

The Irish Catholic

SHANNON CAMPBELL



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MARY KENNY



If you don't know a word look it up
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'Come and see for yourself, Mr President'

Irish missionaries call on Higgins to visit suffering Nigerian Christians

Ruadhán Jones

Irish missionaries have called on Michael D. Higgins to visit suffering Christians in Nigeria, after the president was accused of blaming a recent slaughter of Catholics at Mass on climate change rather than anti-Christian persecution.

The local Bishop Jude Arogundade criticised the president insisting that: "To suggest or make a connection between victims of terror and consequences of climate change is not only misleading but also exactly rubbing salt to the injuries of all who have suffered terrorism in Nigeria."

Church officials in Nigeria said at least 4,650 Christians were killed for their faith last year.

President Higgins condemned the attack on the Church of St Francis in Owo district of Ondo Diocese which left 40 people dead and 126 people injured. Eyewitnesses said the security forces ignored pleas for help as the massacre continue for an hour.

The president added: "That such an attack was made in a place of worship is a source of particular condemnation, as is any attempt to scapegoat pastoral peoples who are among the foremost victims of the consequences of climate change".

Bishop Arogundade warned that: "Alluding to some form of politics of climate change in our situation is completely inappropriate."

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Local prelates comfort survivors of the attack on Pentecost Sunday at St Francis Church, Owo while a sister looks on. The attack left 40 worshippers dead and more than 100 wounded.

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President Higgins' unfortunate intervention on Nigeria attack

To say that President Michael D. Higgins has caused dismay among the Irish missionary community would be to put it mildly. Which is ironic given that many of the same missionaries now scratching their heads at Mr Higgins' ill-judged intervention on the recent massacre in Nigeria would have traditionally greatly admired his work.

Mr Higgins is a long-time supporter of the Church's overseas development agency Trócaire. He is also on the record praising the work and contribution of Irish missionaries.

In fact, missionaries have frequently been recipients of the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad. It is a scheme set up to recognise the service given to those in need abroad, and there are few better placed to receive such an award than Irish missionaries who selflessly serve the world's most vulnerable people.

Schedule

When one looks at the president's schedule, he and his wife Sabina also frequently welcome retired missionaries to Áras na Uachtaráin whether to present a book on their experience to the president or in some other form of reception.

In short, he is not unaware of the vast informal network that Irish missionaries constitute and the consequent ability to offer an on-the-ground appraisal of what is really going on.

This makes the president's unfortunate reference to climate change in a statement condemning the attack on a Catholic Church in Nigeria all-the-more surprising.

It has rightly provoked a swift response from the local bishop as well as Irish missionaries still working in Nigeria and those in Ireland who have vast experience in that state



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Pope Francis greets President Michael D. Higgins during a private audience at the Vatican in September 2021. Photo: Vatican Media

and intimate knowledge of the forces shaping the current situation in Africa's most populous country.

In fairness, even if he has spectacularly failed to diagnose the cause of the attack on the Church, the president deserves huge credit for even acknowledging that the attack happened at all. There was silence from the Taoiseach Micheál Martin and from Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney.

Mr Higgins is a long-time supporter of the Church's overseas development agency Trócaire

In fact, no Government minister in Ireland has even acknowledged that the attack took place, despite the long and historic association between Nigeria and Ireland where ties run so deep we even share St Patrick as a patron saint.

It is a familiar pattern in Irish politics when it comes to attacks on Christians. The attacks are either ignored, or

minimised and the fact that the victims are Christian brushed over. A number of TDs and Senators often ask questions of ministers in the Oireachtas about specific instances of anti-Christian persecution, often in Muslim-majority countries. The usual response is a bland catch-all statement that Ireland condemns all acts of violence.

Acknowledge

Would it be too much for the Irish State to acknowledge the widely-aired fact that Christians are now the most persecuted religious group on the planet? In Nigeria alone, Church officials say that 2021 saw 4,650 Christians killed for their Faith. For comparison, remember that in the 30 years or so of civil conflict on this island up to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 around 3,500 people lost their lives.

Mr Higgins is evidently bullish about his stance on Nigeria. A spokesman this week insisted that the president did not link the attack to climate change. Perhaps that was not the intention, but read for yourself. After

condemning the attack, Mr Higgins added immediately in his statement: "That such an attack was made in a place of worship is a source of particular condemnation, as is any attempt to scapegoat pastoral peoples who are among the foremost victims of the consequences of climate change."

It is a familiar pattern in Irish politics when it comes to attacks on Christians

"The neglect of food security issues in Africa, for so long has brought us to a point of crisis that is now having internal and regional effects based on struggles, ways of life themselves," the president said.

If the president doesn't think what happened in the church is to do with climate change then why mention it in a statement about the attack on the church?

Are we to believe from the president's rejection of criticism that he has uniquely understood this situation and the local bishops and missionaries are misunderstanding him?

It's a quite a stretch. Mr Higgins should accept his mistake, apologise and commit himself to understanding the situation better than he evidently does.

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Irish missionaries call on Higgins to visit suffering Nigerian Christians

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"Such comments associating banditry, kidnapping and gruesome attacks on innocent and harmless citizens of Nigeria with issues concerning climate change and food securities are deflections from the truth," the bishop said.

Mr Higgins has now been urged to visit to learn more about the actual situation on the ground.

"The way leaders of countries are going to Kyiv to support them [Ukraine], it would be good if the President of Ireland came to Ondo to meet with the people and the bishop," Fr Kevin O'Hara SPS, an Irish Kiltegan missionary based in Nigeria, told *The Irish Catholic* this week.

Fr O'Hara described the president's statement as "unfortunate", adding that "our president is looking at it from a distance, there's no way he can understand it [the origins of the violence], given the intricacies."

"I will contact the Irish ambassador to Nigeria to invite the president to come out to Ondo and meet with the people and Church," the missionary said.

Sr Kathleen McGarvey OLA was also critical of Mr Higgins' statement, saying it "reveals the ignorance of our leaders, whether conscious or unconscious, of the alarming spread of insecurity and violence in Nigeria". Sr McGarvey, provincial leader in Ireland of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles, has spent many

years in Nigeria where she helped found the Interfaith Forum of Muslim and Christian Women's Association.

"As an Irish missionary, with close ties to Nigeria as many Irish missionaries have, I feel strongly that we in this side of the world need to pay much closer attention to what is happening in Nigeria," she said.

A spokesman for Mr Higgins rejected criticism insisting that: "The president made no link in his statement between climate change and the attack itself."

Bishop Arogundade described as "incorrect and far-fetched" the reference to climate change in Mr Higgins' statement.



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'Clear call' for married priests from Irish synod participants

Ruadhán Jones

There has been a "clear call" for married priests, according to the synod report from the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise.

The call came from a listening session with parents in the diocese, which largely covers counties Leitrim and Longford.

"There is a strong focus on priests as core to the Church. And here there is a clear call for married priests and women priests," the report says.

The value that underlines the desire is a "belief that a married clergy,

dealing daily with family issues, would be in a better position to understand and deal with families in the community".

The absence of married clergy leads to "a lack of identity with the congregation and their daily struggles with balancing work, family and other life responsibilities", according to a mixed group of participants.

Sentiments

The sentiments are echoed in many of the 26 reports from the diocese and archdiocese of Ireland, which have all released their synodal syntheses.

"A significant number of participants mentioned a sense that priests were seen as separate from the rest of the community and as a result out of touch with the realities of life," the diocese of Clonfert's synodal syntheses reports.

"Many felt that this situation might be remedied by allowing priests to marry."

There is an "urgent need to discuss and decide on the question of allowing married priests to return to ministry, if they so desire", according to the report from the archdiocese of Tuam.

The question of married priests emerges as a key concern for young people in the Church, according to other reports.

In Achonry, 30% of students consulted in one

school listed the concern as an important one they would discuss with Pope Francis, while Clogher diocese reports that "It was expressed by young people that the choice between

family life and Church life should not have to be made by priests and for young people this was a sacrifice that they were unwilling to make or even to contemplate."

Rally for Life returns in two weeks' time

Jason Osborne

Ireland's annual national march for life returns in just over two weeks' time after two years of lockdown and is set to take place Saturday July 2, 2022.

People are encouraged to join "the biggest and most exciting pro-life event of the year", with the rally's theme for 2022 urging the nation to "rethink abortion".

The Rally for Life 2022 will meet at 2pm, Saturday July 2 at the Garden of Remembrance on Parnell Square in Dublin city centre.

The rally is a "family-friendly" day for the national pro-life movement to be "re-energised and strengthened by coming together for life" a flier for the event reads.

Speaking at the event will be Dr Dermot Kearney, who made headlines this year after he was vindicated in the UK for saving 32 babies from abortion by offering their mothers abortion pill reversal.

Some of the women he helped said he "became a saviour to them and their babies", describing him as a "lifesaver".

One woman said of him: "to find there was such kindness in the world was phenomenal. It felt so selfless I cried".

The Life Institute is looking for volunteers to hand out leaflets outside of parishes and church halls, as well as organising buses from around the country. They can be contacted at info@thelifeinstitute.net

Prayers answered



There were joyous scenes at Dublin airport as members of the defence forces returned from a peace keeping mission in Lebanon.

Fr McVerry suffers minor injuries following alleged Dublin assault

Staff reporter

Veteran homeless advocate Fr Peter McVerry has suffered minor injuries following an alleged attack at his home by a man who came to him to ask for help.

CEO of the Peter McVerry Trust Pat Doyle said that in the early hours of the morning June 8, the Jesuit priest "opened his door to an individual knocking for help.

"It soon became clear that the person was affected by drugs and alcohol," Mr Doyle said.

"In the brief interaction that followed, Fr Peter McVerry sustained minor injuries

leading to bruising on his face, particularly around one eye.

"After this brief engagement, the person left. Gardaí were not called," Mr Doyle said in a statement.

The person in question has since presented himself and apologised to Fr McVerry, who "considers the matter closed," he said.

It is understood that Fr McVerry is adamant that the man involved in the alleged attack should not be subject to the criminal justice system. Fr McVerry has long campaigned for drug abuse to be treated as primarily a medical issue rather than one that should be treated first and foremost as a matter for the gardaí.

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NWCI refuses to clarify conscientious objection comment

Jason Osborne

The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) has failed to provide clarification of a comment made by its director despite attempts by *The Irish Catholic* to seek clarity.

The Irish Catholic sought to clarify Director Orla O'Connor's comment in a March 22 op-ed for the *Irish Examiner* that "We urgently need...careful monitoring of con-

science-based refusal of abortion". A number of phonecalls and an email went unanswered, with no clarification offered.

This comes as the NWCI faces calls for its defunding in the wake of a Liveline debate which saw a member of women's group The Countess express women's disappointment at their exclusion from the NWCI's AGM June 9.

The debate saw members of the

public question whether NWCI supports moves which would see the word "woman" replaced in specific legislation with the gender-neutral term "person".

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Senator Sharon Keogan said that she's "absolutely delighted" with the conversation and that "if they've got the support that they think they have, then they shouldn't be getting Government funding.

"They should be self-sufficient," she said.

"I think women are sitting up now. They're looking at the National Women's Council in a way that they probably hadn't looked at them before, and they're now saying, 'Are they really a women's council?' Or are they just going to represent anyone that identifies as a woman?"

"You can't legislate on feelings. Feelings are not something that we

legislate for. You just can't do that. Nobody wants to upset or marginalise anyone or make somebody's voice less valuable. However, you cannot step on women and allow the trans community to supersede what women have stood for for centuries," she said.

Senator Keogan added that the NWCI may have to "sit up now and reflect on who they really do represent".

'Jesus is with me', says Bieber in midst of health crisis

Ruadhán Jones

Canadian pop star Justin Bieber has said his relationship with Jesus gives him "peace during this horrific storm", following his announcement that he is suffering from partial facial paralysis.

Mr Bieber, who is suffering from Ramsay Hunt syndrome, had to cancel concerts due to his severe discomfort.

Posting an update online for fans, the singer said "each day has gotten better".

"Wanted to share a little bit of how I've been fellin'," Bieber wrote on Instagram.

"Each day has gotten better and through all of the discomfort I have found comfort in the one who designed me and knows me," he continued, referring to Jesus.

"I'm reminded that he knows all of me. He knows the darkest parts of me that I want no one to know about and he constantly welcomes me into his loving arms.

"This perspective has given me peace during this horrific storm I'm facing.

He finished, saying that "I know this storm will pass, but in the meantime, Jesus is with me."

Ramsay Hunt syndrome (RHS) is due to viral reactivation and is one of 60 causes of facial palsy, or facial paralysis, as it is known in the US.

The illness occurs when a shingles outbreak affects the facial nerve near someone's ears.

Move to feature climate change in national art collection

Liam Fitzpatrick

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media has announced a €1.5m arts grant to ensure that climate change features more prominently in the national collection.

A statement from the department insisted that it will ensure that State-owned art "is more representative of the diverse communities of contemporary Ireland".

Minister Catherine Martin said "this funding will ensure that the collection is more reflective of the multiple identities and varied per-

spectives in Ireland today".

The fund allocates €850,000 to the Irish Museum of Modern Art and the remaining €650,000 to the Crawford Art Gallery in Cork.

The department hopes to expand the national collection with artwork "on pressing issues including climate change, diversity and global migration".

St Mary's awardees States-bound



Eimear Millane, who is studying for an MEd degree at St Mary's University College Belfast, and St Mary's graduate Cailín Fox received Fulbright Irish Awards to teach Irish at the University of Connecticut and the University of Notre Dame respectively at an awards ceremony in Iveagh House Dublin last week.

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The conservative Catholic who was the first advocate of same-sex marriage...

The idea of same-sex marriage was only seriously suggested in the 1990s, and one of the earliest advocates for this cause was the Catholic conservative journalist and writer Andrew Sullivan.

“At first, the gay community was divided about same-sex marriage – and some are still opposed to it”

Mr Sullivan, who is from an Irish family background, grew up in England, and later went to work in the US, was the first person in America to write a sensationally received article advocating same-sex marriage, back in 1989.

What was considered piquant was that he wrote this from a conservative viewpoint – Sullivan, who is 59, had been influenced by the conservative philosopher Michael Oakeshott while at Oxford, and had even been a Thatcherite.



Mary Kenny

His viewpoint was that gay marriage would enhance personal fidelity, be a stabilising force in society, and help to make homosexual people part of the community. He had been shaken – as who had not – by the AIDS epidemic, in which so many gay men died. Faithful marriage between same-sex couples was better than more casual relationships: this was perhaps somewhat similar to St Paul's idea that (heterosexual) marriage was “a remedy against fornication”.

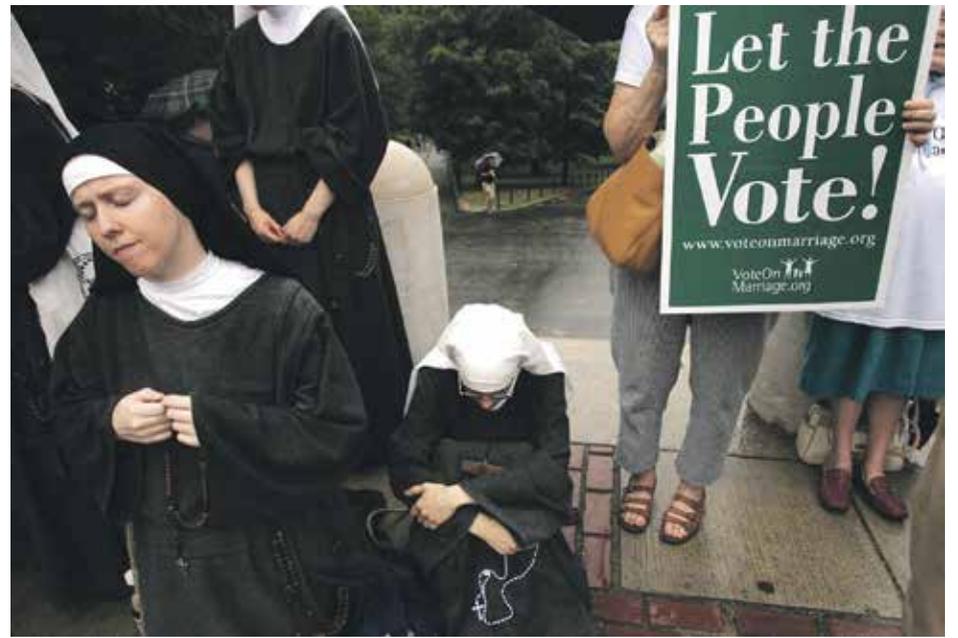
Same-sex marriage

At first, the gay community was divided about same-sex marriage – and some are still opposed to it. Julie Bindel, a British lesbian and women's rights campaigner, is vehemently hostile to an idea she regards as imitating the “profoundly patriarchal” institution of matrimony. Recently, she suggested that gay marriage is only being promoted because straight marriage

is in a state of collapse (at its lowest recording ever in the UK).

“Will sacramental same-sex marriage now be introduced in the Catholic Church?”

Yet Andrew Sullivan's campaign for same-sex marriage soon gathered support and then became successful with unprecedented rapidity. In less than 30 years, most developed societies had enacted legislation for same-sex matrimony and it was widely accepted, and often welcomed, by mainstream society. It was then accepted by some churches – even though there's a long tradition of Christian (and Jewish) teaching that marriage is “first, for the procreation of children”.



Franciscan nuns pray outside the Massachusetts Statehouse in this file photo in opposition to same-sex marriage. Photo: CNS

Catholic Church

Will sacramental same-sex marriage now be introduced in the Catholic Church? That's what an LGBT+ group, set up by

Bishop Kevin Doran, is calling for. According to reports, the idea is fine with the general public, including many mainstream Catholics.

Yet, an idea that is only

about 30 years old is quite new, in historical terms. In the realms of theological deliberation, rather more time is required for radical change.

● Latin was once a *lingua franca* in Europe, but British government employees are being urged not to use phrases like *lingua franca* for ‘common language’. A style guide issued by the Westminster government has asked those in office to eschew Latin (and French) tags such as *ergo* (therefore) and *quid pro quo* (a favour exchanged) or *en route* (on the road) when there are plain English equivalents.

This is because modern young people may be alienated or made uncomfortable by *lingos* they don't know. The Tik-Tok generation could be confused by legal phrases like *de facto* and *de jure*, although this is a useful differentiation between the letter of the law, and what actually happens.

My English teacher, Miss O'Hogan, used to say “if you don't know the meaning of a word – look it up in a dictionary!” Should I say *quod erat demonstrandum* to that?

Peerless poet TS Eliot

It was all Bloomsday and *Ulysses* this week in Dublin – including a recital from James Joyce's major opus at St Kevin's Oratory in the pro-cathedral. The Vatican once banned *Ulysses*, but then so did both Britain and America – though famously, it was never banned in Ireland.

Yet as I've referenced previously, for Christians, T.S. Eliot – whose groundbreaking *Waste Land* was also published in 1922 – may be the more significant writer. Being an Anglo-Catholic was the central aspect of Eliot's life. His biographer

Robert Crawford writes that Eliot placed the deepest importance on Mass and Confession as well as on the liturgy and theology derived from the common strand shared with Catholicism. He took a sacramental view of marriage, and although very unhappy with his first wife Vivienne, who had mental health problems, he could not contemplate divorce.

It was the Irish novelist the late Josephine Hart who introduced me to Eliot's work: I averred that no one could replace Yeats in my affections, but Josephine said “once you 'get' Eliot,

you'll never forsake him”. Indeed so – there is so much depth in Eliot's work, and its profoundly Christian sensibility is a beacon of spirituality, even including its bleaker moments. As Eliot is still in copyright (he died in 1965), only four lines are permitted for quotation, so I'll choose these four from the peerless *Four Quartets*:

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

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'Premium' placed on protecting Catholic ethos says bishop, as Carlow College explores divestment

Ruadhán Jones

Bishop Denis Nulty has insisted that a "premium" is placed on protecting Catholic ethos, as minutes seen by *The Irish Catholic* reveal the Church is considering divesting Carlow College, St Patrick's.

The college is one of two remaining publicly funded Catholic universities following the integration of St Angela's College Sligo into the Atlantic Technological University earlier this year.

The college's governing body,

whose chairperson is Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty, wants to "secure the long-term sustainability" of the college through integration into the South East Technological University (SETU), according to minutes from a meeting on November 25, 2021.

A letter outlining the gift in principle of the college and associated conditions was submitted to the Department for Higher Education by college president Fr Conn Ó Maoldhomhnaigh in February of this year.

A report that would "make a

case" for the integration of Carlow College into SETU was also submitted to the department, following advice from Minister for Higher Education Simon Harris.

In May of this year, Bishop Nulty told *The Irish Catholic* that there were "ongoing discussions" regarding the future of the college's "strategic positioning".

"Carlow College St Patrick's has embarked on a process of deepening collaboration with the Higher Education Sector and in recent years has been in discussions with relevant stakeholders regarding the

future strategic positioning of the College," Bishop Nulty said.

"Carlow College, St Patrick's is currently exploring all possibilities and discussions are ongoing.

"I can assure you, that, I, as bishop, along with the governing body, property trustees, the president and staff of Carlow College, St Patrick's place a premium on protecting Catholic religious education, teacher training and theology," Bishop Nulty finished.

In a visit to the college August 2021, Minister Harris told college authorities they could start discus-

sions with SETU on strategic positioning following the appointment of the first chairperson for the TU's governing body, which has since taken place.

Should the Church divest Carlow College, it would leave Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, as the last publicly funded third level Catholic college.

A spokesperson for the Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy told *The Irish Catholic* in May that "Mary Immaculate College is not negotiating with any institution about merger or incorporation".

