

The Irish Catholic

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YOUTH LEADERS

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Catholics urged to fight any plan to target Faith schools

Chai Brady

Catholics have been urged to fight any proposal to weaken Catholic schools after the Programme for Government published this week proposed a citizens' assembly on the future of education.

Theologian Dr John Murray of Dublin City University told *The Irish Catholic* that he would be concerned that "such an assembly could be used to give the illusion that there is a huge desire for a State takeover of education."

"That would amount to a complete rejection of Catholic education, but also the input of the minority faith communities," he said.

Dr Murray said "given previous citizens' assemblies, I would be concerned that it would be used to give the illusion of a landslide for change" that would effectively ban denominational schools and replace them with a one size fits all model regardless of parents' choice.

"That's the overall agenda as far as I can see," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

However, Dr Murray warned that there is need

for change and the process of divesting some Catholic schools must continue "where there is local demand".

Prof. Eamonn Conway of Mary Immaculate College in Limerick said he believed "it is time for a well-thought out negotiated settlement in regard to education between Church and State."

"The various Church bodies concerned urgently need to seize the initiative by preparing their own programme for appropriate divestment in return for key guarantees that will result in an authentic and well-resourced Catholic educational system."

"This is in the State's interest as well as it will enhance plurality of provision and parental choice," Prof. Conway said.

Warning

Dr Murray warned that it is important that the Church not allow Catholic schools to be "emptied out of their Catholic character".

He said that while respect for all religious traditions is evident in schools, any move to insist that Catholic schools

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Lilies for the gentlest of saints



Deirdre Spellissey and Anne Tiernan participate in celebrations for the feast of St Anthony in Ss Peter & Paul Cathedral in Ennis, Co. Clare.

Archbishop in plea for shorter homilies

Staff reporter

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has asked priests to shorten their homilies as public Masses begin at the end of the month.

In a note sent to priests this week, he said that "it is obvious that safe distancing makes a feeling of communion and community more difficult."

"Distancing could also lead to a deeper reflection on silence in the liturgy. It might even be the occasion to ask people to remain silent for a period before Mass begins in order to create a sense of prayerfulness," the archbishop writes.

Attention

On the homily, he writes that "It is advisable that ceremonies should not be prolonged unnecessarily. Homilies should be short and unnecessary interruptions reduced."

"All this will require attention to detail and a parish liturgy team

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DAVID QUINN

Christianity that is risk-averse is doomed to failure PAGE 12

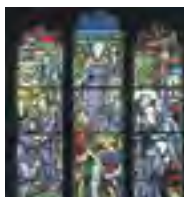


THE IRISH SPIRIT

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St Colmcille

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MARY KENNY

A police force is about service to the people PAGE 5



DO LOUGH DERG FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE June 27th – 29th 2020

More than 5000 pilgrims make the pilgrimage each year, many of them annually. This season, the pilgrimage will not be possible on the Island, so it seems right that I should offer the invitation to 'do Lough Derg wherever you are' to faithful pilgrims like these. But I am welcoming

anyone who may wish to be part of this historic event for Lough Derg. This will not be a virtual pilgrimage. It will entail the full exercises of the traditional Three Day Pilgrimage: the 24 hour vigil, the three day fast, and the nine Station Prayers performed in bare feet. I myself and some

of our team will make the pilgrimage these days. www.loughderg.live will offer support in real time to those doing the pilgrimage from afar. Wherever you are in the world, if you are willing to commit to this programme you are welcome to register to join us.

Fr La Flynn, Prior



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We cannot live without Mass [Page 32](#)



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We all need signposts that point us towards God



Editor's Comment
Michael Kelly



C.S. Lewis.

way of life, one needs the dimension of community. We also need examples of those who have gone before us and shown how the Christian virtues can be lived heroically, even in the midst of great adversity.

“The news this week that 15-year-old schoolboy Carlo Acutis is to be beatified in the autumn will be welcome for many young people”

This is acutely true in a post-Christian society where we live out our faith in an environment where the dominant culture is at best indifferent.

This is why the Church has always proposed the saints to us as witnesses to the Gospel in the midst of everyday life. The saints are not superhuman, or being who exist on an angelic plain – they are men and women who because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are able to live the Faith in an extraordinary fashion. The news this week that 15-year-old schoolboy Carlo Acutis is to be beatified in the autumn will be welcome for many young people (see Pages 14 and 15). To see one of their contemporaries held up as a model of holiness shows that living such a life not an unrealistic ideal, but something that is possible with the help of God. As C.S. Lewis puts it: “To become holy is rather like joining a secret society. To put it at the very lowest, it must be great fun!”

Individuals

Probably we all know such people in our lives, I know I certainly do. Individuals who live their faith in such a way that they make me a better person. Not in a preachy or judgemental way, but in the sense of being a signpost towards God. We all need such

pointers. Christianity lived in an individualistic way will very quickly die and turn in to a vague form of wellness with a smattering of morality about being nice to one another. To understand the faith as a

Funeral told Msgr Cassin left 'towering legacy'

Staff reporter

A key player in the Church's education policy in Ireland has been remembered as a reconciler. Msgr Jim Cassin died after a short illness and his funeral took place last week in the Church of the Assumption, Thomastown, Co. Kildare Bishop of Ossory Dermot Farrell said that Msgr Cassin – who served for many years as the hierarchy's key adviser on education – “combined a good intellect with great humil-

ity and benevolence, a way with people and good sense of humour. “He created unity; he was a builder of community around himself, a reconcile.” Dr Farrell said that “Jim, never wanted to offend; indeed, he never wanted to make a decision that would offend anyone”. Changes The bishop said that “over the 48 years of Jim's life as a priest there has been an enormous change in Irish culture that had a significant impact on the role and understanding of the Church in Irish society. “From the time of this ordination to his retirement, the understandings, activities, and pastoral strategies of the past were all being refashioned in the cauldron of the contemporary situation...Jim, who was never isolated or cut off from the ecclesial body or the ambient culture, was very well placed to carry out this particular responsibility as he was deeply embedded in the local and universal church and in the surrounding culture,” Bishop Farrell said.

Implementation 'crucial' to ending Direct Provision

Aron Hegarty

The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) has welcomed the new draft Programme for Government which contains a commitment to ending Direct Provision. In the draft published this week, assurances have been made that accommodation will be provided for asylum seekers. “This is a significant moment in the long campaign to end Direct Provision and is necessary step for triggering future change,” says Nick Henderson, CEO of the IRC. “While not a cure-all, the commitment to a capital and investment programme is very important. There have been false dawns in the past however and implementation will be crucial.” The announcement was a timely one at the beginning of World Refugee Week (June 15-21).

Targetting of Faith schools

» Continued from Page 1

teach that all religious traditions are equal would be “another stepping stone on the way to empty out the schools of all their character”. Meanwhile, Bishop Tom Deenihan of Meath told this newspaper that the Church “rightly sees education as a vital component for a flourishing society. “The Catholic Church will be anxious to work with the new Minister for Education in a spirit of partnership,” he said.

Plea for shorter homilies

» Continued from Page 1

could provide help,” according to Dr Martin. Underlying the fact that some people who are older or vulnerable will continue to stay away from Mass, Dr Martin insists that “Each parish should reflect on how Holy Communion can be brought to them in a worthy and prayerful manner. “Holy Communion is not a commodity to be just delivered. The Church has a long tradition of bringing the Eucharist to the sick directly from the Eucharistic celebration,” he writes.

Pilgrimages could begin in late July

Ruadhán Jones

As borders reopen across Europe, Niall Glynn of Marian Pilgrimages is "cautiously optimistic" that pilgrimages can begin in late July or early August. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mr Glynn said that they will be looking at restarting pilgrimages on a shrine-by-shrine basis.

"We're cautiously optimistic," he said. "A lot of it will come down to requirements, procedures and policies in the

regions themselves.

"For the Holy Land, we're looking at starting in September, Medjugorje around August.

"Ourdes is an interesting one, it's a situation moving very quickly from where they were two weeks ago.

"The shrine was pretty much closed two weeks ago, only 10 people at a time, but within a week and a half they had reopened.

"We'd be looking to put in our first small pilgrim-

age in and around the end of July, early August, with larger groups later in August.

Mr Glynn said that the main concern was safety and ensuring that high standards could be met regardless of location.

"We're taking a look and see approach, leaving it alone for a month, seeing how things pan out and if it's safe, then we'll ramp it up."

"A lot of it will come down to extra buses, extra guiding, extra hotel facilities so that we can maintain necessary distancing. We're setting up procedures so that come August/September, we're ready to send people out."

Mr Glynn praised the "loyalty and devotion" of pilgrims, many of whom have not asked for their deposits back.

"A lot of people see it almost as necessity to get pilgrimage once a year, so if they can't get out earlier, they will get out later, but it all comes down to safety in the end," he said.

"They're extremely content with our services, and the loyalty is there that they'll say look, keep the deposit until later on in the year. The hunger is there."

Time to reflect on Sacrament's centrality – Bishop McKeown

Lockdown is a chance to recognise that the Eucharist is not some "holy fuel", but an "intimate communion with Jesus", said Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry.

Speaking on Corpus Christi, Bishop McKeown said that if "we are not open to being in intimate communion with Jesus, allowing him to dwell within us, then receiving Communion has lost its roots.

"Receiving the Lord in the Eucharist is a free gift. But it came at a huge price to Jesus on the Cross. Accepting the Christ who was sacrificed on the Cross means becoming part of his sacrifice."

Bishop McKeown described receiving Communion as a public statement that we will fulfil our part of that covenant.

"That is why participation in the full action of the Eucharist is central to the life of the Christian community," he said.

"That is why every parish has to be actively planning so that we can be God's people, really and not just virtually."

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Lockdown weddings 'joyous occasions'



Atiyoyo Edafe and Darren Roche married on April 25 in Foxrock

Staff reporter

Lockdown weddings had the "same joy as if the church was full", said Fr John Bracken, who celebrated two of the just 82 weddings held during lockdown.

Thousands of weddings were cancelled during lockdown, but those that went ahead were "oases of joy", said Fr Bracken of Dundrum.

"Both were streamed on the webcam," he said. "Because of lockdown, it was a good hit on Facebook. So many people were texting and messaging in congratulations, even those who didn't know them! They were like an oasis, a bit of joy in all the sadness."

The weddings followed the same guidelines

as funerals, with ten people in attendance.

"The mothers acted as witnesses," said Fr Bracken. "and the fathers acted as photographers. It really was the parents and if there were siblings living in the country, they attended."

"Family abroad could look in on the webcam. For one wedding, the sister's recorder prayers of the faithful and sent them to me on WhatsApp, so they could be a part of the day as well."

"It was lovely – for me it's almost the ideal wedding, it's so intimate. They didn't have all the stress they'd normally have of massive preparation. It was a lot simpler, stripped back wedding."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

NI Catholic principals call for transfer test suspension

School in the North have been urged to suspend academic selection by the Catholic Principals Association.

More than 200 Catholic teachers called for so-called transfer tests to be removed for the upcoming academic year.

The call was made in an open letter. The principals also asked all grammar schools to suspend the tests.

Unofficial transfer tests have been used since the abolition of the 11-plus in 2008 and are run by private test providers Association for Quality Education (AQE) and the Post-Primary Transfer Consortium (PPTC).

So far about a dozen Catholic grammar schools have confirmed they will not use the test results to admit pupils in 2021.

Lourdes pilgrimage goes online for Limerick

Limerick diocese's annual Lourdes pilgrimage will go online from Friday this year.

Under the patronage of Bishop Brendan Leahy and Lourdes Director Fr Frank O'Dea, the Lourdes 2020 Virtual Pilgrimage runs from this Friday, June 19 to Monday, June 22, with celebrations being streamed live on the Limerick Diocese Facebook.

The pilgrimage – details of which are on the diocesan website – will open at midday on the Friday with an opening ceremony celebrated by Bishop Leahy and Fr Frank O'Dea, followed by Rosary led by Sr Margaret Hogan at 4.30pm.

Holy Italian teen example for Irish youth not to 'follow crowd'

Chai Brady

A young Italian man born in 1991 who is set to be beatified can be an example to Irish youth to be individuals and not fall into depression and drugs, according to the bishop of Waterford and Lismore.

Bishop Phonise Cullinan told this paper that computer programmer Carlo Acutis was "obviously in love with God and in love with others and so cheerful".

"So many of our young people are going around with long faces and how many of them are caught in depression and drug addiction? It's chronic and here we have a young man who's

telling us there is no need for all of this, Jesus loves you and just go for it and love him back."

It was announced over the weekend that Carlo would be beatified on October 10.

He was born in 1991 and died of leukemia aged 15.

The fact Carlo would have been the same age as many youths in their 20s now, Bishop Phonise says, is something "that can speak to young people right now".

"He's just a wonderful young man. One of the quotes from him that really struck me, in English it's 'we are born unique, but so many of us die photocopies', isn't that so true?"

"How many people just mimic the

trend and never really become themselves? Rather than using their freedom to be the people that God wants them to be and use all their God-given gifts they tend to follow the crowd, wherever the crowd is going, which is usually in the wrong direction.

Influence

Bishop Phonise said that "we all need role models in life no matter who we are, whether we're conscience of it or not we're constantly being influenced by those around us".

These role models, if the influence is good, he said a person's "actions will tend to be good, and the opposite is also true".

"In every Christian's life there are

people whom we emulate, even if you take something as simple as picking a name for Confirmation, you tend to pick a name of a saint that you have some affinity with, some connection to and being inspired by that particular saint.

He added: "[Carlo] was such a 'normal' young lad but at the same time so individual in some of the things that he has said are so profound."

The beatification will take place in Assisi at 4pm at the Basilica of St Francis.

Carlo was born in London to Italian parents who soon returned to Milan. He attended daily Mass, frequently praying the Rosary and making weekly confessions.

Parishes need 'advice and encouragement' from bishops

Ruadhán Jones

Parishes need "practical advice" from bishops to help with "complex process" of opening churches, said Fr Aquinas Duffy of Cabinteely parish.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Duffy praised the recent framework document published by the Irish bishops, but said that it provided more questions than answers at this point.

"They bishops are doing what they can by sending out the framework document, it is a good help," said Fr Duffy. "But there are more questions than solutions and answers in it."

"The problem is each parish being left to themselves to come up with solutions and

it's extremely challenging.

"Our own situation in Cabinteely, for example – if we want to return to pre-lock-down schedule, we'd need an enormous amount of volunteers which I'd be surprised if we get."

"The number of masses we do won't be dependent on the priest, but on the volunteers we need."

Fr Duffy said that parishes can feel quite isolated as a result of the huge commitments.

"What we're really looking for are two things: one is practical solutions as to how we can reopen," said Fr Duffy.

"The second is encouragement. It's an important thing at the moment, for bishops to support and encourage parishes."

Prepare ye the way of the Lord



Members of the Polish community Eliza and Lena Pawlowsky work on St Joseph's Well in Barefield in advance of the feast of the Sacred Heart.



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Global firms need to follow up talk on Child Slavery with action – Aontú

Ruadhán Jones

Companies operating in Ireland must end the use of child labour in supply chains, said the Caithaoirleach of Ógra Aontú.

Speaking on the International Day Against Child Labour, Ben Conroy said "child labour is modern slavery, and

our global companies in our society still rely on it".

"At a time in which people are becoming increasingly aware of the many structural injustices that are present in the modern world," he said, "we see major corporations talking a good game about inclusion and equality."

"But it's one thing to talk about it:

another to do something about it."

Mr Conroy continued, saying: "Black lives matter, and black children's lives matter."

"Successive governments have been very keen to make Ireland an attractive place for multinationals to operate: the government should insist that companies operating in Ireland need to be child labour free."

A police force’s ideal

The appalling behaviour of some of the American police which we’ve seen in recent times is, it seems, partly because of their very powerful trade unions. Derek Chauvin, the police officer who stands accused of the killing of George Floyd, had already faced at least 17 complaints of misconduct. Yet his career flourished because the American police unions ferociously defend the men and women in their force, making it almost impossible to sack even those who have been at fault repeatedly.

If nobody is ever fired for indiscipline or misconduct, then, inevitably, bad apples will thrive and tragedies and malfeasances will occur. People in positions of power – and any individual with a gun in his holster and a licence to use it in a position of power – must be held accountable.

Power
Looking back nearly 100 years, I think we should be proud of the way the Garda Síochána – an unarmed police force – was established in Ireland in 1922-23. Despite the fact that the country had been bristling with guns, and many willing to use them, Kevin O’Higgins, the Minister for Justice, insisted that the gardaí should be unarmed. He believed an armed police force would lead to more shooting in the streets: the gardaí’s most powerful weapon, paradoxically, could be that



Mary Kenny



A Maasai man in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya prays next to a mural of George Floyd, painted by the artist Allan Mwangi.

they were defenceless. This would make the population at large more sympathetic to them – and would thus lead to the excellent civic principle of ‘policing by consent’. They sometimes were attacked by those who did not accept the Free State, but the unarmed policy stayed, and helped to create a constabulary which was accepted by the people, in a way that the RIC never had been (although quite a few former RIC men became Gardaí, and made the transition successfully). The first Garda Commissioner

was Eoin O’Duffy – who later became the leader of the Blueshirts – and he set out a high moral standard for the behaviour of the new force. A garda, he told the recruits, should “have a spirit of patriotic devotion and selflessness” – but he was also a guardian of all the people, not any one faction of it. Athleticism – a background in the GAA – was favoured, as was abstinence from alcohol: they got extra points if they had a pioneer

pin! The Cadetship, writes Fearghal McGarry in his superb biography of O’Duffy, was open to single young men who were educated, possessed 24 teeth, and had a sound moral outlook. Discipline was enforced and a ‘knowledge of life’ taught.

“A police force is not just about protecting the jobs of the cops...”

Great care was taken in the selection of recruits, so that they would observe ‘ideals of service’, with a “clean, moral outlook and temperate habits... and pride in their calling”. Trust was emphasised – trust in the state and in the people.

There clearly have been gardaí who have failed to meet the ideals and standards upheld. O’Duffy himself was a flawed character. Yet the Garda Síochána were set on the right path from the start.

A police force is not just about protecting the jobs of the cops: it’s about service to the people and the lawfully elected state, through consent, not guns.



Just how deeply do we investigate Elizabeth I?

The Church of England is minded to investigate Queen Elizabeth I’s role in slavery. Well, she was involved up to the hilt with Sir Francis Drake, who was something of a pirate and buccaneer around the Spanish Main.

But wait a minute – does this mean that her role in establishing Trinity College Dublin will be questioned? Slavers funds used to extinguish Papists?



In praise of the benefits of shopping...

There’s been a certain degree of snootiness about the folks who, as soon as the shops open again for business, queue up for hours to get to buy a pair of shoes, or a frock or a household gadget. But shopping and trading add cheerfulness to a city or town, and it’s a social activity as well as a mercantilist one. The wheels of commerce provide gainful employment, and help to fund the state’s exchequer for the common good –

health, education, welfare services. Shopping has a beneficial side, though perhaps like wine, or watching TV, it’s best done in moderation. Religious practice – and pilgrimage – have often included a little shopping on the side. Mont St Michel in Brittany, a place of holiness, has little stalls selling religious artefacts and souvenirs all the way up to the exquisite church at the top: it’s claimed some of them have been on site

since the 12th Century. A boutique adjacent to the lovely Chapel of the Miraculous Medal in the Rue de Bac in Paris does a brisk trade in a wide range of goods (all served by efficient multi-lingual nuns, very nimble on the currency-exchange calculators). There’s an element of what I call Cromwellite Puritanism about looking down on shopping and commerce. Let the people shop!

People realising ‘we can’t do without God’, says Bishop Nulty

Ruadhán Jones
We are seeing “small green shoots of recovery” as a result of the pandemic, said Bishop Denis Nulty. Speaking on Corpus Christi, Bishop Nulty said that “everything has been disrupted; it’s only now there are some small green shoots of gentle recovery”. “Our church overnight moved into a

virtual community with a huge following.” Bishop Leahy added that “many of our churches operated physical distancing by default before the pandemic, because the regular practice rate was about 22%”. But he continued, saying: “We are reliably told many more have been engaging with the online presence of the Church. “Perhaps people are realising we can’t do without God.”



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Govt push for exclusion zones dubbed 'vindictive'

Chai Brady and Aron Hegarty

The decision to include the pursuit of exclusion zones outside abortion centres in the Programme for Government has been described as "vindictive" by the Life Institute.

The programme set out by Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party states the new Government will: "Establish exclusion zones around medical facilities."

Níamh Uí Bhriain of the Life Institute said constitutional provisions have remained the same and "people have a right to protest".

"The vigils at hospitals have been very peaceful and that's been confirmed by gardaí. I think the inclusion of the desire to create exclusion zones outside abortion centres shows the vindictiveness of the Government and in particular I would imagine of senior ministers."

"What we're talking about here is people either praying peacefully outside an abortion centre or people offer-

ing women what they might need to help them with their pregnancy. How can that be offensive to anybody, unless you are wholeheartedly into the idea that abortion is the only solution that women should be offered."

Regulations

Meanwhile Christian leaders in Northern Ireland have criticised the UK Government after Members of the House of Lords voted this week to approve new abortion regulations for the North.

In total, 355 voted for the regulations with 77 voted against.

"The people of Northern Ireland do not want these

regulations," said Nola Leach, chief executive of Christian Action Research and Education (CARE).

"Members of the House of Lords have voted for regulations that directly discriminate against people with disabilities [sic] and were rejected by a majority in the Northern Ireland Assembly only a few weeks ago."

"MPs need to consider that, by voting for these regulations, the message they are sending to the people of Northern Ireland is that unborn babies have no value, particularly unborn babies who have disabilities."

A recent poll in NI reveals the majority of respondents

do not support abortion to birth for Cleft Lip, Cleft Palate or Down's syndrome.

The poll of 1,878 respondents, conducted by Lucid Talk from June 3-5 for CARE NI, shows more than two thirds (72%) were against abortion to birth for otherwise healthy babies with a cleft lip or palate.

In addition, over two thirds (67%) were opposed to abortion for Down syndrome between 24 weeks gestation up to birth.

i The Rally For Life is hosting a 'Virtual Rally for Life' online from July 1-5. For more information, go to rallyforlife.net or follow the hashtag #RallyForLife2020



Fr Bryan Shortall PP of Priorswood in Dublin is preparing for the reopening of churches for public worship. He has introduced hand sanitising stations in his church.

Mixed reaction as Occupied Territories Bill dropped

Chai Brady

Over a dozen religious leaders have said they are "delighted" the Occupied Territories Bill was dropped in the draft Programme of Government in a statement issued this week, while Trócaire have called for

its implementation.

Signed by over a dozen clergy and lay people of a variety of denominations, the leaders stated: "This bill was seen by the Jewish people as part of the increasingly discredited Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) move-

ment," it said.

"We do accept that Sen. Francis Black had a good motivation in proposing this bill but pushing Ireland into an anti-Israel camp will not advance the peace process in the Middle East."

Rather than mentioning the bill, the draft programme states: "Ireland's longstanding support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will remain an integral aspect of our foreign policy and we will continue to build consensus at EU

level to take a more proactive approach in supporting a negotiated two-state solution and lasting peace process."

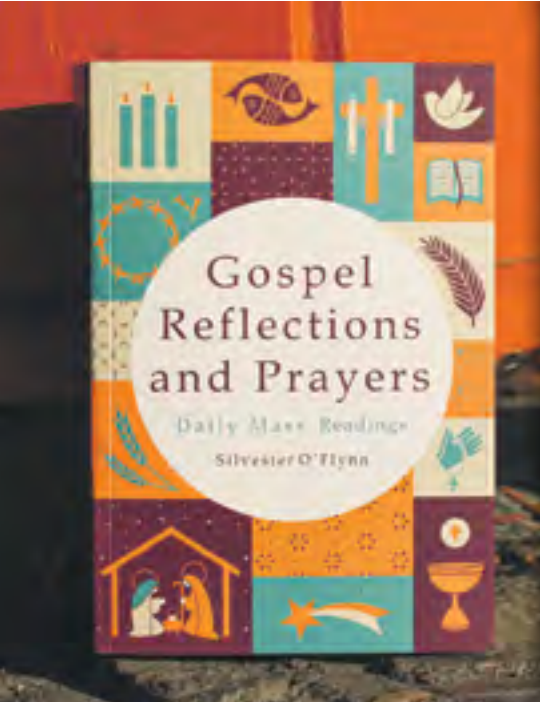
It adds they will oppose any annexation or plans to apply Israeli sovereignty over territory in the West Bank.

