were destroyed in the five-hour attack on the night of September 6.

Sr Maria was about to flee with the other missionaries when she turned back out of concern for the 12 female students who had stayed behind at the mission, according to the pontifical charity Aid to the Church in Need.

The 83-year-old religious sister left a voicemail for her niece, Gabriella Bottani, shortly before her death, the Italian newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* reported.

### Tense

In the voicemail, Sr Maria said that Al-Shabaab insurgents were close to the mission and the situation was “very tense.”

“It appears that they are armed, that they have already kidnapped people, killed someone,” she said.



Pope Francis speaks during a recent audience. Photos: CNS

“Wherever they pass, they carry out massacres.”

Churches have been burnt, people beheaded, young girls kidnapped, and hundreds of thousands of people displaced by escalating extremist violence in Mozambique in recent years.

A missionary in Mozambique told Aid to the Church in Need that the local insurgents who have been targeting Christians in the region have ties to the Islamic State.

During Holy Week in 2020, insurgents perpetrated attacks on seven towns and villages in northern Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado province, burning down a church on Good Friday and killing 52 young people who refused to join the terrorist group, according to the local bishop.

More than 1,000 people have been killed in attacks in Mozambique since 2017, according to the Centre for

Strategic and International Studies. Some of these attacks were claimed by the Islamic State, while others were carried out by the homegrown Ahlu Sunna Wal, an extremist militant group, locally known as Al-Shabaab, which has been kidnapping men and women.

Mozambique’s President Filipe Nyusi said that on September 6, “As a result

of terrorist attacks, six citizens were beheaded, three kidnapped, six terrorists were captured, and dozens of houses torched in the districts of Erati and Memba, Nampula province.”

Bishop Alberto Vera of Nacala said that the attackers “destroyed everything” at the Chipene mission.

### Vandalised

“The attackers broke open the tabernacle and vandalised part of the sacristy, looking for whatever they could find — probably money,” he added.

Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the president of the Italian bishops’ conference, paid tribute to Sr Maria, saying that her sacrifice “will be a seed of peace and reconciliation” in Mozambique.

“We cry for another sister who with simplicity, dedication, and silence offered her life for the love of the Gospel,” Cardinal Zuppi said.



Sr Maria de Coppi

## German synodal way organisers vow to ‘take it to’ Rome

After bishops blocked a vote demanding changes to the Church’s teaching on sexuality at the German Synodal Way September 9, organisers voiced their displeasure with the outcome and vowed to “take it to” Rome.

One of two presidents of the Synodal Way, Bishop Georg

Bätzing, expressed “personal disappointment” that a blocking minority of bishops prevented the document pushing for changes to the Church’s teaching on homosexuality, bisexuality, gender identity, and masturbation from being officially adopted.

While nearly 83% of the

synodal assembly in Frankfurt voted in favour of adopting the text, titled “Living in Successful Relationships,” only about 61% of the bishops did.

The document on sexuality, therefore, fell just short of a two-thirds majority, as 21 bishops rejected the text and three abstained, while 33 bishops

voted for the document’s adoption, reported CNA Deutsch.

Under the statutes of the German process, not only must two-thirds of the members present vote in favour of a text for it to be officially adopted, but two-thirds of the bishops present must vote “yes” as well.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
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## Three cheers in Chile



Supporters of the "I Reject" option react to results of the referendum on a new Chilean constitution in Concepción September 4. Chilean bishops are calling for a new, inclusive agreement after the proposed constitution was rejected. Photo: CNS/Rodrigo Garrido, Reuters.

# Eritrean government rounds up teens from church services

Places of worship have become the latest target for the forced roundup of Eritrean teens to serve as soldiers, in what clerics describe as a deteriorating situation.

For two years, 15- and 16-year-olds have been taken from towns and villages. Some are ending up on the front lines in the war in Ethiopia's northern state of Tigray, according to the sources.

"A few weeks ago (Eritrea) resumed the confiscation of schools run and owned by the Catholic Church. (As if) this was not enough, now there are roundups of young boys and girls aged 16 ... for compulsory military service without end," Fr Mussie

Zerai, a Catholic priest of Eritrean origin who works with migrants, told Catholic News Service September 7.

"They do it in places of worship as happened last Sunday (September 4) in the Eparchy of Segheneity, in the village in Akur at the Catholic parish of Medhanie Alem," he said.

The priest said the soldiers arrived during Mass and surrounded the church to prevent anyone from escaping. They proceeded to take the teens by force, including all the boys of the choir in their uniforms, said the priest, pointing at photographs widely circulated on social media.

"These young people who end up in military training camps and then (would) be sent as slaughter fodder in the wars underway in the region, particularly in neighbouring Ethiopia," said Fr Zerai.

He warned that if the regime continues raiding places of worship, there was a risk that young people – fearing the forced recruitment – would abandon the churches.

"The sacred right of every believer to go to church to pray without being persecuted by the military or police in their country is a fundamental right of every human being," said the priest.

For 20 years, the government of Eritrean President

Isaias Afwerki has implemented a national service program for all citizens 17-55 years old.

According to Human Rights Watch, many Eritreans have spent their entire lives in the service of the government, in either military or civilian capacity. Many of these recruited are picked directly from secondary schools, according to the human rights organisation.

The forced recruitments have resulted in many 18- to 24-year-olds fleeing the country, including making the dangerous journey across the desert and Mediterranean Sea toward Europe.

## New UK Health chief under fire for pro-life views

A Catholic Member of Parliament who was appointed to the role of Health Secretary in the UK has come under fire for her pro-life views.

Following the announcement that Liz Truss, the previous Foreign Secretary, was to replace Boris Johnson as the UK's new Prime Minister, it was later announced that Therese Coffey had accepted the new role of Health Secretary, prompting scrutiny from some quarters about the influence of her Catholic faith.

Clare Murphy, chief executive of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, told the BBC that she was deeply concerned about the appointment, given that Ms Coffey recently voted against making at-home abortion pills permanently available to women in England and Wales.

She said that Ms Coffey's vote went "against the advice of leading medical bodies including Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Midwives and the BMA." She added: "To have a health secretary who would place

their personal beliefs above expert clinical guidance is deeply concerning."

But Ms Coffey has already made clear that she does not intend to change the law relating to abortion.

Ms Coffey has previously said that she would "prefer that people didn't have abortions but I am not going to condemn people that do".

Therese Coffey previously served as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions from 2019 to 2022 and has long described herself as a practicing Catholic.

## Vatican roundup

### Pope Francis shares nuclear war concerns

● The role of the Church in a world shaken by war and other global issues was the subject Pope Francis raised with his diplomatic representatives around the globe September 8.

"Unfortunately, Europe and the entire world are shaken by a particularly serious war, due to the violation of international law, the risks of nuclear escalation, and the grave economic and social consequences," the Pope told almost 100 apostolic nuncios and permanent observers of the Holy See.

The diplomats are gathered in Rome for their triennial meeting from September 7–10.

In his official address, Francis thanked the diplomats for bringing his closeness "to peoples and Churches," saying his representatives had been "points of reference in moments of greatest disorientation and turbulence".

The Pope recalled that "the storm of the Covid-19 pandemic" had forced everyone "to make various restrictions in our daily lives and in our pastoral activity".

"Now the worst seems to be over, and thank God we can meet again," Francis added.

The Pope said that the nuncios had also participated actively in the consultation stages of the Synod on Synodality.

But, unfortunately, he said, not only Europe but also the entire world is shaken by a "war of particular gravity".

### Papal almoner to make fourth visit to Ukraine

● Polish Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, papal almoner, will embark on his fourth visit to Ukraine on Pope Francis' behalf, the Vatican announced.

In a statement released September 9, the Dicastery for the Service of Charity said Cardinal Krajewski would visit the cities of Odesa, Zhytomyr, Kharkiv and other locations in eastern Ukraine "in these days".

Most likely for security reasons, the dicastery did not specify how or when the cardinal would be traveling.

In its statement, the dicastery said the purpose of Cardinal Krajewski's visit was to provide

support to "various communities of faithful, priests and religious, and their bishops, who for more than 200 days continue to remain in the places of their ministry despite the dangers of war."

"It is a silent and evangelical trip to be with the people who are suffering, praying and comforting each of them, showing with his presence that they are not alone in this situation that is only bringing destruction and death," the dicastery said. The cardinal also will deliver aid "through the Caritas offices of the various dioceses," the statement read.

### Vatican Library launches new scholarly journal

● The Vatican Library, one of the world's oldest libraries, has launched a new scholarly journal to help promote high-quality research, dialogue across cultures and sharing knowledge related to the library's holdings, said Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Vatican librarian and archivist.

The Vatican Library Review "aspires to be an attractive place to publish high-quality, peer-reviewed research by actively hosting and allocating contributions," the cardinal wrote as an editorial in the journal's first issue.

The editorial was republished by the Vatican newspaper September 7.

The cardinal invited scholars to submit their contributions, adding he hoped readers would explore each article regardless of their personal field of interest and "join us in this two-fold endeavour of scientific rigor and cross-cultural dialogue".

Some of the articles in the first issue included, An Unpublished Illuminated Codex from Catalonia in the Vatican Library and Visual Kabbalah in the Italian Renaissance, The Booklet of Kabbalistic Forms.



# Letter from Lebanon

## ‘Reality still bleak’ for Lebanon’s Catholic schools amid economic crisis

Doreen Abi Raad

**I**n Lebanon, teetering on the abyss of a socioeconomic crisis, the future of Catholic schools is at risk.

Melkite Fr Youssef Nasr, secretary-general of Lebanon’s Catholic schools, said the school year was opening amid “a major life and existential crisis that stifles the breath of the entire nation and threatens the future of education”.

“We have tried during the past year to confront this crisis with all our might” and “to prevent any school from closing its doors in these difficult circumstances,” Fr Nasr said.

Fr Nasr noted that donors, both local and international, played “an important role in keeping the doors of our schools open”.

Since the onset of Lebanon’s economic collapse in late 2019, the once-middle income country has now become a place where nearly 80% of the population is poor.

### Mission

At a September 6-7 meeting of bishops, heads of religious orders, school administrators, teachers, parents and government representatives, Fr Nasr stressed that every Catholic school “is an urgent need that embodies the educational mission of the Church,” as it keeps the Faithful in their villages, provides education for students and job opportunities for teachers “and extends a helping hand to everyone in need”.

“The reality is still very bleak,” Fr Nasr said. “The political situation is getting worse, and the economic crisis is getting more complicated, which puts us at a dangerous crossroads.”

**“Since late 2019, the Lebanese currency has lost more than 90% of its value”**

“Our main concern is, what would be the impact of the demise of Catholic education in Lebanon on the youth, on the family, on the Church and on the homeland?”

Cardinal Bechara Rai, Maronite Catholic Patriarch, told meeting participants a Catholic school is distinguished by “its commitment to the mission of the Church” and “its openness to everyone, without discrimination”.

“The life of communion gives the Catholic school the face of a synod, which means walking together and mutual listening,” Cardinal Rai said.

Lebanon’s Catholic schools have a historical role of educating stu-



Students are pictured during class at École Épiscopale de Jabboulé in Lebanon at the end of 2021. The school is run by the Notre Dame du Bon Service congregation. Photo: CNS/courtesy Aid to the Church in Need.