Significant damages awarded to Ballymurphy families

Staff reporter

The families of nine people killed by British soldiers in west Belfast 50 years ago have been awarded significant damages, following an undisclosed settlement.

The settlement comes as a result of civil cases brought against the Ministry of Defence for the killing of ten people who were shot dead in Ballymurphy in August 1971.

A statement from the families said they had secured "significant payment in damages" to the families of Fr Hugh Mullan,

Frank Quinn, Joan Connolly, Noel Phillips, Joseph Murphy, Daniel Teggart, Edward Doherty, Joseph Corr and John Laverty.

In May 2021 a long-running inquest found that those killed were "entirely innocent" and in Belfast's High Court June 13, the families' civil action for damages was settled.

Following the announcement, Mr Justice Humphreys told the victims' families: "As well over 50 years have elapsed since these events occurred, I'm acutely aware of the significance of today as part of the process

that all of you have had to go through.

"My congratulations to all of you, for having reached the end of a very long road."

The daughter of one of the victims revealed after the settlement that authorities originally offered her mother just £350 in compensation for the death of her father.

Speaking to *The Irish News*, Janet Donnelly, daughter of Joseph Murphy, said her only regret was that her mother, who died in 2016, wasn't present to see the result.

Walk the Camino for the hospice

Liam Fitzpatrick

The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) will host a hundred-kilometre walk along the Camino de Santiago later this year to raise much needed funds.

Well-known broadcaster Martin King is among those encouraging people to participate in the September 30-October 7 walk.

"End-of-life care helps people live their last days with dignity and supports their loved ones during those very challenging times, so I'm delighted to support Irish Hospice Foundation for the launch of their Camino walk this year.

"Death and bereavement hits every



town across the country. End-of-life care helps people live their last days with dignity and supports their loved ones during those very challenging times," he said.



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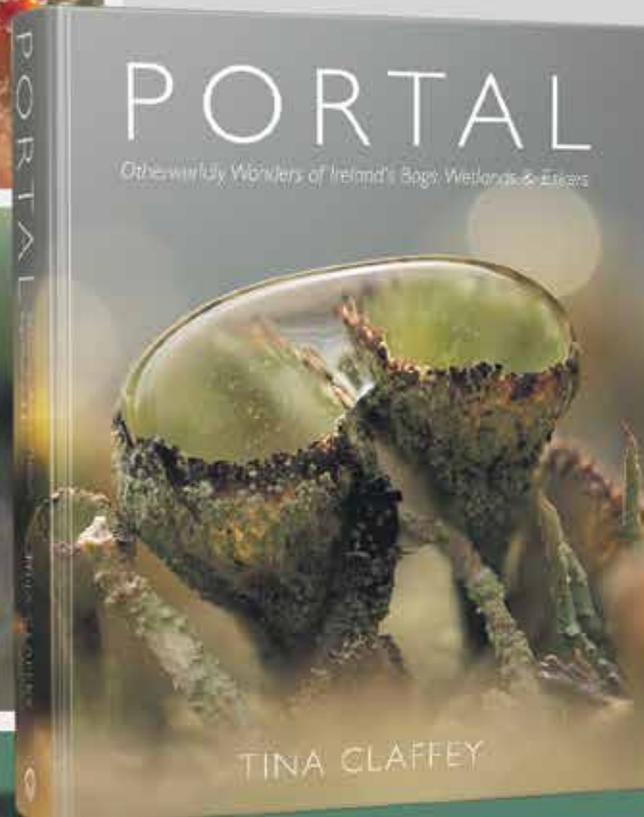
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Shannon Campbell

The View



Synod must be rooted in prayer

We hear views we disagree with all the time, but do we really listen to them? How do we approach difficult conversations in a way that ensures everyone feels fully heard? These are questions my peers and I have been wrestling with over recent months as we've been expressing our views in our school system in Northern Ireland. I have been taking part in the 'Crossing Divides around the Globe Project' run by the British Council in partnership with the BBC.

The project is part of a programme of initiatives to celebrate 100 years of the BBC. More than 1,000 young people in 100 countries took part.

My conversation partners were, like me, in their 20s and all of them work or volunteer in education.

There was general agreement that we should try to educate young people of all backgrounds together. However, there are differences of opinion about how best to do that. Do we need more formally-integrated schools, and what should the role of the Churches be in education?

“The aim of the project was to train young people to listen and understand those with very different perspectives”

We all presented our perspectives on our school system and also deep listened to each others views. We found our differences of opinion were nuanced - on a spectrum, but not on opposite ends of it.

No one won the argument, but then that wasn't the point.

The aim of the project was to train young people to listen and understand those with very different perspectives. It hoped to encourage deep listening which is to learn and practice skills of empathy, silence and suspending judgement.

The three of us - all women - spent time at explaining our positions to each other at

length and we also connected and listened to others across the world as they debated different subjects, important to them.

It's not often that we listen to someone else without interjecting or questioning, but that is one of the keys of deep listening.

Conversation partners

According to a study in Israel, this enables conversation partners to feel safe, less defensive and therefore more open to seeing both sides of an argument. Seasoned negotiator Douglas Stone trains Harvard Law School students in the technique. He first used the technique in the 1990s with 40 non-political leaders from Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. He says that deep listening involved being genuinely curious about someone else's story, with a strong desire to understand them. It's about connecting to them as an individual and establishing trust. In a case study of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, one mediator who had spent decades resolving disputes concluded that critical to successful deep listening (and deep learning) is cultivating the skill of being present.

My recent experience of deep listening reminded me of a conversation I once had with a Jesuit who had to leave my company early because he was headed to take part in the election of his superior. I was fascinated by the process involved and I wonder, does my experience of deep listening find its correlate there? In the constitutions, St Ignatius insisted that the election of the general takes place in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment, which makes room for the Holy Spirit. There is no room for a 'them and us' mentality, lobbying for one or the other. No parties for possible candidates.

Of course, delegates must be able to inform themselves about the persons whom they might judge suitable. They do this by a unique method called the *murmuratio*. Over a period of several days, electors exchange information among themselves about persons they consider capa-



Pope Francis leads a meeting with representatives of bishops' conferences from around the world at the Vatican in 2021 to discuss the synodal process. Photo: CNS

ble of becoming a superior. They talk with one person at a time only; breaking up into groups is out of the question at this stage. Between moments of sharing, each, as he thinks appropriate, goes to the chapel with what he has retained from these encounters. These days of *murmuratio* take place confidentially. You are not able to ask the electors how they are doing or what they have retained from their exchanges which, under the sign of the Spirit, will lead them to vote for such and such a Jesuit.

“Pope Francis, when he called our Church to a more synodal way of being, was inviting us into a process of deep listening”

I suspect Pope Francis, when he called our Church to a more synodal way of being, was inviting us into a process of deep listening: letting go of control, respecting the other, and making room for the movement of the Holy Spirit. Some, I think, (mis)interpret our synodal processes at local and universal levels as a move towards 'democratisation' of Church governance. Anyone

who has tuned in to Prime Minister's Questions from Westminster, the mother of all parliaments, would struggle to discern that process to be a 'spiritual conversation.' For us to be 'synodal' we must be grounded in a commitment to prayer that leads to an environment that is conducive to personal discernment and authentic conversation. This implies a holistic way of living that enables us to enter into communion with the only body whose head is Christ.

Emphasis

Deep listening, it would seem, owes much to the Ignatian tradition, with its emphasis on discernment. It has great potential to understand and adapt to the challenges facing the contemporary Church, helping us to discern the signs of the times. It offers a unique view of the radically different vision of relationship between God and humans that is at the core of our faith. If we were more attuned to the process of deep listening, and the spirituality which informs it, we could generate a lively contemporary Church environment.

But enough of my talking, time to listen. I'll leave the final word to Pope Francis: "Humility is born when, instead of talking, one listens, when one ceases to be at the centre...It's the way of humble service, which Jesus followed. It's always important to listen to the voice of all, especially of the little ones and the least. In the world those who have more means speak more, but among us it can't be that way."

TRIDUUM TO THE SACRED HEART

Wednesday 22 –
Friday 24 June 2022

ST JOHN VIANNEY,
ARDLEA ROAD, ARTANE,
DUBLIN D05 TH79

The services will be led by the resident Sacred Heart Fathers, Fr Hugh Hanley SCJ, Fr Marian Szalwa SCJ and Fr Michel Simo Temgo SCJ

Wednesday 22 June:

10.00 am Mass of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
7.30 pm Meditation and Song

Thursday 23 June:

10.00 am Mass of the Solemnity of St John the Baptist
7.30 pm Holy Hour with first Evening Prayer of the Sacred Heart

Friday 24 June:

10.00 am Mass of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
(World Day of Prayer for Priests)
7.30 pm Concluding Mass

Confessions after each Service

All services available on churchservices.tv/ardlea

St John Vianney Parish, Ardlea Road, is served by the Sacred Heart Fathers (Dehonians)

“The project is part of a programme of initiatives to celebrate 100 years of the BBC”

Discerning what God wants of the Church in Ireland today



This phase of the synod process has provoked diverse and sometimes contradictory suggestions, but also shown that many people still care for the Church, writes **Bishop Brendan Leahy**

One thing is clear: The Church does not stand still. The Spirit pushes us forward. Pope Francis comments on the expression sometimes heard reflecting a hesitancy about change: “We have always done it that way”. He calls this “poison for the life of the Church” and adds that, “those who think this way, perhaps without even realising it, make the mistake of not taking seriously the times in which we are living. The danger, in the end, is to apply old solutions to new problems. A patch of rough cloth that ends up creating a worse tear (cf. Matthew 9:16)”.

“These findings are available in submissions published on diocesan websites”

In referring to the worldwide synodal process that he launched last year, Pope Francis underlines how it must be “a process of becoming, a process that involves the local churches, in different phases and from the bottom up, in an exciting and engaging effort that can forge a style of communion and participation directed to mission”.

So how is the Holy Spirit inspiring the Church in Ireland in this synodal process? To assess something of the Irish experience over the past year, this Saturday, June 18, a significant gathering of lay, religious and clergy representing the 26 dioceses of Ireland - as well as delegates drawn from various movements and associa-



Parishioners take part in synod discussions in Belfast.

tions - will take place in the heart of Ireland: Athlone. Arranged by the steering committee and task group of the Irish synodal pathway, its purpose will be to listen to the findings that have emerged from the many diocesan and other conversations, which Archbishop Eamon Martin has defined as an expression of the “largest consultation ever to take place in the Catholic Church”. These findings are available in submissions published on diocesan websites.

Submissions

Even a cursory glance at the submissions indicates how an effort has been made to listen not just to those of us who come to church regularly, but also to hear what family members, work colleagues and neighbours who do not come to church, have to say. The universal synod’s official handbook for listening and discernment in local churches (the *Vademecum*) encouraged this. As it put it, we

were to make “every effort to involve those who feel excluded or marginalised...including people who have left the practice of the Faith”.

“They have expressed their admiration for the prophecy and style of Pope Francis”

While each diocese will have had its own particular experience of the synodal pathway, nevertheless there are many common themes emerging across the country, north and south: the continuing importance of faith in people’s lives, reflections on the sense of belonging, expressions of how abuse is part of the story of the Church, a call for much greater roles of women at all levels in the future of the Church, attention

to sexuality and relationships and LGBTQ+ concerns, as well as many references to topics such as education and catechesis, youth, family and co-responsible leadership, lay ministry, culture and the impact of Covid-19, as well as faith formation, clergy and liturgy.

People have shared deeply and with frankness. They have expressed their admiration for the prophecy and style of Pope. While there are diverse and sometimes contradictory suggestions, they show many people still care for the Church, wanting to see it having a role in our lives today and in that of future generations.

National synthesis

On June 18, in listening to the findings from the diocesan and other conversations those present will be contributing to the shaping of the national synthesis that will then be forwarded later in the summer to the general secretariat of the synod in Rome

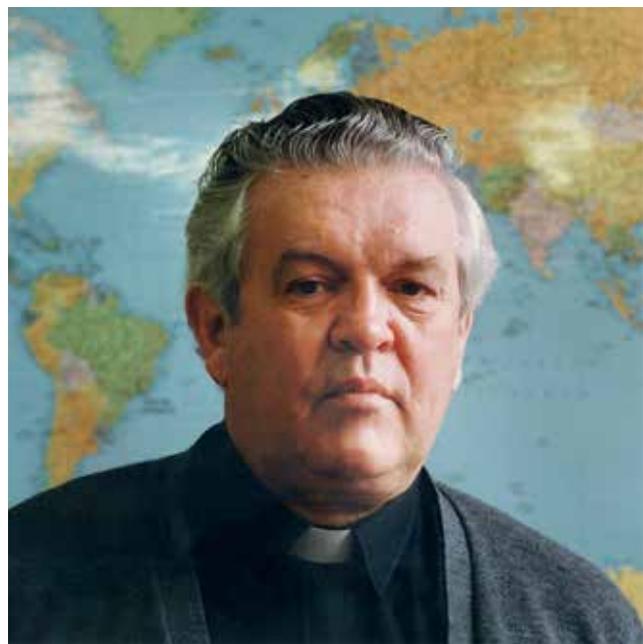
as part of the journey towards the 2023 universal synod to be held in Rome. The June 18 meeting will also include a liturgy in the significant setting of Clonmacnoise.

All of this is a first step. We are part of a universal Church to whose voice we also have to listen. Clearly, we still need much reflection, prayer and catechesis as we progress in the spiritual ‘discernment’ to understand what God wants of the Church in Ireland today. We will need to listen also to the voices of the river of Tradition that has come down to us through the generations. The Irish bishops’ conference has itself launched a five-year synodal pathway that will continue now on the basis of this first phase of conversations and submissions.

What cannot be emphasised enough in all of this is the need for all of us to contribute especially by praying for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Pope Francis’ words, “we are not holding a diocesan parliament, examining this or that question, but making a journey of listening to one another and to the Holy Spirit, discussing yes, but discussing with the Holy Spirit, which is a way of praying.”

“We are not holding a diocesan parliament, examining this or that question, but making a journey of listening to one another and to the Holy Spirit, discussing yes, but discussing with the Holy Spirit, which is a way of praying”

“A legacy of *incredible* humanitarian significance”



Fr. Aengus Finucane.

The Irish Catholic looks at a rich and varied life lived in the service of others and of God.

Fr. Finucane was ordained as a Holy Ghost Priest in 1958. In his first assignment in Uli, Nigeria, Fr. Finucane found himself involved in the bitter civil war between Nigeria and Biafra.

Following Biafra's attempt to secede, this widespread conflict had displaced millions. What's more, there was a blockade of food, medicine and basic necessities by the Nigerian authorities.

At the height of the crisis in the summer of 1968, it was estimated 6,000 children died every week.

An Irish effort

In response to the Biafrans' terrible plight, Concern Worldwide – originally called Africa Concern – was founded and began raising awareness and funds to help those suffering.

On 6th September 1968, the 600 tonne, Columille set sail for Sao Tome – a Portuguese island close to West Africa. The cost of chartering the ship and its vital cargo of powdered food and medicines was all paid for with donations from the people of Ireland.

To circumvent the blockade, the supplies were then flown from Sao Tome to Biafra overnight. The following day in Uli, Fr. Finucane was among the Holy Ghost priests who would help distribute the life saving supplies.

With his commitment and

that of the Irish public and priests, this operation grew into one flight a day for 11 months.

Fr. Finucane was deeply committed to helping the poorest of the poor. So after leaving Biafra, in 1972 he became Concern's Field Director in Bangladesh after its war of independence from Pakistan – the war had left millions in desperate need of food.

The period after Fr. Finucane's time in Bangladesh was particularly testing. In Thailand's Kampuchea refugee camps he saw the desperation of Cambodians who had fled the Khmer Rouge's genocide.

And in Uganda the horror of HIV in Kampala, where even in the best hospitals one third of the children born were HIV positive.

Fr. Finucane worked tirelessly to alleviate suffering, and recognised his responsibility to help the poor and underprivileged.

Concern appointed Fr. Finucane as its Chief Executive in 1981.

During his 16 years as the head of the charity he was 'on the ground' during many of the world's worst disasters. These included the 1983-1985 famine in Ethiopia and the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Relinquishing his post in 1997, Fr. Finucane became Honorary President of Concern Worldwide US. He held this post until his death on 6th October 2009.

Fr. Finucane's legacy

Fr. Finucane is the cornerstone behind much of what Concern has become today. It was he who expanded its aid work into 11 countries and dramatically increased its fundraising.

Tom Arnold – Concern's CEO from 2001 to 2013 – says:

“There can be few Irish people of his generation, or of any other generation, who have contributed as much to improving the lives of so much of humanity.

“He inspired a whole generation of Concern overseas volunteers.”

Fr. Finucane continues to inspire as his legacy still influences Concern 12 years after his death.

“Do as much as you can, as well as you can, for as many as you can, for as long as you can.”
– Fr. Aengus Finucane

In 2020 Concern worked in 23 countries, responding to 78 different emergencies, helping 36.9 million of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Concern's vision, mission and work continues to strive to end extreme poverty, whatever it takes. The charity believes that no-one should live in fear of not having enough food.

The devastation of climate change

Today one of the primary causes of acute food insecurity are weather extremes.

Climate change is increasing hunger levels and pushing even more people to the brink of famine. With multiple famines predicted, there are currently 41 million people teetering on the edge of starvation.

Extreme weather caused by climate change is having a devastating effect on the most vulnerable people in the world's poorest countries.

And these calamitous weather conditions are now more frequent and varied. No sooner has one disaster struck than another arrives. People don't have enough food for months, sometimes years on end.

In Malawi droughts, floods and strong weather patterns are a regular occurrence – placing huge stress

on land and crop production resulting in food shortages and hunger.

These weather extremes affect an already vulnerable population where 80% source their livelihoods from the land, 71% live below the poverty line and an estimated 20% are living in extreme poverty.

People like Yona Lambiki and his family.

Yona, a farmer, lives in Nkhambaza village with his wife and five children. He was always able to support his family with the crops and food he grew providing them with a healthy balanced diet. Any excess was sold, with some of the money used to pay for his children's schooling. But two years ago everything changed ...



Crops destroyed by Cyclone Idai.

In March 2019 Cyclone Idai caused devastating floods and loss of life in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The floods completely destroyed crops just weeks away from harvest – food people were relying on for survival.

Although his house wasn't affected, like thousands of others, the crops Yona was about to harvest were completely washed away. There was nothing for his family to eat, let alone any to sell.

Help for now and the future

But thanks to Concern's generous donors and Yona's hard work he is now able to look after his family again.

Yona immediately received a vital cash transfer from Concern. With this he bought food and other basic necessities his family needed to be safe and free from hunger.

Yona received seeds including maize, tomatoes, beans, three bundles of sweet potato vines and other vegetables to grow so he could, once again, support his family. He also received, fertilizer and a hoe to help him grow his crops. As well as five goats for milk and manure.



Photo: Jason Kennedy / Concern Worldwide.

“I would really love to meet everyone that is behind this support so I could thank them in person.” – Yona Lambiki

Like other families in his community, Yona planted the seeds he received in his home garden. What they harvest is used to feed their families, any excess is sold to improve their livelihoods.

But Concern do far more than simply give communities plants, seeds and tools. They provide training in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) to ensure long term, inter-generational support.

providing support for years – possibly decades – to come.

On speaking about the people who support Concern and make our work possible, he said, *“I'm so very happy with the support I have received from Concern. My life and family's life is healthy and can afford everything we could not afford before. I'm so happy and thankful to Concern.”*

Will Fr. Finucane inspire you too?

There's a way you, just like Fr. Finucane, can leave the world a better place. And help improve the lives of families like Yona's both now and for future generations.

How? By leaving Concern a gift in your Will.

When you leave a gift, your legacy lives on – helping for years to come.

“I know that this is a very personal decision. But I assure you, gifts in Wills have had a phenomenal impact in reducing extreme poverty, hunger and suffering around the world. Today, as the catastrophic combination of conflict, climate change and COVID-19 have plunged so many people into the grip of crisis, your gift will help us to be there in their time of need.”

– Dominic MacSorley, CEO, Concern Worldwide

Gifts in Wills are a vital source of funding for Concern.

Your legacy will help families like Yona's reverse the many struggles caused by Climate Change ...

... will provide the tools and knowledge they need to not just survive but help themselves – a gift from you they can pass down for generations.

To find out more about how a legacy gives a safe, secure future, please request your complimentary copy of 'A World Without Hunger' – Concern's legacy booklet.

You'll learn of others who desperately needed help, and how legacies from people just like you have done so much.

There are also answers to common questions people ask about leaving a gift in their Will. And explains how to get started.

Requesting your free booklet does not oblige you to do anything else.

To receive your free, no obligation booklet – in complete confidence – please contact Concern's Legacy Manager, Siobhán O'Connor. Call **01 417 8020**, email **siobhan.oconnor@concern.net**, or write to 52-55 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2



SVP celebrates combined 450 years volunteering



St Vincent de Paul hosted a garden party during Volunteers' Week to say thank you to SVP volunteers marking milestone service with the Society. Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, Rose McGowan, SVP National President and Fr Perry Gildea, congratulate Aidan Coyle of SVP St Mary's Stewartstown, on 25 years volunteering with the Society.



Annette McWilliams of SVP Blessed Virgin, Ballymena, is congratulated for her more than 25 years volunteering with the Society.

Ruadhán Jones

St Vincent de Paul North Region paid special recognition to volunteers celebrating milestones in their service to the Society this year, with a combined service of 450 years volunteering with SVP.

