

The Irish Catholic

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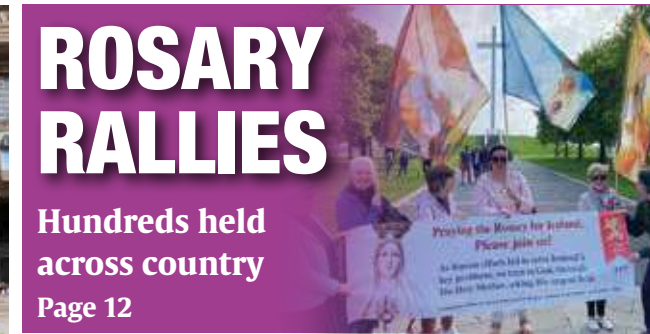
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'We've been treated like monsters'

Sisters of Charity in fear of media and bewildered by negative coverage

Michael Kelly

The Religious Sisters of Charity, who agreed to hand over their hospital and the site of the new national maternity hospital, are fearful of the media and feel bewildered that they have been so badly portrayed in the public eye since deciding to transfer ownership of St Vincent's Hospital in Dublin. The Government this week signed off on the deal.

"You would think we were evil," a source close to the sisters told *The Irish Catholic* this week on condition of anonymity. "We've been treated like monsters. In no way do they want the Church involved in any way [in the running of healthcare]."

"Yet many, many people experienced the care and the work the sisters had done - many in the Irish population experienced care and concern and compassion. Yes, there were some exceptions but for the most part the good that was done was amazing," the source said.

The Religious Sisters of Charity began caring for cholera victims in Ireland in 1832 and in 1834 set up St Vincent's Hospital and since then have been "dedicated to providing the best possible healthcare in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes and in the homes of the sick."

"The nuns are also known for their work among prisoners and the homeless as well as in education, counselling and immigrants."

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'Bring Flowers of the Rarest...'



Niall from St John's Parish on the Falls road in Belfast is pictured with his beautiful sacred space that he set up in his home, May 10.

DAVID QUINN

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response to Cardinal
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MARY KENNY

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NOEL KEATING

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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, Sandyford,

Dublin 18, D18 K277.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

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Sisters of Charity in fear of media and bewildered by negative coverage

» Continued from Page 1

"It is distressing that people would think so badly of us. I'm more concerned for the people who are saying these things than for us," continued the source.

"The sisters are absolutely terrified of the media and the way they have been portrayed. The notion that a young person listening to this, what idea of Christianity do they go away with?" she said.

Despite exiting health-care and handing over the

site, the sisters have been the subject of near constant criticism by some opposition politicians and media commentators. It is claimed by some that the sisters are involved in some sort of sinister deal to assert Vatican control over the site, despite Rome giving approval for the handover – even though the new hospital will provide abortion and other procedures incompatible with Catholic teaching.

Sisters deserve gratitude, not the constant ridicule

At lunchtime on Tuesday a lengthy 1,019-word statement from the Department for Health landed in my email inbox. It hailed May 17 as a "significant day for women's health" in Ireland and announced that the Government that morning approved "the legal framework that will underpin the ownership and governance arrangements for the new National Maternity Hospital (NMH) at the St Vincent's University Hospital campus at Elm Park".

As I looked through the statement I was sure I would come across a simple acknowledgement of the heroic and trojan work that the Religious Sisters of Charity carried out ever since Mother Mary Aikenhead founded the hospital in 1834.

I was wrong.

The only reference in the statement to the nuns was this: "the Religious Sisters of Charity will not play any role in the governance or operation of the new NMH. The sisters have completed the transfer of their shares in SVHG to the charitable entity, St Vincent's Holdings CLG and no longer have any involvement in SVHG".

Acknowledgement

No, 'thank you', 'good luck' or a simple acknowledgement. Eaten bread, it seems, is indeed soon forgotten.

Generations of sisters served the poor and the needy in Ireland long before either the British authorities or the nascent Free State government had the interest, experience or – at times – resources.

Not that the sisters had much by way of resources, they did not and made tremendous sacrifices to ensure that those in need could be looked after in some level of comfort that befitted their dignity.