**“Lebanon’s Catholic schools have a historical role of educating students from all religions, Christian and Muslim alike”**

dents from all religions, Christian and Muslim alike. In Muslim-majority regions, up to 90% of the students are Muslim.

Known for their high level of academics, the schools are typically trilingual, with students learning in Arabic, French and English.

Most recent figures from the secretary-general show that there are 185,000 students in Lebanon’s 360 Catholic schools.

### Concern

Parents are facing the new school year with concern over how they will pay tuition fees, let alone all the daily necessities for their families that have become out of reach.

Since late 2019, the Lebanese currency has lost more than 90% of its value, fuelling triple-digit inflation and destroying purchasing power.

As part of its ongoing response to Lebanon’s dire situation, the pontifical agency Aid to the Church in Need announced September 7 its “Back to

School” aid program in Lebanon, which will benefit 30,000 students and more than 6,000 teachers in nearly 200 Catholic schools.

**“The life of communion gives the Catholic school the face of a synod, which means walking together and mutual listening”**

“For centuries, Catholic schools have been a pillar of the Christian presence in Lebanon. Today, these schools face immense pressures that might erase them from Lebanon. If the schools disappear, many Christian communities could become historical footnotes. For Christianity to survive and remain relevant, the schools need our support,” said Edward Clancy, director of outreach for Aid to the Church in Need in the US.

ACN’s \$2.28 million aid package includes tuition aid for families;

stipends for teachers; installation of solar panels for some Catholic schools and materials for students.

### Stipends

The stipends are a necessity for teachers who, like employees in all sectors in the country paid in Lebanese currency, have seen their salaries devalued amid the currency crash such that earnings previously equal to \$1,000 are now worth \$50.

With some 300 days of sunlight, solar power is a viable solution to Lebanon’s deplorable electricity situation, particularly for schools.

Lebanon’s state electricity provider currently supplies power only for about two hours a day. Private generators must fill in the gap. Skyrocketing fuel costs with the currency crash have rendered that option impossible for many families and schools alike.

“This is one of the nightmares for the operation of schools,” Mr Clancy said.

As Lebanon’s crises continue, “The great risk is that Catholic schools will be forced to close, which would also be a long-term disaster for coexistence between religions, since these institutions play a vital role in maintaining relations between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon that are an example of coexistence for the entire Middle East,” Mr Clancy said.

**“The great risk is that Catholic schools will be forced to close, which would also be a long-term disaster for coexistence between religions”**

For the third consecutive year, Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III Younan announced that the patriarchate is exempting Syriac Catholic students from school fees for the entire academic year in the community’s schools in Lebanon, as well as providing school aid for many Syriac Catholic children in other schools in Lebanon, “considering this step a cornerstone in the service of the mission of education that has always distinguished the Church”.



# Catholic Church works to battle 'fake news' in Brazil's election campaign



**Eduardo Campos  
Lima**

**A**lthough the electoral campaign officially started on August 16, the attacks against the two leading presidential candidates in Brazil – current President Jair Bolsonaro and former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, commonly referred to as Lula – has been growing on social media since last year.

Much of it is “fake news” related to religion, something that has been worrying the Brazilian bishops.

Over the past few weeks, for instance, thousands of people have been sharing on social media a text saying that da Silva tried to enact a decree in 2010 “banning Christianity from Brazil”.

Fact checkers like the Portuguese language service of Reuters Fact Check clarified that Lula's decree included a provision about the need to develop “mechanisms to prevent the display of religious symbols in public buildings of the federal government”. The idea was criticised by the Catholic Church and ended up being cut from the final version of the decree, which was approved in 2010.

**“During his 2003-2010 administration, no measures were taken against Christian churches in Brazil”**

The lies appeared as part of a smear campaign against Lula – who has been consistently leading the polls one month ahead of the October 2 election – attempting to associate him with the anti-Christian persecution led by left-wing regimes in other Latin American countries.

During his 2003-2010 administration, no measures were taken against Christian churches in Brazil. Lula is Catholic and has historical connections to the progressive wing of the Church in Brazil. The Lib-



**Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro. Photo: CNS.**

eration Theology movement was deeply involved in the creation of his Workers' Party in 1980.

## Lies

Nevertheless, lies accusing the former president of wishing to implant a “Nicaraguan-like regime in Brazil” have become more and more common.

“All political groups may spread disinformation – even the press may do it, when it makes a mistake. But several studies have shown that the far-right intentionally disseminates fake news,” said Magali Cunha, a communications researcher who leads Coletivo Bereia, a factchecking group specialising in false stories about religion.

That is why lies against Lula have been much more common than the disinformation against Bolsonaro, Ms Cunha said, recalling that “the 2018 campaign, when the current president was elected, was entirely based on fake news”.

“It is already clear that Bolsonaro's supporters have no intention to present and discuss his political platform. Instead, they are prioritising propagating fake news against the president's opponents again,” she added.

She also claimed that due to the current president's strategic use of lies, most fact checkers are immediately accused of being members of the opposition.

“Being labelled as an enemy of Bolsonaro is inescapable for fact checkers now. But groups like Bereia, factchecking agencies, and universities will not give up,” Ms Cunha said.

## Support

Despite being Catholic, Bolsonaro gets much of his strongest support from Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches. The president is married to a Baptist, and often attends services with her. He is also supported by Evangelical-controlled news websites.

“Some of the most visited Evangelical portals have been spreading fake news – and such content also reaches Catholics, many times through social media,” Cunha said.

Coletivo Bereia was one of the groups that collaborated with the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB) to train agents of the Communications Pastoral Ministry (Pascom) to identify the lies.

Earlier in August, 300

Pascom workers from all regions of the country took part in a course about the dissemination of disinformation during electoral campaigns, the basic procedures to identify fabrications, and the ways to spread such knowledge among their fellow parishioners.

**“The CNBB itself has been a constant target of fake news campaigns over the past few years”**

“The formal training of pastoral agents against fake news, a terrible evil, is a sign that CNBB is willing to take ahead its struggle against disinformation,” Auxiliary-Bishop Joaquim Mol Guimarães, CNBB's Communications head, told *Crux*.

He said that the Church in Brazil has been dealing poorly with the spread of fake news among Catholics – at times concerning the Church itself.

“The segments of the Church that are reactionary, identify with authoritarian stances, and pretend

to be an advocate of the conservative agenda – a segment that includes bishops and priests – are not aligned with the struggle against fake news because, I imagine, they need it to build a victorious activism,” he said.

## No cases

Bishop Guimarães emphasised that there have been no cases of “bishops who have taken drastic, profound, and adequate measures” against priests or laypeople due to the dissemination of fake news.

“We hear of a certain stupor and also fear of acting. Many prefer to be silent. There is a great incongruity between the Brazilian episcopate's rhetoric against fake news and its concrete actions against church members who perpetrate such crime,” Bishop Guimarães said.

The CNBB itself has been a constant target of fake news campaigns over the past few years. On its Facebook page, it is common to see comments from conservative Catholics accusing the conference of being communist and of supporting Lula.

The highly polarised

political context in Brazil is a central issue, said Vinicius Borges Gomes, a Communications professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais.

Mr Gomes taught in Pascom's course.

“Fake news reaches the people's emotions and most intense opinions. That is precisely where religiosity is, given that it involves emotion and dogma. So, religion is fertile soil for fake news,” he told *Crux*.

Mr Gomes, himself a former Pascom agent, said that social media has been aggravating the problem because it tends to allow people to exist in bubbles with people who only share their views.

“Fake news is seen as true by people who want it to be true,” he said.

But at times people disseminate lies even though they know they are lies, he added. “Even Catholics do that kind of thing,” he said.

In the opinion of Bishop Guimarães, Catholics should be aware of the great damage caused by disinformation.

“Fake news is an expression of the worst of mankind,” the bishop said.



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Our Lady and the defeat of communism in Russia

**Dear Editor,** Mikhael Gorbachev would seem to have played, unintentionally, an important role in the unfolding of the Message of Fatima. On March 25, 1984 Pope St John Paul II, in accordance with the request of Our Lady, consecrated the world including Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The following year Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the most senior political position in the party. His meetings with Ronald Reagan and other world leaders soon brought an end to the Cold War which had hung over Europe since 1947. An era of comparative peace ensued.

His policies of *perestroika* (restruc-

turing) and *glasnost* (openness) led to further major changes.

In 1988 he introduced a new law granting freedom of conscience (religious freedom). In 1989 Gorbachev met Pope John Paul II, resulting in the establishment of Russian/Vatican diplomatic relations. In 1990 the first religious ceremony since the 1917 Bolshevik revolution took place in the Cathedral of the Assumption, inside the Kremlin.

On October 13, 1991, for the first time, a Russian pilgrimage went to Fatima. The International Mass and ceremonies (75 minutes) were shown live on television in Russia.

Two months earlier a failed coup-d'etat by communist hard-liners led to

the demise of the Communist Party, the main vehicle for spreading atheistic communism. Russia was thus officially converted from its atheistic ideology in 1991.

*Time* magazine for its end-of-year issue on December 30, 1991 chose the face of Our Lady for its cover picture. Its main article was about her. It discussed Pope John Paul II's belief that the fall of communism came about through Our Lady. The following sentence in the article was high lighted: "The world will recognise in due time that the defeat of communism came at the intercession of the Mother of Jesus".

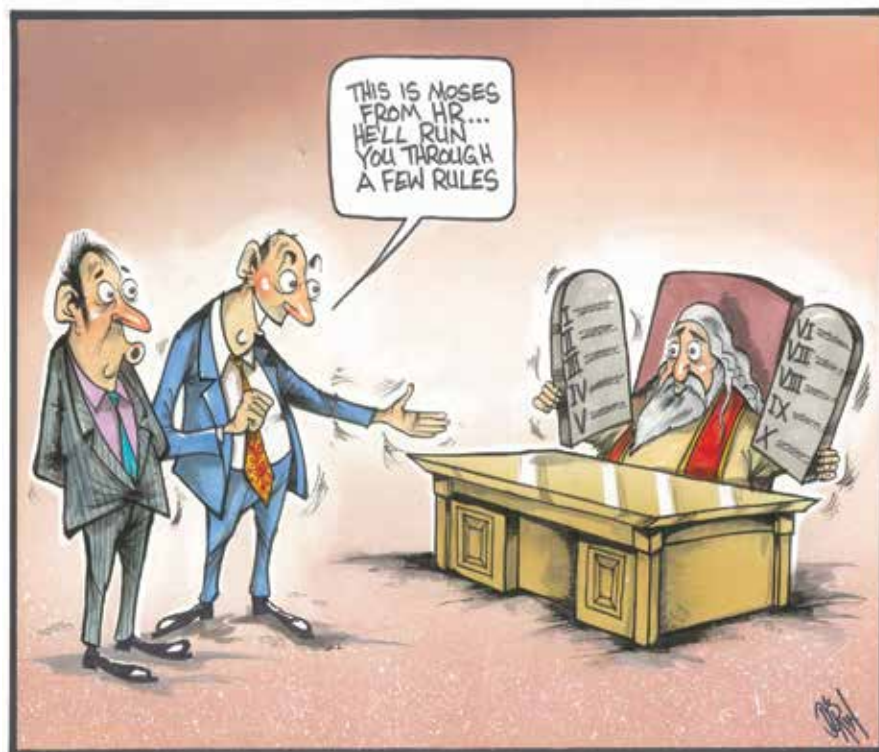
Yours etc.,  
**Lauri Duffy,**  
Howth, Dublin 13

## Let pro-life voices be heard at March for Life

**Dear Editor,** It is important for all people of good faith to get out on the streets of Dublin on September 17 at 2.30pm and let our pro-life voices be heard. The March for Life is an important and joyous event that shows the country that a third of us still oppose abortion. There are many who wish to silence pro-life voices and pretend that we don't exist – they find the truth upsetting.