Church-charity Trócaire issued a statement this week repeating calls for Ireland to "show leadership" by enacting the Occupied Territories Bill.

CEO Caoimhe de Barra said: "...the Programme for Government also reiterates

Ireland's support for international law and opposition to settlement construction in the West Bank.

"Ireland has a strong reputation on this front, but what we need to see is a willingness to move beyond words and towards action. The Occupied Territories Bill has the clear support of the majority of parties in Dáil Éireann. It is morally right and legally sound. We urge parties to continue to push for its enactment."



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Be not afraid, God is with us

Once upon a time...not too long ago...it took courage of a sort not to go to church in holy Ireland. People who did not go to church were regarded as odd, or maybe worse.

They swam against the social tide which equated church attendance with respectability. How things have changed! Now it takes courage to witness to Christian beliefs and ideals. One has to swim against the current of popular opinion stirred up by social media brain-washing and cynical agnosticism.

We are given to understand that normal people have nothing to do with religion. And there are prophets of doom who spread anxiety like a virus. Three times in today's gospel Jesus repeats: "Do not be afraid." This is the phrase most often repeated in the Bible. God knows

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



how fear can paralyse us so he continually exhorts us to have courage, to have confidence. If people opposed Jesus and called him diabolical names, why should we be surprised if we have to put up with a little mockery? We are in good company when we are with Jesus.

Contribution

Pope Francis, speaking to a group of young priests, compared them to aeroplanes: they make news only when they crash! The news never reports that 9,999 planes landed safely today. The wonderful contribution of the Church to education, culture, medical care, feeding

the hungry, working for justice and peace, is being airbrushed out of history.

But Jesus tells us not to be afraid because the time will come when the full truth will be recognised. "Everything now covered will be uncovered and everything now hidden will be made clear." Be not afraid: God sees the full picture.

"So, if anyone declares for me in the presence of others, I will declare myself for them in the presence of my Father in Heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of others, I will disown in the presence of my Father in Heaven." Be not afraid: God is with us. "Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right, theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

i Extract from Silvester O'Flynn: *Gospel Reflections and Prayers* (Columba Press).



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Martin Mansergh

The View



Coalition's 'holistic vision of progress' will need uncommon political will

The country's most important and imposing statue, that of Daniel O'Connell, on the capital's main thoroughfare, should be safe from attack (except by seagulls and pigeons), as he championed the anti-slavery cause. In 1845, he greeted the famous campaigner and at that point escaped slave Frederick Douglass, who was on a lecture tour of Ireland and Britain.

O'Connell had a clear unequivocal position of principle against slavery, and was on the right side of history, unlike some of his Young Ireland critics, who did not want to alienate potential support from the American South.

A past generation of historians tended to underplay the subject, including the firebrand patriot John Mitchel's later support for the South and for slavery.

Watching again after 30 years the box set *North and South*, the last series shows that the legacy of slavery did not go away with its actual abolition at the end of the American civil war. Part of the current crisis has stemmed, not just from heavy-handed policing, but from a misguided political appeal, rarely overt but perceptible, to the after-culture of confederacy.

Self image

Ireland, too, has things to reflect on both in its present and its past. We need to interrogate dispassionately how far our idealistic self image as a country with an anti-imperialist identity and without historical baggage articulated at the highest level actually conforms with either present-day or historical reality. It is not about looking for scapegoats, or imagining that the problem came exclusively from one tradition, but about making honesty and credibility coincide.

Catholic Emancipation, which was primarily the right of Catholic MPs to sit in parliament, came at a price, which was the disenfranchisement of a

large number of smaller Catholic property-occupiers. Nevertheless, it led to the gradual unravelling of the Union.

Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin (JKL) did not believe that repeal was an achievable objective at the time, with or without force. I quote a letter of his from a lecture given in Carlow College by Dr Thomas McGrath, the leading authority on Bishop Doyle, in 2019:

"We must proceed on another course...change not less important than revolutions may be effected without the sword...I would rather see Ireland regenerated than ruined, and I would prefer a lesser degree of happiness than to see her thrown into a furnace having no assurance of her escape from it."

“It looks as if the concluding phase of the decade of centenaries will be presided over by the two parties that are heirs to the Irish revolution and that split over the Treaty”

Nearly a century later, much had evolved, including the advance of democratic rights and a recognition at least in theory that small nations had a right to govern themselves, so that a war of independence, though not without its costs, including partition, at least had some chance of being successful. In contrast, the attempt to reunify Ireland by force ostensibly directed against Britain never had a realistic chance of success.

It looks as if the concluding phase of the decade of centenaries will be presided over by the two parties that are heirs to the Irish revolution and that split over the Treaty, with the very necessary addition of the Greens and support of a few



independents.

The electorate voted for change, but, as in any representative system, left it to the parties to work out what form that should take.

There is no merit in trying to postpone further the challenge of getting to grips with climate change, that has manifested itself in Australian forest fires, hurricanes and flooding, and the rapid spread of a deadly disease, the long-term political, economic and social consequences of which are likely to be far-reaching, even if at this point difficult to assess.

* * * * *

Over many decades, a dominant party in the State

preached not just the virtues but the practical necessity of single-party government, last experienced over 30 years ago.

Despite the real difficulty and prolonged effort required to construct a stable government from a disparate political landscape, as was shown both in 2016 and so far this year, there is much to be said for harnessing different values, perspectives, interests and objectives as the best method of maximising public welfare. A vigilant opposition that can lead a government on occasion to modify its course is also essential. Since January 1922, we have never had a national government. The Collins-de Valera pact might

have averted a civil war, but it was vetoed by the British government along with the draft agreed constitution that underpinned it and which would have removed the divisive issue of the crown.

The confidence and supply arrangement that supported the previous government achieved important advances, even if there still remained glaring gaps. The acting government since the first meeting of the Dáil after the general election has overall coped remarkably well with a full-blown national and international crisis, in a way that can stand up to comparison, even as it exposed critical shortcomings that have to be

addressed.

What it shows is that we have a reasonably resilient constitutional framework with which to deal with all eventualities as well as a strong sense of public spirit and solidarity to draw on. All those several challenges may be further compounded by a messy and unsatisfactory implementation of post-Brexit trade arrangements, though, mostly, political realities tend to have a way in the end of politically asserting themselves, as they did in the case of last autumn's withdrawal agreement

“A more holistic vision of progress than the purely economic underlies the Programme for Government”

A quick glance at the negotiated Programme for Government suggests a very ambitious plan that will require considerable and uncommon political will-power and a benign recovery from Covid-19 to fulfil.

A more holistic vision of progress than the purely economic underlies it, with a strong emphasis on a better work-life balance, including extended parental leave and more flexible working, on meaningful regional development (such as the Technological University of the South-East), as well as revived town centres. Getting around will be less car-based. More multi-denominational schools are envisaged, and a referendum promised on Article 41.2 of the Constitution to amend or delete the clause on the role of woman within the home following a citizens' assembly.

“There is no merit in trying to postpone further the challenge of getting to grips with climate change, that has manifested itself in Australian forest fires, hurricanes and flooding, and the rapid spread of a deadly disease...”

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Out&About

Congratulations, Fr Willie

KILDARE: Clergy, including Bishop Denis Nulty, celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Fr Willie O'Byrne of Kill, Ardclough and Johnstown parish in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.



► **TIPPERARY:** Fr Billy Meehan PP at St Mary's, Irishtown in Clonmel celebrated his Golden Jubilee of his Ordination. The Sacristan, Eddie Sweetman presented him with a replica of the cross and dome of the church from parishioners.

► **DUBLIN:** The Sisters of St Clare in Harold's Cross wanted to acknowledge all the help and support people were giving during the Covid-19 pandemic so they erected a banner of encouragement at the entrance of their convent. They told this paper: "For this we pray for them daily."



IN SHORT

Deacon commends families for 'resilience' during lockdown

The CEO of Cloyne Diocesan Youth and Community Services (CDYS) has commended the "resilience" of those using the Youth and Community Services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

CEO, Deacon Brian Williams, who is a Permanent Deacon in the parish of Macroom, said they are "absolutely taken aback by the resilience of many families and vulnerable people we are working with across the Diocese and beyond throughout this time".

"Things are really difficult for people, we have seen an upsurge in contacts to our services from families who have concerns about young people and the ongoing effects

of social lockdown and the continued uncertainty.

"We have seen an increase in the instances of issues in families relating to a lack of food, domestic violence, mental health challenges and a range of other difficulties that have become more acute over the last three months. We are absolutely privileged to be able to help so many families and young people despite the demands, uncertainty and challenges."

Deacon Williams voiced concern about the rise in alcohol/drug use and its effect on mental health.

"The issue of alcohol and drug use is immense in our communities and we are seeing the direct consequences of this more clearly during the last number of months. The lockdown has given us a unique vantage point into the extent of drug and alcohol

use in our communities, it has slowed us all down enough to see what was in front of us for years," he said.

"It's sad, it's a waste of so much promise, but there is always a way back if we are willing to meet the challenges.

"In our work as a frontline youth and community services and also in my work as a deacon I can see first-hand how the isolation of the last number of months is taking its toll on people who otherwise would have had little or no need of our supports. The fear, grief and anxiety in people's lives cannot be underestimated. As we begin to emerge from the lockdown, I would ask people, community groups and parishes to continue to keep those who are struggling and vulnerable in their prayers, to stay connected and in contact with isolated families and young people."

Deacon Williams added that those who have less will always need additional help, support and understanding.

"Please continue to look out for one another. Our humanity, our community response, our faith and our dedication has served as a beacon for many during the darkness and difficulty of the last three months. Let us keep this beacon burning brightly to make sure no one is left alone as we forge a new normal in our lives."

Ferns bishop announces diocesan appointments

Bishop Brennan has announced the diocesan appointments this month that will come into effect on the weekend of August 8-9.

The Bishop of Ferns, Dr Denis Brennan, announced the following clerical changes:

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



DUBLIN: Fr Martin and Fr Michael at the Mass Rock from Penal Times in Rathfarnham.



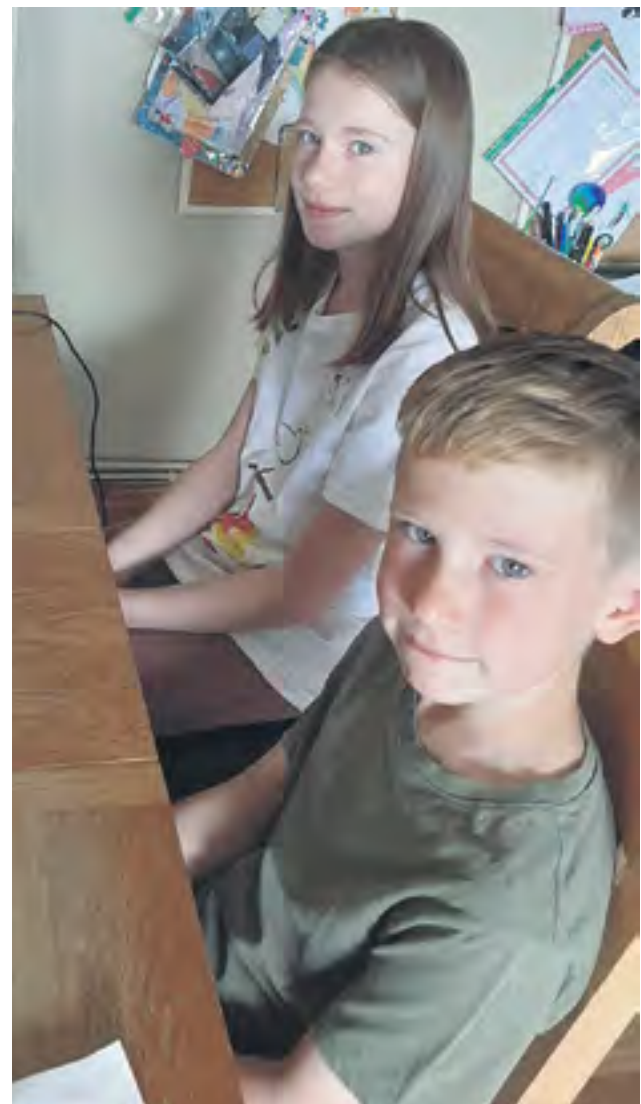
DUBLIN: Fr Seán O'Shaughnessy CSSp pictured on his 90th birthday last week where he lives in Kimmage Manor.



WEXFORD: Bishop Denis Brennan plants a tree at St Ann's Church Rathnure to mark the occasion of his Golden Jubilee as a priest of the Diocese of Ferns.



DUBLIN: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin archdiocese talks to RTE's Ailbhe Conneely on the new guidelines issued by Ireland's hierarchy last week on re-opening churches safely for worship.



DERRY: Kate and Aodhan watch the Fan the Flame Mass online earlier this month in the Diocese of Derry.

Fr Richard Redmond CC Ferns to be PP Ramsgrange. Fr Ricky O Connor CC New Ross to be CC Ferns. Fr Chris Hayden CC Coolfancy to sabbatical leave. Fr Richard Lawless PP Craanford to one year's leave.

Fr Brian Whelan Adm. Ramsgrange to Adm. Craanford.

The Bishop of Ferns also announced that Fr Pat Mernagh, chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces, will go to be parish priest of Kilmore, which will come into effect on December 5-6.

Riverdance doctors record video for Trócaire

Three Irish doctors feature among the stars of *Riverdance's* 25th anniversary cast to have recorded a dance

compilation video in support of Trócaire's latest appeal.

Doctors Maria Buffini, Shona Cobbe and Gillian Madders are all working on the frontline in Ireland's hospitals, but the trio took time out of their schedules to record a message of support for Trócaire's Covid-19 response in 19 of the world's poorest countries.

Over 40 dancers from *Riverdance's* troupe appeared in the video, which has been recorded in support of the charity's 'Make Your Trócaire Box Count' appeal.

With each dancer recording their own segment in isolation, their performances feature scenery from a number of Irish cities and counties, including Dublin, Belfast, Clare and Galway, as well international locations such as

Sydney, New York and London.

Trócaire recently asked supporters to return donations from their Trócaire boxes online or over the phone. The development agency has warned that a 60% decline in donations to its Lenten Appeal has put many of its life-saving programmes at risk.

Dr Maria Buffini of Dublin's Connolly Hospital, Dr Shona Cobbe of the Coombe Hospital, Dublin and Dr Gillian Madders of University Hospital, Galway are three Riverdancers who feature in the video.

Explaining the background to the video, Dr Madders explained: "*Riverdance* is a proud sponsor of Trócaire and we are asking you to visit trocaire.org and make a donation today. Your support could make a big difference."

Events

● In the current Covid-19 crisis, it is clear that most (and perhaps all) Church events are suspended. Consequently, we are withholding the popular Events Listing column until normal activities can resume in our parishes. However, please do email us if you know of any parish event planned and we will publish details.

A form of Christianity that is risk-averse is doomed to fail



If we are not willing to be troublemakers, it is no wonder that the secular culture takes no notice of us, writes **David Quinn**

Are we still a Church of risk-takers? I'm not so sure. I think we have become increasingly risk-averse, taking the safe, soft option when choices must be made. We have become the opposite of prophetic and evangelistic. We prefer to go with the flow, to avoid confrontation, to run away from making people feel uncomfortable. A Church which is like this, will not inspire people or grow.

It was not always like this. Go back right to the start, right back to Jesus. He took risks, big ones. He would calculate the risk in a given situation. Sometimes he would seek confrontation, as with the pharisees, but other times he would decide the time wasn't right and fight the battle on another day.

Trial

When Jesus finally goes to Jerusalem to face trial and execution, he knows what awaits him, but he does it anyway. He knows it is necessary. He chooses, reluctantly, the Cross. He does not have a martyrdom complex. It is important to say this. Some people actively seek martyrdom, which is wrong. Jesus would rather avoid it. This is why he pleads with God in the Garden of Gethsemane to take this cup from him.

The Cross is a symbol of pain and suffering, of redemption and hope. We are not to actively seek out our crosses, but we are not to go out of our way to avoid them either. If they come our way, we must accept them. That is the only way the



burden will be light.

We see the apostles shy away from Jesus when the mob comes for him. That is our usual instinct, and an understandable one. It ultimately takes Pentecost for them to regain their nerve and take the risks necessary to preach the Christian Faith.

St Paul, the greatest missionary, was a supreme risk-taker. As he went from one town to another he was in constant danger. He was beaten, flogged, stoned, ship-wrecked, imprisoned and ultimately killed for preaching the Gospel.

Everywhere he went, he caused trouble. You read this over and over again in the Acts of the Apostles.

For example, he causes a riot in Ephesus. How? Because he was leading people away from the pagan goddess, Artemis, and this meant craftsmen who made their living from selling

silver shrines to her were in danger of losing business. So they stirred up the townspeople against Paul and caused a riot.

“Right from the earliest times, conversion to Christianity has often involved great risk, and not just to the convert, but possibly to their family as well”

In Philippi, he wins a slave girl to the Christian Faith, but this hugely upsets her owners because she was a fortune-teller, and they made a fortune out of her. Now that she was a Christian, she didn't want to tell fortunes anymore (because to do so second-guesses God). Her

owners seized Paul and his companion, Silas, and dragged them before the authorities.

They accused them of “advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice”. The two people are stripped, beaten, flogged and imprisoned. In the end they are released because, as Roman citizens, they had rights which have been violated.

There are plenty more examples like this. Paul exposes him to danger repeatedly anyway.

Does Paul inspire us now, or make us nervous? When his story is read out at Mass we probably listen blankly most of the time. I know I did. But recently I began reading the Acts properly, and especially the deeds of St Paul. They are incredible.

Would you have taken the risks he did? I know I wouldn't. But without someone taking those risks,

we never would have even heard of Christianity.

And it is not simply that Paul was taking risks, he was actively causing trouble. He was expressly challenging the Jews of his day to recognise Jesus as the Messiah, which caused huge upset, and he was telling the pagans that their Gods were false, which also caused enormous anger. But he did so without hesitation.

What do the modern theologians of missionary activity make of this? For a start, do they think it is even worthwhile to convert people to Christianity or it is enough that people simply become the best version of themselves?

Do they think it is wrong to go about causing so much trouble, as Paul did? If that is so, then what was the point of Jesus, who expressly told the Apostles to make disciples of all nations and caused plenty of trouble himself through his direct confrontations with the religious authorities of his day, the confrontations which caused his death.

Right from the earliest times, conversion to Christianity has often involved great risk, and

not just to the convert, but possibly to their family as well. If you convert and are killed or imprisoned as a result, what happens to them?

What would a mentality that puts safety, risk-aversion and a false view of peace first, have to say to such a person?

What would it say to someone in (for instance) North Korea who was thinking today of joining a secret house church at gigantic risk to themselves? Would it advise them not to, for both their own sake and that of their family?

Risks

In many parts of the world, the Church still takes risks. Christians are being persecuted for their faith. These are often the parts of the world where it is also still growing, paradoxically.

Here, we play it safe. We seem to think this is the most Christian thing to do. Are we growing? On the contrary. In fact, a Christianity that no longer takes risks and causes trouble is barely Christianity at all.

“St Paul, the greatest missionary, was a supreme risk-taker. As he went from one town to another he was in constant danger. He was beaten, flogged, stoned, ship-wrecked, imprisoned and ultimately killed for preaching the Gospel”



While public appetite for dismantling parental choice in education is low, those who value faith schools must prepare, writes **Michael Kelly**

At the national education conference hosted by *The Irish Catholic* last October Bishop Tom Deenihan effectively warned that if the Church could not move more quickly on the issue of divesting some more schools to a non-Catholic patronage, the decision well might be made for us.

The Programme for Government announced this week after talks between Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party may well prove his point. The document insists that the new administration will establish a citizens' assembly "on the future of education ensuring that the voices of young people and those being educated are central".

What can be the harm in that, I hear you ask? Well, the reality is that previous incarnations of the citizens' assembly have really been used as fora to soften up public opinion for something that is contentious. Take, for example, the gatherings on same-sex marriage and abortion. I think that few truly neutral observers would accept that these events – despite eminent chairs – heard equally from all sides.

Such an assembly is likely to look at Bunreacht na hÉireann and what the Constitution currently

Programme for Government may lead to referendum on Catholic schools



says about education. For those who are bit rusty on the issue, it says, amongst other things that "the State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children".

It adds that "the State shall not oblige parents in violation of their conscience and lawful preference to send their children to schools established by the State, or to any particular type of school designated by the State".

Approach

Crucially, the document says that the State shall provide "for" education, rather than providing education *per se*. This relatively 'hands off' approach has allowed voluntary schools that cater to the needs of parents to flourish. Traditionally, faith schools have dominated the sector, but

increasingly Educate Together – another voluntary partner – have built a network of non-denominational schools to cater for parents who don't want their child educated in a faith-based environment.

Are there enough non-religious schools? The answer is undoubtedly, no. But the Church has been working to divest schools with varying levels of interest from the Department of Education.

A citizens' assembly on education is likely to cast a critical eye on the current landscape and push for greater State control of education. Already, Catholic schools are greatly curtailed in what they can do – State control would be the death knell for this.

One doesn't have to be a prophet to see a referendum on so-called 'school equality' on the cards in the not too distant future.

The purpose of the referendum, of course, would be to end Church patronage of schools, and along with it all forms of school patronage, and to replace the

current system with State control of all State-funded schools.

Of course, there's no public demand for such a referendum, but put a few 'on message' experts all over the airwaves, a smattering of hard cases where children have been denied a place in an over-subscribed school (for the record a shift in patronage will not tackle the real issue that we need more school places), and a well-timed report highlighting Church failings on the issue of abuse and the stage is set.

Change

Things can change very quickly in politics and a hostile Minister for Education could well steer a referendum to abolish school patronage across the line.

The issue of patronage is not the only thing that is of concern in the Programme for Government which will now be sent to the party faithful for review.

Another part of the document pledges to "develop inclusive and age appropriate RSE and SPHE

curricula across primary and post-primary levels, including an inclusive programme on LGBTI+ relationships and making appropriate legislative changes if necessary". What effect, for example, will such a programme have on the ability of a Catholic school to teach about human sexuality in a way that is authentically Catholic? Will the school be able to emphasise the unique nature of the family based on marriage between one man and one woman?

There are also plans to introduce hate crime legislation may seem harmless, but such laws have often been used in other jurisdictions to silence people critical of themes like gender ideology.

The Programme for Government also promises to provide free contraception over a phased period, starting with women aged 17-25 as well as introducing legislation around assisted human reproduction.

Buried in the detail is also a proposal to introduce so-called 'exclusion zones' around hospitals and medical facilities to prevent pro-life activists from quietly against abortion at such centres.

The agreement between the three parties also promises to "note" the review to the Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy Act (2018) which will take place in 2021. Such a review will likely hear calls for further liberalisation of laws around abortion such as an abolition of the three-day cooling off period and an extension of the age of the child that can be aborted for any reason from 12 weeks to, for example, 14 weeks.

While critics have dismissed the Programme for Government as an uncosted wish list, there is much to concern people of faith.



