

# The Irish Catholic

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## Archbishop warns SVP must not neglect Catholic identity

Greg Daly

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has warned the Society of St Vincent de Paul not to shy away from its Catholic identity and values.

It comes amidst concerns expressed by some members that the organisation risks drifting away from its religious roots towards a generic ideal of secular charity.

In a pointed homily given at a Mass in the Dublin Convention Centre to mark the 175th anniversary of the founding of the charity in Ireland, Archbishop Martin warned that while the society has changed down the years, there are "some constants that you might say if they are not present then you are really no longer the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul".

He insisted that the SVP is "fundamentally in its inspiration about God".

"Some will immediately react that today the society would feel itself much less denominational or evangelical than in the past," he said.

However, Dr Martin also rejected the suggestion that the modern SVP be less denomina-

tional or evangelical than it once was.

Referring to the Gospel mandate to put vulnerable people first, Dr Martin insisted that "the Christian is called to such service because authentic Christian life must reflect who our God is".

He said Christian life is not simply about helping people from afar, but must be about encounter and becoming real friends with the poor.

He said that this cannot "be simply realised from behind a desk."

"Advocacy and administration may be a dimension of the work of any organisation, but becoming friends with the poor means seeing more than statistics and policies," he told volunteers from parishes all across Ireland.

### Disquiet

The archbishop's comments come against the backdrop of a letter having been circulated among SVP members expressing disquiet at President Michael D. Higgins being scheduled to address the conference, owing to how he signed an abortion bill into law in December.

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## Hat-trick hero spurred on by God

Tottenham Hotspur footballer Lucas Moura has praised God for his first hat-trick in Europe after defeating Huddersfield 4-0 over the weekend.

The 26-year-old Brazilian player was the star of the match in the new Spurs stadium, after scoring three incredible goals against the opposing team. Speaking after the match, the footy whizz told Sky Sports: "It was a special day for me, it was a good moment. First hat-trick in Europe as well, I don't have the words to describe it."

"All I can say is thank you to God, I'm very happy here and now we must push on to create history in this stadium. It's a day I will never forget."

The footballer added that he was happy to help his team, and that he has high hopes for future.

"That's my job, to help my team, to score some goals because I know a striker needs to score and I practise this. I'm happy because I finished very well. We need to keep going like this, because if we can keep this intensity, we can win a lot of things."

The Spurs player has previously spoken about how his opportunity to play at this level is a "gift" from God.

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# Easter – wounds and all – is about looking forward with confident hope

**F**or the believer, Holy Week and Easter is the culmination of the Faith when we mark the saving death and life-giving resurrection of the Saviour.

Even if the non-religious relegate Easter to a mere festival of overindulgence in chocolate eggs, the glory of this festival transformed our world. The Carpenter of Nazareth revealed in the New Covenant a way of life that not only calls us to make our world a better place, but opened up the gates to eternal happiness in the world that is to come.

While the Jewish people knew their God was always with them through the Prophets urging them to hope for salvation, the Greeks and the Romans had modelled their gods as indifferent even capricious foes to be feared rather than loved. If interaction with the gods was necessary, it was pure supplication in a bid to assuage their anger.

In Jesus, God reveals himself as the God who chooses to walk alongside us. As the Letter to the Hebrews puts it: "It is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin." (Hebrews 4:15).

## Institution

The ups and downs of that first Holy Week from the triumphal procession on Palm Sunday through to the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, the passion and death on Good Friday, the emptiness of Holy

Saturday and the Rising serve as a metaphor for our Church and world.

Holy Week with its mix of apparent defeat being transformed into triumph is also the story of our lives as individuals marked by sin and selfishness.

**“Christ returned to the Father with the marks of his human condition”**

Even if Lent has not been as fruitful as we would've liked, or our commitment to pray, fast and give alms wavered, Holy Week is the week to begin again and feast on God's mercy.

The reason the Church sets before us the obligation of going to Confession is not because it needs to tick a box beside our name, it is because we need it to help us grow in holiness of life and so lead other people to God. We do this in the midst of our sinfulness and

inadequacy – not in spite of it. As Pope Francis has constantly reiterated since his election in 2013, God never tires of forgiving us – we tire of asking.

Like the earthly life of Christ, our lives are also marked by suffering and weariness. We get sick in mind, heart and body – we decay and we age. Those whom we love and love us get sick and die. Our plans come to nothing and are hopes are dashed. Just when it seems like nothing else can go wrong, something does and we are bowed low our only prayer our tears. It's then that God sends an angel as he sent one to comfort and strengthen his Son in the agony of Gethsemane reminding us that we have no need to be afraid for God is on our side and will not forsake us.

This is our hope – the hope of the resurrection and the knowledge that our suffering has meaning. And that if we unite our

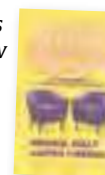
sufferings to Christ's, our suffering will be redemptive.

In his depiction of the resurrection, Piero della Francesca presents Christ to us as the unblemished king – with the exception of the wound to his side and the wound in the back of both his hands made by the crucifixion nails. Christ returned to the Father with the marks of his human condition and the painting reminds us that he is both God and man. The story of Easter is the confidence that we too – wounds and all – can look forward with joyful hope.

Happy Easter.

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

www.columbabooks.com



## SVP 'must not neglect Catholic identity'

» Continued from Page 1

The letter followed grassroots disquiet in the Northern region of the Irish SVP first reported in *The Irish Catholic* last year about the failure of the society elsewhere in Ireland to take a stance in last year's abortion referendum and concern that a similar failure to publicly witness to Catholic values could hurt the

pro-life cause in the North.

The SVP last year responded to criticism of its refusal to take a stance on the referendum by underlining that members and supporters of the SVP should understand that the society is a Catholic organisation committed to Church teaching.

Echoing Dr Martin's comments, SVP Mid Antrim

area president Henry O'Loan told *The Irish Catholic* that SVP is "not just a generic charity. We're very much aware that we are a Christian charity, and that people are looking up to us for love, first and foremost."

"They may be calling for physical assistance, but our first response is with love. People would be very, very aware of that," he insisted.

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# Call for Ireland to take up national synod challenge

Colm Fitzpatrick

Catholics should see the hand of the Holy Spirit working in the ongoing transition from a clerical to a lay-led Church, a theologian who has just completed extensive research on Vatican II in Ireland, has said.

Dr Gary Carville, who graduated with a PhD last month from Dublin City University on the topic of Ireland's reception of the Second Vatican Council, said that the cleansing of the Church in Ireland has been the work of God, and that the process will allow trust to be rebuilt between priests and laity.

"It's about when you're renewing, when your renewing the body, it involves a process of detoxifying, a letting go, and an opening up of wounds and so on. I think that's what's been happen-

ing in the Church and in that context it's good," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

The Clogher diocesan spokesperson added that the future of the Church will be more lay-led, noting that "in the past, it has been the case of people helping priests, it will now be the future of priests helping people".

Echoing these comments, Sean Goan, Co-ordinator of Spiritan Mission Ireland, told this newspaper that while clergy play a valuable role at a sacramental level, the laity need to reclaim their role as "missionary disciples".

Speaking after the success of a two-week-long orientation course for incoming pastoral ministry workers in Ireland at Kimmage Manor, Mr Goan said: "But there is something else going on here, and people need to under-

stand their Faith in terms of their own responsibility for it, their own role as disciples, and their own role in building up community.

"Maybe one of the problems were struggling with here might be a sacramental understanding of what it means to be Catholic," he said.

Dr Carville has called for a national synod in Ireland in the near future to explore how all Catholics can better live out their Faith in communities.

"A national synod, focused on mission, will allow the Church in its fullest reality to engage again in new pastures and allow the whole people of God to be the creative agent and leaven in our communities – from the sources of faith and to the sources of the Church's lived reality today.

See Pages 16-17.

## Heal relations with 'fearless' actions – Easter message

Staff reporter

Working "fearlessly" for the restoration of "hope and good relations" must be done as well as praying for the healing of relationships the Catholic and Col archbishops of Armagh have said.

In a joint Easter message Archbishops Eamon Martin and Richard Clarke said that after the events of Good Friday the first disciples had a deeper conviction that "through the power of Christ, good would indeed ultimately win definitive victory over fear and

evil". They ask: "Does Easter do that for us? Can we truly call ourselves Easter people?"

"Regardless of personal opinions on the various crises in Ireland, Britain, Europe and throughout the world, no reasonable person can seriously doubt the levels of anxiety, anger and divisiveness that are corroding human relationships within and through society and even within close-knit families.

"We must not only pray for the healing of relationships. We must also work fearlessly as 'Easter people' for the restoration of hope and good relationships..."

## Palm Sunday blessing



Fr Louis Illah blessing the Palms at St Finian's Terrace, Navan, before the 2019 Palm Sunday procession to St Mary's Church.

## Pope's environmental message can be tool to reach young, bishop says

Chai Brady

Using the Pope's encyclical on the environment to inform prayer and liturgy is "a proposal that the bishops can take up", particularly as the language appeals to young people, the Bishop of Down and Connor has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* during a conference on *Laudato Si'*,

hosted by the Society of African Missionaries in Dromantine, Co. Down, Bishop Noel Treanor said that in some ways this is already happening.

"Of course this is something that I think has been anticipated and fostered a little bit already by Trócaire which has prepared a very interesting package for schools and did so after the publication of

*Laudato Si'*," he said.

"I have indeed in the past seen instances of the celebration of liturgical events, the Sacraments themselves, the Eucharist, or other events of prayer services where the integration of the entirety of creation and of the created order of which we are part as human has been clearly thematised and reflected."

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# 'No question' of North's Catholics renouncing their Irish identity

Greg Daly

Suggestions that Catholics in the North might be forced to legally identify as British after Brexit are "a complete non-runner", a prominent Northern priest has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fermanagh-based Fr Joe McVeigh said British failures to clarify the issue are complicating matters needlessly, and called on the Irish Government to stand up for the Good Friday Agreement.

"It's a complete non-runner as far as northern nationalists are concerned," Fr McVeigh said. "Northern nationalists settled for the Good Friday Agreement: it was a compromise settlement and it respected their identity as Irish citizens and European citizens and – if they wanted to be – British citizens. There'd be no ques-

tion of Irish nationalists in the North renouncing their identity. Those days are gone."

Fr McVeigh's comments come in the wake of confusion and outrage after Derry-born Emma de Souza tweeted an excerpt from new UK immigration rules, which change the definition of a European Economic Area national, and appear to indicate that dual British nationals who are British by birth will not be considered EEA nationals in the UK.

## Citizenship

Ms DeSouza, an Irish citizen, has been told she cannot access her EU right of residence for her US husband without first renouncing her British citizenship.

Although it is possible that the new rules Ms De Souza has quoted in declaring that the British government is

imposing British citizenship upon the people of Northern Ireland, removing access to EU rights in the process, may not be intended to refer to Irish citizens, Fr McVeigh says British failures to clarify this are unwise.

"It's not wise at all, and it's certainly again somebody in the British home office or somewhere there stirring the pot to make matters more complicated than they already are with Brexit," he said. "We have to be on our guard all the time, and the Dublin Government has to be strong and firm about protecting the Good Friday Agreement and the rights of Irish citizens in Ireland wherever they go."

Fr McVeigh added that he was worried by how leading pro-Brexit politicians "have shown up to now very scant regard for the Good Friday Agreement".

## Young ambassadors on duty



(l-r) Cait Ní Cheallaigh, Clodagh Green, Aoife Convery and Mekha Sajour – four of the 40 Diocesan Ambassadors from the Derry Diocese – attend a gathering in St Eugene's Cathedral, to meet with Bishop Donal McKeown and the Youth Ministry team to discuss how best to listen to young people and allow them to inform youth ministry in the diocese.

## Priest convicted of abuse receives 'ridiculous' 10-year sentence

Chai Brady

Clergy have denounced a 10-year ban from ministry of a paedophile priest, saying it is "bizarre" and "abhorrent" that he wasn't dismissed from the clerical state completely.

It has been reported that the Legion of Christ announced the Vatican has banned an Irish priest from public ministry for 10 years for the sexual abuse of a minor in Chile.

The order said Fr John O'Reilly was also banned by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith from any contact with minors for life. He was also ordered to leave Chile.

Commenting on the sentencing Dublin-priest Fr Bryan Shortall described it as "abhorrent" and "abominable".

"I certainly feel that someone like that, whose been found guilty of the sexual abuse of minors shouldn't be allowed near children again and shouldn't be allowed to exercise

priestly ministry forever, that's my bottom line."

Fr Aquinas Duffy, parish priest of Cabinteely in south Dublin, said the sentence was "ridiculous", saying there would be no question of Fr O'Reilly returning to ministry. "I find that bizarre really, I've never ever heard of a case where there was a 10-year ban, as if the implication is when the 10 years is up he returns back to ministry – that just isn't on. It's not what it appears I would think," he said.

"The Holy Father is very clear on it, I think clearly we don't have all the facts in relation to this particular case. The Pope is very clear there is no place in ministry for those who have been convicted of child abuse and that's it."

The order confirmed in a statement to this paper that the tribunal's sentence stipulates Fr O'Reilly will be permitted to return to public ministry after 10 years.

## Be confident but cautious over Asia Bibi's release – ACN warns

Staff reporter

With the announcement that persecuted Christian Asia Bibi is to be released from Pakistan in a matter of weeks, a prominent human rights charity has said there should be no assumptions made about her safety until she is in a secure country.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan told journalists last week that Ms Bibi, who was last year acquitted of

blasphemy charges, will soon leave the country and be reunited with her family.

Commenting on the news, the National Director of the organisation Aid to the Church in Need Ireland, Dr Michael Kinsella, told *The Irish Catholic* that he is not "overly-optimistic" about the promise of Ms Bibi's release, but that Christians can hold out hope that it will come to fruition.

"I would hope that we can

assume some degree of good faith on the part of Imran Khan when it comes to the treatment of Christians generally, but in the specific case of Asia Bibi she is a pawn in a much wider political gambit by Islamic fundamentalists who are looking to set a precedent, and that precedent is Sharia law, which is the overriding factor when it comes to any and all consideration of human rights," he said.



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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Archbishop 'humbled' over papal appointment

Archbishop Eamon Martin has said he is "humbled" that Pope Francis has appointed him as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Dromore, which took immediate effect on April 15.

"I am humbled by Pope Francis' request and grateful for his confidence in me. It will be an honour for me to serve the people, priests and religious of Dromore during this transitional time for the diocese. Please pray for me as I take up this new responsibility," the Primate of All Ireland said.

In response to the news Bishop Philip Boyce OCD, who served the Diocese of Dromore as its Apostolic Administrator from March 26, 2018, said: "I wish to thank the people and clergy for their prayers, goodwill, encouragement and unstinting support over the last year."

### Nationwide healing mission to begin

Bro. Johnson will be returning to Ireland on his nationwide mission to deepen believers Faith and find healing. His seminars take place at various venues throughout the country from April 22 to May 8. For details, contact Eileen on 0872454697.



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# Benedict makes a fair point

**P**ope Emeritus Benedict has met with some criticism and mockery on social media for writing, in a Bavarian journal, that the sexual revolution of the 1960s was one of the causes of the clerical abuse scandals – ushering in a general ‘collapse’ in morality.

I lived through this period of the 1960s – in the heart of ‘Swinging London’ too – and what Benedict says makes a degree of sense. There was a widespread belief that all the old rules were now old hat, and that personal liberation was the greatest goal. The prevailing motto of the era was: “If it feels good, do it.” Fuddy-duddy restrictions were “square”.

Since these ideas swept through western societies, it would be surprising if Church people, high and low, weren’t also affected by it.

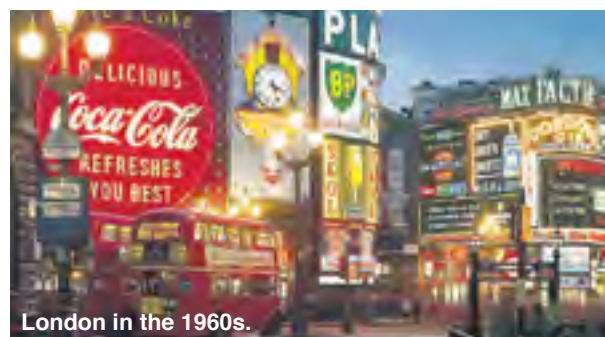
**“The prevailing motto of the era was: ‘If it feels good, do it.’ Fuddy-duddy restrictions were ‘square’”**

A recent new book about the 1960s by Virginia Nicolson illustrates how the attitudes of males changed in this decade – instead of thinking they needed to woo women, men began to develop expectations that all women were ‘on the Pill’, and willing to be easy with their favours. Generations later, the #MeToo movement is a kind of reaction to this casual sexuality.

However, the situation is complex and multi-layered. Abuse of minors



**Mary Kenny**



London in the 1960s.

has occurred at all periods: it should go without saying that every measure should be taken to deter the sin from occurring and punish the crime where it has occurred.

But there were some positive aspects of 1960s

liberation movements, too – challenging prejudiced or entrenched thinking and holding authority to account.

Yet Benedict surely has a point, and reactions should be honest and enquiring, not merely dismissive.

## Dev’s Brexit solution

We can all learn much from history – one reason why the subject should always be taught in school – and if British politicians knew more about Irish history they might, I suggest, find an answer in their search for a compromise between committed Brexiteers and committed EU ‘Remainers’.

A solution could lie in Eamon de Valera’s prescription for Ireland’s relationship with the British Commonwealth in the 1930s: a sort of halfway-house called ‘External Association’.

Dev didn’t see Éire (as it then was) as a full member of the Commonwealth, since he wanted to affirm Irish sovereignty. On the other hand, he thought it was useful for this country to have certain links with the Commonwealth of nations, which might provide a bridge to the North. Moreover, Canada and Australia often extended a helping hand in formulating independent foreign policies.

Thus his invention of ‘External Association’ – or what Churchill called “half-in and half-out”.

Today, perhaps the somewhat divided UK could settle on an ‘External Association’ relationship with the EU, as a compromise between being totally out of Europe, which one half of the population dislikes, or being totally within the EU structures, which the other half abhors.

The Dev solution seems to me a very sensible option!

## Appropriate sense of repentance

For many people, the end of the calendar year is a time to examine our lives – either to count our blessings or to question where we have gone wrong. And then to look forward to the new year and make our resolutions.

It’s a good and practical procedure, but for me, Holy Week is also a time for such reflections. If it is emphasised that Jesus died for our sins, what better time to think about the errors and waywardness of our lives? What better occasion to reflect on how many times we fall than the journey of the Stations of the Cross?

Perhaps older people have a deeper understanding of this: the conversations that I so often have with my peers are about regrets – the wrong and stupid things done, the contemptuous way we

treated advice from our parents when they were only trying to guide us in the right paths: about our misguided pride.

My late husband, an Anglican, often recited, ruefully, from the *Book of Common Prayer*, whose origins were in the universal Catholic faith: “Almighty and most merciful Father: we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. And there is no health in us.”

It is a beautiful passage, summing up that sense of repentance which is piercingly apt for Holy Week.



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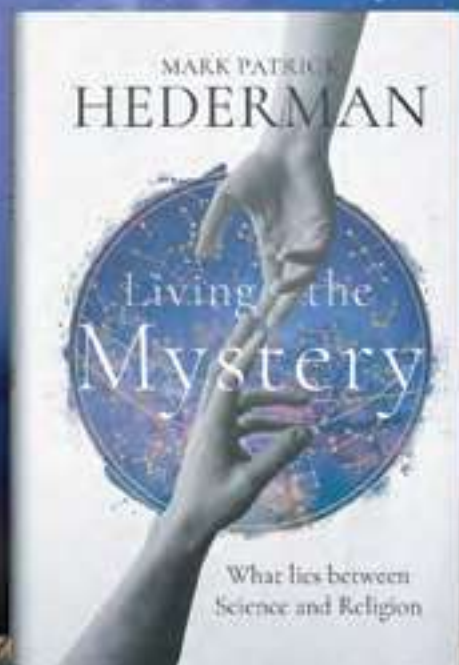
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## Rome v Republic thesis deeply flawed



RTÉ documentary came from a strange place, writes **David Quinn**

**I**t is hard to know what the point of *Rome v Republic* was. The programme aired last week on RTÉ and was presented by former Justice Minister Michael McDowell. It repeated talking points about the Church and its relationship to Irish society and the State that have been discussed endlessly for years at this stage.

Perhaps the only bit of semi-originality lay in its thesis that the British Crown and the Church in Rome conspired to keep the ideas of the French Revolution out of Ireland. Both the British State and the Catholic Church felt threatened by it because it sought to overthrow the monarchy, the Church and the established order generally.

McDowell holds up Wolfe Tone as a hero because he wanted to import the French Revolution to Ireland, drive the British out and unite all Irish people, whatever their religion, in an Irish republic, which is what was being attempted in France. If this dream had been realised, which was McDowell's basic message, how different our history might have been. We would not have come under the domination of Rome, we would have been a true republic for all the people.

### Vision

But right here, at the start, his thesis comes off the rails, or ought to, had he spoken to a wider range of people for his programme. It might at least have been challenged and made viewers think a bit more that there is another way to look at this.

For example, arguably the most gigantic figure of 19th Century Ireland rates only the briefest of mentions in the programme, namely Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell's vision of the path ahead for Ireland was very different from that of Tone.

O'Connell was in France when the Revolution was breaking out and saw its

St Patrick's College, Maynooth – its origins were no secret, despite how it was profiled in *Rome vs Republic*.



horrific violence for himself. He did not want to see this violence come to Ireland. He wanted peaceful reform. He was strongly opposed to the 1798 rebellion.

Suppose Wolfe Tone and the French had succeeded, with great bloodshed, in kicking out the British, does anyone imagine this would have lasted? Britain would never have tolerated a French ally at its backdoor, especially in the era of Napoleon. It would have moved might and main to defeat us again. The loss of life would have been enormous. O'Connell's way – peaceful mass protest – was far better.

O'Connell was also very critical of the bitter anti-Catholicism of the French Revolution. Its extreme violence is barely mentioned in *Rome v Republic*. It is silent on the Terror and on the first mass murder in modern history, the massacre of the Catholics of the Vendée in western France for resisting the revolution.

O'Connell was aware of all this. So was Tone. Whose way was better for Ireland? Even if Tone did not want to see the violence of the French Revolution inflicted on Ireland, he must have known the dangers. Why does McDowell side with Tone and give O'Connell short shrift?

*Rome v Republic* looks at the Church of 200 years ago and presents it to the viewer as barely Catholic. There was a 'folkloric' religion to be found among the ordinary people, an amalgam of elements of Catholicism and paganism, it argues. But here again something that should have loomed much larger in the narrative is barely

mentioned, namely the Penal Laws.

These were still in force 200 years ago, although becoming milder. But there has been a long-running attempt by the British State to destroy Catholicism in Ireland. It did enormous damage, smashing or taking over churches, monasteries, convents etc. No wonder so much rebuilding needed to be done once the Penal Laws began to lift.