Representatives from across St Vincent de Paul North Region joined Fr Perry Gildea, SVP National President Rose McGowan, and Regional President for the North Region Mary

Waide, at a garden party to celebrate Volunteers' Week.

Ms Waide said it was "wonderful to think that we have members celebrating a combined 450 years of service to St Vincent de Paul this year".

She added that it is a privilege to "recognise volunteers who have given a lifetime of service to the Society and without their support, in the heart of our local communities across the North, the extent of the work of SVP would not be possible".



Mary McCullagh and Julia McGuigan of SVP St Columba, Ballinascreen, are congratulated on 25 years volunteering with the Society.



St Vincent de Paul National President Rose McGowan, joins Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region (left), at a garden party to celebrate Volunteers' Week.



Brendan Lynch of SVP Immaculate Conception, Newtownbutler, who has spent 25 years volunteering with SVP.



Ellen Brolly of SVP St Anthony, Mullabuoy, is pictured at the SVP North Region's garden party as she celebrates 25 years volunteering with the Society.



Eamon Quinn of SVP Stella Maris, Strangford, marks 25 years volunteering with SVP.



Ellen Bradley provided musical accompaniment to the SVP North Region's volunteers garden party.



Pat O'Driscoll of SVP Most Holy Redeemer, Ballyholme, on 50 years volunteering with the Society.

"Thank you for supporting NET Ministries Ireland in 2022"



“

When we met her, she was involved with Wicca and had dabbled a lot with witchcraft. She attended a retreat at school, and eventually began to come to Brew 132 in Cork City a few times a week to meet the NET team. Now she goes to Mass with her dad every week and believes in Jesus!

”

**Lilly, Brew 132
NET team, Cork City**

“

We spent the year working with the youth in the schools. Thirty-two of them came to Rossnowlagh for the end of year Surfing retreat. We spent time with them in Adoration, and they said it was their favourite part. Their faces had visibly changed through meeting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

”

**Joe, Letterkenny
NET team**



“

The young people got so much out of their Confirmation retreat. The team got them to pray in silence for twenty minutes. When asked if they felt it was long, they said no, it felt like three minutes. It was a real celebration of faith.

”

**Fr Johnny Moore,
Co. Donegal**

If you would like to bring Irish young people to faith this year, please support NET missionaries working in Ireland by your prayers and financial contributions.

Donate today!



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John Hume's work 'fuelled by his Christian Faith'



John Hume Jr is pictured with politicians and guests beside the bust of his father, June 7.



Portrait of then-MEP John Hume at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Ruadhán Jones in Strasbourg

The work of peace-maker and politician John Hume was "fuelled by his Christian faith", said Lord Chris Patten in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, June 7.

Lord Patten's comments came as a bust of Mr Hume was erected in his honour by An Taoiseach Micheál Martin and EP President Roberta Metsola.

The Derry-born politician was a daily Mass-goer, whose political and social achievements were "fuelled by his Christian faith", said Lord Patten, former governor of Hong Kong and one of the most prominent Catholics in the Conservative party.

"Like many other colleagues in the social democratic and nationalist movement in Northern Ire-

land, the prejudice suffered by his fellow Catholics inevitably drew him into democratic politics," Lord Patten said.

"This was also fuelled by his Christian faith and this in turn undoubtedly underpinned his work as a leader of the credit union movement, helping the poor to save and spend their modest means wisely.

"He believed that many Christians in the 1960s were recognising that their spiritual journey should be accompanied by helping people with their material development," Lord Patten continued.

He recalled how Hume said the North should strive to "create a nation, and the people that reflect our basic Christian beliefs, a place where people help people".

Speaking before the bust's unveiling, Lord Patten reflected on Mr Hume's childhood experiences of discrimination against Catholics

which "cemented Hume's understanding of the relationship between social justice and political harmony without ever embittering him about his Protestant neighbours".

John Hume's politics were not governed by the worst aspects of identity politics, Lord Patten added.

Hume did not ignore the complexities of a society "in which so many others passionately disagreed with his national vision".

Lord Patten finished saying that "quite simply John Hume left the world a better place than he found it.

"It is a task today and tomorrow for us to ensure in Ireland and Europe that things do not slip and slide back to where they were.

"That would be a betrayal of Hume's legacy and – as much to the point – a betrayal of our children and our grandchildren too."



An Taoiseach Micheál Martin (right) meets Lord Chris Patten (back left).



The inauguration of the bust of John Hume by EP President Roberta Metsola and An Taoiseach Micheál Martin, in the European Parliament building, Strasbourg.



A number of Irish airs were played to accompany the unveiling of the bust of John Hume.

The problem with Michael D.



The response of President Higgins to the massacre of Nigerian Catholics was tone-deaf in the extreme, writes David Quinn

At least President Michael D. Higgins thought to mention the recent brutal attack on Mass-goers in southwestern Nigeria that left 40 dead and 87 injured. I'm not aware of any of our other political leaders doing so.

Following the Pentecost Sunday assault which involved firearms and explosives, President Higgins said it was a "source of particular condemnation". But rather than draw attention to wider attacks on Christians in Nigeria and elsewhere, bizarrely he decided to highlight the issue of climate change.

Having said the attack was a "source of particular condemnation", he immediately added that so was "any attempt to scapegoat pastoral peoples who are among the foremost victims of the consequences of climate change."

He continued: "The neglect of food security issues in Africa, for so long has brought us to a point of crisis that is now having internal and regional effects based on struggles, ways of life themselves".

President Higgins was referring to a long-running and often violent struggle between Fulani herdsmen, who are mainly Muslim, and farmers, who are mainly Christian.

Massacre

The massacre of Mass-goers happened in Owo, in the diocese of Ondo. The bishop of Ondo, Jude Ayodeji Arogundade has now described President Higgins' statement as "incorrect and far-fetched".

In a strong statement on social media, he said: "To suggest or make a connection

between victims of terror and consequences of climate change is not only misleading but also exactly rubbing salt to the injuries of all who have suffered terrorism in Nigeria".

He said the president was being opportunistic in using the killing of Mass-goers to draw attention to climate change.

While it is the "the responsibility of every one of us to take care of our earthly home," the bishop appealed to "those who are trying to take advantage of this horrific event to project any form of ideological agenda to desist from such opportunism".

He said world leaders would be better served by suggesting ways in which Nigeria might be made a safe place to live.

We will see how President Higgins responds, if at all. Indeed, we will see how our own bishops respond.

Mistaken

In fairness, President Higgins was not completely mistaken in what he said. The savage attack on the Mass-goers did not emerge from a vacuum. There are tensions between Fulani herdsmen and both Christian and Muslim farmers.

In a way, it is an age-old story. Herdsmen like to be able to drive their animals to where there is water and fresh-grazing, and farmers like to plant crops and claim land and build fences. This leads to an inevitable clash where the stakes could hardly be higher. When people are living on the edge of survival anyway, a threat to your livelihood can literally be the difference between sustenance and starvation.

It is also true that growing desertification is driving the Fulani further south and bringing them into more contact with Christian farmers.

Sometimes the Fulani are killing the farmers not because they are Christians, but simply because they are in the way.

But it is very difficult to imagine President Higgins issuing a similar statement if the shoe was on the other foot and if Christian farmers had massacred Muslim worshippers in a mosque and if this was simply the latest in a line of such attacks.

He would most likely have simply condemned the attack, made no excuses and not used it as an opportunity to raise some other issue.

In addition, if Christians were continually attacking Muslims, including in their schools, places of worship

and elsewhere, as happens to Christians in Nigeria on a regular basis, he would have pointed this out.

In the US, George Martin of Aid to the Church in Need, responded to the massacre by saying, "This is the latest in the ongoing wave of brutal attacks on Nigeria's Christians".

He said: "Political and religious leaders around the world must condemn this barbarism and put pressure on Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to do what it takes finally to stop the violence and protect the Nigerian people".

The head of the US bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace condemned the attack saying: "Nigeria has sadly become all too familiar with such growing violence".

He noted that the American bishops have "supported the Church in Nigeria for many years in its effort to stop terrorist attacks by Boko Haram and armed groups, to build peace between herders and farmers, and to ensure credible and transparent elections".

Boko Haram is a radical Islamist organisation that has been terrorising Christians mainly in the north of Nigeria for years.

“He said the president was being opportunistic in using the killing of Mass-goers to draw attention to climate change”

Other American bishops responded in a similar vein.

In Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin called on Irish Catholics to "Please pray for the shocked parishioners of St Francis Xavier [of Owo, Nigeria] and for all our brothers and sisters who suffer persecution throughout the world."

Initially, Archbishop Martin reacted positively to President Higgins' statement. So did I, until I read it properly, and obviously it has stung the bishop of Ondo, given his reaction.

Indeed, Bishop Arogundade said he paid particular attention to President Higgins' statement because "Irish men and women laid the foundation of the Faith for us in this part of the world".

The bishop has also expressed extreme frustration at the failure by the Nigerian government to properly protect Christians.



Relatives gather around one of the victims of the attack by gunmen during a Pentecost Mass at St Francis Xavier Church in Owo, as she receives treatment at the Federal Medical Centre in Owo, Nigeria. Photo: CNS

Attack

When the attack on the church happened, calls to security services were left unanswered and the gunmen were able to act unimpeded for 30 minutes until they had killed all they wanted to kill. They then escaped, leaving behind two unexploded devices.

It is against this background that Bishop Arogundade issued his statement criticising President Higgins. Its very headline made his annoyance clear: "Setting the record straight: the massacre at St Francis Catholic church, Owo, has nothing to do with climate change and food security issues in Africa".

In short, President Higgins' response to the killing

was tone-deaf. It was not the time to talk about climate change. The massacre should have been condemned and the event used as an opportunity to talk not about secondary issues in this context, but the widespread persecution of Christians in Nigeria and elsewhere. If that was not the time to speak about it, then when are we going to do so?

The Irish Catholic

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Ministering rather than pandering to the flock



The Church is doing gay Catholics a disservice by watering down teaching on homosexuality, hears **Jason Osborne**

The term 'LGBT' is reductionist and if the Church bends to change its teaching on the matter, "the entire edifice of its teaching on sexuality collapses". So says John (not his real name), a Catholic who prefers to refer to himself as same-sex attracted who contacted *The Irish Catholic* about the Church's outreach as part of the synodal process. We are not using his real name in this article as he prefers not to be identified publicly.

Putting context on his own experience, John says he hid his attraction to men throughout his teenage years, first entering onto the "gay scene" at 22 with his first visit to a gay bar. He went on to live the 'gay lifestyle' for just over 20 years.

"My 22nd birthday would have been my first experience in a gay bar and I suppose immediately, just, I was entranced by the whole thing of the attention. The attention was good. For once, I was in a situation where I could relax, I didn't have to hide anything, you know, I could be open and all of that kind of thing. But I suppose right from the off, I noticed, even at that point of thinking, this is great now, I can do what I want here," he tells *The Irish Catholic*.

Negative

However, his first impressions were negative, too. John said he remembers the "hedonism" of copious alcohol and a "merry go-round of sleeping around", which he acknowledged is present in heterosexual venues as well.

"There was an emptiness. There was never really – I think only on two occasions over 20 years – did I feel, I would actually like to see that person again, and that it was more than just a sexual thing. That I wanted to get to know them better," he said, adding that there was "guilt" after the encounters.

During that time, John did attend Mass, but abstained from presenting himself for Holy Communion.

"Now, can I just say then at that time for a while there would have been a few years that I wasn't attending Mass. I did go back to Mass, we'll say in the mid-2000's if my memory serves me correctly". I was going to Mass but I wouldn't



An LGBT choir sings outside the Pastoral Congress at the World Meeting of Families in Dublin August 23, 2018. Photo: CNS

receive Holy Communion because I was still sexually active," he says.

"I was sexually active still, but I suppose your conscience would be saying to you, 'Look, what the hell is going on here? Why are you doing this?'...there was two sides to me: there was the person that went to work every day and then at the weekends I suppose...it would be difficult to just say, 'Ok, I'm going to stop this now all of a sudden or whatever.'"

“During that time, John did attend Mass, but abstained from presenting himself for Holy Communion”

John's re-engagement with the Church "debunked" the notion that the Church isn't welcoming to people of any sexual orientation, he says. "I was never asked my sexuality at the door of a church," as he put it.

"I would never have heard, there was never a demonisation of gay people from the pulpit that I would've heard of anyway, that could be construed as any way hurtful," he said.

"I think that needs to be debunked. The Church welcomes everybody to

“The Church welcomes everybody to come, and then the reconciliation with God, I would say, it has to come from the person themselves”

come, and then the reconciliation with God, I would say, it has to come from the person themselves, to seek it and to want it, whether they're homosexual or heterosexual. I never felt unwelcome.”

Discourse

In the Church's latest dealings with the discourse around human sexuality, John takes issue with the minimising of all SSA Catholics by the universal application of the "LGBT" label, referring to it as "reductionist".

"I suppose, my concern first of all, I find the term – I want this point made: I find the term LGBT reductionist. We don't all listen to what Ms Panti Bliss has to say, we're not all looking to go to gay bars – you've people who wouldn't be caught dead in a gay bar," he said.

"I would also say, and this is from talking to other people. Some of the most clear moments actually were, funnily enough, some of the things that I can remember from conversations with people after a few drinks, that they would open up. A lot of people in the culture, in the bar or whatever, they would recognise, even if it wasn't all the time – we'll say from time to time – the unsatisfactory nature of the condition," he said, specifying "the culture of hedonism and the glorification of youth".

Asked about the path the German *Synodaler Weg* is taking, which seeks to change Church teaching on homosexuality and bless same-sex marriages, John voiced profound disagreement.

"I would say, ok, the thing that's happening in Germany, it disturbs me, because if the Catholic Church bends to the extent of condoning what it had always seen as sin and then it suddenly changes that, well the entire edifice of the teaching on sexuality collapses as far as I'm concerned. Not just that – its unique place as the refuge for sinners is gone as well, because there's no refuge if there's no sinners, if this isn't considered a sin anymore," he said.

“Staying faithful to Church teaching is 'not easy', as he still experiences same-sex attraction and still finds it 'a struggle'”

"People like me do exist – you have a subsection of people, I've met people who never acted on the sexual impulse, they just led quiet lives. So I suppose, where is the story of the same-sex person – I prefer to use

the term SSA, same-sex attraction – where is the story of the person who's faithful to Church teaching. Where is that being told? The Association of Catholic Priests aren't going to tell that story. Cardinal Marx in Germany isn't going to tell that story."

With regards to the bishops' outreach to SSA Catholics, John asks, "First of all, what's an LGBT Catholic?"

Practicing

"Are they practicing homosexuality or not? Because if they're not, they shouldn't have the label LGBT put on them, I think, personally. If they are, I would say there's an elephant in the room, the room where the bishops are meeting these people and the people themselves and the elephant in the room is, well actually, you're talking about dialoguing, going on a journey and listening. Well, they can only listen so much because at the end of the day, that is Catholic Church teaching and if the bishops really love these people, they will give that teaching in love and respect, but they will give the teaching nonetheless," he said, adding that the impression that he gets is that "the bishops are not affirming Church teaching about homosexuality and that worries me".

John says that staying faithful to Church teaching is "not easy", as he still experiences same-sex attraction and still finds it "a struggle". However, he says he's found solace in prayer and the Sacrament of Confession, and that if the goal of a Catholic is to get to heaven, they should be helped to that goal with clearly stated Church teaching.

Don't miss

THE SYNODAL TIMES

a new magazine in the June 23
edition of *The Irish Catholic*

Ireland's synodal pathway is ongoing and The Synodal Times has 32 pages of news, analysis and commentary to break down what the synod is and what it means for the future of the Irish Church.

FEATURING:

- * Conclusions to the listening process from all 26 dioceses
- * The 'Sense of Faith' and Contested Issues
by Gerry O'Hanlon SJ
- * Features on youth involvement
- * An Entirely Synodal Church
by Maureen Kelly

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St Mary's Baldoye's TY students end year in style



Pictured are students who were nominated as contenders for the Transition Year student of the year award: back row (from left) Julia Fudala, Hannah Kaye Ricablanca, Ella Hevey, Isabel Farrell and Martina Sawicka; front row: Lucy Brennan, Hannah Bruun and Amy Tighe.



St Mary's Baldoye Transition Year student of the year Hannah Bruun.



Transition Year sportsperson of the year Lucy Brennan.

Ruadhán Jones

Transition year students at St Mary's Baldoye, Dublin, finished off their year in style with a musical performance and graduation night.

St Mary's Baldoye deputy principal John Moore said that the show, which took five days to produce, was "just brilliant."

"Well done to the Transition Years on an amazing performance which, under the guidance of Amy White Lambe, took less than 5 days to produce," he said.

The musical performance was a journey down memory lane of the various musicals performed in St Mary's, as a group of students find a box of old programmes which leads to discussion and a

scene from the musical appears.

Mr Moore also thanked SNA Annie Jakob for the tremendous amount of work she put into producing the TY newsletter for the students' graduation.

A number of students were recognised at the graduation for their achievements throughout the school year.



Nominations for the Transition Year Student of the Year waiting nervously on stage.



Badminton Winners Hannah Wilcocka, Lesley Anne Velasquez and Hannah Bruun.



Badminton winners Carla Gravalos Olaya and Ella Hevey.



Bronze Gaisce award winners. Pictured in the back row (from left) are Lesley Anne Velasquez, Martina Sawicka, Ceire Ferl Del Poso and Lucy Brennan: front row Hannah Kaye Ricablanca, Ella Hevey and Hannah Bruun.

Who exactly is being moved by the Spirit in the synodal process?



The views of a section of the Church, even if it is the view of many, is not the sense of the Faithful, writes Dr John Murray

Last week's edition of *The Irish Catholic* reports that the Dublin synodal report "says that 'many were moved by the Spirit' to call for the consideration of female priests". The Dublin report doesn't specify the ordained priesthood and could be understood as referring to the diaconate only, but arguably it accurately reflects what is being looked for in the Dublin report. And we might expect similar claims and demands to be made in other diocesan reports both in Ireland and internationally. Even though presented without any critical comment in the Dublin report, the claim that these 'many' synodal participants were 'moved by the Spirit' is surely open to serious questioning. It seems both somewhat illogical and seriously incompatible with the Faith. If it were true that some participants were moved by the Spirit to ask for a reversal of Church doctrine on the Sacrament of Holy Orders, what does that imply about the other synodal participants, and Catholic laypeople generally, who believe the definitive teaching of the Church that she has no power to ordain women as priests? Are these believing Catholics 'moved by the Spirit' in their assent to the traditional teaching and practice? Or is another spirit moving them? It would seem that in the Dublin report only a particular section of the participants is here being categorised as moved by the Spirit, namely, those who are looking for radical changes. But why is this the case? Why is it only the people pushing for reversals of doctrine and practice who are considered to be the voice of God for the Church today? How ought we discern what 'Spirit' is moving people to propose certain things?

Unholy spirit

Was Pope St John Paul II moved by the Holy Spirit or by another, 'unholy spirit' when he confirmed the tradition of the Church in his apostolic exhortation in 1994, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*? Was the whole Catholic tradition, east and west, moved by the Holy Spirit or an unholy spirit

in believing in Holy Orders as coming from Christ and as restricted to men? Can the opinion of some synodal participants in 2022 overturn 'the sense of the Faithful' over all the centuries since Christ on this matter (and indeed on other matters too)? Just how exactly is one to know if the Church has the power to ordain women to the priesthood if sacred scripture, sacred tradition and the papal magisterium are not sufficient to decide the matter?

It seems to me that people are far too quick to invoke the Holy Spirit as supporting their cause throughout this whole present synodal process, even to the extent of opposing definitive doctrine. It is very disappointing to see the official Dublin report promote this strategy. Of course, it lends one's opinion great authority if one can present it as inspired by God! But isn't it the case that many heretical, would-be reformers over the centuries have seen their work as God's work? We need more than the mere claim that one's view is God's view if we are to have confidence that it really is compatible with divine revelation.

“Even though presented without any critical comment in the Dublin report, the claim that these ‘many’ synodal participants were ‘moved by the Spirit’ is surely open to serious questioning”

No doubt we will be told that the views being presented in the synodal consultation are the voice of the People of God, expressing the *sensus fidelium*, the sense of the Faithful. And we will be assured that this is only following the lead of the Second Vatican Council. But if one looks at what the council actually taught, we can see that the views of a section of the Church, even if it is the view of 'many', is not the sense of the Faithful, and may not be used as to pressurise or persuade the magisterium to change doctrine and practice (even in small steps). In the council document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, the 'sense of the Faithful' is defined so as to include all the Faithful, including Pope, bishops, priests, and laypeople, who "show universal agreement in faith and morals". Not only that, but their 'discernment' of the Faith is 'exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience to which the people of God accepts that which is not just the word of men but truly the word of God. Through it, the people of God adheres unwaveringly to the Faith given once and for all to the saints, penetrates it more deeply with right thinking, and applies it more fully in its life' (see paragraph 12). This is hardly what we see hap-



pening in the Dublin synodal report, where the views of some people are being presented as moved by the Holy Spirit even though they are not, and never were, held by the consensus of Catholic Faithful, and they contradict the faith of the Church, calling into question the very reliability of the magisterium, the tradition, and the Word of God. This is so not only regarding Holy Orders but also the Sacrament of Marriage and Catholic sexual ethics. This can lead only to confusion and doubt.