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Pope Francis sees young people leading their peers to faith



An evening for young people and Focolare members in Paul VI audience hall to celebrate the beatification of Chiara Luce Badano on September 25, 2010



Carlo Acutis, who was born in 1991 in London and died in 2006 in Monza, Italy. Photos: CNS



As the Church prepares to honour teenagers who lived lives of heroic virtue, the message is that holiness is for everyone writes **Michael Kelly**

During his long pontificate, St John Paul II canonised 482 saints – more than his predecessors had raised to the altars of the Church in the previous 600 years. His critics accused the Polish pontiff of being too quick to declare people saints, but John Paul II knew that the contemporary world needed more signposts to God rather than fewer.

His papacy saw not only the canonisation and beatification of historic figures, but also modern men and women who had lived lives of holiness in the midst of the modern world.

Both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have followed the model of proposing ordinary people who have lived extraordinary lives as models for Catholics to follow. It is a way of put-

ting flesh on the idea of the universal call to holiness proposed by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

The Church has also been adept at putting modern technologies under saintly patronage. St Isidore of Seville, for example, is the unofficial patron saint of the internet. Despite the fact that he lived more than 13 centuries before the world wide web was invented, his efforts to record every known thing earned him the title.

But, Isidore might have a rival for that accolade now that Pope Francis has given his approval for the beatification of an Italian teenager who was a computer whizz kid.

Leukemia

Venerable Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006, will be beatified

October 10 in Assisi, Italy – the town made famous by St Francis and St Clare (patron saint of television).

“The joy we have long awaited finally has a date,” Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino of Assisi said in a statement at the weekend.

The teenager – who will be known as Blessed after his beatification – is currently buried in Assisi’s Church of St Mary Major.

He died of leukemia at the age of 15, and during his illness offered his suffering as a prayer for the Pope and for the Church.

He was born in London on May 3, 1991 to Italian parents who soon returned to Milan. He was known as a pious child, attending daily Mass, frequently praying the rosary, and making weekly confessions.

“Jesus was the centre of his day,” according to his mother Antoonia Salzano. She said that priests and nuns would tell her that they could tell that the Lord had a special plan for her son.

“Carlo really had Jesus in his heart, really the pureness...When you are really pure of heart, you really touch people’s hearts,” she said.

The date for the beatification was announced the same week as the feast of Corpus Christi and Carlo also had a

great devotion to the Eucharist and Eucharistic miracles.

“It is beautiful that this news comes as we prepare for the feast of Corpus Christi,” Archbishop Sorrentino said. “Young Carlo distinguished himself with his love for the Eucharist, which defined his highway to heaven.”

“Young friends of God are a reminder to their peers that we are made for greatness rather than comfort”

The miracle that paved the way for his beatification involved the healing of a Brazilian child suffering from a rare congenital anatomic anomaly of the pancreas in 2013. The Medical Council of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes gave a positive opinion of the miracle last November, and Pope Francis approved the miracle in February.

Carlo was exceptionally gifted with computers. In *Christus vivit*, the apostolic exhortation published after the 2018 Synod of Bishops on young people, Pope Francis

offered him as a model of holiness in a digital age.

“The news constitutes a ray of light in this period in which our country is struggling with a difficult health, social and work situation,” Archbishop Sorrentino said.

“In these recent months of solitude and distancing, we have been experiencing the most positive aspect of the internet – a communication technology for which Carlo had a special talent.

“The love of God can turn a great crisis into a great grace, the archbishop said.

Sainthood

Another Italian young man put firmly on the path to sainthood by Pope Francis is Matteo Farina who died in 2009.

Matteo died of a brain tumour and the Pope

approved his heroic virtue last month and declared him venerable after a meeting with Cardinal Becciu.

Matteo grew up in a strong Christian family in the southern Italian town of Brindisi. He was very close to his sister, Erika.

The parish where he received the sacraments was under the care of Capuchin friars, from whom he gained a devotion to St Francis and St Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio).

The postulator of Matteo’s cause for sainthood said that from a young age he had the desire to learn new things, always undertaking his activities with diligence, whether it was school or sports or his passion for music.

Starting at eight years old, he would go to Confession often and also had a passion for the scriptures. At nine years old, he read the entire Gospel of St Matthew as a Lenten practice and prayed the rosary every day.

When he was nine years old, he had a dream in which he heard Padre Pio tell him

“The postulator of Matteo’s cause for sainthood said that from a young age he had the desire to learn new things”



that if he understood that “who is without sin is happy,” he must help others to understand this, “so that we can all go together, happy, to the kingdom of heaven.”

From that point onward, Matteo said he felt a strong desire to evangelise, especially among his peers, which he did politely and without presumption.

He once wrote about this desire, saying “I hope to succeed in my mission to ‘infiltrate’ among young people, speaking to them about God [illuminated by God himself]; I observe those around me, to enter among them as silent as a virus and infect them with an incurable disease, Love!”

In September 2003, a month before his 13th birthday, Farina began to have symptoms of what would later be diagnosed as a brain tumour. As he was undergoing medical tests, he began to keep a journal. He called the experience of the bad headaches and pain “one of those adventures that change your life and that of others. It helps you to be stronger and to grow, above all in faith”.

Over the next six years, Matteo would experience several brain operations and undergo chemotherapy and other treatments for the tumour.

His love for the Mother of God strengthened during this time and he consecrated himself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In between hospitalisations, he continued to live the ordinary life of a teenager: he attended school, hung out with his friends, formed a band, and fell in love with a girl.

He later called the chaste relationship he had with Serena during his last two years of life “the most beautiful gift” the Lord could give him.

When he was 15, he reflected on friendship, saying “I would like to be able to integrate with my peers without being forced to imitate them in mistakes. I would like to feel more involved in the group, without having to renounce my Christian principles. It’s difficult. Difficult but not impossible.”

“From that point onward, Matteo said he felt a strong desire to evangelise, especially among his peers”

Eventually, the teenager’s condition worsened and after a third surgery he became paralysed in his left arm and leg. He would often repeat that “we must live every day as if it were the last, but not in the sadness of death, but rather in the joy of being ready to meet the Lord!”

Matteo died surrounded by his friends and family on April 24, 2009.

Francesca Consolini, the postulator of Farina’s cause, wrote on a website dedicated to the young venerable that in him emerged “a deep inner commitment oriented toward purifying his heart from every sin” and he experienced this spirituality “not with heaviness, effort or pessimism; indeed, from his words there emerges constant trust in God, a tenacious, determined and serene gaze turned to the future”.

Matteo often thought about the faith and the “difficulty of going against the current.” Concerned about a lack of good faith educa-

tion for young people, he undertook this task among his own peers.

He once wrote in his journal: “When you feel that you can’t do it, when the world falls on you, when every choice is a critical decision, when every action is a failure...and you would like to throw everything away, when intense work reduces you to the limit of strength...take time to take care of your soul, love God with your whole being and reflect his love for others.”

Holiness

Another modern model of holiness proposed by the Church for veneration is Blessed Chiara Badano. She was born in 1971 in Sassello, Italy after her parents Ruggero and Teresa had prayed to be blessed with a child for more than ten years.

Even at the age of four, her parents said that Chiara seemed aware of the needs of others and she would sort through her toys to give some to poor children. Her parents reported that she would never give away just the old or broken ones. She invited less-fortunate people into the family’s home for holidays and visited the elderly at a retirement centre. When other children were sick and confined to bed, Chiara visited them. She loved the stories of the Gospel and loved to attend Mass.

When she was 9, Chiara became involved with the Focolare movement and its branch for young people. Focolare emphasises fraternity and unity among all people.

Chiara was very popular. She had a lot of friends, she played sports, and she loved to sing and dance. But when asked, she said she did not try to bring Jesus to her

friends with words. She tried to bring Jesus to them with her example and how she lived her life.

When she was 17, Chiara learned she had a very serious form of bone cancer. Treatments were painful and unsuccessful. She became paralysed. One day someone asked her if she hoped to walk again, and her answer was no. When she suffered, she felt closer to Jesus. She even refused to take pain medication that would make her too sleepy to continue to live her life.

Despite her illness and being confined to bed, Chiara wrote letters and sent messages to others. Friends say she inspired everyone who she encountered with her faith and love for others. She gave all her savings to a friend who was becoming a missionary in Africa. When her life was nearly at an end, she said, “I have nothing left, but I still have my heart, and with that I can always love.” Chiara died in 1990 and within nine years, the bishop of her diocese began the work on her cause for canonisation. Pope Benedict XVI declared her ‘Blessed’ in 2010.

“Only Love with a capital ‘L’ gives true happiness,” and that’s what Chiara showed her family, her friends and her fellow members of the Focolare movement, the Pope said at the time.

Chiara, Carlo, and perhaps one day Matteo, are to the decades of the 21st Century what Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was to the 20th.

Known as a ‘man of the beatitudes’ and patron of young adults, he saw many parallels between Catholic life and his favourite pastime, mountain-climbing. He would regularly organise trips into the mountains with his close friends with occasions for prayer, liturgies, and conversations about faith on the way up to or down from the summit. After what would become his final climb he wrote a simple note on a photograph: “Verso L’Alto”, which means “to the heights.” This phrase has since come to encapsulate his philosophy of mountaineering and his Catholic outlook on life and adventure.

Political activism

At an early age, Pier Giorgio joined the Marian Sodality and the Apostleship of Prayer, and obtained permission to receive daily Communion (which was rare at that time).

He developed a deep spiritual life which he never hesitated to share with his friends. The Eucharist and the Virgin Mary were the two poles of his world of prayer. At the age of 17, he joined the St Vincent de Paul Society and dedicated much of his spare time to serving the sick and the needy, caring for orphans, and

assisting the demobilised servicemen returning from World War I (1914-18). He decided to become a mining engineer, studying at the Royal Polytechnic University of Turin, so he could “serve Christ better among the miners,” as he told a friend.

“Pier Giorgio contracted poliomyelitis, which doctors later speculated he caught from the sick whom he tended”

Although he considered his studies his first duty, they did not keep him from social and political activism. In 1919, he joined the Catholic Student Foundation and the organisation known as Catholic Action. He became a very active member of the People’s Party, which promoted the Catholic Church’s social teaching based on the principles of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

What little money he had, Pier Giorgio gave to help the poor, even using his bus fare for charity and then running home to be on time for meals. A friend later wrote that the poor and the suffering were his masters, and he was literally their servant, which he considered a privilege. His charity did not simply involve giving something to others, but giving completely of himself. This was fed by daily communion with Christ in the Eucharist and by frequent meditation.

He was strongly anti-Fascist and did nothing to hide his political views. He physically defended the faith at times involved in fights, first with anti-clerical communists and later with Fascists. Participating in a Church-organised demonstration in Rome on one occasion, he stood up to police violence and rallied the other young people by grabbing the group’s banner, which the royal guards had knocked out of another student’s hands. Pier Giorgio held it even higher, while using the banner’s

pole to fend off the blows of the guards.

Just before receiving his university degree, Pier Giorgio contracted poliomyelitis, which doctors later speculated he caught from the sick whom he tended. Neglecting his own health because his grandmother was dying, after six days of suffering Pier Giorgio died at the age of 24 on July 4, 1925.

On the eve of his death, with a paralysed hand he scribbled a message to a friend, asking him to take the medicine needed for injections to be given to Converso, a poor sick man he had been visiting.

St John Paul II, after visiting his original tomb in the family plot in Pollone, said in 1989: “I wanted to pay homage to a young man who was able to witness to Christ with singular effectiveness in this century of ours. When I was a young man, I, too, felt the beneficial influence of his example and, as a student, I was impressed by the force of his testimony.”

On May 20, 1990, in St. Peter’s Square which was filled with thousands of people, the Pope beatified Pier Giorgio Frassati, calling him the ‘Man of the Eight Beatitudes’.

In a world of celebrity where the internet and social media breaks people as quickly as it makes them, these young friends of God are a reminder to their peers that we are made for greatness rather than comfort. They also show that the Christian ideals are not out of reach, but within our grasp.



End of era as Rome's Irish College shuts as seminary after nearly 400 years...for now



A vital link with the universal Church and a broader ecclesial horizon will be lost writes **Michael Kelly**

It's been said that when the Irish nation couldn't exist at home, it existed in Rome. The eternal city has long been a home for Irish people abroad and since its establishment in 1628, the Irish College has provided formation for generations of priests.

As well as that, it has been a focal point for Catholics at home and a vital link between Dublin and the Apostolic See. That link, of course, goes back to St Patrick himself. The Apostle to the Irish told the new flock he had won for Christ "*Ut Christiani ita et Romani sitis*" - be ye Christians as those of the Roman Church.

When St John Paul visited the monastic site of Clonmacnois in 1979, he urged Irish people to "never forget the wonderful boast and commitment made by St Columban to [Pope] Boniface IV in Rome: 'We Irish...are disciples of Saints Peter and Paul...we hold unbroken that Catholic Faith which we first received from you'".

“A concern expressed by a number of former residents of the college was that the current site might be put on the open market”

And while the Catholic Faith in Ireland may not have the vibrancy it once had, the faith remains unbroken. The link with Rome, not so much. A vital chain in that relationship with the Holy See dies with the announcement from the hierarchy that decided that the Pontifical Irish College “does not intend to receive Irish seminarians” for the coming year.

Of course, the communique from the bishops’ adds that the decision will be kept “under review”, but no one who spoke to *The Irish Catholic* this week about the issue expects the Irish College to function as a seminary in the short- to medium-term.

Several former students told this newspaper that there have



Gates of Irish College

already been discussions amongst themselves about mounting a campaign to ensure that the Church in Ireland does not divest from the site on the Caelian Hill.

Vision

The current college was opened in 1926 and was the vision of the enterprising Msgr John Hagan. A priest of the Dublin Diocese, he died in 1930 at the age of 57 having literally exhausted himself in the fundraising and realisation of the new college.

None of the former students who spoke to *The Irish Catholic* this week wanted to be identified, but all raised concerns about the fact that there will no longer be an Irish seminary in Rome.

One expressed the concern that “it will effectively be reduced to the status of a guesthouse” and pointed to the *Centre Culturel Irlandais* – the former Irish College in Paris.

Gone too are the Irish colleges at Salamanca in Spain and Leuven in Belgium. In fact, of the 34 Irish colleges established for the education of clergy on continental Europe opened in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries, only Rome remains in any meaningful sense. When Leuven ceased to function as a seminary in 1983, it was renamed The Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe.

The statement from the summer meeting of the hierarchy, insisted that “bishops recognised that the college [in Rome] continues to provide an important service to the

Church in Ireland and confirmed that they are open to the possibility of sending seminarians to the college in the future.

“Bishops noted the report of the acting rector, Fr Paul Finnerty, that the college will continue to be a place of ongoing formation for priests. This includes facilitating those pursuing postgraduate studies and those wishing to undertake a longer or shorter period of sabbatical renewal in Rome,” the statement added.

Paradoxically, while the college will no longer host Irish seminarians for formation, it will continue to welcome the American seminarians who have made in their home in recent years while they participate in their semester abroad programme in Rome’s pontifical universities.

The decision of the trustees of the Irish College comes as the Pope’s right-hand man Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin wrote to bishops’ conferences around the world pleading with them to send students to Rome in the autumn. The cardinal is worried that concerns around coronavirus will mean that many clerical students will not be sent to Rome and this will endanger the viability of the city’s network of Catholic third level institutions.

But with the numbers entering formation stubbornly low, the Irish bishops have decided to throw all of the energy behind Maynooth and house all the seminarians there. It is a decision that at least

one former resident of the Irish College is critical of. “Maynooth certainly has its place, but so does the Irish College in Rome. But one would certainly have to wonder if there isn’t a certain bias in favour of Maynooth given that the agencies [of the bishops’ conference] are all based there,” he said.

Decision

Another priest who is a former student of the Irish College in Rome told this newspaper that he thinks the decision to effectively close the seminary in Rome “is short sighted”. He said that he “appreciates that the current vocations outlook in Ireland is bleak, but setting aside Rome as an option for seminarians will really break a link with the universal Church.

“The current college was opened in 1926 and was the vision of the enterprising Msgr John Hagan”

“Being in Rome was also good for future priests because it helped them to understand that Ireland is not the centre of the Catholic world.

“It also meant that people were returning to Ireland with a broader perspective,” he said.

It is understood that Rome will remain as an option for Irish seminarians, and they may

be lodged elsewhere. This has sometimes been the pattern in the Dublin Diocese where people were housed in the *Collegio Teutonico* inside the walls of Vatican City.

A concern expressed by a number of former residents of the college was that the current site might be put on the open market and a slimmed-down Irish College opened on the outskirts of Rome. The sizeable property in the bustling San Giovanni zone of Rome would fetch a hefty sum on the Roman property market.

The college has also traditionally served as a guesthouse during the summer months and the site is also home to the Villa Irlanda Hotel in the former lay centre which welcomes visitors. That could provide the impetus for the college building itself being further utilised for pilgrim accommodation throughout the year while retaining accommodation for postgraduate priests from Ireland and abroad.

Another *alumnus* of the *Collegio Irlandese* told this newspaper that “former students feel very strongly that the college should be retained at the current site and that an ambitious and realistic vision for its future should be drawn up.

“This might mean that – for now at least – it would serve as an international seminary or house of formation, but it should still be available for the Church in Ireland in the future.

“It is a jewel in the crown of the Church in Ireland and a wonderful testament of how the faith survived persecution because of the network of continental colleges sending priests home to minister in our parishes. Future generations will not forgive us if we let it go,” he said.

“When St John Paul visited the monastic site of Clonmacnois in 1979, he urged Irish people to “never forget the wonderful boast and commitment”

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Spotlight on Saints & Scholars

An introductory look at Sts Joan of Arc, Thérèse
of Liseux and Bernadette Soubirous

Padre Pio – joyful giver with
a sense of humour

EXCLUSIVE EXCERPTS

Early Irish Saints
by John J Ó Ríordáin

Cardinal Newman
His thoughts on tradition
and scripture

....and much more!

THREE FRENCH SAINTS

Críostóir Ó Floinn, who has published over sixty books in both Irish and English, has produced this trilogy recounting the lives of three famous French saints – Joan of Arc, Bernadette Soubirous and Thérèse of Lisieux. Written in a very readable and simple style, each book gives a background to the times of the saint in question and then a full account of those aspects of their lives which gave rise to their canonisation by the church.

JOAN OF ARC The one who led an army...

There are few personages in history who have been investigated so thoroughly, during their lifetime and ever since their death, both by friends and enemies, by believers and cynics, as the girl who is now known in her own country as Jeanne d'Arc and in English as Joan of Arc.

During the Hundred Years' War, Joan led an army to recover France from the English and secure the throne for the Dauphin, Charles VII. Her involvement in the war occurred after she began receiving visions of the Archangel Michael, St Margaret, and St Catherine of Alexandria when she was just 13. She rose to prominence when a siege of Orléans was lifted after only nine days. Several additional swift victories led to Charles VII's consecration at Reims. This long-awaited event boosted French morale and paved the way for the final French victory.

However, a politically motivated trial for heresy awaited Joan. On the evening of Wednesday, May 30, Joan was brought from her cell to be subjected to a final sermon about her errors, this time in the marketplace of Rouen where platforms had been set up like those in the cemetery on the preceding day. Having found Joan guilty, they should then have handed her over to the bailiffs of Rouen to be formally sentenced to death and executed. All those who gave testimony later agreed on how she died, crying out the holy name, Jesus, many times.

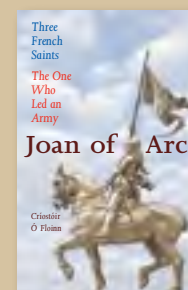
Although it was apparent, as the interrogations and inquiries proceeded, that Joan, from her first appearance on the public scene to the moment of her death at the stake, was a very holy woman, the idea that she might be officially recognised as such by the church was overshadowed for a long time by her idealisation as a political prisoner and the iconic heroine of France. It was left to Felix Dupanloup, Bishop of Orléans, to call universal attention to the personal sanctity of Joan d'Arc, as she had now become known. He got the bishops of France interested in the case to the extent that, in 1869, they sent a petition to Pope Pius IX asking permission to begin yet another investigation into the life and death of Joan. The process continued under subsequent bishops until finally, in 1909, Pope Pius X beatified



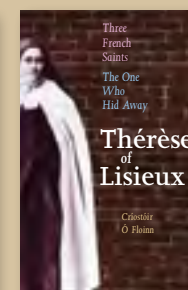
Joan of Arc at the coronation of King Charles VII in 1429, Ingres, 1884, Louvre.

Joan. The First World War intervened in this as in many other matters – in that war, the warrior girl of Orléans was invoked as a patron of France by the soldiers trudging towards the trenches – until at last, on 6 May 1920, the name of Joan of Arc was prefixed by the word Sainte as she was added to the roll of those whom the Catholic Church officially acknowledges as persons who, having lived lives of heroic virtue on this earth, are now enjoying the promised reward of eternal happiness with God in heaven.

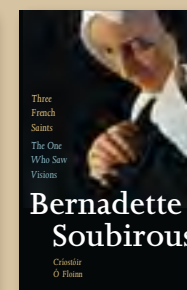
As an aside, opposite the tomb of Cardinal Henry Beaufort, the political churchman who instigated and presided over her trial, a statue of Joan in shining armour, with her sword held upright in her right hand, was erected in 1923, three years after her canonisation, by the Anglican diocese of Winchester, as a mark of reparation to Joan of Arc.



Joan of Arc



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THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

The one who hid away...

On 30 September 1897 a twenty-four-year old nun named Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus died of tuberculosis in a convent of the Carmelites, an enclosed order, in the city of Lisieux in France. She had entered the convent at the exceptionally young age of fifteen. She was unknown to the world outside the convent, except for some relations – her parents were already deceased – and was considered by some of her sisters in religion as an ordinary nun whose short life in the order was not marked by anything unusual, so much so that, shortly before she died, one of them wondered what could be said of her in the brief biographical notice which it was customary to distribute to other houses of the order on the death of a nun. In 1925, just twenty-seven years after her death, Pope Pius XI officially proclaimed this young nun a saint – she was already long canonised by vox populi. One hundred years after her death, Pope John Paul II bestowed on this young woman, who had lived and died unknown to the world, the title Doctor of the Church, thus declaring to the Catholic world that her spiritual teaching and way of life were to be regarded as having contributed significantly to the understanding, by clergy and laity alike, of the theology and spirituality of the Catholic faith. Not only did this make her one of only three women among the thirty three

saints thus honoured – her own patron saint and founder of the Reformed Carmelites, Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) and St Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) counsellor of popes and kings, were both given the title in 1970 – but it placed the young nun of Lisieux on the same exalted plane as theological sages like St Thomas Aquinas.

While popes and theologians were thus acknowledging officially that a girl who desired only to hide herself away from the world in a life of prayer and sacrifice had been chosen by the Holy Spirit to be an instrument of grace and renewal in the Church of Christ, the hidden nun of Lisieux was becoming one of the most popular saints in the devotional manifestations of the faithful everywhere. Under the familiar title of the 'Little Flower', deriving from her own description of herself as merely a little white flower of the Child Jesus, she was taken to their hearts by all kinds of people, from intellectuals like Paul Claudel, Edith Stein and Thomas Merton, to the very children making their First Holy Communion. Her statue, along with that other favourite, St Anthony of Padua, was to be found in almost every Catholic church in the world, and she was prayed to probably more than any heavenly intercessor except our Blessed Lady herself. Miracles physical and spiritual were being attributed to her, and in many



Thérèse of Lisieux in a photograph taken in the courtyard of the monastery of Lisieux on Easter Monday, April 15, 1894.

countries there were societies and magazines promoting devotion to a saint who seemed to have been specially provided by God for the technologically enriched but spiritually impoverished world of the twentieth century. In the middle of that century, in 1954, after the Second World War had shown once again the madness that afflicts the human race when it ignores its Creator, the Basilica of Sainte Thérèse was consecrated in Lisieux and became a place of popular pilgrimage in the very town where she had tried to hide away from the world and be known only to God. How did this extraordinary metamorphosis come about? To answer that question, we have to go back to the last decade of the nineteenth century and to that enclosed Carmelite Convent in the town of Lisieux in France.

BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS

The one who saw visions...



