

# The Irish Catholic

**NUALA O'LOAN**

Not fair or honest to demonise men

Page 8



**SAINT PATRICK**

In the footsteps of the apostle to Ireland Pages 13-15



**MARY KENNY**

Are Catholic countries safer for women?

Page 5



Thursday, March 18, 2021

€2.50 (Stg £2.20)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

## Bishops say synod process will allow people to 'let off steam'

Chai Brady and Ruadhán Jones

The Church cannot shy away from controversial questions about the disconnect with young people and the role of women as it prepares for a national synod, bishops have told *The Irish Catholic*.

Following their spring meeting, the hierarchy announced that it will work towards a national synod in the next five years.

Bishop Michael Router, who has been on a steering group for the project, said that he felt it was important that Catholics who don't agree with Church teaching are heard.

"Those are issues that need to be aired and people need to talk about them and it's an opportunity to do so. There will be a lot of frustration that has built up over the years and people maybe haven't felt they have been given the opportunity to discuss issues that they think are important to them and to the Church," he said.

He said that part of the five-year process will provide a way for people to "let off steam".

"I would hope that people will get by that stage very quickly and that they will see that we are in this together and that we are moving together and we have to find a new way of being Church together and discussing those issues and seeing

» Continued on Page 2

### Sisters celebrate Mother's Day



The Poor Clares in Carlow celebrate Mother's Day, offering prayers and best wishes to all mothers.

**DAVID QUINN**

Upcoming synod must not follow German path PAGE 10



**YOUNG CHURCH**

Reaching out in uncertain times PAGE 12



**WENDY GRACE**

Working side by side but drifting apart PAGE 34



Walk Saint Patrick's Camino, Downpatrick.

Guided Walk or Canoe, Stayover Package (inc B&B, 3 course meal, glass of prosecco)

€150pp  
(2 PEOPLE SHARING)  
£130

DEPARTURES

April- September

Find out more at  
www.saintpatrickcentre.com  
Call +44 28 44619000

The Saint Patrick Centre

Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit

## Inside this week

### Family Feature

#### Finding a way around fraud

Pages 31&33



### Books

#### The Pope speaks of the future

Page 36-37



### TV & Radio

#### Marking a year of Covid

Page 35



**Managing Editor:** Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

**Northern Correspondent:** Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie

**Multimedia Journalists:** Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

Ruadhán Jones, ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Jason Osborne, jason@irishcatholic.ie

**Newsroom:** news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

**Books Editor:** Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

**Advertising:** advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

**Accounts:** accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

**Magnificat:** magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

**Shop:** shop@irishcatholic.ie

**Managing Director:** Garry O'Sullivan

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €165. Airmail €250. Six months €85.

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,  
Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandford,  
Dublin 18, D18 K277.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

## Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie



**Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return next week**

# Vaccine rollout inspires hope in orders

**Jason Osborne**

Religious orders have expressed a "cautious optimism" since the reception of the first jab in many of the congregated settings around the island.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, provincials and representatives of various orders told of their "relief" and gratitude following the reception of the vaccine.

"Given our age profile you can imagine, it's very reassuring," Provincial of the Augustinians, Fr John Hennebery OSA, said.

"I would say it was effective in two ways. First of all, it has led to a more positive attitude in the friars around the country.

"Many of our locations are city centre locations, and in fact we've two locations

where they have no place they could even leave the house to walk in a garden or in a carpark or whatever, so they have been cocooned really for most of the time, most of the year. It has led to, I would say, a cautious optimism about just circulating that bit more and looking towards the future," he said.

His second point was to commend the HSE, describing their work and co-operation with the religious orders as "fabulous".

Meanwhile in Cork, Fr Colm O'Shea SMA told of their relief after "a long year":

"When it did come, I suppose it came quickly in the end, we weren't expecting it this soon, so it was a great relief. We would be conscience there's still lots of people out there who haven't received it so we still have to be careful."

Many of the largest religious settings have received their vaccinations at this point in time, with smaller religious congregations in the process of being vaccinated.

The Mill Hill Missionaries in St Joseph's House in Rathgar suffered two deaths from coronavirus last year, so the rollout of the vaccine in their community came as a great relief.

"We had lost two members in March and April," Fr Philip O'Halloran MHM, said. "The majority here would be in retirement, active retirement."

"It (being vaccinated) gives a greater sense of freedom for everybody. There's more possibilities now. You're not as walled in, even though we're still walled in. You don't have the feeling of being walled in," he said.

## Aontú hit back at Sinn Féin's NI abortion push

**Ruadhán Jones**

The Aontú representative for East Derry has criticised "the absence of humanity or compassion" in Sinn Féin's push to increase the number of abortions in Northern Ireland.

Gemma Brolly said Sinn Féin are seeking to "bin the Human Right to life of the weakest among us" by pushing to increase abortion services.

Sinn Féin have called on the Northern Ireland Assembly to commission abortion services, following the controversial move by Westminster in 2019 to introduce abortion up to 24 weeks in the North.

"Women in the North are legally entitled to modern and compassionate health care and

it is totally unacceptable that two years on the health minister has not commissioned services," Mary Lou McDonald said in a statement.

Ms Brolly responded to Ms McDonald's comments, saying Aontú believe "we are all responsible for each other, including the smallest and weakest among us".

"Shockingly there were well over 700 abortions in the North in the last year, yet it seems this is not enough for Sinn Féin," Ms Brolly said. "Sinn Féin are now pushing for the law to be changed again so the numbers of Irish lives ended will increase.

"There is absence of humanity or compassion in the position of 'New Sinn Féin'."

## Winter has passed at St Kieran's College



Bishop Denis Nulty celebrates Mass at the College Chapel of St Kieran's College to celebrate the school's feast day, March 7.

## Synod must face disconnect with young people and women

**» Continued from Page 1**

how we can educate around those issues and maybe elucidate the Church teaching a little bit better," he said.

Bishop Michael Duignan said the "initial pathway stage will allow time for people

to express their ideas and to become more informed as to what such processes are about.

"We're not talking about a parliamentary process here. We're talking about a process of genuine, Spirit-led discernment. It's discernment by the

whole people of God," he said.

Bishop Paul Dempsey said the key to understanding the synod process is to put listening at the heart of the project and look at the context where the Church finds itself.

"There is the decline in vocations, probably a disconnect with young people nowadays and also the whole question of the need to honour the contribution and role of women in the life of the Church.

"What we're saying is that this journey of synodality, journeying towards a synod, will help us to face many of the challenges that have arisen in recent times," he said.

Bishop Dempsey said there is "a temptation to see the synod as a once-off meeting in three, four or five years' time - but it's about something bigger than just a once-off meeting where maybe the red button issues are going to be discussed.

"Yes the red button issues will have to be looked at and

reflected upon but there are bigger issues as well around how does the Gospel speak to our society today, how do we promote the Church's message, how do we dialogue with a more secular world.

"All of those issues will all be part of the synodal process as well and it is really important to emphasise that," he said.

Bishop Brendan Leahy said he hoped the process will "open up a time for creative discussions, allowing ourselves to reimagine things going forward.

"The bishops are quite excited about this...But we recognise that this is not just a bishops' initiative. This is coming from the ground up. We've had a lot of people suggesting this step be taken, and that we need to look together for how to go forward as a Church in Ireland.

"So there is a great sense of enthusiasm around," Bishop Leahy said.



## BE PART OF A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER

Adukual\* (18) and her seven-month-old baby, Elizabeth\* live in South Sudan, a country torn by years of conflict.

Like millions of others, every day they depend on Concern Worldwide to survive the devastating effects of war, poverty and hunger.

Concern is able to help thanks to the support of people like you, who have left us a gift in their Will. Will you consider doing the same?

For more information, please request your free copy of Concern's legacy booklet. Contact Siobhan on 01 4178020, email [siobhan.oconnor@concern.net](mailto:siobhan.oconnor@concern.net) or visit [www.concern.net/bequest](http://www.concern.net/bequest) - finding out more does not, of course, oblige you to leave a gift.

**Why not do it right now before you turn the page?**

Concern Worldwide, a company limited by guarantee,  
Registered Company Number: 39647, Registered  
Revenue Number: CHY 5745, Registered Charity  
Number: 20009090, Registered in Ireland, Registered  
address is 52-55 Lower Camden St, Dublin 2

\*Names changed to protect identities.

**ENDING  
EXTREME POVERTY  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES**

## Capuchin Day Care Centre

29 Bow Street, Dublin 7



Every day The Capuchin Day Care Centre provides  
600 Meals for people who are homeless and each week  
1000 Food Parcels for those on the poverty threshold.

Help Bro. Kevin continue providing  
this caring service.

Bro. Kevin or Therese 01 8720770  
[www.homeless.ie](http://www.homeless.ie)

# Welcome for cardinal's call for pastoral creativity in Irish families

**Ruadhán Jones**

The call from Cardinal Luis Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, to build on the "pastoral creativity" of families during the pandemic has been welcomed by Irish bishops.

In a private question and answer session before delivering Trócaire's Lent lecture, Cardinal Tagle told journalists that while the pandemic has restricted some elements of the Faith, "it might lead also to pastoral creativity, especially through families".

Bishop Michael Duignan of Clonfert welcomed the Cardinal's call to creativity, telling *The Irish*

*Catholic* that Ireland "had a rich tradition of praying in the home".

"Of late, that seems to have fallen apart," he continued. "It's not as prevalent or as present as it was. What the pandemic has done is put it all back into our homes."

Dr Duignan spoke of how families have made livestreamed Masses a part of their domestic life "at the heart of the house".

"I'm hoping that the pandemic will help us to rediscover the domestic church, the family as that original locus of prayer," he said. "The pandemic has put this very important dimension back in focus in a very real way."

One of the themes for the recently announced synod is to be on the domestic Church. Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick hopes they can build on "one of the great learning moments of Covid".

"I think that this is one of the great learning moments we've had in the Covid, that the Church happens first and foremost in family life," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

"The Church isn't just a building, the Church isn't just a Sacrament, the Church is actually the day-to-day life gathered in the name of Jesus. We're all really going to have ask ourselves, how do we imagine supporting better that experience of Church in the family?"

## Knock Shrine to be given international status

**Jason Osborne**

Knock Shrine is to be recognised as an International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine March 19, the Feast of St Joseph.

Archbishops Eamon Martin and Michael Neary both "warmly welcomed" the announcement, with Archbishop Martin remembering the

"comfort" and "hope" Knock has offered both him and the Irish people throughout the years.

"It calls us to hear afresh the Word of God, to be nourished by the Holy Eucharist, to entrust ourselves to the Maternal care of Our Lady, and to focus on the person and the role of Saint Joseph – especially in this year

dedicated to him," he said of the site.

Archbishop Neary drew attention to the papal visits and Mother Teresa's trip to Knock, saying that since "that August evening in 1879 pilgrims have been coming here to Knock, recognising their dependence on God and the way in which God's mother reaches out and

cares for them".

He described the development as a "source of great joy," saying "This is a hugely significant milestone in the history of the Shrine".

The Pope is to deliver a special message via video link recognising Knock Shrine's special status during Mass at 7.30pm on Friday, March 19.

## Grammy near-miss for Ireland's 'next Enya'



Irish singer-songwriter Victoria Johnston waits for the announcement of the winner for best Christian song – which went to Dolly Parton – for which she was nominated, March 14.

# Leave a priceless gift.

Please remember **GOAL** in your will

GOAL

You do not need to re-write your will, you just need to include us in it. Doing so will help us respond to global health crises, continue to provide life saving support for families and communities struck down by disaster or conflict and to feed the hungry. Founded in 1977 GOAL continues to make the world a better place. You too can help change lives.

**Talk to someone in confidence.**

**Contact Courtenay on 01 2809779 or via email at [cpollard@goal.ie](mailto:cpollard@goal.ie)**

# Increase in drug debt intimidation with isolated families struggling

**Chai Brady**

Gang intimidation due to drug debts has increased during lockdown according to a group who help families affected by drug addiction.

In addition, more families are becoming "isolated" with online forums failing to

bridge the gap, a coordinator from the National Family Support Network said.

North East Region coordinator Gwen McKenna told this paper: "Gang intimidation has increased. We're the only agency in the north-east that are working with An Garda on this drug intimi-

dation, we provide a service where family members can talk formally or informally with a garda inspector and he will advise them on what they can do and how to take care of themselves.

"With the lockdown came the isolation, the groups couldn't meet face to face so

we adapted online but people were afraid to express the level of chaos they're going through online because they didn't feel safe and it's not the same as sitting in a person's physical presence. So they lost the art of being able to cope and they went back into isolation."

She added that isolation is one of the biggest challenges for families that discover their loved one is struggling with addiction because of the "stigma that's out there".

Patron of the group, Bishop Michael Router, told this paper: "The Family Addiction Support Network work with the families to try and give them the skills that are necessary to work with their loved one who has an addiction problem and to overcome that fear, and to overcome the

stigma that's around it.

"The people that you're dealing with may come from socially deprived areas and sometimes they don't have the means to have online conversations or counselling or meetings or whatever they may be, they don't feel that is totally secure also. They do prefer the face to face, that is always more effective. That is a major issue for groups who are trying to assist and help families."

## Honouring the Year of St Joseph



Mary and Con Wiseman, Yvonne Conway, and Phil Sheridan – Diocesan President St Joseph's Young Priest's Society – of St Peter and Paul's Church, Dunboyne, Co. Meath, welcome the arrival of their new St Joseph's statue in honour of the Year of St Joseph.

## Students' virtual Walk to Lourdes raises €1,800 for homeless

**Ruadhán Jones**

Two Laois students have raised €1,800 in a virtual 'Walk to Lourdes' challenge for a homelessness charity.

Sadhbh Dunne and Cara Phelan encouraged their community to collectively walk 1,965km – the distance from their Portlaoise school and Lourdes, France – as part of their St John Paul II award.

So far they have raised €1,790 for Portlaoise Action to Homelessness (PATH), a charity which supports the homeless in inner city Dublin and the two students' locality. The two girls had been hoping to raise €1,500 and exceeded their target midway through their Lenten campaign.

"It is going better than we could have expected as the school and the community really got behind it 'we reached Lourdes on day 8 of Lent,' Sadhbh told *The Irish Catholic*. "I'm really enjoying it as I love walking and I was delighted to see the support from everyone."

Fr David Vard of Portlaoise parish said in a video on the Walk to Lourdes Instagram profile that completing the walk "is a great achievement".

"Thanks to Sadhbh and Cara for their work in organising the walk, and also Bishop Denis Nulty, who helped launch a few weeks ago," he said.

The GoFundMe page for the walk will remain open until April 3.

## Bishops call for 'immediate' increase of numbers allowed at funerals

**Staff reporter**

The Catholic bishops hit out at Taoiseach Micheál Martin for not responding to a request to permit Mass for Easter almost four weeks after a meeting to discuss the vital issue.

In their strongest intervention on public worship, the Church leaders insisted last week that ongoing restrictions banning people attending Mass would be "unjust" as restrictions on other aspects of society would be eased. They say the "ongoing severe restrictions on attendance at funeral Masses (currently limited to ten) are causing untold grief to many families".

They called for the limit of 10 people allowed at funerals be increased with "immediate effect".

Meanwhile gatherings after funerals and at burials in cemeteries are a cause for "concern", the bishop of Killaloe diocese said after a number of priests expressed "serious health and safety concerns" regarding the numbers in attendance.

Bishop Fintan Monahan said: "Whilst it is such a positive and deeply ingrained aspect of our culture in Ireland to gather and offer condolences to the bereaved family, unfortunately due to the highly contagious nature of the coronavirus it is still not safe to do so."



THE HOOK OF FAITH PRESENTS

In Preparation for Holy Week and Easter 2021

## A MINI-LENTEN RETREAT ON ZOOM

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March - *The Eucharist*  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March - *The Cross and the Mystery of Suffering*  
Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March - *The Resurrection, Hope and Joy*

WITH FR BILLY SWAN

Each Conference begins at 8pm

To take part, just send an email to [thehookoffaith@gmail.com](mailto:thehookoffaith@gmail.com)

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

Could God be calling you  
to serve Him as a  
Diocesan Priest?



Virtual Discernment Evening  
for men (18 years+) exploring  
Diocesan Priesthood

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 7:30 pm to 9 pm



Hosted by the Cashel Province



For further information & registration

Email: [Info@vocations.ie](mailto:Info@vocations.ie)

[www.vocations.ie](http://www.vocations.ie)

# Are Catholic countries really less violent towards women?

Following the appalling murder of Sarah Everard, kidnapped at London's Clapham Common, a tsunami of protest has arisen in Britain about violence against women. An extraordinary number of women have said that they do not feel safe in the streets – or sometimes at home – because of the threat of male violence. The First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, has suggested putting all men under a 6pm curfew.

Speaking on the BBC radio programme *Any Questions* last weekend, former Supreme Court Judge, Jonathan Sumption, deplored gender-based violence, but then added an insight of his own: looking over the European statistics, he claimed that violence against women was “lower in Roman Catholic countries”. He hadn't explored the reasons why, but he suggested that it might be because family life tended to be more stable in Catholic countries, and this may have a restraining effect on aggression.

Callers rang to question Lord Sumption's claim (he is not a Catholic, by the way), arguing that women in Catholic countries may be more



Mary Kenny

subdued, or fearful of complaining about male violence or harassment.

A possible problem with his lordship's analysis is that Catholic countries can be very different to one another in other respects. Poland, for example, would differ from Italy and Spain in one important area: alcohol is a bigger problem in Poland (and all Northern European countries) than in the Mediterranean – and alcohol has always been a major feature in domestic abuse.

However, Jonathan Sumption's claim set me thinking about my own experiences – ‘my truth’, as Duchess Meghan puts it. And it made me realise that I grew up in a very peaceful society.

As a youngster in Dublin, I wandered all over the city day and night, without ever a bother. As a teenager, I was theatre-mad and used to return home from the Gate in Parnell Street, or the Abbey (then in Pearse Street) at all hours of night. Sometimes I'd walk along by the dark pathway of

the Dodder river. I never had any problems: and I never experienced or witnessed any form of violence or aggression within my family or immediate environment either.

Others will tell different stories. (As Queen Elizabeth said in her riposte: “recollections may vary”.) We know children were beaten at school, and domestic violence did occur, since it was everywhere.

But Jonathan Sumption's thesis – that men in Catholic societies were less likely to be violent towards women – certainly reflects the story that I know.

● Mother's Day this year fell on the eve of my own Mother's death, 30 years ago, which made it a day of special reflection for me. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the prince is told to pull himself together and get over his father's death: his father lost a father, and that father before him also lost a father, and thus back through time: that is to say, the earthly loss of a parent is the natural order of things. It is also the spiritual order of things to depart this world for the next.

And yet, we can miss our parents even more as we grow older. Because, as we age, we begin to understand them more, and develop a stronger feeling of shared experiences. Age differentiated us from our mothers when young – she was older, we were young, and the ‘generation gap’ often showed, too, in clashes over values. But eventually, that gap closes and we often grow closer, in values, to our parents' way of thinking, coming to understand it was often based on experience.

Guilt and remorse about answering back or rebuffing our darling mothers' kindly advice and the sorrow we sometimes caused may be another accompaniment to the bittersweet recollections of Mothers' Day – as it is for me.

## The Annunciation in art



The Archangel Gabriel isn't, strictly speaking a saint, but Gabriel is a key character in the canon of holy personalities in art. Indeed, the Annunciation is often regarded as the first, and most frequently depicted, image in the development of European art. Fra Angelico's frescoed painting is considered a key moment in European art – painted between 1440-1445 and still pored over by art experts today.

The paintings of Gabriel are often wonderfully delicate, and narrate the start of the gospel story. Among the most famous is *Annunciation* by Matthias Grunewald, at the Colmar

Museum, Germany, where the Archangel carries the staff of church doorkeepers, who safeguarded the church. Jan van Eyck's *Annunciation Diptych*, now in Madrid, shows Gabriel's greeting to Mary as the beginning of the Ave Maria: ‘Hail Mary, full of grace...’ Orazio Gentileschi's *Annunciation* is an exquisite colour composition, showing Gabriel kneeling before Mary, with a lily in his hand.

March 25, of course, marks the Feast of the Annunciation, where Gabriel, with Mary, begin the journey of Christianity. It is still a subject for artists today.

# MAGNIFICAT

Celebrate the joy of the liturgy each and every day.

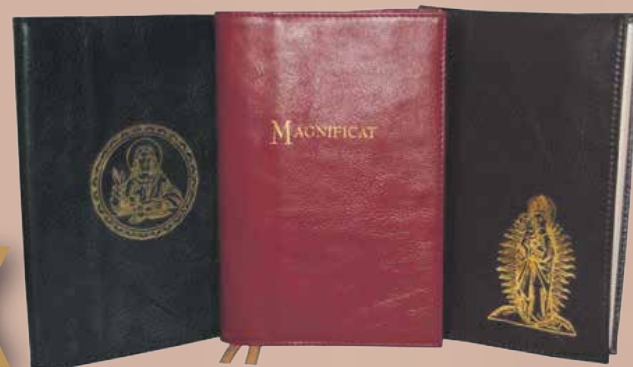
Complete with the daily Mass readings, prayers to start and end the day, essays on the saints and commentary on religious art, *Magnificat* focuses faith beyond Sunday Mass.



Annual Subscription } €53

Special Offer  
Leather Covers

€25 €20  
+ €4.50 P&P



TO ORDER YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TODAY,

Phone: 01 6874024 | Email: [magnificat@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:magnificat@irishcatholic.ie)

Visit: [www.irishcatholic.com/shop](http://www.irishcatholic.com/shop)

Post a cheque to: The Irish Catholic, Block 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 'National scandal': €20 million spent on abortion since 2019

Pro-life organisations and politicians have decried the €20 million spent on abortion provision since 2019 as a "national scandal".

The figures were revealed by the HSE in response to a question from Aontú leader Peadar Kirby. They confirmed that €11.5 million was spent in 2019, with a further €9.5 in 2020.

The Pro-life campaign described the figures as a "national scandal" in a statement. Spokesperson Eilís Mulroy added that it is "very apparent from the breakdown that not a cent of the vast allocation of funding was spent on promoting positive alternatives to abortion".

### Requests to die at home increase due to hospital restrictions

The Irish Cancer Society has seen demand for its night nurses increase by up to 76% in some parts of the country due to hospital restrictions.

The demand for the Society's night nursing service, which provides end-of-life care to patients in their own home rose by over a fifth last year as patients sought to spend their final days in the company of their family.

Requests for the free service for patients being cared for by family and friends in their homes jumped by 76% in Kildare, 70% in Wicklow and 60% in Dublin. Demand has continued into the early months of 2021 with more nurses needed in almost all parts of the country.

### Cork and Ross' new guide a 'positive acknowledgement' of online ministry

A new guide to using social media is a "positive acknowledgement that online communication is now a central part of the Church ministry", said a spokesperson for the diocese of Cork and Ross.

Fr Tom Hayes, who co-authored the diocese's "Guidance on the use of Digital Online Means of Communication", said the document recognises the "reality which parishes are engaging with now which a year ago, very few parishes were".