While advocating for the end of abortion, as was in your article about the march [*The Irish Catholic* – September 8] we must also advocate for women who find themselves in unplanned pregnancies. They must be given every option and support to help either care for their child themselves or put the child up for adoption. It would be hypocritical only to march against abortion and not push for better supports for young mothers.

Yours etc.,  
**Mary Duffy**  
Swords, Dublin



## Priests may come if celibacy is abolished

**Dear Editor,** It was interesting to read in the Editor's Comment [*The Irish Catholic* – September 8, 2022]: "The enthusiastic promotion of the permanent diaconate also begs the question as to why that level of enthusiasm cannot be found,

especially among priests, for promoting priesthood". The lack of priests could be addressed by allowing and encouraging married deacons, who are suitable and willing, to be ordained priests. Indeed, some priests, who left active ministry to get

married could be returned to pastoral priestly duties. The crux of the problem may well be the rule of the Church that priests must be celibate. Perhaps, if the compulsory celibacy regulation is removed more vocations to the priesthood may be

forthcoming.

It was certainly Saint John Henry Newman's view that change is essential in the life of the Church.

Yours etc.,  
**Daithi O'Muirneachain**  
Drumcondra, Dublin 9

## Promoting priesthood in a secular Ireland

**Dear Editor,** While it is welcome that so many men are going forward to become deacons, it is also worrying that there are so few priests [*The Irish Catholic* – September 8, 2022]. We must not forget that the ministry is very different and a deacon cannot give the sacraments.

Fewer and fewer men are going forward for the priesthood, which has been described as a 'vocations crisis'. There is a bigger crisis which is the

secularisation of Ireland. No one in secondary school is being told that becoming a priest is an option, young men are drifting away from the idea of religion – let alone the Catholic faith.

Young people hear nothing about the brave religious men and women who risked their lives overseas to help those in treacherous circumstances, or devoted themselves to the poor and disenfranchised of this country. The legacy of people who have given their

lives to God, and are a shining example of faith in action, must not be forgotten.

We must show children the example of these brave men and women in order to demonstrate the importance of Christian belief because these people are our best examples. This, I believe, is one of the best ways of promoting vocations to the priesthood.

Yours etc.,  
**Margaret O'Hara**  
Templeogue, Dublin

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

### Record numbers train to be permanent deacons

Such good news. Hope is everywhere. – **Deirdre Quinn**  
Permanent deacons play an important role in parishes here in England, so good to hear this is happening in Ireland also. – **Declan McSweeney**  
Brilliant news. Pity they aren't opening this up to women too who give so much to the Church. – **Erin Hutcheon**

### The Church needs more voices of renewal from Africa

Africa needs to implement adequate safeguarding standards across the board; it is staggering how unrealistic and deliberately unprepared the institutional church in Africa is when it comes to safeguarding minors and vulnerable adults. – **Vincent Doyle**

### Young priests hurt by 'rigid' stereotype in synod report

ACP seem determined to discourage orthodox vocations. I have witnessed orthodox seminarians having to go to English dioceses or religious orders because of obstacles being placed in their paths. – **Alan Whelan**  
Great priests dedicate their lives for the service of others. Not an easy job. – **Jacinta Newell**  
Happy are you when the world persecute you and speak evil against you great is your reward in heaven.... God bless our young priests who witness to Jesus and are not afraid to speak the truth. – **Kathleen O'Neill**

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

## Men and women are still answering vocational call

**Dear Editor,** Michael Kelly [*The Irish Catholic* – September 8, 2022] welcomes the good news that there are many men now willing to commit to the permanent diaconate in Ireland. However, he wonders why our priests are not advocating with the same enthusiasm for younger men to consider the priesthood compared to the permanent diaconate, which he rightly argues is a very different vocation as only a priest becomes 'persona Christi' at the consecration of the Eucharist, or in the Sacrament of Confession.

I think that there may be numerous reasons why, such as the fact that young single men are not as engaged with the Church as in the past, or that making a commitment to a life of celibacy in your teens or early 20s, is neither something that is attractive to many young men or more likely is something that needs much thought, so that the decision is not regretted at a later stage when thoughts of having a family become stronger. The good news remains that there are clearly men and women even if a bit older, who are willing to commit to their vocational call to ministry within our Church.

Yours etc.,  
**Deacon Frank Browne,**  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, September 15, 2022

## Personal Profile

A winding path  
to the priesthood

Page 32



## Making the school year a healthy one

**T**he return to school is a stressful time for parents more so than children, I'd wager. Children and teenagers have been getting back into the rhythm of things for a few weeks now, and the build-up to it involved the procurement of uniforms, schoolbooks, sports gear, pens, pencils and more. The parental effort of course doesn't stop there, with different things coming up for their consideration continually throughout the year.

One of the aspects of the school year that requires perhaps an unexpected amount of thought and creativity from parents, though, is school lunches. Children would be happy to eat



**We should focus as much on feeding the body with wholesome food as we do the mind during the school year, writes Jason Osborne**

their favourite foods day in, day out (if my childhood self is anything to go by), but the foods of their choosing aren't always the most...nutritious.

So it falls to parents to develop creative ways to deliver the nutrients their children need, while maintaining their interest at the

same time. Slapping a salad down in front of a child isn't as likely to result in a healthy child as in a tired and frustrated parent, cajoling their young one to finish their meal.

The focus of school is hopefully to fill young minds with edifying ideas and practices.

With humans young and old being a composite of mind and matter, why not give our kids the best possible platform by getting them into the habit of eating equally wholesomely?

### The food groups

Refreshers on the basics are useful, as we're prone to overlooking them for no other reason than that they're just that – basic. The last time many of us will have looked over a food pyramid will have been in primary or secondary school, but it's an invaluable guide to have to hand when considering your child's school lunch.

There are six different categories, which are:

ries, which are:

- Vegetables, salad and fruits – there should be five to seven servings a day.
- Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice – three to five servings a day (although this can be up to seven for teenage boys, and men aged 19-50)
- Milk, yoghurt and cheese – three servings a day (five for children aged 9-12 and teenagers between 13-18)
- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts – two servings a day
- Fats, spreads and oil – very small amounts daily

» Continued on Page 31



## Family News



## AND EVENTS

STOWAWAY  
SQUIRREL TRAVELS  
THE WORLD

A stowaway squirrel is being cared for by an animal rescue charity after travelling thousands of miles from India to Scotland onboard a ship, PA reports.

It is believed the animal spent about three weeks on the vessel and was finally caught by the crew three days before it docked in Aberdeen.

The North East Wildlife & Animal Rescue Centre (New Arc) charity was called to help by Pest Solutions in the city, who picked up the squirrel from the vessel, Deep Explorer.

New Arc is now caring for the palm squirrel, who has been named Zippy due to his speed, and is said to be doing well since the end of his long voyage.

Keith Marley, of New Arc, said: "It is a three-week trip from India and the crew got him three days before they got here."

"They looked after him and were feeding him grapes to keep him well after they took him into custody," Mr Marley said.

DUTCH CITY TO BE  
FIRST TO BAN MEAT  
ADS IN THE WORLD

The Dutch city of Haarlem is set to become the first in the world to ban advertisements for most meat because of its impact on climate change, officials have said.

The city of 160,000 people near Amsterdam has agreed to outlaw ads for intensively farmed meat on public places like buses, shelters and screens from 2024, AFP reports.

The move was approved by the city council in November, but went unnoticed until two weeks ago when a councillor announced he had officially notified advertising agencies.

"It will be the first city in the Netherlands – and in fact Europe and indeed the world – to ban 'bad' meat ads in public places," Ziggy Klazes, councillor for the GroenLinks party who drafted the motion, told AFP.

CHIMPANZEES DRUM  
TO THEIR OWN BEAT

The drum kit is the giant gnarled root of a tree in the Ugandan rainforest – and the drummer is a chimpanzee.

A new study found that not only do chimpanzees have their own styles – some preferring straightforward rock beats while others groove to more freeform jazz – they can also hide their signature sound if they do not want to reveal their location.

The researchers followed the Waibira chimpanzee group in western Uganda's Budongo Forest, recording the drum sessions of seven male chimps and analysing the intervals between beats.

The chimps mostly use their feet, but also their hands to make the sound, which carries more than a kilometre through the dense rainforest.

The drumming serves as a kind of social media, allowing travelling chimpanzees to communicate with each other, said Vesta Eleuteri, the lead author of the study published in the journal *Animal Behaviour*.

Acting on climate change  
can help health

**T**he impact of global warming on climate change may pose wider concerns that arise not just from the direct effects due to extremes of weather. A recent study published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* found that over half (58%) of 275 infectious diseases worldwide have been aggravated by climate change. In what is the largest study to date that reviewed 77,000 publications, researchers identified 10 ways in which climate change is leading to this increase. Conditions on the rise include dengue, hepatitis, pneumonia, malaria, lyme disease, Zika and anthrax but to name a few.

**“Changes in the climate may also increase suitability for reproduction, shorten incubation periods and increase virulence”**

So why is this happening? Firstly, higher temperatures in different parts of the world now means that species like mosquito are moving to new areas and the length of season for transmission of diseases like malaria is longer. For example, mosquito species native to the US Mid-Atlantic are turning up in states further north including Connecticut. Other mosquito-borne diseases like malaria, dengue and West Nile are also rising. Lyme disease, an infection carried by ticks has also been identified for the first time in colder places further north such as Nova Scotia in Canada. There is also evidence of an increase in the number of cases

Medical  
MattersDr Kevin  
McCarroll

of other tick borne infections in Europe. For example, tick borne encephalitis (TBE) is endemic in Eastern Europe, and recently cases of TBE have been identified in the UK. With warmer seasons, the period for transmission of these tick borne diseases is longer.

Changes in the climate may also increase suitability for reproduction, shorten incubation periods and increase virulence. People are also being brought closer to infectious pathogens as a result of extremes of weather. For example, drought has caused the congregation of mosquitoes and birds around remaining water sources facilitating the transmission of West Nile virus. Loss of natural habitats is also forcing disease-carrying animals, like rodents and bats, to live nearer to humans. Heatwaves are also associated with increasing recreational water-related activities that are linked with rising cases of diseases such as gastroenteritis and meningococcalitis.