Bernadette Soubirous in a photograph taken around 1858.

Bernadette Soubirous was born on 7 January 1844 in the small town of Lourdes which nestles below the Pyrenees mountain range dividing France from Spain.

From Bernadette's many narrations, and from the accounts taken down later from her sister and their friend, her account of the first apparition in Massabielle on a fateful day in February are well documented. The other two girls had wandered off from the cavern, Bernadette had sat down and removed her clogs and one stocking when she heard a noise 'like a gust of wind'. She looked around. Behind her in the field there were tall poplars that would sway in the slightest breeze; but they were not stirring. She bent again to remove her other stocking. Again she heard the noise of a gust of wind. This time, looking across towards the rocky hill on the other side of the stream, she noticed that some branches on the side of the rock were moving. They were the branches of a wild rosebush, flowerless now in winter, growing at the foot of one of several cave-like openings in the face of the rocky cliff. While she stared, Bernadette saw a gentle light begin to glow in the dark grotto. Then a form began to appear and became clearer.

Bernadette saw a beautiful young woman standing there, smiling. She was dressed in white from head to foot, with a blue girdle; her feet were bare but adorned with two golden roses, and a long rosary beads was suspended from her right arm. The young girl blinked her eyes tight, convinced that she was imagining what seemed to have appeared in the grotto. When she opened her eyes, the person was still there, beautiful and smiling. Bernadette now felt uneasy and fearful, but not, she said later, in a way that urged her

to run away. Instead, she resorted to what parents and priests had instilled into children as the instinctive reaction to anything that might be from an evil source; she put her hand in her pocket and took out her rosary beads. (Let us pause to ponder how many girls in France or elsewhere today carry similar protection in purse or pocket!) When Bernadette tried to make the Sign of the Cross to begin her rosary, she was unable to raise her hand to her forehead. Then the young lady in the grotto made the Sign of the Cross, upon which Bernadette found herself able to do the same. She began to recite the rosary. While she did so, the lady moved her fingers along her own beads, but did not move her lips. When Bernadette finished her rosary, the lady smilingly gestured to her to cross the stream and come nearer; but the young girl was afraid to do so. Then the vision disappeared.

Bernadette gradually became aware again of her surroundings. The grotto was as dark and gloomy as it had been, just like the other apertures in the cliff face. The dull morning was still windless, the fog had turned to drizzling rain. Although feeling a strange sense of happiness and wonder, Bernadette now became mindful of the practical purpose that had brought her and the other girls to this place. She took off her second stocking and walked across the stream. In doing so, she wondered why her sister had cried out that the water was freezing when they crossed over; to her bare feet it felt pleasantly warm. Little did that peasant girl know then that many saintly mystics, when in ecstasy, had felt that same sensation of unseasonal warmth.

**Exclusive Excerpt from *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*
by Fr Francesco Napolitano**

In the Friary of San Giovanni Rotondo, Padre Pio occupied cell No. 5 for more than twenty-five years. It was here that the most beautiful – and also the most painful – events in the life of this extraordinary man took place. Above his cell door are the words: ‘The glory of the world is always accompanied by sadness.’

This maxim, taken from *The Imitation of Christ* was one that he applied to himself all his life; but for the glory of God, he also transformed – for himself and others – it to that other maxim, *Servite Domino in laetitia* (‘Serve the Lord with joy’).

Sense of humour

A special aspect of Padre Pio’s joy was his sense of humour. His paternal guidance had a humorous, witty, brilliant, and vivacious side, and this played an important role in the education of his spiritual children. This side was most prevalent when he relaxed in the friary garden, or on the terrace near his cell. At those times he became an affectionate, cordial, happy, friendly Padre, even when those who were present were awed by his spiritual stature.

Most people think only of a Padre Pio who suffered, who obtained graces, and who constantly contemplated Christ crucified. They never knew Padre Pio in the intimacy of the friary, or in the warmth of the recreational hours which he spent daily with his fellow priests, friends, and spiritual children.

Considering his afflictions, this happy and humorous disposition of the Padre must not be interpreted as a dual personality. The Bible is very explicit in this respect: ‘When you fast, do not have a gloomy aspect ... when you fast, comb your hair and wash yourself.’ The Padre wanted to teach all those who approached him to always have a smile on their lips.

Padre Pio was a joyful giver; he served God and served Him happily with a frank, innocent smile that stemmed from a pure heart. His spontaneity was admirable.

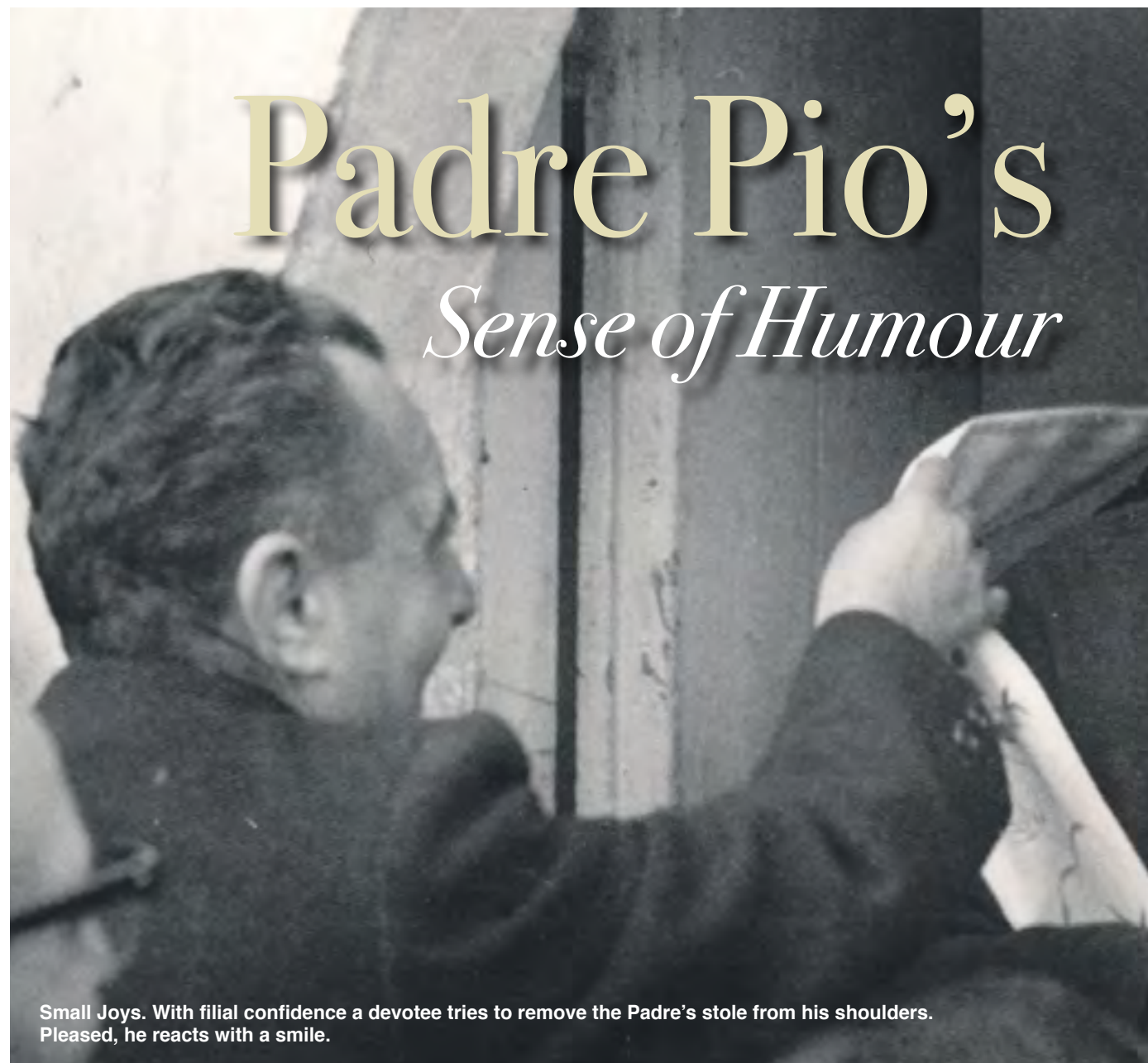
As the Jesuit, Fr Domenico Mondrone, wrote in the magazine, *Catholic Civilisation*, ‘His expressions were proverbial. He would utter an amusing retort, a witty remark, a little joke, right in the middle of a conversation. Sometimes its purpose was to distract one’s attention from his state of martyrdom; sometimes, to lighten the distressing effect of a well-aimed lesson.’

Famous writer

One day the Padre was out in the friary grounds, when the friar who was accompanying him pointed out a gentleman, a famous writer who had come from Milan for the sole purpose of seeing him. Padre Pio unhesitatingly responded, ‘This long trip just to see me? What a fine thing you came to see, all the way from Milan! Don’t you have a prayer book at home? You could have spared yourself a trip. God bless you. A Hail Mary is worth more than a trip, my son.’

Padre Pio was also a witty, brilliant, and formidable conversationalist. With psychological shrewdness, he would corner his listener, deliberately putting him in a difficult position. He could do this even when his opponent tried to involve him in scientific problems with which he was not familiar. At times he would disconcert them with seemingly bizarre remarks. Sometimes, he would stand up and mimic them, making them look ridiculous. He would suddenly change from the pathetic to the comical, or vice versa, depending on the effect he wished to have on his audience. Above all, his superabundance of humour escaped no one.

Once, in reply to someone who was trying to make him



Small Joys. With filial confidence a devotee tries to remove the Padre’s stole from his shoulders. Pleased, he reacts with a smile.

“**Padre Pio was a joyful giver; he served God and served Him happily with a frank, innocent smile that stemmed from a pure heart.**”

understand the difficulty some religious persons have in listening to, and practising the word of God, he said, ‘Three things are useless: washing a donkey’s head, adding water to the ocean, and preaching to sisters, friars and priests.’

Doctors and soldiers

Often, he teased the doctors of the hospital, who came every night to spend an hour of recreation with the Padre. One of them, when told to go to the hospital for some tests, said to his fellow director, ‘What do we doctors know?’ to which the director added ‘But you, Father, have nevertheless built a hospital.’ ‘Yes, but only for sick people, not for doctors,’ replied Padre Pio.

One day, he said to a group of doctors, ‘Don’t forget the proverb of the Salerno School: “A mouse has a better chance with two cats than a sick person has with two doctors.”’

He even joked about his own weakness. To a man who requested his prayers because his leg did not function properly, he quickly replied, ‘You’re lucky to have only one that doesn’t function; I don’t even have one that does!’

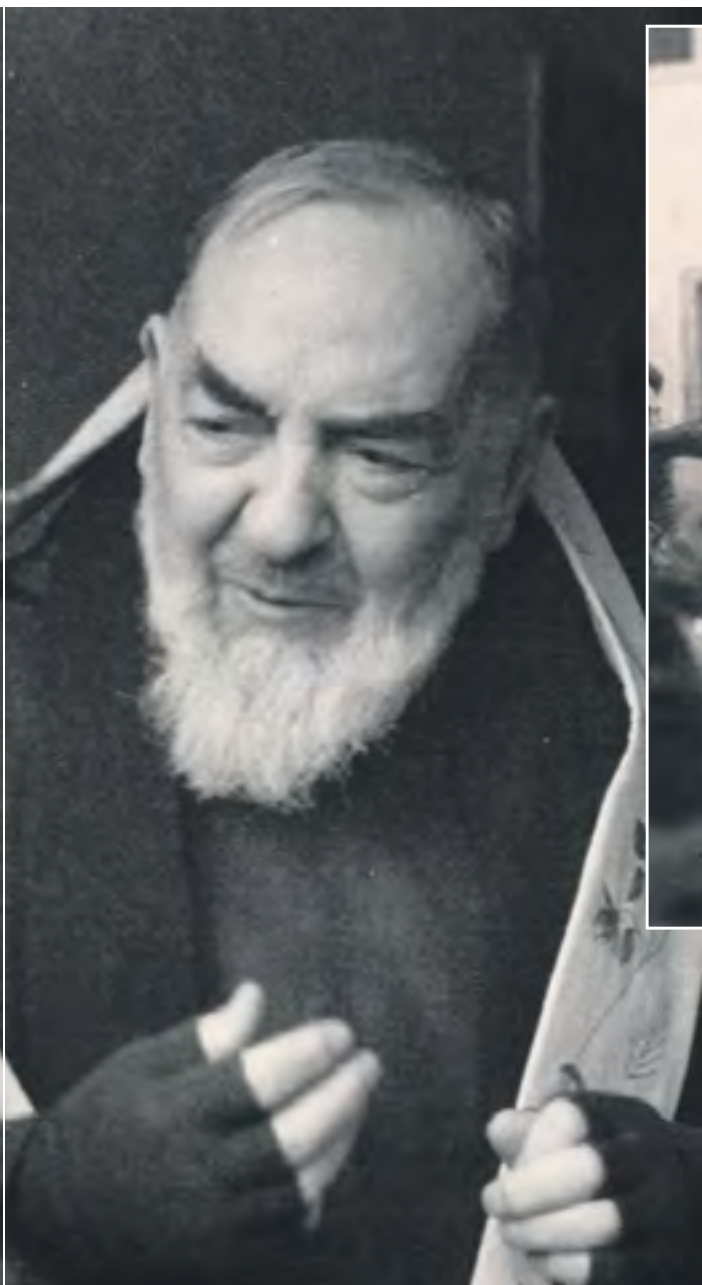
Soldiers and officers would often come to the Friary of San Giovanni Rotondo, especially after World War II. Once, when Padre Pio saw an officer who was looking rather sad, he approached him and said, ‘Well, how come you’re here today?’ The officer explained that he had come to say goodbye

because he was being transferred from Foggia to the north of Italy. Smiling at him, the Padre said, ‘My son, these things happen only to friars and soldiers. You stay in one place, peacefully do your work, and just when you become accustomed to your environment, you are sent to the end of the world. Who knows why! But don’t let it bother you; accept it and leave. Remember that it is your profession. The cassock and the uniform, believe me, are similar.’

Speaking of soldiers, he often liked to talk about his experience in the army in Naples. One rainy day in 1917, he was obliged to go to some place or another. Our soldier (Padre Pio) courageously armed himself with an umbrella; well sheltered, he took off for Piazza del Plebiscito.

‘Hey, soldier!’ But the soldier kept on going as if he hadn’t heard a thing. ‘Hey, by Jove, I’m talking to you, soldier!’ It was a colonel, who had, naturally, become impatient. The Padre had to go back. ‘What novelty is this?’ yelled the colonel, while drowning in the downpour. ‘A soldier with an umbrella! Are you crazy?’

‘I had to play stupid,’ said Padre Pio with a sly smile. ‘I offered him my umbrella: “If the colonel, sir, wishes to share my umbrella, I will accompany him.” The colonel understood that he was dealing with a dumb recruit, so with a spiteful gesture, he turned his back to me, leaving me standing there with my umbrella in hand.’



At those times the Padre had a childlike simplicity in spite of his age; his laughter burst forth from his innocent heart.

Mary, our mother

The Madonna, who was Padre Pio's great love, also had a place in his little anecdotes.

'One day,' he said, 'the Lord took a walk through Paradise and saw so many ugly faces wandering around this place that is so full of delightful things and so void of evil. The Lord was amazed, so He sent for St Peter and asked him, "Peter, what has happened? It seems as if we have transferred the jail to Paradise." Peter replied, "Lord, I don't know; they come in and I don't know how they enter." The Lord then ordered him to guard more carefully.

'Once more the Lord took a walk through Paradise, and again He saw an increase of ugly faces – jailbirds, so He said to St Peter, "Peter I told you to be on guard. Give me the keys; you are no longer guarding well."

'Peter replied, "Lord, I didn't want to tell you, but since you insist, I will tell you. I no sooner turn my back than Your Mother opens the door and lets them all come in. I'm helpless. Lord, how do You feel about it? What must I do when Your Mother goes to the door?"

'The Lord answered, "Peter, just pretend you don't see it."

The conclusion is eloquent in the sense that the Virgin Mary is always everyone's mother; and without her, Paradise would not be the same.

Padre Pio's wit was part of his apostolate. He sometimes used it to confuse a soul, or to better penetrate the secrets of the conscience.

In this manner some people were able to review some aspect of their lives; while others, feeling exposed, overhauled

their lives and became true friends of Christ, and therefore, of Padre Pio.

Advice

Every hour of the day was an opportune time to ask Padre Pio's advice, including the hours of rest in the afternoon. Often, his fellow priests would come in because some penitent had sent them.

Once a woman went to the porter, and with a certain amount of insistence, convinced him that he should go to Padre Pio's cell to ask his advice regarding her health. The young friar, in the spirit of brotherly love, tried to please her, so he went and knocked on the door of the Padre's cell. A voice answered, 'What do you want? Can't you see that I am resting?'

'Spiritual Father,' said the friar, 'a lady from Genoa who is very sick wants to know whether she should continue or discontinue the electroshocks.'

Padre Pio, minimising the importance of the reply, retorted, 'But I'm resting! Tell her to discontinue, because if she isn't already a fool, she will certainly become one.'

Padre Pio's life of mysticism, observed Spaccucci, did not lessen in the least his natural tendency to playful banter, to scholarly language, and to impart his happiness in a spiritual way to all those who were present.

For example, the comedian Carlo Campanini went to Padre Pio and said, 'Father, how can I boast of being a member of your spiritual family when every night I have to paint my face and be a buffoon on the stage?'

Padre Pio smiled, 'My son, in this world everyone is a buffoon no matter where God places him. It is sufficient to surmise what God wants, and then everything will take its proper place. There once was an acrobat who wanted to become a friar, but since he was very ignorant he didn't succeed in learning the hymns and prayers, unlike his fellow friars. So when the church was empty, the acrobat would go before the statue of the Madonna and exhibit his only talent: somersaults and pirouettes.

'When it was found out, it became the great scandal of the friary. One morning the Guardian hid behind a column hoping to take the acrobat by surprise. Imagine the Guardian's surprise when he saw the statue of the Holy Virgin smile, and the statue

of the Child Jesus clap hands; both were so pleased with the performance of the acrobat in the grey cassock!

'So the most ignorant friar of the community offered the Queen of Heaven his only talent, and she accepted it with joy. That friar had chosen his position well. He was a good buffoon in the place that God had assigned to him.'


Thus Padre Pio's humour, Fr Alessandro wrote, became apostolic; it was not just a pastime. His holy soul was never shocked by sin, but he always found a way to put everything in its proper place.

Padre Pio's sense of humour, his witticism, his repartee, were not just for amusement and spiritual defence, but were also a defence against the curious and the annoying.

Between a smile and a joke he hid his secret, so that many of those who lived near him never suspected a thing; some never even understood his goodness and his heroic virtues. He said the most serious of things with such simplicity and sincerity, that he made you accept the supernatural without even noticing it. He was always between two lives, smiling and exchanging words with the beings of two worlds.

We can safely say that in that hour of recreation, the friary garden, the terrace, and his cell were transformed into a place of human activity, of spiritual equality, of brotherly love and perfect happiness.

Padre Pio is no longer physically with us, but his spirit is still calling numerous people to his tomb to testify that his life and works were in harmony with the plans of Providence.



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The Venerable Matt Talbot



Written by
Emma Tobin

When trying to understand addiction, it is important to remember what every human is addicted to. We are all addicted to breathing, for example. It's easy to test, just start holding your breath and soon enough your body will want some air. A little longer; and your body will need some air. A little longer (going red-faced now) and your body will demand some air. Believe me, you would break all the fingernails on both hands if that was what it took to take a breath when you really needed it.

Breathing doesn't seem like an addiction. We need to do it to live. That's a fact. It's important to remember, however, that the flesh and bone our souls are stuffed into doesn't know any facts. Perhaps you could say our brain knows them, but the brain is made of tissue, and it is absolutely capable of knowing the wrong facts.

So, yes, we need to breathe. An astronaut could tell you that. Anyone who swims could tell you that. A ten minute-old child could tell you that. You are addicted to breathing because when you don't your body starts to feel like it's dying. When trying to understand addiction it's important to remember that you know more about it than you think.

It's also important to remember that you know nothing, if you haven't experienced it, about substance addiction. Breathing is usually good for you. Everyone from your doctor to your mother approves of it. Oxygen is free and exists in copious quantities almost everywhere humans have chosen to live. The question of what happens when you become addicted to something that isn't good for you is one that, for most of us, doesn't require looking far.

Alcohol has been used for centuries by multiple human civilisations, for medicinal, ritualistic, and of course social purposes. The history of alcoholism, most likely, stretches back exactly as far as the invention of alcohol. It is only in recent centuries that we have reached a greater understanding of substance addiction and those it targets.

Matt Talbot was born on the 2nd of May 1856, the second eldest of twelve children in

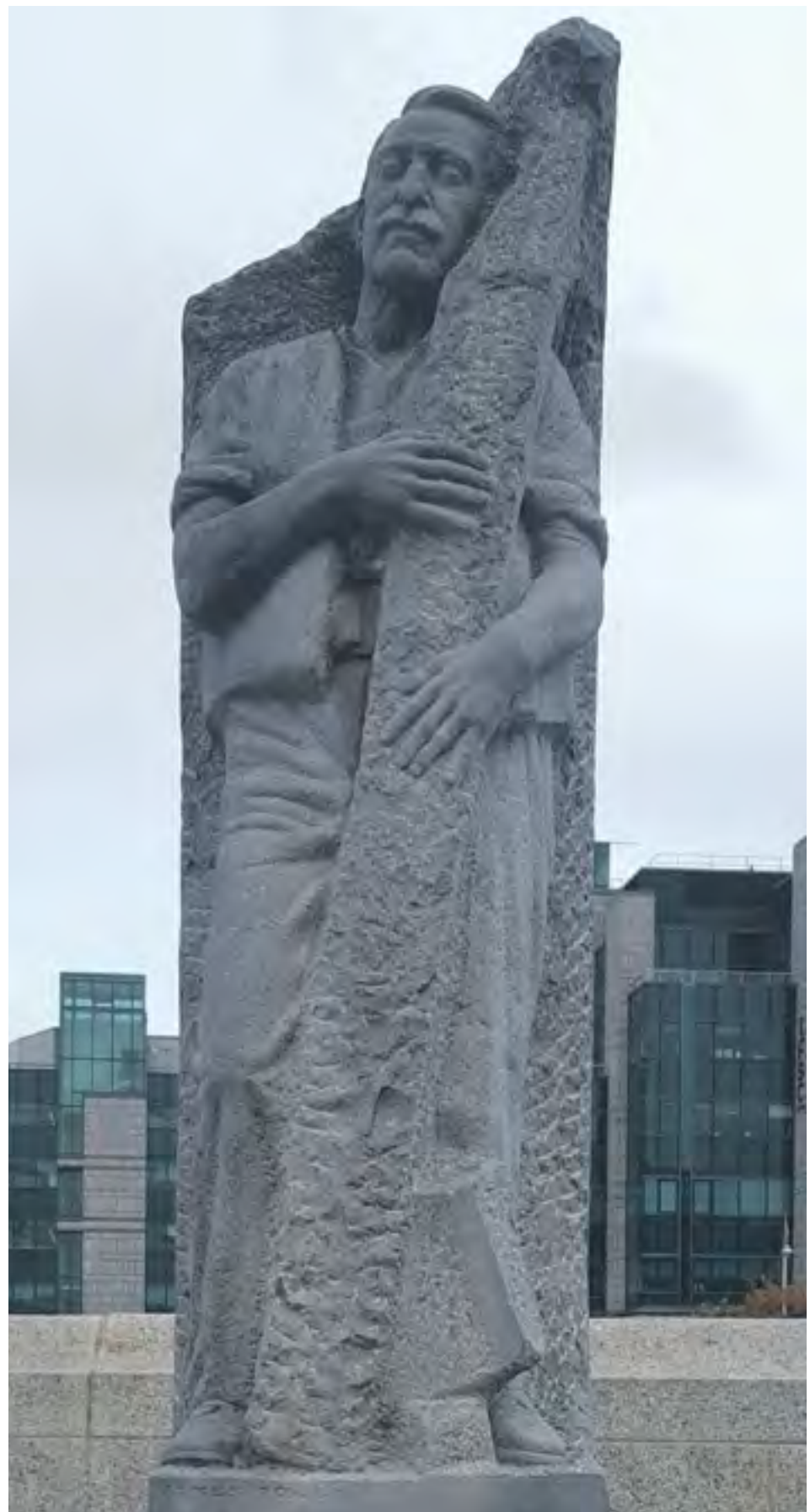
a poor Dublin family. His father was a heavy drinker who spent most of his income at the local pub, and soon enough Matt and most of his brothers would follow suit. Matt received only one year of schooling before he was forced to find a job, which he did, in a bottling company. This provided ample grounds for experimentation, and by his mid-teens he was drinking regularly.