The guide was also prompted by changes to GDPR and privacy rulings in Europe and Ireland, as well as safeguarding concerns.

It outlines how parishes can engage with parishioners online, as well as how to manage online Masses.

### Book brings Christian voices from the Holy Land

A new book is bringing 15 poems written by a priest in a Catholic inner-city London parish together with 15 reflections written by modern Christian voices from the Holy Land.

*Holy Week Voices From the Holy Land* by Fr Richard Nesbitt, with contributions from 15 Christians in the Holy Land sees poems which follow Jesus on his final days in the lead up to his Passion, death, and resurrection, while the reflections seek to connect his experiences to those of the Christian population still living in the Holy Land today.

The cost of the book is £7.99 plus postage and packing. Purchases of the paperback can be made at: [www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/lenten-book](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/lenten-book), by calling 01926 512980, or by email to: [office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk).

# Dying and rising with Christ

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



“When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself”. Lent is advancing rapidly and we are coming close to the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus. When I entered religious life more than 60 years ago, there was great emphasis on meditating on the passion of the Lord but scarcely anything about the resurrection as a pattern for life. Mass was understood as the memorial of the sacrificial death of Jesus without any focus on his resurrection, while the Holy Spirit - then known as the Holy Ghost - was the forgotten Paraclete. We were fortunate to have Fr Hilary McDonagh lecturing us for the final two years before ordination. He anticipated the Second Vatican Council by introducing us to the paschal mystery as the centre of our liturgy. Paschal comes from the Hebrew word for a passing in the sense of a journey. The full journey of Jesus was in coming down to us in the incarnation, living a human life before completing his journey by dying on the cross and rising in his return to the Father. For me, this opened up a new spirituality which sees Christian life as a constant process of dying with Christ to sin and rising with Christ in a life illuminated and inspired by his ideals.

“Its letters stand for the death of Jesus, his rising, and the day of Ascension when he told the apostles to spread his message to all nations.”

### Wheat seed dying and rising

Today's Gospel (John 12:20-33) begins with some Greeks coming to see Jesus. The signifies the outreach of Jesus beyond the Jews to all other nations. He says that the hour has come for his glorification, that is, it is now the time for him to advance to the next stage of his journey or *pasch*. He explains his journey through death and resurrection by the simple parable of the grain of wheat which dies in the earth before it rises to yield a rich harvest. Not only is this the roadmap for Jesus but it is also the plan of life for his followers.

### Rising with Christ to new life

The writer who, more than anybody else, developed this spirituality of dying and rising with Christ was St Paul. In the Sacrament of Baptism by immersion, water is a symbol of both death and life. “By our baptism into his death we were buried with him, so that as Christ was raised



The Sacrament of Reconciliation gives us the grace to eradicate the sinful weeds that inhibit our growth.

from the dead by the Father's glorious power, we too should begin living a new life.” (Romans 6:4). What is this new life? It means breaking free from the slavery of sin so to grow into the likeness of Christ. It is a lifelong journey. The seed that sprouted may have to battle through competing weeds, storms and droughts before it bears fruit.

Jesus said, “Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life.” In this context, hating one's life in this world refers to a worldly life rather than one based on spiritual values.

Writing to the Galatians chapter five, Paul contrasts the results of worldly self-indulgence with the fruits of the Spirit. Self-indulgence results in sexual vice, impurity, sensuality, worship of false gods, sorcery, antagonisms, fighting, rivalry, bad temper, quarrels, disagreements, factions, malice, drunkenness, orgies and such like. These are the vices to be overcome. By contrast, Paul lists nine fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. “All who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with all its passions and its desires.” That's an outline of the spirituality of following the pattern of dying and rising with Christ.

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

The highlight of the Christian year is the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter. We renounce Satan and his empty promises and we promise to live in the light of Christ. In any normal year we would have access to the wonderful Sacrament of Reconciliation for the grace to eradicate the sinful weeds that inhibit our Christian growth. Some parishes will make the Sacrament available. Other parishes will stream a service inviting you to reach out privately to the healing mercy of the Saviour. God understands our limitations at this time and his forgiveness will not be limited to five kilometres.

That day when some Greeks came to see Jesus, he said that his

hour had come. Sentence would be passed on this world and the so-called prince of this world would be overthrown.

“And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself.”

We are fortunate to have this word *draw* in the English translation. Its letters stand for the death of Jesus, his rising, and the day of Ascension when he told the apostles to spread his message to all nations. The letter W stands for his promise that he will return to “take you to myself so that you may be with me where I am” (John 14:3).

### Prayer

*Lord Jesus, I see you lifted up before me, crucified to all selfishness and abandoned totally to the will of the Father. Draw me up from my slavery to sinful self-indulgence. Plant within me the seeds that will blossom and produce the beautiful fruits of the Spirit. May the Spirit guide me and strengthen me in fidelity to the promises of my baptism.*

# The Pope and Iraq's Persecuted Christians



Conn McNally

**I**t is hard to think of a country where the plight of persecuted Christians is highlighted so starkly as in Iraq. The decision by Pope Francis to travel to the Middle Eastern country was extremely brave. In the months leading up to the Papal visit there were a string of security alerts in Iraq. In advance of the visit, Monsignor Bashar Warda the Chaldean Archbishop of Erbil, told Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) that the Holy Father was determined to visit Iraq and the Pope would not call off the visit due to threats to his own life. Archbishop Warda explained the Pope understood he was visiting what is practically a warzone, and that was precisely why he was so determined to visit Iraq.

**“ACN, with the support of our benefactors, was at the forefront of providing aid to Iraq's Christians”**

This Papal visit was extremely important to Iraq's beleaguered Christian population. Before 2003, there were around 1.5 million Christians in Iraq. Accurate demographic information from Iraq today is very difficult to obtain, but according to Reuters there are now somewhere between 200,000-300,000 Christians in Iraq, mostly Eastern Catholics.

ACN staff who saw the aftermath of ISIS's invasion of the Christian heartland in Iraq, the Nineveh Plains, feared that this was the end of Christianity in Iraq. By Divine Providence this was not the case. ACN, with the support of our benefactors, was at the forefront of providing aid to Iraq's Christians. Between 2011-2020, ACN provided €49.5 million in aid to Iraqi Christians. Initially this aid was focused on providing humanitarian relief to refugees. After ISIS was defeated in 2017, ACN switched focus to rebuilding Christian homes and churches. ACN has helped reconstruct over 2,000 Christian homes in the Nineveh Plains, allowing for thousands of Christians to return home.

## Catholic charities

Pope Francis was accompanied on his journey to Iraq by the Irish-born Head of Projects for ACN International, Regina Lynch. Regina travelled with the Papal delegation as a representative of ROACO, an organisation which represents Catholic charities (including ACN) who assist Eastern Catholics. The plight of Iraq's Christians was the focus of the Papal visit. A Spanish journalist, Eva Fer-

Pope Francis visits the Qaraqosh Community at the great Al-Tahira Syrian-Catholic Church (Church of the Immaculate Conception), Qaraqosh (Baghdada).



nandez, was determined to remind the accompanying press of this. During the flight to Iraq, Eva presented the Holy Father with several documents provided by ACN. This included a copy of a decree issued by ISIS demanding Christians pay the jizah, a special tax on non-Muslims. More disturbingly amongst the documents was a price list for Christian and Yazidi women and girls who were sold like cattle in slave-markets run by ISIS. Each age category had its own price, with the most expensive being that of girls under the age of 9 at €160. The fact that ISIS valued the life and future of a little girl at €160 shows how low human depravity can sink. This was a chilling reminder of why the Pope was visiting Iraq.

The Pope landed in Iraq on the 5th of March. After fulfilling the mandatory diplomatic obligations as the Vatican's Head of State, the Pope visited Sayidat al-Nejat Syriac Catholic Cathedral in Baghdad to lead a prayer service. This was a highly significant visit and there was a reason why this was the first church the Pope visited in Iraq. In 2010, Al Qaeda militants massacred 48 Christians in the church. After receiving a jubilant reception by the

local congregation, the Pope led a prayer service and spoke about the plight of Christians in Iraq. The following day the Pope met with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. The Ayatollah is the most important religious leader in Iraq and the most senior Shia Muslim cleric in the world. Around 60% of Iraq's population are Shia Muslims.



The Ayatollah is extremely influential in Iraq. It has been reported he said to the Pope that he believes Christians should be allowed to live in peace in Iraq and should be equal citizens under the Iraqi constitution. This could potentially be a turning point for Iraq's Christians, as Iraq's Shia majority listen closely to what the Ayatollah says. Understanding the importance of prayer, the Pope then travelled to the ancient city of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, to lead prayer for peace in Iraq.

## Holy Mass

The Pope finished his first full day in Iraq by celebrating Holy Mass in Baghdad's St. Joseph's Chaldean Catholic Cathedral, becoming the first Pope to celebrate Holy Mass in the Chaldean Rite. On the following day, 7th March, the Pope travelled north. First the Pope went to Mosul,

**“The Pope thanked ROACO (including ACN) for their work in helping Iraq's Christians. The following day, 8th March, the Pope left Iraq through Baghdad airport”**

which had served as ISIS's capital in Iraq. Mosul is a city in ruins. It had once been the city with the largest Christian population in Iraq, now only 70 Christian families live there. The legacy of ISIS still looms large in the city's ruined streets. In the shattered remains of Mosul's Syriac Catholic church, the Pope led prayers for the victims of ISIS. Afterwards, the Pope travelled to the nearby Christian town of Qaraqosh. Like Mosul, it too had been overrun by ISIS. The town's Al-Tahira Syriac Catholic church was left in ruins. With aid from ACN, the church was renovated and reopened for the Pope's visit. According to Regina, this was the highlight of the visit. Religious sisters danced in joy at the arrival of the Pope. Surrounded by a young local Catholic congregation the Pope led the Angelus in the newly renovated church. This shows that Christianity in Iraq does have a future. Regina spoke of the strong faith of the local Christians, particularly that of a mother who forgave the ISIS militants who killed her son.

After visiting Qaraqosh, the Holy Father went to Erbil, the capital of Iraq's Kurdish region, to celebrate Holy Mass in the city's stadium. After

celebrating the Eucharist, the Pope blessed a statue of Our Lady from Qaraqosh that ISIS had desecrated. The Pope spoke again about his solidarity with the Iraqi Christians, that they will always be in his heart, and how Our Lord God is with them always. The Pope thanked ROACO (including ACN) for their work in helping Iraq's Christians. The following day, 8th March, the Pope left Iraq through Baghdad airport. Everything the Pope did in Iraq was done to offer material and spiritual support to the local Christians. As a Pontifical Foundation, ACN takes the example of the Holy Father very seriously. For this reason, ACN has announced a €1.5 million scholarship programme with the Catholic University of Erbil, to help educate the next generation of Iraqi Christians so they can secure a future for Iraq's Christians.

## Lent Campaign

To learn more about ACN's work in Iraq please visit our Lent Campaign webpage at the link below.

Conn McNally is a member of staff at Aid to the Church in Need Ireland.

If you want to learn more about ACN's work or help persecuted Christians please visit [www.acnireland.org/lenten](http://www.acnireland.org/lenten) or ring (01) 837 7516

## Nuala O'Loan

### The View



# It's neither fair nor honest to demonise all men

**L**ittle boys growing up today experience a different world from that in which our sons grew up. I remember teaching them to be polite, to open doors for people, to offer their seats to those who might need them etc. Now they tell me that some women interpret such basic courtesy as some form of discrimination or insult – as if they cannot open the door for themselves. I tell them it is still good to be unfailingly courteous whenever you can! Yet I know the world is changing.

### Reality

It has always been part of our reality as women that we must be careful about our personal safety, and probably most of us have had some sort of adverse experience. I remember as a 16-year-old, working during the summer in an English holiday town,

walking back from work one night about 10pm. As I walked the little back streets, I became aware that a man was coming up behind me – to this day I know nothing more than that, but, becoming fearful, I began to walk more quickly as I crossed the junction near to the house where I was staying. He walked more quickly. A girl came along the road at the junction and turned the corner, coming between him and me. I ran to the house where I was staying and as I shut the door, I heard her scream – she had been attacked. Her attacker ran. She was taken to hospital and recovered. I told my friends at work and my (male) employer, and for the rest of the summer he sent us home in taxis.

This reaffirmed for me two things which I already knew – that I must always be careful, and that most men are

good and kind, and do not lurk constantly waiting to attack a woman or girl.

Of course, not everyone is as lucky as I was. A recent report by Women's Aid stated that between 1996 and 2019, 230 women died violently in the Republic of Ireland. The statistics are very interesting: their research showed that 56% of women were murdered by a partner or ex-partner and another 31% of women were killed by someone they knew (e.g. brother, son, neighbour, acquaintance).

**“A girl came along the road at the junction and turned the corner, coming between him and me”**

Thus, a total of 87% of women were killed by someone known to them. In only 13% of cases was the murderer a stranger. Of course, every murder, every attack on a woman is to be condemned absolutely. It obviously does not matter whether the attacker is known to the woman or not. It does tell us something though.

### Twice

There is another grim reality too – men are almost twice as likely as women to be the victims of violent crime, according to a British crime survey last year. Women attack men too, and there is a real problem of domestic violence visited on men by women. The risk of violence in homes and on the streets is a growing problem. It can have terrible, life changing consequences.

However, it is important to keep that problem in perspective, so that we are not overwhelmed by fear. It is important, too, to ensure that the way we talk about it does not demonise the innocent and does not compound the problem. It is still the case despite the terrible events of which we hear, that most people don't attack other people. It is of course true that both men and women, boys and girls, need to be careful and to take reasonable precautions. However, we must challenge the untrue and damaging narrative which is beginning to prevail.

I have listened with growing disbelief to some of the public



A woman holds a placard outside New Scotland Yard in London, after clashes between police and crowds who gathered on Clapham Common on Saturday night to remember Sarah Everard. Photo PA

discourse between women about men, and even between men. A colleague of mine in the House of Lords last week suggested that a 6pm curfew should be introduced for men in the wake of Sarah Everard's disappearance and murder.

**“Men are almost twice as likely as women to be the victims of violent crime, according to a British crime survey last year”**

Baroness Jenny Jones said that such a move would “make women a lot safer, and discrimination of all kinds would be lessened”. This is nonsense. To impose a curfew on all men because a small minority of them attack others would be to discriminate against men! A young male English journalist wrote about what men should do when they encounter women in the street – he suggested crossing the road or using the telephone to make it clear that they are concentrating on something else. People increasingly talk about the problem of ‘men’. In so doing they bracket together

the small minority of men who might inflict violence on another person and the majority of men who would never do such a thing.

What does this do to today's little boys and girls as they grow up? Do little girls begin to think that all men are evil, as the dialogue suggests? Do little boys think that ‘men’ attack women? What does this do their understanding of themselves as they grow towards manhood? What does this do to young men today, who, listening to this begin to realise that some people, especially women, speak of them and perceive them all as potential attackers, though there is no justification whatsoever for this? What does it do to all men?

### Believe

I do not believe that there is a problem of ‘men.’ I know that there is a growing problem of violence in our society. That violence is perpetrated by both men and women. Anyone who attacks another person does wrong. Anyone who assaults another person commits a crime. I think we need to be very careful in our public discourse that we do not instil unwarranted fear in young people – fear of being attacked, and fear of being seen as an attacker.

I think too that, as Catholics, we need to remind ourselves what our attitude to our fellow human beings should be. In the past year we have increasingly been separated from each other, those whom we meet outside our homes can be seen as potential sources of Covid-19 – a danger to us.

**“As Catholics, we need to remind ourselves what our attitude to our fellow human beings should be”**

There is a very real possibility that little children going back to school, and adults going back into work, education and training will unconsciously carry that sense of danger with them as they return to whatever new normality is possible. Add to this all the complexities inherent in this new and intensely damaging and untrue narrative about ‘men’ and we will compound their problems.

We need to think again, and to use language which is capable of identifying evil without casting all men as evildoers.

**“It has always been part of our reality as women that we must be careful about our personal safety, and probably most of us have had some sort of adverse experience”**

## EXPERIENCE LIFE IN THE RISEN CHRIST

Does the Resurrection change the way we relate to the world? How can we allow it to renew the way we live every day?



**BUY NOW**  
**€9.99**  
free P&P

As we approach the season of Easter, Magnificat's *The Resurrection* asks us to alter the way we view our relationship with ourselves, others and worldly goods, encouraging us to see God's redemptive work here and now.

ORDER TODAY ☎ 01 6874096

# An Invitation to Join **FRIENDS OF** The Irish Catholic



I passionately believe that Irish Catholics need a strong and independent Catholic media to present the beauty and truth of our Faith, but also to challenge the distortions and untruths about our Church that are too often present in other media. Will you join me in this mission?" – Managing Editor Michael Kelly

Along with supporting the newspaper, Friends receive exclusive access to:

## From the Editor's Desk

our premium video series which sees Michael Kelly in conversation with distinguished guests.

## 25% off books

from *The Irish Catholic* shop, including the best-selling *Freedom from Evil Spirits* by Fr Pat Collins, David Quinn's *How we Killed God*, and more.

## Monthly e-Newsletter

with featured highlights and special features.



**CONTACT** ☎ 00353 1 6874094 ✉ [info@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:info@irishcatholic.ie)

Or send us the order form below

☐ **MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT** - ☐ €10 ☐ €20 ☐ €30 ☐ €\_\_\_\_\_

Monthly contributions are billed each month. You can cancel your contributions at any time.

### METHOD OF PAYMENT

PAY BY CREDIT/DEBIT CARD: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card No: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV No: \_\_\_\_\_

### MY DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

POST IT TO :

**THE IRISH CATHOLIC**

Block 3b, Bracken Business  
Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford,  
Dublin 18, D18 K277.

Alternatively, if you would simply like to make a contribution to support Catholic journalism, you can send a cheque to **The Irish Catholic**.

# The upcoming synod must not follow the German path



We need to be wary of factions who will try to manipulate the planned meeting for their own purposes, writes **David Quinn**

**T**he bishops have announced that they are to hold a national synod of the Church within the next five years. It will be a meeting of priests, religious and lay-people to discuss the future of the Church in Ireland. But is such a meeting necessary, or wise? Might it be hijacked? Could it make unmeetable demands for changes in core doctrines? The idea will be to renew the Church, but it might create division and anger instead.

The bishops made their announcement following their latest quarterly meeting. The initial phase, to last two years, is to be one of prayer, listening, consultation, discernment.

**“Synodality is about the whole People of God helping each other listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church”**

They say this will allow “individuals and parishes, religious orders and associations as well as groups, movements and organisations both within the Church and in Irish society at large, to share their insights into the Church in Ireland – past, present and future”.

The synod itself is to address the issues of “solidarity, outreach to the peripheries and the promise of a new Pentecost”.

It will examine the secularisation of society, the scandals, the “need to promote peace-making and a culture of welcome”, transparency, the family, young people and their relationship with the Church, the contribution of women.

The bishops say in their statement announcing the synod that



German bishops at their spring plenary assembly. Pope Francis has expressed alarm at some of the synodal proposals in Germany. Photo: KNA

the word itself “evokes the image of walking together on the way”. They say “it is a time-honoured way of working out together the navigation map” for the Church at particular times. Synodality is about the whole People of God helping each other listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church”.

In June, the bishops aim to set up a working group to examine how best to progress things. This “will be made up of lay women and men, including young people, religious, priests and bishops”.

## Main purpose

Encouragingly, they say the main purpose of the synod will be “finding the best ways for every baptised person to fulfil the Church’s mission of proclaiming to the world, God’s love and salvation in Jesus Christ”.

Why am I personally sceptical about the idea? Shouldn’t we simply trust that the Holy Spirit will bring the best out of it? Ultimately, of course, the Holy Spirit brings the best out of everything, but to simply say ‘trust the Holy Spirit’ would mean abandoning the need for prudence when embarking on any enterprise. It is a way of short-circuiting debate about the wisdom of something.

For example, the Catholic Church

as a whole, has held only 21 ‘ecumenical councils’ in its history, the last one being the Second Vatican Council which ran from 1962-1965.

The reason they are rare is that, even when necessary, they take a very long time to absorb. They are often very controversial. The first, the Council of Nicaea in the Fourth Century was controversial, so was the Council of Trent, and Vatican I as well as Vatican II.

**“Something similar will definitely be at play before, during and after the upcoming synod as various factions try to manipulate the meeting to their purposes”**

They were the scenes of rows and machinations.

Often kings and emperors would try and interfere. I always remember a remark by Archbishop Tom Morris who said at the beginning of the Second Vatican Council that in the past monarchs sought to

influence councils, and this time it would be the media.

The famous letters of ‘Xavier Rynne’, which were published by *The New Yorker* magazine, were a good example of that.

Something similar will definitely be at play before, during and after the upcoming synod as various factions try to manipulate the meeting to their purposes. There is no doubt that the national media will provide a very willing platform to those calling for women priests, married clergy, a change to the teaching on contraception and sexual morality more generally.

We will be told that these are the voices that must be listened to most of all if the Church wants to pull itself out of its rut, make progress, and reconnect with modern Ireland.

None of that would work, of course. It has never done so for any of the Churches which have tried it, that is to say, the Churches which comprise liberal Protestantism.

In the US, what they call ‘main-line Protestantism’ has gone into steeper decline than practically any other part of the broader Christian Church precisely by going down this path.

The German Catholic Church has been holding a synod and the voices beckoning the Church down this

road have been loud and insistent.

This is why Pope Francis, who likes and supports synods generally, has had to warn the German Church to avoid calling for reforms that will only break the German Church away from the universal Church.

Bishop Heinz Josef Algermissen, the retired bishop of Fulda, met the Pope in October and they discussed the German synod.

According to the online magazine, *Crux Now*, the pontiff expressed a “dramatic concern” over the Catholic Church in Germany and its ‘synodal path’ of reform that began last year, which could include reviewing ‘taboo’ issues such as priestly celibacy and a female priesthood”.

## Holy Spirit

If the Pope simply ‘trusted the Holy Spirit’, he would not have spoken about his concerns.

In fact, before the German synod even began, he issued a letter warning that the synod should not think restructuring the Church and making impossible doctrinal demands would substitute for evangelisation.

Ultimately, this synod will only succeed if it is faithful to the revealed Word of God. Only then will the Holy Spirit allow it to bear fruit.

# Pope Francis: Climate change 'causing immense hardship for the most vulnerable among us'



Extreme weather causing widespread droughts and floods, destroying crops and food supplies in world's most vulnerable countries.

**T**he Pope expressed concern over the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather phenomena and the desertification of the soil. With climate change related hunger and malnutrition increasing, Pope Francis warned, "We have caused a climate emergency that gravely threatens nature and life itself, including our own."

The Pope made his comments as part of a written appeal for the 'World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation'.

**Worldwide, droughts and floods have more than doubled since the early 1990's with Africa particularly badly affected.**

An increase in droughts – combined with ongoing conflict and unemployment – means dry spells have an increasingly destructive impact on people living in already vulnerable communities. Such as those in Niger, Western Africa where 80% of the population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods.