## Lyme disease

In Ireland, one infectious condition that might be on the rise, due in part to climate change is Lyme disease. This is often not diagnosed but could affect up to 2,500 people every year. It is

caused by a bacteria carried by ticks which are found in deer but also in smaller animals including birds. While there are parts of Ireland where Lyme is well recognised, it has been known to occur all over. It also doesn't just affect rural dwellers as dogs may bring ticks into urban homes. After a tick bite, the bacteria infects the skin and may produce a characteristic rash in about 50% of cases. Unfortunately, it usually becomes bloodborne to many sites around the body and often results in non-specific symptoms such as fatigue and joint pain. However, it can also involve the nervous system and present with facial weakness or cardiac symptoms.



When symptoms are non-specific, the diagnosis is often not considered. Furthermore, the vast majority of patients have no recollection of a tick bite and antibody testing is only about 50% accurate at picking it up. Fortunately, it can be eradicated with a course of oral antibiotics, though with more chronic infection treatment may need to be for much longer. Due to widespread travel, people are also coming back to Ireland having been infected elsewhere and

with symptoms that may be put down to a 'mystery' condition. Unfortunately, while there is a growing awareness and understanding of Lyme disease, there are still probably many patients left undiagnosed.

The rise in some of these infectious conditions is a reminder of the complex interaction between humans and disease-causing organisms or viruses that can be upset by changes in climate, ecosystems and the environment.

**“A rise in the level of air pollution may also have negative effects, not just on respiratory but also cardiovascular health”**

Apart from any effects on the incidence of certain infections, climate change has also the potential to impact on health in several other ways. For example, increased UV radiation could result in an increase in skin cancers while cold and heat related deaths might also rise. A rise in the level of air pollution may also have negative effects, not just on respiratory but also cardiovascular health.

To conclude, action on climate change may have positive impacts on the health of our planet in more ways than originally envisaged.

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



» Continued from Page 29



● Foods and drinks high in fats, sugars and salts – not every day (ideally, once or twice a week)

On top of this, it's recommended that everyone drink at least eight cups of fluids a day, with water being the best option. So, how are you to go about getting some of that (the rest being covered by breakfast, dinner and snacking) into school lunches while maintaining your child's interest? It's not easy, but there are better and worse ways to do it.

### Get creative

Giving your child the same lunch every day might appeal to them, but it's not necessarily what's best for them. It's better to draw them out of themselves and fill them with goodness by creative means, which aren't necessarily a lot of work.

“Blending the vegetables your child isn't so fond of, like spinach, into a tasty smoothie is a good way to sneak vital nutrients into their diet”

For example, while the food groups can look intimidating when laid out like they are above, why not consider sending your child to school with a smoothie as part of their lunch? You can easily pack a number of the vital fruits, vegetables and dairy products into these, ticking a couple of the necessary boxes straight off the bat.

Blending the vegetables your child isn't so fond of, like spinach,

into a tasty smoothie is a good way to sneak vital nutrients into their diet. This tricky approach can be expanded to some foods, too, with the possibility of mashing cauliflower into mashed potatoes on the table, too.

Children are remarkably tactile and visually-oriented too, so you might have to apply your ingenuity to changing how a food feels or looks. Many fruits and vegetables can be peeled, and some foods can be cooked differently. A strange child, I couldn't stand cheese of any variety – except for when it was melted onto a pizza or toasted sandwich. It may have been a little more work to ensure I ate some necessary dairy, but it did the trick.

A final tip on the creativity front, there are some curious foods that might catch your child's eye sooner than a health-filled sandwich – why not cook a soup, curry or tacos in bulk and send them into school with your child? The intrigue alone might get them to take a bite.

### Involve the kids

Children might initially mutter and drag feet (or they might not), but they do enjoy learning new skills and becoming that bit more self-sufficient. Aside from giving them a useful new ability, teaching them how to make a simple lunch they like can offer you a little more freedom on those hectic school mornings, too.

Ask them what they might like, and if there's anything they've wanted to try. They could help you with the shopping, or with the

“Aside from giving them a useful new ability, teaching them how to make a simple lunch they like can offer you a little more freedom on those hectic school mornings, too”

meal prep, or both if they're able for it. If they have a hand in their lunch's creation, they're less likely to view their lunch as a health-assault from their parents.

### Don't knock the classics

With all of the above said about creativity, sandwiches and wraps are favourites in Ireland for a reason. Easy to make and to fill with goodness, there are more ingredients on supermarket shelves than ever before to entice your child into

eating them.

Fill a sandwich or wrap with meat or fish – quality cuts of chicken, or a tin of tuna can be supplemented by lettuce and any number of vegetables your child is likely to eat. Different breads make a difference too, so do ask your child what their preference is, and whether they'd be open to trying a new, healthier kind of bread or wrap.

Pasta was another staple of my secondary school diet, particularly as my peer group got hooked on

the gym and exercise. It's easy to cook in bulk, and easier still to customise. You can add in pesto, tomato and broccoli for a tasty meal full of starch, fruit and vegetables, or you can include chicken and beans for a protein-packed meal. The options are endless, and it's near impossible to find something your child won't take to.

Hopefully these few ideas have jogged your creative centre as the school year takes hold and a healthy new routine gets underway.





# A winding path to the priesthood

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

**M**ark Dilworth begins his studies for the priesthood in the diocese of Shrewsbury in England this Autumn. Having already spent some time in Maynooth previously, he still felt the call was there and wants to give it one more shot.

Mark grew up in Innishannon, Co. Cork, and received a firm grounding in the Faith first through his family, and then, perhaps surprisingly, through his time in college.

**“As Mark says himself, the usual line of thought is that you go to university and lose your faith”**

“My mother used to take us up to Mass in Bandon or in our home parish regularly,” Mark recalls. “I didn’t realise at the time what it meant, but the more I knew what it was, it wasn’t a chore anymore, it was something I wanted to do. I got to university in Cork, UCC, and I started to go to Mass every day in the Honan chapel.”

As Mark says himself, the usual line of thought is that you go to university and lose your faith. For him, however it was the opposite experience. As he learned more about his faith and came into contact with faithful Catholics and



Mark Dilworth (right) pictured with Fr John McEneaney after Fr McEneaney’s ordination.

priests, his interest grew.

He joined the Honan Catholic society, and found the chaplains – Fr David Barrins OP, Fr Tom Forde OFM Cap. and Fr Marius Reilly – to be inspirational.

“I was discerning at that stage, and I thought I would be a Dominican like Fr Barrins, but Fr Marius was the one who really got me into the diocesan priesthood. He was always so happy, so joyful. Hiking mountains in his clerical shirt – for me that was inspirational, I never saw someone do that before. Fr Marius’ inspiration was why originally I went for Cork and Ross,” Mark says.

He studied for a time in Maynooth, but after a few years he found himself adrift and unsure of where to turn next. In 2020, as

chance would have it, he was at a party and bumped into Bro. Joseph McGinty, who had a connection with the diocese of Shrewsbury.

### Vocational discernment

“By the grace of God, we got talking about vocational discernment, he gave me an email address for Fr Edmund Montgomery, the vocational director for Shrewsbury. I never knew who this man was, or the age profile. I said I’d look into it and a week later I emailed this Fr Edmund about vocational discernment, to see what was going on, would he see me.”

Fr Montgomery agreed to talk with Mark and after a bit of back and forth, Mark decided to go with Shrewsbury to “see what the year of discernment is like; to decide once

and for all if this is not for me”.

“And then, out of the blue, I was so surprised to get an email from the Bishop of Shrewsbury, Mark Davies. Usually, I’d have to take the initiative, but he took the initiative. So, I had a Skype interview with him. After a couple more weeks, I was pencilled in for a year’s discernment for January 2021.

**“The Shrewsbury ordinands were gathering, they had an Italian, an Englishman, a convert and a man who came all the way from Hong Kong for discernment”**

“I was trying to get out of my job. Then out of the blue, I was working as a contractor, and towards the end of the year I found out I was going to be let go around January time. I thought good, I won’t have to give an explanation of what I’m doing.”

But then, Covid-19 hit, threatening to derail Mark’s plans. In the end, however, his year of discernment was just pushed back by a month. Armed with a letter from the vocation’s director, Mark boarded a flight from Dublin to Birmingham.

“Actually, when I got there, Birmingham security originally didn’t believe me, but I gave them the letter and they let me through. I took a taxi from Birmingham to Shrewsbury. I spent five months in the house of discernment. The Shrewsbury ordinands were gathering, they had an Italian, an Englishman, a convert and a man who came all the way from Hong Kong for discernment. It really was multicultural.

“So five months after that,

towards May/June, I put in the application form for formation in Shrewsbury,” Mark continues. “I had an interview via Zoom. I did that and then I was doing a pastoral placement. I was too late to go to seminary, so after being accepted the bishop sent me for three months to a parish between Manchester and Liverpool.

“Then from December until August in the most northerly part of Shrewsbury. I was shadowing a priest called Fr Eoghan Gallagher originally from Donegal. I was shadowing him for months, doing hospital work, schools, gardening, doing little jobs like running social media.”

The pastoral work was challenging, as he was given a great deal of responsibility, but he enjoyed it. “Whatever the Lord has planned, he won’t give you something you can’t do,” Mark says.

With the college term just around the corner, Mark was on his way back to Birmingham as we spoke over the phone. Although he is undertaking another six years of formation, he has already completed a portion of his studies in Maynooth and will have time for other projects, he says.

“Tomorrow morning, I’m starting Latin again. My Maynooth credits aren’t enough, so I want to refresh it. And next year, I might have to do advanced Latin, without having intermediate. So better to start from the beginning and refresh it,” Mark says pragmatically.

It’s not all about study, though: “I’ll be playing sports with my fellow associates. In our college, they play football. So they might play against each other, or against a seminary from London. My thing is, I’ve started to see if they could play Maynooth. But that may be a long way away.”

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

## Living Laudato Si’

Jane Mellett



## Listen to the voices who suffer from climate change

**“I** have heard their cry...I know their sufferings...Come, now! I will send you...I will be with you” (Ex 3: 1-12).

‘Listen to the Voice of Creation’ is the theme for this year’s Season of Creation which began on September 1 and runs until October 4. This year we are invited to be more attentive to the natural world, to hear the song and the cry of the earth. During these weeks we have seen the devastating images from Pakistan, where record monsoon rains and melting glaciers in the northern mountains have brought floods that have affected 33 million people and killed at least 1,314, including 458 children.

In the Horn of Africa, NGOs are sounding the alarm bells as the region is on the brink of famine. This food crisis, driven by climate change and conflict, is affecting 25 million people. The numbers are staggering as the earth and the poor cry out to us. This Season of Creation we are invited to listen

to the voice of creation, to listen to the voices of those who suffer the most from climate change and reflect on where we are being called to act.

We are also invited to listen to those who hold the generational wisdom to lead us onto more sustainable paths.

In Pope Francis’ message for the Season of Creation 2022, he calls on world leaders, to “take more ambitious steps”, to keep “their promises of financial and technical support for the economically poorer nations, which are already experiencing most of the burden of the climate crisis”. He urges corporations, specifically: “the great extractive industries – mining, oil, forestry, real estate, agribusiness – to stop destroying forests, wetlands, and mountains, to stop polluting rivers and seas, to stop poisoning food and people”.