They have left a legacy to be proud of which is conveniently being air-brushed out of Irish history to suit a dominant narrative that seeks to



Editor's Comment

Michael Kelly



A 2018 protest about the maternity hospital on Dublin's O'Connell Street.

see the influence of Catholicism as largely negative. Dr Peter Boylan, a former master of the national maternity hospital and vocal supporter of abortion legislation, took to social media to express his horror that at St Vincent's Hospital a sign is displayed outlining the values of the Religious Sisters of Charity. Among the values articulated are compassion and dignity – hardly something one could find objectionable.

“No, ‘thank you’, ‘good luck’ or a simple acknowledgement. Eaten bread, it seems, is indeed soon forgotten”

Dr Boylan further expressed surprise that Mass is broadcast every Sunday on one of the many channels on the hospital's internal television service. Does he think that the spiritual needs of patients who are Catholic ought not be provided for by the chaplaincy service?

The Religious Sisters of Charity may have exited the stage when it comes to the management of frontline healthcare, but like many other religious congregations and orders, they remain in the frontline of reaching out to those in need.

Counselling

Today the sisters continue to be involved in offering counselling and therapy to those who need it; working to combat human trafficking; education; tackling homelessness; immigrant support including for those fleeing Ukraine; pastoral and social work; prison visitation; social innovation and spirituality.

Many of the sisters feel that they have been demonised or, as our front page story shows this week, treated like monsters.

There is an almost tragic lack of gratitude for the work of the sisters and other religious – not that anyone ever joined a religious congregation to win the applause of the world. The work is often unseen and done discreetly and

without fanfare. Often only the people who have been helped will know the silent sacrifices of many religious that made a difference at a time in their life when it was needed.

“Today the sisters continue to be involved in offering counselling and therapy to those who need it”

No-one denies the reality that some religious betrayed their calling and treated people appallingly – this remains a stain and is a pain that the victims will carry forever, it has also caused pain to the countless members of religious congregations who showed the people in their care nothing but compassion and mercy.

'Thank you, sisters' doesn't seem like a hard phrase to say – but it says so much about our society that no senior politician would dare to defy the mob and utter these words.

“Many of the sisters feel that they have been demonised or, as our front page story shows this week, treated like monsters”

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Ireland can't be silent on Cardinal Zen's arrest, says senator



Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun, retired bishop of Hong Kong, pictured in 2020. Photo: CNS

Ruadhán Jones

Ireland cannot be silent on the "contempt" shown by Chinese authorities following the arrest of Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun for his support of democracy in Hong Kong, said Senator Gerard Craughwell.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, the independent senator asked "how many tonnes of beef is the human rights abuse in Hong Kong worth to keep us silent".

The 90-year-old Cardinal Zen was detained by national security police Wednesday May 11, charged with colluding with foreign powers, before being released on bail. The charges relate to the work of the 612 Humanitarian Relief

Fund, a charity that helps political arrestees in Hong Kong defray their legal expenses.

Senator Craughwell said his arrest speaks volumes about the "Chinese Junta", that they "have the neck to go that far up the community food chain to arrest a senior member of the Catholic Church."

"It must be an extremely difficult country to live in for people who are in the minority, which people of the Catholic faith are, and for people who wish to express the alternative view," he continued.

"For me the arrest of a senior Catholic cleric showed a level of contempt for the world, which is hard to fathom."

Senator Craughwell added that Ireland "should be making the strongest statements

as publicly as possible at the UN security council.

"In every statement they make, they should address the human rights issues in China, first the Uighur community and now what's going on in Hong Kong."

Attempts to raise issues relating to China's actions in Hong Kong in the Seanad "are closed down as much as possible", Senator Craughwell said.

"We daren't say a word that might lead to a reduction in the amount of beef we export," he continued.

"I said this when Richard O'Halloran was being interned in China and I say this again about Hong Kong - how many tonnes of beef is the human rights abuse in Hong Kong worth to keep us silent?"

Holy Land visits made easier as more restrictions lifted

Chai Brady

The Israeli government has announced people travelling to the Holy Land will no longer have to take a PCR test on arrival from Saturday, May 21.

It will also no longer be required to present a negative Covid test result before boarding a flight to Israel and the requirement to isolate for 24 hours after entering the country will be lifted.

In addition, from Tuesday face masks will no longer be required on international flights, as the government moves to end Israel's few remaining coronavirus restrictions.

The decision was taken by the country's health ministry due to declining virus cases. Travellers will still be required to fill out a health declaration form within 48 hours of flying. The Irish Catholic will be bringing new pilgrimages to the Holy Land this autumn. The pilgrimage involves visiting the holy places associated with the life of Christ.