Responding positively

The Church will hardly be capable of responding positively and effectively to the priestly vocations crisis if such a high level of confu-

sion and nonsense, not to mention lack of Catholic faith, is corrupting its leaders' thinking. Nor will the Church be able to improve the passing on of the Faith and attract young people to the Faith, also called for in the report (but not in contradiction to the Faith in this case), if we condone and promote the idea that the Holy Spirit is inspiring all the views expressed in the synod. God does not speak nonsense. If we are going to treat the views of the marginalised and alienated dissenters as the voice of the Spirit, then either we treat the views of those Catholics who believe the disputed teachings as also moved by the Spirit, thus having God contradict himself and speak nonsense, or we see

believing Catholics as opposing the Spirit. Even with a well-intentioned desire to be 'inclusive', we could end up excluding the Faithful who believe the Church!

We have been conditioned by the synodal process, both nationally and globally, to expect things to change. I'd like to propose that instead of changing Church teachings we see another change. Let's see all our Church leaders finally start to teach *the whole* Faith with conviction and coherence and honesty, rather than entertaining contrary opinions as the voice of the Spirit. That would make a welcome change!

i Dr John Murray is assistant professor in moral theology/Christian ethics at Dublin City University.

Ireland rallies around the rosary

Jason Osborne

The All-Ireland Rosary Rally drew an unprecedented crowd of around 7,000 people in its first post-pandemic outing, with over 40 buses bringing pilgrims to Knock from around the island.

The All-Ireland Rosary Rally was started by Canon Michael Fitzgerald of the Cloyne diocese over thirty years ago. He was inspired by the rosary rallies of Venerable Fr Patrick Peyton who held rallies all over the world for crowds as large as two million people in the Philippines and Brazil.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Fr Marius O'Reilly said there was a "beautiful atmosphere of joy" on the day.

"Everyone was chatting and a lot of them were saying

it was the best day they ever had in Knock. It was a wonderful day."

"The papal nuncio was really animated and on fire, and encouraging people to pray the rosary in their families. Bishop Michael Duignan gave a beautiful homily as well, and I gave a talk on the rosary then," Fr O'Reilly said.

"So just encouraging people, in Ireland we've always had the rosary and it's helped us through thick and thin. It's great to see that...the roots are deep and the people came long distances on buses. There was something like 40 buses there - they haven't seen that crowd in Knock in a long time."

People are already looking forward to next year, Fr O'Reilly said, which is scheduled to take place Saturday, June 3, 2023.



at Knock



Bishop Denis visits Borris



Bishop Denis Nulty and Borris parish priest Fr Rory Nolan with the Hayes family.

Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty visited the parish of Borris recently and celebrated the 11am Mass. Afterwards, he posed for photographs in the church grounds.



Bishop Nulty and Fr Nolan with the Brophy family.



Bishop Nulty with the O'Shea family.



Bishop Nulty and Fr Nolan with the O'Gorman family.



Fr Nolan and Bishop Nulty with members of the choir who participate in Mass every Sunday.

Out&About

Steering a clear course



KILDARE: Bishop Paul Dempsey and members of the synodal steering committee held an enriching day of reflection on synodality in a theological key in St Patricks College Maynooth, May 28.



LAOIS: Up to 4,000 people turned up to the Mass in St Peter and Paul's Cemetery, the first time the Mass could take place there in three years, June 5.



DUBLIN: The newly elected leadership team of the Ireland-England Delegation of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (from left) Frs Vincent Fallon ss.cc. (Vicar), Michael Ruddy ss.cc. (Coordinator), Chris McAneny ss.cc. (Councillor).

INSHORT

Choral Festival returns to St Patrick's Cathedral

After a two-year postponement due to the worldwide pandemic, the fifth Dublin Choral Festival takes place this year on Saturday June 18, at St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin at 8 pm.

The theme is 'Faith, Love, Song and Light' and features a programme of classical, contemporary, and Celtic works from European and North American composers.

"The programme follows a theme of spirituality and love that carries us through the dark times until we finally remerge into the light," organisers said in a statement.

Over 120 singers aged 16-70 from five American choirs will perform in the hallowed halls of St Patrick's Cathedral alongside Dublin's Kaleidoscope Ensemble. Proceeds from the festival go toward the work of the Irish Hospice Foundation.

Further information at St Patrick's Cathedral (www.stpatrickscathedral.ie)

Dublin's deacons celebrate 10th anniversary

Eight permanent deacons from the Archdiocese of Dublin, the first permanent deacons ordained in Ireland, celebrated the 10th anniversary of their ordination the weekend of June 5.

The deacons expressed a great sense of gratitude for the support of their wives, families and friends. They also thanked Fr John Gilligan, Director of the Permanent Diaconate in the archdiocese and Archbishop Dermot Farrell for their encouragement and support.

There are now 34 permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of Dublin and over 100 in Ireland.

Irish docudrama advocates faith's importance

Faith and prayer are among the most obvious weapons that feature in *Speak of the Devil*, the latest EWTN docudrama from Irish Film production company St. Brigid Media Limited.

Filmed on location at the former Ulster History Park at the Gortin Glens near Omagh, it recasts the parable of the prodigal son in a medieval setting to explore the theme of spiritual warfare in detail from a unique perspective.

Producer Aidan Gallagher said, "We wanted to get across the challenges 'out there' that we all face daily, and the difficulties we must overcome.

"The film shows us ways to strengthen ourselves spiritually, as well as simple steps to follow every day to help us live a happier life."

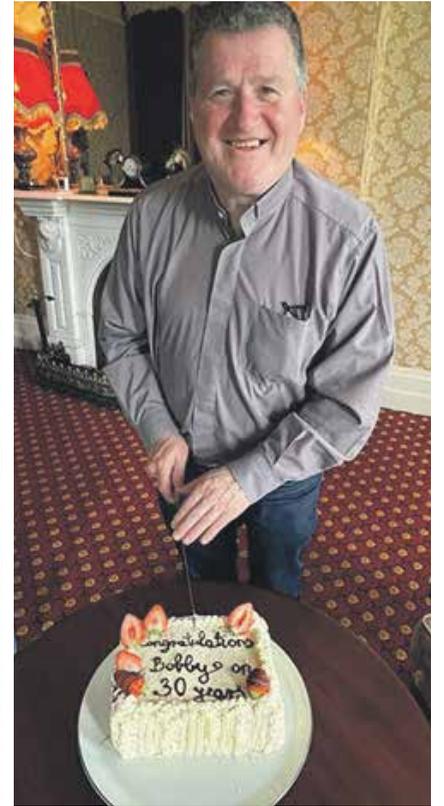
Speak of the Devil was screened in the Vatican, Rome, May 31 and was presented to Pope Francis.



DUBLIN: Jake (age 7) and Zack (age 5) Morrissey from Dublin who sold their unopened Easter eggs for a very special charity, the Poor Clares in Carlow. The boys raised €80 for the convent, which was donated to the sisters recently.



CLARE: Bishop of Kilaloe Fintan Monahan (centre) is pictured with priests of the diocese celebrating their silver jubilee. Pictured (from left) are: Fr Arnold Rosney, Shannon; Fr Ignatius McCormack, St Flannan's College; Bishop Monahan; Fr Tom Whelan, Castleconnell; Fr John Molloy, Toomevara; Fr Lorcán Kenny, Roscrea.



WATERFORD: Pictured preparing a celebratory slice of cake is Fr Bobby Power, who celebrated his 30th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, June 7.



DUBLIN: A Mass of thanksgiving took place in St Sylvester's Church, Malahide, to mark the 10th anniversary of the first permanent deacons of Ireland. Pictured are the deacons and their wives: Eric and Denise Cooney, Jim and Monica Adams, Gerry and Patricia Larkin, Noel and Annette Ryan, Fr John Gilligan Director of the Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Dublin, Steve and Sheila Maher, Gerard and Beatrice Reilly, Gabriel and Lynn Corcoran. Deacon Joe Walshe is absent from the photo.



CORK: Fr Patryk Zakrzewski OP, the Polish chaplain from St Saviour's Dominican priory in Dublin, who ran the full Cork marathon on Sunday, June 5.



DUBLIN: Fr Ivan Tonge and some children from his parish are pictured following his 50th Ordination Mass in St Patrick's Church, Ringsend.



DUBLIN: Fr Michael Murphy addresses the parish Building Hope gathering in Kilmanagh-Castleview parish, which took place June 8.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



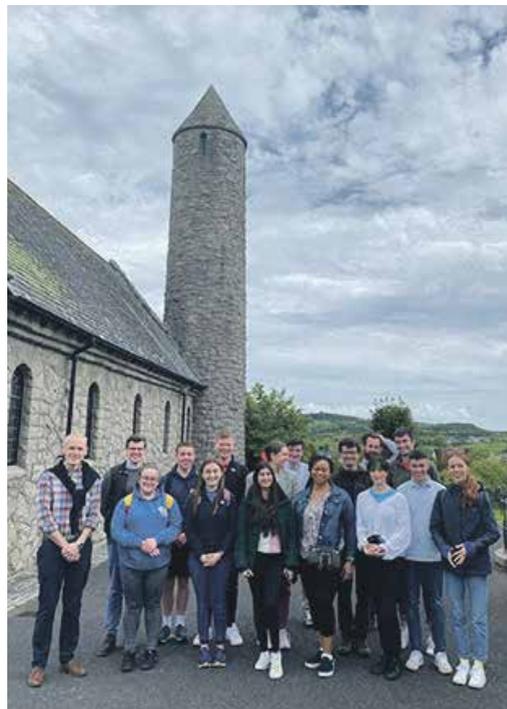
DOWN: Members of the parish of Maghera, Newcastle, are pictured during the Living Church retreat held recently. The gathering brought to a close the final sessions of the online program, 'A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother'.



LOURDES: The Waterford and Lismore diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes lit a candle in Lourdes for the intentions of all in the diocese.



CORK: Fr Michael Kelleher celebrates his 40th year of priesthood. Parishioners celebrated this milestone with him at St Mona's Church, Sherkin Island on Saturday evening, June 6.



DOWN: Queen's University Belfast's Catholic Chaplaincy enjoyed a *gita* to Lecale and Ards to conclude the year. The Italian word *gita* translates as 'trip, outing, excursion', but the best equivalent is probably 'jaunt'.

ANTRIM

Eucharistic adoration takes place on Tuesdays from 8am to 7pm in St Anthony's Church, Craigy Hill.

ARMAGH

On Sunday June 19 in Armagh, people are asked to bring a little bottle of holy water and bless their own family graves.

CAVAN

The Kilmore Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock, Ireland's International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine, will take place on Sunday June 19, on Corpus Christi. Ceremonies will begin with the Anointing of the Sick at 2.30pm.

Bishop Martin Hayes will celebrate Mass at 3pm, with benediction and a rosary procession following. Contact Patricia on 087-1890236 or knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

CLARE

On Friday June 24, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the annual global rosary relay for the sanctification of priests will take place. Bishop Fintan Monahan and Fr Joy will pray the luminous mysteries of the rosary from the Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul, Ennis, at 2.30pm.

CORK

Corpus Christi procession in to be held in Bantry on June 19.

DERRY

Living in Divine Will monthly meeting takes place in Termonbacca, on the first Monday of every month at 8pm, all welcome.

Social Café: come along for a chat, tea/coffee in aid of mental health, every Tuesday after 10am Mass in Aras Cholmille in the grounds of Long Tower Church.

DONEGAL

The glorious mysteries of the rosary will be prayed in St Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny, at 8.15pm, as part of the rosary relay for the sanctification of priests.

DUBLIN

Exposition and evening prayer takes place on Wednesdays at 5pm in Sacred Heart Church, Donnybrook, while the rosary is recited on Thursday at 5pm.

GALWAY

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart nine-day novena takes place June 16 to 24 (the Feast of the Sacred Heart) and will be livestreamed from Christ the King Church, Salthill.

KERRY

The diocese of Kerry is recruiting for pilgrims to travel to Taizé this summer, young people between the ages of 18 and 30 years. The pilgrimage begins Sunday, June 26 and returns on Sunday July 3. Cost of the pilgrimage is €600. For more information contact Tomás Kenny on 086 3683778 or tomaskenny@dioceseofkerry.ie

KILKENNY

Annual Mass will be celebrated in St Kieran's Cemetery on Hebron road at 7.30pm on Friday, June 24.

FERMANAGH

Blessing of the Graves at St Mary's Church, Maghera after the Vigil Mass, Saturday June 25 and St Tierney's Church after the 10.30am.

LIMERICK

The Legion of Mary's weekly meetings now take place in the Pastoral Centre, Doon at 7.30pm on Tuesdays.

LONGFORD

Cemetery Sunday in Longford will take place on June 26 at 1pm.

LOUTH

'A Prayer by Telephone' – The Sisters of Mercy, 34 Point Road, Dundalk welcome any person who may wish to request prayer, especially during these difficult times. All requests are confidential. Tel: 00353 429331602 9am–9pm daily.

MAYO

The Scripture Summer School takes place Thursday 16–Saturday 18 June. Its theme is 'Walking the Synodal Pathway Together' and will be facilitated by Mr Sean Goan and Fr Kieran O'Mahony OSA. There is the option of joining online or in-person. Beginning: Thursday, June 16 at 9.30am. Finishing: Saturday, 18 June at 1pm. Location (if attending in-person): St John's Welcome Centre, Knock Shrine. Booking fee €40.

MEATH

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock, June 17 and 18. Anyone interested in travelling please contact 086-9666199. Bus travelling on June 18.

MONAGHAN

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje July 13 to July 20, led by Fr Patrick McGinn, Monaghan and Marian Kane. Flying from Dublin to Mostar, 30 minutes from Medjugorje. Evening flight. €735 all-inclusive, Limited seats available. For more information and booking, contact 087 271 3260.

TIPPERARY

Mothers' Prayer Meeting: Every Monday at 7:30 pm in Thurles Parish Centre for an evening of prayer, fellowship and chat. This group offers a wonderful opportunity to meet other mums, support each other and share our experiences in a confidential space. All mums welcome! Enquiries at 0860847172.

TYRONE

The annual healing and blessing service will take place on Thursday June 23, feast of St John the Baptist, at the Washingbay at 8pm. The sick, elderly and infirm will receive a healing anointment followed by a special blessing for caregivers. A cup of tea and chat will follow.

WATERFORD

Mount Melleray pilgrim walks take place Saturday June 18, with 4.5km/10.5km/15km options. Registration from 9-10am. Blessing and departure. Booking Essential. www.eventbrite.ie or text 085 1445166 or email walks@mtmelleray.ie.

WESTMEATH

Prayer meeting in the Friary Church, Athlone every Monday night from 7.30 to 8.30 pm.

WICKLOW

Cemetery Mass at Rathbran Cemetery, Friday 24 June at 7.30pm.

WEXFORD

Diocese of Ferns pilgrimage to Lourdes June 20 to June 24. Led by the Bishop of Ferns Ger Nash. Four nights' accommodation in Lourdes. Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner each day. Booking details: Joe Walsh Tours 01 2410800 or info@joewalsh-tours.ie.

World Report

IN BRIEF

Cardinal injured in 2021 earthquake hospitalised after Haiti accident

● Cardinal Chibly Langlois was injured in a traffic accident in Haiti on June 8, according to local media reports.

The 63-year-old bishop of Les Cayes was reportedly not in critical condition but was taken to the hospital on June 8 for a possible broken arm after the incident in the south of the country.

Cardinal Langlois was also injured in a 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Haiti last year.

The president of the Haitian bishops' conference was hurt and another Haitian priest died in the earthquake on August 14, 2021, in which over 1,200 people died and more than 12,000 were injured.

Cardinal Langlois is the first Haitian cardinal. He was elevated to the position by Pope Francis in 2014.

Man charged with attempted murder of US Supreme Court justice

● A criminal complaint filed June 8 charged 26-year-old Nicholas John Roske of Simi Valley, California, with attempted murder of a US Supreme Court justice in violation of federal law.

Signed by FBI special agent Ian Montijo, the complaint lists Mr Roske's offense under "Attempts to

kidnap or murder, or threatens to assault, kidnap or murder a United States Judge, to wit: a current Justice of the United States Supreme Court."

The news comes after a Supreme Court spokeswoman confirmed that an armed man was arrested after threatening Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

Poland's bishops: Ukrainians 'will not be able to survive' without help

● Poland's Catholic bishops said June 7 that many Ukrainians "will not be able to survive" without continued help.

In a message issued after their plenary meeting in Zakopane, southern Poland, the bishops said that Poles' response to the arrival of more than three million refugees from Ukraine "deserves recognition".

"They ask everyone to continue to help and show generosity towards our sisters and brothers who are still suffering because without help many of them will not be able to survive," the bishops said.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, an estimated 3.9 million people have crossed the Poland-Ukraine border. Although the war is continuing, many Ukrainians have decided to return home.

Cardinal Farrell to lead Vatican investment oversight committee

● Cardinal Kevin Farrell will chair a new committee to oversee investments, the Vatican said June 7.

The 74-year-old Irish-American cardinal will lead a committee of four finance professionals.

Since 2020, Cardinal Farrell has also led a committee to monitor internal Vatican financial decisions that fall outside other

accountability norms.

The investment committee was established by the Vatican's new constitution, *Praedicate evangelium*, to ensure "the ethical nature of the Holy See's movable investments according to the social doctrine of the Church and, at the same time, their profitability, appropriateness, and riskiness".

Myanmar junta attacks historic Catholic village again

● Homes in a "historic" Catholic village have been burned to the ground for a second time this month by Junta troops in Myanmar, ucanews.com reports.

Over two-thirds of an estimated 500 houses were destroyed in fires set during a military raid on Chan Thar village in the mainly Buddhist Sagaing region on June 7, local sources told ucanews.com.

On May 7, around 20 houses were destroyed in the same village in fires set by soldiers.

Pope's knee troubles force cancellation of July trip to Africa

Because of continuing problems with his knee, Pope Francis has postponed his planned trip to Congo and South Sudan July 2-7, said the Vatican press office.

Matteo Bruni, director of the press office, did not mention whether the Pope's planned trip to Canada in late July was still set.

"At the request of his doctors, and in order not to jeopardise the results of the therapy that he is undergoing for his knee, the Holy Father has been forced to postpone, with regret, his apostolic journey to the Democratic Republic of Congo and to South Sudan," Mr Bruni said June 10. The trip would be moved "to a later date to be determined".

Although Pope Francis has cancelled several events since mid-January and has begun using a wheelchair or a cane, the Vatican had continued to insist that he would make the two trips in July. The Vatican press office published a detailed schedule for the Africa trip May 28 and released a list of the journalists accredited to the papal flight to Africa June 8.

The South Sudan portion of the trip had been in the works for years.

Pope Francis was scheduled to fly to South Sudan with Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and the Rev. Iain Greenshields, moderator of



Pope Francis touches his knee while grimacing during his general audience in St Peter's Square at the Vatican in this June 1, 2022 photo. Photo: CNS

the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, for an ecumenical pilgrimage of peace July 5-7. Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian leaders in South Sudan and internationally have been supporting the nation's peace process and pushing the leaders of opposing factions to end fighting and collaborate for the good of the nation.

Schedule

The three leaders had been trying to schedule the visit since 2016 when South Sudanese Catholic, Anglican and

Presbyterian leaders visited the Pope and archbishop and asked them to go to encourage the peace process. At least 60% of South Sudan's population, including its political leaders, are Christian.

Pope Francis also was set to visit Kinshasa and Goma, Congo, July 2-5 and to meet with victims and survivors of the ongoing violence in the eastern part of the nation.

It is very unusual for the Vatican to announce a papal trip and publish a detailed schedule for it, then cancel the trip. In 1994, St John Paul II was

forced to cancel two planned trips: one to Beirut and one to Sarajevo. Both visits were postponed because of security concerns. But that year, he had fallen in the shower and broken his femur, which also forced the cancellation of a May visit to Belgium.

The Vatican has not provided details about Pope Francis' knee ailment or his therapy.

In an interview May 3 with an Italian newspaper, he said, "I have a torn ligament; I will have a procedure with injections, and we will see."

Catholic leaders criticise EP for backing US abortion law motion

A Catholic leader June 9 criticised the European Parliament for voting in favour of a motion denouncing the leaked US Supreme Court draft opinion on abortion.

Fr Manuel Barrios Prieto, the secretary general of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), told Vatican News that the vote showed "a certain tendency in the European Parliament and European institutions that is not favourable to life".

Members of the European Parliament, the EU's law-making body, voted

in Strasbourg, France, on June 9 to pass the motion "Global threats to abortion rights: the possible overturning of abortion rights in the US by the Supreme Court," with 364 votes in favour, 154 against, and 37 abstentions.

The 32-point resolution states that the European Parliament "is deeply concerned about the potential consequences for women's rights worldwide, should the US Supreme Court overturn *Roe v Wade*".

It also expresses fear that overturning the 1973 decision that legalised abortion

nationwide would have "a chilling effect on prioritising and funding" abortion globally.

Fr Prieto noted that the motion was not binding, but said it was nevertheless worrying because it asserted that "to defend the health of the woman one has to guarantee the 'right' to abortion".

"This is something that is totally contrary to the position of the Church, not only of the Church, but every person who sees in the embryo a new life, different from the life of the mother, that has to be protected," he said.

Suspect arrested over Indian bombings including at Catholic school

Police arrested a suspect in connection with recent bombings in northeast India, including one at a Catholic school.

Thounaojam Rishi Luwangcha, 46, was taken into custody June 7. Officials also confiscated a cache of explosives, detonators and wires similar to the ones

used in the explosions, Ksh Shivakanta Singh, superintendent of police in Imphal West, told reporters.

Charges were pending June 8. The blast June 5 at Little Flower School, a Catholic missionary school in Imphal, capital of Manipur state, stunned Christians.