It is necessary for all of us to act decisively. For we are reaching “a breaking point”.

The Season of Creation offers us the nourish-

ment and inspiration to work for a more sustainable world. We are invited to pray for those who are suffering at this time, to pray for world leaders to make the courageous decisions that are necessary to safeguard our world and also to discern where we personally are being called to act. Many parishes are engaged in eco-parish awards, tree planting initiatives, local clean ups, energy saving initiatives, biodiversity projects and much more. The hardest part is often wondering where to begin. For everything you need to help celebrate this Season of Creation and suggestions for achievable actions please go to [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie) and search ‘Season of Creation 2022’.

For support feel free to contact [jane.mellett@trocaire.org](mailto:jane.mellett@trocaire.org)

“Enlighten us with the grace to follow the way of Christ as we learn to walk lightly upon this holy ground. Fill us with the hope to quench the fires of injustice with the light of your healing love that sustains our common home” (from the Season of Creation Prayer 2022).

Jane Mellett is the Laudato Si’ Officer with Trócaire





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Few criticisms in wall-to-wall coverage of Queen Elizabeth's death

Last week I was reflecting on visionary political leadership, but I didn't expect to be returning to the topic so soon. Queen Elizabeth II was one of those leaders, though perhaps 'inspirational' might be a better description.

Her unexpected death last week was one of those impactful events that grabs a huge amount of media attention across the world. On that Thursday night I tuned into several news channels and almost all were reporting on the same event, which doesn't happen that often in our fragmented media landscape. One of the most iconic media images for me was of the Queen in Balmoral on Tuesday of last week greeting the new Prime Minister Liz Truss – working still at 96, dressed informally, two days before death called. Not a bad way to go, and yet, there was still a sense of shock, even for us in Ireland, where most of us are hardly monarchists!

A few aspects of the coverage that night caught my attention. On the **News Special** (BBC One) our own Fergal Keane presented a very empathic report from Windsor, where the Queen lived much of the time. The locals seemed to regard her as a neighbour and many were quite upset. One young man described her as "a guiding light", one who provided a moral code. Later there were



references to her "strong Christian beliefs", and it was reported that Pope Francis, another inspiring leader, had sent a telegram with "heartfelt condolence" and references to her "unstinting service". Cardinal Vincent Nichols was reported as saying she was "a shining light in our history", and there were tributes from Jewish and Muslim leaders.

On **News at Ten** (ITV) the tributes were fulsome, but the newsreader did say "not everyone is a monarchist" – a fact worth acknowledging at that point I think. I'm not a fan of Justin Trudeau but

he found the right words and was quite emotional – he referred to her "steady grace" and called her "one of my favourite people in the world". ITV's Political Editor Robert Peston described her as "underpinning parliamentary democracy" and then in the archive footage we saw her meeting Pope John XXIII! The longevity is amazing and the list of the famous people she met is vast, a who's who of the 20th and 21st centuries.

On **Sky News** they said she "dedicated her life to duty", and was "a symbol of continuity". And in describ-

ing her son, the now King Charles III, said that he saw his title of "Defender of the Faith" as more "defender of faith" in general. Of course there is an historical anomaly with the royal being head of the Church of England, but now is not the time to be teasing all that out.

On **Dan Wooten Tonight** (GB News) conservative commentator Dominique Samuels described her as "the one constant thing in tumultuous moments". On **The News Desk with Tom Newton Dunn** (Talk TV) we learned she was patron of 60 charities. Political Editor

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND

Channel 4 Sunday September 18, 7.35am

The family meets the school counsellor and their priest to uncover what is to blame for the constant bickering at home.

#### MASS

RTE One Sunday September 18, 11am

Students and staff of St Leo's College, Carlow celebrate Mass in the RTÉ studios, Donnybrook. Celebrant: Fr John Dunphy; Musical Director: Áine Shiels.

#### SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC Two Sunday September 18, 1.15pm

An exploration of Christianity in County Down.

Kate McCann pointed out the unusual fact that both King Charles and Liz Truss were starting their new jobs at the very same time – both being first timers could give them some freedom, while leaving them without the built-up wisdom and expertise, though I'm sure there will be no shortage of advisers.

On the Friday the focus was on the dignified memorial service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral broadcast live on several channels. This captured the spirit and the even the look of Anglican Britain. Aljazeera covered it live, but their scrolling headlines included a reference to the reaction of indigenous peoples in the Commonwealth – a reaction of sorrow and criticism, including reference to "historical injustices rooted in colonisation". It was one of the very few negative notes

in the wall-to-wall coverage.

While that service was very much in tune with the Queen's religious faith, there was also much reference to her humorous aide. This was particularly evident in those much-played clips of her with Daniel Craig as James Bond, and even more so with Paddington Bear in that skit for the recent Jubilee celebrations. On **Michael Portillo** (Times Radio, Friday) there was a funny collection of anecdotes. In one I particularly liked the queen was asked by a guest if she listened to a particular programme. She replied "No, if I listened to that it would shorten my life". I know how she feels.

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@boreganmedia

# Film

Aubrey Malone



## More poppycock than Hitchcock in fifties London

Saoirse Ronan can do anything – even a Dublin accent. Well she's done everything else, right? Why not go back to her 'real' voice? It squeaked through in *Brooklyn*. Here we get the full "Dublin can be heaven/with a coffee at eleven" version. How strange that she chose the role of a trainee constable from 'across the pond' to unleash it on us.

*See How They Run* has her in London's West End in 1953. She's investigating the murder of a Hollywood director (Adrien Brody) who's about to turn the long-running Agatha Christie play *The Mousetrap* into a film when he's bumped off. Enter Saoirse and a terminally bored detective played by Sam Rockwell.

The film enjoys itself hugely as Saoirse and Sam trawl through the list of suspects. Saoirse is all fire and brimstone, jotting down even the most insignificant detail in her little notebook. Sam generally looks like he'd prefer to be somewhere else – like at the dentist.

The two of them play off one another like seasoned pros as they re-heat a gumshoe *soufflé* that recalls everything from *film noir* to an Ealing comedy in its mood. They tick all the genre boxes. The set pieces make you feel murder is more like an elaborate board game than something in which people actually die.

All cast members keep their tongues lodged firmly



Saoirse Ronan and Sam Rockwell star in 2022 film *See How They Run*.

in their cheeks as they send themselves up. That's the secret with this kind of thing. You have to make out like you believe the non-

sense or the audience won't.

It would have been better if it was a bit more outrageous – like, say, that other Saoirse Ronan pastiche, *The*

*Grand Budapest Hotel*. But it still works. We get flashbacks, split screen devices, blackly comic ensemble playing from the impeccably coiffed Edwardians queuing up in 'Ten Little Indians' fashion to be quizzed.

We're even proffered Sir 'Dickie' Attenborough. Movie nerd Saoirse is more inclined to seek his autograph than enquire where he was "on the night of". But why didn't they pick an actor who looked more like Attenborough? Harris Dickinson doesn't.

Is he really Sir Dickie? Is Agatha Christie really Christie? Or are these characters part of the film's 'in' jokes – like calling Rockwell Stoppard (after the playwright

Tom Stoppard?) or Saoirse 'Stalker'. Ha ha, she stalks her prey.

You'll change your mind often about the identity of the culprit as the plot gets more labyrinthine. Saoirse happily jumps to any conclusion ready to hand. Rockwell is more intent on savouring tipples in the local hostelry than reporting back to the Home Office with his findings.

Grab a bag of popcorn in the foyer and put your CSI side on hold. Lean back in a comfy seat and revel in 90 minutes of vintage fare as two stars at the top of their game try to find out who 'dun' it in their diametrically different ways.

P.S. I can exclusively reveal it wasn't the butler.



# The poor are the ambassadors of God

In the past I often heard people complaining that too many Sunday sermons were about money. I don't hear it nowadays, probably because the parish newsletter and parish council publicise the financial needs. This Sunday however the Gospel (Luke 16:1-13) suggests that the preacher should talk about money, dealing with its wrong use and right use.

**“There were plenty of propertied people such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea among his disciples”**

It begins with the parable of the unjust steward. He was suspected of fiddling with the master's finances, and it looked certain that he would lose his job. So, he used his cuteness, writing off some huge debts to ensure that he would have friends to look after him when he would be sacked. The master praised him for his astuteness. In telling the parable Jesus certainly was not justifying dishonest dealings but the point he made was the challenge to the children of light to be as enthusiastic and energetic about their work as the money-maker was about his.

In the follow up to the parable Jesus makes three comments about money: how to use it; it is tainted; it can make one a slave. Money is a great source of service with potential for good, but it becomes a tyrannical master if it takes over life.

Jesus never showed any desire to be a possessor. Having left behind the home security of Nazareth, he often had nowhere to lay his head. He depended on the generosity of others who would minister the Father's providence to him. He did not condemn rich people as such. There were plenty of propertied people such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea among his disciples. He accepted invitations from people who were wealthy enough to host a banquet. He defended the extravagant anointing from Mary of Bethany when Judas grumbled about it.

He encouraged people to use money with a conscience. One per cent of the world's population own 50% of the world's wealth. Last night, on the news, a reporter in Somalia said that every 48 seconds, a child dies from starvation. “Alas for you who are rich: you are having your

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester  
O'Flynn  
OFM Cap.



consolation now. Alas for you have plenty now: you shall go hungry” (Luke 6: 24-25). The unjust steward used money to win friends who would look after him after his dismissal. Jesus spoke about a different sort of friend, one who would welcome you, not into an earthly home, but into the tents of eternity. Forget all your stories about St Peter at the gates of heaven. It's the poor who operate the ticket turnstiles. They are the ambassadors of God's welcome, the friends who will welcome you in Christ's name. “Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