The programme makes much of the fact that the British funded the building of St Patrick's seminary in 1795 at Maynooth as if this was some kind of revelation. It's true that it suited both the Church here and the Crown to do this. The Irish Church wanted its priests trained in Ireland, and Britain didn't want them trained on the Continent and exposed to revolutionary ideas.

**“Why does McDowell side with Tone and give O'Connell short shrift?”**

But this self-interested gesture by Britain was against the grain. O'Connell did not win emancipation for Catholics until 1829, 34 years later.

Again and again, Michael McDowell presents the Catholic Church in Ireland as somehow alien, that it was imposed upon us by Rome, hence the title of the programme. This, of course, is exactly how Protestant Britain viewed the Catholic Church, which is to say, as an outside agent, not homegrown, not native.

This rhetoric goes all the way back to Henry VIII. It's

why Henry established the Church of England, and it is why the Church of Ireland was established here. Ian Paisley loved to talk of the Roman Catholic Church.

But the Catholic Church in Ireland dates back 1,500 years. Few things here have deeper roots. Yes, the influence of Rome has waxed and waned, but it is the international, universalist dimension of the Catholic Church that has prefigured organisations like the European Union and helped to form European culture. Irish people were well aware of the internationalism of the Catholic Church, and proud of it.

### Popular support

And this brings us on to something else that gets very short shrift in the programme, namely the huge popular support that once existed for the Catholic Church here. Its influence came from that and has waned only as that popular support has waned.

Rome did not impose an outside religion on us. If it was 'imposed' we did it to ourselves and we expected our politicians to heed it.

Michael McDowell is, or was, a classical liberal, that is someone who believes in limited Government, a State that does not overreach, and an autonomous civil society.

Any republic has to defer to what people want, and whether our former Justice Minister likes it or not, for a long time we expected the Irish State to defer to the gigantic civil society organisation that is the Catholic Church. That was unhealthy for both, but it is what we wanted. It was not a Roman invasion of Ireland.



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# Maria Steen

## The View



# Benedict's arguments are worth engaging with

**P**ope Emeritus Benedict XVI has published an essay commenting on the sex abuse scandal that has rocked the Catholic Church for some time. The former Pope broke his usual silence in order, in his own words, "to contribute one or two remarks to assist in this difficult hour".

At the heart of his thesis on why we have seen so much sexual abuse by clergy is the idea that the perpetrators (and many in power in the Church who protected them) ultimately rejected God, bought into a completely permissive culture with regard to sex, and allowed a collapse of Catholic moral theology that rejected Natural Law and the idea that there are some acts that are always wrong – in essence, the adoption of moral relativity.

His words have come in for much criticism, from the *New York Times* to the *National Catholic Reporter* to the *Atlantic* which refers to the "strange text" that the

former Pope has "unleashed on the world" calling it "incoherent, inaccurate, and at times truly bizarre". The same critics who are quick to shoot down Church teaching – especially the doctrine of papal infallibility – are now pointing to it to support their claim that Benedict's words should be dismissed, as he is no longer Pope.

### Striking

It is striking that none of his detractors has tackled the central themes raised in his missive. They deride the idea that he cites increased displays of nudity as contributing to the cultural decline, but fail to address the link between the flooding of our culture with pornography and violence against women and children.

They dismiss the idea that the sexual revolution in any way contributed to the crisis within the Church, but fail to recognise that the men who present themselves for the priesthood are as much products of the culture in which they live as anyone else.

They rail against the idea that so-called "progressive" theology has anything to do with the sex abuse crisis, instead sticking to the mantra that the problem is "internal and structural". A more nuanced – and honest – approach would be the admission that it is both. As Benedict XVI points out, a theology that allows the ends to justify the means, one which rejects the idea that there is anything that is an absolute good – or indeed a fundamental evil – is

bound to lead to a situation whereby people will try to justify their behaviour – no matter how dastardly.

The truth is that human beings (including priests, bishops, cardinals and even Popes) will use whatever structures and powers they have to cover up their sin. We hide and try to blame others. This truth about humanity is – quite literally – the oldest story in the Bible. When Adam is confronted by God in the Garden of Eden, what is the first thing he says when asked if he has eaten the fruit of the tree of which he was forbidden to eat? "It was the woman you put with me." Translation: "It was the woman's fault, and really it was yours, God, for putting her with me."

Behind the cover up and the efforts to shift responsibility are the simple facts of an unchecked human passion, a willingness to ignore the rules and a giving-in to the desire to sin.

**“A society without God...is a society that loses its measure”**

And so, there is more than a grain of truth in what the former Pope says. He states that the change in sexual mores in the 1960s was "on a scale unprecedented in history" with the previously normative standards regarding sexuality collapsing entirely. At this stage, that view cannot be seriously questioned by any thinking person. The empirical evidence shows clearly that throughout the world generations of people became far more sexually permissive since the '60s, with most people having multiple sexual partners, a dramatic rise in STIs, a boom in divorce rates and indeed abortion rates, and a corresponding decline in marriage.

Interestingly – for those with a concern about current proposals to overhaul the sex education curriculum in this country – Pope Emeritus Benedict, speaking from his experience of the Church in Germany, links state-prescribed sex education initiatives to the culture which no longer "conceded any norms" in relation to

sex. This is what parents of school-aged children in Ireland are facing today. Witness the Provision of Objective Sex Education Bill before the Dáil and the push by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to prescribe a "fact-based, objective" approach to sexual education (which is anything but), without troublesome moral norms that make people feel guilty about certain behaviours. These are exactly what the former Pope is talking about.

The fact of the matter is that abusive men ignored their conscience which must have told them what they were doing was objectively wrong. They justified themselves and their behaviour by reference to a new theology which claimed that morality changes depending on the time and the society. They lost control of their sexual appetite and indulged it without restraint. And those who covered up the crimes of some men, and the behaviours of others – which although not falling into the category of crimes were nonetheless deeply sinful and scandalous to the faithful – were guilty of the sin of pride, of not wanting to lose face in the eyes of the world. Pride and unrestrained sexual desire are the sins at the heart of this crisis.

That willingness to ignore the rules – or to change the rules to suit oneself – is at the heart of the Pope's criticism of the new attitude adopted by many theologians and others who would describe themselves as progressive. He highlights the mixing of seminarians with lay people and women in a way hitherto unknown to candidates for the priesthood, the institution of homosexual cliques in seminaries as well as a change in the criteria for the selection of bishops after the Second Vatican Council, as all contributing to the breakdown of the priestly life and the scale of scandals that broke as a result.

If there is nothing objectively wrong in acting on one's sexual impulses, then what is wrong with a priest doing the same?

This thinking is rooted in the idea that priests are just the same as everyone else, rejecting the idea that they are "set apart" from society. The idea of a priesthood set apart is often criticised as contributing to a superior attitude, and indeed to the crisis in which we find ourselves. There is something in that. But right reason would suggest that the idea of priests being "set apart" is not that they are not subject to the same human impulses as the rest of us, but rather that a higher standard of behaviour is demanded of them – which makes sexual abuse by the clergy all the more egregious.

**“That willingness to ignore the rules is at the heart of the Pope's criticism”**

This flawed thinking – that there is nothing wrong with obeying one's impulses, and ignoring the fact that there are sexual behaviours that are right and wrong – gave permission to these men to act on their impulses, whether it was breaking their vow of celibacy with women or men on a consensual basis, or abusing – in the most vile way – children and young people or those under their authority.

No change can be brought about with regard to the sexual abuse crisis without first making a proper diagnosis – and indeed that is what the Pope Emeritus is doing in this essay. Not until we honestly look at and address the underlying causes of the disease can we hope to root out this cancer that has infected the Church. Many in the Church have been seduced by the ways of the world, shoving God to the margins – or out of the picture altogether. But Benedict XVI says: "A society without God...is a society that loses its measure." We no longer have a compass that points us in the right direction, towards good and away from evil – and if ever there was proof of this statement, the sex abuse crisis is it.

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**Amen**





# Walking the walk...

Tours can open up our Irish history in new ways, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**



**H**istorical and religious tours can often be reduced to drab, monotonous circuits where bland facts are reeled off one after the other, with the enthusiasm of a teetotaler at an open bar. Putting a twist on this all too common experience, an innovative Kilkenny walk is instead offering visitors the chance to explore Ireland's Medieval Mile cityscape through the lens of magic and mirth.

The Shenanigans Kilkenny Walking Tour is a factual based outing of the city's past, delving into the history of religious monuments and other ancient sites, weaved in between humorous bits of magic and unique anecdotes. Unlike other tours, where guides are "very serious about the history", the walk prides itself in regaling information about this part of Ireland's ancient East while dumbfounding visitors, all with a side dollop of laughter.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about the tour, organiser Nevin Cody said that Ireland has an "awful lot" to offer and Kilkenny is a key example of this, adding that the city is well-renowned for its ancient history. Indeed, there's no doubt that Nevin is the best man to be recounting tales of its past given he is a native of the area, having absorbed

its sights and smells for decades.

"It's designed in a way that anyone can come and enjoy it, even if you know a little bit about the city – it's lovely and entertaining," he says.

## Magician

The tour, which begins at Kilkenny Castle, is run by Nevin and professional-comedy magician Brendan Byrne, who try to convey the stories their telling through the medium of conjuring.

"Far too often magic is done very much in the context of 'I fooled you' or 'I tricked you'. I've never been that type of magician because nobody likes to be fooled and nobody likes to be tricked. However, if something magical happens, there's many magical things that happen on our tour and the tricks we perform help us to tell a story.

**“Any avid Irish historian will be acutely aware of the religious significance of Kilkenny”**

"But some of the other magic helps people just start talking to one another as we go along, and making new friends," Nevin explains.

During the walk, tourists are mystified by mind-



Nevin Cody and Brendan Byrne on the tour.



reading, vanishing bottles, and rope tricks, as well as a section where the guides scramble through the busy streets blindfolded. The magic, however, plays a secondary role in the tour as Nevin is keen to emphasise how important the city's religious and secular history has impacted Ireland today.

"I think it's important, because we can't live anywhere without knowing where we've come from, and while there's many different views nowadays about the Church, the reality is that it's part of our past and part of our history.

"It's part of time where there was a strong community, towns bonded together much stronger than they

do nowadays," Nevin says, noting that today's society which is more "individually-based" can learn from this practice.

Any avid Irish historian will be acutely aware of the religious significance of Kilkenny, given that the city is inundated with ecclesiastical landmarks ranging from St Mary's Cathedral, which was consecrated in 1857 to the Black Abbey, established in 1225 as one of the first houses of the Dominican Order in Ireland. Kilkenny itself gets its title from an early 6th-Century foundation named after St Canice – now St Canice's Cathedral – which was a massive monastic centre from at least the 8th Century.

There are plenty of tombstones that are unique to the Cathedral, and tourists with a keen interest in the structure can look inside to view the See Chair of the Bishop of Ossory dating back to 1120.

Listing out the religious areas of Kilkenny, Nevin says, "The monks settled here in St Francis' Abbey, they brought knowledge, education, and they brought beer." While this line is usually greeted with a chuckle, he points out that beer was actually the bulwark of the city because water was generally dirty and undrinkable. It's often quirky and unknown facts like this that help us understand the past in a new and thought-provoking way, allowing tourists to appreciate the living, breathing stories behind these landmarks.

**“I think it's part of our requirement that we look after the legacy”**

"I think it's part of our requirement that we look after the legacy that was left to us and some of those things have other

uses – but even just from a purely architectural point of view, they're incredible structures," Nevin says.

The tour has been a glowing success so far, Nevin explains, noting that the walk has ranged from two right up to 40 or 50 tourists, all of whom have had a "really positive reaction". It takes place every Thursday and Friday from March to October, and includes corporate, schools and private group bookings. Nevin adds that the tour is malleable, so a specific request to focus on a religious structure or city building can be arranged.

Although the prestidigitation is incredible and amusing, the true value of the tour is found in different people coming together to learn about their shared past in an enjoyable and social format.

"The real magic is a bunch of humans having a bit of fun together, learning about some new places, that's the magic."

**To find out more about the Shenanigans Kilkenny Walking Tour, or to book, see: <https://shenaniganswalks.com/>**



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## What they said...

● Taking a break outside during the conference are Amy Dinsmore (18), Dr Lorna Gold of Trocáire, Niamh Murphy (17), Paulina Bork (17), Eve McPartland (16), teacher Sr Yvonne Hannah from Our Lady's Grammar School in Newry and at the back: Dr John Sweeney Emeritus Professor of Maynooth University. Sr Yvonne, who came with some of her students [pictured], said: "The variety of speakers were excellent, you know things but it's great to be reminded. We also learnt a lot. I've found that young people always are very interested in climate change, it's adults who have to get on board, a lot of the speakers spoke about that."



● Msgr Jim Carroll, Anne Fitzpatrick from Mayobridge parish, Seamus Farrell of the Diocese of Derry's *Laudato Si'* group, Frances McNally, Youth Director in Dromore diocese and Youth Leader Niamh Rocks.



Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Frances McNally said: "I suppose the whole event really fires people up, I'm certainly fired up to go back

to my work and get young people involved in protecting our common home. I'm thinking of a prayer walk, environmental walk, planting trees, it's going to be action based. I think young people are more engaged if there's Faith in action."

● Sandra Garry [right], part of the event's organising team, is part of the Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs (NICCOSA).



# 'Embrace' Pope's word



Chai Brady

**R**ealising that the planet is on the brink of a precipice that can only be stopped by the actions of humans who need an "ecological conversion", is an idea that can't be understated according to several prominent academics.

Over the weekend more than 100 people gathered in the Dromantine Conference Centre in Co. Down for a meeting about the environment. 'Our Parish, Our Common Home' conference, inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, was hosted by the Society of African Missionaries.

The conference began with a scientific overview by Dr John Sweeney, former professor of Maynooth University who highlighted the severity of the "exceptional" warming of the earth, and how the warmest three years on record have been in the last three years.

### Topics

As a climate scientist who has worked on climate change issues for almost 40 years at the university and has over 100 publications on this and



Dr Dermot Lane (above) and Dr Lorna Gold (left) addressing the conference. Right, a general view of the attendance. Photos: Chai Brady

related topics, he said climate change is already affecting countries in Africa and Asia.

Flooding and drought have become more severe than ever before and certain places in the developing world face "cultural extinction" because of the consumerism and excess of the developed world, he said, "disproportionately we have a great deal to answer for".

Dublin priest and author Msgr Dermot Lane said at the conference: "I think that one of the key moments in bringing about the conversion that

is required is to use a new language – a different language – people are saying that the young people are leaving our Church, why is that?"

"Because they don't find the language of *Laudato Si'* in their prayers, in their worship, in the way the Eucharist is celebrated. Young people grow up with an evolutionary outlook, and the evolutionary outlook raises all kinds of searching questions as to where is the presence of the Spirit in all of this?"

"So, I believe very strongly we have to begin to pray the

new cosmology, the new cosmic story, we have to initiate a spirituality that can embrace the earth."

### Active

Nowadays young people are heavily involved in environmental matters, many schoolchildren are extremely informed and active in combatting climate change and its impact on the earth the Coordinator of the *Laudato Si'* Project in Trócaire Dr Lorna Gold told conference goers.

Heavily involved in the school climate strikes that

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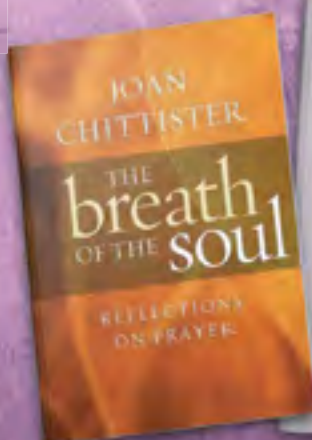
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# on climate change



saw young people taking to the streets to highlight the need to combat human causes of global warming, Dr Gold gave an overview of the encyclical.

"It's very important that we within the Church have read this document, understand this document, because sometimes I feel in the work

that I do it's read more outside the Church than within," she said.

Dr Gold highlighted a message Pope Francis gives in the encyclical saying "our relationship with the earth has become fractured" and "we are living in a time of crisis in terms of our relationship with the natural world".

Several speakers highlighted the destruction of the earth's delicate eco-systems, particularly over the last few decades, and how human interference is irrefutably the main driving force.

Catherine Devitt of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice said that *Laudato Si'* invites everyone to value all

life on the planet.

"We talk about justice and we talk about rights, but isn't it time that we also need to consider the rights and the place of other species? And to consider that our concept of the common good now needs to include and expand and embrace all other species on the planet," she said.

## Development

"*Laudato Si'* does say that, it provides far more in offering a new development in Catholic teaching around the clarity of non-human creatures and their value."

Hosted by the Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs, the Bishops' Council for Justice and Peace and the *Laudato Si'* Working Group of the Council for Catechetics, it encouraged many parish representatives to bring the message of *Laudato Si'* to their community.

The need to act both as an individual as well as a community, whether it be as a family or within a parish, was highlighted as being integral to successfully responding to Pope Francis call in *Laudato Si'* during the conference.

## What they said...

● Anne Connolly, Fr Joe McVeigh and Andrea Connolly outside the SMA's Dromantine Convention Centre in Co. Down. Fr McVeigh said the talks were "very inspiring".



"When I go home this is going to be from now on a big part of what I'm going to say at Mass, I think it should be a priority – this issue – in every parish in every diocese in Ireland. We should be putting pressure on our politicians and our

political leaders to act in a very meaningful way to reduce carbon emissions."

● Fr Robert Fleck of the Diocese of Down and Connor, Communications Officer for the Irish bishops Brenda Drumm and Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor.



● Bernadette Campbell of Trócaire and Aileen Kelly. Ms Kelly said the conference highlighted for her the short time period before there's a "point of no return" regarding the climate. "If everybody here goes home to their parish and starts some small thing, I was thinking of starting a pollination garden...it will have ripple effects."



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Scholastica and her daughter, Francisca.  
Peter Caton, Kenya, 2017.

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# Europe's bulwark?

**G**iven Hungary's history following the Second World War and its key role in the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, it makes sense that it would be opposed to any hardening of the Irish border in the aftermath of Brexit, according to Szabolcs Takács, Hungary's state secretary for EU affairs.

In Ireland this month to meet his Irish counterpart Helen McEntee and members of the Oireachtas Committee of European Affairs, he also addressed the Institute of International Affairs on 'The Abduction of Europa' and has had meetings with Ireland's Hungarian community, which could be as many as 14,000 strong in the Republic with up to 4,000 more in the North.

"Of course, we visited yesterday the non-existent border, which we would like to keep as it is – non-existent – and I had meetings with some representatives, both from the North and from the south, who are in charge of the peace reconciliation. I had quite an interesting meeting with them, on how they see what has been achieved in the last few years, and what is at stake now in case there is a hard Brexit, which we hope will not happen."

Noting that Hungary's history long meant that Hungarians had an interest in how Ireland had been divided, he says the real challenge is how to square the circle of three apparently incompatible objectives.

"It has become now very evident that there is no border between the Republic and Northern Ireland and we believe in the shared view, I think of everybody in Europe, that this should remain to be so, but the political challenge and the intellectual challenge if you like, is how we can keep the integrity of the Single Market and the constitutional integrity of the UK while not risking this," he says, expressing the hope that the UK can have an orderly withdrawal from the EU that would clear a path for a subsequent comprehensive deal that would suit everybody.

## Businesses

"Yesterday when I had the chance to talk to these people we had the chance to try to understand more in depth what exactly it means – how many people are affected, how many businesses are affected, what it means on a daily reality if there are any borders," he continues. "But what I have learned, quite interestingly, is that apart from the technical and financial and business burdens any check would mean

## European countries need to face their challenges head on, **Greg Daly** is told



Szabolcs Takács.

even if only cameras were installed, the psychological impact would be much bigger, because in the last 20 years what they have experienced is that there is no check whatsoever, no cameras, no border crossings, no check-ups."

In the meantime, he adds, the North's religious demographics are changing, and observes that if the peace dividends of the Good Friday Agreement can be maintained, there are real grounds to hope that the Troubles can remain in the past.

The subject of religious demographics naturally turns conversation to the religious demography and identity of the EU as a whole, something Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has positioned himself as championing, and indeed something that EU Commission President

Jean-Claude Juncker recently praised at a meeting of COMECE, the conference of European bishops.

**“When we talk about genders we believe that there are two genders in the world, a male and a female gender”**

Mr Takács says that the question of religious identity is core to today's debates, and adds that his message to the Irish Government has been that while Hungary has consistently shown solidarity towards Ireland on the backstop issue, and that this solidarity has been unconditional, at the same time it had certain expectations of Irish support.

"We would certainly expect the Irish Government to show the same solidarity to issues important for Hungary, including this what you are talking about, because our government is a Christian Democratic conservative centre-right government in the traditional sense, as we call it ourselves," he says, "and I think it would be also a good topic of discussion to identify what we mean by Christian values."

Respect for life and family are vital in this area, he says, along with issues of gender equality and the role of women in society.

"But I believe there are certain red lines that we cannot pass, like when we talk about genders we believe that there are two genders in the world, a male and a female gender. We know that the world is

changing and that as a result of all kinds of human development, technological development, the gender issue has also become one of the hottest topics of political debates and public discourse," he says.

Adding that solidarity is a key Christian value, entailing help to others, he also said it's important to analyse why European society is changing and aging while elsewhere the population is on the rise.

"I don't know; maybe it has something to do with the economic development, welfare society, and better quality of life, where people are becoming more and more individualistic rather than community-focused, family-focused, religion-focused," he says. "But we believe that this continent where we live was based on these Christian values, you can call them

the Judaeo-Christian ones if you like, and we believe that this is what made Europe a successful continent despite difficult centuries in our history."

It's a contentious claim, of course, but hardly an unfamiliar one: historians of Europe have long recognised that Europe is less a physical continent, being really just a relatively small offshoot of the vast Eurasian landmass, than a cultural one. Its commonly recognised boundaries have varied over time, and it wasn't for nothing that Hilaire Belloc famously claimed that what defined Europe, as a civilization, was its Christian identity.

"And now what we see is the European Union which is also a great story of our common European history, that's why we wanted to join and be part of that because we Hungarians, just like the Irish and everybody else contributed largely to what we call Europe, but we would like to preserve this legacy," Mr Takács says. "So for us European identity is extremely important, and while we obviously see the challenges of demography, and the labour market needs and demands, and the suffering of the world, we don't believe that there is only one one-size-fits-all solution."

This, he says, is exactly the opposite view to that held by Mr Juncker, for example, describing him as being only notionally a Christian Democrat while really having far more in common with liberal and green politicians whose aims go far beyond environmental matters into social policies where traditional social institutions like the family do not matter very much, if they are seen as being important at all.

"What is more important that around this heart of political power there is a soft power which is influencing the mindset of people: media, NGOs, think tanks, universities," he says, raising the question of whether so-called soft power is where real power lies nowadays.

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While comments about the importance of respect for life and family may seem utterly in line with Catholic thinking, Mr Takács has clear difficulties with what the Pope has said about migration.

"We also have some debate with Pope Francis, who says that we have to be open to all refugees coming to Europe. But I think we have to sophisticate that – who is a refugee and who is not a refugee? There are different categories of people," he says.