No injuries were reported,

although some portions of the school building, including window panes, were damaged, ucanews.com reported.

Police suspect that Mr Luwangcha was recruited by the National Revolutionary Front of Manipur, a militant group known for making threats and extorting money.

Catholic educational institutions across Manipur were closed June 7 to protest the bombing in a step taken by the Archdiocese of Imphal and the Catholic Educational Society Manipur.

"All Christian institutions joined in and it went off peacefully," said Fr Stephen Thouthang, CSEM director.



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

Struggle for normality



Residents remove debris from a supermarket in a shopping mall damaged by a Russian missile strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, June 8. Photo: CNS

ISIS affiliate group suspected of carrying out Pentecost massacre in Nigeria

A Nigerian government official said June 9 that the insurgent group Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) is suspected as the perpetrator of a massacre at a Catholic church last week that left dozens dead.

"We have been able to see the footprint of ISWAP in the horrendous attack in Owo and we are after them. Our security agencies are on their trail and we will bring them to justice," Interior Minister Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola said as reported by Reuters.

In the June 5 attack, gunmen opened fire on Catholic worshippers attending Pentecost celebrations at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church in

Owo, Ondo State, in southwestern Nigeria.

Initial reports suggested that more than 50 people were killed, including children, and others injured. The official death toll for the attack currently stands at 40, with 61 injured people still in hospital, Reuters said.

ISWAP is considered a breakaway faction of Boko Haram, another Islamic extremist terrorist group which has killed thousands of Christians and displaced millions of people in Nigeria and neighbouring countries in recent years. ISWAP's leader at the time pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015.

ISWAP has in recent

years claimed to have carried out public executions of Christians and bragged of its actions in digital media. However, Ondo State, where the Pentecost attack took place, is far from ISWAP's usual area of operations in the north of the country.

Pope Francis has expressed his "spiritual closeness" to Nigerian Catholics following the most recent attack, saying in a telegram that he was praying "for the conversion of those blinded by hatred and violence".

More Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria than any other country worldwide – at least 4,650 in 2021 and nearly 900 in the first three

months of 2022 alone. Christian leaders and advocates continue to highlight and document the brutal ongoing persecution against Christians – often at the hands of their Muslim neighbours – in Africa's most populous nation. Some aid organisations and experts are even assembling evidence that the killing of Christians in Nigeria constitutes a genocide.

The country was, without explanation, in late 2021 delisted from the US State Department's list of countries with the most egregious religious freedom violations.

Bishops advance sainthood cause of 81 Korean War martyrs

Bishops in South Korea have moved ahead to pursue the canonisation of 81 Catholics, including priests, religious and laypeople who were martyred by communist forces during the Korean War.

The Special Episcopal Commission to Promote Beatification and Canonisation held its closing session June 7 for preliminary examination of 81 Servants of God, the title accorded to individuals as the first step toward canonisation, according to a notice from the bishops' conference

of Korea.

The bishops agreed that the candidates were "witnesses of modern and contemporary faith" of the Korean Church, ucanews.com reported.

Sainthood candidates include Bishop Francis Hong Yong-ho of Pyongyang, 49 priests, seven religious and 23 laymen who were tortured and killed by the communists before and after the Korean War, which was fought from 1950 to 1953.

The martyrs include foreign missionaries. One was Msgr Patrick James Byrne, an American Maryknoll missionary who was the apostolic delegate to Korea.

The bishops' conference said a preliminary examination of data and research materials began February 22, 2017, and 25 sessions were held until May 13 this year. The committee will submit the data and documents it has gathered to the Vatican's Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.

Vatican roundup

Pope urges Sicilian priests to be moral guides but to 'drop the lace'

● Pope Francis told priests and bishops from the Italian island of Sicily June 9 to be strong moral guides, and to update their art and vestments in conformity with Church reforms.

"In Sicily, people still look to priests as spiritual and moral guides, people who can also help to improve the civil and social life of the island, to support the family, and to be a reference for growing young people. High and demanding is the Sicilian people's expectation of priests," the Pope said during the meeting at the Vatican.

Noting that he had seen photos from Masses in Sicily, Francis appeared also to comment on the use of lace on the vestments priests wear while celebrating Mass.

"Where are we 60 years after the Council," he said. "Some updating even in liturgical art, in liturgical 'fashion.'"

"Yes, sometimes bringing some of grandma's lace is appropriate, sometimes. It's to pay homage to grandma, right?" he continued. "It's good to honour grandma, but it's better to celebrate the mother, Holy Mother Church, and how Mother Church wants to be celebrated. So that insularity does not prevent the true liturgical reform that the Council sent out."

IOR closes 2021 balance sheet with 18 million net income

● For the tenth consecutive year, the Istituto per le Opere di Religione (IOR) published its Annual Report containing its 2021 Financial Statements prepared in accordance with IAS-IFRS international accounting standards.

These financial statements received a clean opinion from the auditor Mazars Italia S.p.A. and, on 26 April 2022, they were unanimously approved by the IOR Board of Superintendence. Subsequently, as provided for in the statutes, they were then sent to the Commission of Cardinals for their review.

Given the soundness of the 2021 financial statements, and taking into account IOR's capital requirements, the Commission of Cardinals decided upon the distribution of profits.

In 2021, the IOR achieved the following results in line with its strategic plan:

- €18.1 million net profit
- + 15% net interest margin, + 22% net commission income, + 4% assets under management
- 38.54% TIER 1 ratio
- 59% cost/income ratio.

Profits are in line with expectations, with the new HTCS (Held To Collect and Sell) business model adopted for investments and with a conservative risk profile.

Growth in assets under management reflects positively on the investment performance delivered to clients with respect the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church. same 70% of management lines performances were above the 5-year benchmark.

Pope mourns Order of Malta leader Fra' Marco Luzzago

● In a condolence message June 8, Pope Francis praised the "luminous Christian witness" of Order of Malta leader Fra' Marco Luzzago.

Fra' Luzzago, who had overseen the 1,000-year-old institution since 2020, died June 7 after a sudden illness.

The Pope offered his condolences in a telegram to Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi, the Pope's special delegate to the Order of Malta.

The telegram said: "Spiritually sharing in the grief at the sudden passing of His Excellency Fra' Marco Luzzago, Lieutenant of the Grand Master, I wish to offer my condolences to his family and to the entire order and, in remembering his commitment generously lavished in the performance of his high office in the service of this institution, as well as his love for the Church and luminous Christian witness, I invoke eternal peace for him and from my heart impart my blessing to you."



Letter from Jerusalem



Judith Sudilovsky

After 10 years of systematic work, the Old City of Jerusalem is more accessible to the disabled and the elderly.

The pandemic-related shutdown allowed for completion of work of the last, most sensitive mile of the historic stone alleyways of the Via Dolorosa – the Way of the Cross.

It took years for the first 2.5 miles of the \$6.5 million Accessible Jerusalem-Old City project to be completed because of the complexity of working within a historic area that is less than a half square mile in size.

Both the Old City and its walls are designated as an UNESCO World Heritage site, requiring planners to carefully consider changes as they accommodated the needs of residents living their daily lives and millions of visitors a year, said Gura Berger, spokeswoman for the East Jerusalem Development Co., which implemented the program.

“We worked day and night and we made (1 mile) accessible in two years,” Ms Berger said. “These are the most sentimental (miles) because for the first time in history the Via Dolorosa is accessible. We did something important because people really come here in awe, with respect and hopes to the holy city.”

Adaptation of the ancient steps varies throughout the city depending on the location and steepness. It includes ramps as well as a set of “Venetian stairs,” which combines short sloping steps within the ramps along the steep path on a stretch near the fifth, sixth and seventh stations.

“Local shopkeepers and residents noted that the switching of styles and locations of the ramps is confusing and that they can be slippery”

Manoeuvring the path is still an effort, Ms Berger admitted, but planners are limited in solutions because of the historical and topographical aspect of the city. Making accessible a city that was built in ancient times with the intention of keeping invaders out is difficult, she said.

Project

The project was carried out by the Israeli Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, Jerusalem Municipality, Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem Development Authority and East Jerusalem Development Co.

Major project makes Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem’s Old City accessible to all



A Palestinian rides a motorised wheelchair on the Via Dolorosa’s new accessible lane in the Old City of Jerusalem June 3. Photo: CNS

“Adaptation of the ancient steps varies throughout the city depending on the location and steepness”

The work included renewing pavement, replacing underground infrastructure, painting facades, installing awnings and rearranging entrances to shops and residences. In a steeper areas handrails were added along the walls. Fourteen accessible toilet facilities with signage also were installed.

App

A dedicated app – Accessible JLM-Old City – is available in nine languages and maps the accessible routes within the Old City.

In addition, some 60 beacons of a planned 200 that use Bluetooth technology have been installed to orient people with visual impairment. The beacons are automatically accessed through the downloadable Step-Hear app which for now is only available in Hebrew and English, but other languages are being planned, Ms Berger said.

Entrances to the Western Wall, Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif

also have been made accessible. However, the sites themselves are private property and not under the domain of the project.

Shopkeepers

Local shopkeepers and residents noted that the switching of styles and locations of the ramps is confusing and that they can be slippery. They said they have seen pedestrians stumble because of the changing styles. In addition, they complained about the ramps now making it easier for motorcycles, scooters and motorised carts to speed through narrow alleyways.

“This is good for wheelchairs but it has created other problems,” said local resident Fees, 42, who declined to give his last name while drinking a cup of coffee at a café. He described how a scooter driver recently rode over his 8-year-old daughter’s foot.

“They need to block the motorcycles and scooters from coming into the Old City. The intentions were good; it is not easy to work

in the Old City. It is OK, but there are flaws,” he said.

“It is easier to climb and good for carts, but it is still slippery,” agreed souvenir store owner Mumtaz Husseini.

“They complained about the ramps now making it easier for motorcycles, scooters and motorised carts to speed through narrow alleyways”

Now that 95% of the city has been made accessible officials continuously review infrastructure with an architect and accessibility consultant, listening to residents and making as many improvements as possible, Ms Berger said. She noted that traffic regulations are also outside of their realm.

Built on five hills, the dramatic height difference in the Old City

is apparent. The highest point at the New Gate is 262 feet above the lowest point at the Dung Gate. The thousands of steps built over the generations needing to be made accessible added complexity to the project, Ms Berger said.

Accessible

The project also made the Old City streets accessible to mini-ambulances, mini-garbage trucks and carts to improve the quality of life for residents, she added.

Older people in the neighbourhood are seeing a difference, said Old City resident Razi Rasheq.

“My neighbours suffered because every time they needed an ambulance for their grandmother it wasn’t able to reach them,” Mr Rasheq said.

Michael Flaherty, visiting from Hawaii, gingerly made his way down a section of a ramp with the help of a cane, accompanied by his wife and a tour guide. Until his recent back surgery he didn’t need to use a cane.

“This helps with accessibility,” he said of the ramps. “Whoever did this, did a good job. You won’t appease everybody. Somebody will always be unhappy.”

i The Irish Catholic will be leading two pilgrimages to the Holy Land in October. For more information, see page 4.

Abuse expert: 'Voice of Jesus' speaks through victims



Inés San Martín

According to one of the Catholic Church's foremost experts on clerical sexual abuse prevention, by ignoring the voice of the victims "we are excluding the voice of Jesus who speaks to us through them".

German Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, President of the Institute of Anthropology-Interdisciplinary Studies on Protection and Human Dignity (IADC) of the Pontifical Gregorian University, was speaking at a day-long "conversation" held June 9 in Madrid, Spain, organised by the publishing house PPC.

During his presentation, Fr Zollner, who is also a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, said that Christians need to "open our eyes, ears, and mouth when we see something that could be abuse; we all have the responsibility to form ourselves, to inform ourselves, and to push our communities to act".

"People affected by abuse in the Church want, above all, to be recognised as victims, and that the bishops acknowledge that they have been wounded, abused by a member of the community," he said. "A spiritual recognition is important, because many victims have felt wounded in their faith and that influences their relationship with God, a wound that makes them suffer a lot."

Fr Zollner also said that the Catholic Church is twice accountable: to society and to God. However, he warned, "sometimes society tends to forget that there are other sectors where abuse is very present, and I am not talking about families, where it is much more difficult to know, but in sports, tourism, cinema, even in the media."

"The Church has to do everything necessary and not only what it is obliged to do," he insisted.

Commissions

Speaking about Spain, which is currently seeing two parallel commissions looking into historic allegations of clerical abuse, one sanctioned by the Spanish Congress and one launched by the bishops, Fr Zollner said that "naturally, we do not exist outside of political polarisation and we cannot detach ourselves from this reality".

Yet when it comes to drawing "a strategy," Fr Zollner said, it cannot be rooted in confrontation, because it will be fun-



Jesuit Fr Hans Zollner, a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, poses in Rome November 9, 2021. Photo: CNS

damentally "to the detriment of the victims."

Commenting on the role of the media when it comes to uncovering abuses, he said that "naturally" there are some rare enemies of the Church, and even those who want to destroy it, "but the criticism of the media is usually based on facts".

“Sometimes society tends to forget that there are other sectors where abuse is very present”

"If there were no cases of abuse and if there were no cover-ups, the newspapers would not write and there would be no scandal," he said, insisting that "if we produce scandal and bad news, we feed the newspapers that want to attack the Church. In this sense, the first task is to end the scandals, and to clean what needs to be cleaned."

Furthermore, he said, "victims still today find closed doors and it is difficult for them to find human persons who listen to them and accompany them."

To this day, the Jesuit priest said he still finds victims and survivors who have been ignored by the Church.

Fr Zollner used the Sacrament of Confession as an example: There must be an examination of conscience, repentance, a clear confession of sins, and reparation. When it comes to abuse, he said, the examination are the reports that look into the crimes and the behaviour of the institution; repentance "must be sincere, from the heart, and not just easy words;" and reparation, which many times is simply listening to the survivors and acknowledging the crime committed to them. "For many, that is all they are looking for," he said.

Authority

"The authority of the Church itself, even of the Pope," is at stake, "since abuse touches the foundation of our faith. It is the greatest challenge we are facing," according to Fr Zollner.

Fernando García Salmones, who suffered sexual abuse in a school of the Claretian missionaries, and Hortensia López, who suffered abuse of power as a Discalced Carmelite, took part in the same roundtable.

"When I look back, I see that child who was a little mouse

standing before a giant vulture," said Mr García, who was abused in 1975, at the age of 14, by his religion teacher.

"I would like the Church to stop fighting against the victims and take the step towards an attitude of listening," he said, adding that the Claretian missionaries "have listened to us and they have believed us" during the process of restorative justice that he and other survivors went through.

During four years, he said, three children entered the room of a priest every day and no one wondered what was going on there.

"Perhaps we need to look into it. Perhaps a person who is called to form others on morals and love, maybe cannot be just anyone. Or maybe, he mustn't be forced into celibacy. I am not a believer, and as such, I am intruding into your faith, but maybe celibacy is a mistake, because we have a repressed person caring for children," he said, addressing a mostly Catholic auditorium.

Story

Sharing her own story, Ms López said that she went through three different communities until she reached her breaking point in 2015, when she was 41 years old.

In her experience, she said, "you are not a person, you are the prioress's puppet," and having spoken with three bishops, she found no help. In fact, one of them told her that she should "withhold as much as she can, and when she can't take it anymore, she should leave. And that is what I did".

“Three children entered the room of a priest every day and no one wondered what was going on there”

The head of her community, she said, even banned her from telling her story to Pope Francis in a letter, and when she tried to send the letter to the pontiff through her bishop, the prelate said he wouldn't send it because "this Pope answers to everyone, and he will answer to you, and you don't know the retaliation you will have to tolerate from the prioress". It was this bishop, she said, who told her to take as much as she could and then leave.

She was eventually forced to leave the Carmelites, and when she did, she sent a letter

to the Vatican's Congregation for Religious. The congregation's response was that what had happened was not "of our competence, because you are no longer a religious".

Having spent 20 years as a Discalced Carmelite, by the time she left, "I didn't know how to use a computer; I had anxiety walking on the streets," she said. She received no support from the Church, and it wasn't until she wrote a book that she found support in others who had been in a similar situation.

"In the convent, I was treated by a therapist for a depression caused by the mistreatment of the prioress," she said. "But when I left, no one took responsibility for what had happened to me. No financial help whatsoever to start all over again, after a life given to the Church."

"I was 41, had spent 20 years in the convent; I was depressed, had no career, do you think that such a person will find a job? The Church has to take responsibility for the fact that the religious who leave have nothing," she said.

"Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, applies to everyone," Ms López said. "The Church has institutions to help everyone: people who leave prostitution, people who are alcoholic, drug addicts, but not the religious. Why? Is it a sin to leave religious life? When the Church preaches and practices mercy with the sinner, a person who leaves religious life deserves no help?"

“By ignoring the voice of the victims ‘we are excluding the voice of Jesus who speaks to us through them’”

Letters

Letter of the week

What does a change of Church ownership mean?

Dear Editor, One hears repeated reference to the notion of change of ownership of the Church. As written some commentary proposes to wrest the ownership from the ordained ministry and give it to the laity. However, one petition in the Sacrifice of the Mass, to wit, "look not on our sins but on the faith of your Church" demonstrates that the Church is owned by Christ.

Fergal Quinn used to tell a joke concerning an aeroplane taxiing towards the runway well behind schedule, but

returning to the apron a few hundred yards later. The passengers were told that the pilot had detected a worrying noise in one engine. One passenger hoping to catch a connecting flight became quite agitated but five minutes later was relieved to hear that the problem had been solved. Congratulating one of the cabin crew, he asked how the problem had been solved so quickly. The flight attendant told him they had changed the pilot!

To be credible those advocating the change of ownership cited above need

to clarify what they mean. Specifically, it is necessary to show that the change is not just of a change of pilot, a new self-sufficiency of the laity. This offers no illumination regarding the future.

As different from the right of possession, ownership for Church members involves conviction about the truth of Catholicism and toil at giving faithful witness to its teachings in the drama and actions of life as lived in the vineyard.

*Yours etc.,
Neil Bray
Cappamore, Co Limerick*

We must appreciate our hardworking priests

Dear Editor, Thank you so much for highlighting the positive reaction to hardworking priests in responses during the synodal process [*The Irish Catholic* - June 2, 2022].

There are so many loud voices that seem so blinkered. For them it seems all that matters is pushing for women to become priests and that people who are gay or lesbian can get sacramentally married.

There is nothing wrong with feeling those issues are important, but it is foolish to become obsessed with these issues to the detriment of the bigger discussion: creating a Church that truly reflects Christ.

A major issue the Church faces is declining vocations. Supporting and empowering laity to take the burden of administration I believe is a concrete and practical way to deal with this.

However, we must not forget the courageous work of overburdened priests.



At the end of the synodal process I hope all the Faithful truly appreciate them now rather than just focusing on what to do when there are fewer

and fewer of them.

*Yours etc.,
Daniel Kelly
Ranelagh, Dublin*

Deliverance ministry can only be a benefit to Ireland

Dear Editor, Fr Pat Collins, who has been warning about the growing secularisation of Ireland and the connection to people's oppression by evil spirits, is a voice that must be taken very seriously.

In your front-page article [*The Irish Catholic* - June 9, 2022] Fr Pat appeals to the Irish bishops to create protocols around deliverance ministry and, more importantly, pushes for the creation of professional deliverance ministry teams.

There is no doubt that as many people stop attending

church or outright deny the Faith, they are being sucked up by other dangerous practices which make a plethora of promises which attract those who are unhappy.

It is no wonder he is inundated with calls for help as people struggle with demons, real or connected to their mental health.

While the secular world will scoff at the idea of deliverance ministry, and particularly the idea of exorcism, there are many positives even the most devout atheist will have to agree with.

Fr Pat advocates for the teams having psycho-therapists and psychologists involved, who would assess the person who presents as being oppressed or possessed by demons. He states that the majority of people who say they are being attacked by evil spirits are actually struggling with mental health issues.

The fact is that in Ireland mental health services are under-resourced and many people are falling through the cracks, if the Church can help identify those who are in

need and refer them to these services, this can only be seen by any intelligent person as beneficial to wider society.

These deliverance ministry teams can act positively in two ways: help those struggling with mental health issues and actually support those who really are being oppressed by evil spirits. Mental health issues are not something to ignore and possession and oppression are no joke.

*Yours etc.,
Deirdre O'Hara
Cork City, Cork*

Attacks against Christians must be taken seriously

Dear Editor, When will the world take the terrible attacks on Christians in Nigeria seriously? It seems that Europe and the western world cares so much about the rights of certain oppressed groups but not for Christians, it is bizarre and frankly disconcerting.

Covered in your paper [*The Irish Catholic* - June 9, 2022] the leader of the OLA sisters said the world must take action after 50 people were killed in a church on Pentecost in Nigeria. These people were peacefully attending Mass before they were massacred in a diabolic act.

While the event was covered in Irish and

some European media, I doubt we will hear much more about it.

If the people who were killed were part of another minority group or even religion, I'm sure there would be opinion pieces for days in all the 'woke' papers dissecting the background to the event, the causes and what must be done to stop it happening again.

It is high time that a serious discussion at EU level is had about hate-filled attacks on Christians around the world. A fact they seem to disregard is that Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world, in particular, in many parts of the

Middle East and Asia they are faced with jail or worse for simply practicing the Faith.

This can not continue, we as Christians must do all we can to support those who are standing up to hate and violence, who are supporting small groups of Christians who are unwelcome in their communities and countries and who are treated with absolute contempt because of their love of Christ. Turning our backs and pretending it is not happening is not an option, they need us.