This year droughts and floods have already caused a 12% drop in cereal production in Niger compared with the already poor yields of 2018/19. 2.7 million people are now projected to be in severe acute food insecurity – urgently needing food if they are to survive.

**“Listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer most because of the unbalanced ecology.”**

**– Pope Francis**

Since 1968 Irish charity Concern Worldwide has worked around the world helping alleviate hunger caused by natural or man-made disasters. Over this period climate change has become one of the key drivers of hunger.

In 2019 alone, Concern helped 28.6m people in 24 of the world's poorest

countries – including Niger.

Concern doesn't just provide emergency food to those affected by hunger. The charity continues to work alongside communities so they are able to feed themselves long into the future.

*People's lives are transformed when they are equipped and empowered to do it for themselves. This is how real progress is made.*

One of Concern's most vital funding sources – on which it absolutely depends – is gifts in the Wills of its supporters. These gifts ensure Concern will always be there for people in need of a helping hand.

## What Concern's help looks like

In Niger life is a *constant* struggle for survival. A struggle which becomes almost impossible during the annual 'hunger gap'.

*Causing untold suffering, the annual hunger gap is a desperate period.* Food from the last harvest has run out and it will be months until more is available.

During this time, normal life grinds to a halt. Children leave education to help with agricultural chores at home. Adults travel anywhere they can to find work to earn even the smallest amount to support their families.

Every day becomes a terrifying battle to find food.

The hunger gap used to last 3 months, ending when the harvest was ready. But *climate change has made this terrible problem much worse*, with infrequent rainfall and rising temperatures drastically reducing crops.

As a result this torturous period now lasts 5 months from April to September, with people spending almost half their year struggling to stay alive.

And Covid-19 has further exacerbated an already dreadful situation. Restricted movement and border closures are impacting supplies to local markets, pushing prices up. Now even those who manage to work can't buy food because it's too expensive. Seeds for next season's crops are also being affected by these shortages. This means the pandemic's

deadly effects will be felt next year too.

**Vulnerable families, who already have little to eat, are in grave danger.**

But thanks to gifts in Wills, Concern is able to immediately support families in desperate need and equip them to support themselves long into the future.

For families affected by climate change in countries like Niger, one of the ways this is achieved is by providing communities with drought-resistant seeds, *proven* to yield more food ... the tools needed to farm their land ... and training to adopt climate-smart techniques. For example, crop rotation and composting to keep the soil in the best condition. And methods to capture and keep as much rain as possible.

Thanks to generous people leaving Concern a gift in their Wills, families can now grow their own food in their own vegetable gardens. The food they're growing now will feed them this year. **The knowledge and skills they gain will make sure they have enough food to eat every year from now on.**

Chawada Aboubacar is a mother of five. Thanks to her own hard work and support from Concern, she now has a thriving kitchen garden of her own. Her family own a small piece of land where they grow the grain, millet. When it runs out between harvests, it used to be a struggle to provide the food they needed to survive.

But Chawada now grows tomatoes, onions, cabbage and carrots in her kitchen garden. This garden will provide nutritious food for her family this year and for years to come. Keeping her children safe from hunger so they can thrive.

*"We will start eating cabbage, carrot and lettuce in one month and then the onion in about six weeks. This garden helps me and my family. It makes me happy."*

– Chawada Aboubacar

Having enough food prevents life threatening malnutrition, meaning Chawada and her children have the opportunity to live long and happy lives. What's more, any surplus food from

the kitchen garden can be sold, giving the family money to buy other nutritious food and essential items.

Best of all, a regular, dependable source of food means Chawada's children don't have to work on the

Your gift ensures your legacy lives on, supporting Concern to help people like Chawada and her family long into the future.

Many who do leave a gift in their Will have been so affected by the suffering of



With Concern worker Mounkaila's help, Chawada can now grow food to help her family survive.

land and can go back to school. Getting the education essential for a brighter future for them.

By passing on the skills she has gained to her children, Chawada is ensuring they will be self-sufficient in the future; able to provide for both their own families and the wider community – helping to pull everyone out of poverty.

## Be part of a world without hunger

**“What would induce anyone ... only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was so urgent and necessary to do so?”**

**– Pope Francis**

As you've just seen, gifts in Wills transform lives both immediately and long into the future.

Won't you help Concern fight poverty and hunger – to end it in some of the world's poorest communities – by leaving a life changing gift in your Will?

the world's poorest, most vulnerable families, they have chosen to make a lasting commitment: to be part of a world without hunger.

**"I have two children and if they were in need, I would hope that somebody, somewhere would reach out to help them. With my legacy, I will be that person for somebody's loved ones – you could be too."** – Fiona, Co. Louth

To discover more about how leaving a gift in your Will transforms and saves lives, please request your complimentary copy of 'Be Part of a World Without Hunger', Concern's legacy booklet.

Inside you'll see how legacies left by people like you are helping the world's poorest people. Both today and for years to come.

The booklet also answers many of the common questions people have about leaving a gift in their Will. And explains how to start the process.

Of course requesting your free booklet does not oblige you to leave a gift, or do anything else.

**"Moments of kindness shine in the darkness and give so much comfort – that's the final gift I intend to leave to the world."**

– James, Co. Wicklow

To receive your free, no obligation booklet – in complete confidence – please contact Concern's Legacy Manager, Siobhán O'Connor. Call **01 417 8020**, email **siobhan.oconnor@concern.net**, or visit **www.concern.net/bequest**



**CONCERN**  
worldwide

**ENDING EXTREME POVERTY  
WHATEVER IT TAKES**

# A most unusual mission year

Kayla Hollick.

Estefania Pryma and Donna Heid.



The pandemic is continuing to bring unexpected blessings for a number of NET ministries' young missionaries, writes **Jason Osborne**

**N**ET Ministries is defined by its success in getting out there and seeding its missionaries among the youth of Ireland – a trickier prospect when the young people of Ireland are confined to their homes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The challenges of lockdown could easily have rendered their hands-on approach null and void, but as has been typical of the Church's missionaries throughout the millennia, they chose to accept the current struggle as a blessing in disguise, rather than a nuisance to be lamented.

## Relationship with God

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, a number of Net's missionaries, from teams around Ireland, told of the development of their relationship with God during lockdown. With many Irish among their number, this year's cohort also saw people answer the call from England, Canada and the USA – all arriving in

Ireland only to quarantine for two weeks last year.

"Obviously, this is a very different year from any other mission year. But through the lockdown, I think a lot of people have been able to ask a lot of questions. Even for ourselves, we have in our schedule our personal prayer, our team prayer, Mass and so on scheduled in each day. Being able to have that scheduled in and having that routine brought into everyday has been so good," said Jack McCarthy of the Elphin team.

He credits the unusual past year with having "brought me so much closer and into a deeper relationship with God," a report which is echoed by his teammate in Letterkenny, Kayla Hollick from Canada:

"Yeah, like Jack said, having the routine prayer life, like I definitely would try to back home, but living in a place where it's literally built into your schedule is such a gift to be able to grow your relationship with God.

"And me specifically, just like, my confidence has increased through the Lord because for team prayer, for example, sometimes you're leading and leading your team in prayer can be really intimidating and I know I did not have that confidence at the beginning of the year," she said.

## Time of prayer

However, the close proximity to both God and her teammates has brought a newfound sense of worth to Kayla, with her time of prayer and fraternity in lockdown convincing her of God's love for her in ever new ways.

Kayla's fellow missionary in Letterkenny, Donna Heid from the USA, shared the same sense of peace Kayla has been feeling, and described the year as "anointed".

"I wouldn't have it any other way...He needed us for this time of Covid and I am continually astounded by the ways that he gives us the strength and the creativity to adapt to this unique year. When I think of the question, are you disappointed in this year – absolutely not. It brings my heart so much joy

to see the ways the Lord has been moving and growing in our hearts and allowing us to reach out to the community of Letterkenny, but also all over Ireland and the world."

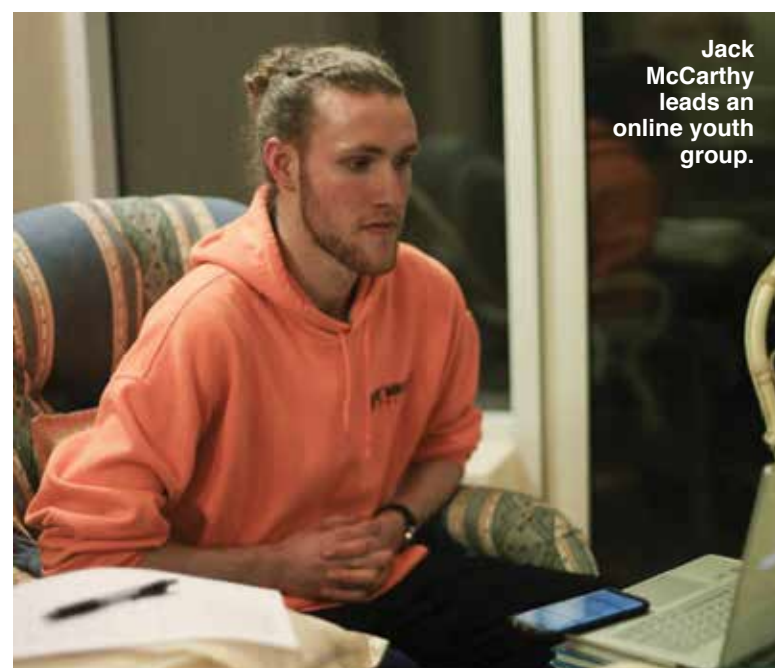
And how have the missionaries reached out to their contemporaries at a distance? By putting human technology to God's use, as Henry Starkie of the Ceili team told me.

**“That’s intimidating and that’s pretty scary, but also at the same time, if you’re holding onto Jesus’ hand, he’s going to take you down paths you had no idea were going to be there”**

"I don't feel isolated because we have technology which can just connect us with people. Like, we have three youth groups running, we're running two alpha groups as well, and getting ministry almost every day with people, so I don't feel isolated in any way whatsoever, which is really awesome.

"What I think is really cool as well, is that these are such uncharted waters. We can literally do whatever we want to do, because there's no precedent. There's no precedent for what's happening right now, so we get to make it up. That's intimidating and that's pretty scary, but also at the same time, if you're holding onto Jesus' hand, he's going to take you down paths you had no idea were going to be there. It's like waking up and being on an adventure every day, I feel," he said.

Also making good use of technology, Kayla mentioned her 'Daughters of Sion' "passion project" that she's been working on throughout lockdown – a project that wouldn't have seen the light of day but for the difficult time through which we're traversing. It's seen visitors from Australia, Uganda, Columbia, India and South Korea.



Jack McCarthy leads an online youth group.

**“Regardless of where they end up, the future is bright for these missionaries, and the corners of Ireland that God has confined them to during lockdown”**

"I wouldn't have had the time to make this website otherwise. It's so cool that it's not just my local community – the world is my oyster right now," Kayla said.

## Mission

For some of them, this year is a time to be planted and a time to grow – with Kendall Kaulfus of the Ceili team saying she'd love to continue the mission work God set her on this year once her time with Net comes to an end.

"I would love to keep serving with Net Ireland eventually. I've got one year of university left though, so I'll be going back and finishing

that in the States. I go to school for a specialisation in youth ministry, so in whatever capacity I'll be doing some form of mission, whether I'm doing that with another organisation like Net, which would be so amazing – I really do hope that Jesus calls me back here – or if that means I'm just starting something up in a parish in the States. I'll be doing ministry in some capacity, but it's not quite clear yet where exactly he's placing me after this."

Regardless of where they end up, the future is bright for these missionaries, and the corners of Ireland that God has confined them to during lockdown.

# Following the footsteps of St Patrick and touching our Christian roots



The tallest statue of St Patrick in the world on Slieve Patrick. Photos: Chai Brady.

**P**erhaps one of the paradoxes of Covid-19 restrictions has been that March 17 being stripped of the parades and green beer, has allowed space for a deeper reflection on St Patrick and his mission to Ireland.

No part of the island is more associated with the 'Apostle to the Irish' than the land around Downpatrick (*Dún Pádraig*, meaning Patrick's stronghold). It is here in the county town of Co. Down where the saint's last resting place is found. A short distance away is Saul Church, built on the site of St Patrick's earliest place of Christian worship on the island of Ireland dating from 432AD.

During the summer when coronavirus-related restrictions were eased and it was possible to travel,



As we celebrate our national patron who brought hope to a dark and troubled land, the sites associated with his mission are provoking fresh interest, writes **Michael Kelly**

I was blessed to make a pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Patrick and his earliest followers to explore the roots of our faith.

## **Resonates**

Remarkably for a saint who resonates around the world, Downpatrick is also home to the only permanent exhibition in the world

dedicated to the saint. At the St Patrick Centre in the heart of the town, pilgrims have an opportunity to meet Patrick in his own words and explore his life, legacy and ongoing relevance.

The award-winning IMAX experience also explores Patrick's unifying role in bringing Christians from different traditions

together united in the one faith which he brought to the island.

Conscious of the popularity of the Camino to Santiago and walking tours in general, organisers decided last summer to take advantage of the eased restrictions to offer a socially-distanced 'St Patrick's Pilgrim Way'.

The pilgrim guides Martina Purdy, former BBC political correspondent, and former barrister, Elaine Kelly began leading pilgrims along the new camino in July and the original itinerary took in seven locations.

The pair, who were Adoration Sisters until their convent grew too small to complete their training, have painstakingly scouted a path for pilgrims that is steeped in spirituality, history and beauty.

While practising safe social distancing, walkers on the way heard about the legacy of St Patrick and made visits to sites such as his first church at Saul.

## **Ancient**

Following the tradition of ancient pilgrimage routes, walkers are provided with a 'pilgrim passport' to get stamped at the various sites.

The breath-taking sites we visited include the 1,000-year-old ruin of Inch Abbey, the saint's national monument at Slieve Patrick with stunning views of Strangford Lough, Struell Wells where pilgrims have travelled for centuries to visit St Patrick's well, St Patrick's Catholic Church in Downpatrick and St Patrick's Grave at Down Cathedral.



Pilgrims visit St Patrick's Catholic Church along the way in Saul.



Pilgrims ascend Slieve Patrick.



Martina Purdy, pilgrim guide, explains the history of the Church of Ireland Down Cathedral.



The Lourdes Grotto on Slieve Patrick.

Since I was travelling from Dublin, I arrived in Downpatrick the night before. As I arrived at my hotel, the pilgrims who had just finished the Camino that day were settling down to a well-earned drink. People had come from differing backgrounds. Some had undoubtedly religious motivations, others were interested in the life of St Patrick and still others relished the challenge of a new walk.

Martina and Elaine recommend that the Camino is undertaken over two days with the first segment done on the morning of the first day, and the second part of the pilgrimage starting with lunch the following day.

I decided that I liked the idea of taking on the 18-mile challenge in just one day and was not disappointed.

**“Downpatrick is also home to the only permanent exhibition in the world dedicated to the saint”**

There were about 20 people in our group and our morning began at the St Patrick Centre exhibition itself before visiting the Mound of Down where the Battle of Downpatrick took place in 1260. The 'pilgrim passport' has useful points to ponder like: what can I learn from Patrick's journey? Do I want to be transformed? What change would I like to see in my life?

### Tranquillity

Next we make our way to the peaceful tranquillity of Inch Abbey where the legend of the snakes was written. The abbey was destroyed in 1177, but the powerful walls stand as a testament to the faith and fortitude he brought.

A ramble along the beautiful banks of the River Quoile brings us to Saul – and the site of the first Christian church in Ireland. Here one has a sense of having reached the 'cradle of Christianity' on the island of Ireland. It was here that St Patrick died on March 17, 461AD. Today a building of the Church of Ireland, pilgrims

can pray or reflect on Patrick's life. The pilgrim passport simply adds: ask yourself where can I find more silence in my own life?

A much-needed lunch is served in the nearby pub The Barn at Saul where we are joined by those who are coming on the afternoon trek and those who were there for the morning alone depart.

### Harry Clarke

Our next stop is Saul Catholic Church to see St Patrick's altar stone and to marvel at the stunning Harry Clarke stained glass windows. It is a useful pause for reflection before making our way to the top of Slieve Patrick to see the tallest statue of St Patrick in the world. The statue was erected in 1932 – the same year as the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin – and marked 1,500 years since Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland. It is a clear day and from the top we can see for miles around including the beautiful Strangford Lough where Patrick landed his boat.

Our descent takes us down in the direction of the first holy wells in Ireland at Struell. This is a pre-Christian site where Patrick is reputed to have spent a night inside the healing well where today we can collect water. It has been a site of pilgrimage for centuries, and opposite the site is a place of penance known as 'Patrick's Chair'.

We are blessed with both the weather and our guides. Martina and Elaine are gentle companions and as we walk the conversation moves from faith, to the beauty of the local area to coronavirus and everything in between.

The company of other walkers shortens the journey and conversations I hear range from Netflix recommendations to worries about a sick grandchild. All of human life is here, I think as we make our way back towards the town of Downpatrick and the stunning Catholic Church of St Patrick on the aptly-named St Patrick's Avenue.

The church towers over the town and the spire dates from 1895. In 1993, a new transept was built for

the expanding congregation and part of the work included the creation of St Patrick's Shrine – a mosaic with panels showing events from the life of the saint.

**“Walkers are provided with a 'pilgrim passport' to get stamped at the various sites”**

Our final steps take us back through the streets of Downpatrick to Down Cathedral. St Patrick's grave lies to the left of the church in a small graveyard with simple adornment. Again, the pilgrim passport contains welcome advice: take time to pray and be thankful. And leave whatever burden you carry on the journey of life, leave it at this holy place and journey on with the spirit of Patrick in faith, hope and love.

### By chance

Martina explains that the Camino almost came about by chance. “Elaine and I were due to walk the Camino in Spain in May, but this was cancelled due to the Covid-19 epidemic...We found an incredible alternative on our doorstep.

Elaine says: “St Patrick's Way is a journey of self-discovery. Walking in the footsteps of the great apostle of Ireland, we taste the mysticism of Patrick, the great treasures he gave to the world, and we imbibe the beauty and history of the Christian faith.

“St Patrick's Way will go some way to help feed the malnutrition of our souls,” she says.

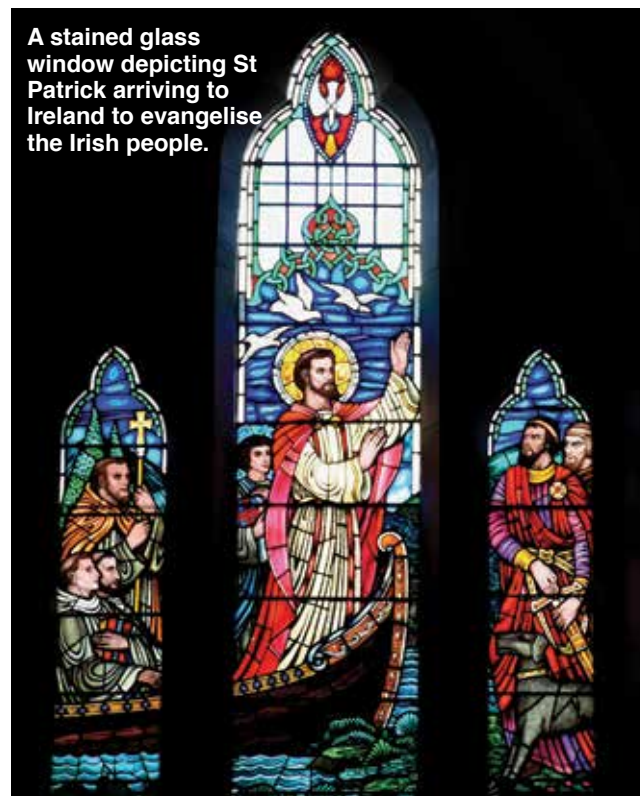
And so, we return nourished in soul to our lodgings at the nearby Denvir's Hotel – Ireland's oldest coaching inn. That celebratory glass of prosecco never tasted so good.

**For more information on the Camino and overnight packages to participate in the 'Way of St Patrick' please contact the St Patrick Centre on 028.4461.9000 (0044.28.4461.9000 from the Republic) or see [www.saint-patrickcentre.com](http://www.saint-patrickcentre.com)**

**“I decided that I liked the idea of taking on the 18-mile challenge in just one day and was not disappointed.”**



A group of pilgrims who braved Downpatrick's St Patrick's Way.



A stained glass window depicting St Patrick arriving to Ireland to evangelise the Irish people.



Pilgrims enjoy visiting the ruins of the Cistercian Inch Abbey.



Managing Editor of *The Irish Catholic* Michael Kelly chats to another pilgrim.



Martina Purdy shows pilgrims an intact monastic cell in the old graveyard at the site of Saul Church, the cradle of Christianity - where St Patrick built his first church.



Guide Elaine Kelly explains the history of Saul church, the first church in Ireland, which was founded by St Patrick.

# The pandemic can lead to 'pastoral creativity' through families



While the pandemic restricts pastoral outreach, it can lead to greater creativity in families, Cardinal Tagle tells Ruadhán Jones

**T**he Irish Bishops recently released a statement criticising the Government for their inaction over a return to public worship. It was another reminder of the challenges the Church in Ireland has faced as a result of the pandemic. We are now likely to experience a second Easter in the Republic without Mass.

What effects will this have on the Church, as an organisation and as a community? How will people cope without Mass, potentially for some time to come? How will Church infrastructure survive?

These questions were posed to Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Prefect for the Congregation of Evangelisation of Peoples and president of Caritas Internationalis, in a private question and answer session with Irish journalists. The Filipino cardinal spoke to us shortly before delivering Trócaire's annual Lenten lecture on the theme 'Caring for the Human Family and our Common Home'.

## A sense of hope

In his role as Prefect of Evangelisation, these questions are of especial significance to him – but of course, they are questions which the entire Church community are asking. Cardinal Tagle's response balanced the obvious challenges the Church faces with a sense of hope for how it will respond.

He said that while the pandemic has restricted some elements of the Faith, "it might lead also to pastoral creativity, especially through families". Cardinal Tagle put the challenges facing the Church in perspective, comparing the situation we are now experiencing with the one faced by Christian missionaries in Japan 200 years ago.

"If we feel that the pandemic has set limits to our public exercise of the Faith, we remember in some countries today and in the past, even without the pandemic, they were not allowed to publicly display their faith for various reasons," he said.



Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila greets a family after giving them a food bag as refugees arrive at a transit camp in Idomeni, Greece, on the border of Macedonia October 19. Photo: CNS

"For example in Japan 200 years ago, Christianity was banned.

"The Imperial rulers thought that they had eliminated Christianity because of the number of martyrs and those who had been expelled.

**“For Cardinal Tagle, then, as for many others, the pandemic is a time of opportunity and challenge”**

"About 200 years later, the Japanese government opened the doors to missionaries. And the French missionaries who went to Nagasaki were surprised to find that there were Christians hidden, who survived for more than 200 years, in the midst of restrictions.

"It was the families, the laypeople, especially the mothers and the grandmothers, who passed on the Faith. They were creative. So the pandemic may restrict some exercise of the faith, but this pandemic might also lead to pastoral creativity, especially within the families," Cardinal Tagle finished.