Much criticism of Mr

**“Even if only cameras were installed, the psychological impact would be much bigger, because in the last 20 years what they have experienced is that there is no check whatsoever, no cameras, no border crossings, no check-ups”**





Viktor Orbán.

Orbán has centred around this issue, and in particular around the question of Muslim immigration. Maintaining that religious freedom is important, and that “we cannot expect others to respect our religion if we don’t give religious freedom”, Mr Takács is worried that Europe’s identity is threatened.

“I think we have to be very clear about that: we cannot be obscure, and we cannot smudge this debate, because quite frankly, and it sounds very straightforward and very tough, we believe that we see something in Europe which we are not happy with, and that’s the Islamisation of Europe, in a way,” he says.

### Radicalisation

The problem, he says, is that there are real questions around the radicalisation of young Muslims in Europe.

“We must analyse the reason how people could be radicalised, young people who were born in Europe to a Muslim family but who were educated sometimes in Christian schools, trying to teach them the ethos of Christian values, European values, how come that they were successfully radicalised by some in the name of radical ideology behind the walls of madrassas in Europe, behind the walls of prisons in Europe, and they turned against violently the society that educated them,” he says.

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Venturing that attacks such as that in Paris’s Bataclan concert hall in 2015 are “a result of the unsuccessful integration of these people into Europe”, he says the challenge of achieving this has not been met, and that the demographic numbers are not on Europe’s side as populations rise in countries with a host

of problems.

“This will drive millions – tens of millions, probably – in the years to come to come to Europe. The question is are we ready for that, do we want that? They are coming with a very strong identity because the poorer you are, the stronger your religious identity is – this is our experience as well,” he says.

The flip side of this, he says, is that as societies get wealthier religious identity tends to decline, with an impact of a general sense of community identity. “As societies developed, people turned away from traditional values that gave them shelter, religion, church, and they have become more and more individualist because they had a safe zone, that was economic prosperity: they did not need the traditional values too much, like family, like church, like religion,” he says.

There’s a failure of confidence involved in this, he says, and governments need to work to bolster traditional family life.

“That’s why we as a government of Christian values, what we encourage is a very attractive family policy that gives incentive to people who would like of their individual will to have more children. It’s their decision, we cannot force people to have children, but we should provide an environment for them which makes it much more bearable,” he says. There’s always a sacrifice involved in having children, of course, but the state can make this easier.

“We have to encourage it. Because we believe in and we wouldn’t like to see the Hungarians becoming less and less. Demography is a problem in our country as well but the trends are already changing slowly for the better,” he says. In some ways, he adds,

central and eastern European countries are in a better position to address these challenges than western European ones, having less experience of multicultural society and different intellectual and socio-economic traditions, never having been welfare states on western lines.

**“We have to cooperate with these countries to give them a future – we simply cannot give up on Africa, we have to make Africa a liveable continent”**

Maintaining that it’s better to address the problems of aging populations through encouraging families than through encouraging immigration, he says, “so we need more people in our cultural context, and that’s why we encourage child birth with very attractive incentives – basically if you have three children in Hungary you don’t pay tax or you pay very little tax.” Acknowledging that this is not a short-term solution, he says that immigration in the meantime should entail newcomers accepting that they are coming to Hungary and embracing its values. The challenge, he admits, can be to define what those values are.

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Where then does this leave the issue of refugees?

“If you’re a war refugee that’s a different story because we help you regardless of who you are, and this is what we did, by the way, 25 years ago, when the war in the former Yugoslavia happened, we opened up the doors to anybody,” he says. Now, though, he says there is a real question about who is a genuine refugee, maintaining that the real refugees from the crises in Syria and Iraq, for instance, are in camps in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan.

These may not be ideal places, he says, but they are safe, and so the priority, he claims, should be helping make the camps better places with the aim of helping refugees return home.

“This is another very, very important element of Christian solidarity, Christian values, and that’s why Europeans as a developed part of the world have to help them financially,” he says. “That’s why we – Hungary – supported very much the deal between Turkey and the European Union that the EU finances the government of Turkey with €2bn a year, to help them keep these refu-

gee camps bearable for the people. The vast majority of the Syrians would not like to leave, but they have one ambition to go back to their own country once peace comes – we don’t know when, that’s the tragedy.”

Crucial too, he says, is working to make other countries better places to live so that people are not driven into desperation – and forced migration.

“We have to cooperate with these countries to give them a future – we simply cannot give up on Africa, we have to make Africa a liveable continent,” he says, implicitly harking back to the 1950 Schuman Declaration, the EU’s founding document, which saw the development of Africa as an important objective of a united Europe.

Returning to the subject of the radical Islam, Mr Takács expresses concerns about rising anti-semitism in Europe, causing Jews to flee countries such as France, apparently in response to Islamist threats. Citing his time chairing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2015-16, he says that during that period alone 8,000

French Jews emigrated from France to Israel.

“The Jewish community is as old as the Christian community in many parts of Europe and their existence should not be threatened just because they belong to a religion,” he says, adding, “We have to analyse this. We cannot put our heads in the sand as if it is not happening.”

**“The problem, he says, is that there are real questions around the radicalisation of young Muslims in Europe”**

Talk of anti-semitism naturally invites a question about George Soros, the Hungarian-born US financier who readers of *The Irish Catholic* should be familiar with due to his funding of Amnesty International and the Abortion Rights Campaign as they campaigned for a referendum on repealing Ireland’s constitutional protections for the unborn. He and Mr Orbán’s government have frequently come into conflict, most obviously in connection with how

a university founded by him had been obliged to leave Hungary for a new base in Austria, with this leading to suspicions of anti-semitism.

“Soft power is creating a perception that is far from the reality,” Mr Takács says. “George Soros, is a Hungarian-born financier of Jewish origin and sometimes he can abuse this and say that we are attacking him because he is Jewish, which is the most serious and blatant lie. Openly we say that we would defend Mr Soros on one occasion: if he is attacked because of his origin. Then we will defend him.”

Claiming that media, universities, think tanks, and NGOs can work as a kind of collective ‘soft power’, Mr Takács says this can be used to stifle attempts to put across what he sees as the Hungarian government’s message.

“Is this freedom of speech? But this is a fight that we are very happy to carry, because we believe in Christian values, and we believe that a large part of European society actually want to support us. The European Parliament elections will be a good test for us,” he says.

**“I want to go home. That’s all I’ve ever wanted.”**



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# The council that is to come



Vatican II is only just beginning to bear fruit, **Colm Fitzpatrick** is told

**N**o other event springs faster to mind when conversing about radical changes in the Church than the occasion of the Second Vatican Council; an event which continues to reverberate in the hearts and minds of Christians today.

With well over 50 years having passed since the 1962-65 council concluded, countless historians and sociologists have offered key insights into its successes and pitfalls, as well as how it can continue to be understood and integrated into the lives of modern-day Catholics.

Adding to this body of scholarship, Dr Gary Carville, Director of Communications in Clogher Diocese, is shining a light on how Ireland responded to the council and why it remains an ongoing challenge and opportunity for the current Irish Church. Graduating with a PhD last month from Dublin City University with his thesis titled, *Ireland and Vatican II: Aspects of episcopal engagement with and reception of a Church Council, 1959-1977*, the former Fine Gael councillor has provided a comprehensive analysis of Ireland's reaction to the council, at both an episcopal and lay level.

## Significance

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about the significance of the event, Dr Carville says that the Church was trying to "bring its message anew" and to present the Faith in new ways without characterising the world in wholly negative terms.

It was an attempt to "stop looking on the Church as being perfect and the world as being imperfect...but to bring the deposit of Faith, to present it in new ways to the Church and to move out into



The opening session of Vatican II in 1962.



Dr Gary Carville.

the modern world with all of its joys, hopes and fears, and to bring the Gospel out into it," he explains.

In this sense, the council was a call to renewal, or *aggiornamento*, whereby the Church returned to its sources in order to strengthen and deepen its capacity to engage with modern society. Central to this return was the rediscovery of Scripture in the life of the Church and each other.

"One of the great documents, one of the touchstone documents is *Dei Verbum*, the document on revelation and Scripture. To me, that is absolutely fundamental to understand and appreciate the place of Scripture in the life of the Church because you can't understand liturgy or Church teaching unless you have an appreciation of Scripture, both in terms of divine revelation, but also in terms of history," Dr Carville says.

**“Changes were, of course, noticed in Ireland, most notably in the liturgy where parishioners were able to pray in their own language”**

This return to the sources entailed the removal of many superfluous elements which had developed in the Church over the centuries, both liturgically and theologically.

"Vatican II was about shedding off the bits the Church had been carrying, maybe the forms of monarchy, maybe some elements of liturgy that were maybe not necessary, things that had crept in with practices over the centuries.

"It was a case for decluttering and going back to what was really essential in terms of the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel, to live the Gospel, and to be the body of Christ, the people of God in a world that needs to hear the Gospel. The proclaiming of the Scriptures is a key element of that, but also allowing the Church to engage with the modern world," Dr Carville says.

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The council undoubtedly had a profound impact on the world as Catholics and Christians tuned in on radio and television globally, but it was inevitably received by different countries in varied and unexpected ways.

Changes were, of course, noticed in Ireland, most notably in the liturgy where parishioners were able to

pray in their own language.

The priest was also facing and engaging with the laity, and later people were able to take part in different ministries, like reading and distributing the Eucharist. However, when compared with countries like France, Ireland was very slow, and changes were incremental. Dr Carville also stresses that the reforms were received in a hierarchical manner as Irish people had been so used to a pyramid-like structure of the Church. This monarchical-type institution impeded reception of the council.

**“The Church was trying to ‘bring its message anew’ and to present the Faith in new ways”**

"The reception of Vatican II in Ireland was, on the one hand, aided by a model of Church more accustomed to loyally receiving change by directives from above. On the other hand, it was hampered by a lack of theological and intellectual preparedness among clergy and laity. This affected the capacity of Church in Ireland to fully realise the renewal which the council sought to achieve," Dr Carville continues.

"Ireland's deep-rooted identification with an institutional-based traditional and devotional form of Catholicism, the divided nature of the communities in Northern Ireland, the homogenous nature of Irish society in the Republic of Ireland, and the beginnings of economic and social change within that society, all impacted upon the capacity of the Church in Ireland to receive fully the council from the beginning."

Catholicism was a central feature in the life of Ireland, but unlike other Catholic countries such as France or Belgium which were rife with new currents of theological thought that had been developing since the beginning of the 20th Century, Ireland had failed to muster any widespread, rigorous intellectual engagement with new theological or pastoral trends.

Dr Carville suggests that this dearth directly impacted the capacity of the Church in Ireland, through its leaders, to receive the broader vision set out by the council not only through its documents but through the reception of the reform it inspired.

"The bishops themselves weren't even prepared to deal with it," he says noting that Cashel's Archbishop Thomas Morris later said that a lot of the theological ideas discussed during the council were totally foreign to him.

The degree to how insular the Irish Church had become was evident in the ideas for

discussion the Irish prelates suggested as part of the ante-preparatory phase of the council, which consisted of issuing condemnations on topics such as evolution and existentialism.

"The peripheral and legalistic disposition of the bishops was further underlined by some bishops who simply wanted the council to clarify or modify liturgical rubrics such as faculties or powers to delegate the administration of confirmation, faculties to erect stations of the cross, guidelines for penances for mortal sins, the length of intervals between the administration of extreme unction, the hours of the breviary and related matters of rubrics," Dr Carville explains.

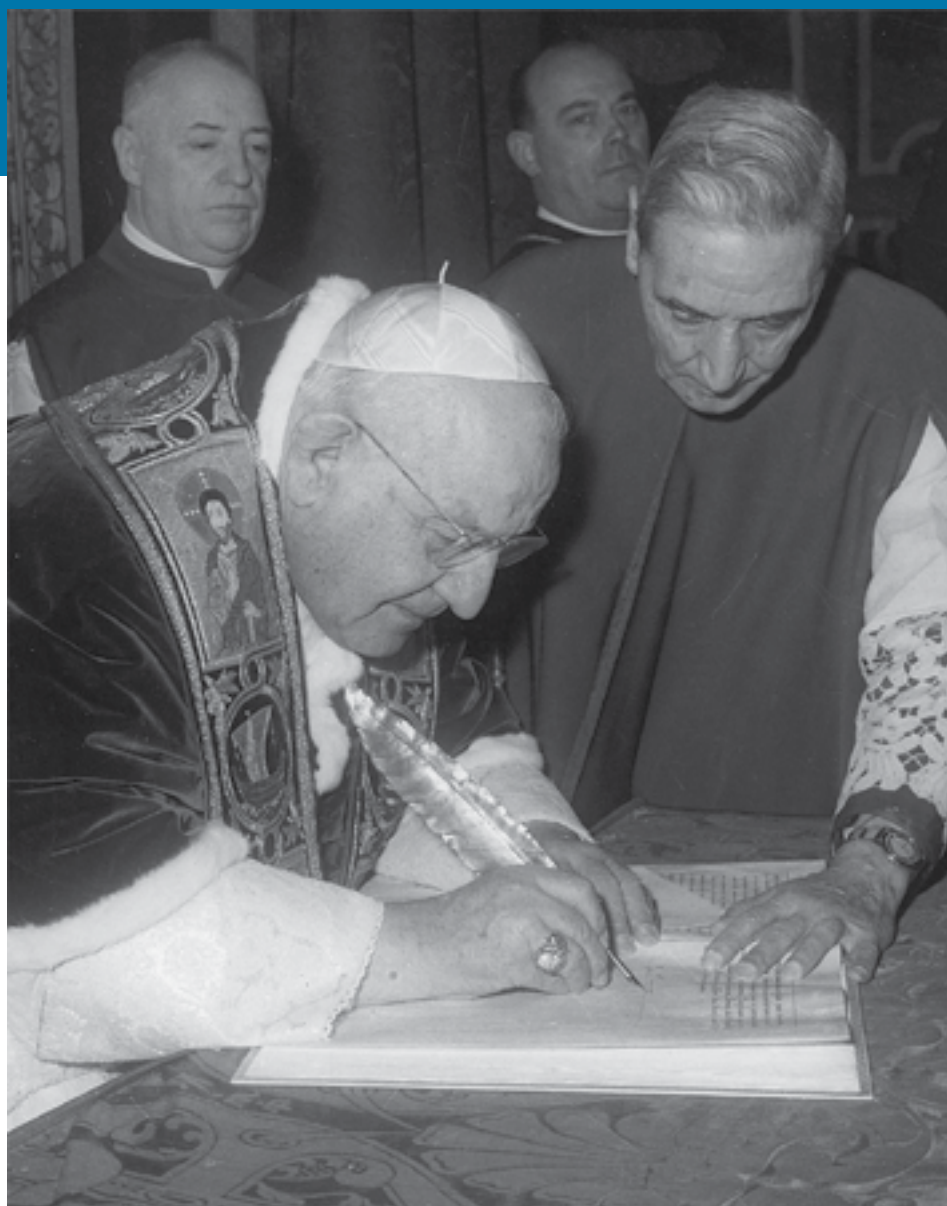
"A number of bishops wanted clarity on regulations governing servile work, particularly on holy days of obligation as well as reform of the rules governing fasting and abstinence."

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As a result of this gap in innovative theological knowledge and language, the Irish Church resolved to simply implementing diktats from Rome without much dialogue.

This approach meant that the laity were unable to interiorise the reforms, impeding individuals to engage with Christ, Scripture and the Sacraments in the way the council would have and is still seeking us to do. Dr Carville is keen to stress this





Pope John XXIII signs document *Humanae salutis* formally convoking the Second Vatican Council on December 25, 1961.

shouldn't be seen as a failing but as another challenge because the reception of the council hasn't ended.

### Synodality

"What I'm saying is that the reception of Vatican II is an ongoing process, it will take time. I think the model of ministry that Pope Francis is showing us today in terms of – I know the buzz word 'synodality' is used – but really what it is about is walking with people and listening to people's conversation. That's very much a product of the council and to me, that's one of the ways the council is being received and will be further received as time goes on," Dr Carville says, noting that the process is beginning to bear fruit in Ireland, given current diocesan discussions about parish pastoral areas and lay-led liturgies on week-days.

He adds that while we can never lose sight of the need for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life, the future of the Church in Ireland will be less clerical, and requires the help of

Catholic communities.

"I think that in many ways Vatican II was the work of the Spirit and I think personally speaking, much of what has happened in the Church in Ireland has been the work of the Spirit. It's about when you're renewing, when your renewing the body, it involves a process of detoxifying, a letting go, and an opening up wounds and so on. I think that's what's been happening in the Church and in that context it's good. It's a cleansing, and a much-needed cleansing, and also leading the Church to be much humbler which is hugely necessary and important but also, it's enabling the baptismal call of people to be realised."

"It's also important to enabling trust to build; trust between people and priests, and priests and people. Trust to be built in terms of capacity to lead, capacity to take charge, and where in the past, it has been the case of people helping priests, it will now be the future of priests helping people."

If historians say it takes a century for an ecumenical

council to be received, we're still in the infancy of Vatican II.

Dr Carville also envisages that the future Church won't be rooted in territories, but rather different types of smaller communities as we move away from a monarchical and legalistic type of institution.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alongside these innovations, he hopes that in the near future, Ireland holds a national synod, although only when we are spiritually, organisationally, and educationally prepared.

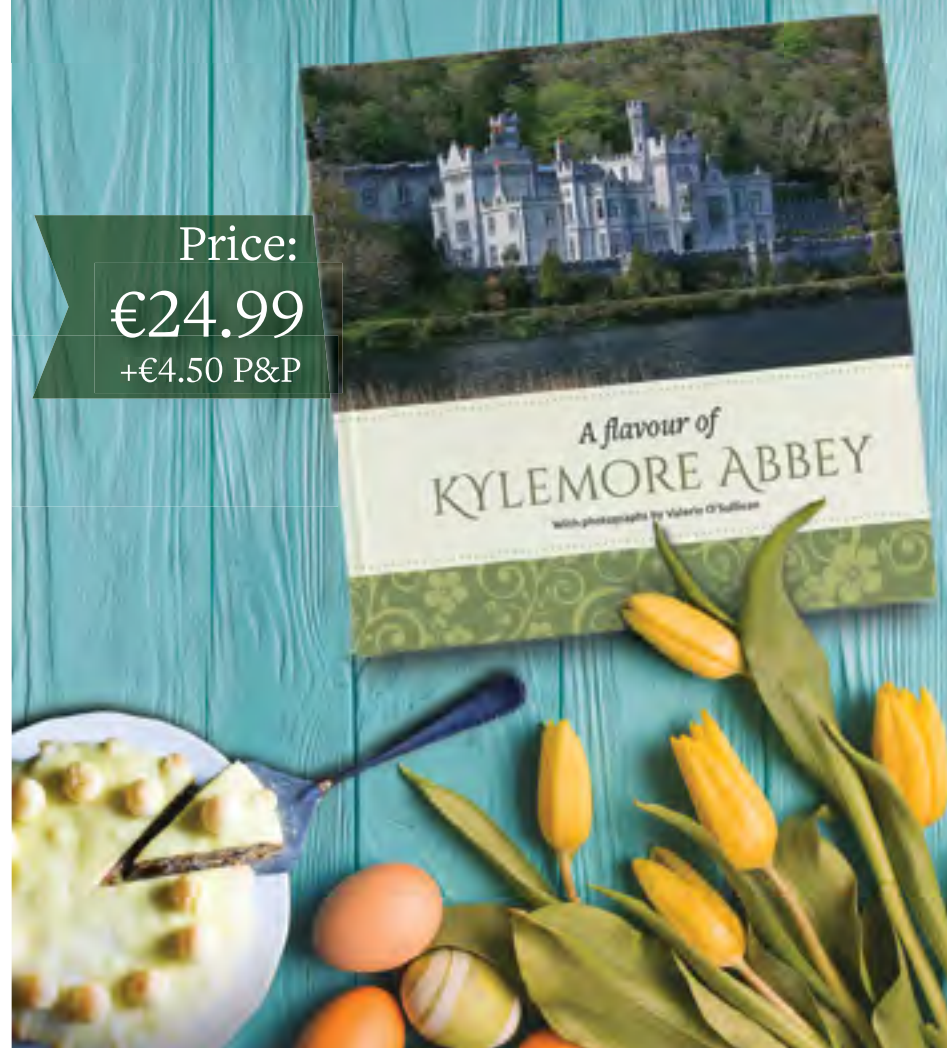
"A national synod, focused on mission, will allow the Church in its fullest reality to engage again in new pastures and allow the whole people of God to be the creative agent and leaven in our communities – from the sources of faith and to the sources of the Church's lived reality today.

"The potential to engage laity, women, young people, priests, deacons, religious, other faith communities and wider society, is massive."

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**“I think that in many ways Vatican II was the work of the Spirit...much of what has happened in the Church has been the work of the Spirit”**



# Out&About

## Confirmations in Clare



**CLARE:** Pupils from the parish of Killimer and Knockerra celebrate their Confirmation presided over by Killaloe's Bishop Fintan Monahan.



**DUBLIN:** Joe Parlon with his wife Mary and Annette O'Rourke, Chairperson of Kingscourt Parish Pastoral team. Joe was the guest speaker at the Lenten Novena on mental health and wellbeing.



**LIMERICK:** Printmaking for second-level art teachers, sponsored by Limerick Diocese and Limerick City and County Council as part of the Visible Reminders arts series. Participants included: Tim Noonan, Moyross Youth Academy; Kate McElligott, Limerick Printmakers; Karen O'Driscoll and Niamh O'Hara, Coláiste Iósaef, Kilmallock.



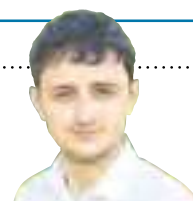
**MONAGHAN:** Bishop Larry Duffy blesses the commencement of the building of a new Autism unit at Scoil Mhuire, Clontibret. The sod was cut by Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Jobs, Business and Innovation. Also in photo are Elizabeth Moorehead, school principal; Cathal McGlone, BOM chair; Fr Paudge McDonnell PP and Fr Lorcan Lynch CC.



**DERRY:** Pupils of St Peter's and St Paul's Primary School, Foreglen, receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, with Fr Arthur O'Reilly and Ms Michaela McHugh.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**CORK:** Pupils of St Aloysius Girls Secondary School come together as part of a prayer service to pray for courage, trust and faith, in anticipation for Easter.



**CORK:** Fr Bernard Cotter, parish priest of Murragh and Templemartin stands beside Cork and Ross Bishop-elect Fintan Gavin in the Cathedral of Ss Mary and Anne. Photo: Tony O'Connell



**DERRY:** Catriona Toner is one of the 80 pupils from St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt, who was presented with the Pope John Paul II and the Muiredach Cross Awards by Archbishop Eamon Martin in St Patrick's Cathedral, in recognition of their volunteering work in parishes, communities and schools.



**DUBLIN:** Sr Kathleen Fitzsimons OP, who works on the psychological rehabilitation team of Spirasi, is warmly received by the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina at Áras an Uachtaráin.