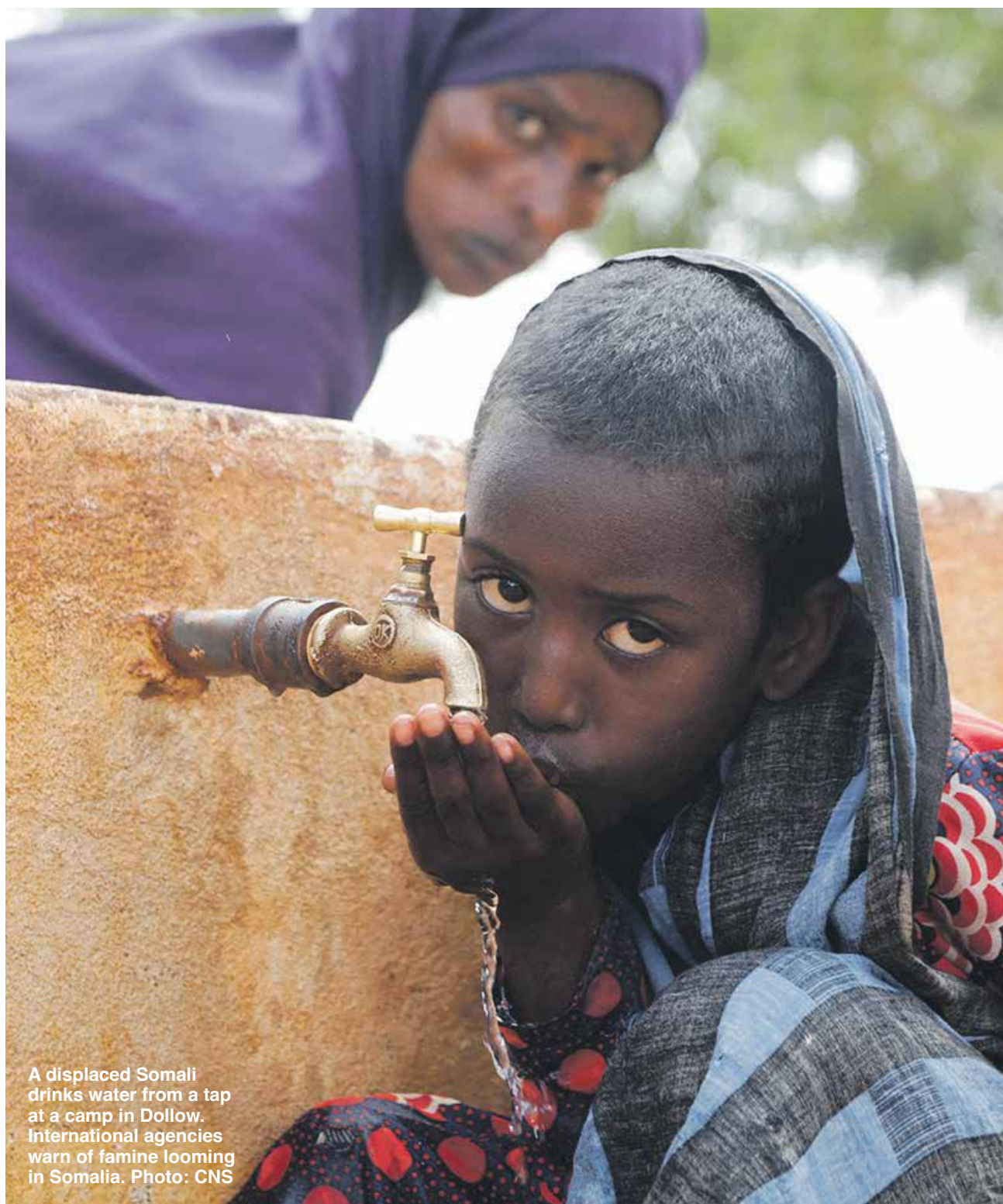
## Great potential

While wealth is a gift with great potential, Jesus twice warned that it is tainted. It is toxic, a carrier of temptation. St Paul wrote, “The love of money is the root of all evils and there are some who, pursuing it have wandered away from the Faith and so given their souls any number of fatal wounds” (1 Timothy 6:10). Even the treasurer of the apostles, Judas, fell prey to the temptation to help himself to the common fund. Eventually he betrayed the Lord for 30 silver pieces, a paltry sum, the going price for an injured slave.

We have very expensive tribunals attempting, with very little success, to uncover tax evasion and graft which is the misappropriation of public money. Many small business concerns go to the wall because creditors do not pay up. As far as many people are concerned, insurance companies are there to be ripped off.

In today's first reading, Amos condemns the exploitation of the poor. We must ask ourselves if we have a conscience about trading in the products of exploitation. Do we regard a contribution to a charitable organisation or aid to impoverished lands as a matter of justice or simply a feel-good gesture of charity?

The third word that Jesus associated with money is slave. One becomes a slave to money when it preoccupies the mind, sets values, directs behaviour, and deadens one's conscience. The slave is one who has lost freedom. Then one puts work totally before family, there is pressure to have the latest model,



A displaced Somali drinks water from a tap at a camp in Dollow. International agencies warn of famine looming in Somalia. Photo: CNS

and Sunday ceases to be a sacred day of rest. Profit, productivity and pay displace family, friends and fun.

Financial success is a wonderful gift offering the opportunity to do great good. But it is tainted with temptation and burdened with the responsibility of sharing with those who are impoverished. It is not just a matter of charity but one of justice. The rights of ownership are carefully protected by law but the responsibility of sharing God's gift with others is blandly ignored.

“No servant can be the

slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and money.”

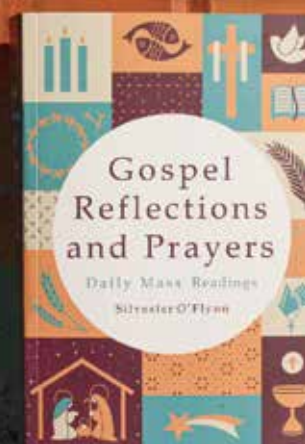
The gap between rich and poor continues to grow wider. The early Christian community understood that people who share in the breaking of bread in the Eucharist were obliged to share their possessions with those in need. Every gift of the Creator comes with the responsibility of using it and sharing with the poor.

## Prayer

O God, the Creator of all and the giver of every good gift, Open our hands to receive your gifts with gratitude, Open our eyes to see the needs of others, And open our hearts to be generous in giving.

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# When paranoia possesses us, we become suspicious and distrustful

Anthony Hopkins stars in a scene from the 2010 movie *The Rite* – but Hollywood images can prevent us from really seeing demons. Photo: CNS

**W**hat's in an image? An image can imprint itself indelibly into our consciousness so that we cannot not picture a thing except in a certain way. Take, for instance, Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper. Today if you close your eyes and try to picture the Last Supper, that image will spontaneously come to mind, even though scholars assure us that this is not how Jesus and his disciples would have been seated at that meal. Such is the power of art.

**“This may be the hardest demon of all to exorcise because it is so deeply embedded inside us”**

Sadly, this is also true for how we spontaneously picture devils and exorcisms. Movies about demon possession, like *Rosemary's Baby*, have imprinted certain images inside of us so we picture someone possessed by a demon as a person with a wild, contorted, hate-filled face, floating up to the ceiling, spewing out sick mustard coloured liquid from his mouth, in a room smelling of poisonous gases. Our picture of an exorcism then is that of a very ascetic-looking priest, dressed in heavy blacks, a stole around his neck, calling out Jesus' name as he sprinkles holy water, with the devil shrieking aloud as he retreats. That's our image of demon possession and exorcism. Such is the power of art!



**Fr Rolheiser**

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

But, normally that's not at all how demon possession and exorcism look like. Indeed, picturing the devil and an exorcism in that way is more harmful than helpful because demons are more subtle and exorcisms are more demanding than that picture would have us believe.

What do demons inside of us actually look like? Well, an image of a contorted face spewing out poisonous gasses and shrieking out hate can in fact serve us well. As a metaphor, that works. However, in real life that contorted, hate-filled face is too often our own face, and the poison spewing out of us is really the hate-filled language we hurl at each other as we name-call across ideological, political, moral, and religious lines. As well, the exorcism required is not the sprinkling of literal holy water, but the sprinkling of the Holy Spirit.

**What do demons actually look like?**

There's a very powerful one named paranoia who brings with him a series of other demons: distrust, suspicion, self-protection, and fear. When paranoia possesses us, we become suspicious and distrustful. Everyone begins to look like a threat, an enemy, and all our natural instincts begin to pressure us towards self-protection, and that begins to contort our faces and we begin to spew out distrust. This may be the hardest demon of all to exorcise because it is so deeply embedded inside us. It's no accident that the word *metanoia* (which summarises Jesus' challenge to us) is the antithesis of paranoia.

Then there is a demon named pride, one that keeps us forever conscious of our own specialness, a demon that would have us prefer to be special rather than

happy. This demon invariably brings with him a very nasty companion called envy, a demon that paralyses our ability to admire others, bless them, and not be threatened by their successes.

Next, come the demons of gluttony and greed. Mostly these no longer tempt us towards over-indulging in food or drink and accumulating more and more possessions. Instead, these demons infect us with a greed for experience, with an obsession with drinking in everything, with an obsession to be networking socially 24 hours a day. Moreover, they bring with them the demon of lust; one that has us making others the object of our erotic desires and in a myriad of other ways has us not fully respecting them.

**“It tells us as well that the Holy Spirit is not some abstract force that cannot be known by us”**

These are the actual demons that contort our faces and while none of them might make us look

like the young child in *Rosemary's Baby*, all of them have us spew out distrust and hatred rather than trust and understanding.

How are they exorcised? Well, these are not the kind that normally respond to a sprinkling of holy water. These need to be cast out by the Holy Spirit.

Scripture tells us the Holy Spirit “scrutinises everything”. It tells us as well that the Holy Spirit is not some abstract force that cannot be known by us. St Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, tells us precisely who and what the Holy Spirit is. He begins with the *via negativa*, telling us what the Holy Spirit is not and what the Holy Spirit should never be confused with, that is, with those demons just named: paranoia, distrust, suspicion, self-protection, fear, pride, envy, greed, gluttony, and lust. The Holy Spirit is the antithesis of all of these. To the contrary, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, fidelity, mildness, and chastity.

**Exorcism**

Two contraries cannot co-exist inside the same subject and so an actual exorcism works this way. The more we embrace charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, fidelity, mildness, and chastity, the more we exorcise paranoia, distrust, fear, pride, envy, greed, gluttony, and lust – and less demonic hatred spews from our mouths.

**“What do demons inside of us actually look like? Well, an image of a contorted face spewing out poisonous gasses and shrieking out hate can in fact serve us well”**



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## The sacred sense of letting life take a pause

**Still Points: A Guide to living the Mindful Meditative Way**  
by Bro. Richard OFM Cap  
(Hachette Books,  
€14.99/£12.99)

Peter Costello

Bro. Richard Hendrick is a Capuchin priest-friar working in Dublin. He wrote a long poem *Lockdown* which went viral. It was picked up by both the BBC and by CNN in North America. From there it went even further, was translated into 26 languages and inspired two short videos and even musical composition.

### Flare

Bro. Richard has taken advantage of this flare up of publicity to bring out a book on his current interest in trying to bring the insight of the Christian contemplative tradition to a wider public who of late have taken a great interest in modern mindfulness theory developed in America.

The result is a book which many will warmly welcome. Structured around the cycle of the natural seasons, the author tries to draw his readers into a deeper contemplation of the spiritual nature of the way we understand life.



Bro. Richard Hendrick

Some readers may be surprised that for instance he gives detailed instructions on how to pray the rosary. But this surely is to be welcomed, for we live at a time when many have lost contact with rituals the older generation took for granted. Bro. Richard, however only provides a guide; it is for his readers to follow the path to learn what they can by the methods he suggests.

That sacred pause is a way of finding the way into the still silent point at the heart of things which mystics talk about.

## Revolution recollected in tranquillity and pain

*Estella Solomons: Still Moments*, Room 31, NGI, continues to January 2023.

Appreciation by Peter Costello

**T**his free exhibition, curated by Niamh MacNally, is supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the *Decade of Centenaries Programme 2012-2023*.

This new show at the National Gallery of Ireland is a small, of select but very absorbing exhibition. Given her status in the first half of the last century, many of the pictures will be familiar, but nevertheless are nice to encounter again. But it also includes a number of little seen paintings, many from

private collection or those of associations.