For Cardinal Tagle, then, as for many others, the pandemic is a time of opportunity and challenge. What he hopes will emerge from it

is a Church which is creative in its outreach. It will also be a 'domestic Church', one lived in and through homes and families.

Speaking on a related matter, Cardinal Tagle discussed the way in which a "culture of encounter" can be facilitated by "natural and human caused calamities".

"In a way the natural calamities – even the human-caused calamities – can be a fertile ground that puts a lot of flesh into ecumenical and interreligious dialogue," the Cardinal said. "Because the encounter is the common human situation of suffering, it does not distinguish between the educated and not so educated, between Christian and non-Christian. Suffering could be the sure footing for encounter and dialogue."

Cardinal Tagle recalled an encounter he had in Lebanon, while working in a refugee camp, with a Muslim patriarch. The patriarch asked him, 'You are not one of us, but why are you doing this? Why do you care for us?'

## Calls for love

"And I thought, he was the one who opened the door for me to tell the Good News," Cardinal Tagle said. "And I said, 'Our teacher, Our Lord Jesus Christ, taught us to love everyone. So we're here for love.' An encounter happens very often without words, but there is intense com-

munication. People know you are there not to take advantage of them, not because you can get anything from them, but because there is a need that calls for love and compassion – they understand that."

The impression the cardinal gives is of a resourceful and active mind, and it is that which may best serve the Church in its post-pandemic mission. One further reflection demonstrates the versatility he brings to the role of evangelisation. When I asked if the Church sees climate change as an issue which can connect Church teaching with the views and interests of young people, he says "very much so".

**“Lo and behold, of the many, many possible ministries in the pastoral assembly, the ministry that got the most volunteers was the ecology ministry”**

"I would like to share an experience of mine as a young bishop in the first diocese I served. We started an ecological ministry. This was way before *Laudato Si'*. When we thought of it, there was

this fear that many people might find it strange, we would not get volunteers.

"Lo and behold, of the many, many possible ministries in the pastoral assembly, the ministry that got the most volunteers was the ecology ministry. Especially in a place like the Philippines, where we have an average of 22 hurricanes or typhoons a year, hitting different parts of the country... even without a scientific or professional study of what you call climate change, we experience the changes.

"When I was growing up the most intense typhoon was up to grade three, now it is up to grade five. So you can imagine how the velocity of typhoons has doubled in these past 40 years. So young people, seeing all of this, they have more of a sensibility because of their scientific and technological studies.

## Youth

"I think this is one area where the Church can really work hand-in-hand with the youth. The Holy Father is quite clear, *Laudato Si'* is not just a 'green' document. It is part of the social teachings of the Church... it is a part of the Gospel lived so that we could be good stewards of the Earth and of humanity. I think the young people would find an avenue for Church involvement through *Laudato Si'*."

# We live in extraordinary times...

Don't miss the latest in Catholic news from Ireland and abroad.

Subscribe to *The Irish Catholic* today.

Featuring news and analyses that represent your voice on the national stage, regular contributors who provide commentary on hot button issues and local voices highlighting the ongoing work of parishes and communities throughout the country.

Special Offer for New Subscribers

3 MONTH SUBSCRIPTION

# €45

Down from €55



To subscribe to *The Irish Catholic*, please fill in the form below and post it to us:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Eircode: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Print Subscription

- ☐ 3 Months for €55
- ☐ 6 Months for €85
- ☐ 1 Year for €165

#### Digital Subscription

- ☐ 3 Months for €15
- ☐ 1 Year for €49

#### Credit Card payment details

Name on the card: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card number: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_

For more information, please visit  
[www.irishcatholic.com/shop](http://www.irishcatholic.com/shop)  
or call on 01 687 4028

## The Irish Catholic

You can also send us a cheque/postal order to:

**The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277**

# Reimagining St Brigid's



Mr Gillespie's wife Teresa with their daughters Grace (5), Rose (3) and Maëve (7) pictured at Croghan Hill, Croghan, Co. Offaly.



It's not easy to create something unique, but one artist has been making St Brigid's crosses like no other, writes **Chai Brady**

**M**any people are familiar with a St Brigid's cross, usually small and crafted with rushes made on the saint's feast day of February 1 but one Irishman has gone a step further using metal wire to create crosses made in county colours.

Gabriel Gillespie, who lives in Edenderry but is originally from Donegal, has been making St Brigid's crosses for years, giving them for free to friends and family and telling them to put them above their doors. He has always felt attracted to the image of the cross.

Brigid's cross on them to keep them safe from fire and everything else. Last year, with Covid, I was working from home and I had a bit more time in the evenings and I wasn't travelling to work, it's two hours every day, I found this metal wire and that's when I had this notion to make a Kilkenny cross, black and amber, I don't know why."

**“Mr Gillespie then went about getting a patent on his design and sold his old 1993 motorcycle to put into his new business”**

From there he perfected his method and has been making crosses in county and club colours for people across Ireland. It's still early days as it was really mid-November that he started building on his sales but even so he has a few tales to tell about the interactions he's had with customers – part of the process he particularly enjoys.

## Wexford

"I sent one to a woman in Wexford and her friend saw it and bought one that evening. Then they both sent back the boxes I used as packaging. It was actually brilliant, they're real two Irish mummies, they said 'we felt bad throwing away the boxes' so they sent them back," Mr Gillespie recalls.

"I had another fella from Mayo and he bought one a week before the All-Ireland and I was chatting to him, he was buying it for his Dad.



"He said, 'I tell ya, it'll soften the blow of it this weekend'. I didn't realise the All-Ireland final was on and Mayo were playing Dublin, and I said 'what's on this weekend?', he said, 'Dublin is going to beat us in the final but at least he'll have a nice cross to look at after the game, it might lift his spirits,' he laughs.

Mr Gillespie was a plumber in Dublin – having moved there from Donegal – before the recession, where he met his wife Teresa. They now have three daughters Maeve (7), Grace (5) and Rose (3) and he works full-time in addition to making St Brigid's crosses in the evenings and

on weekends. He named his business Meenavean after the area in Donegal his father and grandparents hailed from.

It wasn't always easy as he says he's made hundreds, with the first ones being "way off the mark".

"There's quite a few tricks you have to learn and practice to be able to make them. I would have made loads of them and let's say they wouldn't be as nice looking as they are now."

Mr Gillespie then went about getting a patent on his design and sold his old 1993 motorcycle to put into his new business.

He said: "I couldn't afford lawyers or solicitors or whatever so I had to read up on the legislation for design patents with the IPOI (Intellectual Property Office of Ireland), I applied and I got great help. Because I'm not from a legal background they gave me a few tips along the way. People are very caring!"

## Patented

However, he says the reason he got the design patented was to leave a legacy, "With the patents there's a date and confirmation that it was a lad from Donegal who made them".

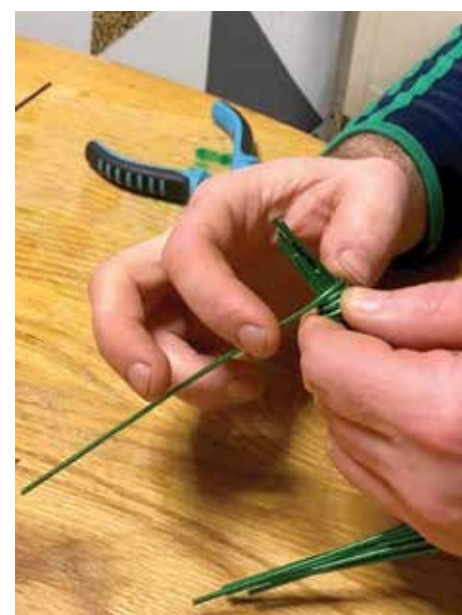
# crosses in county colours



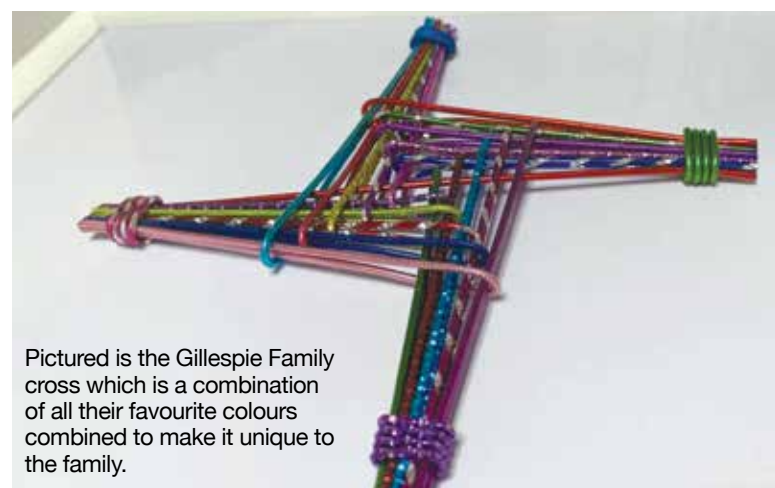
Mr Gillespie with his three daughters.



A cross made for Naomh Pádraig CLG Uisce Chaoín in Donegal.



Maeve (7), Grace (5) and Rose (3) in Mr Gillespie's workshop playing with toys while he makes his crosses.



Pictured is the Gillespie Family cross which is a combination of all their favourite colours combined to make it unique to the family.

"I think the nicest crosses of the whole lot are the traditional ones made of rushes and reeds and the actual tradition of the making of the crosses on February 1 and what they symbolise in relation to St Brigid and also to protect the home and the people that made them from fire and disease: that is paramount to me.

**"I couldn't afford lawyers or solicitors or whatever so I had to read up on the legislation for design patents with the IPOI (Intellectual Property Office of Ireland)"**

"I'm lucky in the sense I can make them now at a time where I

have access to nice coloured metal and stuff, at the time people first started making them they only had rushes. What those people did with reeds and rushes, they probably hardly had food on the table, was brilliant.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a challenge as being able to show a design in person to someone has more of an impact and does it more justice than a photograph explains Mr Gillespie, saying: "I would be a bit of a chatter and I like the craic and all the rest of it, I do miss the face-to-face stuff to be honest."

**"I'm lucky in the sense I can make them now at a time where I have access to nice coloured metal and stuff, at the time people first started making them they only had rushes"**

## Grandparents

It was in his grandparents' house that Mr Gillespie says he noticed he was always drawn to the St Brigid's crosses they made.

"When I was a child visiting my grandparents and you'd be sitting there looking around, looking at clocks or looking at all the old stuff you know, in your own world, but I would always be looking at the crosses that they made. I suppose I

was drawn to the cross, I think a lot of people are drawn to the cross," he said.

"I have been drawn to making them, there is something driving me to make them, even before I sold a cross. I have buckets in the shed, I've been making them for years, I don't know why that is and I can't explain it. I do know one thing: I really love making them, I really do."

Recently Fr Eddie Gallagher PP of Kilcar, Donegal, along with Mr Gillespie and his father, put up one of his crosses in the parish church.

"We have a great priest called Fr Eddie and I do listen to his Masses online of a Sunday," said Mr Gillespie. "When you're in a church you've seen everything in, baptisms, you've seen your people being buried in it and everything else, it was quite a big thing for me seeing that go up in the church."

**"The Covid-19 pandemic has been a challenge as being able to show a design in person to someone has more of an impact and does it more justice than a photograph"**

Looking to the future, Mr Gillespie adds: "I'm going to keep making my crosses anyway, I've been making them before the start of this [pandemic] and that's not going to change. I like knowing who it is for, if somebody trusts me to make something for a mother, a father or son or daughter, I like thinking about where it's going rather than just making a Dublin cross for the sake of a Dublin cross."

"I hope I don't lose that, if somebody wants to message me or email me that's no problem. It takes me a few hours to make one and assemble so it's not something I'm making in two minutes, putting it together and boxing it and posting it, it's all handmade. It all takes time.

"It gives me a great buzz to know you're making something nice for some good people. This started out from friends and family but I'm on a journey and I think it's only starting."

Each cross is priced at €120 plus postage in Ireland at €7.

Those interested in Gabriel Gillespie's work can visit his Meenavean page on Facebook or Instagram. Alternatively, people can contact him on 0864570527 or email: meenavean@gmail.com



**€6.59**  
was €10.00

**Brendan Book Of Prayer**  
James O'Halloran

Tailor made for small groups and families to engage constructively with the gospel and base their prayers in the word of God. Each session begins with an opening prayer and is anchored by a piece of scripture followed by questions and prompts.



**€7.79**  
was €12.99

**Love Life**  
Catherine McCann

Catherine McCann's life work has served as the embodiment of a positive approach to ageing. Through these pages, she presents the positive side to getting older and offers practical advice on how to make retirement an enjoyable time.



**€9.99**  
was €16.99

**The Celtic Spirit and Literature**  
Grace Clunie & Tess Maginess

*The Celtic Spirit and Literature* offers a lively and thoughtful introduction to the rich and complex world of Celtic Spirit, past, present and future. It explores many centuries up to the present day.



**€8.99**  
was €14.99

**Trinity**  
Anne Marie Mongoven OP

Shortly before she died, Anne Marie Mongoven OP penned her final book, an exploration of the Holy Trinity. Examining the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, this book is a fresh look at the Mystery central to Church teaching.



**€11.99**  
was €19.99

**Best Loved Poems from the West of Ireland**  
Ed Thomas F Walsh

A collection of poetry, with both English and Irish selections celebrating the heritage of Connacht. Accompanied by breath-taking photos, these poems and places recount part of Ireland's history – something we are nothing without.



**€7.99**  
was €12.99

**A Tale of Two Cities**  
John Hall

It's an old city rivalry that comes to life in photographer John Hall's book about Dublin and Cork. Experience the best each city has to offer including monuments and breath-taking river shots.



**€5.39**  
was €8.99

**A Short Life of St Vincent De Paul**  
Luigi Mezzadri CM

A modern biography of a popular saint who's conversion can serve as an inspiration to all. Well known as the founder of the Vincentians and a number of charitable organisations, St Vincent De Paul had a difficult journey to becoming the great saint of the poor.



**€8.99**  
was €14.99

**Beautiful Thoughts for Beautiful Minds**  
John Scally

John Scally's 2018 collection of short stories is perfect for moments when negative news becomes too much. Featuring a unique mix of inspirational fables, heart-warming stories and a few jokes scattered between, it's sure to bring a smile to your face.

FLAT RATE POSTAGE €4.50

40%  
*off*

Spring  
SALE

LAST CHANCE  
70%  
*off*



**€5.99**  
was €19.99

**Clare's Wild Atlantic Way**  
Patrick G. Ryan

The worldwide famous coast is shown in all its glory through these photographs taken by pilot Patrick G Ryan. The awe-inspiring images capture both the rugged natural landscape, as well as the castles and lighthouses that enhance it.



**€4.49**  
was €14.99

**Fáilte Pope Francis**  
from the children of Ireland

Prior to Pope Francis visit to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families, the children of Ireland submitted letters and drawings welcoming the pontiff. A wonderful gift for upcoming First Communions!



**€7.49**  
was €24.99

**Pope Francis in Ireland**  
Ed Mags Gargan

This commemorative souvenir from the 2018 papal visit covers the day to day events of the World Meeting of Families, personal reflections from participants and a photographic diary of Pope Francis' stops.



**€4.79**  
was €15.99

**Fifty Masses With Children**  
Sr Francesca Kelly

An invaluable resource for teachers looking to familiarise primary school children with the liturgy. Arranged thematically, the book contains notes, reflections and lessons for Masses covering the major dates and occasions during the school year and the liturgical year.



**Wisely, I Pray**  
Ambrose Thomas

A prayerful companion into three sections to help pray fully. Part one highlights elements of these poems offers reflections for a part three expands



€7.19  
was €11.99

**The Celtic Quest**  
Rosemary Power

Celtic spirituality as a movement has been growing over the last couple of decades. However, given much of this spirituality relies on translations and adaptations, finding the real Celtic tradition isn't as easy as one would think.



€8.99  
was €14.99

**Following The Pink Ribbon Path**  
Mary Redmond Ussher

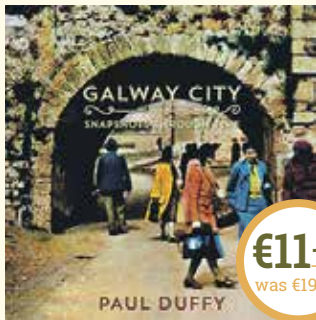
Mary Redmond Ussher changed the face of the hospice sector in Ireland by founding The Irish Hospice Foundation. While she was journeying through her cancer experience, she penned these pages, a path for healing and hope to offer comfort and strength.



€7.99  
was €12.99

**Mystics The Beauty of Prayer**  
Craig Larkin

The challenges and spiritual journeys of these saints are not only insightful to the reader, but also a source of guidance for those who seek to understand the mystery of God.



€11.99  
was €19.99

**Galway City: Snapshots through Time**  
Paul Duffy

Engaging and unique postcards share an intimate history of Galway City from 1890 to 1930. The shots range in type from tourist and promotional productions to true to life scenes from Galway's history.



€8.99  
was €14.99

**Columbanus**  
Kate Tristram

The tale of the earliest voice of Christian Ireland. St Columbanus undertook one of the first great missions to continental Europe and continued his work throughout his life. This is his story from his birth in Leitrim to his death in Italy.



€7.79  
was €12.99

**Awakening Inner Peace**  
Sr Stan Kennedy

Though structured around the traditional Book of Hours, Sr Stan has designed this modern version to be more flexible making it the perfect tool to discover spiritual comfort and spark prayerful inspiration. Ideal for anyone who seeks a moment of peace with God.



€11.99  
was €19.99

**A Farewell to Poetry**  
Gabriel Fitzmaurice

A fine collection of poems composed over a lifetime by one of Ireland's most prominent poets, and a great character of the Irish arts.



€11.99  
was €19.99

**Give Dust A Tongue**  
John F Deane

John F Deane's memoir details his spiritual development from his strict Roman Catholic upbringing on Achill Island to the Spiritan Seminary and from the marriage and death of his young wife to his prolific career in poetry.



€3.59  
was €11.99

**The Psalms**  
P Fintan Lyons OSB

to the psalms divided to discover them more rights the essential etic prayers, part two personal retreat and on specific issues.



€8.99  
was €29.99

**Irish Benedictines**  
Ed Martin Browne OSB

The first comprehensive survey of how the Benedictines fit into the story of Irish monasticism. In a scholarly but accessible fashion, these essays celebrate and explore how Irish men and women have sought God by following the Rule of St Benedict.



€4.49  
was €14.99

**Martin Luther**  
P Fintan Lyons OSB

Over 500 years ago, an obscure German professor changed the world by launching a movement that rocked Christianity. This biography studies the phenomenon of Luther and his effects on church and society.

To order please fill in the form below and send it to **Columba Books, Block 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.**

Alternatively you can phone us on **01 687 4096**

or email **sales@columba.ie**

## MY ORDER

(Please put the quantity before each book)

€4.50  
FLAT RATE  
P&P

### \*\*\* SPRING SALE – 40% OFF \*\*\*

- \_\_\_ Brendan Book Of Prayer – Price (was €10.00) **NOW €6.59**
- \_\_\_ Love Life – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €7.79**
- \_\_\_ The Celtic Spirit and Literature – Price (was €16.99) **NOW €9.99**
- \_\_\_ The Celtic Quest – Price (was €11.99) **NOW €7.19**
- \_\_\_ Following The Pink Ribbon Path – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €8.99**
- \_\_\_ Mystics The Beauty of Prayer – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €7.99**
- \_\_\_ Trinity – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €8.99**
- \_\_\_ Best Loved Poems – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €11.99**
- \_\_\_ Galway City: Snapshots through Time – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €11.99**
- \_\_\_ Columbanus – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €8.99**
- \_\_\_ A Tale of Two Cities – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €7.99**
- \_\_\_ A Short Life of St Vincent De Paul – Price (was €8.99) **NOW €5.39**
- \_\_\_ Beautiful Thoughts for Beautiful Minds – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €8.99**
- \_\_\_ Awakening Inner Peace – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €7.79**
- \_\_\_ A Farewell to Poetry – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €11.99**
- \_\_\_ Give Dust a Tongue – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €11.99**

### \*\*\* LAST CHANCE – 70% OFF \*\*\*

- \_\_\_ Clare's Wild Atlantic Way – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €5.99**
- \_\_\_ Fáilte Pope Francis – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €4.49**
- \_\_\_ Pope Francis in Ireland – Price (was €24.99) **NOW €7.49**
- \_\_\_ Fifty Masses With Children – Price (was €15.99) **NOW €4.79**
- \_\_\_ Wisely Pray The Psalms – Price (was €11.99) **NOW €3.59**
- \_\_\_ The Irish Benedictines – Price (was €29.99) **NOW €8.99**
- \_\_\_ Martin Luther – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.49**

## MY DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Eircode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## METHOD OF PAYMENT

**REMEMBER ADD €4.50 P&P**

☐ PAY BY: Cheque/Postal order

for € \_\_\_\_\_ payable to: **Columba Books**

☐ PAY BY CREDIT CARD:

☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Debit

Card No: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Exp date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV No: \_\_\_\_\_

Discover more titles at  
**www.columbabooks.com**



# Out&About

## Monks in the mist



▲▼ **KERRY:** Stills from *Killarney: A place between Heaven and Earth*, filmed as part of the build-up to the St Patrick's Festival in Killarney. Photos: Valerie O'Sullivan.



▲▼ **DERRY:** Foyle Foodbank receive a surprise delivery of "hug in a mug" packs from St Joseph's year 10 students, March 9.