The first group will be accompanied by Fr Eamonn Conway, leaving Dublin on October 1. The second group, led by Fr Emlyn McGinn, will depart Dublin on October 6. For more information about The Irish Catholic pilgrimages, email Marian Pilgrimages on info@marian.ie or telephone (Dublin) 01 8788159 or (Belfast) 02895680005.

Galway bookshop strikes gold with prayer book

Jason Osborne

A pair of solid, gold coins worth around €5,000 have been found in the spine of a prayer book in a bookshop in Galway.

Kennys Bookshop in Galway unearthed treasure when archivist Sarah Gallagher found two gold coins hidden down the side of a prayer book as she catalogued a newly-

purchased diocesan library.

The coins come from Mexico and are dated 1821-1947.

The book in which they were found was just one of 25,000 in the recently-acquired library, and is of little monetary value itself.

Kennys Bookshop took to Twitter to proclaim: "AMAZING discovery here at Kennys. We sometimes uncover gems, but today we found actual treasure ...solid gold coins,

hidden in the spine of an old prayerbook!"

Speaking to RTÉ, Tomas Kenny said they're trying to figure out the coins' story.

"It's hard to know what the reason for hiding them there was but Mexico was a very difficult place to be a Catholic priest in the early to mid-twentieth century and it's entirely possible they were there in case a quick escape was needed," he said.

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Titus Brandsma is a saint for the fake news era, says Irish Carmelites provincial

Ruadhán Jones

Newly canonised St Titus Brandsma “stood up for the truth” and can be a saint to combat the era of fake news, said the provincial of the Carmelites in Ireland.

St Brandsma was a Dutch Carmelite priest, professor and journalist who opposed Nazi propaganda in Catholic newspapers.

He was arrested for distributing letters forbidding Catholic papers from taking advertising

from the Nazis, and was killed by lethal injection in Dachau, 1942.

He was canonised by Pope Francis, Sunday May 15, along with nine other new saints.

Speaking from Rome following the ceremony, the Irish provincial Fr Michael Troy O.Carm called St Brandsma a “courageous man” who took a “stand for the truth and not to be browbeaten into submission to Nazi ideology”.

Fr Troy said the Dutch saint’s example is particularly relevant to the modern age.

“I think anybody who stands up and who

has a very clear message on the truth and the search for truth speaks loud whatever era they appear, but particularly where we’re bombarded with media and fake news”, his example is very important, Fr Troy told *The Irish Catholic*.

“I think the whole idea of truth in journalist and the journalist’s desire to present the truth – I think these are very important,” he added.

The occasion of St Brandsma’s canonisation was a very joyful one, Fr Troy continued, particularly for Holland, Europe and Ireland.

“The fact that he spent time in Ireland back in

1935, it means there’s an interest, a closeness,” the Irish provincial said.

He is hopeful that St Brandsma’s witness can spark renewed interest in the Carmelite order in Ireland and globally.

“All of these inspirational figures, who emerge in the course of our long history, do tend to engender a revitalisation of life, an interest in the person, his message, his writings and teachings – we would be very hopeful,” Fr Troy said.

See pages 15 - 18.

Parish mourns as Our Lady statue shattered

Jason Osborne

The community of St Mark’s Church in Tallaght, Dublin, received unwelcome news Sunday morning when it was revealed that their statue of Our Lady was shattered in a “mindless act of vandalism”.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, moderator of the parish Fr Pat McKinley said the statue had been a “great source of comfort”, particularly during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

“We put the statue out there at the very beginning of Covid,

the first lockdown....it was just a thought; people couldn’t get into the churches, so we thought we’d put the statue out as just a way of saying to people, ‘We’re still around, we’re still available,’” he told this paper.

“People prayed there, people were delighted to have her there. People would come and leave flowers – there’s never been a time where there hasn’t been fresh flowers at it, and I’m not doing it....it was a great source of comfort for people.”

Receiving a call at 7:30am on Sunday morning, Fr McKin-

ley said he was “very upset” and “annoyed”.

“We’ve no clue who did it... What I just asked people to do, a mindless act of vandalism like this, people who do that need prayer, so I’ve just asked people to pray for them,” he said.