**KERRY:** Diocese of Kerry Sacristans gather in Tralee to train, network and share practice. This year the focus was on 'Creating a welcome for all in our churches and Celebrating Holy Week'.

## IN SHORT

### Exploring Ireland's ancient tracks

Over the coming Easter period large numbers will retrace their ancestral heritage as they take to Ireland's ancient penitential trails to celebrate Pilgrim Paths Week.

This Eastertime Festival celebrating Ireland's pilgrim heritage will see a nationwide series of walks taking place on Ireland's mystical trails. Knowledgeable local guides will lead each walk, allow time for personal contemplation, outline the story of the route and explain how medieval penitents coped with their arduous journeys.

The medieval pilgrimage was

originally a journey combining prayer and sacrifice – with an element of physical challenge. Recently, there has been renewed interest in following the footsteps of medieval pilgrims, and over the last number of years Ireland's penitential trails have echoed to increasing footfall.

Speaking ahead of the festival, Chairman of Pilgrim Paths Ireland, John O'Dwyer said: "National Pilgrim Paths Week was created to raise awareness and use of Ireland's rich inheritance of pilgrim routes. The event is targeted, not only at those who enjoy exploring Ireland's ancient tracks, but also the growing numbers seeking to escape the daily grind of life and take time out to reflect and meditate a little while

enjoying the outdoors.

"Pilgrim Paths Week 2019 has already attracted much local support while also appealing increasingly to overseas pilgrims."

Pilgrim walks are scheduled to take place at each of Ireland's Pilgrim Paths including: Tochar Phadraig, Co Mayo; St Kevin's Way, Co Wicklow; Inishcealtra, Co Clare; Cosán na Naomh and Cnoc na dTobar, Co Kerry; St Finbarr's Pilgrim Path, Co. Cork along with St Declan's Way, and Kilcommon Pilgrim Path, Co. Tipperary.

To find out more about the National Pilgrim Paths Week (April 19-28) and see the full week-long programme of events go to [www.pilgrimpath.ie](http://www.pilgrimpath.ie) or email [info@pilgrimpath.ie](mailto:info@pilgrimpath.ie)

## ARMAGH

Lenten talks to take place in St Malachy's Church each Monday of Lent at 7.30pm.

Divine Mercy Sunday takes place on April 28 in St Patrick's Cathedral. Includes prayer, Confession and benediction, with Mass at 5.30pm.

## CLARE

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

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

## CORK

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

'Women of Faith – A Catholic conference for women', on May 25 from 9.30am-3.30pm at SMA Parish Centre, Wilton.

## DERRY

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

## DOWN

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 28: St Paul's Parish, Falls Road commences at 1.30pm with Exposition and Confessions, followed by Holy Rosary, the Divine Mercy chaplet and 3pm Holy Mass.

## DUBLIN

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

Holy hour of Adoration for Healing at St Laurence O'Toole Church, Seville Place, every Tuesday evening during Lent at 8pm.

Divine Mercy Sunday on April 28 at the Church of St Vincent de Paul, Marino. Holy hour and Confession at 3-4pm and Mass at 4-5pm. The celebrant is Fr Conor McDonough.

24-hour prayer vigil beginning on Good Friday, April 19, at 10am and ending on Holy Saturday at 10am on Cathal Brugha Street. For more information, contact Teresa: 0860514919.

## FERMANAGH

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

## KILDARE

Praying, reading and sharing the following Sunday's Gospel in Resurrexit, Kilmeague, every Wednesday from 8-9.30pm. See [www.resurrexit.ie](http://www.resurrexit.ie) for details, or ring 087-6825407.

May Masses and devotions at the Shrine at Our Lady of Clonfert

Church. Daily Mass (Monday to Saturday) at 8pm with guest preacher and Mass at 12pm each Friday. Sunday Mass at 10am and 7pm each week of May. Full programme available at [Clonfertdiocese.ie](http://Clonfertdiocese.ie).

## KILKENNY

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

## LIMERICK

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

## LOUTH

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

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

## MAYO

Latin Mass in the Old Rite (Tridentine) will be celebrated on Easter Sunday (April 21) in the Parish Church Knock at 5.30pm.

Holy Souls pilgrimage to Knock Shine on April 22. Mass at 12.30pm in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel for Larry Cummins with Rosary, Holy Souls Chaplet and Stations of the Cross.

## MEATH

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

## ROSCOMMON

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

## TIPPERARY

The annual Divine Mercy Novena will commence in Rossmore Church, Co. Tipperary on Good Friday, April 19 at 3pm and it will conclude on Saturday, April 27, with Mass and Divine Mercy chaplet at 6.30pm. Confessions will be heard each day during the Novena.

## WEXFORD

The annual Divine Mercy Ceremony will be held in St Michael's Church, Gorey, on April 28 at 2.30pm with Stations, Chaplet, Mass and Confessions.

## WICKLOW

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

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





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Indian Lenten campaign tackles malnutrition

● A Lenten campaign spearheaded by Caritas India is fighting chronic malnutrition in the country.

The Catholic charity launched its nationwide campaign for this year's Lent, a seven-week period culminating in Easter Sunday on April 21, with the theme 'Nutrition our right – Unite for a healthy India'.

"It is an effort of solidarity during the Lenten season that the Church reaches out to those on the fringes," especially children of the socially poor Dalit, tribal and marginalised people, said Fr Jolly Puthenpura, assistant executive director of Caritas India.

India is home to the largest number of the world's undernourished children – 195 million.

### Papal blood relic inspires Filipinos

● A blood relic of the late Pontiff, St John Paul II, has been attracting young people in the central Philippine archdiocese of Palo.

The relic has been touring the country as part of preparations for the 500th anniversary celebration of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines in 2021.

"It's a heart-warming experience seeing the relic for the first time," said Abbie Montablan, a 21-year-old seminarian in the city of Tacloban.

### Jalandhar bishop faces prison after raping nun

● Police have charged Bishop Franco Mulakkal of Jalandhar with raping a Catholic nun multiple times, nine months after she complained in southern India's Kerala state.

The police team probing the allegations filed charges on April 9 before a magistrate in Kottayam district, where the nun's convent is based.

A 2,000-page charge sheet listed charges of wrongful confinement, rape

of a woman incapable of giving consent, causing grievous bodily harm during rape, unnatural offense and criminal intimidation.

If found guilty, the bishop faces imprisonment of not less than 10 years or up to life in jail.

The charge sheet also lists 83 witnesses, 40 of them Catholic leaders including Cardinal George Alencherry, the major archbishop and head of the Syro-Malabar Church.

### Be a 'channel of love', Pontiff urges radio station on anniversary

● Pope Francis has called on an Asian church-run radio station, which celebrated its 50th anniversary on April 11, to help build "a more just and united society". In his message to Radio Veritas Asia (RVA), the Pontiff expressed hope that the station would pursue its mandate to preach the Gospel and be a "channel of love by being the voice of the poor".

The Pope said he would pray that the media organisation, established in 1969, would continue, "to raise the hearts of listeners to the God of love and truth".

### Bishop to flee to Rome after safety concerns increase

● A Nicaraguan bishop said he will leave the country indefinitely as concerns for his security increase – presumably the product of his criticisms of the Central American nation's president. Auxiliary Bishop Silvio Baez Ortega of Managua said he would travel to Rome – at the request of Pope Francis – after finishing Easter celebrations in Nicaragua, which has convulsed with violence for more than a year.

## Twitter CEO silent over pro-life censorship

Before the crowd at an April 10 hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution, Senator Ted Cruz, displayed a billboard containing a tweet quoting St Teresa of Kolkata: "Abortion is profoundly anti-woman. Three quarters of its victims are women: half the babies and all the mothers."

Alongside the quote was a picture of the saint, smiling.

Then Sen. Cruz, the subcommittee's chairman, asked expert witness Carlos Monje of Twitter's public policy team a simple question: "Is this hate speech?"

The graphic in question was posted to Twitter on March 8 by Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List. The national pro-life organisation had intended it to run as a promoted ad, but Twitter ensured that it never saw the light of day by removing it immediately.

The reason for the ban? The graphic purportedly violated Twitter's "health and pharmaceutical products and services policy".

Details on that policy from Twitter's website are vague, listing entities to which those restrictions apply from country to country while providing only cursory explanations



Senator Ted Cruz displays a board with the image of St Teresa of Kolkata during a Senate hearing.

for why the restrictions themselves are necessary, for example, stating that "unless listed below, the promotion of health and pharmaceutical products and services is prohibited".

### Ambiguous

Such an explanation makes the ban of a St Teresa quote questionable.

Equally ambiguous was Mr Monje's answer to Cruz's question. After a brief silence, he said: "I believe that (tweet) is from the Susan B. Anthony List, and Susan B. Anthony is currently an advertiser in good standing on our platform."

Sen. Cruz interrupted, try-

ing to refocus the conversation: "You're very good at not answering questions. Is this hate speech?"

Mr Monje again demurred: "Every tweet has context behind it...I can tell you that we have actioned accounts on both sides of this debate, including tweets by pro-choice groups who have said that everybody who is pro-life is misogynistic."

This was just one of many tense exchanges during the hearing, which was called by the subcommittee to evaluate what role large technology companies might play in coercing conversations that occur on their platforms, up to and including censorship

of certain viewpoints.

Sen. Cruz, who was concerned with blockage of conservative and pro-life perspectives online, delivered a fiery opening statement, where he decried "the ability for a handful of giant tech companies to decide if a particular speaker is disfavoured...and (if) their words may fade into the ether".

He offered three potential solutions to "big tech" censorship: amending Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which he claimed "provides a special immunity from liability that big tech enjoys that nobody else gets", leveraging antitrust laws against tech companies for monopolising online speech, or charging those companies with fraud for falsely portraying themselves to customers as neutral public forums.

When Sen. Mazie Hirono, who is ranking member on the subcommittee, got her turn, she brushed off Sen Cruz's concerns as mere conspiracy theories.

"There are many areas where the Senate should be conducting oversight of the tech industry...baseless allegations of anti-conservative bias is not one of them," she said.

## Prelates denounce South Korea abortion law reversal

South Korea's Constitutional Court has ruled an abortion ban in the country to be unconstitutional, receiving mixed responses from Korean citizens.

Seven of the nine justices on the court voted to repeal the law on April 11, ordering it to be revised by 2020. Two of the justices dissented.

The law, which was established in 1953, banned abortion except in cases of rape, incest, foetal abnormalities and serious risks to the mother's health.

Under the law, a woman who sought an abortion could face up to a year in

prison or a \$1,750 (€1,550) fine. A doctor who performed an abortion could face up to two years in prison.

The case was taken up by South Korea's Constitutional Court after an obstetrician was persecuted for performing 69 illegal abortions during 2013 and 2015.

The repeal drew criticism from pro-life advocates. A statement signed by Archbishop Kim Hee-joong of Gwangju, president of the bishops' conference, said the court decision denies vulnerable human beings of their basic right to

life. It also stated that the ruling unjustly excludes men from their responsibility in unplanned pregnancies.

The Archbishop of Seoul, Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soojung, has been an outspoken critic of legalising abortion in South Korea's national debates.

"We should instead strengthen institutions that can help women healthily give birth to babies and raise them by recognising a newborn's life as responsibility shared by both women and men, as well as society," he said.

# IRELAND

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Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
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## Outrage over memorial crosses bulldozing

Catholic and Orthodox leaders have condemned the bulldozing of memorial crosses at a site of communist-era mass executions.

Media reports said at least 15 protesters were arrested in early April when police cordoned off an area of the Kuropaty Forest, outside Minsk in Belarus and bulldozers moved in to demolish about 70 15-foot crosses, which were taken away in unmarked trucks. The crosses marked the site where tens of thousands of execution victims were thrown in mass graves, mostly between 1937 and 1941.

"I feel desperate about the removal of these crosses," said Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, chairman of the Belarusian bishops' conference.

"Perhaps some order is needed in this place, and perhaps it was necessary to move the crosses temporarily and then replace them. We also do such things - but not without telling people," he said.

The nation's Catholic bishops' conference demanded "an urgent stop" to the destruction of the crosses in Kuropaty, which they called one of the country's "many Golgothas" and a "holy place of memory and prayer".

Pope Francis kisses the feet of South Sudan President Salva Kiir on April 11, at the conclusion of a two-day retreat at the Vatican for African nation's political leaders. The Pope begged the leaders to give peace a chance. On the right is Vice President Riek Machar.



## New Shroud of Turin photographs revealed online

A new website aims to make available to Catholics and researchers a collection of photographs of the Shroud of Turin by a scientific photographer who was part of a research project that spent more than 100 hours conducting tests on the shroud.

The Shroud of Turin is a linen cloth 4.4m long by 1.1m, which shows the image of a man tortured and crucified. It is held by many Catholics to be the burial cloth that wrapped the body of Jesus after his death on the Cross.

From 1977 to 1981, a team of physicists, chemists, pathologists, and engineers from universities and US government laboratories conducted the Shroud of Turin Research Project, which concluded that "the shroud image is

that of a real human form of a scourged, crucified man. It is not the product of an artist. The blood stains are composed of haemoglobin and also give a positive test for serum albumin.

"The image is an ongoing mystery and until further chemical studies are made, perhaps by this group of scientists, or perhaps by some scientists in the future, the problem remains unsolved."

The project's final report added that "no pigments, paints, dyes or stains" were found on the shroud's fibres, adding that "it is clear that there has been a direct contact of the Shroud with a body, which explains certain features such as scourge marks, as well as the blood. However, while this type of contact might explain some of the features of the

torso, it is totally incapable of explaining the image of the face with the high resolution that has been amply demonstrated by photography".

There are no chemical or physical methods known which can account for the totality of the image, nor can any combination of physical, chemical, biological or medical circumstances explain the image adequately.

Vernon Miller was the official scientific photographer of the Shroud of Turin Research project. His photographs, and magnified micrographs of various aspects of the shroud, are now freely available to view or download at shroud-photos.com.

## Vatican roundup

### Pope kneels and begs before Sudanese leaders

At the end of a highly unusual spiritual retreat for the political leaders of warring factions, Pope Francis knelt at the feet of the leaders of South Sudan, begging them to give peace a chance and to be worthy "fathers of the nation". "As a brother, I ask you to remain in peace. I ask you from my heart, let's go forward. There will be many problems, but do not be afraid," he told the leaders, speaking without a text at the end of the meeting.

"You have begun a process, may it end well," he said. "There will be disagreements among you, but may they take place 'in the office' while, in front of your people, you hold hands; in this way, you will be transformed from simple citizens to fathers of the nation."

"The purpose of this retreat is for us to stand together before God and to discern his will," he said in his formal remarks on April 11, closing the two-day retreat in the Domus Sanctae Marthae, the Vatican guesthouse where he lives.

### Human trafficking creates 'a wound in humanity', Pontiff warns

Human trafficking is a "crime against humanity", because it denies the human dignity of the victim, seeing him or her only as a piece of merchandise to be used to enrich or give pleasure to another, Pope Francis has said.

Human trafficking, "in its multiple forms, is a wound in the humanity of those who endure it and those who commit it", the Pope said on April 11, addressing the closing session of a Vatican conference.

The Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development organised the conference from April 8-11. The office brought together more than 200 bishops, priests, men and women religious, project coordinators, pastoral workers, representatives of Catholic organisations and foundations and trafficking experts from around the world to brainstorm and coordinate efforts to stop trafficking.

### Journalist 'surprised' by bishops' support after defamation

After a court ruled in favour of an archbishop's defamation lawsuit against him, Peruvian journalist Pedro Salinas said he was "pleasantly surprised" by a message of support from the country's bishops.

Peruvian Archbishop Jose Eguren Anselmi of Piura won the case against Mr Salinas on April 8, but bishops in the country distanced themselves from the lawsuit and said the Church needs the help of journalists and survivors of clergy sex abuse to overcome the current crisis.

Archbishop Eguren, a professed member of the Catholic movement Sodalitium since 1981, filed the lawsuit after Mr Salinas wrote a 2018 article accusing the prelate of having known about the abuse. Losing the suit filed by the archbishop, he was given a one-year suspended sentence, fined \$22,250 (€19,675) and ordered to do 120 days of community service. Mr Salinas has already announced an appeal.

### SPEAKERS INCLUDE:



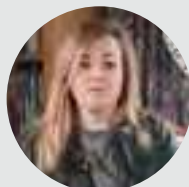
Maria Steen  
(Iona Institute)



Niamh Uí Bhriain  
(Life Institute)



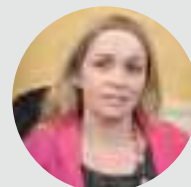
MC, Wendy Grace  
(Broadcast Journalist)



Emma O'Connell  
(Gianna Care)



Senator Ronan Mullen  
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# Letter from Rome



Inés San Martín

Acting as the interim replacement for a cardinal subpoenaed by civil prosecutors for alleged sex abuse cover-ups, and facing questions about his own record in responding to abuse charges, the new man in Santiago, Chile, says he's got only one "pastoral proposal", and it's expressed in his motto as a bishop: "To serve and to love."

"What worries us is not the money [that the archdiocese will have to pay to survivors of clerical abuse], but how can we help those victims heal, and above all, we want to guarantee that they, and everyone else, helps us build a different future where these things don't happen again," said Bishop Celestino Aós, named on March 23 as the apostolic administrator of Santiago following the resignation of Cardinal Riccardo Ezzati.

"How could we let these things happen...things I didn't even dream could happen, and that do," Bishop Aós told reporters. "What can we do to guarantee that they don't happen again?"

Bishop Aós's nomination amounts to the latest twist in a long-running attempted clean-up of Church leadership in Chile, which Francis set in motion in May, when he summoned all the bishops to Rome.

## Resignations

In Rome, all the Chilean bishops handed in non-binding offers to step down to the Pope. Among other things, the fact that they had no canonical status means that the Pope wasn't bound by the norm of having only three months to accept the resignations.

Bishop Aós came to Rome last week for a series of meetings with various Vatican dicasteries, from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which among other things deals with cases of clerical sexual abuse of minors, to the Congregation for Bishops, where he's asked for auxiliary bishops to assist him in running Chile's largest diocese.

Earlier this month, he met Francis and then 74-year-old Capuchin Franciscan went to Assisi to say Mass in Rome with Chilean priests currently serving in the Eternal City.

Of his conversation with Francis, Bishop Aós said it was "long", lasting over an hour, when such meetings tend to run half that time.

"It was cordial, the Holy Father is always very welcoming, and it was just he and I," Bishop Aós said. "The issues we spoke about, as you

## Ending abuse means 'changing hearts, not just decrees'



Chilean Bishop Celestino Aós Braco of Copiapo, the new apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Santiago, speaks to journalists outside the Vatican. Photo: CNS

can imagine, are those concerning a Church as important as that of Santiago, which is very complex."

"St Paul compared the Church to a body with its members," he continued. "And with the Holy Father we spoke not only about our brothers who have, in some way, been wounded by abuse, but also about the wealth of the Church of Santiago, that has the newly wed, the children, the youth, the elderly."

**"We don't live in a bubble, we don't have privileges to be treated as first class citizens nor should we be treated as third class citizens"**

Francis, Bishop Aós said, insisted on the fact that he's the shepherd of the entire Church of Santiago.

Regarding his willingness to cooperate with civil authorities, currently investigating his two predecessors and several other bishops on charges of either cover-up or of abuse, Bishop Aós said that the Church in Chile will do everything possible.

"We don't live in a bubble, we don't have privileges to be treated as first-class citizens nor

should we be treated as third-class citizens: We're subject to civil law," he said.

"And if there is a person of the Church, be that it's a priest, a bishop or a layperson, who commits a crime, he must submit to the courts and must accept the consequences of his actions," he said. "This is the governing principle. If as an institution, in some cases the Church failed to do its job well and the courts determine that we must compensate those affected, we will do it."

Days after being appointed, in fact, the Chilean courts ruled that the Church of Santiago will have to pay \$450,000 (€397,000) to three victims of former priest Fernando Karadima, after the courts found the Catholic Church had failed to act accordingly when it first received the allegations.

Francis, Bishop Aós said, "is very close" to the people and Church of Chile, and he's "striving to give the faithful the best pastoral government possible".

\* \* \* \* \*

According to the bishop, the Pontiff realises that he's the shepherd of the global Church, and that as such, understands the Church in Chile is living moments "of great difficulty

and pain, and he wants to be close to us".

Francis also reportedly asked Bishop Aós to tell the Chilean people that it's time to "look ahead, with faith, with hope", acknowledging the past, but also with the certainty that behind the actions of the men of the Church there's also the presence of God, "whom we're about to celebrate: he died on the cross, rose again and he's with us".

**"If as an institution, in some cases the Church failed to do its job well and the courts determine that we must compensate those affected, we will do it"**

On Monday, Bishop Aós met with American Cardinal Sean O'Malley, who's currently in Rome to participate in the meeting of the council of cardinals who advise the Pope on the reform of the Church's government. Last week, the archbishop of Boston also participated in the general assembly of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, which he heads.

Though the situation in Chile and the US is different, Bishop Aós said it's "comforting" to know that O'Malley is "praying for us".

Asked about allegations that he didn't act properly when he was Promotor of Justice in the diocese of Valparaíso, where several ex-seminarians accused priests and even then-Bishop Gonzalo Duarte of abuse and cover-up, Bishop Aós said he has a "clear conscience" about having done the work he'd been asked to do.

He said that as a Promotor of Justice, it wasn't his role to give a sentence, which pertains to a judge.

"I don't know how the Pope sees me," he said during a candid moment of a press conference held in Rome's famous Via della Conciliazione leading to St Peter's Square. "I think he sees me as a poor Capuchin with more than a few years."

"The Pope knows that it's not enough to replace one or two people," he said. "The whole of society and of the Church needs to change its heart. Signing decrees is not enough. If it was, I'd be signing them already. We need to change hearts."

📍 Inés San Martín is Rome Bureau Chief of Cruxnow.com





Archbishop Wilton Gregory greets a Little Sister of the Poor at the Jeanne Jugan Residence that the order operates for the elderly poor in Washington. He visited the home on April 5, the day after Pope Francis named him as the new archbishop of Washington. Photo: CNS

# Many focused on what Washington's new archbishop will say about race

Whether it was deliberate or by accident, the Archdiocese of Washington announced on the 51st anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. the selection of its new leader, set to become its first black archbishop.

Various news stories noted the date and a reporter asked Archbishop Wilton Gregory – whose new appointment by Pope Francis was announced during an April 4 news conference – about the civil rights icon, a question that almost certainly would not have been asked of a white counterpart. “It was a turning point in my life to have seen this extraordinary American, this preacher of the Gospel, this great humanitarian cut down in his youth and what that loss meant to our nation and indeed what it meant to the world,” Archbishop Gregory answered during the news conference in Hyattsville, Maryland, adding that he was 20 when Rev. King, 39, was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

“It was a turning point that allowed me to see a modern-day martyr for the cause of justice, peace, unity and to see the impact that both his life and death have had on people.”

Many eyes, ears and questions, as well as expectations, directed at



Rhina Guidos

the new archbishop of Washington have been and will be focused on what he says about race and racism when he officially takes up his new post at his May 21 installation.