## Irish Catholic Christmas crossword winners announced

**Winner – Trip for Two to Lourdes**  
Kathleen Ryan, Co Laois

**Runner Ups – Awakening Inner Peace by Sr Stan and Knock Prayer Book**  
Anne McAfee, Co Antrim  
Mary Clancy, Co Tipperary  
John Whelan, Co Cork

### December 24th Solutions

**Across** – 1 Jack Horner 6 Change gear 11 Awaited 15 Brussels sprouts 17 Possibilities 19 Users 20 Toffees 23 Wee 25 Pea 26 Set 28 Arid 30 Poorer 33 Chat 36 Novena 37 Canon 38 Shine 39 Ode to Joy 40 Levity 42 Cattle 44 Any 45 December 47 Lofts 48 Shiraz 50 Peer 51 Thanks 54 Cafeteria 56 Faulty 57 Europe 58 Icon 59 Pluto 61 Den 62 Layla 65 Mar 66 She 67 Order 68 Zoo 70 First aid 74 Glad 75 Sundae 77 Plenty 78 Wenceslas 79 Scribe 80 Five 83 Delphi

84 Poult 86 Angeleno 88 Gnu 89 Tartan 93 Cadeau 95 Armchair 97 Opted 98 Idyll 100 Creamy 101 Soya 103 Decode 105 Eire 106 For 108 Mel 110 Calorie 111 Eva 112 Yorkies 113 Pieta 117 Masseuse 118 Third 119 Arsenal 120 Articulate 121 Here and now  
**Down** – 1 Jesus Was a Capricorn 2 Cherubic 3 Heaven 4 Rebus 5 Equator 7 Holier than thou attitude 8 Gape 9 Gash 10 Rubies 11 At last 12 Altar boy 13 The Queen of Sheba 16 Safer 18 Islands 21 Spine 22 Mac 23 Woad 27 Evoke 29 Daft 30 Pole Star 31 One 32 Estuary 34 Hooch 35 Terms and conditions apply 36 Not 41 Vainly 43 The Golden Rule 45 Duke 46 Refund 47 Lately 52 Sup 53 Joust 54 Cede 54 Royal Mint 55 A candle in the window 59 Prune 60 Oaf 63 Priest 64 Azalea 65 Moss 69 Las Vegas 71 Robin redbreast 72 People 76 Echo 77 Preface 82 Merry 84 Peacock 85 Underlines

87 Nacho 91 Pry 95 American 96 Iota 99 Libation 102 Amy 103 Dries 104 Costume 106 Fennel 107 Retina 109 Sexton 113 Piece 114 Nori 115 Esau

### December 31st Solutions

**Across** – 1 Franciscan 6 Astronauts 11 Potsdam 14 Alert 15 Overlook 17 Barnacle goose 19 Noisy 20 Gourmet 23 Tea 24 Captain Hook 25 Eli 26 Lee 28 Nigh 30 Handle 33 Gods 36 Crocus 37 Ousel 38 Habit 39 Sopranos 40 Aerial 42 Gifted 44 Yew 45 Skerries 47 Rigid 48 Lupine 51 Scream 54 Louisiana 56 Amused 57 Gemini 58 Cite 59 Top up 61 Sir 62 Gigli 65 Law 66 Tot 67 Rhino 68 UFO 70 Yahoo 74 Alma mater 75 Alight 77 Tripod 78 Evergreen 79 Easily 80 Pisa 83 Dim sum 84 Befit 86 Accurate 88 Fox 89 Urchin 93 Avalon 95 Camino de Santiago 97 Faith 98 Wears 100 Trophy 101 Norm 103 Oswald 105 Path 106 Web

108 Ark 110 Recycle 111 Eye 112 Senator 113 Croft 116 Compassionate 117 Drisheen 118 Chair 119 Ishmael 120 First Night 121 Escapology

**Down** – 1 Flattening the curve 2 Abednego 3 Catnip 4 Story 5 Avenged 7 Storm in a teacup 8 Orbs 9 Airs 10 Social distancing 11 Pierce 12 Troopers 16 Louse 18 Aniseed 21 Tepid 22 Dig 23 To-do list 27 Evade 29 Hurt 30 Headlamp 31 Ale 32 Learned 34 Osier 35 Spurn 36 Coy 41 Repast 43 Frontline workers 45 Snag 46 Scurry 47 Resign 52 Mew 53 Pinto 54 Angelfish 55 Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves 59 Twain 60 Pay 63 Nought 64 Eureka 65 Loan 69 The Hell of the North 72 Missal 73 Communed 76 Tame 81 Futon 84 Battery 85 Floorcloth 87 Chile 90 Carp 91 Lay 92 Jacks 94 Owl 95 Chick pea 96 Dove 102 May 103 Oaths 106 Weasel 107 Belief 109 Poncho 113 Conga 114 Maps 115 Tern

Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in  
advance of publication



▲▼ **DERRY:** Pupils at St Anne's Primary School Derry display innovative reading arrangements as part of the school's 'Get Caught Reading Challenge', March 2.



**KOREA:** Irish Columban Fr Patrick Cunninghamz joined students from Myanmar outside the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul calling for an end to the military government in Myanmar, March 4.



**DERRY:** Alanna from the Holy Family Primary School Derry shows off her home-made jam turnovers, March 5.

Events

● In the current Covid-19 crisis, it is clear that most (and perhaps all) Church events, other than some Masses, 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.



# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Kenyan bishops urge uptake of Covid-19 vaccines

● Days after a Catholic doctors' association urged Kenyans to shun Covid-19 vaccines, the country's bishops have told the citizens to accept the inoculations. The bishops said it was licit and ethically acceptable to receive all the vaccines the government recognised as clinically genuine, safe and effective. They also said they would make the Church's health care facilities network available so the vaccine rollout could be well-coordinated. Their comments came after Kenya received the first shipment of one million vaccines from the global Covax initiative and started vaccinating groups considered more exposed. "Receiving the available Covid-19 vaccines ought to be understood as an act of charity toward other community members," said Archbishop Philip Anyolo, chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops.

### Church struggles over Indian state's education order

● Catholic Church leaders are up in arms over a government ordinance in India's Kerala state, saying it infringes on their constitutional right to manage educational institutions. "The new ordinance will adversely affect the functioning of colleges we fund and manage in the state," said Archbishop Andrews Thazath, chairman of the public affairs commission of the Eastern-rite Syro-Malabar Church. Church leaders, who studied

the law for three weeks after it was promulgated on February 20, say they plan to join other groups in court seeking the withdrawal of the law. The law promulgated by the communist-led government in the southern state stipulates that all self-financing colleges, funded and managed by private entities, should follow state guidelines on the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff and their service conditions.

### Jews, Christians can learn from shared Scriptures

● Jews and Christians can learn from each other's shared Scriptures, according to two renowned academics. Such dialogue, they said, can help to move a divisive society "from polemic to possibility. At a time of tremendous incivility in the US, we felt it was really important to model how one could be civil in the most serious disagreements," said Bible scholar Marc Zvi Brettler of Duke University in North Carolina during a recent webinar hosted by the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations, or IJCR, at Jesuit-run St Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

Mr Brettler joined fellow scholar Amy-Jill Levine of Vanderbilt Divinity School in Tennessee in discussing their book *The Bible With and Without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently*, published last October.

### Slaying of nine Filipino activists sparks outrage

● A Catholic bishop and a lay group have joined rights organisations to denounce and call for an investigation into the killing of nine activists by security forces in raids in four Philippine provinces March 7.

Police and soldiers shot the activists while serving search warrants to look for firearms and explosives, *UCA News* reported.

Several victims, including a married couple, were members of human rights group Karapatan, a staunch critic of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's war on illegal drugs.

The killings have sparked a public outcry, with the Church leading calls for justice. "The blood of these fellow Filipinos is literally crying for justice as they are wiped off the floor tiles of their homes," the Council of the Laity of the Philippines said in a statement March 8.

## Bishops: Covid relief welcome, abortion funding 'unconscionable'

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act heading to President Joe Biden's desk for his signature will provide relief to Americans in need amid the pandemic, but it lacks "protections for the unborn", the US bishops said.

Their March 10 statement quickly followed US House passage of the measure in a 220-211 vote. Biden was expected to sign it into law the afternoon of March 12.

In a joint statement, Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the chairmen of six USCCB committees praised "positive provisions" that "will save people from extremely desperate situations and will likely save lives".

But they called it "unconscionable" that Congress passed the bill "without critical protections needed to ensure that billions of taxpayer dollars are used for life-affirming health care and not for abortion".

"As the American Rescue Plan Act was being written, Catholic bishops reached out to every House and Senate office to express our support for providing additional relief to help poor and vulnerable people who are most at risk of harm from this pandemic, and our strong conviction that this relief should also protect the unborn and their right to life," the bishops said.

"We are grateful this legislation addresses many positive provisions, including unemployment assistance, child



Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, is seen at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls in Rome January 31. Photo: CNS.

and earned income tax credit enhancements, nutrition funding, vaccine distribution funding, health care funding, housing assistance, international assistance to regions stricken by Covid, conflict and hunger," they said.

But "unlike previous Covid relief bills", the bishops said, "sponsors of the American Rescue Plan Act refused to include the long-standing, bipartisan consensus policy to prohibit taxpayer dollars from funding abortions domestically and internationally".

The measure includes \$17 billion for vaccine-related

activities and programs and \$110 billion for other efforts to contain the pandemic; \$130 billion for public schools; and \$143 billion to expand child tax credit, childcare tax credit and earned income tax credit mostly for one year.

It expressly provides \$50 million for family planning, but as the bishops noted in their statement, and other national pro-life leaders have said, funding allocated in other provisions can be used for abortion.

In addition to Archbishop Gomez, the committee chairmen who signed the state-

ment are: Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Bishop David Malloy of Rockford, Committee on International Justice and Peace; Bishop Michael Barber of Oakland, California, Committee on Catholic Education; Bishop Shelton Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism; and Auxiliary Bishop Mario Dorsonville of Washington, Committee on Migration.

## Nun begs police not to shoot Myanmar protesters

A religious sister in northern Burma knelt before police last Monday, begging them not to use violent force against protesters.

In a video, Sr Ann Rose Nu Tawng, a member of the Sisters of St Francis Xavier, can be seen speaking March 8 to two kneeling police officers in the city of Myitkyina, the capital of Burma's northern Kachin State.

Speaking to *Reuters*, Sr Tawng said: "I begged them not to hurt the protesters, but to treat them kindly, like family members."

She said that senior officers had told her they were just clearing the street. In the video, the sister and one policeman can be seen touching their foreheads to the ground.

"I begged them not to shoot the children," she said.

But soon after, "we heard loud gunshots and saw that a young kid's head had exploded, and there was a river of blood on the street", she recounted.

Sr Tawng and other witnesses said that at least two protesters were killed

and several injured in clashes with police.

The religious sister tried to bring some of the victims to a clinic she runs in the town but was blinded by tear gas.

"Our clinic floor became a sea of blood," she said. "We need to value life. It made me feel so sad."

Catholic nuns from a variety of communities in Burma have marched the streets, praying for the protestors and offering them food, according to *UCA*

## Religious sister honoured as 'Woman of Courage'

A religious sister and registered nurse who served those sick with Covid-19 in Italy has been honoured by the US State Department with the "Women of Courage" Award.

Sr Alicia Vacas Moro is a Comboni Missionary Sister

originally from Spain who has served the poor and the sick as a nurse in Egypt, the West Bank, and amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Sr Vacas was awarded the International Women of Courage Award by Secretary of State Anthony Blinken

in a virtual ceremony on March 8 along with 13 other women.

Ahead of the ceremony, the US embassy Chargé d'Affaires Patrick Connell said that he was personally inspired by "Sr Alicia's lifetime devotion to peace and justice, espe-

cially on behalf of the most vulnerable".

"For more than 20 years Sr Alicia has served in war-torn communities in the Middle East advocating for those who could not speak for themselves in places besieged by war and insecurity," Mr Connell said.



Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

## Protest and unrest in Senegal



A vehicle burns during clashes among police and supporters of Senegalese opposition leader Ousmane Sonko in Dakar, Senegal March 3. Photo: CNS

## Many countries facing food security crisis, CRS warns

Global hunger has reached an alarming level and could grow worse as the Covid-19 pandemic stretches on, said Catholic Relief Services last week.

The organisation issued a new analysis identifying food crises in 14 countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

"In addition to the tremendous health and economic impacts of this disease, Covid-19 has plunged millions of families further into poverty, threatening their ability to put food on the table," said Sean Callahan, CRS president.

"As we near the one-year mark of this

pandemic, it's important to acknowledge and tackle the broader toll Covid-19 has taken on especially vulnerable countries, many of which are combating simultaneous crises," he said in a March 10 statement.

The pandemic has created a loss of income for many people, constrained government funding, deepened social inequalities, disrupted trade and supply chains, and restricted non-profit groups' access to vulnerable areas, CRS said. Combined, these factors have impacted millions of people's access to food.

The World Bank has reported that for the first time in 20 years, global

extreme poverty levels have been on the rise. The report said an estimated 110 to 150 million people worldwide are in extreme poverty.

A report by the World Food Program (WFP) last June predicted that an additional 121 million people will have experienced intense food insecurity by 2021. This is an 82% increase from numbers prior to the pandemic.

To counter these challenges, Catholic Relief Services has suggested that aid organisations scale up voucher systems for food, support food storage, reach out to isolated groups, consider the impact of the virus on women in

particular, and promote cooperative data collection.

The organisation has also called for policymakers to increase foreign aid and support locally led responses, such as the actions of faith-based organisations.

"As the pandemic drags on, and vaccines are still out of reach for many developing nations, they will likely experience additional waves of the virus that will further exacerbate food insecurity," Mr Callahan said.

"We must act now to avoid a catastrophe, and before decades of development gains are lost."

## Brazilian ex-president thanks Pope for solidarity after convictions nullified

The former president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, thanked Pope Francis for his solidarity last Wednesday, after his prison sentences were annulled.

Mr Lula was serving a 12-year sentence for corruption and money laundering.

"I want to thank Pope Francis (@Pontifex\_pt) that when I was in prison he made a point of sending me a letter. And for having me at the

Vatican as soon as I left prison for a conversation about combating hunger and inequality," the former Brazilian president wrote on Twitter March 10.

The BBC reported March 8 that Federal Supreme Court Justice Edson Fachin nullified all the convictions handed down against Mr Lula by the federal court in Paraná state, which was part of the anti-corruption investigation Operation Car Wash.

According to Infobae, Mr Lula served

580 days in prison.

Pope Francis wrote a letter to Mr Lula in May 2019, in response to a letter from the former president. In the letter, the Holy Father explained the importance of understanding politics as a form of charity and encouraged the former president in the face of the "difficult trials" he had experienced, such as the death of his wife Marisa Leticia, his brother Genival Inácio, and his seven-year-old grandson Arthur.

## Vatican roundup

### Vatican diplomat criticises 'divisive' UN report on Islamophobia

● A Vatican diplomat has expressed dismay at "the narrow scope" of a United Nations Human Rights Council report into the persecution of people of faith.

Addressing the 46th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, March 4, Archbishop Ivan Jurković, Permanent Observer to the UN in Geneva, said that the report could prove to be "divisive" because it focused on one religious group to the exclusion of others.

The report, entitled "Countering Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Hatred to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief", was presented to the council by Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

"The report does not adequately consider the overall context of persecution of all people of faith (or of no faith)," Archbishop Jurković said.

While the Vatican condemned "all acts of religious hatred, discrimination and persecution ... including against Muslims," the archbishop said that highlighting one group appeared to mark "a substantial change" in approach.

"Such a change, rather than reducing the negative-profiling and stigmatisation of such groups, presents a real risk of being divisive, of facilitating a 'we' vs. 'them' mentality," he said.

### Pope opens up about 'risks' taken on Iraq trip

● The Catholic Church's commitment to dialogue with other churches and with other religions flows from the Gospel, but Pope Francis said he knows some Catholics disagree.

"Often you must take a risk" to promote harmony, he told reporters March 8 as he flew back to Rome from Baghdad.

"There are some criticisms: 'The Pope isn't courageous, he's reckless. He's doing things against Catholic doctrine. He's a step away from heresy.'"

Still, he said, through prayer and listening to the advice of experts and aides, he has become convinced that God wants the Church – and all humanity, for

that matter – to continue promoting a sense of belonging to one human family.

Pope Francis said the pandemic – not security issues – was what made him repeatedly think, "maybe, maybe not" about the visit. Decisions about foreign trips are "stewed over time," the Pope said.

"I thought so much, prayed so much" about the Iraq trip because of the coronavirus pandemic, "and in the end I made the decision freely, but it came from within. And I said to myself the one who helped me decide this will take care of the people."

### Holy See urges gender parity in media

● Promoting women in the media is a "vital step in order to advance sustainable peace and security" Msgr Janusz Urbanczyk said.

Msgr Urbanczyk, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations, made the statement at a meeting on "Media Freedom and Gender Equality", sponsored by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The Vatican diplomat recalled Pope Francis regarding the need for women reporters: "In this recounting of life," the Pope said, "women are very attentive... Women see better and understand better, because they are better at feeling."

The vision and sensitivity of women may often be key for a more comprehensive accounting of the reality, the monsignor said.

"Therefore, promoting equal respect and participation for women and men in and by the media is a necessary and vital step in order to advance sustainable peace and security," Monsignor Urbanczyk added.

Monsignor Urbanczyk thus pledged the Holy See continued support to the commitments of the OSCE on equality between women and men.

This includes the advancement of equal opportunities for women in the media.



# Letter from Rome



Elise Ann Allen

## Reverberations of Pope's Iraq visit felt after Francis is gone

**P**ope Francis's recent trip to Iraq will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the country in ways that only time will tell. In the immediate aftermath, a few significant developments can already be seen.

According to some observers, even before the historic March 5-8 trip took place, the first-ever papal visit to Iraq was having an impact on the country at the highest levels.

In December the Iraqi Parliament voted unanimously to declare Christmas an annual national holiday. Previously, Christians had been given the day of December 25 off, but it was not considered a holiday for the rest of the population in the Muslim-majority nation.

**“After years of delay, so-called ‘Yazidi survivor law’ was passed by Iraq’s parliament March 1, and ratified by Mr Salih on March 8”**

At the time, the move was hailed as a down-payment on the Pope's visit, which despite a swath of obstacles such as the coronavirus pandemic, the Pope's sciatica, rocket attacks and other potential security threats, took place with what most would describe as overwhelming success.

Monday 8, the day of Pope Francis's departure, the Iraqi government made another important move some are also crediting to the Pope's visit when President Barham Salih ratified a law benefitting Yazidi survivors of the 2014-2017 ISIS genocide.

After years of delay, so-called “Yazidi survivor law” was passed by Iraq's parliament March 1, and ratified by Mr Salih on March 8.

During his March 7 visit to Mosul, Pope Francis presided over a memorial ceremony for victims of war, terrorism, and violence, specifically calling attention to the suffering that countless women and girls faced when they were sold as property by ISIS militants.

In his speech, Francis thanked “all the mothers and women of this country, women of courage who continue to give life, despite the wrongs and hurts”, asking that women “be respected and protected. May they be shown respect and provided with opportunities”.

In remarks during an Iraqi Parliamentary Assembly on International Women's Day, Mr Salih said he had “the honour of approving the law of Yazidi survivors in justice for their



Children are seen near an image of Pope Francis during the Pope's visit with the community at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Qaraqosh, Iraq, March 7. Photo: CNS

suffering and the suffering of all Iraqi components due to terrorist brutality”.

“The enforcement of this law is a must-have national responsibility in the context of the fairness of victims,” he said, and praised Iraqi women who have contributed to fighting terrorism, saying, numerous women have “stood with arms and many of them were martyred as an example of which we are proud of in sacrifice and heroism”.

### Restitution

Initially written to offer restitution exclusively to Yazidi women who were kidnapped by ISIS, the version of the law passed Monday 8 also applies to both men and women belonging to other ethnic and religious minorities, including Turkmen, Shabak, and Christians, as well as Yazidi men who survived mass ISIS killings.

According to Iraqi Kurdish news site *Rudaw*, as part of the legislation ISIS survivors are guaranteed job opportunities, as they are being allocated 2 percent of employment opportunities in Iraq's public sector with a fixed income and a portion of land.

Under the new law, August 3 will be considered a day of commemoration of the crimes committed against the Yazidis.

This law marks the Iraqi government's first legal recognition of the

Yazidi genocide. Previously, the term “genocide” had only been used by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Several Yazidi activists also praised the move, including Murad Ismael, who called the ratification of the law “one important step toward justice”.

**“Regardless of the significant steps that have been taken in Iraq surrounding the papal trip, some have voiced fear that now that the Pope is gone, attacks will increase”**

Nadia Murad, a Yazidi woman who survived ISIS captivity and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018, said via Twitter that the passage of the Yazidi survivor bill “is an important first step in acknowledging the gender-based trauma of sexual violence & need for tangible redress”.

Regardless of the significant steps that have been taken in Iraq surrounding the papal trip, some have voiced fear that now that the Pope is gone, attacks will increase.

Monday 8, after the Pope had left, one person died in an explosion near the al-Aimmah bridge in Bagh-

dad, which left three others in critical condition. Earlier that day, three members of a terrorist cell believed to be planning suicide attacks were reportedly arrested.

Prior to the Pope's visit, several rocket attacks were conducted targeting United States operations in Iraq, with some falling in civilian areas. Many on the ground believe these attacks will continue, and fear there could be an escalation of violence.

However, for Iraq's Christian community, most are still on “cloud nine”, celebrating a visit they never thought would happen.

### Human fraternity

In a statement after Pope Francis's return from Iraq, the United Arab Emirates' Higher Committee of Human Fraternity called the visit “an important moment for the world and a true promotion of the values advocated by the document on human fraternity”.

The committee was established in August 2019 as a means of implementing the human fraternity document signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Egypt's prestigious Al-Azhar mosque, Ahmed el-Tayeb, during the Pope's visit to Abu Dhabi in February 2019.

In the statement, Cardinal Ayuso Guixot, who was part of the Pope's delegation to Iraq and who serves as president of the Vatican Council

for Interreligious Dialogue and is a member of the committee, said the Pope's aim with the visit is to “promote cultural dialogue and a culture of convergence and inclusiveness so that everyone in our society can enjoy peace in his life regardless of his race, culture or religion”.

Professor Mohamed al-Mahrasawi, president of Al-Azhar University and who is also a committee member, said the Pope's visit provided healing “for the wounds of the Iraqi people after years of wars and destruction”, and was a call to tolerance, citizenship and peaceful coexistence “between all Iraqis and all peoples of the region”.

Similarly, Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, secretary general of the committee, said the papal visit shed light on the Iraq's rich religious and cultural diversity.

“It also carried a powerful message that the whole world should support the victims of wars and extremism, not to abandon them under any circumstances,” he said, adding that the committee would launch a study evaluating the results of the papal visit in order to develop future projects for the benefit “of all Iraqis”.

**i** Elise Ann Allen, senior correspondent for *Crux*.

# Covid-19 makes human trafficking worse



John Lavenburg

**F**lor Molina crossed the US-Mexico border with her trafficker in 2002. At the time, she was under the impression the trip would last six months, provide housing, and enough money to return to Mexico to open a sewing shop and provide for her three children.

Instead, she found herself working 18-plus hours a day and sleeping in a factory where she was monitored and not allowed outside. Her trafficker – an older woman around 60 – would routinely abuse and humiliate her in front of her co-workers.

This would last for 40 days. On the 40th day, as Molina recalls, she earned permission through her hard work to go out to the one place she had requested: a church.

## Sunday

“It was Sunday, February 10, 2002 when she allowed me to go to a church,” said Molina, a founding member of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST). “I walked out of the factory and to my surprise that day nobody was monitoring my movements, so I decided to escape and not go back even though I was so scared and didn’t know anybody.”

**“If someone had told me that these things exist, of course I wouldn’t have put my life at risk going to the United States”**

Molina, who was also a member of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking from 2009-2017, told her story last Monday at the Shine the Light Human Trafficking Conference hosted by National Advocacy Centre of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd last Monday and Tuesday. It explored the root causes and intersections on human trafficking.

The root causes of human trafficking identified at the conference include poverty, forced migration, sexism, gender inequality, racism, exploitive economic systems and unemployment.

As a self-described “desperate mother escaping domestic violence and try-



Activists take part in a ‘Walk for Freedom’ in 2018 to protest human trafficking in Berlin. Photo: CNS.

ing to provide a better life to my three children”, multiple root causes were at play when Molina made the decision to pursue what she perceived as a work opportunity in the United States.

She also didn’t know about human trafficking, which is why she continues to tell her story.