Fr McKinley said that the statue bore apostolic fruit, with a young couple donating €80 to replace the statue, while sharing that the statue had helped the young woman “renew her faith”.

Fr McKinley says that the statue will be repaired by a parishioner, or replaced if it can’t be.

NI exclusion zone bill to be challenged in judicial review

Staff reporter

The Attorney General of Northern Ireland has been granted permission to challenge the abortion exclusion zone bill through a judicial review.

The bill seeks to make pro-life protest outside abortion providers illegal, but has been delayed from

becoming law while a date for a hearing of the judicial review at the UK’s Supreme Court is awaited.

Attorney General of Northern Ireland Dame Brenda King has asked the High Court to determine whether the bill is in the “legislative competence” of the Stormont Assembly.

The Attorney General

raised concerns about the omission of the “reasonable excuse” defence from the legislation and has asked the supreme court to decide whether this part of the legislation is “a proportionate interference with the rights of those who wish to express opposition to abortion services in Northern Ireland”.

A blessed bike ride



Bro. Kevin Crowley of the Capuchin Day Centre is pictured with Sheryl O'Dwyer from Baile Ghib, Co. Meath, before the Cycle for Bro. Kevin 2022, which raises funds for the centre, left Dublin to arrive in Clonakilty, West Cork on Saturday May 14. Photo: Damien Eagers.

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I'm with Bertie Ahern on finding a solution to the northern Protocol

Hopefully, all parties involved will do their best, and in good faith, to fix the Northern Ireland Protocol problem, and the vexatious bureaucracy involved in transporting a Marks & Spencer comestible from Cheshire to Belfast. Bertie Ahern – who brought so much to the peace process – says that with enough patient negotiation, it can be done. Julian Smith, previous Westminster Secretary of State in Belfast, says that we all need a good 'fudge'. (Formally known as 'constructive ambiguity'.)

And yet, at a deeper, historical level, it isn't really surprising that the North, at least in the unionist part of its identity, and the Republic, should have this difference over being part of the European Union or part of the United Kingdom.

Connections

Catholic Ireland has had deep connections with Continental Europe for centuries: the links go back to the early Christian era, when the Irish monks were, effectively, missionaries in Continental



Mary Kenny

Europe. When St Bernard of Clairvaux embraced, as a brother and a friend, St Malachy O'More in the 1100s, that was a symbolic image of Christian Ireland's alignment with Europe.

All through the following centuries, Catholic Ireland looked to France, Spain, Portugal, Rome, Austria, Belgium.

“Catholic Ireland has had deep connections with Continental Europe for centuries: the links go back to the early Christian era”

For Ulster unionists, although they had a shared early Christian heritage, that European connection was never really established. The affective association was always with Britain.

We know circumstances change – and the North's demographic balance is

altering – but the roots in any culture remain tenacious, and are still present in the collective sub-conscious. The fault-line across the Border contains these deep differences in attitudes to Europe – and to Britain.

Younger generation

Regrettably, a younger generation in the Republic aren't always aware of this hinterland of Ireland's faith-based associations with Continental Europe and how meaningful it was. The smart folk like to think that the Irish Republic is pro-European because it is so 'modern': whereas, actually, it's so European because the tradition is so ancient. The monks who left their legacies in Bobbio and Luxeuil and Regensburg laid the foundation.

I'm with Bertie Ahern in hoping that a working compromise can be found for the pesky Protocol. But the big picture is embedded in a longer historical narrative, and in any future 'shared island' we should be aware of this story.



Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern.



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Too much kowtowing

The cafeteria was quite full, so I approached a table with an empty chair and asked the middle-aged Chinese man already seated if I might share his space. "Of course," he replied courteously. Soon we fell into conversation about the charms of the Maytime weather.

Then he volunteered the information that he was from Hong Kong, and he was enormously distressed by events there. "It has become a terrible place. There is no freedom, no human rights. Beijing is determined to clamp down on all democratic

institutions. People live in fear." His elderly parents were still in the region, formerly a British territory (until 1997), and he was very worried about them. "Beijing will not stop until it is in total control of everything in Hong Kong. Everything will get worse – you will see."

But, I asked, since Hong Kong was economically successful, wasn't it in China's interest to keep the goose that lays the golden eggs as it is? "Xi Jinping and his supporters don't care. Only power and control matter: they are cruel despots."