“This is a very historic and vibrant black Catholic community in DC, and I do think it’s quite significant that we’re finally going to have our first African American archbishop,” particularly during a time of rising racism and anti-immigrant sentiment in the country, said John Gehring, Catholic programme director for the Washington-based Faith in Public Life.

The incoming Washington archbishop is not new to those issues, said Sr Patricia Chappell, executive director of the Washington-based Pax Christi USA, who has worked with Archbishop Gregory on various Church initiatives dealing with race and racism.

He has been a member of the National Black Catholic Clergy

Caucus and most recently, Sr Chapell said, he was involved with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops’ statement ‘Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love – A Pastoral Letter Against Racism’, approved by the bishops when they gathered as a body in Baltimore in November.

Archbishop Gregory mentioned the document during an April 9 news conference in Atlanta, one of the last with local media as he gets ready to wrap up 14 years as archbishop there.

**“The Latino presence for the Church in the US is nothing less than the gift of God”**

The bishops’ statement, he said, “for the first time specifically identified racism as a difficulty that is certainly rooted in the black American experience but is now also an expression that our Latino friends have experienced, continue to experience, as well as well as other immigrant minority people, the Islamic community”.

In places such as Atlanta, he said, while addressing the relationship between Catholics and the Jewish community there, being part of minority communities helped build a bridge between the two.

“Certainly, we faced bigotry together, whether addressed to Catholics or Jews, or African Americans, so that bond links us,” he said during the Atlanta news conference, where he also was peppered with questions about race.

“We need to expand our horizons, not to neglect the fact that racism has a unique voice, unique presence within the African American community, but racism has also tainted our relationship with other groups who have suffered at the hands of those who hate rather than those who love and welcome,” he continued.

## Icon

Living in Atlanta, the proud hometown of the civil rights icon, helped him better understand issues of race, he said.

“I consider myself a blessed man to have lived in Dr King’s city for 14 years and witness the pervasive pride this city has for that man,” he said.

Though his experience in dealing with other important issues, mainly the clergy sex abuse crisis, should not be overlooked, said Sr Chapell, his appointment as the Washington Archdiocese’s first black archbishop marks a “historic” and “grace-filled” moment “during chaos in our country, particularly the polarisation that’s

taking place”, and some of the reactions faced by “people who are different”.

He is a person who can help some members of the Church embrace diversity, said Sr Chappell, a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

At organisations such as Pax Christi, which fights against racism, “we stand ready to work with him and support him”, Sr Chappell said, and past developments show that he’s not afraid to talk about the issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

Following the Charlottesville, Virginia, white supremacist rally that ended up with the death of a counter-protester and riots in August 2017, it was the then-Atlanta archbishop who urged his brother bishops to speak up against what had just taken place.

“For bishops who govern local churches that don’t have a very diverse community, they too have to speak,” Archbishop Gregory said last year, a day after the riots ended. “The people in their pews, whether they have African Americans or Hispanics or Asians, or even Muslim neighbours, they have to know that silence in these matters is construed as approval.”

**“We need to expand our horizons, not to neglect the fact that racism has a unique voice”**

During the Atlanta news conference, Archbishop Gregory tried to set the tone that he’s an archbishop for the diverse archdiocese that he will soon be taking over, which also will include a large and growing population of Latinos. In the past, he has often highlighted that population, the second-largest ethnic group in the Catholic Church in the US and one whose plight he also seems to be focused on.

“The Latino presence for the Church in the US is nothing less than the gift of God,” he said in Atlanta, praising Latinos’ “vitality of hope, of your wonderful family life, your deep religiosity”.

“You’re a blessing and I think one of the things that happened in the Encuentro, which took place a few months ago, was that the Latino community had a chance to broadcast its dreams, its hopes, its vision, its desire to work with their fellow Catholics to build up the life of faith” in the US, he said.

When asked in Atlanta what his appointment as the first black archbishop of Washington should signal to those who see limitations because of the colour of their skin, he answered: “I hope that they take, whether they be Hispanic, Asian or African American, whatever their origin, I hope that my appointment to Washington, as I hope my appointment to Atlanta, will send them the message that they can dream big,” he said.

**① Rhina Guidos writes for Catholic News Service.**



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Easter came early for your readers

**Dear Editor,** It almost felt as if Easter has come a week early with this week's copy of your paper (IC 11/4/2019).

Fr Martin Browne's article on 'Getting the most from the Easter Triduum' spelled out perfectly just what we've been building up to these last few Lenten weeks and reminding us that we can best appreciate Easter as the heart of our Faith when we grasp that the *Triduum* enables us to see how Crucifixion and Resurrection are bound together.

It was particularly powerful to read Fr Browne explain how none of the days of the *Triduum* make sense without the others, with our Easter

experience being deepest when we take part in the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the Celebration of the Passion on Good Friday, and then Mass – ideally the Easter Vigil – on Easter Sunday. Along the way there were all manner of valuable little details, the kind of things that – aside from being well worth reflecting on – would be great in a table quiz: which Mass does not feature a final blessing or dismissal, when does the Church not celebrate Mass?

Elsewhere, while we constantly hear that of 'green shoots' of life in our Church, in true Easter style this week's paper opted not to feature claims of this, instead *showing* those shoots

starting to grow.

'Limerick laughter in a Dominican youth club' was a real sign of hope, especially given how this youthful project is taking place at a church that only a couple of years ago was locking its doors because of our Church's vocational decline over recent decades. 'Brewing fraternity', meanwhile, was a fascinating study of how Cork's religious orders and young Catholics have come together to lay groundwork for reaching out to a generation that has never really known our Christian message. Well done!

Yours etc.,  
**Cora O'Brien,**  
Dundalk, Co. Louth.

### An odd omission from Dr Zagano's piece

**Dear Editor,** Dr Phyllis Zagano's article on deaconesses (IC 4/4/2019) is remarkable for its failure even to mention one of the works which examine this subject most thoroughly – *Deaconesses: An Historical Study* (published in an English translation in 1986 by Ignatius Press) by the late Aime Georges Martimort, a Toulouse priest and patristics scholar who was a consultant at the Second Vatican Council.

Martimort made some very important points in the conclusion of his book, points which were made only after he had conducted an exhaustive review of the relevant evidence. Among the most salient of those points are:

First, that only one document, the *Didascalia*, "presented the institution of deaconesses to us as a ministry in the true sense of the word"; second, that the institution "lasted only

as long as adult baptisms were the norm", that it was "geographically limited" and "rapidly became obsolete"; third "during all the time when the institution of deaconesses was a living institution, both the discipline and the liturgy of the churches insisted upon a very clear distinction between deacons and deaconesses"; and finally that any restoration of the institution "could only be fraught with ambiguity".

It is also clear that much of the evidence presented by Martimort is at variance with some of the assertions made by Dr Zagano – in a letter, alas, there is not enough space to detail them. But it is odd, given the differences between Dr Zagano's case and that presented by the late French scholar, that she does not refer to his work.

Yours etc.,  
**C.D.C. Armstrong,**  
Belfast, Co. Antrim.

### Jesus came at just the right time!

**Dear Editor,** I enjoyed reading Colm Fitzpatrick's article in his Questions of Faith column (IC 21/3/2019), entitled 'Why did Jesus come when he did?' He asks whether this might be an inconsequential question – not at all. There's great scope for exploring God's plan for humankind!

The time was ripe for God to send his son – the Roman Empire was flourishing and means of communication were highly developed, thus making it a lot easier for Jesus' disciples to carry out his command to spread the Gospel than it would have been

in earlier times. This was the hypothesis put forward during a Scripture study course I attended a few years back. It sounded a very legitimate reason to me.

The Roman historian and senator, Tacitus, refers to the execution of Jesus by Pontius Pilate. Scholars accept his testimony as authentic and of historical value as an independent Roman source. Wikipedia has a very informative entry 'Tacitus on Christ' which is well worth reading.

Yours etc.,  
**Betty Nolan,**  
Foxrock, Dublin 18.



### Historical background of *Humanae Vitae* is crucial

**Dear Editor,** I feel bound to address contextual matters of Pope Paul VI and *Humanae Vitae* which I believe to have been unfortunately misused as the touchstone of orthodoxy, especially in the appointment of bishops to our Church.

A much richer and valid understanding of *Humanae Vitae* would come from an understanding of the basic sexual ethic that all relationships should be open to the life of God. This is fundamentally a pastoral question and not to be mis-used as a megaphone doctrinal statement. Judge not and you'll not be judged. Pope Benedict himself has stated that even when a prostitute uses a condom, this could be a first step.

Pope Paul VI himself could just not have foreseen the AIDS crisis and

tragedy. Pope Francis has famously used the metaphor of our Church as that of a Field Hospital. Other valid Church teachings come into play, e.g. the lesser of two evils. Pope Paul admirably left this classic pastoral question to the informed consciences of the couple. Unfortunately scratch many prototype liberals and you will be unlikely to find the same *agape* love, respect and tolerance which implicitly come from the Gospels.

Basically *Humanae Vitae*'s prophetic voice must be seen in a neo-Malthusian North-South perspective. Saint Paul spoke and taught of the mystery and holiness of marriage. Respect, holiness and mystery go hand in hand. Many of our bedrock credos are caught not taught. Our Lord himself said the

virtuous man falls seven times daily.

Fundamentally *Humanae Vitae* should be seen as a positive affirmation of God's grace and love to all humankind and for all creation. Everybody is invited to serve and contribute to the Kingdom. Only God can plumb the vast mysteries and depths of the human heart and what it means to be human yesterday, today, tomorrow and in eternity please God.

Finally, Vatican II was the first time our Church attempted to approach the gift of marriage equally in terms of relationships and not procreation. This is the historical background of *Humanae Vitae* and should not be ignored.

Yours etc.,  
**Philip John Griffin,**  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

## facebook community

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

### Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reveals reflections on abuse crisis

Every time Pope Benedict speaks it's like a dog whistle to the commentariat. No measured consideration is ever given to any aspect of what he says. "Error! Heresy! Blasphemy!" cry the modern Inquisitors. – **Charles Glenn**

With all due respect to Pope Emeritus Benedict, what do we say to the young girls and boys abused physically and emotionally before the 1960s, by nuns and priests? While it is not our place to judge I truly believe those children now adults would feel totally different. So let our Church be open and truthful and not hide the damage done by priests and nuns in the past. Yes, I am upset that my children and grandchildren do not believe in the Church but can see the reason why. The plain truth is the Catholic Church has been destroyed from within. May it be guided on its future journey. – **Myra Grennan**

### Bishops say no-fault divorce in UK undermines marriage from outset

No fault divorce has done more than anything to undermine society and throw women and children into poverty. It's very similar to Sharia law where women and children are easily discarded. It's the most destructive thing, especially for children. Pierre Trudeau ushered it in along with abortion on demand and that's his awful legacy here in Canada – **Elizabeth Rose**

### John Moriarty: A philosopher's quest in the wildness of life

I had the privilege to chat with him once; a gentle unassuming man. – **Bob Noonan**

### Vatican imposes 10-year suspension on Irish priest for abuse

He should be permanently banned – **Paddy McCafferty**

I don't understand the 10 years part. Surely he will be removed permanently? It must be a mistake. – **Aquinas Duffy**

### US governor signs foetal heartbeat law

Perhaps the US will ultimately evolve from a death culture to a life culture and then it will be a safer country to live in. – **Lea Black**

It's good to see that some people are standing up to do what is right. – **Joseph Madden**

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

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



▲ **NICARAGUA:** Nicaraguan Auxiliary Bishop Silvio Baez Ortega of Managua embraces Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes after a news conference in Managua last week. Bishop Baez has been among the most vocal critics of President Daniel Ortega and has been harassed for his outspokenness, especially on social media.

◀ **US:** A sculpture titled 'Jesus at Table' is pictured during a spring snowstorm outside St Raphael the Archangel Church in Oshkosh, Wisconsin on April 10. A major spring winter storm system brought blizzard conditions to parts of the Midwest.



**JERUSALEM:** Mousa Kamar, second from right, looks at old family photos from Good Friday processions with his sons, Ramez (left) and Youssef, and his mother, Graciella Matulleh Kamar, in the Old City of Jerusalem. Four generations of the Kamar family have helped carry the large wooden cross in the Franciscan Good Friday procession on Jerusalem's Via Dolorosa.



**RWANDA:** A woman lights a candle during a vigil marking the 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide at Amahoro stadium in Kigali earlier this month. Photos: CNS



**ROME:** A man takes a video as people climb the restored Holy Stairs after their unveiling at the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs in Rome on April 11. The restoration of the stairs, believed to have been climbed by Jesus when he appeared before Pilate, was the final phase of a 20-year effort to restore the 16th-Century sanctuary.



**US:** Dominican Sr Mary Jo Sobieck, a theology teacher at Marian Catholic High School in Chicago, kicked off the baseball season by debuting her very own 2019 Topps Allen & Ginter Baseball Trading Card last week. Known as the 'Curveball Queen', Sr Mary Jo signed 260 baseball cards that will be inserted into random Topps trading card packs.





# And all manner of being shall be well...

**W**e are all, I suspect, familiar with the famous expression

from Julian of Norwich, now an axiom in our language. She once famously wrote: "In the end all shall be well, and all manner of being shall be well." To which Oscar Wilde is reported to have added: "And if it isn't well, then it's still not the end."

Few words better express what we celebrate in the Resurrection of Jesus. Belief in the Resurrection, belief that God raised Jesus from the dead, constitutes the very ground of our Christian faith. Everything else we believe in as Christians is grounded on that truth and, as St Paul says, if that isn't true, if Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, we are the most deluded of all people.

But if God did raise Jesus, and we believe that he did, then not only can the rest of Jesus' message be trusted, we can then live with the ultimate consolation that the end of our story has already been written and it is a happy, ecstatic ending. We will in the end, live happily ever after. Life is indeed a fairy tale.

## Guarantee

How does the Resurrection of Jesus guarantee that? Here's how Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, that wonderful scientist and mystic from the previous generation, answered that.

Once, having just made a presentation within which he presented a vision of how the cosmos and all of life will come together in one final harmony inside the



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

Cosmic Christ at the end of time, he was challenged by a sceptic to this effect: "That's a lot of wishful thinking and optimism. But suppose we blow up the world with a nuclear bomb, what happens to your wishful thinking then?"

Teilhard's answer wonderfully distinguishes genuine Christian hope both from wishful thinking and natural optimism, even as it affirms what the Resurrection of Jesus guarantees. He responded in words to this effect: "If we blow up the world with a nuclear bomb, well that would be a two-million-year setback. But what I'm proposing will happen, not because I wish it so or have empirical evidence to warrant it. It will happen because Christ promised it, and in the Resurrection, God showed that God has the power to deliver on that promise."

**“Suppose we blow up the world with a nuclear bomb, what happens to your wishful thinking then?”**

What we believe in as Christians is not based on wishful thinking or natural optimism, it's based on the word and promises of Jesus and the trustworthiness of that word and those promises are guaranteed by

the Resurrection of Jesus. When we believe this we can live our lives without undue anxiety about anything, confident that the end of our story is already written and that it's a happy ending.

If we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, if we believe in the Resurrection, then, in essence, we believe that the world is already saved. We don't have to save the world; we only have to live in face of the fact that we believe it has already been saved.

And if we live in face of that belief we can risk everything, risk our very lives, knowing that the ending of our story has already been written and that it's a happy one, no matter how dire things might look at present.

We see a wonderful example of this kind of belief in Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of the key figures in opposing and eventually bringing down apartheid in South Africa.

At the heart of the struggle to bring down apartheid, facing every kind of threat, he remained steadfast and even joyful in the face of threats and overwhelming odds. What anchored him in his steadiness and joy? Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus.

Occasionally on a Sunday morning when he would be preaching, armed soldiers would come into the church and line up along the aisles

with their weapons in hand, hoping to intimidate him. Tutu, for his part, would smile at them and say: "I am glad you've come to join the winning side! We've already won!"

In saying this, he wasn't talking about the battle over apartheid which, at that point, was still far from won. He was talking about the Resurrection of Jesus, the definitive triumph of goodness over evil, which assures that, in the end, goodness will eventually triumph over evil, love over division, justice over injustice and life over death.

**“If we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, if we believe in the Resurrection, then, in essence, we believe that the world is already saved”**

Knowing that, we can live life in confidence and hope. It will end well, not because we wish it so or because things are looking that way for us. It will end well because Jesus promised it would and in the Resurrection God backs up that promise.

Hence there's nothing to fear, nothing – not defeat, not threat, not loss, not sickness, not even death. The Resurrection of Jesus assures us that in the end all shall be well, and all shall be well, and every manner of being shall be well; and if it isn't well...well, then it's still not the end!

## QUESTIONS of faith

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

## Is Jesus based on pagan gods?

There's a common belief today among sceptics of Catholicism, and Christianity in general, that Jesus was just another pagan god, and so no different from the pagan deities that were believed in before him.

This has become a popular internet conspiracy, and even some, though not many, scholars have endorsed this theory. Movies like *Zeitgeist* have tried to bolster this claim by comparing the Jesus story to the lives of other gods like Horus or Osiris.

The argument goes that these other deities, like Jesus, were also born of a virgin, performed miracles, referred to themselves as the Son of God, were persecuted, died, and rose from the dead.

Given the glaring similarities between these ancient stories and Christianity, it seems like the claim that Jesus is just another pagan god is a no-brainer. However, when these similarities are probed into more deeply, it soon becomes apparent that the alleged parallels are contrived, forced, or plain false.

### Analogy

For example, the life of the god Osiris is most commonly cited as reflecting the story of Jesus, but in Egyptian mythology, Osiris never really rose from the dead but reigned as king in the underworld.

To compare the two is a strained analogy, and clutching at straws at best. Likewise, the deity Horus didn't rise three days after being buried and was never referred to as the Messiah, the anointed one or the Son of God, as is often claimed. These are just a few of the many forced comparisons made between Jesus and the countless other believed deities that preceded him.

Indeed, the well-known scholar and agnostic Bart

D. Ehrman argues in his book *Did Jesus Exist* that attempts to draw parallels between these ancient myths is amateurish and outlandish, stressing that the Jesus described in the Gospels is based on an historical man called Jesus who people came to believe was the Son of God.

Arguments which identify him as a pagan rehash aren't convincing, Ehrman argues, because early Christians were influenced by Jewish ideas rather than Greek or Roman ones.

Most scholars today are convinced that understanding the Gospels requires placing Jesus in the Jewish milieu of his day, an environment where there was no trace of cults committed to dying-and-rising gods. Without this context, the Gospels don't make much sense.

These are pretty forceful objections to the suggestion that Jesus was just another pagan god, but there are plenty more. Firstly, the hypothesis requires one to believe that Jesus was a made-up figure, or at least had these details attributed to him. However, this undermines the historical reliability of the Gospel accounts, which is a difficult position to stand over given the sheer amount of evidence which suggests that such accounts are true.

Secondly, the notion that Jesus didn't exist, or had miraculous features attached to him at a later stage doesn't explain why so many Jewish people decided to convert almost immediately after his death, especially given that they weren't expecting their Messiah to be crucified. Something real and tangible must have happened.

Like most other conspiracy theories about Jesus, by analysing them more deeply, they very quickly begin to fall apart.

**Got a question or comment?  
Email [colm@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:colm@irishcatholic.ie)**



# Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today

A principal's perspective

Faith in our schools

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## Feeling involved

Donal Harrington

**I** think the place to start is with the word 'involvement'. I would propose a fundamental distinction between people 'getting involved' and people 'feeling involved'. In many ways this is the key to the whole question. Helping people to feel involved is primary.

A simple reflection on Sunday Eucharist gives us a way into it. There is the priest. There may be a choir. There are ministers of the Word and ministers of the Eucharist. There are the servers, ushers perhaps, the collectors. And there is the congregation. Out of all those people, who would we say is 'involved'?

We might be inclined to say that those who are doing more things are more involved. But that is not necessarily the case. After all, people's minds can be a hundred miles away from what they are doing. The person who is most involved might well be somebody sitting down in the church, 'doing' nothing. But that person may be participating intensely; listening to the Scripture, bringing their concerns to the altar, feeling at home, going away refreshed and challenged.

What matters most is that people feel involved. If people feel involved, then they are involved, often in a very profound way. The main issue is not about getting people involved in specific parish activities. Of course that is important, but it is a narrower idea, and a short-term way of looking at things. The main issue is about feeling involved.

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The road to Emmaus

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[Robert Zund's 1877 painting]

Please spread the word and join us on the journey of the building tomorrow's parish today – a familial community of faith, fostering authentic, intentional discipleship. If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on [eoin@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:eoin@irishcatholic.ie)



# Feeling involved

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**Donal Harrington** explores how we can foster 'feeling involved' in our parishes

As someone once put it, it is not a 'parish of ministries' but a 'ministering parish'. A parish of ministries is one where some people are involved in specific groups or projects. Even if there were a lot of them, it would still be only a few, only a small percentage of the faith community. But a ministering parish is one where everybody is involved. They are not, by and large, in ministry groups. But they feel involved.

**“A ministering parish community is a place of every member ministry.”**

A ministering parish community is a place of every member ministry. It is a place where Baptism is not lying dormant, or in sleep mode, as it were. Baptism is not a thing of the past. This is a parish where people have activated their Baptism and are engaging with it. It is a place where people are in touch with their faith, in the heart, in the head, in the hands. None of that necessarily requires 'getting involved' in a parish ministry. But it does mean feeling involved. It is a different sense of involvement.

## A common thread

The evangelising parish expresses itself in caring, in welcoming, in listening and in praying. We can see how the theme of feeling involved

is implicit in each of these. When the parish expresses itself in these ways – when these come to the fore in the parish – it has the effect of more people coming to feel involved. Affirming is also very important. Affirmation does not ask parishioners to do anything more. It names what is already going on and recognises it as 'being involved'. All it asks of people is that they recognise it too, that they make the link between this and their Baptism, so as to see how this is 'faith in the hands'.

**“If they come to feel that the parish is 'home', with a place for them at the table, they are coming to feel involved.”**

When we notice, then we can respond. If people feel noticed and cared for, that can be a form of feeling involved. They can come to feel that they belong. It seems fair to say that the secret of success is the welcome that people experience. When people have felt accepted and appreciated, they have come to feel that they belong. Again, many have come to feel involved, to feel a part of the faith community. If they come to feel that the parish is 'home', with a place for them at the



table, they are coming to feel involved.

## Not simply 'getting involved'

None of this is about 'getting people involved'. It is about something more fundamental, something foundational. It about creating an environment of inclusion, where

people feel faith connecting with life, where people have a sense of ministering and being ministered to, where people feel that they are 'practising' their faith.

The aim here is that everyone would feel involved. But that is not measurable in the way that aiming for a full church is. If more people feel involved, that would

be reflected to some extent in attendances. But not everybody will come to church regularly. Not everybody will identify openly with parish. When the faith community is caring, welcoming, listening and praying with people, there will always be more people than we know who are feeling a part of it, feeling involved.

## Getting involved

Feeling involved is foundational, the overarching focus. Getting people involved in specific parish ministries and initiatives is more specific, and secondary. But here, at the same time, we need to review our understanding, our ideas about what is involved in getting people involved.