“If someone had told me that these things exist, of course I wouldn’t have put my life at risk going to the United States,” Molina said.

## Situation

Looking at the situation today, the conference speakers agreed that the root causes of human trafficking have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and left especially women and children at a higher risk.

In live remarks last Monday, Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey said the pandemic has made it more difficult to assist victims and survivors, heightened insecurities of victims as government and philanthropic funds have been refocused, and made it challenging to sustain a robust criminal justice response.

Rep. Ann Wagner of Missouri added in a previously recorded message that “with our kids isolated online predators have ramped up their grooming activities”.

**“She also didn’t know about human trafficking, which is why she continues to tell her story”**

Mr Smith and Mr Wagner were both co-sponsors of the conference. Over the past two decades-plus Mr Smith has helped pass legislation to combat human trafficking including the “Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000”.

Mr Wagner introduced the Eliminating Abusive and Rampant Neglect of Interactive Technologies (EARN IT) Act last September. The Act would take steps towards greater protections from online sexual abuse for children.

## Enslaved

Statistically, the conference cites that there are 40.3 mil-

lion people enslaved worldwide, 20.1 million of which are in forced labour, and 4.8 million in forced sexual exploitation. It further notes that 65% of trafficked persons are female. And 1 in every 3 trafficked persons is a child.

When Sr Winifred Doherty, the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd United Nations representative considers the human trafficking numbers, she too points out that the pandemic has made things worse. However, she views it from the broader sense that the pandemic has exposed the problems with social, economic and political systems worldwide.

“I sum up the root causes under five P’s: pleonexia, privilege, pleasure, power and profit,” Sr Doherty said. “The current systems and structures are the carriers of these root causes and are the reason gate for human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation.”

“And these intersect with persons in poverty who are vulnerable, marginalized, dark skinned, migrant and

disproportionately impacting girls and women,” she continued.

**“Over the past two decades-plus Mr Smith has helped pass legislation to combat human trafficking”**

Sr Doherty also looks at neoliberal capitalism as a conveyor of human trafficking. She said one way is it “contributes to the deterioration in a country’s economic outlook and may result in an increased flow of migrant workers”. And that increased flow of migrant workers can then “overlap with trafficking and person flows”.

Scott Wright, who is the director of the Columban Centre for Advocacy and Outreach highlighted the human trafficking risk migrants face, especially along the US-Mexico border.

“They’re particularly vulnerable to human traffick-

ers to cross borders at every step along the way of their journey and as they wait on the Mexico side of the US border to cross,” he said.

Sr Norma Pimentel has extensive experience with migrants at the border in her role as executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.

## Afraid

She noted that migrants are also afraid to come forward about their abuse out of fear of retribution towards themselves or their family back home. Therefore, she said it’s important to “guarantee their safety”. And “trust is key in the process of opening up and sharing and naming their abusers”.

In general, Sr Doherty acknowledges that there’s no easy answer to stop human trafficking. But she said what we can do is “raise our voices for new systems and structures that seek to uphold the sacredness of life”.

“We must challenge our political, social and economic systems and perhaps hope with the light of the Covid-19 pandemic that we are able to usher in a new world order, new economies built on care, inclusion and social justice. If now is not the time to act on what the light has revealed, when will that time be?” Sr Doherty said.

**“Human trafficking has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and left especially women and children at a higher risk”**

# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Religion is the vaccine against virus of unhappiness

**Dear Editor,** With the repercussions of the Covid-19 virus and the growing number of destructive antisocial disorders occurring regularly throughout the world it is probably timely for people who feel there is something not right about our society to reconsider and re-evaluate the benefits of religion and participation in church services as a more fulfilling and contented way of living.

Religion can give some people a better sense of purpose and meaning in life with greater inner comfort from building values like honesty, integrity, compassion, love, empathy, respect and harmony with others. People who do not acknowledge God can also experi-

ence a fulfilled and contented life that they believe ends when they die as they do not accept the existence of an afterlife.

Scientists have found that those who have religious beliefs tend to be more content than those who don't. Some scientists believe that religion can be an effective vaccine against the virus of discontent and unhappiness.

The key to religious credence is faith. Faith is a strong belief in the doctrines of a religion based on spiritual conviction rather than proof. Years ago faith was handed down from one family to another. Nowadays, things are different and in many homes religion is not

relevant anymore. It is not discussed or practised by families.

This brings me back to the proposition that it is timely, particularly for people who are suffering in these strange times to reconsider the benefits of religious practice and faith requiring a belief and trust in God as a more fulfilling and contented way of living. It could be the basis for an open and candid discussion around the family table. This is easier said than done in a more non-religious, pragmatic, and secular world but is nonetheless worth reflecting on.

*Yours etc.,  
Eddie O'Mahony,  
Tramore, Co. Waterford*

## Putting things back in order

**Dear Editor,** As one who would love to have Mass back in all our churches, I think there would need to be a few things put in order. First of all confession needs to be offered by all priests, it is not proper for people to be going to Holy Communion, without first going to confession. Second, you would think you were in a concert hall, as soon as Mass is finished, the loud talking and laughing that takes place is very disrespectful. People need to exit quietly, and chat outside.

*Yours etc.,  
Helen Gately,  
Athlone*



## 'Clearly the Government is in violation of Constitution'

**Dear Editor,** May I add my voice to all those calling for churches to be open for safe socially distanced public worship. I understand that independent TDs plan to raise this issue in the Dáil in the coming weeks and urge all churchgoers to lobby their TDs on this matter. They should point out to them that Article 44(2.1) of the Irish Constitution states clearly and unambiguously that free profession and practice of religion are, subject to public order (not public health) and morality,

guaranteed to every citizen. Article 44 (5) states "Every religious denomination shall have the right to manage its own affairs". Clearly the Government in publicly calling for their closure is in violation of its Constitution.

The Government plans to ease level 5 restrictions on Easter Monday April 5, one day after the biggest Christian feast of the year. The death and resurrection of Christ is commemorated by Christians of all denominations. Holy Week and Easter

ceremonies will be publicly held in churches everywhere except in this part of Ireland where for the second year running the Government plans to keep churches closed to the people. Yet no case of covid has, to date, been traced to a church service. The 'buzz' word currently is 'trends'. If the trend for case numbers is downward and the vaccinations trend is upwards, the Government argues it will be safe to ease restrictions on April 5. Trends do not happen overnight.

A steady decrease/increase represents a trend. If trends are sufficiently favourable to warrant ending level 5 on Easter Monday those favourable trends will be well established by the previous Monday March 29 and before to allow churches to open and hold safe, socially distanced Holy Week and Easter ceremonies for limited congregations without risk to anyone.

*Yours etc.,  
Ann Kehoe  
Castleknock, Dublin*

## President Biden should not receive Communion

**Dear Editor,** I refer to Jason Osborne's interview with Professor Massimo Faggioli on President Biden [IC 04/03/2021].

The essential issue is the president's reception of Holy Communion whilst, stridently and unashamedly, promoting abortion.

As Pope Benedict recently noted, President Biden is an "observant Catholic". However, not all observant Catholics, for example those in irregular unions, receive the Holy Eucharist at Mass – nor should they.

All Catholics should receive Holy Communion only if we are in the state of grace. The Word of God makes this clear (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

To promote the evil of abortion is

manifest grave sin. The American president also advocates for other ideological positions that are contrary to the Faith.

For him to receive Holy Communion in this condition is spiritually harmful for him and it gives grave scandal to Catholics all over the world.

Even worse, that certain cardinals, bishops and priests encourage and permit him to receive, is unprecedented in the history of the Church. These churchmen are undermining the Church's teaching and making a mockery of the Church's witness.

Our discipleship of Jesus Christ makes demands upon us and requires from us an unequivocal and uncompromising witness to certain truths and values.

Given President Biden's chosen public stance on crucial moral issues, his reception of Holy Communion is injurious to the Faith. It sends out a signal that it is "fine" for Catholics to hold such views. It sows utter confusion.

He is welcome at Mass along with everyone else but he should have the spiritual honesty and integrity not to present himself to receive Holy Communion. Indeed, it is the duty of bishops and priests not to administer it to him while he persists in promoting abortion.

Certainly, as Professor Faggioli encourages, let us pray for President Biden.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr Patrick McCafferty PP,  
Ballymurphy, Belfast.*

## facebook community

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

### Church criticises Taoiseach for failing to respond to plea on Mass ban

There was a time when the Government bowed to the clergy – today it is two fingers to them. When will they get it right? – **Brendan Kennedy**

The Irish Government are biased against the Church. Ireland is one of only two countries in the EU that have closed the churches. It is disgraceful and disrespectful to all those who want to attend Mass. – **Mary Duggan Murphy**

It's absolutely so very, very sad and unbelievable that we are very close to Easter and cannot go to Mass. We are so lost without Mass. – **Caroline Ennis**

The bishops, archbishops etc.. along with the pastoral councils and apostolic bodies need to get their voices out there to the Government. This is nothing short of discrimination. – **Sheelagh Hanly**

If every Mass-going person in the country emailed and phoned their local TDs there might be a push from inside the Dáil to open churches for Easter. While people generally remain silent politicians will duck the issue. – **Martin Gillick**

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

## Please open our churches for Holy Week

**Dear Editor,** We are in the season of Lent and Easter is fast-approaching. Many, if not most Irish people, have found the last year of the pandemic quite challenging on many fronts. It has been tough for so many people and a huge challenge for everyone all over the world. For those of us who cherish our Catholic Faith, the inability to access the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the Eucharist, for so many months has been particularly difficult.

As the most important week in the Christian Church calendar is nigh, many of us deeply desire to be able to participate in the Easter ceremonies in person this year. Online is just not quite the same. I would ask both our Church and political leaders that for those who wish to participate in, (and are able to), that our places of worship be open for the ceremonies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. All the safety measures would be in place, as they were before, and our churches were so safe as a result.

Last year we weren't able to participate and it would be a great sorrow for so many people if we were not able to again this year. Please open our churches especially in time for Holy week. God is essential. Thank you.

*Yours etc.,  
Aisling Bastible  
Clontarf, Dublin*

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

# Around the world



▲ **FRANCE:** A vibrant sunset frames Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey in the French region of Normandy March 8. Photos: CNS.

◀ **AUSTRALIA:** Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney greets people following the Rite of Election of candidates and catechumens at St Mary's Cathedral.



**MYANMAR:** Anti-coup demonstrators spray fire extinguishers at riot police from behind a barricade during protests in Yangon, March 9.



**MEXICO:** A Texas state trooper asks migrants seeking asylum in the US to come out of hiding on March 9.



**CHILE:** People take down their makeshift shelters during an eviction of an unauthorised settlement in Santiago, March 10.



**USA:** Venezuelans in Doral, Florida, acknowledge the Biden administration March 9, for announcing an 18-month period of Temporary Protected Status would be granted to about 320,000 Venezuelans in the US.



St Therese of Lisieux

# Dorothy Day's unlikely affinity

One of Dorothy Day's favourite saints was Therese of Lisieux, the saint we call 'the Little Flower'. At first glance, this might look like a strange affinity. Dorothy Day was the ultimate activist for justice, protesting in the streets, being arrested, going to prison, and starting a community and a newspaper, the Catholic Worker, in service of the poor. Therese of Lisieux was a contemplative nun, hidden away in an obscure convent in a small town in France. Indeed, during her whole life, except for one brief trip to visit to Rome with her family and parish, she never left her small town and, at her death, was probably known by fewer than two hundred people. Moreover, in her writings, one finds precious little that might be considered explicitly prophetic in terms of social justice. She wrote as a mystic, with a focus on the interior life and on our personal intimacy with Jesus. Not exactly the stuff of protests in the streets. So why did Dorothy Day, whose life looks so different, have an affinity for this young recluse?

## Spirituality

Dorothy Day was drawn to Therese's spirituality because she understood it beyond its popular misconception. Among all known saints, Therese of Lisieux stands out as one of the most popular saints of all time and as one of the most misunderstood saints of all time, and her popularity is part of the problem. Popular devotion has



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

encrusted her person and spirituality in an over-simplistic piety that generally serves to hide her real depth.

**“One Sunday, looking at a picture of Our Lord on the Cross, I was struck by the blood flowing from one of his divine hands”**

Therese termed her spirituality 'the little way'. Popular piety, for the most part, thinks of her 'little way' as a spirituality that invites us to live quiet, humble, simple, anonymous lives wherein we do everything, especially the small humble tasks asked of us, with fidelity and graciousness, unassuming, childlike, grateful to God just to be of service. While there is

a lot of truth in that understanding, it misses some of the depth of Therese's person and spirituality.

To understand Therese's little way and its connection with justice for the poor, we need to understand certain things in her life that helped constellate the vision that lay behind her little way.

## Childhood

Therese of Lisieux had a very complex childhood. On the one hand, her life was touched by deep sadness, not least the death of her mother when Therese was four years old and several bouts of clinical depression from which she nearly died. She did not have an easy walk through childhood. On the other hand, she had an exceptionally graced childhood. She grew up in a family of saints who loved her deeply and honoured (and often photographed) her

every joy and pain. She was also a beautiful young girl, attractive and graced with a disarming warmth and sensitivity. Her family and everyone around her considered her special and precious. She was much loved; but this did not make for a spoiled child. We can never be spoiled by being loved too much, only by being loved badly. Her family loved her purely, and the result was a young woman who opened her heart and person to the world in an exceptional way.

**“We need to understand certain things in her life that helped constellate the vision that lay behind her little way”**

Moreover, as she matured, she began to notice something. She noticed how when she was a child her every tear was noticed, valued, and honoured, but that this was not the case for many other people. She recognised that countless people suffer heartbreaks and injustices, endure abuse, are humiliated, live in shame, and shed tears that

no one notices and no one cares about. Their pain is not seen, not honoured, not valued. From this insight, she articulated this ground metaphor that undergirds her "little way".

Her words: "One Sunday, looking at a picture of Our Lord on the Cross, I was struck by the blood flowing from one of his divine hands. I felt a pang of great sorrow when thinking this blood was falling on the ground without anyone's hastening to gather it up. I was resolved to remain in spirit at the foot of the Cross and to receive its dew. ... I don't want this precious blood to be lost. I shall spend my life gathering it up for the good of souls."

## Piety

From this, we see that her little way is not about privatised piety, but about noticing and responding to the pain and tears of our world. Metaphorically, it is about noticing and 'gathering up' the blood that is dripping from the suffering face of Christ which this face is presently suffering in our world in the faces of the poor, the faces of those who are bleeding and shedding tears because of heartbreak, injustice, poverty, lack of love, and lack of being deemed precious.

Dorothy Day walked the streets of the poor, noticing their blood, drying their tears, trying in her own way to gather them up. Therese did the same thing mystically, deep inside the body of Christ. It is no surprise that Dorothy Day took her as her patron saint.

**“Dorothy Day was drawn to Therese's spirituality because she understood it beyond its popular misconception”**

# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, March 18, 2021

## Personal Profile

Called from  
among the  
fishermen

Page 34



# Finding a way around fraud

**A**n advertisement I saw recently on the internet suggesting that I could “double” my Bitcoin got me thinking about how a scam like this would make no sense to someone even 20 years ago. We live in an ever-changing world, and those changes have brought both good and bad.

A year into the Covid-19 pandemic and one of the changes for the worse has been a jump in the many types of fraud, fuelled by our increasing reliance on the internet, phones and other forms of depersonalised communication.

If you're to manoeuvre these potential minefields successfully, awareness is your best bet. You



**Our ever-evolving world is bringing about newer methods of fraud by the day, so it's important to stay alert, writes Jason Osborne**

ought to be aware of the many ways in which modern fraudsters and scammers attempt to reach you, and you ought to be aware of what to do if they do, or if you think you've been the victim of fraud.

### Types of fraud

Whereas once upon a time, the most obvious way to scam someone was to call to their door and

try to sell them something faulty, there are unfortunately many more ways to do so today:

- Email fraud
- Phone fraud
- Card fraud
- Online fraud
- Investment fraud

These are but a selection of some of the tools at the modern fraudster's disposal, and there are

undoubtedly more. The key is to be aware that not every phone call you get, email/message you receive or advertisement you chance upon is to be trusted. A general truism is that if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

### Email fraud

Email fraud is one of the most common ways that potential victims are targeted, with malicious actors sending fake emails that look like they're from reputable sources or come with good intentions. Oftentimes, they will ask you to click on a link or send on personal and financial details. Many times, they lead you to websites that look genuinely pro-

fessional, asking you to fill in your details for a refund, credit or an unexpected lottery or cash prize win. Unexpected job opportunities provide popular sources of potential fraud, too.

Even if you click into a link without inputting any personal or financial details, there is the potential danger that the link, when clicked on, downloads malware (malicious software) to your computer or device, some of which allow a fraudster to track your online activity, and therefore pass your financial, personal or security information along. This could result in your cash being

» Continued on Page 33

## Family News



### AND EVENTS

#### CHINA AND RUSSIA TO BUILD LUNAR SPACE STATION

China and Russia have announced plans to build a space station on or around the moon, or both.

The Russian space agency Roscosmos says it has signed an agreement with China's National Space Administration to develop research facilities on or around (or both) our nearest celestial neighbour.

A statement from both countries' space agencies says it will be available for use by other nations.

It comes as Russia prepares to celebrate the 60th anniversary of its first-ever manned space flight.

The International Scientific Lunar Station will carry out a wide range of scientific research including exploration and utilisation of the moon, a statement from both agencies said.

"China and Russia will use their accumulated experience in space science, research and development and use of space equipment and space technology to jointly develop a road map for the construction of an international lunar scientific research station," the statement said (in Mandarin).

It added that both Russia and China will collaborate in the planning, design, development and operation of the research station.

#### DIVERS FIND PHILIPPINE REEF COVERED WITH FACE MASKS

The BBC reported that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is washing up on coral reefs close to the Philippine capital, Manila.

According to an estimate by the Asian Development Bank, during the peak of the Covid-19 outbreak, the city could have been generating up to 280 tonnes of extra medical waste per day.

Environmental groups are warning that the plastic inside face masks is breaking down and being consumed by marine wildlife.

They're urging the Philippine government to improve its handling of medical waste, to prevent further pollution of the seas.

#### GLOUCESTERSHIRE FAMILY AT THE CENTRE OF METEORITE JOY

The Wilcock family have found themselves at the centre of a major scientific occurrence after a meteorite hit their property in Winchcombe at the end of February.

It was the most valuable rock from space ever to fall on the UK, and the discovery has made waves in the British scientific community.

A carbonaceous chondrite – a dark stony material that retains unaltered chemistry from the formation of our Solar System 4.6 billion years ago – it could give fresh insights on how the planets came into being.

The Wilcock family heard a dull thud outside their home on the night of Sunday, February 28.

"When I heard it drop, I stood up and looked out the window to see what was there," recalled Hannah Wilcock. "But because it was dark I couldn't see anything."

"It was only the next morning when we went out that we saw it on the drive – a bit like a kind of splatter. And in all honesty, my original thought was – has someone been driving around the Cotswolds lobbing lumps of coal into people's gardens?" she told *BBC News*.

# Exploring questions rather than shutting them down

In my first year of university, the study of philosophy was divided into three sub-topics. There were lectures and classes in logic, ethics, and then 'general philosophy' which was supposed to include everything else.

I showed up to my first lecture in the latter as a fresh-faced undergraduate eager for knowledge, and left it a spluttering mess. The spluttering only intensified as the weeks went by. The lecture series, you see, was structured as an introductory run-through of the history of philosophy. And it was a very particular version of that history.

## The idea of a neutral introduction to philosophy sounds appealing

Plato was an armchair guy, positing a 'world of forms' with no empirical basis. Aristotle was a little better, but his theory of purposive, goal-directed 'final causes' was a wacky attempt to do physics without the benefit of the scientific method. Nothing much happened for ages after the Greeks, then the medievals turned up, but they were too influenced by Christianity so didn't make much progress. Then, at last – the enlightenment! Science! Empiricism! Materialism! What happened after that was basically a series of footnotes to David Hume: but if you can be a footnote to David Hume, why be anything else?

I exaggerate, but the slant was enough to leave me ranting to friends over lunch about how you couldn't just write off the Greeks. "You couldn't even understand what a triangle is if materialism was true!" I wailed. My being a



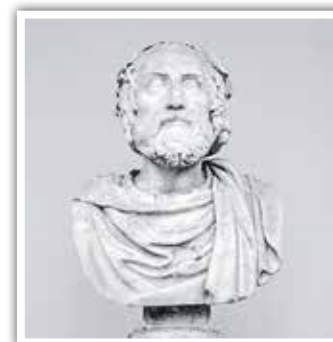
## Everyday philosophy Ben Conroy

massive dork aside, it's interesting to look back on what bothered me most about the lecture series: its reliance on a controversial, contested narrative of the history of philosophy in what would be, for many, their first proper introduction to that history. An introductory lecture like this should be more neutral. But I'm now not so sure that my first-year self was correct.

The idea of a neutral introduction to philosophy sounds appealing. Rather than pushing one set of answers to the big questions, we should introduce people to the important ones, expose them to the best arguments on both sides of the question, and then teach them to think things through for themselves. It's not that this picture is completely wrong: doing didactic instruction on what to think barely qualifies as philosophy. But notice that we've framed our neutral introduction with reference to the most important questions and the best arguments. But what are the most important questions? Trying to come up with a neutral answer to that is difficult. But you have to choose some answer: time is a limited resource and any introduction is going to have to exclude vastly more thinkers, ideas, and debates than it includes.

Things get even more difficult when you start talking about the best arguments on each side of those debates. We might be able to neutrally agree that

'does God exist or not?' is an important question, but should our intro focus on the design argument, the cosmological argument, or arguments from moral realism? We could just go with currently popular and influential arguments, but what if we think those are less important or interesting than ones that had more currency in the past? Favouring fashionable discussions



would then just be enshrining the biases of our own age in the minds of the next generation. Making at least some judgments about importance and quality thus seems inescapable. Once you're doing that, you're not teaching philosophy neutrally.

If neutrality can't be achieved, that seems like a very good reason not to worry about it. Again, that doesn't mean we should just teach philosophy by blasting would-be learners with our own takes. But it does mean that it's impossible to leave our own views about what matters at the door when introducing others

to philosophy. Catholics thus shouldn't be afraid to draw on the riches of our own intellectual tradition when introducing others to philosophy.

## Part of that involves considering strong challenges to our own tradition, or at least acknowledging that they exist

But how to do this without becoming didactic? Rather than neutrality, the aim should be something more like cultivating the virtues of intellectual honesty, humility, and curiosity.

When presenting those ideas which we think important and true, the aim should never be to shut down questions but to encourage deeper exploration of them. Part of that involves considering strong challenges to our own tradition, or at least acknowledging that they exist.

Nor should we be afraid of properly exploring those challenges. I am not the world's biggest fan of David Hume's argument against miracles: in fact I think it's one of the most overrated arguments in all philosophy. But if I was teaching it, I'd try to present it in its strongest form, and I'd expose students to the many other philosophers who do find it convincing. Resorting to strawmanning or caricaturing an argument is never the right move: abandoning neutrality need not mean doing violence to the truth.