Estella Solomons is of very personal interest too, as my home overlooks "The Grove" in Upper Leeson Street, where she had her studio in later years.

However this exhibition relates to earlier decades mostly to the period of the Irish Revival and the Troubles. So many of her friends were themselves important artists and writers, that those lines of Yeats (written after visiting the Municipal Gallery) come to mind for Estella Solomons also: "Say that my glory was I had such friends".

### Hidden corners

Two images belong to her long quest for the hidden corners of city and country: Leinster Market and the view of Rossapenna from Breaghy; lovely things.

The portraits are mostly of her friends and fellow writers and artists recollecting, as it were, revolution in tranquillity. A very striking image is *Woman in a red tie*, an image of the "New Women" of the period; wonderful. Also powerful and significant is the portrait of Rabbi the Rev. Abraham Gudansky, the senior minister at Adelaide Road synagogue, very much a man "behind the scenes at this period".

**“This new show at the National Gallery of Ireland is a small, but select but very absorbing exhibition”**

One picture, however, which was unfamiliar, was very striking, *On Parole* painted in 1920. The curator says it is of an unidentified activist, not "on the run", but just released, perhaps from Ballykinler or Kilmainham.

### Fear

His expression is not one of fear, but of a troubled mind. I suspect (though the curator's notes do not suggest this) that this is an image of one of those countless millions who suffered the mental damage, what is now so casually called post-traumatic shock, that deranged too many Europeans in the 1920s and 30s.

It brought to my mind the words of a defence barrister in a Dublin murder trial some years later, that his convicted client should be reprieved from the death penalty, because he had been "driven mad" by the Revolution. Mental health is an aspect of the Decade of Commemorations that the Government's committee has not addressed.

It is well worth going to see this show for this painting alone. But the others are fine pictures which have long entered the canon of significant Irish art of the 20th century. A show not to be missed.

**i** Images are copyright, and used courtesy of the NGI



*On Parole* - Oil on canvas  
Unframed: 52 x 44 cm  
NGI.2017.24 © The  
Trustees of the Estate of  
Estella Solomons. Photo ©  
National Gallery of Ireland

## The Pope's first word about Christmas coming: gather the family around the crib



Pope Francis at  
Greccio in Italy.

### Admirable Signum: The Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene

Pope Francis  
(Veritas/Liberia Editrice  
Vaticana, €5.99)

Peter Costello

Here we are just back at school and college, and the first book about Christmas is already in the shops. What can this mean? Just as surprising is the name of the author of this little pamphlet. It is Pope Francis.

The text, moreover, is not new. It consists of an Apostolic Letter issued at the Shrine of the Nativity in Greccio, Italy on December 1, 2019. It was in the sanctuary here that St Francis himself created the first European crib, to replicate one he had seen on his visit to Bethlehem.

### Piety

This simple act of piety was the beginning of a tradition

for the Feast of the Nativity that continues to this day, with variations according to local inclination. The Pope's words are an invocation of this moment and of the true meaning of Christmas not just for Christians, but for the entire world bound together in a charitable union of love.

The early publication is clearly an effort to impress people early, before the whole apparatus of commerce comes to bear upon us all, but especially on our children, whose feast this ought to be. Those who object to the "commercialisation" of Christmas are reminded thereby that it is simply up to themselves to refuse to take part in the upcoming carnival of capitalism. If you only buy one thing for this Christmas perhaps it ought to be this brief and salutary booklet on the essential meaning of the season for families.



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.



*Woman in a red tie* - Oil on canvas  
Unframed: 61 x 51 cm Framed:  
86 x 75 cm © The Trustees of  
the Estate of Estella Solomons.  
Private Collection.



*Sean Milroy* - Oil on canvas Unframed: 74.5 x 45.5cm Framed: 90.5 x 69.5cm © The Trustees of the Estate of Estella Solomons. Image courtesy of The Model, home of The Niland Collection.

# The Napoleon of Fleet Street

**The Chief: the Life of Lord Northcliffe**  
by Andrew Roberts  
(Simon & Schuster,  
£25/€29.00)

**Felix M. Larkin**

In *Ulysses*, James Joyce refers to "Harmsworth of the farthing press". He thereby denigrates the great achievement of Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe, in creating the first mass circulation newspaper in these islands – the *Daily Mail*, launched in London in 1896.

It was very much a new thing. Priced at a halfpenny, it was half the price of its cheapest rivals. Moreover, it adopted a more informal style in presenting news and contained features designed to appeal to a wide audience. This represented a revolution in the newspaper business, the so-called Northcliffe Revolution.

Joyce was not alone in being snippy about the *Daily Mail*. Lord Salisbury, the British prime minister at the end of the 19th century, dismissed it as "a newspaper run by office boys for office boys". It was, however, a great commercial success. It made Northcliffe a fabulously wealthy man, and he subsequently built a newspaper empire that included the venerable *London Times*, the *Daily Mirror* (sold to his brother Harold, Lord Rothermere, in 1914), the *Evening News*, several regional newspapers and countless magazines. In the words of Andrew Roberts, author of this new biography of Northcliffe, "not for nothing was he regularly dubbed 'The Napoleon of Fleet Street'".

## Teacher

He was born in Chapelizod in Co. Dublin in 1865, the son of a teacher in the Royal Hibernian Military School in the Phoenix Park who was later an impecunious barrister in London. The family moved to London in 1867. His mother was of Ulster-Scots Presbyterian stock, and Northcliffe was utterly devoted to her. She outlived him; he died in 1922, she in 1925. Roberts records that Northcliffe had no female friends or confidants besides his mother, not even his wife or his many mistresses.

## Pre-eminent

Northcliffe's pre-eminent position as a press baron – Roberts estimates that his Amalgamated Newspapers company controlled 40% of the daily newspaper market in Britain in 1914 – gave him immense political influence. While never seeking government office for himself, he did not hesitate to use his newspapers to try to impose his will upon the governments of his day.



Lord Northcliffe plays a round of golf.

This led many to claim both during his lifetime and afterwards that he had megalomaniacal tendencies. Roberts largely rejects this charge and argues that his objectives were to advance policies and measures that he believed were in the best interests of Britain and the British Empire.

**“Nevertheless the Northcliffe Revolution came to Ireland when William Martin Murphy launched his revamped *Irish Independent* in 1905”**

He did this most spectacularly when his newspapers exposed the incompetence of the British authorities in failing to adequately equip the army mired down on the Western Front in the early phases of the First World War. A leading article on this matter written by Northcliffe himself and published in the *Daily Mail* on May 21, 1915, is said by Roberts to have been "the most consequential article – for good and ill – ever published by any of Northcliffe's papers in his lifetime". It forced Asquith, the long-serving and somewhat indolent Liberal prime minister, to restructure his government in order to strengthen

the war effort. He formed a coalition with the Conservatives and created a new Ministry for Munitions to which he appointed the rising star of the Liberal Party, Lloyd George – then a Northcliffe favourite.

Northcliffe regarded Asquith as unfit to be a war leader, and his newspapers would eventually play a key part in the intrigue that brought about Asquith's resignation in 1916. With Northcliffe's blessing, Lloyd George then became Prime Minister – though Northcliffe would fall out with him too. Roberts remarks that "Northcliffe did not much like politicians as a tribe, and the long list of those with whom he fell out ... can be seen as testimony to his independent-mindedness".

## Ireland

Ireland does not feature much in this book. Northcliffe never actually consid-



ered himself an Irishman, and he seems to have had little engagement with the affairs of the land of his birth. At his mother's urging, however, he strongly supported the Ulster Unionist demand to be excluded from any independence settlement. Once partition was secured in 1920, he accepted the inevitability of some measure of dominion home rule for the rest of Ireland. The support of his newspapers for the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 was an important factor in its acceptance by British public opinion.

Northcliffe never started or acquired a newspaper in Ireland, but nevertheless the Northcliffe Revolution came to Ireland when William Martin Murphy launched his revamped *Irish Independent* in 1905.

Its antecedent, the *Irish Daily Independent*, had been founded by Parnell in 1891 at the height of the Parnell Split, and was later the organ of the Parnellite wing of the divided Irish Party.

After the party re-united in 1900, it was sold to Mr Murphy. He transformed it from a penny to a halfpenny newspaper, and shamelessly copied the editorial style of the *Daily Mail*. Like the *Mail*, it was a spectacular success – with circulation rising from an initial 25,000 copies per day to over 100,000 by 1915.

**“Lord Salisbury, the British prime minister at the end of the 19th century, dismissed it as ‘a newspaper run by office boys for office boys’”**







# Leisure time

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— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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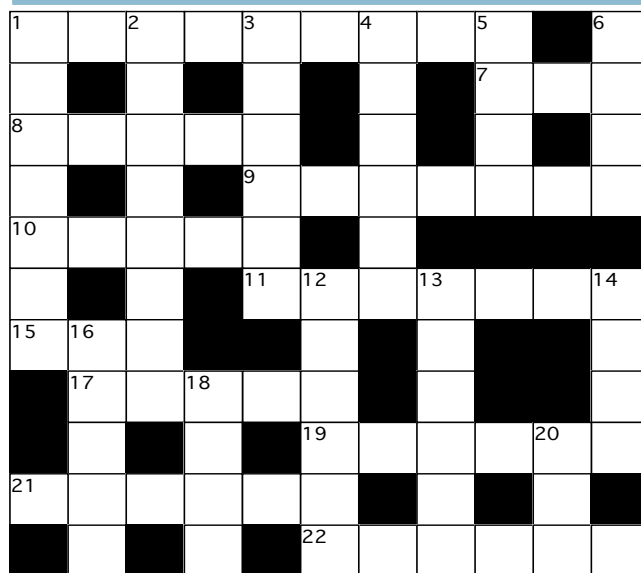
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## Crossword Junior

Children's 450



### Across

- 1 You might buy this at a match to see the names of the players (9)
- 7 These letters mean someone is very important (1,1,1)
- 8 A spy is sometimes called a secret \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- 9 A person wears this on their head when working with food (7)
- 10 The brother of your mother or father (5)
- 11 Saved from danger (7)
- 15 Ocean (3)
- 17 Storeroom in the roof of a house (5)
- 19 Not nice to someone (6)
- 21 Groups of sheep (6)
- 22 "I like a story with a happy \_\_\_\_\_" (6)

### Down

- 1 They may be salted or dry-roasted (7)
- 2 You wear it on top of your other clothes when you go out (8)
- 3 "I can offer you this, or would you \_\_\_\_\_ have that?" (6)
- 4 Films (6)
- 5 2, 4, 6 and 8 are \_\_\_\_\_ numbers (4)
- 6 Small mark (4)
- 12 A reason to be let off (6)
- 13 Prepared a meal (6)
- 14 Changed the colour of hair or material (4)
- 16 With time to spare (5)
- 18 Small, sharp nail (4)
- 20 Lady who is a member of a religious order (3)

## SOLUTIONS, SEPTEMBER 8

GORDIUS NO. 575

**Across** — 1 Cappuccino 6 Used 10 Lurid 11 Vigil mass 12 Wedding 15 Cuppa 17 Rosa Parks 18 Olaf 19 Rabid 21 Pyramid 23 Liner 24 Wren 25 Eire 26 Hoped 28 Roadmap 33 Corncrake 34 Ibiza 35 So-so 36 Heptagonal