Some say that it is next to impossible to get people involved in the parish, or that people no longer want to be involved. But others say that

people are willing, that it is just a matter of how to connect with them. Both views are valid, but I am inclined to think that the latter view may be nearer the truth. Getting people involved is difficult, but possible.

## Obstacles

A good place to begin is by asking about the obstacles. What is it that prevents people from getting involved in specific parish activities? When we think about it, it becomes clear that there is no single answer. There are quite a number of different factors at play.

*[What are the obstacles to feeling involved in your parish? What are the obstacles to getting involved in your parish? How can these be addressed? More on this next week.]*

## Scripture

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

### Colossians 3:1-4

Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.

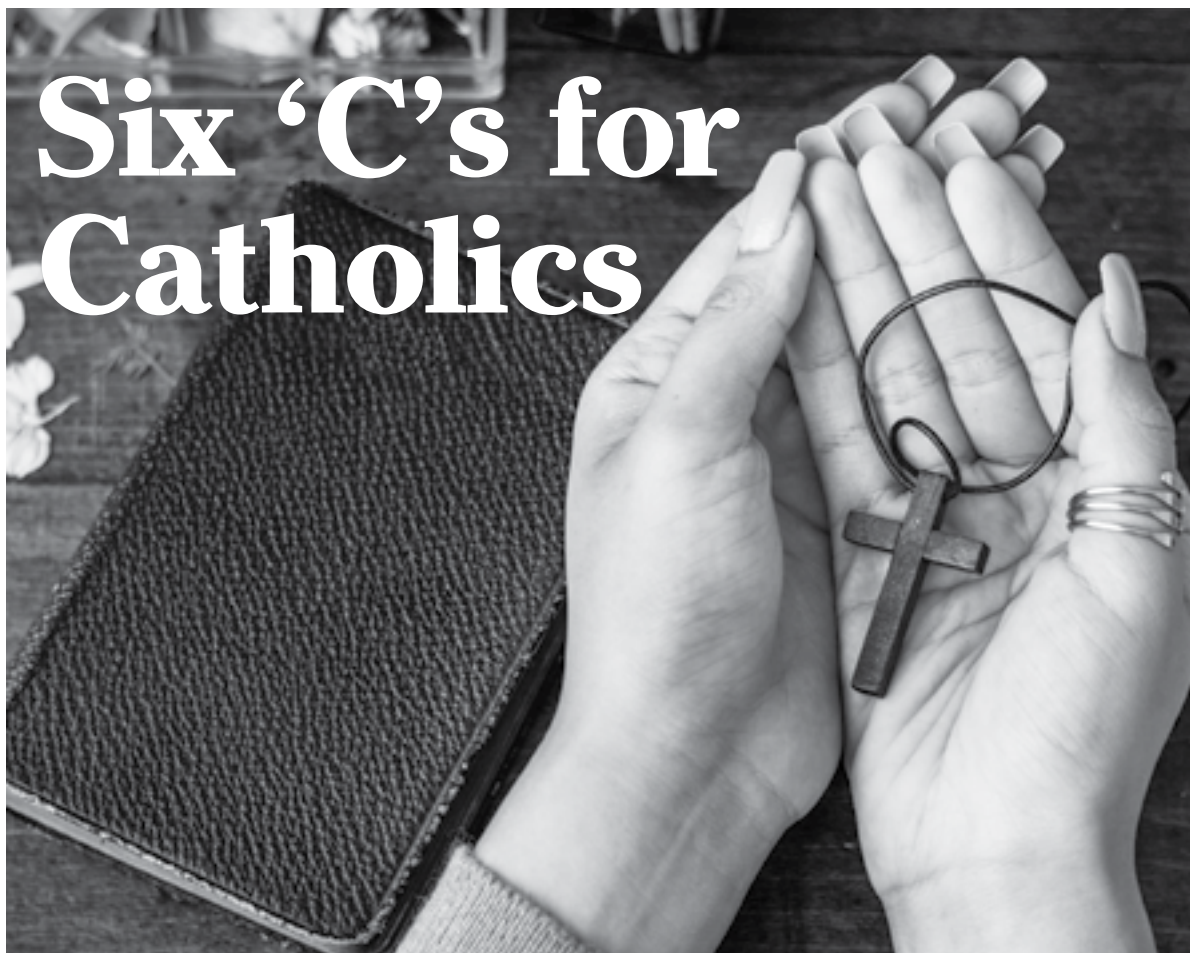
## Spend some time in prayer with the reading.

1. Find a quiet place, and give yourself 15 minutes without distractions. Read the section once, and then pause for reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and response to the passage.
2. Read the passage a second time. Ask yourself: What do I find challenging about this reading? Is there anything that I can try to do differently in my life as a response to it? What is the message in this reading for our parish? Write down anything that comes to your head.
3. Pause in silent reflection, and then read the passage a third time.





# Six 'C's for Catholics



**Fr Joe McDonald** proposes 6 thought-provoking mini-reflections for Catholics in Ireland today.

**R**ecently I have heard people commenting on how hard it is to be a Catholic today and then following on from that some of them actually asked me for any advice I might have in that regard. In one way I am loath to offer advice as I feel it is easy to be seen as some sort of guru, which I am certainly not. Having said that perhaps it is important as a priest, who is supposed to be, in some way, a professional follower of Jesus, to share something around our common faith journey.

There is something in us that likes the neat or pithy little jingle of the three R's, or the one of your five a day, so here goes: The six 'C's for Catholics today:

## Commitment, Courage, Christ, Church, Compassion and Comedy

**Commitment:** I think one of the big problems today is being lukewarm or picking and choosing what we like in our faith. I also think there is a fear of commitment. The reality is that whilst being committed to anyone or anything makes big demands it is far more desirable than being committed to nothing or no one. True commitment despite all its difficulties actually brings fulfilment and happiness.

**Courage:** Throughout history, both in the world, and within this country, it has at times required great courage to be a Catholic. My contention today is that we are entering a period that

will demand greater courage than ever to be a practicing Catholic. I say this for two reasons: this courage will be required because of the growing hostility towards Catholicism, a hostility that I believe will increase, but also because of the impact of the state of the Church on personal faith. I am really speaking of courage as a gift of the Holy Spirit and something we as believers need to pray for.

**“However, I deliberately cite Christ as one of the core characteristics of being a Catholic today, because of my firm belief that we have moved away from him”**

**Christ:** This probably seems so obvious as to border on the silly. However, I deliberately cite Christ as one of the core characteristics of being a Catholic today, because of my firm belief that we have moved away from him. I think this is often true even in our preaching. I think we as people of faith, need to discover afresh, or perhaps discover for the first time, the unique all-consuming excitement of engaging in a unique personal relationship with both the

historical Jesus of Nazareth and the living Risen Christ.

**Church:** There is indeed a great abandonment of Church. Some of this we brought on ourselves, and indeed continue to do so. We are slow to learn. Moral relativism accompanies this turning our back on Church as does the decline of practice. One of my favourites as many of you know is 'well Father I am a very good Catholic I just don't go to Mass!' To which I reply: 'you are indeed a very good person, and may well be a good Christian but very good Catholic you are not. Very good Catholics go to Mass.' It has become trendy to bash the Church, as I say sometimes fairly, but increasingly, without fairness or justification. For me the Church remains central to my Catholic faith and whilst at times I am hurt by it, I am also indebted to it as the place where my soul is fed and continues to grow.

**Compassion:** One of the great dangers today as we try to find our way forward, or as has been said, 'as we try to steady the ship', is that we become rigid or inflexible. This is when a harshness can creep in. We have paid a high price for the message of fear that we preached with such gusto when in fact it was a message of love. If we lose the compassion of Christ we cease to be his followers and we cease to be his Church.

**Comedy:** Perhaps the strangest, or most surprising of the characteristics listed here today. In my view, this is crucial. When we lose our sense of humour we are in trouble. So often, we so called Church people, are seen as, if not actually a sour lot, then at least a boring lot! How easy it is to forget that we are called to be people of joy. Are people drawn to us because we are good fun, good company, bearers of good news, because they sense deep within us there is a joy that only the Lord can give?

## Fish & Tips

### Daily Ideas for Disciples

#### The Lenten Calendar For Children

This calendar has a little activity for you to do each day of Lent. Besides what you see in the calendar it's good to do one or two things all through Lent. Some people give up things - sweets, chips, xbox or playstation for example... Some people take up something - a good work or a small act of kindness - helping more at home, making your bed each morning, giving some of your pocket money to a good cause for example...

Remember to try and say an extra prayer each day!! As you'll see, the Sundays of Lent don't really count. There are 40 days without Sundays. Each Sunday is like a mini Easter - So you can have a special treat those days!!

#### Holy Week

##### Palm Sunday

The people of Jerusalem welcomed King Jesus as they came with palm branches.

• Put the blessed palm you got at Mass today in a place of honour in your house.

##### Monday

When they got to the top of the hill the soldiers roughly tore off Jesus' clothes.

• Thank God for your clothes and put them away neatly when you go to bed. 35

##### Tuesday

They laid Jesus on the cross and nailed his hands and feet to it.

• Visit, call or write a card to someone who is sick or in hospital today telling them how you are thinking of them. 36

##### Wednesday

The soldiers lifted the cross so that Jesus was hanging from the cross in his hands and feet.

• Think today of all the things you have to be grateful for in your life. 37

##### Holy Thursday

Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper, "Love one another as I have loved you."

• Think of someone who hurt or offended you. Forgive them. 38

##### Good Friday

Jesus died on the cross.

• Look at a crucifix for two minutes and think of how much Jesus loves you. 39

##### Holy Saturday

Our Lady's day.

• Mary cared for her son Jesus. Say a prayer in thanks for all the people who care, love and look after you. 40

This resource is generously shared by Frank Brown of the Combined Parishes of Clondalkin.

## Cornerstone digital Edition

Did you know that every edition of *Cornerstone: Building Tomorrow's Parish Today* is available as a PDF download from the Irish Catholic online shop at [www.irishcatholic.com/shop](http://www.irishcatholic.com/shop).

The focus of *Cornerstone* is building tomorrow's parish today; inspired by the Great Commission, each week there are features relating to Scripture, sacraments and service as well as shining a spotlight on vibrant pastoral ideas being realised in parishes around the country and beyond. Our aim is to help every parish best answer the call to 'saying, doing and being' Christ in their context; sharing the good news! Whether actively involved in parish ministry, feeling disconnected from your parish or both; *Cornerstone* is for you. Each parish faces many challenges, but for every challenge, there's a parish that has an answer. Let's avoid reinventing the wheel and share our ideas, resources and insights. Every week there is a mix of input from well-known experts and those involved in hands-on



ministry, providing a new, weekly one-stop-shop for parishes looking to actively engage in mission and ministry. Catch up on previous editions and send the link to friends and family - whether you're on a PPC, in the choir, a minister of the Word or Eucharist, or just want to read the latest ideas and advice for building tomorrow's parish today.



## EVANGELISATION

# Faith in our schools

"My favourite thought about Abraham Lincoln is he believed strongly in two things: loving one another and working together to make this world better"

Cuomo, 2004

David O'Brien

As a Catholic primary school, we can certainly relate to this quote but the more challenging question is whether we are a living example of such Christian practice in today's world. This is the journey a cohort of three Laois primary schools The Heath National School, Emo National School and Scoil Mhuire, Abbeyleix, have begun to explore in partnership with Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) and the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.

Like other Catholic primary schools in Ireland, our school, The Heath NS, has a long educational history dating back to the days of penal laws and hedge schools. It is a history of education through a Christian lens, inspired by a shared belief in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is an education which emphasises the dignity of the human person as a child of God, called to work with other persons in creating an inclusive community in service of the common good; where knowl-

edge is sought and respected while faith is nurtured and challenged. Our ethos/mission statements are based on these values, are quoted in our booklets, are available on our websites and are evident around sacramental preparation but, as educationalist Jacinta Kitt so wittily questions, is this the living reality in our schools?

One of the major challenges for Catholic schools in Ireland today is sustaining educational practice centred on Jesus Christ in a very changed, demanding and fragmented society. The increased levels of expectation, compliance, accountability and curricular initiatives, no matter how well intentioned, all erode our enthusiasm, our time and, above all, our focus.

As if to highlight this point, in the same month that our school received an invitation from our diocesan education adviser to participate in this School Culture Initiative, our school also received notification of a Whole School Evaluation. Needless to say, the initial interest in the School Culture Initiative was quickly replaced by prepa-

ration for the Whole School Evaluation. In the aftermath of our WSE, and the normal work of a summer term to be completed, our staff could have been forgiven for not embracing the opportunity being offered by ACE to reflect on our school culture. Initially apprehensive about another initiative, we tentatively established our school culture team, tempted by the opportunity to engage in meaningful work in a process inclusive of all our staff. It also helped that this would be led by an external facilitator involving other similar local schools and of course the promise of a weekend away together in Killashee House Hotel!

Seven months into the process and a year on from our initial sign up, there has been no easing of societal and educational change. What has changed, however, is that this year we are not just responding to external demands but

are engaged in true school self-evaluation which is of fundamental value to the school community we serve. The School Culture Initiative has provided us with a reason and safe space in which to examine and debate our Catholic culture.

**"Seldom have we had such rich and genuine conversations and, certainly not on principles of belief and faith."**

Seldom have we had such rich and genuine conversations and, certainly not on principles of belief and faith. This opportunity has enriched us all, our understanding, our relationships and our sense of being valued. All staff greatly appreciated Bishop Denis

Nulty's presence at both of our culture weekends and were motivated by his interest and support in our work in becoming an intentional Catholic school.

While it has not been easy to always find the time, our monthly meetings with Jonathan Tiernan (Director ACE Ireland) and the other partner schools have been instrumental in keeping us on task. Indeed, in my view, the opportunity and benefit of networking with other schools on our shared Catholic culture would be of great assistance to all Catholic schools. At this stage we have established our school's root beliefs and values and have simplified the language to make it accessible for children and adults alike. These root beliefs and values will now guide us in examining both our current practice and in establishing how we can demonstrate them in an

intentional way on a daily basis.

On completion of the process, at the end of this school year, we believe we will be more confident in articulating and communicating what our school stands for as an intentional Catholic school. More than ever I believe if Catholic schools are to have a future, they need to be certain of their identity, proud of their tradition and for their practice to be clearly rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We are grateful to our diocese and the Alliance for Catholic Education for allowing us begin this very positive journey which, we hope, will result in us in the Heath National School working together to make our world better, which, in turn, will lead us all to love one another a little bit more.

*David O'Brien is Principal of The Heath N.S., Co. Laois.*



## Easter Gospel

# The road to Emmaus

**St Luke details how Jesus breaks the Word before the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:13-35).**

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas,

answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one

to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he



[Robert Zund's 1877 painting]

made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us

as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 18, 2019

## Personal Profile

Retiring to a life of service brings a renewed sense of fulfilment

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## Give your children the gift of Irish



**W**hen I was in primary school, I hated Irish. Mostly, I hated it because I struggled at it so badly.

Never in a million years did I imagine that I would one day raise my own children through Irish. Nor could have I foreseen that my children would be American citizens and our Irish-speaking home would be in Washington, on the west coast of the US.

It wasn't until I was a teenager and gained a bit of confidence in my academic abilities that my Irish improved. But I wasn't fluent in the language, and I wanted to be. Ironically, it wasn't until I moved to the US in 2006 that I found the drive to make my



**Caoimhín De Barra**  
explains how he not only taught himself Irish, but is raising his children through Irish in the US

goal a reality.

Studying at the University of Delaware, I joined the college rugby team. At the first training session, I saw a guy wearing a t-shirt that read: 'Más féidir leat é seo a léamh, rachaimid a lui'. Roughly translated, this means 'if you can read this, we will sleep together'.

Perhaps fortunately, I was

unable to translate it. But I was so embarrassed that I couldn't read it that I decided there and then that I would do whatever it took to speak Irish fluently.

In order to achieve this, I basically built Irish into my daily routine. At first, this meant reading the *Teach Yourself Irish* book I had every day. From there I progressed to reading an online

article in Irish every morning while I ate my breakfast, and watching TG4 while I ate dinner. I bought books in Irish and read them in my spare time, and when I was walking or driving, I tried to formulate my thoughts in Irish.

After about 18 months, I was reasonably fluent.

I had also heard stories of people who had learned Irish as adults and then raised their children through the language. That became my next goal.

I wanted to do this for a couple of reasons. Firstly, I had been raised to take pride in my Irish identity, and I thought nothing would demonstrate this more than doing my part to promote our language.

But more importantly, I

wanted to give my children the gift of Irish. I knew what it was like to want to speak Irish, but be unable to do so. I never wanted my children to have to feel that, so I was committed to doing whatever I could to make sure Irish came naturally for them.

Of course, I was still living in the United States, and it looked like I would be for the foreseeable future. I got engaged to an American, Kathy, and we agreed that when we had children, we would raise them bilingually. What this would mean in practice was that I would only ever speak Irish to our children, while Kathy would speak English to them.

Fast forward a few years. We

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## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### Family fun, bluebells and forest trails

Getting out into nature is always a welcome activity for the children, particularly in an age where being glued to smartphones or Netflix is becoming all the more common.

The whole family could go to Moore Abbey in Kildare for Easter Monday to enjoy a walk, stroll or run in the woods as the native Irish bluebells bloom.

On Monday April 22 from 2-5pm, Monasterevin Tidy Towns are organising a family fun day sure to engage all involved.

Gather family and friends together for a photograph and make special memories in giant picture frames located around the forest trails. Music, games and refreshments and a lot more surprises are in store.

Organisers say: "This event promises to appeal to all ages from the young to the young at heart. There is a strong possibility for young members of the community to spot two of our indigenous animal species, Mr Fox and Mr Rabbit."

#### Kids close to highways suffer stunting

Young children who live close to a major roadway are twice as likely to score lower on tests of communications skills, compared to those who live farther away from a major roadway, according to an analysis by researchers at the National Institutes of Health and the University of California, Merced.

Moreover, children born to women exposed during pregnancy to higher-than-normal levels of traffic-related pollutants – ultra-fine airborne particles and ozone – had a small but significantly higher likelihood of developmental delays during infancy and early childhood.

The study appears in *Environmental Research*.

"Our results suggest that it may be prudent to minimise exposure to air pollution during pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood – all key periods for brain development," said Dr Pauline Mendola an investigator in the Division of Intramural Population Health Research at NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the study's senior author.

#### Nutritious food equals good mood

Children in households with uncertain access to nutritious food are twice as likely to have low self-esteem and less likely to believe they can make healthy choices, new research shows.

Uncertain access to enough food can starve a child's self-esteem and confidence in making healthy life choices.

Children living in households with food insecurity have double the risk of low self-esteem compared with their peers living in homes that always have good access to nutritious food, according to joint research by the University of Alberta and Edith Cowan University in Australia.

"Food insecurity is a real concern, a big public health concern," said community nutrition researcher and registered dietitian Rosanne Blanchet. "We're seeing that food insecurity is affecting children's mental health and that can have long-term consequences. It affects their life chances."

# Morality vs ethics: a silly distinction we can do without



## Everyday philosophy

### Ben Conroy

If philosophers are doing our job, we should be helping to make people's thinking clearer. We should be cutting away guff and making concepts precise, so that discussions are more productive and it's easier to find the truth. Today I want to do my bit in the war against confusion and propose one small change: let's get rid of the distinction between 'morality' and 'ethics'.

A while ago, the Iona Institute's David Quinn was on Dr Ciara Kelly's Newstalk programme talking about sex education. Dr Kelly argued that religion should play no role in sex education (even in religious schools). One of her arguments was that sex "wasn't a moral issue". Quinn was a bit baffled. Surely, he and Dr Kelly could agree that consent, respect and care were features of good sex and the absence of any of them in a sexual encounter would make that encounter wrong (to varying degrees).

Dr Kelly completely agreed: but she didn't think that meant that morality had anything to do with sex. She preferred to talk in terms of 'ethics'.

I come across this a lot. People get uncomfortable when you start talking about morality, but mention ethics and they visibly brighten.

#### Concepts

The trouble is that the two concepts – 'morality' and 'ethics' – are basically the same concept. There are some fine-grained, finicky distinctions – you can have 'codes of ethics' but saying 'a code of morality' would be a bit weird.

But philosophically speaking, they almost always mean exactly the same thing. Moral philosophers are also known as 'ethicists'. Courses in moral philosophy are usually

referred to as 'ethics courses'. To say something is "morally wrong" means things like "you ought not to do it" or "it will make you a worse person". To call something 'ethically impermissible' means the same.

So why is it so common to distinguish the two? (Google "morality vs ethics" and you get 42 million results worth of hot takes). For my money, it's mostly about signalling. 'Morality' is a word more associated with religion and all the stereotypes that go with it than 'ethics' is: morality is coded in people's minds as something like "ethics, but with an unpleasant flavour of judgmentalism, sex-hating, and censoriousness".

**"The distinction between morality and ethics is stupid and should go away. It makes communication harder..."**

People also have a vague sense that as good liberals they shouldn't try to impose their 'personal morality' on others, and this inchoate sense applies not just to law but increasingly to discussion and arguments.

Fortunately, no one actually believes that this means you should stop advocating for what you think is right, and opposing what you think is wrong. It's a point made banal by repetition, but if you're a liberal who supports tolerance and believes

it's not just a matter of taste, then you're making a claim about what's good and bad, right and wrong.

What, then, to do? You don't want to come across as one of those disreputable religious people, but neither do you want to say that murder, fraud, or arson are matters of indifference – or, indeed, that



there are no impermissible sexual actions.

Thankfully, 'ethics' rides to your rescue. Unlike 'morality', the primary associations of the word 'ethics' are with things like 'philosophy', 'integrity', 'free thought'. Maybe some ancient Greeks being enlightened or President Michael D. Higgins giving a speech.

Positioning yourself as someone unconcerned with morality but who really cares about ethics allows you to jettison all the unpleasant associations without actually changing the meaning of your words. Better, it signals that you're sophisticated, tolerant, cosmopolitan. You probably

care a lot about 'best practice.' You can say things like "we've got rid of Catholicism but we haven't figured out what to replace it with yet", and when greeted with murmurs of approval you can bring up ethics.

**"To say something is 'morally wrong' means things like 'you ought not to do it'"**

I'm being a bit mean here, and for what it's worth I don't think people do this consciously: it's just that people in certain milieus notice the wrinkled noses when they say 'morality' and the approving nods that greet talk of 'ethics' and adjust their behaviour accordingly. It's actually a good thing that people care about ethics: it means that their concern with what's right and wrong, with what we ought to do, hasn't atrophied but has just been redefined. If you want to build a bridge to people who've fallen into this habit of thought, you can just switch to talking about ethics instead of morality.

Nevertheless, the distinction between morality and ethics is stupid and should go away. It makes communication harder, giving people the impression that when you talk about morality you're automatically appealing to religious authority or hidebound superstition when really you're saying exactly what they're saying when they talk about ethics. And it makes people dumber: social rewards for respectability rather than clarity of thought tends to do that. So let's do our best to ditch the distinction: it's the right thing to do.