*Yours etc.,
Patrick Brady
Portlaoise, Co. Louth*

facebook community

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

Dearth of vocations means difficult transition ahead, cautions Bishop Ruter

Lukewarm Catholics are to blame, both clergy and lay. Church needs to get back to basics. Hold doggedly and unequivocally to Church teaching. Defend Church dogma publicly at every opportunity. Where there is no tinkering at the edges, no watering down, eg in Africa and Asia, converts are attracted to counter cultural Church. Making concessions like Church of England has done will lead to the abandonment of faith. — **Conall O Coisneachain**

Exhausted priests are caught between a rock and a hard place

Lay people can only do so much. They can never take the place of priest. We need to pray for our priests and pray for good holy vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In my opinion there is not enough prayer going on for our priests. We should never forget, no priest means no Mass. — **Mary King**

Could we get some priests from Africa or other countries? — **Bridgetmarie O Hagan**

The priests that we have are absolutely worn out with the demands put on them and support from parishioners is very poor. There are fewer people attending Mass since the pandemic. The number of parishes and Masses need to be cut back and those who want to practice their Faith will attend. — **Frank Daly**

Your local politicians are responsible, they need to champion the Catholic way of life instead of accommodating woke culture. — **Bradford Crilly**

Francis: renewing the Church from the margins

The future of Christianity increasingly lies in Africa, Latin America and to a lesser extent Asia. Francis knows this and acts accordingly. Hope he remains in office for years yet. — **Declan McSweeney**

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

Remembering that life is precious

Dear Editor, During the campaigns in our abortion and marriage referenda, I was struck by the persistent silence at the ambo in parish churches.

Surely God wanted us to remember that every life that he creates is precious for the very reason that he creates it? Would he not want his ordained ministers to keep reminding us of that?

*Yours etc.,
Elizabeth Berkery-Farrell,
Stillorgan, Dublin*

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.

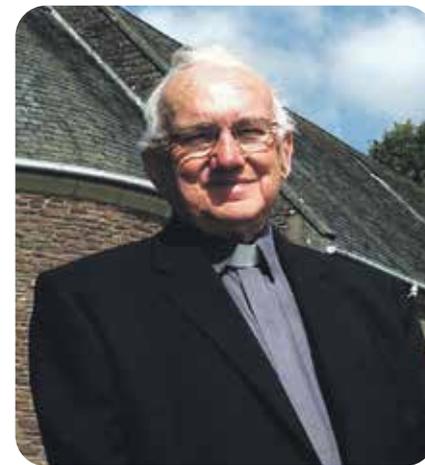
Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 16, 2022

Personal Profile

Embodying the beauty of All Hallows' legacy

Page 32



Ramping up reading this summer



To my mind, there's nothing better than finding a free hour or two and sitting down to enjoy a good book. Whether it's fiction or non-fiction, diving into a story, real or imagined, is the highest quality escapism we can indulge in, in my opinion. What's more, you always bring something back from your imaginative adventure, whether that's a wider vocabulary or deeper knowledge of a particular topic.

Some people are more inclined to read than others, there can be no doubt about that, but I refuse to believe it's not for everyone. There are books out there covering every possible topic – if you haven't traditionally been a reader, it's just a



Reading is one of the most valuable activities to invest in and summer is the perfect time to do so, writes Jason Osborne

matter of finding one you're interested in.

Another target audience for this article are those who read in their youth and enjoyed it, but just don't seem to be able to conjure up the will or the time to get back into it today. To them I say: don't give up! I have yet to find an activity that possesses such longevity, or that inspires such passionate senti-

ments in those who take part.

However, I'm sure some people will require more convincing than that. To that end, we're going to look at a handful of the benefits reading confers on those who do it, and how to read more. As we'll see, there are a lot of 'whys' as to why you should consider getting into reading, but the 'how' is just as important in our busy old world.

Few enough of us have a lot of time on our hands, so learning how to be savvy and fit books into our schedules is a key part of becoming a 'reader' today.

Reading works and strengthens your brain

An age-old piece of wisdom that's now being backed up by modern research. MRI scans have confirmed for researchers that reading involves and strengthens a complex network of signals and circuits in your brain, which develops as your reading habit continues and matures.

A 2013 study saw researchers use functional MRI scans to measure the effect reading a novel has

on the brain. The participants in the study read the novel *Pompeii* over a period of nine days, and the results showed that as the tension built in the story, more and more areas of the brain displayed increased activity. Researchers found that for days after this reading period, brain connectivity increased, especially in the somatosensory cortex, which is the part of the brain that responds to physical sensations like pain and movement.

Reading develops empathy

Another research effort has revealed that people who read

» Continued on Page 31

Family News



AND EVENTS

CLIMBER BANNED FOR FAKING EVEREST ASCENT REACHES SUMMIT

An Indian climber banned from Everest after faking a summit of the world's highest mountain has successfully scaled the peak for real, telling AFP he returned to "prove" himself.

Narender Singh Yadav claimed to have reached the top of the world's highest mountain in May 2016.

But photos of the 26-year-old at the summit were later shown to have been digitally altered, prompting the Nepal government to revoke recognition of his feat.

Mr Yadav and two other climbers were issued a six-year ban backdated to 2016, and this was the first year he was able to return to the mountain.

"Everest is a dream for all of us but Everest is life for me," Mr Yadav told AFP.

"There were a lot of allegations on me... that's why I (had to) prove myself and climb Everest."

LETTERS FROM HITLER'S DOCTOR SHOW HOW HE TREATED DICTATOR'S VOICE

The Swiss descendent of one of Adolf Hitler's doctors has released details of letters that show how he treated the Nazi dictator for voice problems, *NZZ am Sonntag* newspaper reported.

Hitler was treated several times by Carl Otto von Eicken, a German ear, nose and throat specialist, for ten years from 1935, the newspaper said.

The letters from the doctor to a cousin were discovered by Robert Doepgen, von Eicken's great-great-grandson, who found them when researching family archives for a school project.

Von Eicken died in 1960.

British historian Richard Evans, a specialist in German history, vouched for the authenticity of the unpublished letters, the newspaper said.

The letters show Hitler's fear of serious illness, the newspaper said.

"If there is something bad, I absolutely have to know," Hitler told the doctor after their first consultation in May 1935, according to the letters.

The newspaper said the letters also showed the importance Hitler attached to his voice, which he used in speeches to whip up support for his regime.

ASTRONOMERS PONDER 'MYSTERY' OVER POWERFUL RADIO WAVE BURSTS

Powerful bursts of radio waves emanating from a distant dwarf galaxy that were detected using a massive telescope in China are moving scientists closer to solving what one called a "cosmic mystery" that has lingered for years.

Since being discovered in 2007, astronomers have struggled to understand what causes phenomena called fast radio bursts involving pulses of radio-frequency electromagnetic radiation originating from places inside our Milky Way and other galaxies.

Radio waves have the longest wave lengths in the electro-magnetic spectrum.

Astronomers suspect that these bursts may be unleashed by certain extreme objects. These might include: a neutron star, the compact collapsed core of a massive star that exploded as a supernova at the end of its life cycle; a magnetar, a type of neutron star with an ultra-strong magnetic field; and a blackhole messily eating a neighbouring star.

You are called to be the Body of Christ in the world today



"The blood of Christ, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit, can purify our inner self from dead actions so that we do our service to the living God" (Hebrews 9:14).

In his writings, St Paul uses the metaphor of the body of Christ in two quite distinct ways. On the one hand it is a metaphor for the whole Christian community, building on the understanding of Jesus' saying "wherever two or three gather, I am there" (Matthew 18:20).

"I think we need to recover the original understanding of the Christian community as the Body of Christ and I have faith that our daily practice of meditation helps restore it in us"

In that very practical and very real sense, together as a community we represent the body of Christ, provided we have put on the mind of Christ; provided we see the world through the eyes of love and compassion, as he did. For the first thousand years of Christianity, the Christian community – understood in this sense – was referred to as *corpus verum*, the true body of Christ.

The second sense in which St Paul mentioned the Body of Christ was in reference to the bread and wine of the Eucharist transformed into the body and blood of Christ and for the first millennium of Christianity the Eucharist was referred to as the Mystical Body of Christ.

However, the theologian Henry de Lubac, tells us that

Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



sometime in the mediaeval period, these senses were reversed and the Church as an institution came to be regarded as the Mystical Body and the Eucharist as the real presence. De Lubac considered that this change led to the Eucharist becoming primarily a matter of individual piety and the Church's identity became increasingly tied to the visible institutional structures and less to the sacramental mystery that links the present Church to its origin in the person of Jesus and the Risen Christ.

The Second Vatican Council, in *Lumen Gentium* (1964), reflected the broader, universal nature of the Church, acknowledging that all persons, by virtue of their humanity, are members of the body of Christ. We acknowledge today that Christ is present in every person, irrespective of their commitment to a faith tradition or none.

A challenge with theological reflection is that it can remain trapped in the intellect alone. But meditation, as John Main often said, moves our centre of gravity, our consciousness, from the head to the heart because, ultimately, meditation is pure prayer. Evagrius wrote that "A theologian is one who knows how to pray, and he who prays in spirit and in truth is

by that very act a theologian" (*On Prayer*, 60). In that sense, our community, the world community for Christian meditation, is a community of theologians!

I think we need to recover the original understanding of the Christian community as the Body of Christ and I have faith that our daily practice of meditation helps restore it in us. This sense of the Body of Christ was captured beautifully by St Teresa of Avila when she wrote that "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours".



You are called to be the Body of Christ in the world today. Meditation teaches us that the fruits of meditation are to be found not in greater personal piety *per se* but in contemplative action in the world. It calls us to take on the mind of Christ and to be his body in our corner of the world, right now, today, where we live. As John Main said: "The all-important aim in Christian

Meditation is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality, but the reality in our lives; to let it become that reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, to everything we are."

"The essence of the Christian message is not about atonement but 'at-one-ment'"

Every time we receive the Eucharist, and hear the words "Body of Christ" we renew our commitment to be just that in the world today; to reach out to those most in need, to those who are most impoverished, to those who suffer physical and mental anguish, because they too are the body of Christ and we are called to embrace them and relieve their burden.

The pragmatic test of our unity with the body of Christ is to acknowledge our unity with one another; to really see, in the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, that we 'inter-are', that all of life is one in the Universal Christ. The essence of the Christian message is not about atonement but 'at-one-ment'.

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

» Continued from Page 31



literary fiction show an increased ability to understand the feelings and beliefs of others – a useful skill in the polarised world of today! This ability is known as the ‘theory of mind’, which embodies a group of skills that are highly valuable in building and maintaining relationships and social circles.

Reading builds your vocabulary

Another one of the well-known truths about the effect reading has on you, it’s also been the subject of research in recent years. *Healthline* magazine refers to the “Matthew effect” with regards to this beneficial aspect of reading, which is based on Matthew 13:12: “For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

As a large investment yields more return monetarily, and as large physical objects such as planets and suns attract more matter to them by virtue of their stronger gravitational effect, so too do those who read acquire larger and larger vocabularies than those who don’t. Research has found that students who read books regularly beginning at a young age gradually develop large vocabularies, which goes on to affect much of their lives, from education to employment.

Reading can reduce blood pressure and heart rate

A 2009 study saw researchers measure the effect of reading among other activities (such as yoga and humour) on the stress levels of students participating in strenuous health science courses in the US. It was found that 30 minutes of reading lowered blood pressure, heart rate and psychological distress as effectively as the other activities did.

The authors found that 30 minutes of reading time could be quite easily

slotted into even the students’ busy schedules, which would go a long way towards alleviating the effects of the pressure they were feeling.

Reading can alleviate depression

People labouring under the shadow of depression may find some solace in fiction. As mentioned at the beginning of this piece, reading provides (in my opinion) the best opportunity for quality escapism on offer. If fiction isn’t so much your thing, non-fiction can provide strategies and solutions for dealing with the problems you’re facing.

It was with this in mind that the NHS start their ‘Reading Well’ programme, which is essentially a book prescription programme that sees medical experts prescribe self-help books that have been specifically chosen for certain conditions.

If these are some of the answers to the question of ‘why’ you should read, the question of ‘how’ is equally important today. Most of us live frenetic, scattered lives, interspersed with lots of screens and lots of activity. It can be exceedingly difficult to slow your racing mind enough to enable you to slip into a good book, but



the effort is always worth it. Still, here are a couple of techniques to help a reading habit to slowly pervade your daily routine.

Read before bed

How many of us, in spite of all good advice, spend our last waking moments each day browsing our phones before laying our head down for the night? Study after study recommends a slow-down period before sleep, and reading is the perfect way to ease into that.

The time before bed is very special in that it’s unlikely you’re up to much at that time, if you’re at all like me, and so it’s perfectly reserved for a brief read until you feel your eyelids begin to droop.

Always have a book to hand

I used to be very particular about my reading – I wouldn’t read unless I was somewhere quiet and calm, and only if I had a minimum amount of time. Unfortunately, this is no way to approach reading in the world today. You should have a book to hand whether you’re commuting to work or waiting for an immanent phone call – it’s a matter of grabbing what time you can.

Try audio books

I haven’t tried audio books myself yet, but everyone around me has and they recommend them without end. It makes sense to me, as the tireless onslaught of podcasts can become monotonous, and yet sometimes you’d like something of quality to listen to that isn’t current affairs.

You can listen to an audiobook while driving, cooking, cleaning, working or doing pretty much whatever else you can think of. Supplement your physical reading with audiobooks and you could enable yourself to read around the clock (although I’m not sure that’s the best idea, either)!

Faith — IN THE — family



Christina Malone

It was the middle of May and my oldest daughter had heard me talking about the Sacrament of Confirmation a lot in recent weeks. One day in the car she said to me: “I thought about my own Confirmation.

I nearly crashed the car – she had only just made her first Holy Communion last October – slow down little girl. She continued: “I think I do not want to be confirmed.”

“What!?”

I reply – not that calm anymore!

Fast forward a few days. I had just found out that I was going to start my new ministry as a Parish Pastoral Worker in another area of the Dublin Diocese.

I packed a few books and took some folders from the shelves. Many of those things I put away, I hadn’t seen in ages. I was wondering if it was time to shred some of the things as most of this is either online or on my laptop.

While looking through some of my folders I was thinking about Marie Kondo from the Netflix series *Tidying up with Marie Kondo* and her famous sentence “does it bring me joy” (Marie Kondo is a Japanese organising consultant, author, and TV presenter).

While smiling about Marie’s encouragement to let go and sort out your belongings one particular folder caught my attention. It was mainly the sticker on the front. It was the logo from the World Youth Day in Cologne. I smiled and decided to have a closer look. I sat down and I looked through it, page by page. In it I found a diocesan prayer book for the World Youth Day in Toronto 2002. I found many Mass leaflets, one was from the Ecumenical Kirchentag (Church day) in Berlin in 2003. I came across a youth Station of the Cross during Lent 2004.

I kept smiling while I went through it. I was reminded how God has worked through me and in my life to show me his path. At the back of the folder I found a certificate.

A closer look, and a few minutes later I realised it was my Confirmation certificate (not an official one – this one was colourful an A4 page with my name and the date of my Confirmation). I also found the Confirmation Mass leaflet. I looked again and I couldn’t believe what I saw – my Confirmation took place on 26.05.1997. Today was the 26.05.2022!

It was my silver anniversary. I burst out laughing, took a picture and sent it to my older sister who was my sponsor and said “thank you for all your prayers”.

Her answer was a laughing-out-loud smiley. I paused and realised how blessed I had been in the past 25 years. How God guided me to the World Youth Day in Toronto in 2002 and since then how God has become my trust, my hope and my strength.

Reaction

I obviously kept the car on the road. After my initial not-that-calm reaction to my daughter’s revelation not to be confirmed I started laughing and told her my own story. I was not ten but I was 14 (Confirmation preparation in Germany took place over a year) I did not want to be confirmed but went ahead, mainly to keep my granny happy (she lived in the same house!). She kept saying “just take those gifts of the Holy Spirit and after that you can do what you like”. I thought I did just that – little did I know, that because I read a prayer at the ceremony of Confirmation, I was asked to become a Minister of the Word. Because of that commitment, I kept going to Mass, and one day while on “duty” as a Minister of the Word - I saw the poster for the World Youth Day in Toronto. I often remember me saying; I went to Toronto as a tourist but came back as a pilgrim. I looked at my ten-year old daughter and after she heard my story she replied “I might change my mind by the time I am in sixth class”.



Embodying the beauty of All Hallows' legacy

Personal Profile



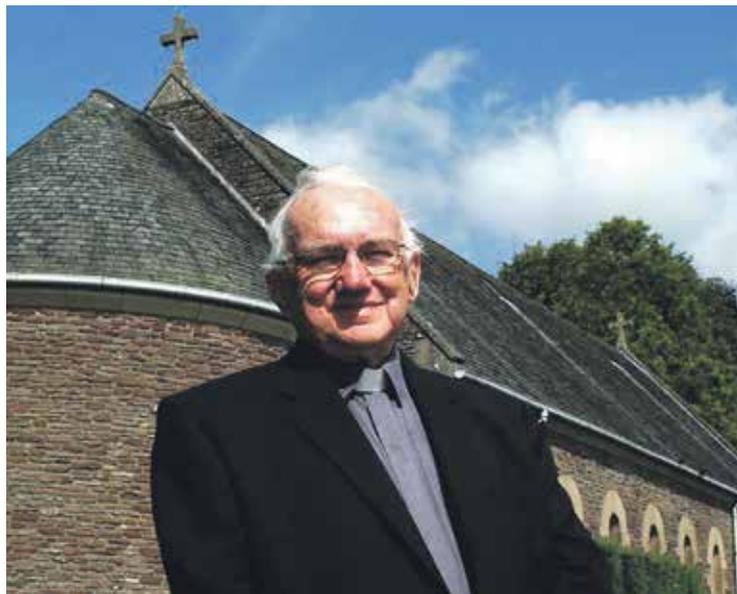
Ruadhán Jones

When Msgr Basil O'Sullivan entered All Hallows in September 1950, along with 33 other young men, he did so out of desire to be of service to the global Church. And since his ordination in 1956, he has spent his life ministering to the people of Scotland, a country where he gave and received much love.

“When Msgr O'Sullivan first arrived in Scotland and began his ministry, the Church was quite strong and well settled, mainly among Irish immigrant families”

Msgr O'Sullivan went to school in the North Monastery, Cork and later St Finbarr's College. He says that from around the age of 12, he knew he had a vocation to the priesthood. He joined All Hallows' College at the age of 18 in 1950.

“I had heard about All Hallows College from a friend of mine, and I liked the idea that it supplied priests where it was needed,” he tells me. “In those days, there were loads of priests in Ireland. It was quite inviting to go to a college which



Msgr Basil O'Sullivan.

catered for places outside of Ireland where they were short. That's what attracted me.

“Once I was ordained, this was in 1956, I came to Dundee, the diocese of Dunkeld. After a year the bishop sent me to the Gregorian college in Rome to study canon law. It was a great blessing and privilege to study there for two years, before coming back to Scotland.

“I was a curate to various parishes. Then eventually I became a parish priest in my own right, up the country. They usually gave the younger men a parish up the country until they would come to into the cities. My first parish was Alva in Clackmannanshire, it was still the diocese of Dunkeld. I was there for four years and then I was sent into the city of Dundee, to St Columba's.”

Scotland had a family connection for Msgr O'Sullivan, as his aunt taught in Glasgow, but he said he would have been happy to go wherever the college sent him: “I did suggest to the authorities in the college that Scotland I wouldn't mind. But I really didn't

mind where I went, the spirit of All Hallows was to go where there was a need for a priest. I'd have been quite happy to go wherever.

“One day it was suggested I should meet this bishop from Scotland, from Dunkeld. Another man with me also joined. Others went to America, a lot went to California, to England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, all over the world. It was a very widespread apostolate from All Hallows. It's a wonderful college.”

All Hallows

All Hallows was founded to supply diocese short of priests, Msgr O'Sullivan explains, by a Dublin curate, Fr John Hand. Around the time the college was founded, the famine struck Ireland and the Irish began to emigrate around the world. “And this was when All Hallows really came into its own,” the monsignor says. “These welcoming countries were desperate to find priests to look after the Irish.”

When Msgr O'Sullivan first arrived in Scotland and began his ministry, the Church was quite strong and well

settled, mainly among Irish emigrant families.

“There was a marriage between the traditional Scottish Catholics, who weren't that numerous of course, especially up in the Highlands, and the Irish settlers,” Msgr O'Sullivan says. “Then there were quite a few Italians around as well, people of Italian extraction. It was a bit of a melting pot.

“I loved the work, I love Scotland, the people have been good to me. I was met I must say with great love and support. I got great love, they are very good and staunch Catholics.”

After serving in a number of parishes, Msgr O'Sullivan was posted as parish priest to the rural parish of Dunblane in 1988. He was one of the first responders to the terrible school shooting that took place there in March 1996.

“They dropped their children off at five to 10 for school, and they were dead within 40 minutes”

“It was a curious kind of school, in religious terms,” Msgr O'Sullivan remembers. “We didn't have a Catholic school, it was too small a community. The children went to the Dunblane primary school, a lot of Catholics were there.

“It was unusual, very much an inter-denominational school. We had three chaplains, two Church of Scotland and myself. We did all the services for the children. We had close cooperation, I would take the assembly one week, and the other guys would take it another week. We just followed each other. There was no sense of division or anything. It was very ecumenical.

“Of course, when the children were shot, Catholics and Protestants and non-religious people, they all got the same treatment, we guided and cared for each other. Two of our

little children from our parish were killed.