Later in life Matt recalled that throughout his late-teens and most of his twenties, his sole purpose in life was to fund his constant, heavy drinking. He spent everything he earned on alcohol, and would regularly scrounge, beg, and pawn anything he could sell in order to fund his habit until pay day. It was not terribly unusual for working men to drink copiously, but Matt's obsession scythed through any other worldly interest. Most weeks, he would bring just a shilling home to his mother.

“Matt became an autodidact, teaching himself to read and dedicating much of his time to reading and rereading religious texts.”

Most people nowadays are capable of understanding that for a child in the most poverty-stricken circumstances, with little or no education and a family history awash in alcoholism, living in a social and cultural circle in which drinking was what grown men did, this was a very difficult fate to avoid. It might have been the story of Matt Talbot; it was the story of many others. However, when Matt was in his late twenties, he realised the ruinous effect that alcohol was having on his life. There were few options for poor, unskilled workers to seek medical help, so Matt turned to the Church in the hope that he could seek God's help in overcoming this terrible disease.

He took a pledge not to drink for three months. These first few 'dry' months were excruciating, but when the temptation to drink struck, Matt turned instead to prayer. After the three months were over, he extended his pledge, and did not drink alcohol for the remainder of his life. Matt adopted an ascetic lifestyle of constant prayer with few physical comforts, based off accounts of monastic life. The churches of Dublin became his refuge.



Matt Talbot Cograng CC BY-SA Source Wikimedia

When, in the initial weeks and months of his recovery, the urge to have a drink almost overwhelmed him, Matt would retreat to a nearby place of worship and pray for strength. In later years, Matt's dedication to prayer continued unabated and his days were spent either working, praying, or attending Mass.

The rest of his life was spent in devoted prayer. Matt became an autodidact, teaching himself to read and dedicating much of his time to reading and rereading religious texts. He wore several pages in his Bible almost transparent. He was regarded as one of the hardest and fastest workers in Dublin and gave charity and support to everyone around him. He died suddenly in Granby Lane on

Trinity Sunday, 7th of June 1925, while on his way to Mass. He could not be identified at the scene, but when his body was being prepared for burial, it was found to be wrapped with several chains, a symbol of his devotion to Mary. He was buried in a pauper's grave in Glasnevin cemetery.

Soon after his death, Matt's reputation as a saintly man and a protector of those suffering from addiction was established. He became the Venerable Matt Talbot in 1973. Matt found his champions in his faith, and his legacy is one of hope that addiction can be overcome. It is also a reminder that addiction is difficult to overcome alone.

St Colmcille

Exclusive Excerpt from *Early Irish Saints*
by John J Ó Ríordáin C.Ss.R

Saints seem to be people of many parts and Colmcille more than most: he was a prince, priest, prophet, poet, diplomat, monk, abbot, scribe, and scholar. In terms of family background, he sprung from the Cenél Conaill (the O'Donnells of Donegal), a branch of the royal house of the Clan Uí néill. He was a descendant of Niall of the nine hostages, and over a period of 700 years, his family produced as many as forty-one high Kings. Colmcille, too, it seems, was himself eligible for such an office.

By secular, as well as by religious standards he is one of the outstanding figures of Early Mediaeval Ireland. Speculation about his life, his reasons for leaving Ireland, or the extent of his influence at home and abroad, cannot detract from that fact. Nor can a case be made against his holiness on the grounds that he was not formally canonised by the Pope, because Colmcille lived hundreds of years prior to such formalities. When St Adomnán wrote his *Life* in the seventh century, it was specifically to establish for all and sundry that the first abbot of Iona was a man who walked with God in a truly extraordinary and inspiring fashion. For fourteen hundred years the Christian community, particularly in Ireland and Scotland, has acknowledged this estimation of the man by invoking his intercession and keeping his memory green.

From the various sources at our disposal it is possible to put reasonable shape on his life while bearing in mind that the only fairly certain date in his career is at the end. On the testimony of St Adomnán, his biographer, the saint died on Iona on 9 June, AD 597, aged seventy-five. At the other end of the scale, the traditional date of his birth is 7 December, AD 521, and the place is Gartán, Co. Donegal.

His training

In his childhood, Colmcille was fostered by a local priest named Cruithnechán, who not only taught the boy his letters and his prayers but gave him a shining personal example of

Christian living, so shining indeed, that he too, like his young foster-child, is venerated as a saint of God. It was during these years of fosterage that his peers, observing the boy's frequent visits to the little chapel, dubbed him Colm Cille, dove of the church, an affectionate title which has attended him ever since in Ireland, while the Scots have a preference for the Latin, Columba, a dove.

When his term of fosterage was completed Colmcille, instead of following the way of a prince among his people, opted to become a Christian monk. Such a choice on the part of so highborn a young man had major consequences for the young and evolving Irish church. His career undoubtedly provided a powerful stimulus to monastic development, and his choice of the monastic life was a headline followed by many another young nobleman. He was a man of the very highest birth, with all the natural advantages which such a circumstance gave in an aristocratic society. He had the gift of second sight, combined with a power to control others by the sheer force of his own personality.

His foundations

Information on Colmcille's life prior to his departure for Britain in AD 563 is little enough. During the decade prior to his departure he was active in establishing monastic communities throughout the upper half of Ireland where his family held sway. Among these foundations were Swords, Lambay, Tory, Drumcliffe, Drumcolumb, Clonmore, Moone, Inchmore in Lough Gowna, and perhaps Kells. There is no knowing the full number; but St Dallan Forgaill, in his *Amra* or Elegy of Colmcille, describes him as 'guardian of a hundred churches'.

His missionary exile

In his youth he had renounced the family inheritance. Then, at the age of forty-two, he was prepared to go a step further and



East-most south window of the side chapel of St Columba's Cathedral, Derry. The three lights depict scenes in the life of Saint Columba: S. Columba A.D. 563 sails for Iona (left light), S. Columba at Drumceatt A.D. 575 (centre light), and Death of S. Columba A.D. 597 (right light). Photo: Andreas F. Borchert / CC BY-SA 3.0 DE. Source Wikimedia Commons.

“Adomnán's *Life* offers a vision of a community of saints and founders bound together in strong brotherly relations.”

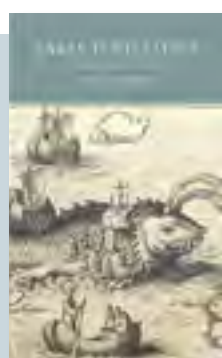
renounce his native land. In Early Christian Ireland, the greatest sacrifice and penance a monk could undertake, other than martyrdom, was voluntary exile. Colmcille, who wasn't in the habit of doing things by halves, took that penitential option.

To this day the people of Islay maintain that when the saint sailed out from Derry he made first landfall on their island, but then moved on to another Inner Hebridean Island, Iona, for his first permanent settlement in Scotland. Here, for thirty-four years he would lead his monks in prayer, study and apostolic endeavour. Life was rarely less than grim on that island, and yet, it was here that he founded a scribal tradition which ultimately produced the Book of Kells; and it was from here that he guided and conducted a mission to both his own Gaelic people in the kingdom of Scottish Dal Riada and to the pagan Pictish peoples further north.

During the Iona years Colmcille returned to Ireland on several occasions, and for various reasons. The monastery of Durrow, in Co. Offaly, was almost certainly founded

during one of these visits, while on another, at the celebrated Convention of the Kings, at Drumcet near Limavady, he negotiated the independence of Scottish Dal Riada and saved the bards from suppression. He visited or maintained contact with other Irish church leaders, and many of them in turn visited Iona. Adomnán's *Life* offers a vision of a community of saints and founders bound together in strong brotherly relations.

By the end of his life, Colmcille's achievement was monumental: he had founded Iona and a number of connected monasteries in the west of Britain and in Ireland, and had exercised strong and decisive influence over the political scene in Scotland and Ireland. But he would have considered these achievements minor in comparison to what he was seeking to attain, namely, wisdom, learning and holiness. Judging from the *Amra Colmcille*, by the time of his death the saint already had an incomparable reputation for these virtues, the virtues not just of a saint but of a wholly rounded and complete human being.



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The Meaning and the Message

From the book *Cardinal Newman for Today*
by Thomas J. Norris

The young Newman was brought up on scripture. His adolescent conversion deepened his regard for the written word. The scriptures and, later, the fathers were his spiritual and mental nourishment, but soon he began to make other discoveries. They are all shoots springing from his encounter with divine revelation in scripture and the fathers. A principal discovery was going to be that of tradition and the necessity of a credal Christianity in the context of an apostolic church.

Tradition: A Gradual Discovery

His first introduction to the theme of tradition came from Edward Hawkins (1789-1882) who in 1818 put Sumner's treatise on the subject into his hands, and then preached the famous sermon on the subject which Newman heard. Given Newman's rather Calvinist leanings in the years immediately succeeding his first conversion in 1816, there was little room on his theological horizon for the idea of tradition, and any room there was began to be filled by his progressive reading of the fathers.

The mode of his discovery of tradition was theological, that is, as insight flowing from either earlier beliefs or tasks undertaken. Thus his researching of the First Ecumenical Council for the Arians of the Fourth Century was the entry into church history as a systematic discipline. Rowan Williams has shown that the young Newman, while appreciating the work on pre-Nicene theology of the 'standard divines' like Bull, Waterland, Petavius and Baronius, considering them to be 'magnificent fellows but ... antiquarians or doctrinists, not ecclesiastical historians', is sensitive to the category of history. Revelation is committed to a community which must move through history, indeed make history.

Still, Newman is at first reticent to admit the need of doctrinal formulation. He fears the irreverent exposition of the pearls of the gospel. He is suspicious that such exposition may detach these treasures from their native and proper location in the bosom of the church. The Arians project, however, alters that perspective substantially. 'His sense of the legitimacy and necessity of doctrinal definition seems to have developed actually in the process of endeavouring to write church history'. This begins with the history of the Arian hurricane. It will be his persistent involvement with those great Christological



“ Tradition exists alongside scripture, not in competition with it since both spring from the same fountainhead in revelation. ”

controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries, controversies providing the theological and cultural context for the golden age of the fathers that will both occasion and cause his gradual discovery of the reality of tradition. He will discover it, in fact, as a component and carrier of revelation through the waves and storms of church history. And this is precisely the thesis of the great 1837 work, *The Prophetic Office of the Church*. Tradition will be the plank in the raft which the Via Media must sail between Protestant reduction to scripture only, and Roman exaggeration towards authority, even infallible authority.

Episcopal and Prophetic Tradition

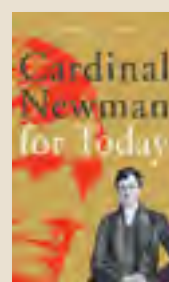
The Prophetic Office expounds a fertile theology of tradition. Louis Bouyer sees in it 'a view of the Catholic tradition which is not only a most inclusive but also a most synthetic one'. Newman's view distinguishes two kinds of tradition, episcopal and prophetic. The latter is powerful but subtle, 'pervading the church like an atmosphere'. It both parallels and fills in the gaps in the episcopal form. It is drawn on, and witnessed to, by the fathers. It also flows in many channels and so enjoys multiple media, including the consensus fidei of the lay faithful. Here is the germ of the theology of the laity. The advancing insight

Scripture is the more authoritative of the two, a view which he held throughout his life. Through his reading in the early 1840s of the history of the Monophysites and of the fifth century councils, the collaborative nature of scripture and tradition dawns upon him. He sees them as expressions of the fullness of revelation. Furthermore, as a Catholic, he saw only verbal differences between the Catholic and Anglican theology of scripture and tradition in the transmission of divine revelation. Catholics, of course, believed in the church's divinely given authority and infallible competence to teach the faith, the proof of which was in scripture and tradition. To refresh our memories on the point, we only need to recall Newman's own demonstration of the dogma of the immaculate conception in the Letter to Pusey, where he draws on early apostolic tradition in the mouths of second and third century fathers and doctors in order to ground the papal definition.

Doctrine: The Need To Know Before We Can Love!

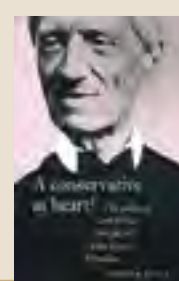
Always the most practical of thinkers, particularly since he was primarily a pastor, Newman realised slowly the indispensable place of doctrine in the exposition of faith. 'We must know concerning God, before we can feel love, fear, hope, or trust towards him. Devotion must have its objects; those objects, as being supernatural, when not represented to our senses by material symbols, must be set before the mind in propositions.' Religion is intrinsically doctrinal and dogmatic, or it will not be at all.

The climate of Newman's day tended to water down this dimension of revelation. It reduced religion to feeling, and dogmas to opinions or beliefs that happened to be held by groups. Newman saw here the central mischief of his own age and of the age to come. He called it liberalism. In his novel, *Loss and Gain*, he portrays, ingeniously and with irony, a fictitious Truth Society whose patrons were Abelard, Benjamin Franklin and Julian the Apostate, and whose guiding principles were 'first, it is uncertain whether truth exists, and, second, it is certain that it cannot be found'.



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By working collaboratively on a shared goal, religious and laypeople have better been able to help respond to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees, writes **Rory O'Neill**

The idea of love of God and love of neighbour is a basic element in hearing the call to join a religious or missionary congregation. This idea is also shared by many others who do not feel called to the religious or missionary life but who do feel called to serve God and others.

There is no doubt that civil society organisations can and do support and engender the charisms and vision of religious and missionary congregations. Collaboration and partnerships have allowed shared visions and mission to coalesce and address existing and emerging phenomenon that affect those on the margins of society today.

The Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI), under its social justice mandate (JPIC), seeks to respond with courage and confidence to existing and emerging realities. Inspired by the Gospel and Church teachings, AMRI, as a centre for mission and dialogue, promotes collaboration and partnership with various stakeholders. A concrete example of this is the relationship AMRI has today with the Irish Refugee Council.

Relationships

The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) was established in 1992 with the support of various religious congregations and development agencies. These important relationships continue to flourish and develop as the need for our supports continues to expand. Our work with people seeking protection and refugees is echoed in the four verbs used by Pope Francis in discussing migration – to welcome, protect, promote and integrate people seeking protection. Our services offer a continuum of care for people through the protection process and onto Irish citizenship and beyond if needed.

As an organisation, the IRC began its relationship with AMRI in 2015, through the then justice coordinator, Sr Sheila Curran RSM, who reached out with the offer from various congregations

A place to call home



of property to house refugees in an emergency response to what was termed the refugee crisis in 2015. Since then, the initiative has developed into a collaborative housing programme called 'A Place Called Home'. The programme provides housing and support to people leaving Direct Provision, families reunited through family reunification and those who have here under the State's resettlement programme.

This programme would not have been possible without the support of the congregations and other faith-based organisations and groups. Currently, we have over 70 people directly housed in 18 properties. These properties have been donated by the following congregations: St Patrick's Missionary Society, Loreto Sisters IBVM, Sisters of Mercy South Central Province and Western

Province, Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles, Christian Brothers European Province, Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart of Mary, and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

Skills

Not only has property and funding been donated, but individual sisters, brothers and priests are committed to providing holistic support needs to the people we work with. The range of skills that sisters, brothers and priests provide continues to be a resource that is invaluable and unquantifiable. Healthcare support, social work, translation, cultural knowledge, teaching and life skills are constructive examples of the many supports that are provided.

Another valuable aspect of the

project has been the ecumenical and interfaith dimension. The Church of Ireland has been an integral and very generous funder for the IRC's wider housing and homelessness work. The range of work that housing and homeless support requires in this current climate covers a very wide spectrum. From access to schools, employment, health, legal and social supports.

“The challenge to love God and love our neighbour is not unique to religious congregations or missionary societies”

Interfaith collaboration is perfectly exemplified in a new programme the Irish Refugee Council is working with in collaboration with the State, UNHCR and other stakeholders called Community Sponsorship. This is where communities come together to provide the integration supports for a Syrian refugee family coming directly from a UNHCR camp in either Lebanon or Jordan. One community based around a pre-existing ecumenical project has been formed to undertake this programme. The group have also been extensively supported by a missionary congregation – the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Another community has been supported by the Jesuits.

Both the IRC and AMRI acknowledge the value of this

close collaboration. Through this has come the realisation that by working collaboratively with a shared goal, we have better been able to help respond to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. This has also enabled religious and missionaries continue to be faithful to their own unique charisms and fulfil their mission here in Ireland today in a very concrete and fruitful way.

The challenge to love God and love our neighbour is not unique to religious congregations or missionary societies. It is a call to all Christians and indeed to all people. 'A Place To Call Home' is one particular example of collaboration and partnership with others, where shared goals are achievable. It is a model whereby the charism and mission of congregations and missionary societies can see their vocation being fulfilled in a very meaningful way.

The present Covid-19 crisis highlights our interdependence. While we are all in this crisis together, we do not all experience it in the same way. Covid-19 will exacerbate already existing social vulnerabilities and inequalities while creating new ones. We will all need to re-think how we co-exist together to ensure no one is left behind. Once we can all collaborate and work together, we can be very effective in our approach.

✚ *Rory O'Neill, Irish Refugee Council and the Association of the Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland Justice Desk. World Refugee Day is June 20.*

“Healthcare support, social work, translation, cultural knowledge, teaching and life skills are constructive examples of the many supports that are provided”



World Report

IN BRIEF

Catholic charity to send Brazil aid

● Brazil is to receive emergency aid from a leading Catholic charity as the coronavirus crisis worsens in the country.

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has announced 11 new projects in response to this, supporting the work of priests, religious and lay missionaries.

In total, the projects will aid 169 priests, 141 sisters, 31 seminarians and 56 lay missionaries.

Most of these projects involve the collection and distribution of food and other essential supplies to those most needy.

Fr Francisco Silva, treasurer for the diocese of Itapipoca, said few people had money to spare and welcomed help from overseas charities.

Bishops in Philippines issue Independence Day rally cry

● Catholic bishops in the Philippines issued an Independence Day rally cry calling on Filipinos to unite and fight for freedom against the “anti-people” policies of President Rodrigo Duterte’s government.

“People’s quest for freedom and liberty should never end even if curtailed by a government due to pandemic restrictions”, said Manila’s apostolic administrator Bishop Broderick Pabillo last week.

The prelate said the faithful should fight against policies that further oppress people, including the recent anti-terrorism bill passed by lawmakers.

The Philippines celebrated its liberation on June 12 to mark the end of 333 years of Spanish rule in 1898. Spain introduced Catholicism to the archipelago.

New education approach for Africa say Catholic experts

● The International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ICMICA-PaxRomana) has called for more functional and responsive education systems to assist African communities.

Importance of the household, positive parenting and values taught by the Church were highlighted as key areas for child development.

“The situation of Covid-

19 has not created a new situation; it has dramatised what has been there all the time, the inequalities in education,” said Fr Joseph Arimoso, Education Co-ordinator for the Jesuit conference of Africa and Madagascar, in Kenya last week.

“Education plays a different role in Africa and so we need to look at a different approach to education.”

British bishops express solidarity with Black Lives Matter

● The Catholic bishops of England and Wales have released a statement of solidarity with campaigners for racial justice in the USA. The bishops conference also condemned systemic racism in Britain and said that Catholics have a responsibility to promote racial justice.

“We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life,” their statement said. “We serve a God of love, mercy and justice.”

Last week the Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ) called for anti-racist training to be part of every profession and to be on school curriculum.

Painting priest in Indonesia dies aged 89

● Jesuit Fr Lambertus Martinus van den Heuvel Sugiri, who co-pioneered Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Indonesia and used art to evangelise, has died following a short illness.

The Dutch-born priest, 89, used painting influenced by Ignatian spirituality and the work of Jeronimo Nadal, a 16th-Century Jesuit priest, to communicate the Gospels to those he served.

He produced almost 300 paintings at St Theresa Church in Menteng and the Catholic-run Sanggar Prathivi Arts Studio.

“He was a man filled with spirit,” said Fr Fransiskus Xaverius Dedomau Djatmiko da Gomez.

US bishops warn Supreme Court has redefined legal meaning of ‘sex’

The president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has lamented a decision by the country’s Supreme Court this week on the legal definition of sex in civil rights law.

Archbishop José Gomez issued a statement in response to a case on whether sexual identity and gender identity is covered by laws prohibiting employment discrimination based on sex.

“I am deeply concerned that the US Supreme Court has effectively redefined the legal meaning of ‘sex’ in our nation’s civil rights law. This is an injustice that will have implications in many areas of life,” he said on Monday.

The Supreme Court ruled that employers cannot sack workers because of their sexual orientation or self-determined gender identity, even while dissenting justices opined the court was legislating from the bench.

The decision considered a trio of discrimination cases before the court, two of which involved employees who said they were fired because of their sexual orientation in *Bostock vs Clayton County*



Archbishop José Gomez.

and *Altitude Express Inc. vs Zarda*.

A third case, *Harris Funeral Homes Inc. vs EEOC*, involved a man who lost his job at a Michigan funeral home after he had gender-transition surgery and returned to work dressed as a woman; the funeral home had sex-specific dress code policies for employees.

The question at issue was whether or not protections against sex discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act

also applied to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

This week the court’s majority ruled that “an employer who fires an individual merely for being gay or transgender violates Title VII”.

Humanity

In November, the US bishops’ conference had asked the court not to extend Title VII protections to sexual orientation and gender identity

because to do so would “redefine a fundamental element of humanity”.

“By erasing the beautiful differences and complementary relationship between man and woman,” Archbishop Gomez said, “we ignore the glory of God’s creation and harm the human family, the first building block of society.”

“Our sex, whether we are male or female, is part of God’s plan for creation and for our lives.”

“As Pope Francis has taught with such sensitivity to live in the truth with God’s intended gifts in our lives requires that we receive our bodily and sexual identity with gratitude from our Creator.”

“No one can find true happiness by pursuing a path that is contrary to God’s plan,” he continued.

“Every human person is made in the image and likeness of God and, without exception, must be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect. Protecting our neighbours from unjust discrimination does not require redefining human nature,” the Archbishop of Los Angeles said.

India Church leaders seek government consultation on worship in lockdown

India’s leading lay organisation has urged the prime minister’s office to consult religious leaders before radical decisions are taken on worship during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

At a webinar hosted by the All-India Catholic Union (AICU) last week, Catholic leaders discussed a guideline that the government issued for opening religious places.

The guideline allowed opening religious places from June 8, but banned the distribution of prasad or food offerings (Holy Communion).

Church leaders said that celebrating Mass in churches without being able to distribute Communion would render the whole exercise meaningless.

Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI), said “the Holy Eucharist, also known as Holy Communion, was at the very core of the Christian Faith”.

“For Catholics, the bread and wine were the body and blood of Christ. People had been deprived for many months from partaking in Communion,” he said.

Disease

Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore, spiritual adviser to the AICU, said the Church is committed to personal hygiene and preventing the disease spreading.

He added the “detailed system management” inside churches should be left to the local bishop, priests and the laity.

Catholic leaders noted that the Church has contributed greatly in extending medical care, relief and other assistance to people impacted by unemployment, hunger and homelessness because of the pandemic.