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now have two daughters, and in our home, both languages are heard all day, every day. As planned, I only speak Irish to the girls. Kathy speaks mostly English, but mixes in the Irish she knows. When I talk to my wife, I use both Irish and English.

Kathy was initially worried that if I only spoke Irish with our children, she wouldn't know what was being said much of the time. But after three years, she understands everything I say to the girls. Indeed, this has been a natural process. As I move from speaking simple words to more complex sentences to my daughters, Kathy's Irish skills have progressed as well.

### Language skills

Our eldest daughter is now three, and it is interesting to see how her language skills have developed. Of course, we are surrounded by English, and this is what she speaks most naturally. But she understands everything that I say to her in Irish.

Our conversations follow a strange pattern. I will say something to her in Irish, and she will usually respond in English, or in a mix of Irish and English. When she says something in English, I repeat what she said in Irish.

I do this because I am the only source of Irish she has. As such, I need to role-model for her what the conversation in Irish should sound like. If you know anything about the idiomatic eccentricities of three-year-olds, you will understand how hard it can be to try and instantly translate some of what they say into another language!

**“When we meet my Irish friends, it has been heart-warming to see them interact with the girls in Irish”**

While she mostly speaks English, she does speak in Irish as well. In particular, she has learned that if she wants to get something from me, she doesn't have a chance unless she can say it in Irish. In addition, there are many words she only knows in Irish, which she mixes in with her English.

Aside from speaking Irish, I put Irish cartoons (thanks to the TG4 website) on the TV, and I read stories

in Irish to the girls before bedtime. Whenever people complain about the money the State spends on Irish, I wonder do they realise that basic things like books and cartoons in Irish, essential for what I and many others are trying to do, would be impossible without it?

The nature of the mixed language environment means there are lots of funny and adorable moments of linguistic mix-ups. A couple of weeks ago, I was singing a lullaby to my younger daughter, who is five months old. The first line goes ‘Dún do shúile, a rún mo chroí’ (close your eyes, love of my heart).

My eldest daughter was listening and piped up: “A Dhaidí hearts don't have eyes!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Naturally, in deciding to raise our children with Irish, we were also making a decision that would impact our wider families, especially when they came to visit us. I have been surprised by the willingness of my father and my aunt in particular to use whatever Irish they have with the girls, even though they wouldn't have spoken it since school. Even when we meet my Irish friends, it has been heart-warming to see them interact with the girls in Irish to the best of their ability.

I was more worried about how Kathy's parents would react. Neither of them are of Irish descent, and I was not sure if they would support our decision. But they both have been wonderful, and are willing to play along even though they have no idea what I am saying to their grandchildren (although I do try and have a running translation for their benefit).

When we go out in public, the same rules apply, and I only speak Irish to the girls. For the most part, I feel pretty comfortable doing this. I have never felt that we are being judged for speaking something other than English. Indeed, hearing a language besides English isn't all that uncommon in the US.

At the same time, I am aware that occasionally people in this country do feel they have a right to challenge people for not speaking English. A quick look online will turn up a slew of videos of ugly confrontations that began because someone was speaking something other than

English. I often think about what I will say or do if that ever happens to us.

How will our Irish-speaking family evolve going forward? I would love to return to Ireland and enroll our children in a Gaelscoil, to give them a much richer immersion in the language than they will experience in the US. However, circumstances mean that is unlikely.

But in reading about what parents in similar circumstances have done, I realise that regular trips home that include opportunities for the girls to use the language will be essential for their continued development with Irish.

**“I have never felt that we are being judged for speaking something other than English”**

I do wonder what they will think about being raised through Irish when they are older. Will they wonder if it was worth all the effort to possess a language than even in Ireland only a minority speak? Or will they be grateful to speak the language that their Irish ancestors spoke for millennia before them?

Perhaps they will wish to pass Irish on to their children when the time comes. Or they may decide that they aren't that interested in the language. Either is fine by me. I will be content to know that they will not experience what it feels like to want to speak Irish, but be unable to.

In the meantime, we will continue to live, laugh, and love in our little Irish-speaking corner of the world.

**❶ Caoimhín De Barra lectures in history in the US as an assistant professor at Gonzaga University in Washington. His latest book *Gaeilge: A Radical Revolution* was recently published by Currach Books (€14.99).**

## Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



Sometimes God just breaks in. That phrase, “You can't pour from an empty cup” makes sense to me and so for Lent this year one of my commitments was to take time out. On a sunny Thursday morning I took myself to Ards Friary – for quiet time.

A few days previously a friend of mine had told me she was beginning an eight-day silent retreat in the Ignatian Centre at St Bueno's in Wales. Part of me envied her. Another part of me wondered how she would cope with eight days of silence. I even found myself daunted at the prospect of a morning alone in Ards. There was a time when I did eight-day retreats and even a 30-day retreat but that was before being a mammy.

There is something about being a parent which leads us to think that we are responsible at all times for everything to do with our children – even when they are adults. For me, the challenge of even a morning on my own in Ards was about putting aside that sense of responsibility, putting the phone on silent and just giving some time to God and to myself.

**“I felt an overwhelming sense of God's presence and felt that my decision to give myself some quiet time had been affirmed”**

I spent a little while in the chapel there and then took myself off for a walk. It took me about two hours to walk a distance of about a mile! I stopped, sat on a rock by the sea, wandered off the path and down to secret little coves. I noticed flowers and rocks and the sound of the waves. I thought and I prayed and eventually found myself a spot down beside a rock pool where I spent some time writing. Throughout, the lines of Psalm 131 echoed within me.

I returned to the chapel hoping that a priest would be there for Reconciliation. I was delighted to see the wonderful friar, Fr Kieran heading into the confessional. Within

moments he quoted a Psalm to me – “Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil and quiet like a child in its mother's arms, as content as a child that has been weaned.” Tears came unbidden – surprised, he asked me why, “Because that is the psalm I have been praying



with all morning as I walked.” I replied, “Ah,” says he with a smile, “that is what you call serendipity or grace!”

I felt an overwhelming sense of God's presence and felt that my decision to give myself some quiet time had been affirmed. There are times for any of us when we wonder about faith, wonder about prayer. Then there are times when God breaks in and those doubts are scattered. Those are the moments when we just know in the core of our being.

God breaks in. God surprises us and that is what Easter is all about. God breaks into the darkness of the tomb and liberates Jesus from death. God breaks in to the desolation of grief which surrounds Mary of Magdala, Peter and John in our Easter Sunday Gospel. As we will see over the Gospels in the coming weeks God continues to break in, to surprise, to overthrow doubt and fear, to liberate.

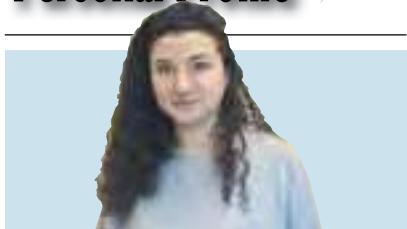
Easter reminds us that God is always greater – greater than the tomb, than our fear, than our busyness or stress, than our frustrations or fragility.

Few of us can go on eight-day silent retreats – unfortunately. We can however all give ourselves permission to take some time out. Yes, there may be a myriad of things which could or should be done but sometimes we just need to step away – even for just a little while. God is always breaking into our lives. My prayer this Easter is that we give ourselves time to notice.



# Retiring to a life of service brings a renewed sense of fulfilment

## Personal Profile



Hannah Harn

**B**efore retiring in 2015, Trócaire volunteer Tony Devlin did not think he had the time to serve his community, even though he wanted to.

"I suppose all through the years I was interested in [volunteering]," said Tony. "It's a responsibility that all of us who are lucky enough to live in the first world have toward those who are less fortunate."

"When I retired," he said, "I finished my paid working life and had sufficient time to get involved more directly. I'd always had an admiration for Trócaire because of the work they do for justice."

Since then, Tony has found a sense of fulfillment in volunteer work.

"Volunteering is incredibly rewarding in itself," he said. "Sometimes you can feel like the world is a very selfish and materialistic place, where people have no time to help each other."

### Justice

"When you talk to people...when you engage with them, you realise that they respond," Tony explained. "Once these issues of justice and human need are brought to people's attention, they don't turn their backs on them. Their generosity and compassion become very visible."

Born and reared in Dublin, Tony grew up in a near-

universally Catholic and Christian environment.

"I've always had, and thankfully still have, a basic faith in Jesus Christ," said Tony. When he began wondering where his volunteer work would align with his own ethos, Trócaire was the right fit.

Tony's work with Trócaire consists mainly of awareness-raising events and education modules at schools, where he helps young people to be more aware of the struggles others are facing.

"If you're looking to find the most honest, idealistic, and uncompromising people, it's usually children between eight and

10 years old," he said. Through his work with schools and students, he has found younger people to be the most responsive, and most active, in engaging with the issues he presents.

### Programmes

"They love being involved. They're just like little sponges for this stuff, they're very open to it," Tony said. "And to some extent, we need to set up a programme where that innate desire they have can be harnessed. And once they become activated, they become demanding. They're great little apostles."

"They understand, in a very

simple sort of way, that there are bad things you can do and there are good things you can do," he said, "and they're very willing to do them."

With adults, however, Tony found a surprising difference. "It becomes more difficult with people who are older because we make fewer compromises and are more settled," he said. "We feel we have more to lose."

According to Tony, taking the "conscious step" toward generosity, even when it seems to risk personal disadvantage, is where faith comes into play. For him, faith and justice are tied together.

**“There’s always enough time to do the important things, and it doesn’t take much time as you think. Take a small step. Do one thing”**

"The opposite side of faith and charity is justice; one goes hand in hand with the other," he said. "It's a value system. It's about friendship for the other, love of the neighbour, concern for the poor and the disadvantage of those in trouble. It's not necessary to have a Christian deity or any other faith, but it certainly helps to bring it into your own, to know this work is important."

Tony also volunteers once a week with Crosscare, a Dublin diocesan social service programme, where he helps facilitate their migrant and refugee service.

"It's really about trying to help them find their place in the Irish setup, especially with things around immigration rules and such," he said. "My job as a volunteer is to greet them as they come in, find out what their needs are and line them up with one of our workers."

Tony has seen evidence of

the increase in homelessness on the ground. "When people are ultimately granted permission to remain, they can't get out of direct provision because they can't find anywhere to live," he said. Until they are approved to stay in Ireland, migrants and refugees are unable to work.

"They have to find a job and a place to live all of a sudden, with all of the disadvantages of living in a strange country and having lived in a more-or-less institutional setting for years," said Tony. "This is a way for them to get a foot up the ladder."

Tony also enjoys volunteering for a group that not only handles injustice on an individual level but beyond.

"I like the fact that Trócaire is not just looking to help those who are in difficulty but also to ask why they're in difficulty and what can be done about that," he said.

According to Tony, the best way to get involved in volunteer work is to start small, even if it seems like there are not enough hours in the day.

"There's always enough time to do the important things, and it doesn't take much time as you think," he said. "Take a small step. Do one thing."

When it comes to young people, Tony feels the next step is continuing to cultivate the "innate" desire children have to do good by encouraging gratitude.

"We are always unhappy about something," he said. "But things that parents and teachers can do is cultivate this sense of gratitude, how fortunate we are that this is the country that we have."

"From there it's a small step to say, 'Well, shouldn't justice be available to everyone?'"



## Children's Corner

Chai Brady

## Getting out of your shell with crafts

**W**hen scissors are introduced into a child's world for the first time, all sorts of mayhem can ensue, but what could be better than putting their skills to good use and recreating one of nature's most-loved reptiles?

Turtles and tortoises come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and colours; certain species can live for 100 years.

While making your paper plate turtle, which involves lots of cutting, pasting, painting, and creativity, you can learn more about these long-necked, slow-moving creatures.

### Supplies needed:

- Paper plate – any size
- Construction paper
- Kid's scissors
- Glue
- Sequins
- Googly eyes.

### Instructions:

Have your child cut strips of construction paper.

Then they can cut those into smaller pieces, which can be squares or rectangles.

Glue the pieces to the back side of a paper plate. A dessert-sized plate that has a rim around it may be better than the thinner kind which don't have a defined rim – this gives your turtle more volume. You can also make parent and children turtles.

To make the large parent turtle, use a regular, full size paper plate. If you only have larger paper plates you can make a smaller turtle by cutting the centre out of a regular size paper plate. Use the

centre, smaller circle for your child turtle.

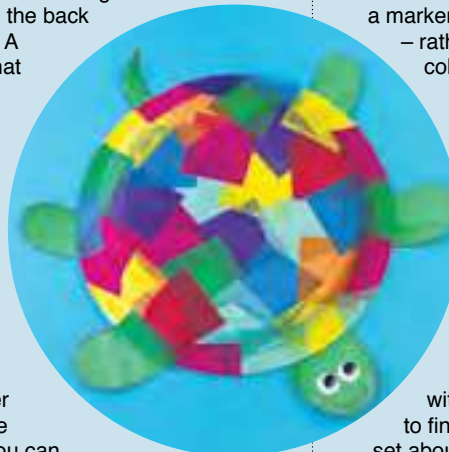
You can also decorate the turtle shell with a marker – no need to stick to one colour – rather than using a scissors to chop coloured paper.

Cut out a head, four legs and a tail with scissors and green construction paper. Glue them onto the underside of the shell.

Then you can glue sequins around the edge which come in different sizes and can be purchased in many shops.

Finally you can add googly eyes to the turtle's head for the finishing touches.

It's not only turtles you can create, with a little imagination and a few easy to find arts and crafts gear, the family can set about making a huge range of little critters. Perhaps a paper plate fish, cat, turkey, peacock or even an octopus?





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Fitting available evidence to the charge

Sometimes when you hear about an upcoming programme, it's so predictable you could nearly write the script in advance.

That was largely the case with **Rome vs The Republic** on RTÉ1 last Thursday. In this documentary on relations between the Vatican and the Irish State we got the usual litany – Mother and Child Scheme, John Charles McQuaid, Eamon Casey and Michael Cleary warming up for John Paul II in Galway, Enda Kenny's speech in the Dáil, the contraceptive train, Brendan Smyth and so on.

We also got the oft told stories of abuse, which are truly awful and we must never forget, but going over these stories in the same old predictable way, from the same old perspectives, is of diminishing value.

Sometimes documentaries start out with a pre-ordained thesis, and then everything is made to confirm and conform, in this case to reinforce a dominant narrative rather than to explore new approaches. Even before the opening titles we knew where this was going, with a new litany of the saints – Michael McDowell, Mary McAleese, Colm O'Gorman, Patsy McGarry – along with images of Savita Halappaner and a triumphalist celebration of same-sex marriage in Dublin Castle courtyard.



Michael McDowell presented *Rome vs The Republic* (RTÉ1).

A contribution, say, from our own Mary Kenny who has written extensively on Irish Church-State-Culture issues would have been in order to provide some balance.

### Irony

I don't think the programme makers got the irony of abandoning one kind of triumphalism for another, of swapping one kind of deference for another. For the most part presenter Michael McDowell delivered unchallenging interviews – including with Mary McAleese, who never gets challenged on her views by a suppliant media whose prejudices she feeds, consciously or not. And

there was no critique of how, arguably, we have swapped deference to Rome for deference to Brussels, or swapped Catholic orthodoxy for liberal orthodoxy.

There seemed to be a disdain for 'political Catholicism', and yet when this emerged as liberation theology it was so popular with the liberal left. Even less was there room in this self-congratulatory outing for a critique of the current state of modern Ireland, where we have replaced institutional child abuse with the officially sanctioned killing of unborn children in some of our shiny modern hospitals, with many of the contributors to this programme being

ardent supporters of the removal of the Eighth Amendment, which gave protection to these vulnerable children.

As for what constitutes a Republic, there are many definitions and models, but it seems that Tone's secularist republic was the dominant version for reverence even though we were told that Tone played the Catholic card in seeking military help from France and there wasn't enough critical examination of the role of violence in his approach.

One of the few positives was the interesting historical background from the 18th and 19th Centuries, e.g. the more simple expressions of faith in pre-famine Ireland, the British Government supporting a seminary in Ireland in the late 18th/early 19th Century to avoid seminarians being radicalised by revolutionary ideas if they were trained in France (though I wondered why the Church would even have considered send-



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### EASTER SUNDAY MASS

RTÉ1, Easter Sunday, 9am (also EWTN)

Pope Francis celebrates Mass in St Peters Square, Vatican City, followed by *Urbi et Orbi*.

#### FILM: RISEN

RTÉ1, Easter Sunday, 3.20 pm (also Channel 4, 11 pm)

(2016) Joseph Fiennes, Peter Firth. A Roman Tribune in Judea is tasked to find the missing body of Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead.

#### TURAS COSNOCHTA

RTÉ1, Monday, April 22, 7.30 pm

Young pilgrims visit Lough Derg and persevere through the hardest part of the pilgrimage: the all-night vigil. Repeat of BBC's *Oilithreacht*.

ing them to a revolutionary France so full of anti-clerical sentiment) and the petition against conscription signed by seminarians in 1918.

The documentary told only part of the story and apart from an acknowledgement that Archbishop McQuaid "was the architect of social services within the state", there was little attention given to the huge contribution of the Church to education and health care, little attention to the spirit of service that drove selfless people of faith to make an invaluable contribution to Irish society and worldwide.

Finally, I was glad to see Archbishop Diarmuid Martin being positive about the future for the Church in Ireland, reckoning it will be 'authentically Church in a different culture'.

Also positive, in one of the best interviews of the week, was Dr Dom Colbert on the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) last Thursday. Dr Colbert has written a book, *No More Tears – From Biafra to Bosnia*, about his experiences in poverty stricken and war torn areas around the world.

Often working with religious sisters, including with the Medical Missionaries of Mary, he was inspired by the missionary enthusiasm of the 1940's and 50's and the desire to travel widely, as he tended to patients in the most difficult of circumstances and while some of his stories didn't make for easy listening, a warm life enhancing humanity shone through.

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# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Can music's charms soothe a savage breast?

### Bel Canto (15A)

Julianne Moore may not be Maria Callas in the singing department but she's no slouch as an actress. In this ambitious adaptation of Ann Patchett's acclaimed novel of the same name she plays soprano Roxane Coss.

She's interrupted in the middle of a private concert she's giving to international dignitaries in a palace in an unnamed Latin American country in the late 1990s. A gang of left wing guerrillas led by the fiery Benjamin (Tenoch Huerta) storm the building.

They expect their president to be in attendance but he isn't. They demand he release a number of political



Julianne Moore and Ken Watanabe in *Bel Canto*.

prisoners. The staff of the palace are held hostage, as well as Coss and some of the other people at the concert.

The tension is ramped up when one of them is accidentally killed. A month-long stand-off develops. Soldiers

surround the building. Tensions mount when the water supply is cut off. But relationships start to develop within the palace.

Chief among these are that between a translator played by Royo Kase and

one of the guerrillas, Carmen (María Mercedes Coroy). Coss becomes intimate with a Japanese industrialist, Katsumi Hosokawa (Ken Watanabe). He has attended the concert due to his obsession with her. He gains entry as a result of a false promise to build a factory in the country.

Christopher Lambert plays a French ambassador. A UN negotiator tries to defuse the situation but he doesn't get anywhere.

The film becomes interesting – some would say ludicrous – when Coss is persuaded to go out on a balcony and sing to the soldiers outside. It's hoped her mellifluous tones will soften their attitude and break the deadlock. And so it comes to pass.

Everyone is transfixed by her voice. The tension evaporates.

It isn't Moore's own voice. She lip-syncs effectively to that of real life American soprano Renée Fleming. The title of the film translates as 'Beautiful singing'. It certainly is that. You'll feel the hairs stand out on the back of your neck as her plaintive strains echo through the air.

### Basic message

The transformative power of music is the basic message of this beguiling film. It was inspired by an actual incident in Lima, Peru. Director Paul Weitz uses artistic licence to lift it onto another level.

Weitz is more familiar with lightweight vehicles like *About a Boy* and *American*

*Pie*. At times he seems to be punching above his weight. He gives us a new spin on the Stockholm syndrome but many of the relationships inside the palace develop too fast (and too incredibly) for comfort.

He uses a plethora of different languages to tell his story. For some people it will all seem too far-fetched, for others cathartic. There are also longueurs. But his intentions are honourable. The (tragic) ending is very effective.

The ensemble playing of the multi-ethnic cast makes one suspend disbelief in a scenario that, in another director's hands, might well have come across as risible.

Very good  
★★★★





# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

**The Heart is a Noisy Room**  
by Dr Ronald Boyd-MacMillan  
(Hodder, £9.99)

The author is a Christian activist who has had an extremely varied life, but always one engaged with getting in touch with people and telling them about the "good news". In his third book he focuses on those inner voices which we all have, sometimes positive, sometimes negative (especially in the long night watch around three in the morning).

The author wants us to be alert to those negative voices – often claiming the authority of family tradition – and to listen out for the voice that Christians can hear in the Scriptures, but often ignore.

This is his definition of the negative voice: "A voice is a persistent, powerful message, from you to yourself that persists and keeps you from embracing your true self."

He says he often can't read "Christian books" anymore because they take a long time getting to the point. He moves quickly and clearly through to what he wants to say: basically we need to embrace the positive. Many will find what he says truly enheartening.

**Be an Irish Explorer: An Art Journal Around Ireland**

by Bex Shelford  
(Gill Books, €9.99 / £8.99)

These days, thanks to cheap flights, many children are more familiar with Lanzarote than they are with their native island. Author Bex Shelford lives near the sea, and so is well aware of the Irish landscape that surrounds us.

Adapting the idea now used to introduce young people to museums and galleries, she aims in this holiday activity book to make them just as aware of what lies around them at home.

This book visits many different locations from Blarney to the Giant's Causeway, but provides materials to make postcards, colour images, and even create one's own graphics book.

All excellent and absorbing stuff, which will encourage creativity, as well as promote an inquiring spirit. Excellent for those summer outings that, alas, can end in tears if not prepared for by parents.

**Charles Bukowski and Ernest Hemingway: Barfly & Bullfighter**

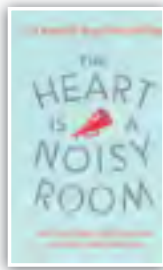
by Aubrey Malone  
(A limited edition from The Beat Scene Press, £8.00, from 27 Court Leet, Binley Woods, Coventry CV3 2JQ)

Bukowski, once called the "laureate of American low life", may not be to everyone's taste, though his attitudes lie somewhere in the hinterland inhabited by many of those who voted for Trump.

This short work by the *IC*'s film critic concerns the relations between the poet and the macho man supreme. The barfly's dislike of the novelist echoes what others, notably Morley Callaghan, have said, but is expressed in more pungent language.

The Hemingway of the early works disappeared into a mythic dust cloud of his own making. A Catholic of some kind by conviction – the jury is still out on this – Hemingway never developed any kind of aesthetic drawn from his latent faith as did Mauriac, Waugh, or Greene. "Art", as he saw it, got in the way of authenticity.

Malone's little book, like Bukowski's gritty writing, packs a lot of punch.