» Continued from Page 31



stolen or your details being used in criminal activities.

The best guidelines to follow when dealing with email scams are: don't respond to emails asking for any sort of personal or financial information without independently verifying that the email came from the company it claims to be from; never give away security details, such as your pin code or passwords, online to anyone; be suspicious if asked for card or security details via email – banks and card-issuers will never ask for security credentials by email.

### Phone fraud

Another regular way scammers try to fool people is via phone – contacting you and pretending to be from a reputable company or a bank, and thereby tricking you into giving them your personal, financial or security details. These calls are often accompanied by a sense of urgency, asking you to “verify”, “update” or “reactivate” something. They won't want to give you time to research or verify their authenticity.

**“It's a good rule of thumb not to assume a caller is genuine just because they have some details or claim to represent an organisation you're familiar with”**

Again, simply being wary of unsolicited phone calls or voicemails goes a long way to combatting this risk. Secondly, never divulge personal information until you have verified that the caller is a genuine representative of the organisation that they claim to be calling from.

You can do this by taking the caller's number and telling them that you'll call back once you've verified their identity, or by looking up the organisation's number and making contact directly with them instead. If the caller is genuine, they'll understand.

Another thing to watch out for is that fraudsters may already have some basic information about you – such as your name, address, or account details – that they've gathered by various means. It's a good rule of thumb not

to assume a caller is genuine just because they have some details or claim to represent an organisation you're familiar with.

### Card fraud

The key with cards is to keep both them and your pin number safe at all times. By doing so, not leaving your card lying around for example, you go a long way towards mitigating the fraud that can be carried out using your card.

If your card does go missing, lost or stolen, the most important thing to do is contact your bank immediately and report it as such.

Checking your statements is also an important step in the fight against card fraud. Constant vigilance will allow you to determine if your card's activity matches up with how you've been using it. If you notice any inconsistencies, it's time to contact your bank or card provider and say so.

### Online fraud

With the exponential increase in online activity since the beginning of the pandemic, there has also been a similar increase in instances of internet fraud, the Gardaí raising continual awareness of the issue since early last year.

The internet is more interwoven with our daily lives than ever before, with shopping, socialising, banking and work all carried out virtually in many households around Ireland. Bringing many opportunities with it, the online world also provides criminals the chance to attempt crimes from a distance, which reduces their chances of being caught.

In order to protect yourself against this particularly prevalent form of fraud, a couple of guidelines to keep in mind:



- When shopping or banking online (or making any kind of monetary transaction) make sure your internet access is secure – the beginning of the website address should change from 'http' to 'https' before a purchase is made, indicating a secure connection.

- Do not use unsecured public wi-fi networks to make a purchase or access your online banking; opt for a 3G or 4G connection instead.

- Ensure the padlock icon is present to ensure that the retailer has an encryption certificate. This appears next to the website address in the search bar.

- Use privacy settings on your social media profiles, as information is valuable to fraudsters too.

- Do not click on pop-ups or ads in general, but especially with offers that appear to be too good to be true.

- Develop strong passwords – alphanumeric passwords are the best, which use both numbers and letters.

These steps will ensure that you stay protected against what is a booming form of fraudulent activity.

### Investment fraud

According to the Gardaí, investment fraud has increased by 120% during the Covid-19 pandemic, with common investment opportunities such as shares, bonds, cryptocurrencies (such as the Bitcoin one I mentioned earlier) and rare metals being offered to people from many different directions.

Investment fraud is where criminals pose as investment managers, promising quick returns with high rates of return – before simply stealing your money.

The guards report that nearly all recent investment scams have been related to virtual currencies such as Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. Losses start at €1,000 in many cases, with the majority being in excess of €40,000, representing a person's pension or life savings.

Many of the previous pieces of cautionary advice apply here, but another one to keep in mind is that independent financial or legal advice is a must before making an investment.

If you would like any more information on ways to identify fraud or scams, and how to deal with them, the websites [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) and [www.fraudSMART.ie](http://www.fraudSMART.ie) have a plethora of resources on the topic.

## Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

During the week we had the first session of our book club exploring the story of St Ignatius 'The Pilgrim' which Bishop Alan McGuckian had translated into Irish. We talked about the early life of Ignatius and the impact it had when he began to realise how present and active God was within his own life experience. This is an aspect of Ignatius' spirituality which has always appealed to me. I think that as a Church we really need to reflect on whether we have done enough to encourage people to reflect on the experience of their daily lives and to trust that God is present right there in the bits and pieces. I recently watched a talk by my friend Salvador Ryan, Professor of Church History in Maynooth. In it he talks about how in the past Irish Catholicism was nurtured by a rich profusion of devotional practices which weaved their way through every aspect of daily life. With Vatican II there emerged a much greater emphasis on the full and active participation of lay people in the Mass. At the same time, and hurried on by many changes in society, there was a sustained decrease in devotional practice and more and more of Catholic life came to focus on and depend upon what happened in those forty five minutes on a Sunday.

The vulnerability of that dependence has come into sharp focus over the past year. Without access to the Mass many people do not know where else to draw strength or nourishment for faith. We have to wonder how many will come out the other end of the pandemic having shed, almost without realising it, whatever faith they had.

It seems to me then that as we move through Lent, towards Holy Week we need to reclaim the domestic reality of our faith. We are not going to be gathering in our parishes but this cannot be allowed to mean that Holy Week and Easter do not happen. Instead it is up to us – with the assistance of liturgies on TV and online – to celebrate meaningfully. So what can we do? On Holy Thursday could we find some way to remember what happened in the Upper Room? Jesus washed the feet of his friends. Perhaps we could take on some act of service for those

we live with. That evening perhaps a loaf of bread could be placed on the table and shared during the meal. And let's be clear – we are not celebrating a Mass here or pretending to do so, but we are acknowledging that what Jesus did at the last supper arose from his experience of shared meals. With our sharing



of bread we can acknowledge how much Eucharist means in our lives and our desire to return.

On Good Friday we could walk a Stations of the Cross where we live. I think here of the Courthouse and the Poor House, the building that used to be the county psychiatric home, the hospital where so many patients and staff have struggled to make their way through the nightmare that has been Covid. I think of the schools and the struggle that families and teachers have had, of supermarkets and their frontline workers, of businesses whose lives and futures have been cast up into the air. There is plenty of material for walking a Stations of the Cross. Holy Saturday is always a day of quiet preparation and waiting for me. Perhaps this year it is a time to reflect on what experiences from the past year we need to let go of – fear, anxiety, frustration, anger perhaps – and what experiences and wisdom we can bring with us into the future.

Easter Sunday is a day for flowers and brightness and celebration. If my children were small I would have them drawing pictures of empty tombs or building Easter gardens! Whatever we do it is vital for our wellbeing and our faith that we take ownership of Holy Week and Easter, that we celebrate it in ways that make sense for us and our families. Perhaps this year Easter is about the liturgy of family life.

# Called from among the fishermen

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

**T**he family of Fr John Joe Duffy, parish priest in Creeslough/Dunfanaghy Co. Donegal, have been fishermen for generations. His father, his grandfather, his uncles – all were involved in the fishing industry in one way or another. But the priesthood was always Fr Duffy's calling and today he combines his life and calling in ministering to the fishing and farming communities in Donegal.

**“From the age of six, Fr Duffy felt the call of the priesthood. He remembers that all he wanted to do was imitate the actions of the priest on the altar”**

“We can trace fishing back in our families for hundreds of years,” Fr Duffy tells *The Irish Catholic*. “My father was an islander, my mother was across from the island. I grew up in Burtonport which was then a premier fishing port. Everything that shaped my life before I went to college in Maynooth was part and parcel of that whole fishing scene.”

Though he grew up enmeshed in the life of a fishing community, Fr Duffy felt that his calling was elsewhere. It was never his desire to fol-

Fr John Joe Duffy, parish priest in Creeslough/Dunfanaghy Co. Donegal.



low a career in fishing.

“I used to enjoy going out on the boats,” Fr Duffy explains. “I’d go with my father and some others on occasion. I’d go lobster fishing, which is very beautiful to see the lobster in the pot, the excitement as each pot would come in – would there be a lobster or crab in the pot?”

### Fishing

“Where I grew up, we had quite a loss of life from fishing,” he continues. “When I was just two months old, my father’s cousin was drowned at sea together with oth-

ers. I grew up listening to all that. It was very much part of our culture, that danger going to sea.

“When my father would go to sea, we didn’t know – there was that uncertainty, that he might not return. They were out in much smaller boats than today, the boats today are much safer.”

From the age of six, Fr Duffy felt the call of the priesthood. He remembers that all he wanted to do was imitate the actions of the priest on the altar.

“The first thing I wanted to do was what the priest was doing on

the altar, when I was very, very young,” he says. “That never left me. Then another priest came from the US and I met him, my father was bringing him over to the island. He then said to somebody that I would make a good priest, which was music to my ears because I’d been thinking about this to myself all along.”

Ordained a priest for the diocese of Raphoe, which largely covers Donegal, Fr Duffy knew he would never be far from the sea. This was a good thing, as he found himself quite homesick away from the ocean.

**“Fr Duffy now ministers in a rural parish which is a combination of a fishing and farming community”**

“When I was in Maynooth, I would be homesick for the sea,” Fr Duffy says. “You have to be from the sea to understand it. The same would be true when I was a bit inland in Donegal. I had the Finn river running by me and yet I would have to drive to the sea, to look at the sea at times.

“Especially when I was faced with challenges, such as maybe the death of someone or difficult situations where when I would feel down in myself. I would go drive to the sea and there I could meditate and pray. I find I can meditate and pray by the sea or on a boat better than in any other place.”

Fr Duffy now ministers in a rural parish which is a combination of a fishing and farming community.

“It’s very satisfying here in Creeslough to be among the farming community as well,” Fr Duffy says. “Farmers and fishermen are very different in their make-up. One organises and plans, while fishermen are really hunters at

the end of the day. It’s very hard to plan because the sea dictates when you can go to fish and when you can’t, even though there is a huge amount of planning in all that. One’s a cultivator and the other are hunters, that’s the difference between the two.”

Fr Duffy remains vocal about the needs of the fishing community, who he feels have been let down by successive governments.

“I believe that the department of fisheries seem in this country to persecute fishermen,” Fr Duffy says. “When European law is enacted, that law seems to be more draconian in Ireland than in other countries. In Ireland, the officials, very senior ones, seem intent on tearing the industry apart and not putting supports in place for the industry. Like you would have in farming for example.

“Small boats belonging to Irish residents, Irish taxpayers, they are now not allowing them to land at their home ports. They have to travel a huge distance to Killybegs to offload their fish. This is making life very risky, very dangerous and that’s what I’m most passionate about, the protection of life. I’m afraid for these men that we will have tragedies as we had in the past.”

### People of God

The priest remains an integral part of parishes and communities in Donegal, Fr Duffy says, and adds that the pandemic seems only to have increased that: “I find that I have contact with a lot more people, even now in this time of pandemic, through Facebook and social media and in calls. People are asking for prayers for the sick. The role of the priest is to pray for the people of God, to pray for his fellow human beings.”

## Working side by side at home but drifting apart

**Myself and my wife are both still working from home. We are trying our best to juggle managing work and the children but it’s not easy. Even though we are side by side for most of the day our communication has drifted.**

**I**t’s totally understandable that the novelty of working from home has now well and truly worn off for some people. When it all began this time last year, none of us could have predicted we would still be between the same four walls for the vast majority of our day.

You might now look with rose tinted glasses on the office politics, Mark from IT who always grated on your nerves and your lunch sometimes mysteriously going missing from the kitchen. Now your open plan office consists of you and your wife. Your headspace lunches are going downstairs and watercooler chit chat is non-existent.

It looks like an element of working from home will be a feature for some time to come so it’s important that you set good boundaries for

personal time and space as well as how both your working days will be structured. You might have talked in general about the pandemic and its impact but have you recently had your own family HR meeting and talked about practical ways to respect the feelings and issues you might be having by working in such close proximity?

Establish some ‘office rules’ like what are your respective working hours? Do you want to share a lunch hour together some days or could you use that as time for yourself for a walk, run or cycle? Have you re-evaluated the best way to work as a team in managing work and children? We could learn something from our very own intrepid explorer Shackleton, when he was marooned in the Antarctic and didn’t lose a single soul, one of his keys was routine.

Discuss what works best for one another, for example you might be really productive in the early hours while your wife is more of a night owl, use what works for you both and then work out the best way to coordinate a schedule that works best for the whole family. This could include some new parts

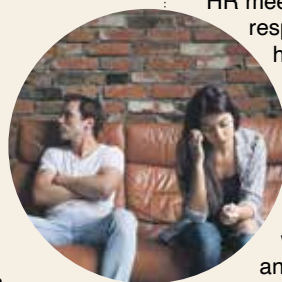
to your routine like family game nights, cooking together or games in the garden with that commute time you have gotten back.

It’s important to also re-evaluate what is working and what is not working. Even though you are side by side you might not actually be checking in with each other enough, if at all. Having a good routine and structure is really important. Have boundaries for when your work day starts and ends and ways to make the switch to home life so you can communicate again. From a psychological perspective it’s good to have something that helps you make the mental switch from work to home life. It could be changing into comfier clothes, locking the office door or taking a ten-minute walk around the block to decompress from the day.

Try not to use the additional hours you have at home at work, instead invest that time into your relationship and time for yourself. Don’t let your usual work hours bleed into what should be family time and remember as this pandemic and various restrictions changes and its impact on you changes keep the discussion ongoing about what works and doesn’t work and make changes accordingly.



Wendy Grace





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Marking a year of Covid-19 on the airwaves

**O**n the one-year anniversary of the Covid-19 outbreak in Ireland, it wasn't surprising that the issue of the lockdown and religious practice featured prominently in the media last week, especially considering the Catholic Bishops' statement on religious worship which put this back more prominently on the agenda.

David Quinn discussed the matter on **Today with Clare Byrne** (RTÉ Radio One, Wednesday) with Prof. Tomás Ryan of Trinity College. It was a reflective discussion with some respectful disagreements and differences of emphasis but with some common ground as well. Mr Quinn thought it was "entirely reasonable" to ease restrictions on public worship when lockdown rules at level five in general were eased and especially at level three, when even hairdressers were open but you couldn't attend regular religious services. He pointed out how Ireland was very much an outlier on this issue, being much stricter than most other European countries, and drew attention to the army of volunteers who had made huge efforts to keep churchgoers safe when the churches were open in a limited way.

Prof. Ryan thought that churches were "a risk site" for super-spreader events, but also that 'worship is incredibly



Newstalk presenter Kieran Cuddihy

important' and that it wasn't just on the same level of going to the cinema and the like. He believed it was a central thing "for people of all faiths and none" (worship central to people of no faith?) The Church, he believed, had an important community leadership role and he seemed to favour regional easing where Covid-19 cases were very low (he instanced Cork, Kerry and

Kilkenny). He complimented the Church for being innovative in coping with lockdown and felt funerals didn't always have to be confined to the church buildings especially with the weather improving. His argument was for us to aim at getting to level one, when we could have normal funerals and less of them, while Mr Quinn countered that this would mean months more of

lockdown. They reprised the discussion on **The Tonight Show** (Virgin Media One) on the Thursday evening.

The issue was discussed further later that day on **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk). Fr Iggy O'Donovan OSA was "sort of" supportive of the bishops, but stressed he was not grousing about the restrictions. In Covid-19 matters he was more inclined to take his instructions from the civil authorities, like Ireland's Chief medical Officer Tony Holohan and his US equivalent Anthony Fauci. Religious services, he said, were far down the list of priorities for the State. Churches, he found, were poorly attended anyway but now he saw "the most unlikely people" advocating for their right to worship. Presenter Kieran Cuddihy was of the opinion that there were genuine regular Mass-goers who were deprived because of the restrictions. As regards worship he agreed that there was "nothing like the real thing", and thought there should be more scope for movement in relation to funerals and weddings – churches were big roomy buildings.

A caller, Jason, said we needed God more than ever now and was supportive of the bishops. He said online worship was nice but it wasn't the same – you couldn't really receive Eucharist virtually. Another caller, Brendan (not

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MASS

**RTÉ One Sunday March 21, 11.00am**

Celebrated by the prior of Lough Derg, Msgr La Flynn. Liturgy is led by the Lough Derg pastoral team and music ministry group, directed by Mary McDaid.

#### NEW! CATHOLIC SPHERE

**EWTN Wednesday March 24, 8.30pm**

EWTN correspondents from around the world join Brian Patrick to provide a unique global perspective on our faith, focusing on the issues that are important to Catholics today.

#### THE LEAP OF FAITH

**RTE Radio One Friday March 26, 10.05pm**

Topical religious issues with Michael Comyn.

me!) agreed on the need to allow greater numbers at funerals – he had been a steward at church and saw how safe they were – with large buildings, hand sanitising, social distancing and quick dispersal of the congregation. He also agreed that the Eucharist, like drinking water and eating food – can't really be done virtually. While also supportive of civil authorities, he pointed out that Slovakia, Slovenia and Ireland were the only countries where you couldn't go to Mass – the countries that allow it, the majority, have medical experts advising them too. He felt the civil authorities here had a 'tone deafness about people's spiritual needs, but was 100% behind the project to keep people physically safe.

On Thursday evening back on **The Hard Shoul-**

**der** (Newstalk) Kieran Cuddihy reviewed one year of Covid-19 restrictions by interviewing people in his home town of Kilkenny. His interviewees included Fr Willie Purcell who spoke of agonising over funerals and a church in a broadband blackspot where even the idea of livestreaming Mass was a challenge. People, he said, were missing the "on-ground" experience and the rituals around going to Mass. Mr Cuddihy showed an empathic understanding of Fr Purcell's dilemmas – the idea of a shepherd not being able to go near his flock – no religious illiteracy there!

[boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com),  
[@boreganmedia](https://www.boreganmedia.com)



# Music

Pat O'Kelly



## March musical treats to enjoy

Among artistic ventures falling victim to Covid-19 last year were Feis Ceoil and Music for Galway's *Cellissimo* festival – a celebration of the cello in one form or another. Happy to relate both events have been reconstituted with Feis Ceoil, supported by the RDS and celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021, already under way and *Cellissimo* running from March 25-31.

However, both are a little different this year with the Feis excluding choirs and orchestras from its competitions and *Cellissimo* having its live and recorded concerts and recitals streamed online. Feis Ceoil's international adjudicators will view and give their verdicts also online



Cellist Mischa Maisky

with feedback scanned or emailed to competitors. Winners' names will be posted on its website and engraved on cups and trophies.

*Cellissimo* comes under the artistic direction of Finghin Collins, no stranger to Feis Ceoil by the way, and, with his committee, has devised interesting and wide-ranging programmes that include unusual 'seasoned' attractions including cheese tasting, Connemara beer sampling, an Aran knitting workshop and a *Cellissimo* scent kit!

Some of the festival concerts and recitals will involve what has become known as *The Galway Cello* – made from local materials by German-born Co. Galway instrument maker, Kuros Torkzadeh. *Cellissimo* also offers master classes and cello-themed films together with interviews and conversations. 'A

little bit of everything', one might say.

Directed by French cellist Marc Coppey, the Irish Chamber Orchestra's opening concert on March 25 will be streamed live from Kylemore Abbey. The music includes a Vivaldi Double Cello Concerto with Coppey and his illustrious Irish protégé Christopher Ellis as soloists.

Besides Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Barber and Bartók, the concert also brings the world première of Music for Galway's commissioned *Fragments* by Bill Whelan played by Naomi Berrill on *The Galway Cello*.

Sweden's Jakob Koranyi, Russia's Tatjana Vassiljeva, Britons Adrian Brendel and

Hannah Roberts as well as Marc Coppey and Christopher Ellis will highlight Bach's six solo Cello Suites during the festival's lunchtime programmes.

Friday (March 26) evening's event comes from Tigh Neachain on Galway's Cross Street, a venue famed for its traditional music sessions and where Irish artist Naomi Berrill will present one of her personal choice entertainments.

Saturday evening (March 27) moves out of the city again, this time to Claregalway Castle for a near-marathon recital of Beethoven's five Cello and Piano Sonatas with Christopher Ellis, Marc Coppey, Christopher Marwood, William Butt and Adrian Mantu. Finghin Collins is the partnering pianist in each with musicologist Richard Wigmore adding insightful comments as well.

With the ConTempo Quartet and Christopher Marwood, Sunday evening (March 28) shifts to Portumna Castle for a programme entitled *From Prussia with Love*. With Mozart's D major String Quartet K 575, written for cello-loving Prussian monarch Friedrich Wilhelm II, and Schubert's marvellous C major String Quintet D 956, this should be another highly agreeable gathering.

The closing recital on Wednesday March 31 showcases brilliant Latvian-born Israeli cellist Mischa Maisky accompanied by his pianist daughter Lily. Piazzolla's *Le Grand Tango* rounds off music by Beethoven, Britten, Tchaikovsky and Rakhmaninov.

More about *Cellissimo* and *The Galway Cello* on <https://musicforgalway.ie/cellissimo-events/>

# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## A future vision: restoring 'the civic community'

**The upswing: How we came together a century ago and how we can do it again**

by Robert D. Putman with Shalyn Romney Garrett (The Swift Press, £25.00)

Frank Litton

This is a book for anyone who is interested in the history of the United States of America. Covering the last 125 years, from the 'Gilded Age' to the present, it stands apart from many histories of that period; written by social scientists, it tracks the paths of economic, political, social, and cultural change with data most often found in the domain of the social sciences. It will also interest those concerned with the condition of US democracy, and, indeed western democracies in general.

Robert D. Putman is best known for his investigations into the factors that sustain a healthy democracy. He introduced the concept of 'social capital'. When citizens come together to run clubs, societies, associations, they generate social capital. It pays dividends in healthy democracies whose politics paint the 'big picture'.

For example, the social capital produced by the Irish Country Women's Association and Macra na Feirme has and does support our democracy, even if, or rather because they are apolitical. Should its membership decline and its pitches close, then our democracy would be weakened.

### Inequality

Like so many, Prof. Putman laments the rising economic inequality, social divisions, and partisan politics in today's US. It's difficult to articulate and implement a vision of the common good as individuals retreat into their 'bubbles'. Prof. Putman saw similarities with the condition of the US in the late 19th Century.

He decided to investigate, and with a master-sociologist's grasp of where data could be found and what it could reveal, he did find similarities between then and now. Individualism,



A poster of Putnam's theories

inequality, and political tribalism mark both the gilded age and the present. He found more: he found the path from then to now had the shape of an inverted horseshoe.

Putman calls it the 'I:we:I' route and finds it again and again. For example, in the rise, fall and rise again of economic equality; in the rise and fall of national chapter-based associations; in the move from individualism to community and back to individualism between 1890-2017.

### Conclusion

All in all, 57 figures displaying indicators from diverse sources converge on the same conclusion: the United States moved from an individualistic, unequal and conflicted society to a more equal, communitarian and politically-united society and back again. The high point of 'we' occurred in the 1950s, the 1960s mark the pivot towards today's 'I'.