Cardinal Gracias said many Church-run institutions had been converted to Covid-19 care wards, refugee centres and food distribution points.

“The Church and the community are in the forefront to relieve the hardships of migrant workers and their families,” he said.

Church can make post-Covid contribution, says Australian clergy

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane has pitched for the Church to take a key role in Australia’s Covid-19 recovery efforts, adding that the task cannot be left solely to politicians.

“We’re in a situation now where the world has changed, perhaps forever,” said the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference last week.

“We now have a chance to shape society in ways that weren’t possible before this crisis.”

The Archbishop feels the Church can deliver a unique post-pandemic contribution and pointed to the Church’s extraordinary reach into Australian communities with thousands of workers in schools, hospitals and on the frontline.

The clergyman said the Church offered many insights into dealing with dramatic world changes.

Teachings

He cited the teachings of Pope Leo XIII, who he said offered “a genuinely Gospel response to a dramatically changed world” and had found a voice in every Pope since.

“The principle duties and responsibilities of employers, employees and governments are as much in focus today as they were then,” he said.

“We are in this together – all Australians; and the Church wants to be a good companion on the road ahead, helping to identify new opportunities and what is needed to respond to them.”



Edited by Aron Hegarty
aron@irishcatholic.ie

Heavy crosses to bear



Activists in protective gear dig 'graves' on Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro. The graves were dug to symbolise those who died from Covid-19. Photo: CNS

Pakistani Christian accused of blasphemy by wife and daughter

A wife and daughter have accused their Christian husband and father of committing blasphemy in the first case of its kind in Pakistan.

Anwar Masih from Lahore has been charged under blasphemy law 295-C for uttering blasphemous words about the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Last week, the Civil Line police station registered a case against Mr Masih.

According to the first information report (FIR), the complainants are his wife Kausar Parveen and his daughter Samreen.

The police have confiscated their mobile phones, which contain evidence to prove that he has committed blasphemy.

This is arguably the first case in the

country where the wife and daughter both are witnesses against the husband and the father.

According to reports, Samreen and Kausar were running a beauty parlour and Samreen had been having an affair with a Muslim man, who she is now married to and eight months pregnant.

Samreen converted to Islam, while Anwar was kept in the dark and never told by his wife nor daughter about the marriage or conversion.

Once Anwar found out, he was naturally shocked and furious that his wife and daughter did not tell him.

He shouted at his daughter and wife, and allegedly abused Islam too which was recorded by his daughter on her phone, which has been confiscated,

it is part of the record and is to be produced in court when the hearing starts.

The police have kept Anwar at an unknown place for security reasons, while the mother and daughter are hiding at an unknown location.

Nasir Saeed, Director of Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS)-UK said: "This is shocking news for me that a wife and daughter have both gathered to witness against their husband and father and complained against him to the police.

"This is another example of the misuse of the blasphemy law where a daughter gets rid of her father, and a wife her husband, simply because he cannot accept what they have done."

Third Chinese bishop installed in state ceremony

An 83-year-old Chinese bishop has been installed as the third bishop to be recognised by the Communist regime since the Vatican-China 2018 agreement on the appointment of bishops.

Bishop Peter Lin Jiashan was officially appointed as head of the Fuzhou Diocese in Fujian province last week.

Since 1997, Bishop Lin had refused to register with the government, and thus had not

been recognised by Chinese authorities.

Fujian province's Ethnic and Religious Affairs Department said that Fr Wang Yuliang, an official of the state-approved bishops' conference in China, read a letter of approval from the bishops' conference. In the letter, Bishop Lin pledged to obey God, fulfil the pastoral duties of a bishop and proclaim the Gospel to lead the diocese.

The bishop also said priests and Catholics should abide by the constitution of the country, uphold national unity and social harmony and love the country and the Church.

He insisted Catholics follow the directions to "sinicise the Church in our country" and contribute to the realisation of the "dream of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation".

Details of the Vatican-

China agreement on bishops, which has always been described as "provisional", have never been released, but are reported to be valid only for two years unless renewed before September 2020.

The first bishop approved by China was Bishop Zhuang Jianjian of Shantou in January 2019. He retired immediately and eight days later, China recognised Bishop Jin Lugang of Nanyang.

Vatican roundup

Fund established by Pope to help families

● Pope Francis has set up a fund aimed at helping families and individuals of Rome diocese who are in economic difficulty due to the Covid-19 crisis.

In a letter to the Vicariate of Rome last week, the Holy Father says the Jesus the Divine Worker Fund will support those who have lost their jobs and their livelihoods because of the pandemic.

"As bishop of Rome I have decided to establish the 'Jesus the Divine Worker Fund' to reaffirm the dignity of work, with an initial allocation of one million euros," wrote Pope Francis.

In particular, the fund is for "those who risk being excluded from institutional protection and who need support until they can walk again unaccompanied".

"Many are fathers and mothers who struggle to set the table for their children and make sure they receive the bare minimum," he continued.

"This Fund is intended to be a sign that is capable of urging all people of good will to offer a concrete gesture of inclusion, especially towards those who seek comfort, hope and recognition of their rights."

Swiss Guard swearing-in moved to October

● The Pontifical Swiss Guard has confirmed that 38 recruits will be sworn-in on October 4, but that the ceremony will take place without guests.

The event, which should have taken place on May 6, will be held behind closed doors in accordance with the "current rules of protection" to avoid infection due to the Covid-19 virus.

Although no parents, family members or guests will be present, live television broadcasting and streaming of the "unique event" will be shown on the official website of the Swiss Guards at guardiasvizzera.ch.

The programme will

include Holy Mass with the recruits in St Peter's Basilica, while the swearing-in ceremony will take place in the San Damascus Courtyard.

Pope Francis expressed the hope that their service in the Vatican and their time spent in Rome would bring those they encounter "a word of comfort and a gesture of brotherhood, so that they may become convincing witnesses of the risen Christ, alive and present in every age".

The date of the swearing-in (May 6) commemorates the 147 Swiss Guards who fell defending Pope Clement VII during the Sack of Rome in 1527.

All of us responsible for child labour, says Pontiff

● Pope Francis has appealed to the international community to protect the numerous boys and girls who are deprived of their childhood and forced into child labour.

The Holy Father noted that World Day Against Child Labour, which was marked on June 12, signifies a phenomenon which he said "endangers" the integral development of so many boys and girls.

Pope Francis noted that "in the current health emergency situation, in several countries many children and young people are forced into jobs that are inappropriate for their age, in order to help their families in conditions of extreme poverty".

He added that "these are forms of slavery and imprisonment, resulting in physical and psychological suffering".

"All of us are responsible for this," claimed the Pope, who called on institutions to "make every effort to protect minors".

The Holy Father asked institutions to ensure that the economic and social gaps, which underlie the distorted dynamic in which they are unfortunately involved, are filled.

Letters

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

Letter of the week

Perplexed by the statistics and the reality

Dear Editor, On March 22, we learned of the very sad death of the first Covid-19 victim in our country; a lady in the east of Ireland, who was vulnerable due to an underlying medical condition, we were told. Since then, we have followed the statistics; the rise and fall in death rates, the genders of victims, the mean and the median age, county by county breakdowns of confirmed cases and deaths, if they had underlying medical conditions, etc.

'We are in this together' we are reminded repeatedly, since the gov. ie campaign was launched a month later. Collective responsibility, not individual choice, is the message being

impressed upon us all. The world is united in the common fight against this dreadful virus, as the stats pour in from far flung places and are analysed and compared.

So too is the world united in outrage at the brutal killing of George Floyd and the battle for justice is at the top of the social justice agenda.

The statistics are readily available nationally for deaths caused by all sorts of illnesses, road accidents, work related deaths, suicides, homicides, drownings, etc., but not so for abortion, which is freely and widely available in the Republic for 16 months now. How perplexing. These vulnerable human beings have died at

the hands of many of the same medics, doctors, healthcare workers who are currently desperately fighting to save the lives of others.

While all sorts of businesses and commercial enterprises are slowly reopening, we are also told that Ireland ranks in 16th place within the European Union, when it comes to being permitted to return to religious services/places of worship of all faiths.

The mind boggles. It seems that not everybody is 'in this together' after all.

*Yours etc.,
Seán Wynne,
Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim.*

Will future generations condemn abortion?

Dear Editor, The current generation of English people condemn their ancestors for condoning the practice of slavery in the founding of the British Empire.

Will future generations condemn this generation for condoning the practice of procured abortion in the struggle for 'human rights'?

*Yours etc.,
Fr Oliver Skelly,
Coole parish,
Co. Westmeath.*



Turn virtual Mass-watchers into physical Mass-goers

Dear Editor, Although it's likely that many people watching online Mass since the coronavirus pandemic reared its ugly head were already going to Mass, I'm sure there are many that have tuned in at this time of uncertainty and fear. Religion is a comfort to people in the darkest times and even though there are many lapsed Catholics in Ireland, their dormant Faith will have been reignited.

We were already on a path of virtual reality

becoming many young people in particular's actual reality, we need to make sure that this doesn't push more people into the online world, away from communities and real-life human contact (albeit at a two-metre distance!).

For this reason I found your column [IC 04/06/2020] very interesting. You ask the question: "What of those who are not regular attendees, but have been taking comfort and solace from participating online?"

They are now part of our virtual community, how do we incorporate them in to the physical community?"

You say that we need to be proactive, easier said than done, but I agree this is a valuable opportunity to invite people into our parish communities. Rather than the result of this pandemic being another nail in the coffin of the Church in Ireland which is increasingly coming under attack from secularists, why shouldn't it be a time of renewal?

This is an opportunity that can't be wasted, let's make the days before June 29, when our churches will reopen for Mass, a time of celebration and happiness. Let's show people the joy of receiving Communion, of coming together as a parish community and even though it will be different, let's tell people what they are missing.

*Yours etc.,
Anne Halligan,
Ballyfermot, Co. Dublin.*

Tackling racism with respect and dignity

Dear Editor, The issue of racism has been put to the fore after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in the US and I have to say I'm quite glad that it has caused a heightened awareness of racism in Ireland.

It was great to see Bishop Brendan Leahy speaking about it in a recent homily [IC 11/06/2020], in which he says racism and sectarianism destroys the fabric of communities. This can not be overstated.

There has been a lot of criticism of the riots and looting in the US which are a byproduct of the protests that have been happening across the country. There can be no defence for this disgraceful behaviour. However, what people fail to understand is that although these crimes of looting, rioting and general violence are reprehensible and send the wrong message, this is happening due to the growing disquiet and anger due to the systemic racism in

the US. Racism tears communities apart. Why does it have to come to this before it's taken seriously?

Ireland is not in the same position as the US, but racism does exist, we must never let it tear our communities apart, we must treat all with respect and dignity, as is the Christian way.

*Yours etc.,
Caoimhe Kelly,
Dungarvan,
Co. Waterford.*

Parishes need all the help they can get reopening

Dear Editor, In order for parishes to rally together to get churches back open they'll need a lot of assistance. It was refreshing to see on your front page [IC 11/06/2020] that there are important figures within the GAA who are open to helping churches be prepared for Mass returning.

The difficulty is not all parishes have a close connection with their local GAA club. Those who do I have no doubt will be supported by enthusiastic young people who are fit and capable of cleaning and putting up signs in their local church so it is up to standard and able to follow the bishops' guidelines published last week.

This would probably be wishful thinking for others, who may be disconnected from youth groups or clubs for one reason or another.

I think parishes should reach out to local schools and youth groups and ask for help if they need it, to make sure their church or churches are ready for public worship once more by June 29, there could be nothing more disappointing if a church couldn't bring itself up to code before this date and continued to remain closed for public worship. As the saying goes, if you don't ask, you won't receive.

*Yours etc.,
John O'Gorman,
Ennis,
Co. Clare.*

Praise for two former Taoisigh

Dear Editor, As much as some of our former Taoisigh inspire controversy and even disgust in many of us, I have to say I must commend John Bruton and Bertie Ahern for speaking out in support of reopening churches [IC 04/06/2020]. Politics is divisive and there will always be staunch disagreements and rows but aside from the politics, what these two politicians have done is not something our current Taoiseach would do: a man who generally speaks in platitudes that are nice soundbites but come across as insincere.

The majority of our current political leaders are either apathetic or openly vitriolic to the Church and have no interest in catering to the spiritual needs of Christians in Ireland.

To have these two well-known people who led our country in the past speak out like this is welcome but also a memory of what this country has lost, respect for the divine, for religion and for those of us who have a deep faith.

*Yours etc.,
Dan O'Connor,
Navan,
Co. Meath.*

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



▲ **USA:** Mischa (6), from Maryland, holds a bullhorn in front of a 'Black Lives Matter' protest sign near the White House in Washington DC.

◀ **IRAQ:** A young man dives into the Tigris River in Baghdad to cool off as the temperatures soar while pools remain closed due to an imposed curfew. Photos: CNS



SOUTH AFRICA: Men kneel during a protest outside the US Embassy in Pretoria following the death of American George Floyd.



EL SALVADOR: Salvadorans gather during a candlelight service in San Salvador to commemorate the 1989 killing of six Jesuits. A Spanish court has begun a trial of those accused of murdering the priests.



COLOMBIA: A Venezuelan migrant child wearing a protective mask is seen at a makeshift camp in Bogota.



POLAND: Nuns of the Mother of Divine Mercy order in Krakow rap to the song *Jesus, I Trust You* in a YouTube video. The nuns are doing the rap challenge to raise funds for medical staff tackling Covid-19.



Our perception of a ‘dignified’ death

The movie *Million Dollar Baby* tells the story of a young woman who becomes a professional boxer. Young, strong and physically very attractive she captures your heart as, against all odds, she eventually rises to the top in her sport. But then the story turns tragic; she is unfairly hit by an opponent and ends up paralysed, her body broken and with it her health and attractiveness. And her condition is permanent, there is no cure. She chooses to end her life through euthanasia.

I had gone to this movie with a young couple, both solidly committed to their church and their Faith. Yet both of them were in strong sympathy with how this young woman chose to die. Perhaps it was more their emotions than themselves speaking when they justified her manner of death: “But she was so young and beautiful! It wouldn’t have been right for her to spend the rest of her life in that terrible state!”

In their young eyes, her debilitated state stripped her of her essential dignity.

What is dignity? When and how is it lost?

Dignity is a promiscuous term, constantly shedding different partners. It is also a sneaky term. Sometimes it no longer means what it used to mean and nowhere



Fr Rolheiser

is this truer than when the term is applied today to ‘death with dignity’? What defines death with dignity?

Shortly after Brittany Maynard died by euthanasia in a case that caught wide public attention, Jessica Keating wrote an article in *America* magazine assessing that death from various points of view. At one point she takes up the question of dignity and writes: “The use of the term dignity to describe this death is deeply problematic, since it masks the reality of fear and equates dignity exclusively with radical autonomy, choice and cognitive capability. The result is a not-so-subtle implication that the person who chooses diminishment and suffering dies a less dignified death.” (*America*, March 16, 2015)

In much of our talk about death with dignity today there is in fact the not-so-subtle implication

that the person who chooses diminishment and suffering over euthanasia dies a less dignified death. That is hard to deny, given the dominant ethos of a culture wherein physical diminishment and suffering are seen as a very assault on our dignity. This has not always been the case; indeed in former times sometimes the opposite was true, an aged, physically diminished body was seen as something dignified and beautiful. Why is our view of dignity different today?

They are different because of how we conceive of dignity and beauty. For us, these have to do mainly with physical health, physical vitality, and the physical attractiveness of the human body.

For us, aesthetics is a house with one room – physical attractiveness. Everything else assaults our dignity. That makes it difficult for us to see any process

that diminishes and humbles the human body by robbing it of its vitality and physical attractiveness as being a dignified one. And yet that is normally how the death process works. If you have ever journeyed with someone dying from a terminal disease and been at their bedside when he or she died, you know that physically this is not pretty. Disease can do horrible things to the body. But does this destroy dignity? Does it make one less beautiful?

“Yet, who would say that Jesus did not die with dignity? The opposite. We are still contemplating the beauty of his death and the dignity displayed in it”

Well, that depends on one’s spirituality and on what one considers as dignified and beautiful. Consider Jesus’ death. By today’s concept of dignity, his was not a very dignified death. We have always sanitised the crucifixion to shield ourselves from its raw ‘indignity’, but crucifixion was humiliating.

When the Romans chose crucifixion as a method of capital punishment they had more in mind than just ending someone’s life. Besides wanting to make a person suffer optimally and they

also wanted to totally and publicly humiliate him by humiliating his body. Hence the person was stripped naked, with his genitals exposed, and when he went into spasms in the moments before death, his bowels would loosen. What can be more humiliating? What can be less beautiful?

Yet, who would say that Jesus did not die with dignity? The opposite. We are still contemplating the beauty of his death and the dignity displayed in it. But that is within a different aesthetics, one that our culture no longer understands. For us, dignity and beauty are inextricably tied to physical health, physical attractiveness, and lack of humiliating diminishments within our physical body. Within that perspective there is, seemingly, no dignity to Jesus’ death.

I am the first to admit that the issue of death with dignity is an extremely complex one that raises legal, medical, psychological, familial, societal, ethical and spiritual questions for which there are no simple answers. But inside all of these questions there still lies an aesthetic one: what, ultimately, makes for beauty? How, ultimately, do we see dignity?

Does a person with a still attractive, undiminished, physical body who voluntarily chooses to die before that beauty is despoiled by disease die more dignified than did Jesus?

“For us, aesthetics is a house with one room – physical attractiveness. Everything else assaults our dignity”

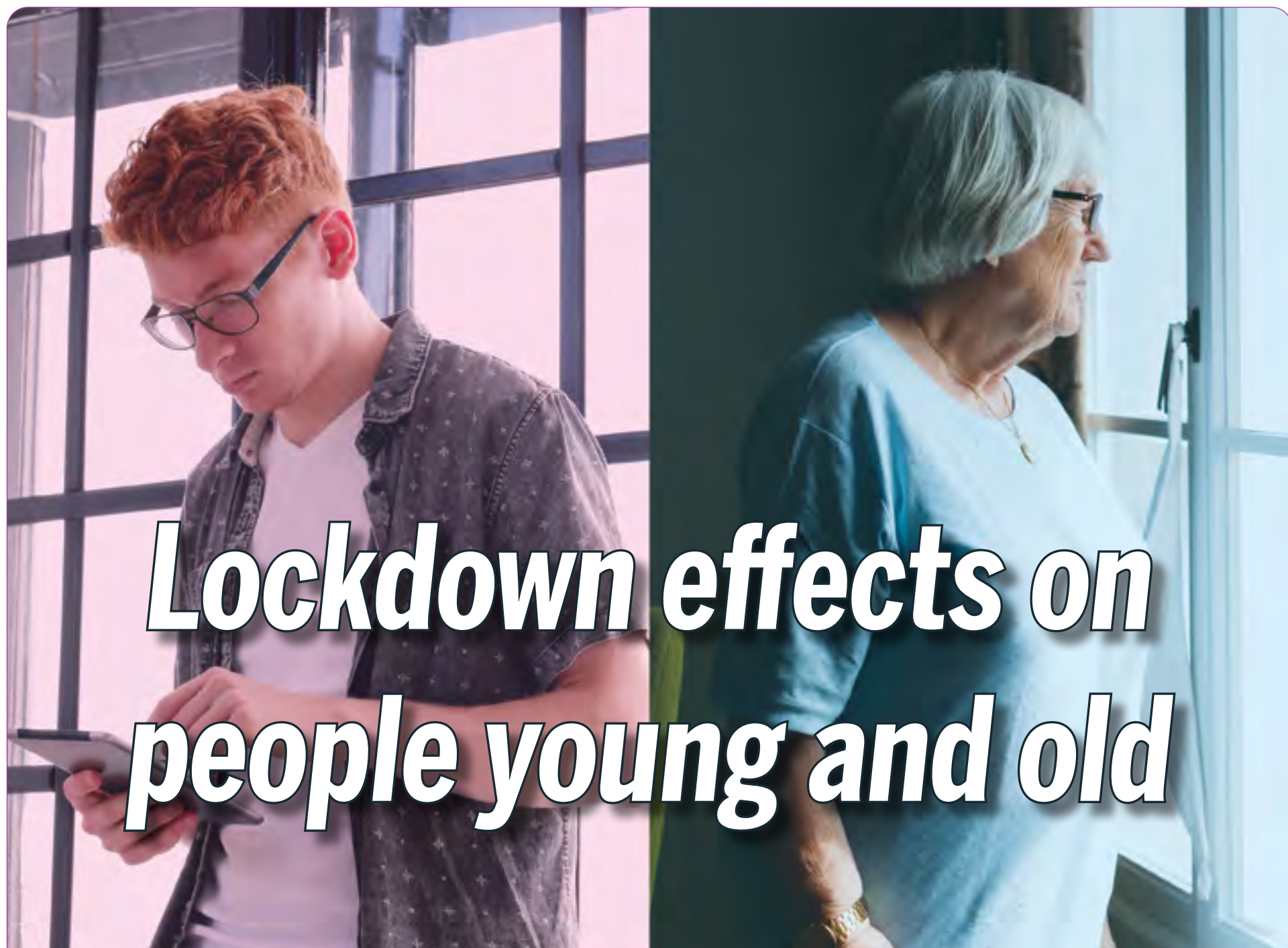
Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 18, 2020

Personal Profile

Crisis deepening
our understanding
of Eucharist

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Lockdown effects on people young and old

The pandemic has resulted in far reaching, monolithic difficulties for us all. It has reminded us that we are not invincible, that we are, in fact, incredibly frail beings.

However, it has also underlined our common humanity, as all corners of the globe are suddenly linked in this universal struggle. But even within this universality, difference remains; difference of effect and reception of the virus, difference in material circumstances.

For those who are 'vulnerable' – i.e. those with underlying conditions or over 70 – it means cocooning; for parents, it means



The pandemic is a monolithic event, yet its effects differ from person to person writes Ruadhán Jones

combining working from home with teaching and cooking; for children and young people, it means a hard-to-accept separation from their friends, education and social outlets.

As a result, how each of us copes with the lockdown will differ and intersect in a variety of ways and this is no bad thing. While the general process remains the same, it's good to

consider what your position is, or those who are in your care, and respond accordingly.

So what are some of the specifics you need to consider for those cocooning and for young people?

Coping with cocooning

I remember at the start of the lockdown overhearing a woman on the phone to her dad: "I don't care how young you feel dad,"

she said, "biologically you're over 70!" Though comical, this little exchange was the first time I was aware of the effects the lockdown was likely to have on the elderly.

Those over 70 and those with underlying conditions were advised to cocoon, which effectively means staying at home to protect themselves from the coronavirus. Under the new phase of restrictions which began on June 8, those cocooning can again go outside for exercise or for a drive. They can meet up outside with a small group of up to four people – all socially distanced, with gloves and masks.

While the lifting of restrictions leads to much needed personal

interaction for many, it still leaves some isolated and without physical contact. This can lead to increased anxiety or loneliness, and knowing you are at risk can create worries about your health and the health of family members.

But these issues are not insurmountable: the first step is to be aware of your situation and to give yourself the time to adjust. Be patient in finding a routine that works, especially as the situation changes.

Developing a regular routine can provide structure to your day, making the world seem safer and more predictable. It's important to stay in touch with friends

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Family News

AND EVENTS

HELPING KIDS MOVE FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY

Transitioning from primary to secondary school can be difficult and intimidating for children, what better way to get them prepared than an outdoor skills programme in the wilds of Co. Mayo? The day of fun, adventure and life learning is said to be an opportunity to;

- Explore how best to manage the transition in to secondary school.
- Learn how to better deal with worry and anxiety
- Improve your communication skills
- Identify fears and worries and learn coping skills
- Find ways to deal with bullying
- Fight fear by facing fear
- Learn some bushcraft skills.

The event is run by two trained professionals, a psychotherapist and an expert at outdoor education and 'adventure management'.