# The special powers of sacred spaces

**Unlocking the Church: The lost secrets of Victorian space**  
by William Whyte  
(Oxford University Press, £18.99)

Peter Costello

In the past Christianity poured a great deal of art, energy and money into buildings. So much so that the cathedrals of the middle ages have come in a special way to symbolise for many the very nature of the Church: their aspiring pinnacles promoting inspiration.

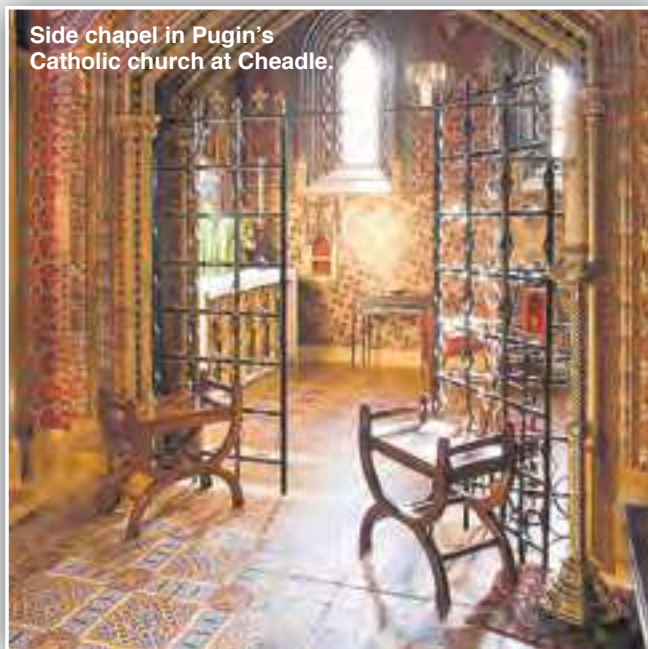
Today, however, all traditions are finding themselves having to preserve and care for buildings that strike many of us as useless to society. With talk of the community being important, not the edifice, much that earlier generations understood, or seemed to sense, is lost on modern visitors in search merely of "heritage".

Author William Whyte, vice-president of St John's Oxford, is Professor of Social and Architectural History in the university, as well as an associate priest in the Anglican parish of Wolvercote.

The focus of this fascinating book is on what the author sees as "the story of a revolution". The outcome was a range of buildings informed by the ideas of John Henry Newman, John Ruskin and Augustus Pugin, "and their ideas about the role of architecture in our spiritual life and well being".

## Restoration

This roll-call of names demonstrates that at the heart of what they sought was a restoration of medieval Catholic idea of how a church as a building should be



Side chapel in Pugin's Catholic church at Cheadle.

arranged, decorated, and used. These aspects of the building affected what was done in the church, and what was done outside the church in the general social life around it.

The book opens with an evocation of the little Anglican chapel created by Newman at Littlemore (which he loved deeply) and from which, at the great break in his life that made him whole, he left to enter the Catholic Church. There he achieved his full flowering, but never forgot that he had roots in the Anglican Tractarian movement.

This return of the Catholic through Tractarianism spilled over, as Whyte makes clear, into not only the Non-Conformist churches, but also into the Catholic Church itself, and its building ideas in the 19th Century, in Ireland as well as Britain.

In a series of five chapters he explores Victorian architecture in a genuinely inspiring way, discussing how the visitor should see, feel, visit, analyse and revisit the churches. Getting the most out of a church visiting demands not just some vague aesthetic pleasure, but a real appreciation of why things are the way they are in these buildings. Their purpose is not primarily to delight our senses, but to worship God.

Many visitors today can delight in the buildings, but not understand them. We speak loosely of heritage, but this surely ought to mean something, an expression of a feeling, a sense of truth, in which the visitor can share.

Throughout the book, as he explores with devoted expertise, the nature of the buildings that he loves, Whyte emphasises the need for all of us to

use our eyes, that seeing is necessary to knowing, and so he implies knowing may evolve into believing.

The focus on this book is on England. But he remarks in his preface that people living elsewhere in Scotland, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, and part of North America too, will find themselves living near a Victorian Church.

**“Many visitors today can delight in the buildings, but not understand them”**

This book will prove of interest and value to people living here in Ireland. That spill over between the different traditions can be seen here too: when the Catholic Church in Ireland commenced its great building campaign in this period it left behind the neo-classical of, say St Andrew's, Westland Row, for the pinnacled dominance of Armagh cathedral.

Here in Ireland we can see for ourselves in University Church in Dublin, or in Pugin's handful of buildings in the city and country, solid examples of what Prof. Whyte is discussing.

He mentions in passing how processions made a come-back. At one great event Anglican, Catholic and Non-Conformists all took part, all ending up in a picnic in the castle of Lord Bute, who three years later became a Catholic. The 19th Century in many ways was not quite what we often think it was.

This is a splendid book, thoughtful, insightful, informative and suffused with a sense of religion which is unusual in architectural historians.

## Sinfully good meals for the family



Ready to cook: Martina and Colette at work in their kitchen.

**Saintly Feasts: Food for Saints and Scholars**

by Martina Maher & Colette Scully, with Dries van den Akker SJ  
(Messenger Publications, €19.95 / £17.50)

Mary Litton

This is a lovely book by two charming and talented ladies, one in her 90s, who undertook to cook Sunday lunch for a Jesuit community in England.

Those familiar with present day Jesuit houses will know that though there is a hot lunch five days a week in them, the staff does

not work after five or at weekends: cold collations are the order of the evenings and weekends. Martina and Colette came to the rescue, returning to work as a sort of curial work of mercy that grew into something larger. They found a vocation for themselves in cooking.

This cookbook is a sample of the sort of things they made. It is all good traditional fare, nothing cheffy here.

The well loved traditional fish are, however, given a personal twist as their experience grew. From the roast rib of



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.

## Lively scenes from pre-Famine Cork

Young men leaping the bonfire on St John's Eve.



**Daniel MacDonald Painting and Pencillings Cork 1843-1844**  
(Exhibition at the Gorry Gallery; catalogue from Gorry Gallery, 20 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2)

**In the Lion's Den: Daniel MacDonald, Ireland and Empire** by Niamh O'Sullivan (Cork University Press, €20.00)

### Peter Costello

The exhibition of Daniel MacDonald works recently at the Gorry Gallery in Dublin was the first time that the work of the Cork painter Daniel MacDonald made an impression upon me. He is undoubtedly a great talent, as Niamh O'Sullivan has shown in her book about him and her extensive essay in the

exhibition catalogue.

There are inevitably echoes of contemporary English artists, Leech, Cruickshank, Phiz, are mentioned. But in the images of Daniel O'Connell I see H.B., the Dublin-born artist John Doyle, the grandfather of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Certainly for me this recent show presented provided a vivid "shock of the new". These are lively drawings and caricatures of Cork life in the two decades before the famine. This has been evoked by Mary Coakley in *Wine and Wit: Literary and Artistic Cork in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Glendale Press, 1985). MacDonald belonged then to the golden age in Cork, when it outshone Dublin, laying down its claim perhaps to be "Ireland's real capital".

The exhibit covered a wide range of yachting in Cork Harbour (very much a sport for the well-off middle classes to which MacDonald's family belonged), scenes of society on formal occasions and on less buttoned-up ones too.

But the real interest is the picture of rural life: these are humorous, but in a fond, even loving way. They reveal an active, energetic society, poor but under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell, hopeful of advance and change. These are images of a life before the Great Hunger shook the city, the country and the province to the core.

Here is an artist to look out for when visiting galleries in the future. Prof. O'Sullivan's book will open up a vision of a truly lost Ireland, to which we still owe so much.

beef down to the summer pudding, this is the stuff to give the clergy, not to speak of your domestic troop.

One would only balk at icing on the Bakewell tarts – such a finish takes from the pure almond and jam flavours. This may be a matter of taste, but that is the way mother made them long ago.

### Interesting

But the book is not all about cooking. A Dutch Jesuit friend has added to each recipe the life of a

saint.

These are very interesting as he has rightly chosen a great many little known-names.

Often the link with the receipt seems tenuous, but that does not matter at all. Others are humorous: as St Eve is coupled with roast rib of beef.

Indeed the idea that Adam and Eve are saints led to a discussion of the question at our dinner time; which goes to show what sort of book this is, food for the body, food for the mind.

One last point: this is the first cook book I have seen in years that mentions the question of cost.

The two ladies do the buying for the Sunday lunch, setting £5 a head as the guide line. This is more than one would allow for an ordinary family dinner in the week, but that rib roast with trimmings, a starter and a dessert might well rise to the five.

Celebrity chefs on the telly or in print never mention money, except when it comes to their own incomes.

## WebWatch

Greg Daly

## Words spoken from Benedict's post-papal silence

While it may be many years before we learn what seeds were successfully sown during last year's papal visit, such that the jury is out on whether or not it should be considered a success, there were few who attended 2012's International Eucharistic Congress who do not think it a triumph, a real forward-looking sign of hope for the Church in Ireland.

If there was a sour point in it for many, however, it will have been in Pope Benedict XVI's message to the congress, in particular when, after outlining some of the glories of the Irish Church, he turned to the subject of clerical sexual abuse.

"Thankfulness and joy at such a great history of Faith and love have recently been shaken in an appalling way by the revelation of sins committed by priests and consecrated persons against people entrusted to their care," he said in a speech that can be read in full at [w2.vatican.va](http://w2.vatican.va).

"Instead of showing them the path towards Christ, towards God, instead of bearing witness to his goodness, they abused people and undermined the credibility of the Church's message. How are we to explain the fact that people who regularly received the Lord's body and confessed their sins in the sacrament of Penance have offended in this way?"

### Mystery

"It remains a mystery," he said, shocking those who thought he might have some explanation to offer. He went on, however, to make a vitally important observation.

"Yet evidently, their Christianity was no longer nourished by joyful encounter with Jesus Christ: it had become merely a matter of habit. The work of the Council was really meant to overcome this form of Christianity and to rediscover the faith as a



Pope Francis talks with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

deep personal friendship with the goodness of Jesus Christ," he said.

Over six years have passed since the then Pope said this, but this week it became supremely clear that he has not simply shrugged this conundrum off as a mystery that cannot be explained. Wednesday saw three different outlets publishing an essay on this subject by the Pope Emeritus apparently written for a Bavarian publication, as "previously unpublished" ([catholicnewsagency.com](http://catholicnewsagency.com)), a "global exclusive" ([nypost.com](http://nypost.com)), and "special to the Register" ([ncronline.org](http://ncronline.org)).

How the three outlets acquired this essay ahead of, say, official Vatican media is a puzzle in its own right, of course, and a somewhat troubling one given how it's given further fodder to those who would foster divisions by making out as though there is a kind of cold war between Benedict and the Pope.

That's for another day, however; what's important here is how Benedict delves into questions of how traditional sexual morality was destabilised in the 20th Century, how this effected the formation and lives of priests, and how the Church might respond.

Crucially, he's not trying to do everything here – that would be an impossible task, given that he was writing a 6,000-word essay, not a book.

Instead he's grappling with an under-examined question, strikingly at odds with lazy questions of what it is in Catholicism or clerical life that encourages abuse; anybody with any familiarity of broader statistics knows that priests don't abuse more than others, and that Catholic societies are no more prone to abuse than others.

### Wicked things

Instead he's homing in on the question of why Catholicism didn't prevent abuse. Why did priests who presumably had objectively rich sacramental lives do monstrously wicked things? Why did bishops and others tasked with overseeing such priests endanger the innocent by not preventing such priests from harming children? How could anybody who purports to be Catholic have committed and facilitated such crimes?

The essay deserves reading and reflecting on in full, and in connection with it, it's worth reading the [revdbh.blogspot.ie](http://revdbh.blogspot.ie) post entitled 'Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI weighs in on abuse crisis', Carl Olson's editorial 'Benedict XVI's essay is both insightful and incomplete' at [catholicworldreport.com](http://catholicworldreport.com), and Austen Ivereigh's [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org) piece on how 'Pope Benedict's letter on sex abuse is not an attack on Francis (or Vatican II)'.  
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The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email [advertising@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:advertising@irishcatholic.ie)

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- Work with the parents/guardians of children receiving sacraments.
- Contribute to the development of Adult Faith Formation Programmes for the wider community.

Ideally, Candidates should have a Degree in Theology or equivalent qualification, some relevant experience, possibly teaching experience, current driving licence and use of a car.

Application in writing along with Curriculum Vitae and References to:

Fr. John Mc Tiernan P.P., Bridge St., Belturbet, Co. Cavan  
For more information please contact  
049-9522109 or 086-8391439.

Closing date for applications is  
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George Durner and Sr Sue Mosteller

will guide a retreat for priests from Ireland at the home of Jean Vanier Trosly-Breuil, France

Monday 16th September – Friday 20th September 2019

Further details contact:

Rev Niall Ahern, St Patrick's, Strandhill, Sligo, 071 9168147  
Rev Paul Farren, Catechetical Centre, Derry, +4428 71264087  
or email [pfarren@derrydiocese.org](mailto:pfarren@derrydiocese.org) for a booking form

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Remembering  
MEMORIAM CARDS  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
CARDS & NOTELETS  
BOOKMARKS

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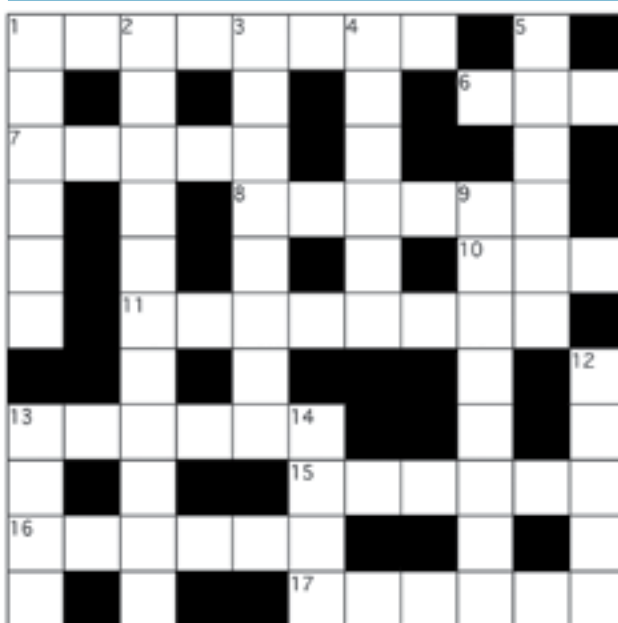
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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 278



## ACROSS

- 1 You may lean on these when walking if your leg is injured (8)  
 6 This container may be made of cardboard (3)  
 7 Large, juicy fruit (5)  
 8 Grown-ups (6)  
 10 Use oars to move a boat (3)  
 11 He comes from the Emerald Isle (8)  
 13 Making your choice in an election (6)  
 15 Movie stars (6)  
 16 Yell with fear (6)  
 17 You use it to rub things out (6)

## DOWN

- 1 Use it to take photographs (6)  
 2 They treated Cinderella very badly (4,7)  
 3 Person from a country beside the USA (8)  
 4 As much as is needed (6)  
 5 It will harm you if you swallow it (6)  
 9 Drive them sometimes while working on farms (8)  
 12 Someone who holds onto money, like Scrooge (5)  
 13 Piece of underwear (4)  
 14 Something that's fun to play (4)

## SOLUTIONS, APRIL 11

### GORDIUS No.398

**Across** – 1 Budgerigar 6 Mesh 10 Swine 11 Arboretum  
 12 Dynamic 15 Smart Alec 17 Oche 18 Imam 19 Corgi  
 21 Realist 23 Cameo 24 Stag 26 Eased 28 Thyroid 33 The Golden Rule 34 Duvet 36 Break of day

**Down** – 1 Bash 2 Dairy farm 3 Enema 4 Iraqi 5 Abba 7 Extra  
 8 Hamstrings 9 Trisect 13 Mice 14 Collect 16 Winchester  
 20 Retrieved 21 Road-hog 22 Slay 27 Steal 29 Henna  
 30 Rodeo 31 Oder 32 Stay

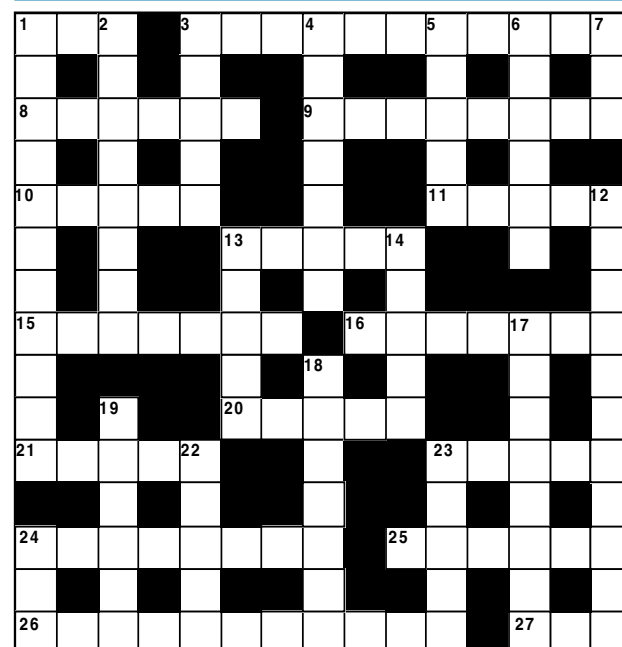
### CHILDREN'S No.277

**Across** – 1 Patrick 5 Soap 6 Ice-cream 7 Tusk 8 Nodded  
 11 Daring 12 Eggs 16 Aroma 17 Amazon 18 Tie

**Down** – 1 Painted 2 Treasure 3 Clean 4 Badge 5 Smudge  
 9 Disease 10 Sneeze 13 Ghost 14 Wand 15 Mat

## Crossword

Gordius 399



## ACROSS

- 1 Will you find corn on this swan? (3)  
 3 As far as uniforms are concerned, those are fighting words! (6,5)  
 8 Part of a garment rearranged in the local, right? (6)  
 9 Boxing equipment or a holdall for a puppet? (8)  
 10 Scottish island where Inspector Morse's sidekick may be found? (5)  
 11 Hot breakfast made with fish aloft (3-2)  
 13, 15 & 16 These virtues help one navigate a hypnotic firth ahead (5,4,3,7)  
 20 Air-filled cavity in the skull associated with the nose (5)  
 21 Soundly appreciate a joke (5)  
 23 Attempt to learn (5)  
 24 Motor with a bird to a fairground ride (8)  
 25 Cooking directions (6)  
 26 Oppressed when one has feathers trampled on (11)  
 27 Initially, this facilitates a postal reply (1,1,1)

## DOWN

- 1 By contrast to this mollusc exterior, is it mussels' heaven? (11)

- 2 With which to flog a bovine male (8)  
 3 Sounds asinine, but inlets are about right (5)  
 4 It looks like spinning toys lubricate this valuable earth! (7)  
 5 Faced up to providing a variety of coffee (5)  
 6 A life not yet born (6)  
 7 Droop (3)  
 12 Try no sleepy arrangement of synthetic fibre (11)  
 13 Financial resources (5)  
 14 Ditches these to sounds of laughter (5)  
 17 Instances of harm found in groups of twelve? (8)  
 18 The dangler looks wrinkled and worn like this (7)  
 19 A fight among animal skins is caused by a plough! (6)  
 22 Is it not what the ghost of your huncle might do? (5)  
 23 Severe, forbidding (5)  
 24 The accountant finds many a boulder (3)

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One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

## Sudoku Corner

278

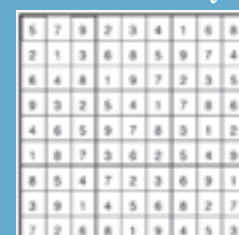
Easy



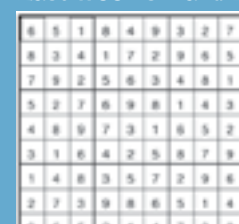
Hard



Last week's Easy 277



Last week's Hard 277





## Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



## They wondered

Who will  
roll the stone away  
they wondered  
as they wandered  
to the empty tomb.

Borrowed!  
like so many other rooms;  
the Bethlehem stable  
the Upper Room  
Martha and Mary's kitchen  
where great things happened

Welcome offered  
food prepared and shared  
lessons in listening  
borrowed yes, but always  
willing to repay

Repay!  
every act of kindness  
every word of encouragement  
every step taken  
every difference made

Made .....  
the tomb was made by man  
He was made of God.

The stone was rolled away.  
He is risen.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## The day love conquered fear and darkness

**IT MUST HAVE BEEN** a strange day. Early morning finds women on their way to the tomb. The Friday rush did not allow time for the decencies around burial to be observed and, in haste, Jesus was laid to rest. The stone was rolled into place and people moved away. For some, it was the end of another Friday but, for these women, for Mary and for those remaining of the eleven, it was the tragic and unexpected end of an amazing journey.

What a journey it had been! Mary had been part of it from the outset but, most of the others joined during his last three years. Miles travelled, miracles, wonders, healings and fish caught in abundance. Dreams were being fulfilled and a fresh hope took root in the hearts of his travelling companions. It all came crashing down.

The fall of Pilate's gavel, Judas' moment of blindness, Peter's denials, the mockery and scourging endured by Jesus and the three falls on the Calvary way painted a harrowing picture for the ones who had come to love and believe in him – to the point where they saw a new future. All ended, apparently, in the rolling of a stone and the closing of a tomb.



The rolling stone might not gather moss but for them it spelt total loss.

## Determination

Yet somehow these women are walking towards the location where they seemed to have lost everything. What was in them? From where came their determination? What was their driving force? Surely the answer is found in faith, in hope and in love.

Yes, their faith was shaken to its core but somehow the hope and love endured to a degree where

faith could be re-claimed, sought out, deepened and developed.

On arrival, they found the stone rolled back and the tomb emptied. Confusion abounded but bit by bit the story began to take a new shape and hope had its moment. Angels, gardener and one not at first recognised responded to the love that was so real for these women. "He is not here. He is risen. Look where they laid him". "Do not cling to me – go to the brothers and say to them"... "Mary"...

Like Judas' coins dropping to the floor, the penny began to drop and the journey re-commenced. "Some women from our group have astounded us, they speak of a vision of angels, who declared he was alive."

Others went on foot of this and found the tomb empty and everything as the women had reported "but of him they saw nothing"...until that moment they had failed to understand the meaning of the Scriptures that say he must "rise from the dead".

Sadly and truthfully we can identify with much of this story. Our Church is in a darkened corner now. The stone, for many, has been rolled into place and the burial is

complete. Many have walked away from the tomb – some heartbroken and others maybe less so. There remains however the spirit of those Easter Morning women and men with shaken faith but also the abiding hope and love that this cannot be the end.

## Message

Is there a message here for us on Easter Sunday morning? I honestly believe there is. It is a message rooted in uncertainty, confusion, hurt, failure and disappointment but also and more crucially a message that finds love through hope. Through that love and hope combined, we are lead again to a place of faith – a place where we must go and "tell the brothers and the sisters, he is risen".

Trócaire's slogan comes to mind ... "until love conquers fear".  
Happy Easter!



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