“We can't forget it, the trauma, and every time there's a new shooting, like the one in Uvalde, it brings it all back. It was 26 years now since we had the shooting in 1996, March 1996. The poor parents are still without their child, they were all young parents at the time. They dropped their children off at five to 10 for school, and they were dead within 40 minutes. 16 children and the teacher. A lot of them were wounded as well.”

Trauma

As Msgr O'Sullivan says, whenever a similar tragedy occurs, the trauma resurfaces. In 2012, following the Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut, Msgr O'Sullivan reached out to the priest, as this shooting had similar casualties to the Dunblane massacre.

“The children killed in Sandy Hook were about the same age as ours. There were just infants, very, very young. I got in touch with the priest there. I had sympathy with the priests who had to do the funerals. Somebody heard about it and saw the connection with the shooting in Dunblane and the shooting in Sandy Hook. They made a documentary of the two and what struck them, the American producers, was that the Scottish parents had insisted on gun control, they wouldn't take no for an answer. But of course, nothing like that happened in America,” Msgr O'Sullivan says.

The monsignor, though he is coming on 90 years of age, continues to work as a parish priest in the diocese of Dunkeld. On his request, the bishop sent him to smaller parish, which he says is less demanding. But as he says himself, “there's still plenty of life in me”.

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

Sweet Treats

Kiley Britten



Summery lemon sponge showstoppers

This dessert is a bit of a twist on the classic Victoria Sponge. In my book, lemon is the king of summer flavour – and raspberry the Queen, which is why I have topped my sponge with raspberries. The perfect zestiness and sweetness of lemon curd is paired with a rich butter sponge and whipped cream tops off the whole spectacle. If you prefer a different fruit with lemon, you could top your sponge with strawberries or blueberries which would work particularly nicely. Here, I have cut out four rounds to make two mini cakes, but if you are feeding more than four people you may want to double the recipe and make one large one instead of two small. Either way, it is sure to make children and adults stop in their tracks when they see such a delicious confection!

Ingredients:

- 85g butter, softened at room temperature
- 100g sugar
- 2 eggs
- 115g plain flour
- 1tsp baking powder

- 1tbsp milk
- 75ml whipping cream
- Lemon curd (bought or homemade)

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 190°/Gas 5. Prepare your cake tin by lining with baking parchment, then greasing the parchment with a bit of butter.
2. Cream the butter using a hand or stand mixer until it is soft and light in colour. Gradually add the caster sugar. It will take around 5 minutes to be really fluffy.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, ensuring they are mixed in well. Sieve the flour and baking powder into the mixture, mixing the whole time. If the mix is looking very thick, add the tablespoon of milk to moisten it a little.
4. Pour the batter into the cake tin, creating a bit

of an indent in the middle (this will help the cake be a little flatter on top). Bake the cake for 20-25 minutes, until the edges have shrunk away from the tin and a skewer comes out clean. Leave the cake on a wire rack to cool completely.



5. To assemble, whip the cream until it is a little bit thicker than 'soft peaks'. Using a scone or round cookie cutter, cut the cake into four even rounds. Spread cream on the outside of two rounds. Spoon the lemon curd into the middle of the ring. Place the remaining rounds on top.
6. You can dust the top with powdered sugar and add fresh fruit to the top of the sponge and add berries to the top of the cream. This is best eaten within a day, though it likely won't be around for much longer after you serve!

TVRadio

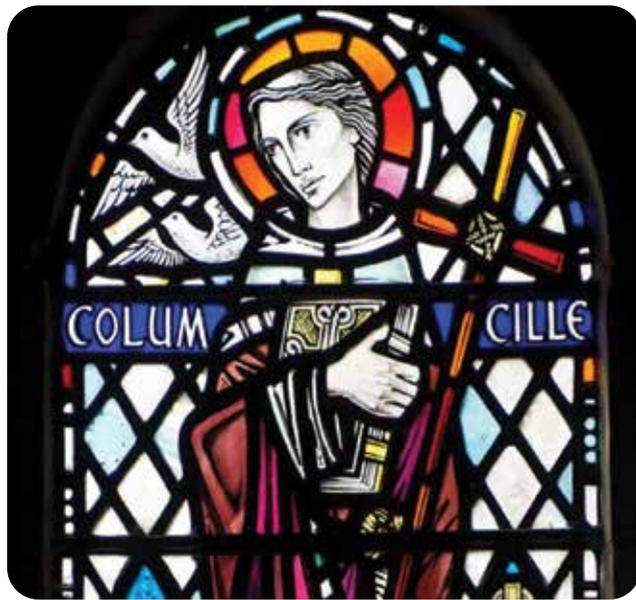
Brendan O'Regan



Hard to get to the heart of the real Colmcille

Recently I visited the exhibition relating to St Columba (aka St Colmcille) in the National Museum. It was modest enough but well-presented and informative.

So, I was already in the zone for **Colmcille – An Naomh Dána** (TG4, Thursday). It was certainly interesting, but hard to figure out what was historical and what elements were added by later hagiographers. There was general consensus that the monasteries founded or influenced by Columba/Colmcille were centres of great learning. This was true especially of Iona. One contributor described it as “the birth-place of Irish literature”. Dr Niamh Wycherly from Maynooth University credited the saint with creating a “swathe of ecclesiastical foundations” which were home to a variety of historical artefacts. Earlier she pointed out that lives of the saints, the hagiography, can reflect more the times they were written in rather than the times they were about, and indeed some stories seemed designed for purposes other than mere history. And so there were stories of the saint sailing on a floating rock, or spreading his cloak miraculously wide to claim a large amount of land. Very often



St Columba or Colmcille

political agendas were at play in these anecdotes; for example, as various powers tried to claim Colmcille for themselves and their own purposes.

Excommunicated

At one stage it seems the saint was excommunicated or exiled after a row over copyright. Allegedly he had surreptitiously copied a psalter belonging to another holy man and wouldn't give it back, which supposedly led to real bloody battles, but again this seemed to serve the agenda of the storyteller. Overall I found lots of historical and folklore interest

in the programme but not a lot that was spiritually inspiring. I'm not sure they captured the essence of the man, and maybe that is beyond us now anyway, though one of the points frequently made was that we know much more about Colmcille than about St Patrick or St Brigid. I don't think the dramatic reconstructions helped – they seemed a bit forced and the saint didn't come across as very appealing.

The Ireland of the Sixth Century had its issues and challenges, but I'd say the people of that time would be bemused by the debates we're having nowadays

– e.g. fraught discussions on how to define the term ‘woman’. Ironically even the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) seems confused. On **Liveline** (RTÉ Radio One) this and related topics dominated the show last Thursday and Friday. It started with an interview on the Thursday with Sandra Adams of a women's group called The Countess. They had been refused entry to an NWCI event – apparently the organisers feared they were going to hijack the meeting, but Ms Adams said they were just going to ask questions about whether the NWCI supported the removal of the term ‘woman’ from maternity-related legislation. The council wouldn't come on to explain themselves, which seemed to irk presenter Joe Duffy, but a statement said they wanted inclusive language to include “women and people”. Joe was scratching his head after hearing that phrase!

Discriminatory

The NWCI didn't want anything discriminatory or exclusionary against trans people, but despite their alleged commitment to inclusion, they seem quite willing to exclude a raft of women – those who disagree with them, pro-life women, conservative women, women

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTÉ One Sunday June 19, 11am

Mass celebrated by Fr Brian Allen OFM of Merchant's Quay Franciscan Church in Dublin with music by the Leinster Singers. The musical director is Ann Fetherston.

THE WHISTLEBLOWERS: INSIDE THE UN

BBC Two Tuesday June 21, 9pm

What happens when the fixer of the world's problems, the UN, is itself faced with allegations of wrongdoing and corruption? Or when UN staff try to call out their own managers?

WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

EWTN Thursday June 23, 8.30am

Continuing coverage from Rome, with conference and panel discussions.

from the Countess group, and women from Government parties (as happened during a recent protest gathering relating to the National Maternity Hospital). A caller who wasn't a fan of the NWCI believed that institutions like this were being “captured by strange belief systems”. Worse still, this is being paid for by the taxpayers.

One caller (on the Friday) suggested trans people's lives shouldn't be up for debate, but Joe said this was a democracy and we were entitled to discuss issues. Also on the Friday Joe pointed out that most or all politicians supported the gender recognition legislation, but surely if all public representatives are singing from same hymn sheet on a controversial issue there's a

problem of representation. Democratic deficit or what!

Condemning

Finally, Tuesday of last week, **RTÉ News** reported on President Michael D. Higgins' statement condemning the Nigerian church attack. That was welcome, but I thought it ill-judged to use the statement to make points about climate change. RTÉ's report might explain the peripheral relevance: “Some Owo residents and one Catholic bishop have suggested that the attack may be linked to conflict between nomadic... herdsman and local farmers over land use”.

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Pat O'Kelly

Music

A dramatic and delicately expressive tale of political intrigues

Opera and the organ are currently dominant features on the musical landscape. The former comes mainly through Irish National Opera (INO) with its production of Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* having a successful run in Dublin's Gaiety Theatre and other centres before Wexford and Limerick draw it to a close.

With Sinead Campbell-Wallace in the title role, Puccini's *Tosca* has INO at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre for five performances between July 11 and 17. Besides these INO ventures, the National Symphony Orchestra supports a single performance of a much lesser known work – Wallace's *Lurline* – at the NCH tomorrow (Fri-



Mary Queen of Scots.

day 17). While this is billed as a ‘concert performance’, I understand there will be some stage action under producer Una Hunt and designer Vivian Coates.

Maria Stuarda dates from

1835 with its La Scala, Milan première on December 30 that year. There is rivalry on a number of fronts but principally between Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, and Protestant Elizabeth, Queen of England.

While Donizetti's opera involves some of the political intrigues of the time, his music is solidly dramatic and delicately expressive. The INO production, with remaining performances in Wexford's National Opera House on Sunday 19 and Limerick's University College on Wednesday 22, has Tara Erraught and Anna Devin as the opposing, but related, monarchs under Tom Creed's direction and Fergus Sheil conducting.

Besides being an inveterate traveller, William Vincent Wallace (1812-65) was also a virtuoso pianist, violinist and considerable composer. He began writing his romantic opera *Lurline* in Vienna, where he was supervising a production of his *Maritana*, in 1847. However, between one thing and another, *Lurline* waited until February 1860 for its unveiling at London's Covent Garden.

It was quite a success with one critic writing “this piece is not only the *chef d'oeuvre* of the composer but may challenge a comparison with the best German, Italian and French dramatic music of the present day”. However, as *Lurline* passed

into operatic oblivion relatively quickly, this revival is welcome.

The brilliant John Wilson conducts tomorrow's performance (Friday 17) at the NCH at 7pm with Dublin soprano Rachel Kelly as the Rhine water nymph of the title and Portuguese tenor Luis Gomez as her earthly lover.

Pipeworks International Organ and Choral Festival 2022 began yesterday (June 15) at Dublin's St Patrick's Cathedral, with the cathedral incumbent Peter Barley heard in Poulenc's Organ Concerto with the RTÉCO under David Leigh.

Another feature of the festival has Dutch organ supremo Ben van Oosten

at the console of Dublin's pro-cathedral tomorrow (Friday 17). Celebrated for his interpretations of the French repertoire, his programme centres on César Franck, commemorating the composer's 200th birthday, as well as music by some of Franck's pupils.

Noted for his improvisations, US-based David Baskeyfield will accompany a showing of the 1925 silent film *Phantom of the Opera* in St Bartholomew's Church, Clyde Road at 9pm on Saturday 18 and close the festival in St Michael's, Dun Laoghaire on Sunday 19, when his recital offers Buxtehude, Bach, Mozart and Franz Schmidt's virtuosic Toccata in C of 1924.

The Real Presence is the real thing

The Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ is a celebration of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. It is an astounding belief. We would not dare to hold this belief except that it is based on the very words of Jesus himself. "I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

The late Brennan Manning, author of many inspiring books, told this story about his mother, a retired nurse, living in Brooklyn. Her source of energy for each day was the Eucharist. Because she began a voluntary stint at a drug detoxification center each morning at 7.30am, the only Mass she could attend was at 5.30am. Across the road lived a very successful lawyer, mid-30s, married with two children. Driving home from a late party at 5am one January morning, the roads glassy with ice, he said to his wife, "I bet that old bag won't be out this morning." But there she was on her knees negotiating the slippery slope up to the church.

He went home and tried to sleep but could not. Around 9am he rose, went to the local presbytery and asked to see a priest. "Padre, I am not one of yours. I have no religion. But could you tell me what do you have in there that can make an old woman crawl on hands and knees on an icy morning?" Thus began his conversion, along with his wife and family.

What does the Real Presence mean?

"What have you got in there?" I suppose we could answer, "What we have is the real thing". We speak of the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist. What do we mean by real? In popular usage, when we say something is real, we mean that it actually exists as opposed to being imaginary or fictitious. When we speak of the Real Presence of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, do we imply that there is something less real about God's presence in Sacred Scripture, in a community of people gathered to pray in God's name or in the wonders of creation? The word real as used in eucharistic theology is a transliteration of the Latin

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



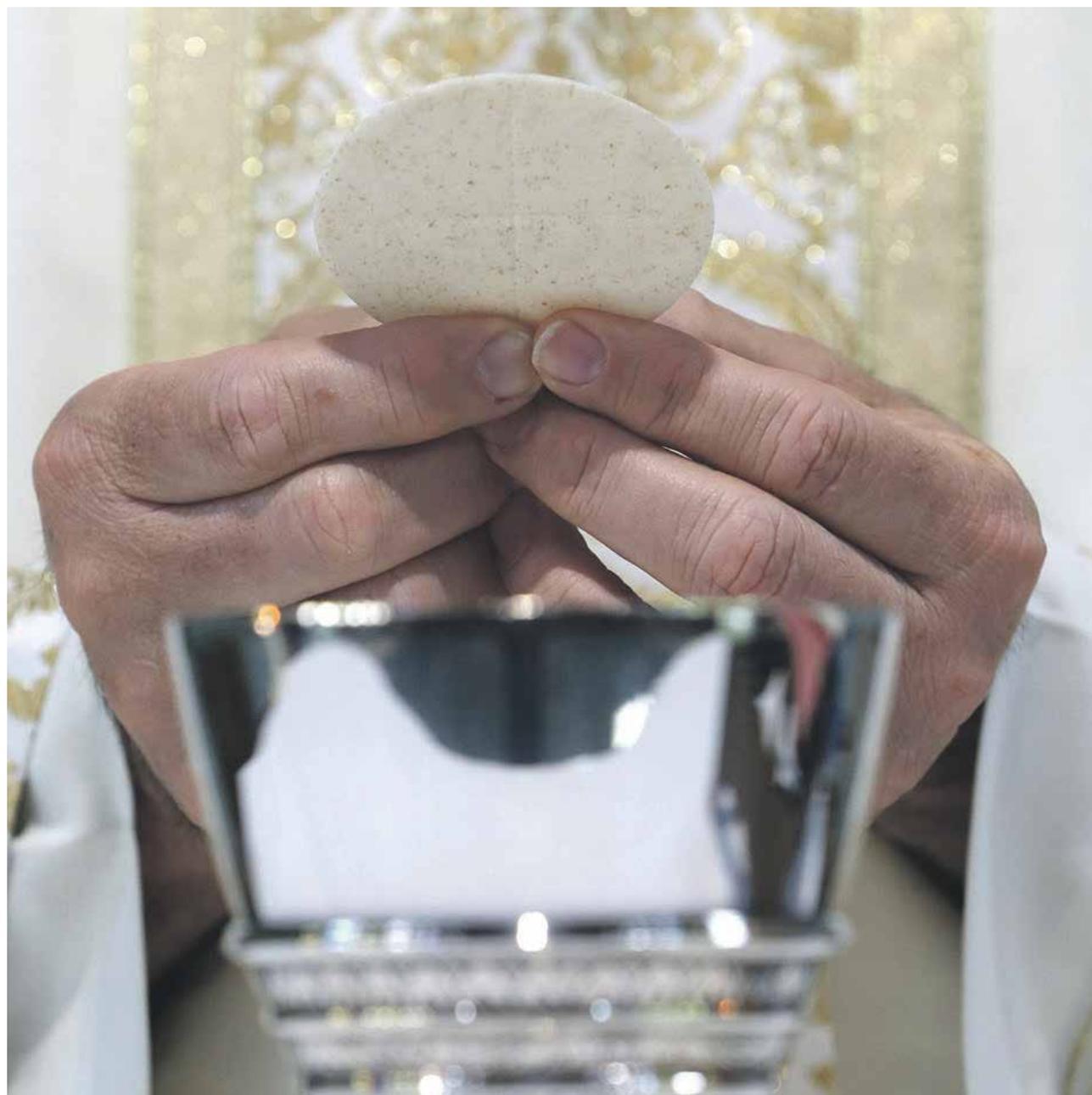
word *realis* which means pertaining to a material thing. Sacraments are perceptible signs using material things such as water, oils, bread and wine, as well as words and actions which make present the grace they signify. If I may invent a word, perhaps we might speak of a 'thinged' presence of God's action and grace. The Real Presence is the real thing!

“Believe it or not, but more than half of the answers identified Winston Churchill as virtual”

Go back to the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The Lord was explaining to the apostles that no longer would he be with them in his human body but he would remain in a new embodiment. Taking some bread, he blessed it, broke it and gave it to them saying, "This is my body which is for you; do this as a memorial of me". In the same way, taking the cup of wine he said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me." The bread and wine which are consecrated by the Holy Spirit become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The disciples were instructed to "Do this in memory of me." At the consecration, the Holy Spirit brings us Jesus as the bread of life. Then, at receiving Holy Communion Jesus brings us the power of the Holy Spirit.

Recently I read about a survey taken in England where participants were given a list of names and asked to identify those who were real or who were virtual people. Believe it or not, but more than half of the answers identified Winston Churchill as virtual. Maybe it was due to Churchill's presence in several recent films and documentaries. There is a growing coterie of people living more in the virtual world than the real world.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, churches were closed and people got accustomed to



following Mass online. I've met many people who searched around and settled on a site they found very enriching. Churches have been open for several months but the number who have returned is seriously diminished.

“In the light of Sacred Scripture and the food of the bread of life, we are sent out from the celebration to love and serve the Lord”

My own experience is that less than one-third have returned here. I know that many of the older generation who formed the backbone of Mass attenders have genuine reasons for not coming outdoors but there are others who prefer the online or virtual Mass. Maybe the music is better than the local liturgy, or the preaching is better. But isn't there something missing? No

Holy Communion! The Real Presence of the Lord, coming to us as the bread of life, the greatest source of energy for the practice of Christian living. In the light of Sacred Scripture and the food of the bread of life, we are sent out from the celebration to love and serve the Lord. As Jesus told the apostles in today's Gospel, "Give them something yourselves to eat."

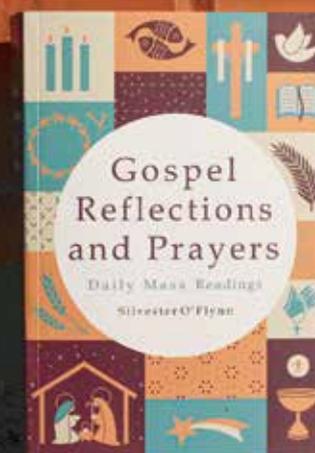
Pope Francis is encouraging us to engage in a synod, which literally means walking together with other people and with God. Who knows what will come from this process? One wish I have is for people to be drawn into an adult understanding of our religion. Do people today understand what Holy Communion is? Do they welcome the Lord? Do they spend time in thanksgiving? What is meant by the invitation to the Supper of the Lamb? Why do we say "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof but only say the word and my soul shall be healed"?

Prayer

After Mass, I love to ponder on the words of Saint Francis. "O sublime humility, O humble sublimity, that the Lord of the Universe, the Son of God so humbles himself that for our salvation, he hides himself under the little form of bread!" I believe Lord, help my unbelief.

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Women, inequality and feminism



Women in Chinautla, Guatemala, collect wood along the polluted Las Vacas River. Photo: CNS

There are still people everywhere who believe there's no longer any issue regarding the status of women. Widespread is the belief that today, at least in democratic countries, women enjoy full equality with men. As well, for many, feminism is a bad word, politically charged, representing a radical liberal ideology whose agenda is at odds with traditional family values. What's to be said about this?

First off, feminism, like Christianity, is a wide term that includes both healthy and strident expressions. There are good feminists and there are strident ones, as is true of Christians. Be that as it may, my main purpose here is to suggest that nothing can be further from the truth than the naive belief that gender equality has been achieved - anywhere. It hasn't, not by a long shot.

Evidence

Why do I say this? Before offering more substantial evidence, let me highlight just one example. I live in the West, in the United States, in America, in Texas, in San Antonio (a very Christian and compassionate city), in a democratic culture that prides itself and believes itself to be a beacon to the world vis-à-vis human rights and women's equality. Yet, as I read our daily newspaper, rarely does a single week go by wherein there isn't the report of a woman dying because of domestic violence. Moreover, these are only reports of women being murdered



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

by a domestic partner; the numbers are no doubt astronomically higher in terms of women suffering physical and sexual abuse in our homes. Note, in 90% of these cases it's the woman who dies.

However, to substantiate the claim that women still suffer, massively and disproportionately, from inequality, let me cite a series of comments from a recent book *Awakening*, by Joan Chittister:

“Feminism, like Christianity, is a wide term that includes both healthy and strident expressions”

“The fact is that two-thirds of the poor of the world are women, two-thirds of the illiterate of the world are women and two-thirds of the hungry of the world are women. Oppression of half the human race cannot be explained

by accident...Women are most of the poor, most of the refugees, most of the uneducated, most of the beaten and most of the rejected of the world.”