Those interested are asked to bring waterproofs, layers of clothing, a packed lunch and water. The meeting place is at Centra, Main Street, Newport at 9.45am sharp, July 18, before driving to the Bangor trail.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/primary-to-secondary-school-transition-an-outdoor-prep-day-tickets-107732035418?aff=ebdssbd&estsearch>

BETTER COMMUNICATION LEADS TO FAMILY DINNERS

A new study in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, published by Elsevier, connects less family discouragement and better family communication with a higher likelihood to eat evening family meals and family breakfasts together, and not in front of a television. Researchers studied 259 parents who were also patients at either The Ohio State University or Wake Forest University accredited weight management and bariatric surgery facilities. They found parents who had better family communication and lower discouragement about trying to improve their eating habits were more likely to participate in family meals.

"It's important to note all family members in the home have influence," said study author Keeley J. Pratt, PhD. The Ohio State University, Columbus, US, said any family member can influence the adoption and maintenance of healthy patterns and behaviours in the home. "Even if someone doesn't have the most power to influence the family (like children), they are all influencing each other."

KNOW YOUR FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY

Knowing the history of health issues in family members might just save your life but many people are unaware of what conditions they may be genetically predisposed to. A study by medtech firm ANCON Medical found that 29% of people had no idea whether or not they have a family history of cancer, 21% know nothing about their parents' medical history – and 57% know nothing about the medical history of their grandparents. According to the British Heart Foundation, a family history of heart disease is a key risk factor when it comes to developing the UK's biggest killer. Asking family members about any prevalent conditions that keep coming up may be a huge help in reducing future risk. Conditions including stroke, kidney disease, diabetes and cancer all have been shown to have genetic links and so having a relative who has had the condition could raise your own risk, so don't be shy!

Without Mass we cannot live



Photo: Angelica Mendoza / Catholic

At the 49th International Eucharistic Congress in 2008 in Quebec, Canada, Pope Benedict XVI spoke passionately via satellite about the Eucharist as "our most beautiful treasure" and "the sacrament per excellence", introducing us early into eternal life. The theme of the congress that year was 'The Eucharist, gift of God for the Life of the World' which Pope Benedict said contains the whole mystery of our salvation. He spoke of the Second Vatican Council referring to the Eucharist as the source and summit of the action and of the life of the Church.

“We have to constantly work to retain a sense of the sacred, something which hasn't been easy over the past few months during the Covid-19 lockdown”

Urging a commitment to a renewed Eucharistic catechesis, he encouraged Catholics to study the great 'Mystery of Faith' that we proclaim at every Mass suggesting Vatican Council's Sacrosanctum Concilium as a source of knowledge in this task. Pope Benedict XVI said that it's by receiving the Body of Christ that we get the strength of unity with God and with one another.

In his Quebec homily, the Pope reminded the congregation that the Eucharist is not "a meal among friends".

Again he referred to the rich teachings of the Second Vatican Council which tell us that: "Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy."

Sometimes the way we teach our children about Mass



A parent's perspective Maria Byrne

and the Eucharistic is lacking compared to how we challenge and advance their understanding in areas connected to science or politics or numerous other areas. Many children refer to the "holy bread" with no idea that the bread and wine offered by Christ at the Last Supper literally became his body and blood and that this miracle is repeated at every single Mass since. Sadly, many in the Government and in State organisations viewed Mass and the Sacraments as similar to many non-essential activities like a soak in the jacuzzi in your local gym or a trip to the cinema which we could live without for another while. We can't blame them for not having the knowledge that we ourselves may lack, seeing the Mass as mostly a community gathering which could be replicated by taking part in a Zoom meeting or touching base with neighbours by engaging in a game of street Bingo. The YouCat, the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church is a great resource for parents who struggle to even begin to teach their children about the Eucharist. I love its layout, the user-friendly texts and how the little extra quotations on the side of each page sum up points very succinctly. Again, Pope Benedict, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, has a great way with words telling the young readers that the liturgy "is never a mere meeting of a group of people, who make up their own form of celebration...Through our sharing in Jesus' appearing before the Father, we stand both as members of the worldwide community of the whole Church

and also of the communion of saints". He goes on to say: "Yes, in a certain sense this is the liturgy of heaven."

We have to constantly work to retain a sense of the sacred, something which hasn't been easy over the past few months during the Covid-19 lockdown. There have been online Masses, amazing efforts to organise great talks and internet conferences, encouraging online messages from priests, bishops and pastors but, as a Catholic mother, I could see the increasing disconnectedness, sadness and spiritual hunger in my own family. As another great quote in the YouCat says, this time from the rule of St Benedict: "Nothing may have priority over the liturgy."



Photo: CNS

For parents who face a battle every day, not only to retain their children in the Catholic faith, but to keep their faith relevant in their lives with so many other influences drawing them in different directions, it's been particularly tough.

Question 166 in the YouCat asks: "Why does the Church celebrate the liturgy so often?"

In the answer one line stands out stating emphatically that just as we breathe air to stay alive, so too the Church lives and breathes by celebrating the liturgy. In a homily last April, Pope Francis spoke of his serious concerns about the faithful not being able to come together as a community to celebrate Mass or to receive the sacraments saying that one's relationship with Jesus is intimate and personal but it is also in a community. I think it is a major worry, not only for our children but for ourselves, that, as Pope Francis warned, our relationship with God would be seen as something "just for myself, detached from the people of God". He pointed out that in the Gospels, Jesus' disciples always lived their relationship with the Lord as a community.

“In his Quebec homily, the Pope reminded the congregation that the Eucharist is not “a meal among friends”

The YouCat tells us of the brave martyr, Saturninus who, on cross-examination after accusations of taking place in the forbidden assembly on Sunday proclaimed: "Without the Sunday Eucharist, we cannot live. Do you not know that the Christian exists for the Eucharist and the Eucharist for Christians?" The Eucharist has priority in the life of the Church and of the individual because here we fly directly into the arms of Jesus and when we let him come close to us, he teaches us, feeds us, changes us, heals us and becomes one with us in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

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and family by phone or video chat, or organise to meet outside if they are within your travel limit. Regular routines and contact can recreate that social hub which we are used to and need to support our mental wellbeing.

Keep active, stay safe

Fitness and exercise – if you were to go by most advertisements, they're purely an enterprise for the young. Equally, they must be vigorous, involving sweat, aches and pains.

But while that might be the popular conception, it isn't the truth. It is just as important for the young as for the old. Physical activity can be as simple as cleaning the dishes and doing some Hoovering, doing a bit of baking or tending to plants in the garden.

Those over 70 and those with underlying conditions were advised to cocoon, which effectively means staying at home

"Just 30 minutes of activity every day can really help to keep your bones nice and strong," says Nora Stapelton of Sport Ireland. "It can help your balance, your co-ordination, as well as boosting your mood and looking after your mental wellbeing."

"Don't underestimate how much light housework can help you with reaching that daily activity goal."

As is often the case, starting small clears a path for any larger improvements you might like to make. Committing to cooking yourself a meal every day, or getting out into the garden for a walk, can make a great difference to your mental health.

There are also plenty of resources online if you would like to take it a step further. The HSE has a webpage dedicated to exercising indoors for older people. They go through simple exercises that can help with balance, flexibility and strength, which take only a few minutes each day.

Speaking to young people about the coronavirus

The lower threat posed by the virus to young people is well known, but the pandemic has affected them all the same. As we have noted previously, young people are missing out on a huge chunk of their life, as well as being isolated from their social circles. It is important to be aware

of our young people's needs, in particular this social aspect.

As restrictions relax and the overall threat lessens, the temptation to meet up with friends can only grow stronger. That some sports gatherings are allowed, as well as groups of up to four gathering outside, will help give focus to young people's desires in a structured way.

Children and teenagers will often take their lead from adults, so it's important to take care of yourself first. If you want them to respond with care and calm, then you must develop this yourself. By behaving rationally and providing clear and honest information, this can go a long way to maintaining your child's mental well-being.

If they are starting to meet up with friends, or are perhaps too fearful to do so, remind them that there are ways they can keep themselves safe. Use language that is appropriate to their age and where necessary, use images to illustrate. Equally, by demonstrating a commitment to aspects such as hand hygiene and social distancing, it will reinforce your teaching. When our actions match our words, it simplifies our children's learning.

Many children will still be struggling with the stress of the situation. They may respond in different ways, becoming clingy or withdrawing, getting angry or over-excitable. Whatever the case, respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Social life and technology

I remember a cartoon I saw about social media, pre-dating this crisis. It was a mother looking at her teenage son. He's sitting on a chair, with his



headphones on, staring at his phone. She says to him "Why is it called social media when it means you sitting on your own at home?"

While the implicit criticism still stands, we've come to learn over the course of this lockdown of the positive role our media can play. We all find it hard to be away from our friends, to practice physical/social distancing and to stay at home. Using technology to stay in touch can help.

Developing a regular routine can provide structure to your day, making the world seem safer and more predictable

As such, promoting a healthy use of social media and tools such as video chats is important. You could encourage your child to reach out to friends and family members, or to learn a new hobby on YouTube or to find reliable advice from the HSE on Twitter or similar media.

Much like our need for the sacraments and a return to mass, this shouldn't overshadow physical relationships: but it can be a helpful stand in at this time. We can't fulfil all our children's needs and so social media can become a way to support our efforts.

Listen and respond

For those supporting a child or someone who is cocooning, showing care, kindness and compassion is very important. Small, practical contributions can make a great difference. If you are minding them at home, provide activities for them to engage with like music, books, magazines and/or knitting.

If they're not at home, offer to do their groceries or pick up prescriptions. Further, making daily contact by phone is a vital means of keeping their spirits up. Listening to them can help you get a sense of their mental state and to offer support when needed.

The last thing to remember is that it's important to listen, even to ourselves. By listening we come to realise the differing needs of those around us, and even of our own needs. Having listened, we can respond more effectively and with greater attention to the specific requirements of the lockdown period.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



My eldest daughter skipped downstairs to breakfast, threw her arms in the air in triumph, and announced delightedly: "Today we are going to see nana and granddad!"

It had been almost three months since the kids had met with their beloved grandparents. This pandemic-induced hiatus was all the more frustrating, knowing that they were just half an hour away down the road.

Of course, there had been many video calls and messages sent, but such things are a pale imitation of actually spending time together. The lifting of the first phase of quarantine restrictions had at last made real-life visits possible. On the very June morning that restrictions were eased, my parents were going to come to our house for a socially distanced visit. It was strange to have to brief the kids on staying at a remove from their grandparents, who are normally hugged half to death upon arrival. Yet caution is still the order of the day, and a small price to pay.

That morning, the kids were busy baking cupcakes and chocolate chip cookies for the occasion. During lockdown, the kids had developed some amazing skills, which they were keen to demonstrate. My nine year old daughter had become an expert baker and my 10 year old son developed remarkable carpentry skills. Lockdown had been a busy time for us renovating our old house, and we had a lot to show for the three months of quarantine. The kids were justly proud of all their efforts in laying lawns, planting flowers and growing vegetables and were very excited to give their grandparents a tour.

In fact, they were so excited that they insisted on waiting at the gate for the VIP arrivals for a half hour before they were due. When they eventually arrived, they scampered down the lane behind the car. The kids were overflowing with chat and stories for my folks, and a we spent warm afternoon catching up in the garden.

The next morning, we decided to test our newfound liberty further still with a trip to the sea. The kids had

hardly left the garden in three months, except for a few outings to walk the dog. The kids longed for the sea and the poor dog, having arrived from Tipperary just before the lockdown, had never even seen it. The next morning, we duly trundled over to a favourite haunt on the west Cork coast, where the woods meet the water.



When we arrived, the air was still and the water a perfect mirror, reflecting the hills across the bay. There was a pure silence – at least for the brief moment before I opened the car door to let the kids out. They came caterwauling out the door, thundering across the grass before leaping gleefully down onto the sand, my eldest kicking a celebratory football high into the air. Meanwhile, the dog escaped from the boot and galloped down to the water for a drink, as he does in our stream at home. He whimpered confusedly at the salty taste but then ran headlong into the brine regardless.

Following the older kids, as ever, our toddler waddled delightedly across the beach, joining in the general merriment. In the few months that the beach had been denied to us, she had even forgotten the word and now practised it gleefully, saying "beach, daddy" repeatedly, while pointing in wonderment at the sand.

We ambled along the shore, spotting seashells and jellyfish and breathing in the cool salt air of the morning. After a fine walk, it was time to return home for another day of home school – for while we are now freer, the world has not fully righted itself quite yet.

Crisis deepening our understanding of Eucharist

Personal Profile



Aron Hegarty

A Polish priest based in Co. Dublin believes the Covid-19 pandemic is changing and deepening our understanding of what the Eucharist is about.

Fr Dominic Zwierzychowski OMI from Poznan says the faithful, despite being kept apart physically, are feeling a greater sense of togetherness during these difficult times.

In an interview with *The Irish Catholic*, the 28-year-old clergyman described his faith journey, his online outreach work with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Inchicore and how the real presence is driving a new community.

“I have noticed that we are changing our way of understanding what the Eucharist is all about”

“I was ordained in 2018 in Poland and I worked there for one year as a pastoral assistant in one of the parishes close to Gdansk,” he says.

“After one year, I was then sent here to the Anglo-Irish province and I am now one of the priests in the Inchicore pastoral area.

“My task is to work together with others here and I also help out around Bluebell.

“We have the parish, two primary schools – a smaller and a bigger one, and are involved in the area in St John of Gods services for people who have many disabilities.



Fr Dominic after Sunday Mass at Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Bluebell. Photos: Oblate Communications Office.

“I am trying to maintain that because in communications I am doing the website, Facebook account and also our daily Mass and different services around the Church beginning from the time of the pandemic.”

Church

Fr Dominic says he went to Church regularly in high school growing up, but only discovered what real faith is once he went to a retreat in his school.

“I was touched very deeply by it and I was thinking from that moment on about myself and how Jesus is present in my life,” he recalls.

“I realised that all of this was faith and when I started in the retreat in our congregation (Oblates of Mary Immaculate) I was knowing the faith more and more.

“I was also asking myself ‘what would I like to do with my life?’ and at around the same time, I met the Oblates so I decided that I would try; I joined as a novitiate and decided ‘that’s it, that’s exactly it.’”

While living in his home country, Fr Dominic always wanted to work abroad and, through his family connections in the UK, decided that he wanted to work in Ireland.



Fr Dominic at the Oblate Vocations Mission in Darndale earlier this year.

He moved over here last year and is now a parish priest, and part of the communications team for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate where he combines his two roles to facilitate the order’s outreach programme to the community digitally.

“I thought that we could extend this presence to an online presence,” he says, “with things like articles, videos, Mass online as well to the parish level.

“This is part of my work, I just connected it together with my duties for and in the parish.”

The onset of Covid-19, according to Fr Dominic, has both “deep-

ened” parishioners understanding of the Eucharist and brought them closer together.

This, he says, has allowed for there to be a real presence felt which is giving rise to a “new kind” of community.

“Over the course of this pandemic,” he says, “I have noticed that we are changing our way of understanding what the Eucharist is all about.

“Due to the coronavirus, I have had to think about this for my own sake, and for the parishioners that partake in the Eucharist, that it is

not just simply Holy Communion in taking the Body and Blood of Christ; it is also the presence of the community.

Community

“We have this presence of community in this special, proper moment of the day and we are gathering together as a real community and pray together.

“Jesus is present in this community and we really listen to the word of God every day; the Bible readings, Jesus and his presence in the Church, the Bible and the scriptures as well.

“Fr Dominic always wanted to work abroad and, through his family connections in the UK, decided that he wanted to work in Ireland”

“As a result of the crisis, we were and we are still able to understand more deeply what the presence of the Lord is really all about in the Church, so we have deepened this understanding I would say.

“I feel that we are real community around the Eucharist,” Fr Dominic continues.

“Every day and every morning at 10:15am there are between 20-40 people who partake in this Eucharist together, so I feel the real existence and presence of this new kind of community.

“On one hand, I would say that we have found having Mass or whatever online... to be a struggle, particularly during this pandemic, as I am mostly alone and I don’t feel this physical presence in the Mass.

“On the other hand, I am very much inspired because now, after more than three months of our online presence, we have a huge and very vocal group of community.

“We are sending greetings to each other every day before and during the Mass and people are sending their intentions.”



Children’s Corner

Chai Brady

Daft densities and floating oranges

There’s a lot to be learnt about how certain objects interact with water. It can also raise a of questions. Fruit for example, why do certain fruits that look big float, while a smaller fruit might sink? One of the biggest factors here is density.

When trying to guess if an object will float, it’s easy to be tricked by an object’s size. Density is defined as mass per unit of volume, and objects with a higher mass-to-volume ratio have a higher density. Objects that are denser than water will sink, while those that are less dense will stay afloat.

There’s an interesting and easy way to test this. Because it’s less dense than water, an unpeeled orange will float. It should stand to reason that peeling an orange, and thereby decreasing its mass, should have little or no effect. What happens, in fact, is the opposite although it may seem counterintuitive.

Apparatus:

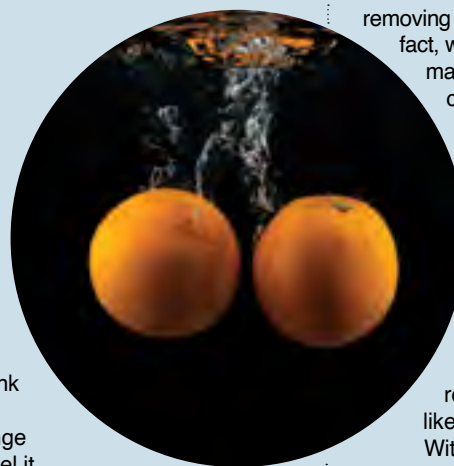
- A wide-mouth container such as a jar

- An orange
- Water

Directions:

- Fill the jar with enough water to cover an orange, it should be submerged.
- Gently place an unpeeled orange into the water. Observe what happens. Does the orange sink or float?
- Remove the orange from the jar and peel it.
- Place the peeled orange back into the jar. What happens to the orange now?

It may seem like peeling the orange should allow it to float even better, since by peeling it we’re



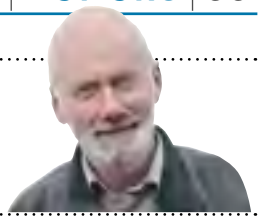
removing some of its mass and making it lighter. In fact, what we observe is that peeling an orange makes it sink. This seems illogical until you consider the nature of density.

Density is defined as mass per volume. An orange peel is highly porous, meaning that it has lots of tiny holes in it. The holes are essentially tiny bubbles of air. These air pockets are empty space, or pockets of no mass that, when calculating the total density, serve to decrease the final result. When you take away the peel, the air pockets are removed – think of the peel as acting like a life jacket for the orange.

Without the peel the orange has a higher density, because its mass per unit of volume increases. The orange is now denser than water. It therefore sinks. So, while it seems to go against reason, the result is actually adhering to the rules of density.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



What's food for some is poison for others

I get a sense of the anticipation that's growing with the prospect of public Masses being back from June 29. Some have wanted them sooner, others have urged caution, but unlike the anti-racism protestors the Church has shown great restraint and civic responsibility.

Last Monday Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was interviewed on **The Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) on what approaches might be taken. There was talk about social distancing, priests wearing masks, Masses being oversubscribed and other concepts foreign to our experience of Mass in pre-covid times, when a Zoom Mass was a case of priest in-a-hurry.

The Archbishop wanted people to be ready and safe post lockdown, but also optimistic. He complimented the work of Crosscare during the pandemic in caring for the vulnerable.

A related item featured on **Today With Sarah McInerney** (RTÉ Radio 1) on Thursday. Evelyn O'Rourke presented a report on Little Flower Penny Dinners in the Liberties area of Dublin – inspired by the Little Flower, St Thérèse of Lisieux and allied to St Catherine's parish in Meath Street. As with Crosscare, this was the Church at a core work of service, striving away under the radar in an era when discretion and low profile are



RTÉ reporter Evelyn O'Rourke's visit to the Little Flower Penny Dinners in Dublin's Liberties features on Radio 1.

not exactly fashionable. There was a "significant increase in demand" during the lockdown, but that very situation made it more challenging for the volunteers – a dining room for hot meals was replaced by food parcels and meals on wheels. One woman spoke of how "beautiful" the food was and complimented the politeness of the staff.

Protests

The anti-racism protests were anything but low profile and continued apace last week. Of course they have a good cause – racism is offensive

and downright stupid, but the protests at times have taken on an air of mass hysteria, with everything from *Fawlty Towers* to a statue of Winston Churchill being targeted. You might have thought the moving statues phenomenon in Ireland in the 80s was strange, but these latest moving statues are causing new waves of polarisation as they move from plinths to rivers or museums or disappear into their own shielding lockdowns.

And yet there is a discussion to be had. I think some of these events amounted to

cultural vandalism, and yet I wouldn't fancy statues of Hitler lording it over any public squares.

I thought it really went pear-shaped when UKTV removed an episode of *Fawlty Towers* because of racial slurs. A few days later it was due back with "extra guidance and warnings" – do they think the audience is thick or what?

I think some of the modern cultural vandals are completely devoid of a sense of humour and wouldn't know satire if it bit them (biting satire!). Yet I looked at the offending episode again and the Major's racial slurs did certainly jar, and as in similar situations I'd cringe and think: "Oh they wouldn't get away with that now."

In fact, for me, it would make casual racism more disgusting and maybe that was the original intention.

The anti-racism protests were the subject of a lively debate between David Quinn (frequently seen in these here



John Cleese in *Fawlty Towers*.

PICK OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE

BBC1, Sunday, June 21, 10.45am

Seán Fletcher and Sally Phillips take a look at the week's talking points and explore the ethical and religious issues of the day.

NEW! EWTN BOOKMARK

EWTN, Sunday, June 21, 5pm, also Thursday, June 25, 10.30pm

Gerard B. Wegemer and Stephen W. Smith provide an illustrated collection of St Thomas More's most important English and Latin works. Hosted by Doug Keck.

THE LEAP OF FAITH

RTÉ Radio 1, Friday, June 26, 10.05pm

Topical religious and ethical issues. Last episode of the season.

parts) and Richard Boyd Barrett TD of People Before Profit on **Newstalk Breakfast**, on Wednesday. Quinn played the trump card by citing the comment of Chief Medical Officer Tony Holohan to the effect that the protests were a "risk to life", and suggested that people just couldn't pick and choose which cause was exempt from lockdown rules.

As the protests so obviously broke these rules I wasn't impressed, despite what he said about masks and distancing, by Boyd-Barrett's participation in and defence of the protests.

A related discussion took place on **The Last Shoulder** (Today FM) last Friday – this time more about the controversial TV shows. I was inclined to share one reviewer's distaste for US reality TV shows like *Cops*

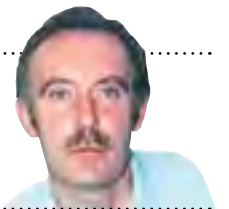
which allegedly glorified police aggression, especially towards African Americans. Presenter Matt Cooper did well to tease out the implications of removing the offensive film and TV programmes – if stuff is removed for offensiveness why not do the same with the likes of *The Life of Brian* because it caused such offence to Christians? I have only ever seen clips of it but I can't see how a parody scene of the Crucifixion could be anything but grossly offensive.

If you were to cull every film and TV offensive to Christians it would be quite a massacre!

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[@boreganmedia](https://twitter.com/boreganmedia)

Film

Aubrey Malone



Pawlikowski's tale is dark but hauntingly beautiful

Ida is a Pawel Pawlikowski film about an 18-year-old orphan girl raised in a convent. As she prepares to become a nun she learns she's a Jew. Her parents were murdered during the Holocaust. She has to put doubts about her vocation behind her as her cynical aunt helps her explore her roots.

Shot in black and white with enormous care given to every frame, this is a bleak but beautiful tale of *Ida's* journey through conflicting emotions. It's a work of raw but haunting beauty.