**Down** — 1 Calm 2 Porcelain 3 Undid 4 Cavan 5 Nigh 7 Scalp 8 Discarding 9 Placard 13 Inky 14 Greater 16 Hollyhocks 20 Barbarian 21 Predict 22 Iowa 29 Overt 30 Doing 31 Pace 32 Fail

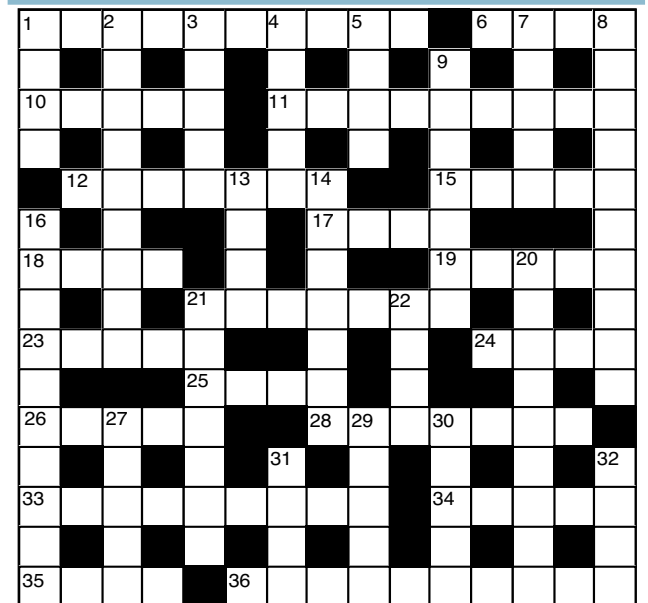
CHILDREN'S No. 449

**Across** — 1 Ron Weasley 7 Letters 8 Run 9 Act 10 Tar 11 Tan 13 Hat 14 Detective 20 Gallery 21 Pulse 22 Story

**Down** — 1 Related 2 Nature table 3 Elect 4 Susan 5 Earth 6 Knit 12 Ant 15 Cages 16 Igloo 17 Enemy 18 Foyle 19 Spy

## Crossword

Gordius 576



### Across

- 1 & 34a Furniture set typically comprising a sofa and two armchairs (5,5,5)
- 6 Type of sword used in Olympic fencing (4)
- 10 Happen (5)
- 11 Surgical procedure (9)
- 12 Disintegrate, like a southern milliner (7)
- 15 A reef is made of this (5)
- 17 Small imperial unit of length (4)
- 18 Bird which traditionally rises very early (4)
- 19 Type of antelope (5)
- 21 Legacy; what one leaves in a will (7)
- 23 Easily understood (5)
- 24 & 4d A golfer's perfect score (4,2,3)
- 25 A member of the aristocracy (4)
- 26 Cast, fling (5)
- 28 Ray of solar light (7)
- 33 County of the Déise (9)
- 34 See 1 across
- 35 Move the lyre? You can depend upon it! (4)
- 36 The highest standard or quality (10)

### Down

- 1 Removed (4)

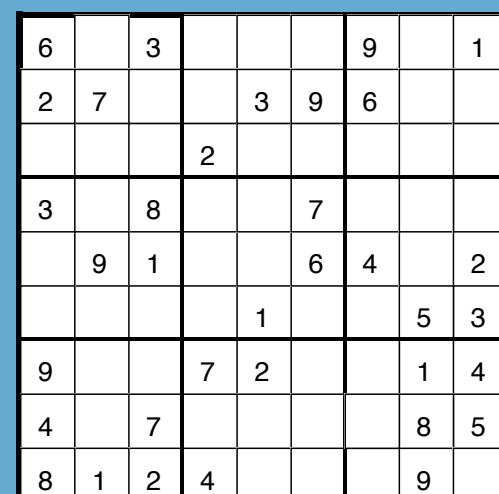
### 2 Equine runner (9)

- 3 Type of heron (5)
- 4 See 24 across
- 5 Ship's complement (4)
- 7 The willow Rosie moved (5)
- 8 These females traditionally run boarding-houses (10)
- 9 Small axe (7)
- 13 Melody (4)
- 14 Ceremonial procedures (7)
- 16 Look up to see the time traditionally displayed here (5,5)
- 20 Worship (9)
- 21 Where beer is produced (7)
- 22 Ostracise (4)
- 27 This name for the honey-badger might be written later (5)
- 29 Excessive, uncalled-for (5)
- 30 Herb often used in recipes involving tomatoes (5)
- 31 A thickening made of butter and flour (4)
- 32 In this place (4)

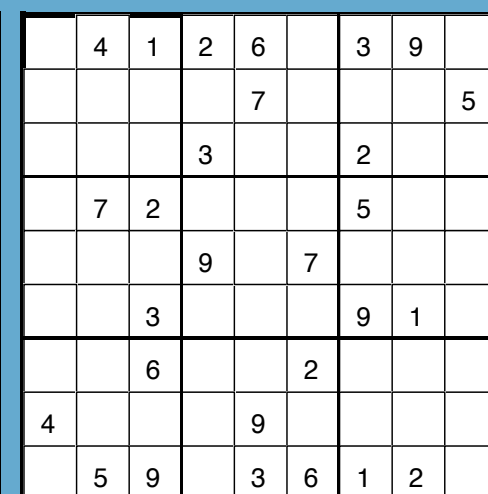
## Sudoku Corner

450

Easy



Hard



Last week's Easy 449

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

Last week's Hard 449

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



## Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter

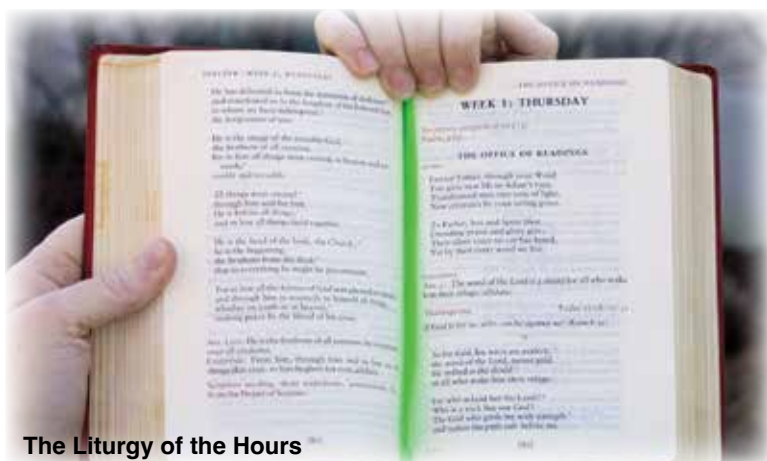


# Finding the right pace to pray

**LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRISES.** If you had told me 30 years ago that I would be writing an article in praise of the Breviary, I would have thought you mad. Yet that's just what I am doing today.

Thirty years ago, I was very sporadic in my praying of the Divine Office. I was still a young priest, and so, so busy, much too busy to pray at times, or so it seemed. All that changed when the bishop entrusted me with the care of a parish. I felt the duty then to pray for the people in my care, and that sense of duty has never left me. The bishop's reminder at the annual Chrism Mass not to deprive the people of the benefit of this prayer always struck a chord with me.

It's not that I manage to pray each of the five 'hours' every day. I did manage that during the Covid-



The Liturgy of the Hours

19 lockdown, when pastoral activity ground to a halt and my life was almost as regular as that of a monk. Being able to pray the Divine Office

in those days meant I continued to play my part in the prayer-life of the parish, interceding for the people, and with the people.

## 'Normal' times

In 'normal' times in the parish, nothing is regular: no two days are the same. I've often tried to prepare a meal in the evening, only for the phone to ring, with that phone call turning into a saga demanding attention or leading to further pastoral tasks. Often a call to the door can follow, then a rush to a parish meeting and

before long, I am sitting down to the news, with tea forgotten, and evening prayer similarly lost. Days of home visitation can yield many, many more cups of tea, but even less opportunity for evening prayers.

Morning time seems to suit me better. The blood pressure pill is popped first thing, the morning ablutions attended to, and that leaves 30 minutes before food, a half hour conveniently filled by the office of readings and morning prayer. Breakfast is the reward that follows, the carrot which encourages fidelity.

Are these prayers boring? I never find them so. I try to sing the hymn at the start of each hour, the Te Deum on Sundays, and at least one psalm in each set of prayers. Living on my own helps — imagine having to listen to all that weird singing!

What's wonderful about the Divine Office is that it's an almost entirely scriptural prayer, with praise to start the day and thanksgiving to complete it. The variety is endless, as is the page-flicking that follows a saint's day. Praying on my own means I can set the pace, and I never forget the names added to my 'list' at the end of the

## On the move

Moving house is a different experience now compared to ten years ago, when I last moved. Then, it was simple: calls were made to the ESB and eircom, and names simply changed. Now, several service providers are involved. One priest ends his contract and the next initiates a new one. It's different, but the pain of moving is constant, something not to repeat often, nor one to seek. This time it has brought me to the western parish of Castlehaven, where my new address is Union Hall, Skibbereen, Co. Cork P81 C433. Or email frbernard1984@gmail.com (please, let's keep in touch!).

intercessions, always including the fraternity of the priests of Cork and Ross.

And whisper it: I also take days off. It adds to the quality of the other six days!

● In rural Ireland, speaking truth to power can present a challenge, but one mode does it well: the fancy dress parade at the carnival. Our August festival in Newcestown brought a send-up of our new 'family of parishes', under which the parish is to lose its resident parish priest. Our poor bishop was depicted in his full regalia, and I was seen waving a Castlehaven flag (Newcestown's bitter GAA rivals). A scoreboard summed up the situation where the diocese was ordaining a Newcestown man as it removed its PP:

'Diocese of Cork & Ross: 1

Murragh & Templemartin parish: 0'



## FOOD IS NEEDED BY MANY FAMILIES IN MONGOLIA

Sr Anne Waturu works for Caritas in Mongolia and wishes to improve food security and create sustainable livelihoods for those struggling to heat their homes in winter, as well as to improve the nutrition and living standards of all concerned.

She tells The Little Way Association: "We work in an area of the capital where the people live in gers, the traditional tents of Mongolia. A very large number of families in Ulaanbaatar have very little food and other needs, with children under the age of five the worst affected, suffering stunting in height and muscle wastage. The funds we hope you will send us will enable us to provide food for the poorest of the poor who are really struggling to survive and then the little money earned from menial jobs can be used for fuel and other basic needs such as clothing, hygiene materials and education."

**Hunger is painful, and you will have the deep gratitude of many people**

The Little Way Association receives many requests each week from missionaries who want to assist the poorest and most vulnerable people in deprived areas throughout the world. A donation to our fund for the hungry, sick and deprived will help The Little Way Association to continue to say "yes" to deserving and viable missionary projects for the needy.

**The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.**



*"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."*  
~ St Therese

## WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

**Can you help provide a well?**

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

## MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass



Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

### THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION

Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR  
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466

[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED**

€..... **UKRAINE APPEAL**

€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**

€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**

(Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**