Oppression

“The history of women is one of historical and universal oppression, discrimination and violence. In Buddhism, women who have led lives of total spiritual dedication are trained to take orders from the youngest of the male monks. In Islam, women are required to veil their heads and cover their bodies to express their unworthiness and signal the fact that they belong to some man. In Hinduism, women are abandoned by their husbands for higher pursuits and larger dowries or held responsible for his death by virtue of a woman's bad karma. In most forms of Judaism, women are denied access to religious ritual and education. In Christianity, until recently and in many sectors

yet, the legal rights of women have been equated with those of minor children; wife-beating is protected by domestic right and even the spiritual life of women is dictated, directed, and controlled by the men of the faith.”

“The history of women is one of historical and universal oppression, discrimination and violence”

Moreover, Sr Chittister highlights an irony that generally goes unrecognised and, worse still, is often used to camouflage our failure to accord women equal status. Here's the irony. Many of us nurture, consciously or unconsciously, an attitude that might aptly be called a romantic feminism wherein we over-idealise and over-exalt women and, ironically but understandably, by that very token end up denying them full equality. This is how Sr Chittister puts it: “on no other class, surely has so much poetry, so much music, so many flowers, so much adulation, so much tolerance, so much romantic love and so little moral and intellectual,

spiritual and human respect been lavished.” In essence, an over-idealisation of women, tells them: you're so special and wonderful that you shouldn't be treated in same way as men!

I'm old enough to have lived through a couple of generations of feminism. In the 1980s and 1990s, when I taught theology in a couple of universities, feminism, both healthy and strident, was very strong within the faculty and in much of the student body. I confess that I wasn't always at ease with it, particularly with its often-militant tone. I sensed its legitimacy, even as I feared its stridency.

Changed

Well, times have changed. Today, in the classrooms I teach, more and more, I'm meeting women, younger women, who have little sympathy or use for the feminism of the 1980s and 1990s. There's almost a patronising attitude towards those women who pioneered the feminist agenda. Partly, it's a generational thing that's understandable. Partly, however, it's also a naiveté, an unfounded belief that the battle has been won, that women have now achieved full equality, that there's no need any longer for the old-style battles.

So, when I read Sr Chittister's grim statistics and read about domestic violence almost daily in our newspapers, I long for those feisty feminists I once met in classrooms and at faculty meetings all those years ago.

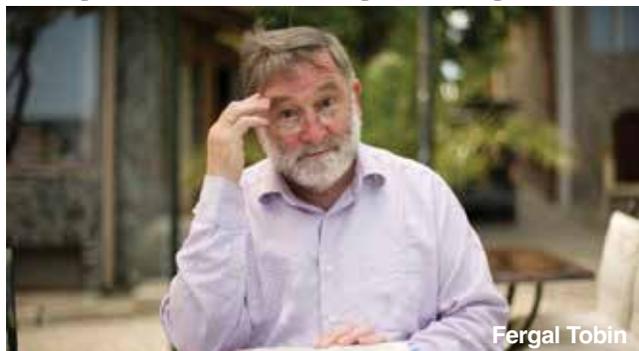
“There are good feminists and there are strident ones, as is true too of Christians”

BookReviews

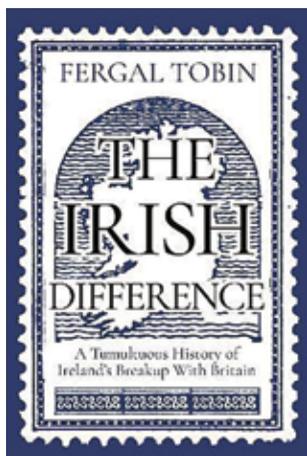
Peter Costello



Explaining the Irish to the English...at long, long last?



Fergal Tobin



The Irish Difference: A Tumultuous History of Ireland's Breakup With Britain

by Fergal Tobin
(Atlantic Books,
£18.99/€22.99)

Joe Carroll

This book grew out of the author's exasperation at how ignorance of Ireland was an important factor in the pro-Brexit vote, especially in England as distinct from the other parts of the United Kingdom. The "fabled British elite... should have known better".

So this book is first of all "addressed to a British, or more precisely an English, readership". It aims "to explain the degree of Irish difference, such as carried us out of the United Kingdom a century ago and latterly made us such a stone in the Brexit shoe".

The result is a witty and entertaining gallop over Irish history which Irish readers will savour but English readers, whether the "elite" or "dyspeptic, ill-educated and alienated provincials" to quote the author, might find the detail daunting. They will learn, for instance "Why Jackie goes to Ballybay."

Forebears

To make it easier, the author divides their forebears who crossed the Irish Sea into Old English (descendants of the Normans); New English (Elizabethan and Stuart adventurers, "stridently Protestant"); and the "Creoles" who were mainly the soldiers rewarded by Cromwell for their services

in laying waste to much of Ireland in the 17th Century.

On firmer ground, Mr Tobin, who is a distinguished books editor in Ireland as well as an author, insists that the religious divide in Ireland must not be misunderstood. "It has been said a thousand times and bears repeating here that the divide in Ireland is not religious in any theological sense: it is not a religious war. But religious or confessional allegiance is the most visible marker of all differences in the Anglo-Irish imbroglio."

The same proviso still applies in Northern Ireland. When the 'Troubles' broke out in 1969, French newspapers carried banner headlines about the 'Guerre de religion' prompting their readers to think back to their own clashes with 17th Century Huguenots.

Useful

The book is especially useful in describing how the various Land Acts by far-sighted British politicians such as Gladstone and Wyndham dispossessed the 'Creoles' of their vast, unworked estates almost without a shot being fired. They were paid off, of course, but it was a relatively painless process and the land annuities burden disappeared after a deal in 1938 between Éamon de Valera and Neville Chamberlain which also secured the return of the treaty ports, again without any gunfire.

The author also explains how the 19th Century Irish benefitted from education reforms, embraced cultural nationalism, found new pleasures in the revival of hurling and the invention of Gaelic football (replacing the widely played cricket and rugby brought by the planters).

How the course to a Home Rule relationship with London was rudely interrupted by the 1914-18 war and the plotting Republican Brotherhood in 1916 is explained with a note of wistful regret.

In the end there was no getting over the 'Irish difference' without blood being spilled. English readers owe Mr Tobin a debt. If only they could have read his book before the Brexit vote.

Exploring the 'work of angels' in the Book of Kells

Image & Vision: Reflecting with the Books of Kells
by Rosemary Power
(Veritas, €24.99/£22.00)

Peter Costello

Rosemary Power has written two earlier books on the world of Celtic Christianity, one of which deals with Colmcille and Iona. She also lectures widely on themes in this area of scholarship to non-academic audiences, thus passing on the latest aspects of current research. Her new book derives naturally enough from her talks on the Book of Kells, which may have been created on Iona, and she proves a very enlightening guide for those wishing to seriously explore one of Ireland's greatest treasures.

Invaders

Gerald de Barri, whose family were among the leading Norman invaders, described in the 1180s a book very similar to the Book of Kells, whose illuminations were just as remarkable, as "the work of angels", and that is a very appropriate idea to encompass the beauty of the pages.

The author herself remarks towards the end of her text. "Today we have the advantage of being able to read the gospels in a language of our choice, as well as to view this work directly or in reproduction. This has made the Book of Kells accessible in a way our ancestors could not have envisaged. As with any other great work, or collections of works of art, our modern interpretations also have their place, especially when informed by the past."

“The images used here are backed up by photographs of some of the high crosses associated with the themes she enlarges upon”

Today the Book of Kells, once enshrined in Iona and in Kells, where it seems to have been on occasional display, is kept in the library of Trinity College Dublin, where it is seen annually by many thousands of visitors. However, having stood on many occasions among these thronging crowds,

and listened to their puzzled comments, it is quite clear that tourists from North America and Asia are very unclear about the nature of what they are seeing. Rosemary Power's book will be a great aid to many who have enjoyed the brief sight of one opening of a verso and recto page which is all they will glimpse in a darkly shaded room.

Encounter

The exhibition that accompanies this brief encounter is excellent, explaining in a straightforward way the cultural background to the book, and the mysteries of the text and about how the book was made, and the pages created. This is really worth a visit.

Image & Vision will fill out the visitor experience from a Christian point of view. However it contains only 12 images of the highly ornate 'carpet' pages. Some readers may well feel that they would also need to see more images, not perhaps in the full-sized facsimile editions, which are very expensive, but one of the many pamphlets which concentrate on the images.

The images used here are backed up by photographs of some of the high crosses associated with the themes she enlarges upon.

In reading Rosemary Power's book though, I think that many readers might benefit from reading the last chapter 'Connection and Composition' as a continuation of the introduction for it explains a great deal which would inform even a first reading.

The text itself is divided into three parts reflecting the layout of the manuscript. 'The Season' deals with the stages

of the life and passion of Jesus Christ which the Book of Kells sees not as separate texts, but as a total, with constant visual and textual references between the four gospels.

The second section, 'Entering the text', deals with the link between the canon tables and the evangelists, and the start of Luke's Gospel.

But the section called 'Portraits' which follows expounds the often hidden aspects of the surviving portraits of the evangelists that open their respective gospels.

The last of the portraits is about the image of Mary and her son, picking up a Marian theme which will certainly greatly interest some readers.

“The second section, 'Entering the text', deals with the link between the canon tables and the evangelists, and the start of Luke's Gospel”

The heart of both Ms Power's richly detailed text and the manuscript is perhaps the portrayal of Christ himself on folio 32v (pictured). This is certainly among the great iconic works of art in the Western tradition, the divine Christ paralleling the page showing Mary with the very human infant Jesus.

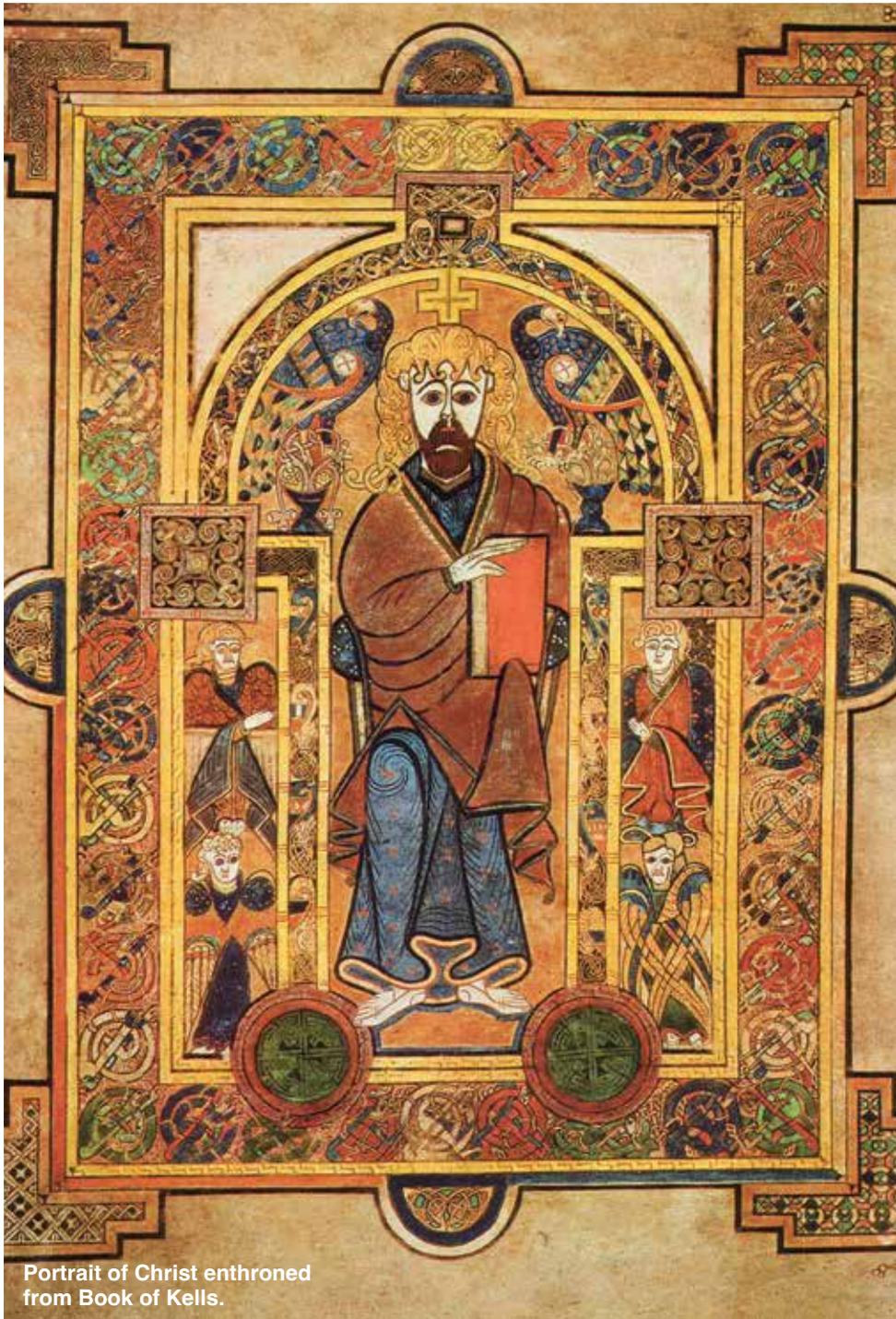
This is a book to be warmly welcomed, and hopefully it will be widely read. There are certainly a lot of new things to be learned from it which help to make that far distant era of faith a living experience.



The Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus.

“Image & Vision will fill out the visitor experience from a Christian point of view”

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.



Portrait of Christ enthroned from Book of Kells.

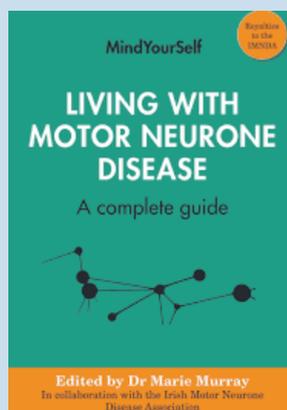
Living with a growing disease

Living with Motor Neurone Disease: A complete guide edited by Dr Marie Murray, in collaboration with the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association (Atrium/Cork University Press, €14.95/£12.95) Though first recognised back in the 19th century, Motor Neurone Disease became more familiar a century later through the widely publicised experiences of the disease by such people as David Niven and Stephen Hawking. Where once it was unfamiliar, today every family will know of, have heard of, or have contact with a sufferer of MND. Charlie Bird of RTÉ will be in the minds of many at

the moment.

For that reason this book will be very welcome, for though still seen as a terminal condition, through modern treatment functioning lives can be well extended. In this book Dr Marie Murray and some 19 collaborators provide a patient and family friendly book.

This is a very hope-inspiring, life-enhancing book, filled with very carefully composed advice which will be of immense help to many. Wider understanding by everyone in society of a condition such as MND, or Post-Polio Syndrome, which affected my family, helps to create a universal atmosphere of support. This book should be read



not only by healthcare specialists and those affected by the disease, but all aware citizens.

The royalties from this book will go towards funding research through the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Mental maps and private worlds

For me Rosemary Power's book provoked thoughts on a very different topic. There are insights of interest on every page of the author's exposition. Yet there are comments one might question.

She describes the churches in the Middle East and North Africa as on the 'fringe' of Christendom. But this was surely not the case: early Christians saw Jerusalem as being the centre of their faith and indeed the centre of the world as they conceived it: Adamnán, the biographer of Colmcille, actually wrote a book, not about Rome, but about the Holy Places of Palestine.

New faith

The new faith had already broken the bounds of the Roman Empire, moving along the trade routes to Persia, Central Asia and India. A little later Nestorians would reach China, while some Christians followed the Jews of Diaspora across the Sahara to Black Africa. This is the Christian world as shown on the Hereford Mappa Mundi. In this view Ireland was certainly on the fringe not just of Christianity but of the known world. Jerusalem then was the centre not the fringe. But this is only a small point perhaps.

“We all say (or most of us do) ‘I live in Ireland’, but that Ireland is quite different from another person’s”

But the cities of the Middle East have a curious feature. In Middle Eastern cities, such as Jerusalem, Cairo, Istanbul, people can walk the same physical streets but live in different cities.

Edmund Wilson in his pioneering book *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (1955, revised ed. 1969) describes how the different world views of the different cultures there lead to the manuscripts being nearly lost sight of, because the Orthodox

leader into whose hands the first came had closer connections in such matters with people in New York than his neighbours in Jerusalem. Edward W. Lane describes the same sort of situation among the various cultures of Cairo in his great book on that city in the 1830s, a century before.

The idea of 'mental maps' developed largely by geographers such as Hugh Brady and others has failed, to so speak, to find a home among Irish writers and commentators. If we paid more attention to the notion we would have fewer arguments.

We all say (or most of us do) "I live in Ireland", but that Ireland is quite different from another person's. Though it may appear highly objective science is in fact a very subjective application.

Maps

Take for instance the common appearance of maps. They are nearly always Mercator projections with north south orientations. Turn the page in your atlas around and see what a strange new appearance the world - or just Ulster - takes on. Maps should be arranged to reflect points of view, as H. J. Mackinder and other advanced geog-

raphers suggested as long ago as 1902.

How it appears thus to a class of people, such as whalers, is very different to how a statesman might see it. How each individual sees the world is very different from others.

“The new faith had already broken the bounds of the Roman Empire, moving along the trade routes to Persia, Central Asia and India”

To tell the truth, we none of us live in the same world as anyone else. We all live in a private world, largely of our own creating. That is how we like it. What others fail to recognise is their loss, perhaps even their failing. But what we have to accept is they see the world differently from us.

A saint's view of the world is very different from that of the latest young man (it is always a young man) who shoots up a US school, supermarket or club, in a private war against society and culture.



Hereford Mappa Mundi.

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Image: Roge Wavio (29) of Kalacha, Marsabit, Kenya holds produce she has grown with support from Concern. Photographer: Jennifer Nolan / Concern Worldwide

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Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



Healing a divisive world...

AS SOMEONE WHO is regularly tasked with preaching, I am always looking for examples of people who live out their faith in practical ways, loving God and neighbour in the bits and pieces of life. Within the last year I came across two films which I found inspiring. The first film, which I discovered by accident on YouTube is called *Pov-erty, Chastity and (Dis)obedience*. It is a documentary made in 2021 and interestingly it was commissioned by the Irish Government. The documentary tells the story of several different Irish missionaries who went to South Africa, focusing in particular on their work under apartheid and their contribution to peace, justice, health, education and anti-apartheid activism over the decades. Many of them admit that they went to South Africa to educate the children of wealthy people but ended up being so affected by the plight of the poor and the injustice against black people from apartheid, that they ended up living their lives in solidarity with those most in need. The film is dedicated to the generations of Irish missionary women and men who devoted their lives not just to South Africa but in every corner of the globe,



Haley Joel Osment stars in the movie *Pay It Forward*. Photo: CNS

standing in solidarity with its people and their struggles.

Movie

The second film is called *Pay it Forward*. It was released just over 20 years ago. The movie is based on a book of the same name, and it is the story of an eleven-year-old boy, Trevor, whose social studies teacher presents his class with a chance to earn extra credits. Those who accepted the challenge were to look for a way to change the world and put it into action. Trevor thought long and hard about the project.

He came up with an idea which would change the world, one person at a time. He would choose three people and do a significant favour for them. Then in turn, he would ask those three people to choose three more and do favours for them. Paying it forward would create a chain reaction. Trevor's first choice was to bring home a homeless man, allowing him a place to shower and get clean clothes and a meal. Second, he recognised that both his social studies teacher and his mom seemed to be a perfect couple and moved to get them together (this act of kindness had a very bumpy path as you will see if you watch the film but it is too complicated to go into here). The third recipient of a favour from Trevor was a classmate at school who was always being attacked by bullies. As the film progresses it becomes apparent that the chain reaction of acts of kindness started by this one eleven-year-old boy becomes

a movement across the country which has a profound effect on countless people. There are very sad elements to this film not least that the young hero suffers a violent death but the good that lives on in his memory is extraordinary.

Witnesses

When Jesus asked of his disciples to go out and be his witnesses, to change the world and create opportunities for people to love and care and forgive and look out for each other, he wanted them to pay it forward. He asked the same of those Irish missionaries who have made such a difference in the lives of so many in South Africa and all over the world. Through Trevor's teacher in the film Jesus asked the same of him. Today he asks no less of you and me and we do respond to him every day in our own ways. How about choosing someone we don't know and do a favour for them, then ask them in return to pay it forward by doing something for someone else. The work of the Holy Spirit can help us to heal a divisive world, one person at a time.

The 'Loser's' Blessing

Lord bless the folk who never quite got there
The people who intended something fine
The folk who might have lived a better, nobler existence
The ones who somehow always failed to shine
The people who tried to keep their temper
And yet who seemed to lose it all the more
The one's who haven't made their name in business
Who should be rich but always will be poor
The folk who aren't as clever as they might be
Who aren't as good and feel their efforts vain
Lord bless all these - and me among them
And give us all the heart to try again

-Fr Ronan Drury RIP

'Christy'

At the Baptism of her son a Dublin mother told the priest the following; "We called him 'Christy', Father, cause he was born on the Feast of Corpus Christi".



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU

Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

- €..... HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU
- €..... UKRAINE APPEAL
- €..... WELLS AND CLEAN WATER
- €..... MASS OFFERINGS (Please state no. of Masses _____)
- €..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

To donate online go to www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address