You might also like to check out Pawlikowski's equally haunting *Cold War*, a minimalistic piece about a doomed love affair in post-war Poland. It's an audio-

visual symphony of riches, a mutedly haunting work.

I spent a lot of time working as a courier so I know about the pressures the lead character undergoes in *Sorry We Missed You* – parking tickets, the expense of running a van, difficult clients, running up and down stairs at the rate of knots, a boss barking instructions in the thick of traffic.

He has fierce money problems. They aren't helped when his son turns against him. This is a heart-rending tale of a man on the edge. He tries desperately to make ends meet but finally runs out of road when a cruel boss fails to cut him slack.

"Am I your guinea pig?" asks Charles Moritz of Felicity



Agata Kulesza and Agata Trzebuchowska star in *Ida*.

Jones in *On the Basis of Sex*. It charts changes in the law on sexual discrimination spearheaded by crusading lawyer

Ruth Bader Ginsburg. It's an interesting question. She uses a man to pioneer female liberation.

This is in the tradition of *Mrs Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*. It drags in the middle with its didacticism but you really root for her in the climactic scene. History is made. You can buy this online like all the other films I'm mentioning here.

Francois Cluzet's *Untouchable* deals with the friendship between a black carer and a paraplegic millionaire. It moves at a mile a minute. The unusual pair bond in unusual circumstances. It won many awards in France and has travelled well.

Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit* is set against the backdrop of the 1967 riots. A tale of police violence against African-Americans, it has huge

reverberations for us today in the aftermath of the recent death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Bigelow grabs us by the throat from the first frame and doesn't let go.

Two kidnap films I bought recently are *The Berlin Syndrome* and *Everybody Knows*. The former requires a strong stomach but is darkly compelling in its investigation of psychosis and the Stockholm syndrome.

Everybody Knows is a phenomenal film too, a masterpiece of intensity. Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem are at the top of their game. They try to deal with the fallout from the disappearance of Cruz's daughter from a wedding reception. Every moment of this one is magic.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



A crisis for Irish democracy: conflicting views on the 1970 Arms Trial

The Arms Crisis of 1970: The plot that never was

by Michael Heney
(Head of Zeus, £20.00/€23.00)

John Bruton

This important but controversial new book by Michael Heney, published recently in the midst of our present pandemic crisis, challenges the received historical interpretation of the attempt in 1970 to import arms for possible use in Northern Ireland.

Rather than seeing it as a plot undertaken by a faction within the then government, without proper authority, Heney argues convincingly that this was in fact an informally authorised operation.

He believes that the then Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, knew what was going on, at least to the extent that he wanted to know.

Michael Heney, once a journalist and producer at RTÉ, attended the hearings as a young reporter. But this book is based on extensive archival research. Heney is able to make out his case by relying on state papers which were sealed from view until 2000, under the 30-year rule.

He shows that Jack Lynch had been told by the then Secretary of the Department of Justice, Peter Berry, as early as October 1969, of offers of arms, or of money to buy them, being made by a serving Irish Army officer to nationalists from Belfast some days earlier at a meeting in Bailieboro.

He reveals that the Chief of Staff of the Irish Army min-

uted that, on February 6, 1970, he had received a direction from the Cabinet to "prepare the Army for incursions into Northern Ireland" and to have arms "in readiness to be available in a matter of hours" to be given to Northern Nationalists for their protection.

The legal position was, however, that under the Firearms Act of 1925, arms could not be imported to Ireland without a licence from the Minister for Defence of the time, Jim Gibbons. No such licence was ever issued.

Prosecutions

That was the basis for the prosecutions in the Arms Trial of Charles Haughey, Neil Blaney, Captain Jim Kelly, John Kelly and Belgian businessman Albert Luykx.

Strangely, the decision to prosecute these men was taken by the Attorney General, Colm Condon SC, before all the relevant witness statements had been gathered, notably the witness statement of the Chief of Army Intelligence, Colonel Michael Hefferon.

Hefferon's testimony was to blow a big hole in the prosecution case.

There is much forensic detail in this book to which this summary cannot do justice.

The conclusion I draw is that, from mid-1969, the Lynch government was pursuing a twin track strategy:

(1) A diplomatic one, that was openly acknowledged, seeking reforms in Northern Ireland. Jack Lynch's Tralee speech (eschewing coercive means to achieve a united Ireland) was part of this and

(2) A parallel, covert and



Charles Haughey (on left) with Jack Lynch.

deniable, strategy to give military aid to the nationalist minority for "self defence", in the event of a further intensification of Loyalist attacks on them. The attempted arms importation was part of this second track.

The Secretary of the Department of Justice, Peter Berry, saw the danger in the second track, hence his warning to Jack Lynch in October 1969.

The notion that weapons, once supplied, would or could only be used for "self defence" was ludicrous. The Irish State would have had no control over how they might be used, once the arms were outside its jurisdiction in Northern Ireland.

Such an involvement by the Irish state in military actions across the border would have exposed to attack isolated nationalist communities far from the border.

The effect on relations with the UK would also have been disastrous. Imagine how one might react if the British Army was supplying arms to a political group in this jurisdiction!

Jack Lynch did not seem fully to see these risks, until Liam Cosgrave went to see him on May 6, 1970 with information he had received from an anonymous Garda source naming the Ministers supposedly involved in the plot to import arms (including the Minister for Defence, Jim Gibbons).

Michael Heney controversially argues that this second track approach (of the Irish state preparing to arm Northern nationalists) might, by reassuring them that they were not alone, have forestalled the re-emergence of the Provisional IRA.

I do not believe this at all: it is dangerous historical nonsense.

Ideology

The Republican ideology, dating back to the Fenians in the 1860s, is based on the false idea that Unionists can be coerced into united Ireland, and that, because Ireland is an island, nationalists have a moral right to use force to that end, and that only pragmatic considerations should inhibit them from doing so.

This ideology was so widespread among 'Republicans', that the Provisional IRA Republicans would have gone down the cul-de-sac of violence, no matter what the Irish state did, or did not, do about arms in 1970.

It was never a good idea for the Irish state to supply arms to nationalists in Northern Ireland, whether directly or indirectly, licensed or not.

Michael Heney does show, however, that the prosecutions in the Arms Trial of 1970 were unjustified. This is principally because the accused believed sincerely that they were acting with formal or informal government authority.

How then ought the matter have been resolved, if not by the Arms Trial?

Jack Lynch should have put a stop to the whole arms importation exercise much earlier, when first warned of it by Peter Berry in October 1969. He should have done so long before May 1970, when he did eventually act by sacking some of the Ministers involved.

After all, Jack Lynch had

“Lynch should have concentrated all his efforts on the diplomatic track, in the United Nations, the United States and among the Irish in Britain...”

already won an overall majority in the Dáil in June 1969, and had the political authority to assert himself over his Ministers. By October 1969, reforms in Northern Ireland were under way. The B Specials were being disbanded and effective security powers were being withdrawn from Stormont.

Lynch should have concentrated all his efforts on the diplomatic track, in the United Nations, the United States and among the Irish in Britain, in pushing for much more rapid reform in Northern Ireland. Instead he allowed the covert strategy to continue in parallel...his big mistake.

The use of weapons, by whomsoever supplied, and for whatever ostensible purpose, was always a waste of time, and of lives, as we have learned the hard way over the past 50 years.

John Bruton served as Taoiseach from 1994 to 1997. He retired from active politics in 2004.

Some pause for thought for 'new urban Christians'

On Marriage, On Birth, On Death (three titles in the series "How to Find God") by Timothy and Kathy Keller (Hodder & Stoughton, £9.99)

Peter Costello

In this time of peril and stress, when Covid-19 continues to spread across the benighted nations of Africa, many are faced very directly with question of what it is they believe and why. Many grow confused.

So these three small books are to be welcomed. The author is a Presbyterian pastor in New York, whose books have already sold two million copies worldwide. He

has been called 'a pioneer of the new urban Christians'.

As the titles indicate, these deal with those basic landmarks of life birth, love and death. These are experiences which all human share, and of which every tradition of Christianity has to speak. The author hopes to state in the briefest most accessible way what the basic beliefs of those who profess to be Christians, and perhaps many who do not – in these times 'the anonymous Christian' of some theologians must be considered too.

Keller writes from a particular view point, but his aim is a laudable one. There can be

too much emphasis on what divided us – where passions easily manipulated *à la* Trump can easily be found – than what actually unites us in reality or in potentiality.

“The brief texts are quickly read, but will take a life time to live. Now may be the time to begin for many”

Many who are not supposedly Christians, and might call themselves let us say humanists

or ethicist, will be surprised that much in the Gospels – and it is in the Gospels that Christians find their Faith simply laid out – rather than in the long reaches of the Bible, which sometimes seem at odds with the words of Jesus.

The brief texts are quickly read, but will take a life time to live. Now may be the time to begin for many.

He supports his insights with very appropriate quotes from such people as C. C. Lewis.

Though cast in a very straightforward style, Keller and his wife provide a great deal of food for thought. As the world

seeks to adjust to the present crisis, many are turning their minds to recovering a basic view that many can share.

Statement

A journalist recently asked President Trump was he an "Old Testament man or a New Testament man". Trump found himself confused. But with the words of the Sermon on the Mount before us surely – a basic statement if ever there was one – we are all, in some way 'New Testament' people, people of the New Covenant?

Are we all, in our different ways, 'new urban Christians' too?

Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.

The glories of the 'divine Raphael' on view in Rome

With the assistance of galleries around the world, the Scuderie del Quirinale in Rome has mounted a magnificent, once-in-a-lifetime show, celebrating the youthful yet astonishingly mature genius of Raphael, who died in 1522 at the ridiculously early age of 37.

Masterpieces which would have taken years of travelling to see, have been brought together. The show was closed due to the present Covid-19 crisis which hit Italy very hard, but as now re-opened again.

Among the creations on show are his 'Pope Leo with Two Cardinals' (c. 1520), an image of brooding power and ambition of a man whose significance was brought into focus by the anniversary of Martin Luther awhile ago. Also on view in show, brought from the National Gallery in London, is his other papal portrait 'Pope Julius II' (c. 1511) – his beard a sign of mourning, not for a fellow human but territory seized by his enemies, a ruler lost in his thoughts, which cannot always have been pleasant ones.

However, aside from these so many images bring delight to the visitors, covering as they so many moods and aspects of life, such as the 'Madonna of the Rose' (c. 1520) and 'La Fornarina' (1520).

Renaissance

The Italian President in opening the exhibition remarked that "from the renaissance spirit that made Raphael's art unparalleled, energy can be drawn for the restart of Italy and Europe" – a hopeful message indeed at this moment in time.

For more information in Italian and English visit the gallery website: www.scuderiequirinale.it/pagine/raffaello-oltre-la-mostra



'Madonna della Rosa' (Prado).



'Julius II, The Burdens of Papal office.'

The online activities will broaden the horizons of viewers with many other contents: video-walks inside the rooms, enriched with details and curious facts about the

works, as well as forays behind the scenes, with the story of the set-up and insights on more particular and specific aspects of Raphael's work and on the Renaissance in

which he flourished.

Michael Collins' new book, *Raphael's World* (Messenger Publications, €19.95), was reviewed on these pages in our issue of May 21, 2020. P.C.

Lockdown literature • Chapter 5

Come spend a while in the magic that is John McGahern

In this series some of our literary collaborators will be giving suggestions for lockdown reading, books of all kinds to enlighten us and raise our spirits. This week Mary Kenny writes of John McGahern's *Amongst Women* (1990), a novel of ordinary family life in provincial Ireland built around the life experiences of an embittered Republican veteran.

Lockdown has been both frustrating and depressing, but it's also been a terrific time for books, and I've been reading, and re-reading, the author I consider to be one of the finest voices in Irish modern literature, John McGahern.

McGahern combines an unerring instinct for storytelling with a deep sensibility about the human spirit, the interweaving of relationships, and a compelling gift of evoking the Irish countryside of the north-west plains around Leitrim, Cavan and Roscommon.

We may think of this area of Ireland as somewhat flat – it's less wild and dramatic than the rugged coastal areas, but McGahern writes with nostalgic lyricism about his home terrain.

Quite often, his stories have similar themes, but because he's such a magical writer, his technique always works. *Amongst Women* brings us the familiar portrait of a controlling man, farmer, widower and rural patriarch: Moran verges on the tyrannical, and yet his children really love him, as does his second wife, Rose. The back story is that Moran fought bravely in the War of Independence, and yet, nursed a grudge, subsequently, that those who fought often didn't get the spoils, which, he feels, went to a more *adroit bourgeoisie* – the doctors, civil servants, clergy.

Yet he's not anti-clerical – "leave the priests out of it", he tells another Republican veteran who grumbles about the clergy. The family Rosary is also a compulsory part of his daily ritual, and to some degree a means of controlling his family. But it's also a rite of family cohesion: just as grace before meals is a means of showing due gratitude.

Relic of the past

A Protestant neighbour is helpful with farm machinery and Moran now sees the country Protestants more like himself, a kind of relic of the past.

The story charts the gradual social changes between the 1950s and 60s, through the various life-choices of his five children. A typical McGahern passage describes with great vividness the harvest traditions of Irish country life; and, the funeral rites at death, where the clocks in the house are stopped, and all ends with a decade of the Rosary.

McGahern achieves the greatest accomplishment for a novelist: to draw you entirely into the world he has evoked.



John McGahern.

Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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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.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 337



Across

- 1 After you cook it in water, crack this open to enjoy it (6,3)
7 This pirate is Peter Pan's enemy (7,4)
8 Selected (5)
9 Goes over articles, and gets them ready to be published in the paper. (5)
11 Wicked (4)
14 Pulled sharply. (6)
16 Number that means a single thing (3)
17 Enormous (8)
18 Use your lips to do this (4)
19 Very harsh (6)

- 2 Getting better at something (9)
3 You use it to rub things out (6)
4 Bert's best friend in Sesame Street. (5)
5 Getting bigger. (7)
6 You put this in a fountain pen (3)
10 Sorrow (7)
12 A person speaks with this (5)
13 Go away (5)
14 The name of a book or film. (5)

Down

- 1 Two-wheeler (7)

- 15 A type of lizard (5)

SOLUTIONS, JUNE 11

GORDIUS No. 459

Across – 1 Spacecraft 6 Flog 10 On cue 11 Fragrance 12 Crashed 15 Turin 17 Emus 18 Unit 19 Accra 21 Jackdaw 23 Lunge 24 Emit 25 Halo 26 Salvo 28 Pharaoh 33 Inflation 34 Rioja 35 Gush 36 Holy Orders

Down – 1 Snow 2 Accordion 3 Evens 4 Rifle 5 Fear 7 Liner 8 Green Party 9 Fretsaw 13 Ha-ha 14 Desktop publishing 20 Cameo role 21 Jehovah 22 Asia 27 Lifts 29 Handy 30 Rarer 31 Lido 32 Jaws

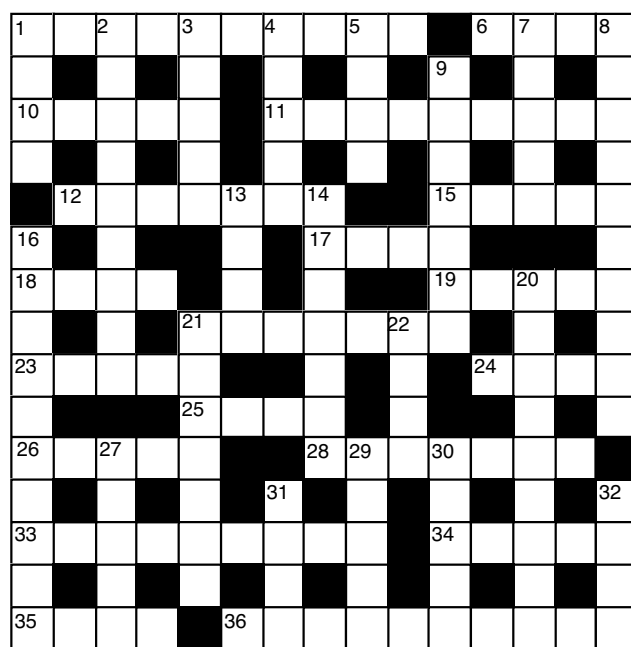
CHILDREN'S No. 336

Across – 1 Barack Obama 6 Tablets 8 Touch 9 Heels 10 Prince 13 Rescue 16 Beetle 17 Cobweb 18 Log 19 Kettle 20 Euro

Down – 1 Butcher 2 Robbers 3 Chess 4 Oyster 5 Autumn 7 Shoe 10 Pebble – 11 Ice Age 12 Colour 14 Elope 15 Cow

Crossword

Gordius 460



Across

- 1 Fearful creatures of folklore developed in blob? Gosh! (10)
6 Travelled quickly, scooting past every dawdler at first (4)
10 & 15a These avian seasonal visitors might make a grebe tense (5,5)
11 He wrote lots of letters - from the capital of Minnesota? (5,4)
12 Denizens of the ice rink (7)
15 See 10 across
17 Rocky outcrop (4)
18 Sacred (4)
19 Ms Doolittle, of 'Pygmalion' and 'My Fair Lady' (5)
21 Fast food establishment that makes one sprightly? (7)
23 & 34a Team sport might be burning you (5,5)
24 See the cardinal and Patrick involved in a tiff (4)
25 Attest that Vera is upset (4)
26 An easily taken goal, or the result of a faucet installation? (3-2)
28 Great joy (7)
33 Transmit over the airwaves (9)
34 See 23 across
35 The Spanish potassium's good for such creatures (4)

- 36 Can Gene hop around here in Denmark? (10)

Down

- 1 Central parts of wheels (4)
2 Classic actors' good luck wish that might make a barge leak (5,1,3)
3 Group of eight (5)
4 One doesn't succeed when roles are reassigned (5)
5 Cuticle (4)
7 Location for quiet needlework (5)
8 Italian cheese might make the colt elated (10)
9 Reel, walk unsurely (7)
13 Every Englishman accepts cold ham starters (4)
14 One can show respect for a item of regalia (7)
16 How caring, to scorch one piece of furniture (10)
20 While getting better, the little devil is wandering (9)
21 Type of poison (7)
22 Ms Fitzgerald is to be found in a cellar (4)
27 Wine of poor quality (5)
29 Metric unit of capacity (5)
30 Make physical contact (5)
31 Portuguese city with a distant ring to it (4)
32 Presently, one will see 'The Headless Clergyman' (4)

Sudoku Corner

337

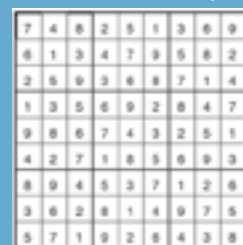
Easy



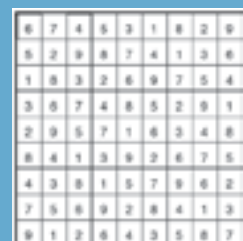
Hard



Last week's Easy 336



Last week's Hard 336



Notebook

Fr Martin Dempsey

Blessing for priesthood

May the blessings released
through your hands
Cause windows to open in
darkened minds.
May the sufferings your calling
brings
Be but winter before the spring.
May the companionship of your
doubt
Restore what your beliefs leave
out.
May the secret hungers of your
heart
Harvest from emptiness its
sacred fruit.
May your solitude be a voyage
Into the wilderness and wonder
of God.
May your words have the
prophetic edge
To enable the heart to hear
itself.
May the silence where your
calling dwells
Foster your freedom in all you
do and feel.
May you find words full of divine
warmth
To clothe the dying in the
language of dawn.
May the slow light of the
Eucharist
Be a sure shelter around your
future.

– John O'Donohue
*Benedictus – A Book of
Blessings: 2007*

Remembering a wonderful man and priest

MONSIGNOR JIM CASSIN
[pictured right] died on Friday,
June 5, 2020. He was a priest of
the Diocese of Ossory.

Dear Jim,
I write this letter to you just
ten days after you have gone
to The Father's House where
no doubt you have received
a warm welcome from the
Father himself but also a
wonderful reunion with
your parents Denis and Mary
and so many of your family
and friends who are already
there. Mind you, I expect that they
were not planning to be seeing
you up there so soon just as we,
your family and many friends
were not expecting to let you go.
None of us were really prepared
for this and there wasn't even a
chance to say goodbye.

Jim, I first came to know you
in my last year in Secondary
School at St. Kieran's. My room
was directly across from yours
on Chapel Lane and you would
regularly call in for a chat. I had
known a number of very good
priests in my parish and through
my years in St Kieran's but you
were probably the first one that I
related to as a friend. During that
final year in school I was seriously



considering the possibility of
becoming a priest and while I
never mentioned that to you
directly, your kindness and your
enthusiasm helped me to
decide what I wanted
to do with my life.
I went into the
seminary and
you were my
teacher for the
next five years.
Your subject was
moral theology
and you were an
engaging, insightful
and demanding lecturer.
However your influence in my
life stretched far beyond moral
theology.

At my ordination dinner in
1986 you quoted a line from the
Rite itself: "May the example of
your life attract the People of
God."

You were asking me to
remember that as I began my
journey of priesthood, but Jim, in
my life nobody has lived out that
sentence more than you.

You had a wonderful capacity
for friendship and hospitality and
that was nowhere more obvious
than when you became President
of St Kieran's College in 1995.
I worked with you on so many

pastoral projects over the years
and your patience and ability to
bring people of different opinions
together in consensus was most
impressive. That, I suppose is what
leadership is about and it led so
many people to believe you would
become a bishop. It's hard to be
a leader without stepping on a
few toes and I guess only the Holy
Spirit knows what damaged toes
are capable of!

Passion
Beyond St Kieran's and our diocese
you went on to serve the Church
at national level in the area of
education which was always your
passion.

Your achievements and success
in that role were eloquently
articulated by Bishop Dermot at
your funeral and by your friend
Bishop Kelly at the conclusion of
the Bishops' meeting in Maynooth.
I hope you knew those words of
appreciation while you were still
able to hear them.

Jim, whatever about the titles
of Father, Monsignor, Professor,
Director of Formation, President,
Executive Secretary even being
referred to as the "former future
bishop", my only interest here is to
thank you for being a great priest
and a wonderful friend.

My late mother loved you to
bits. When you once tried to pay
her a compliment, something she
did not receive easily...she famously
called you a 'plasterboots'.

Jim, goodbye for the present but
can I leave you with these words
from Raymond Carver's little poem
'Late Fragment'.

*'And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel
myself
beloved on the earth.'*

Jim, you now know how much
you were beloved on Earth. And
yet, that loves pales in comparison
to what awaits you in The Father's
House. May you rest in the joy of
that love forever.

– Martin





Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera and members of Eluru Diocese, Andhra Pradesh, India, distribute aid packages to the poor.



The Little Way Association

YOUR GIFT WILL HELP PROVIDE FOOD FOR THE POOR AND MARGINALISED

Your gift can make a life-and-death difference for desperately poor families and for sick and needy people who are struggling in the midst of the present covid crisis. The Little Way Association has received many urgent appeals from Bishops, priests, sisters and missionaries asking for help for those in their care.

Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera of Eluru, India, writes: "Hundreds of poor people lack food and other basic necessities because of the lockdown and urgently need assistance."

Families are battling against hunger

Heidi Caluori of Arco in Sao Paulo, Brazil, writes: "The people from the slums are the hardest hit by the virus. Not being able to work anymore means people do not receive a salary and have no money to buy food. Families are battling against hunger. We want to continue to distribute food to the people in the surrounding slums. We need your donations!"

Sr Eileen Quirke of the Presentation Sisters in Quito, Ecuador, asks for help with: "...Basic Food Kits, and Home Medical Attention (initial visits, necessary examinations, followed by the prescribed medication) for elderly people who are isolating for the last two months in our poor villages."

Every cent that you send for our "hungry, sick and deprived" fund will go intact to those who look after the very poor

Mass is offered daily for all our supporters' intentions.
Thank you so much for your prayers and your continued practical support.



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€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state number)
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