Prof. Putman recognises that the 1950s were far from a perfect realisation of 'we'. He investigates the circumstances of both African Americans and women - both groups who were far from equal members of the 'we'. He reports, however, that substantial progress was made to redress the inequalities on the upward path.

Analyses can take the form of a 'chain' or a 'rope'. In one, the conclusion is supported by a chain that moves via well-established propositions and rigorous deductions to its conclusion. This analysis is as strong as its weakest link.

The rope analysis weaves together many strands. While each is itself weak, brought together they gain considerable strength.

Prof. Putman and his associates are outstanding weavers. It is not just the massive quantity of data [threads] they collected that impresses, their presentation in figures and prose is exemplary.

Prof. Putman wants to do more than provide a tapestry of the last 125 years. His worry is the distemper of US politics and his intention is to find lessons for change in history. The lesson is obvious: the ascent to 'we' was propelled by the social capital produced by formation of many associations, so we should form new associations rebuilding social capital. Obvious, yes, but useful?

\*\*\*

Have we any reason to expect history to repeat itself bringing back the sense of shared purposes and the common good?

Prof. Putman pays no attention to the debates of political philosophers and economists that accompanied the changes he charts. We need to bring these into focus if we want to access the prospect of a return to 'we'. These debates were framed within the tradition of liberal democracy. It provided the resources for the 'we' as well the basis for its critique.

It helps to see the I/we distinction as a reflection of the more basic distinction between belonging and autonomy. We need both to belong and to be autonomous. What is the value of belonging without autonomy? Or autonomy without belonging?

### Criticism

The 1960s saw increasing criticism of the conditions of belonging by an increasingly autonomous citizenry scandalised by the treatment of African Americans, the oppression of women, and futile slaughter of an unjust war in Vietnam.

In the process the 'belonging' was undermined, and the value of autonomy amplified. Today we approach a culture that satisfies neither our need for belonging or autonomy. The problem can be traced to the liberal order that presents the balance between autonomy and belonging as a trade-off: belonging is the price individuals must pay to enjoy autonomy.

We need to recover an understanding that allows us to see both belonging and autonomy as mutually-enhancing.

## Looking Eastward Francis and 'the Land'

Peter Costello

Pope Francis has returned safe and sound, despite the fears of many, from his historic four day trip to Iraq. His visit seems to have deeply affected many both in the country itself and in the wider world. The damage done in the decades since the original American interventions is still very real. But the troubled life of the country can be traced back much further certainly to the Mandates after the Great War (1914-1918) that led to the establishment of the Hashemite Kingdom, on the ruins of the ancient Ottoman Empire.

But this is modern history. The importance of Mesopotamia - the lands around and between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates - goes back in history and cultural legend thousands of years.

**“For Eastern Christians the focus of faith was in Jerusalem to the west”**

Here, in the basin of the two rivers was where it was said that the Garden of Eden had been, and here Noah and Noah's family had survived what people believed to have been a universal flood. From here Abraham was believed to have departed from Ur of the Chaldees for Canaan; and from here too the Three Wise Men made their prophetic journey to the same land in the belief that a world-changing personality was to be born there.

### Familiar

These things are familiar to many. But it is less clear to 'the peoples of the Book' that it was here that the traditions, religious rituals, theological ideas and social rules of many nations had



Framed by the ruins of the past, the Pope speaks of the future

their origins. 'The Code of Hammurabi' - as I so well remember being told by a Jesuit teacher at the age of eleven - was the basis of the Ten Commandments.

Here in exile, about 539BC, Jewish scholars brought together and edited various traditional documents, histories, and literary texts (such as the fable of Job) from several cultures of the region to form the basic text of what we think of today as the Old Testament. This was the key formative event in the development of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and it took place in 'the land of the two rivers'.

So the region the Pope has just visited has in history

played a vital role east of the Jordan. But more than that, it played an important part in the emergence of Christianity.

\*\*\*

The Christian communities the Pope visited were by no means all Catholic. Others belong to early Christian communities that came into being in the debates and conflicts which gave rise to Christianity, communities that preserved the earliest formulations of the new faith, in creeds later altered or abandoned by the Western Church.

### West

Here in the West we see history very much from a Roman viewpoint, with

**“The region the Pope has just visited has in history played a vital role east of the Jordan”**



Robert D. Putnam

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.

# from Rome: Pope of the Two Rivers'



Jerusalem as the focus of faith in the East, with nothing beyond.

**“From several cultures of the region to form the basic text of what we think of today as the Old Testament”**

But for Eastern Christians the focus of faith was in Jerusalem to the west, focused on Jesus they did not see as far as Rome. From the early communities in the land of the two rivers preachers took the news of a new faith into the Middle East, to India, to Central Asia and even further into Mongolia, Tibet and China. These people, the Nestorians and others, the first to utter the name of Jesus in the heart of Asia we hear little about here in Europe.

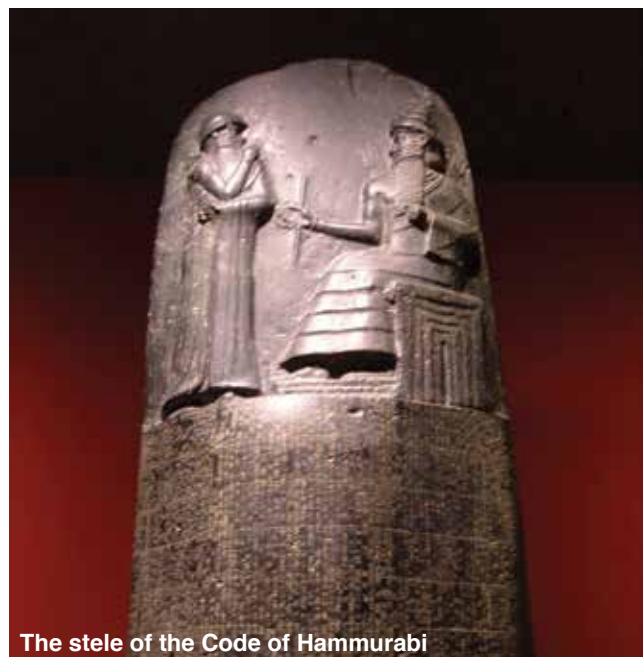
## Light

But we need to remind ourselves, in the light of

the Pope's perilous journey, that Christianity is not a European faith, is not a 'white man's' religion. The influence not just of some of the earliest civilisations in the world, the earliest cultures in Mesopotamia, of Judea, Egypt, North Africa, Ethiopia, Persia, Malabar and China remind us all that the new Christian faith was

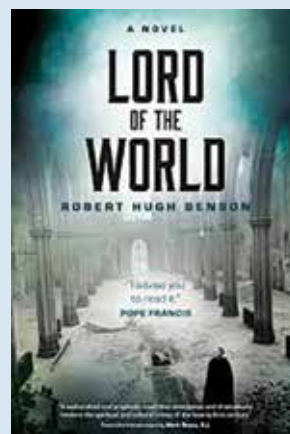
formed in those very early centuries by people with brown, black and yellow complexions - a multitude of cultures who even now 'keep the faith'.

Rather than being an aspect of the Christian past, these communities might well be, if things improve, as the Pope hopes they do, the components of the future.



The stele of the Code of Hammurabi

## Robert Hugh Benson: convert, priest and novelist



**Lord of the World, a novel**  
by Robert Hugh Benson  
(Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, \$15.95/£10.99)

**J. Anthony Gaughan**

In January 2015 during an in-flight interview from Manila to Rome, Pope Francis referred to the 'ideological colonisation' of international family-planning agencies and national governments that impose population control as a condition of development aid.

The reporter asked what he meant by the term. He referred then to *Lord of the World* and suggested that they read it.

Robert Hugh Benson, who came of a socially-prominent and highly-literate family, was the son of an Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, and one of the most notable converts to the English Catholic Church in the decade before the Great War. A prolific writer, he was then a widely-read, even 'popular' novelist. Now he is hardly read at all: the shelves of his books in the Central Catholic Library in Dublin have been rarely borrowed since the 1970s. But there has recently been a revival of interest in the man and his writings, with several editions of this book alone in print.

## Important

This is now seen as one of the most interesting and important of his novels. First published in 1907 and re-issued in 2016, Mr Hugh Benson imagines the world many years after his own time as crafted by the unstoppable progress of science and technology.

He sets his novel in the year 2000. It was remarkable in its prescience. It describes a European Union at war with an Eastern Empire, weapons of mass destruction, mutual annihilation pacts between empires and euthanasia centres to put an end to any discomfort or sufferings. It was the first of a number of dystopian nov-

els of the twentieth century which described a frightening future world, notably some by his contemporary H. G. Wells, and later Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *1984* (1949).

The two main characters in Mr Benson's novel are Julian Felsenburgh and Fr Percy Franklin. The former is a mysterious megalomaniac with a skill to mesmerise people with his oratory. Eventually he becomes president of Western Europe and is universally feted for successfully concluding a peace agreement with the Empire of the East. He ushers in a new order. Known as humanitarianism, it is a new religion without God.

## Order

Everyone is required by law to adhere to the order without any deviation. The Catholic Church and its members are quickly seen to be a threat to this uniformity. Catholics are hunted down and when they profess to believe in God they are summarily executed. Mr Felsenburgh and his cohorts complete the extermination of Catholicism by wiping out Vatican City and with it Rome, as well as Nazareth and much of the Holy Land.

Fr Franklin is introduced as a priest ministering at Westminster Cathedral in London. He is also engaged in providing reports to the Vatican on the state of the Church in England. He records the transformation of society under the new order, the creeping control

by the state of every aspect of human activity and the disaffection of many priests - some of whom became the ceremonial organisers of the mass demonstrations of the new order.

Eventually Fr Franklin is summoned to Rome, where he is elected to the college of cardinals. He becomes an adviser to the Pope, whom he later succeeds. As Pope he relocates to Nazareth, where he is annihilated with the remnants of his Church.

There is a subplot. Initially the prime minister of England and his wife are devotees of the new order. However, its denouement leaves them both totally disillusioned. With the prime minister voicing his regrets and struggling with his conscience, his wife checks in to one of the 'euthanasia hospitals' which had been established in the brave new world created by Mr Felsenburgh and kills herself.

## Speculate

It is interesting to speculate what Pope Francis considered journalists could learn by reading Mr Hugh Benson's apocalyptic novel.

Perhaps it was that the ideological ordering of society desired by many 'progressives' could lead to a secular state with little room for 'pluralism' and the suppressions of an individual's basic freedoms such as freedom of conscience, freedom of speech and freedom of religion.



Robert Hugh Benson at work



## The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Clare Martin at  
clare.martin@hospicefoundation.ie  
or call 01 679 3188



Irish  
Hospice  
Foundation

[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

**MQI**

Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services

## Your heart for the homeless

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering

Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email [emma.murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:emma.murphy@mqi.ie)

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

## Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.  
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: [info@mscmisions.ie](mailto:info@mscmisions.ie)

[www.mscmissions.ie](http://www.mscmissions.ie)

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

**trócaire**

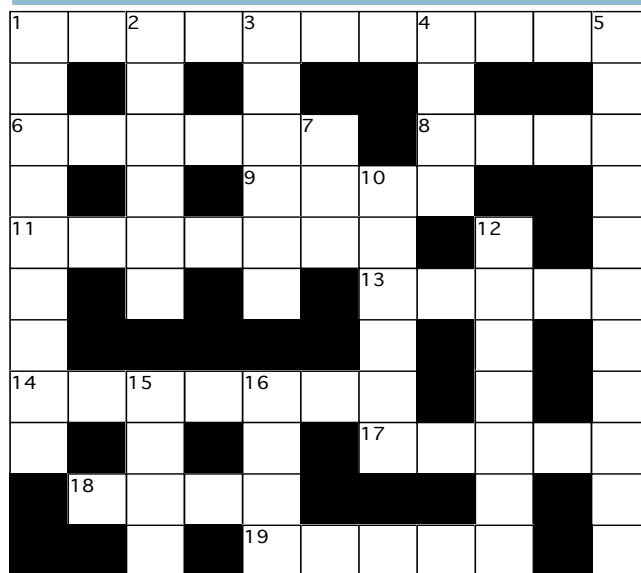
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

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.

# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 374



### Across

- 1 This brave person puts out blazes (11)  
6 Country to the North of the USA (6)  
8 Tidy (4)  
9 Pull along the ground (4)  
11 Sneaked around, looking for prey (7)  
13 Control a car (5)  
14 We notice this in the night sky at one time of the month (3,4)  
17 An \_\_\_\_\_ Síochána (5)  
18 Lose your footing (4)  
19 Say this when you apologise (5)

### Down

- 2 Kidnappers want it to be paid (6)  
3 Violin (6)  
4 You \_\_\_\_\_ a painting on the wall (4)  
5 Noisy, highly-dangerous reptile (11)  
7 I am; you \_\_\_\_\_ (3)  
10 Finding the total (6)  
12 You can see the Statue of \_\_\_\_\_ in New York (7)  
15 Travel on foot (4)  
16 You might say this if you make a small mistake (4)

## SOLUTIONS, MARCH 11

GORDIUS NO. 498

**Across** — 1 Bombay Duck 6 View 10 Canal 11 Overdrawn 12. High tea 13. Olive 17 Beau 18 Erno Rubik 21 Villain 23 Serve 24 Wean 25 Rips 26 Rearm 28 Heathen 33 Serengeti 34 Teepee 36 Tantum Ergo

**Down** — 1 Buck 2 Monsignor 3 Allah 4 Drone 5 Chew 7 Iraqi 8 Wunderkind 9 Adjourn 13 Taxi 14 Abolish 16 Measures up 20 Beekeeper 21 Vermont 22 Idea 27 April 29 Exist 30 Totem pole 31 Leda 32 Zero

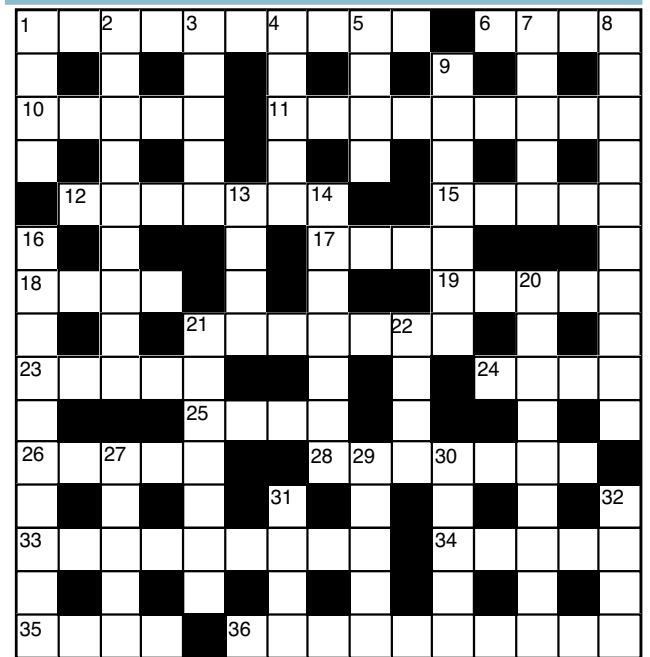
CHILDREN'S No. 373

**Across** — 1 Leprechaun 7 Plane 8 Shannon 10 Foot 12 Flew 13 Oak tree 15 March 16 Ozone 18 Sliotar 19 Relit

**Down** — 1 Lap of honour 2 Peacock 3 Eyes 4 Hogan 5 Upon 6 Bin 9 Overcoat 11 Priest 14 E-mail 17 Owl

## Crossword

Gordius 499



### Across

- 1 A grouping of states which trained foe differently (10)  
6 Society, or a card from a black suit (4)  
10 & 17a Cornwall town that is vainest in form (5,4)  
11 Will a parish priest get to finish the Era of the Hanger-On (9)  
12 Not straight; dishonest (7)  
15 Taste or smell, for example (5)  
17 See 10 across  
18 Major military alliance in this part of the world (1,1,1,1)  
19 The GI is confused by this number (5)  
21 Pharmacist (7)  
23 Moorland (5)  
24 Frost is involved in a macho argument (4)  
25 Presently, soon (4)  
26 Closer to condition for picking (5)  
28 Hauled along the ground (7)  
33 Ruins veal? Strangely, it's like that all over the place (9)  
34 Mediterranean island, popular with holidaymakers (5)  
35 Retained, grasped (4)  
36 One whose advice is based on the stars (10)

### Down

- 1 Circuit-breaking device (4)  
2 By the grace of God, aid triage by arrangement! (3,6)  
3 Proportion (5)  
4 Make fun of (5)  
5 Nothing works? Oh, sorry! (4)  
7 Acquire knowledge or skills (5)  
8 In the Tower of London, these soldiers are not vegetarians, by the look of it (10)  
9 The Israeli parliament (7)  
13 Potassium is hot in this Dublin lighthouse! (4)  
14 & 16 A red card off the fairway shows quality, but no refinement (7,2,3,5)  
20 Looking angrily at a somewhat longer wig (9)  
21 A formal bill of rights (7)  
22 Couch (4)  
27 Medicine bottle (5)  
29 Monarch (5)  
30 Part of a cooker (5)  
31 Enquires (4)  
32 Market (4)

## Sudoku Corner

374

### Easy

5		6	8			2		9
		1						5
7			5		1		4	
4	7	2		8				6
6								4
9				4		7	8	3
	8		1		4			7
2						4		
1		4			3	8		2

### Hard

7					2	4		9
		2		4				
4			9				1	
6				1		2		
	7		6		3		4	
		1		8				6
	3				5			4
				6		5		
1		9	8					7

### Last week's Easy 373

9	7	3	6	4	5	1	8	2
2	4	5	3	8	1	6	9	7
6	8	1	7	9	2	3	5	4
7	5	2	8	6	3	4	1	9
3	6	4	5	1	9	2	7	8
1	9	8	4	2	7	5	3	6
8	2	7	1	3	4	9	6	5
4	3	6	9	5	8	7	2	1
5	1	9	2	7	6	8	4	3

### Last week's Hard 373

5	8	3	9	1	4	2	7	6
7	6	1	2	5	3	8	9	4
2	9	4	7	8	6	1	3	5
9	3	6	5	7	8	4	2	1
1	7	5	4	3	2	6	8	9
4	2	8	1	6	9	3	5	7
6	1	9	3	2	5	7	4	8
3	4	7	8	9	1	5	6	2
8	5	2	6	4	7	9	1	3

## Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough



# We shouldn't be surprised that the Lord continues to raise up saints

**WHAT HOPE IS THERE** for the young people of Ireland? Just over 40 years ago, when Pope St John Paul II addressed young Irish people in Galway, he was speaking to people supported and nourished by a Catholic culture: "You come from Catholic families; you go regularly and meet Christ in Holy Communion on Sundays or even during the week. Many of you pray with your families every day". But even then he recognised the many pressures on these young people, leading them away from the "demanding call" of Christ.

Today, young people growing up in Ireland experience almost no ambient encouragement to follow Christ. Many Catholic families are non-practising, many Catholic schools do little to promote a living faith, and parishes rarely have any specific outreach to young people. In any case, the values of young people are largely being shaped, not by the adults who surround them, but in the online world, where religious faith is routinely ridiculed.

## Demanding

What hope could there be that any young Irish people might swim against this overwhelming current and respond to Christ's demanding call today?



It's certainly true that the vast majority of young people have little real relationship with Christ and his Church, but my four years of priestly ministry here have put me in touch repeatedly with deeply faithful young people, each one a walking miracle. They are often the only believers in their friendship groups and unsupported by family. They have typically had mediocre formation in school and parish. In spite of all this, they have each come to hear

the voice of the risen Christ, and come to know that he is the one to follow, against all currents, come what may.

These young people are living at the heart of mainstream Ireland, but they reach out to fellow believers to form tight-knit communities of prayer and encouragement: Youth 2000, Ignite Ireland, Jesus Youth, and so on.

## Desire

They have a desire for authenticity, for a deep prayer life, for perseverance in good, for freedom from enslaving addictions, and they know all this requires radical renunciation. Many volunteer for programmes like Exodus 90, involving group commitment to ascetical practices and substantial times of silent prayer. To make up for what was lacking in their own formation, they seek out nourishment in online Bible studies and podcasts.

These young people are missionary too: they give up their time to work with NET Ministries, or Holy Family Mission, or FOCUS, and they bravely propose the Gospel on the streets of our city during Nightfever events.

Their purity of intention is quite astonishing, above all because it is

● I was reminded of Patrick again this week when I saw the extraordinary images from Myanmar of a Catholic nun, Sr Ann Rose Nu Tawng, facing up to armed police preparing to open fire on children who had taken refuge in her clinic. "If you need to kill, kill me instead", she told the police, and at that point they left. She has continued since then to care for the victims of violence, and to speak up for peace. St Patrick, in his time, spoke up too against men of violence.

Apart from his *Confession*, a letter he wrote survives, written to the soldiers of a British leader, Coroticus, excoriating them for their violence against a number of his new converts. Like Sr Ann Rose, Patrick cries out in grief and righteous anger, demanding justice for the murdered and enslaved. The soldiers are "dripping in blood", and "rebels against Christ", but he hopes still that these violent men might repent and choose life, "now and in eternity".

in no way the fruit of a surrounding culture. These pure hearts are born and reared in adversity.

We shouldn't be surprised, of course, that the Lord continues to raise up saints, even when the surrounding culture undermines holiness.

Our own national patron, St Patrick was once, after all, an unenthusiastic young Christian, lost in an unchristian culture. "I did not know the true God", he frankly admits in his *Confession*. But there, in the heart of pagan Ireland, the Holy Spirit was transforming this young man's heart. In his solitary prayer, with no teachers, and no Christian community, the Spirit burned within him: "More and more my love of

God and reverence for him began to increase, and my faith grew stronger".

This is the gift God gave Patrick in the land of his captivity. The living God is giving this same gift to young Irish people today, leading them out of slavery and into freedom, making them a light for the nations, a light for post-Christian Ireland.



## PLEASE GIVE LENTEN ALMS FOR THE WORLD'S POOR

Your gift can make a life-and-death difference for desperately poor families and for sick and needy people living on their own 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.

They tell us of how already-struggling families and communities are experiencing real additional hardships. It is hard to see how the world can easily return to normal, let alone how the homeless, sick and deprived can build a new life. The Little Way Association tries to respond favourably to all the many requests that we receive for the poor and needy but, without our supporters' generosity we would be powerless. This Lent, please can you spare a donation, large or small, for the suffering people in mission lands in desperate need of help.

**Every euro that you donate goes intact to provide basic sustenance, water, medicine and housing for the children, families and individuals who need them.**

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

**THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION**  
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR  
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND NEEDY**

€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**

€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**  
(Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**



**Your Lenten gift will be gratefully received and sent WITHOUT DEDUCTION to the missions, to enable a missionary priest or sister to carry the love, care and compassion of Christ to a needy person.**

All our donors are remembered at Masses offered for their intentions and the missionaries always promise prayers for their benefactors.



In 1893, St Therese of Lisieux wrote to her sister Celine:

**"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself, as it were, at our mercy. He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart. The very least trifle is precious in His sight."**

## MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

**We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass.**

**In Lent, we can serve Christ and help the destitute with our almsgiving.**