The arrest of Cardinal Joseph Zen a few days later will have been no surprise to this worried exile. The last Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, himself a Catholic, described the 90-year-old Cardinal as the most important figure in the Catholic Church in Asia and a major advocate for humanitarian causes.

The response of Pope Francis seems to have been, at best, extremely cautious: for the Pope's critics, Vatican policy has involved too much kowtowing – an ancient Chinese description of submission – to Beijing.

● I haven't yet seen the TV adaptation of Sally Rooney's *Conversations with Friends*. There's no hurry and I am not the "target market", anyway – it's aimed at younger audiences. But what interests me about Ms Rooney's writing is that it portrays an Irish, and a Dublin, bourgeois-bohemian class – and class differences. I had many conversations – no wordplay intended – with my late friend, the novelist Clare Boylan about the way Irish people were portrayed in fiction, and drama, when we were growing up. Irish life was either seen as rural – or else it was Dublin working-class. In drama, Irish life was often portrayed as rough and violent. None of this corresponded with the world we had known of a fairly cultivated Irish middle class where violence was deplored – and a man who hit a woman was "a brute". Kate O'Brien, in earlier times, had captured an Irish bourgeoisie and now this is the Sally Rooney genre.

Pressure on those raising trans concern reaching 'crescendo', psychologist says

Jason Osborne

The pressure being applied to those who raise any concern with any aspects of the transgender movement is reaching a "crescendo" according to psychotherapist Stella O'Malley.

This comes as Ms O'Malley requests the record of the Dail corrected, as she claims she was misquoted and her attitude towards transgender people misrepresented in the

chamber by People Before Profit-Solidarity TD Mick Barry.

Mr Barry alleged Ms O'Malley to be "an extremely controversial figure among the transgender community in Ireland and internationally", and asked why she had been invited to talk to the Education and Training Board Ireland conference on managing gender issues in schools.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Ms O'Malley said that with a podcast with

over 70 hours of content, her views "are very easily accessed", and that she doesn't think it's "appropriate to medicalise children's gender identities".

"I think there are more effective and more valuable and more helpful ways to approach gender distress, and I think that is the most empathetic and compassionate approach to a child because we are well aware of the foundational principle first, do no harm," Ms O'Malley

said, continuing, "We're well aware of the efficacy of going forward with the least invasive procedure first. These are well-established approaches and that's where I lie."

"And so when I see extremists who lie and who take things out of context in a disingenuous and malicious way, when they attack me, that just gives me the information that it's necessary that I stand firm because these are bad faith people who are not trying to

find the truth and they're not trying to make the world a better place."

Ms O'Malley said that when attempts are being made to silence those who voice concerns about aspects of the transgender movement, "it's very important to figure out that being silenced immediately raises red flags and so that's why it's important to keep talking."

"I also think that talking is the only way forward when people

disagree. I think that silencing people – when I first came into this – the hashtag that was used by the very same trans activists who are telling lies now, the hashtag they always used was #nodebate.

"That immediately made me think, 'Why would you not want to debate something?' Because when you can't debate it, it suggests that you're on false ground, and it turns out they are on false ground," she said.

Lay ministry crucial for future, prelate says before collection

Chai Brady

There is an "urgent need to find new ways for priests and people to work together" the archbishop of Dublin said during the archdiocese's 'Lay Ministry Collection'.

Taking place from May

14-15, the collection supports lay people develop their talents and skills to be used in the faith community.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell said the collection will "therefore support the development of a variety of lay ministries, providing for more women and men to

work alongside the priests and deacons."

He said it would include working in parishes as part of a parish team, building teams to accompany people during sacramental preparation, for Baptism, Communion and Confirmation, as well as supporting families at funeral time, and supporting and resourcing faith development.

Archbishop Farrell added: "These lay ministry roles are crucial for the road ahead. There is no other way. Indeed,

there is more: our faith tells us that this is the way God is calling the Church to follow Christ today.

"Among the many dimensions of the way the Church is being transformed are not only the change in Western society and culture but also in the attention being paid to where God is leading people of faith. The Spirit of God is always at work among us: just as the Spirit was present in Jesus on the Cross, so the Spirit is among the People of God in these difficult times."

TD hits back at 'fanatical' Church-bashing over NMH

Ruadhán Jones

TD Michael Collins hit back at critics with "fanatical agendas" for "bashing" the Catholic Church over the deal for the new National Maternity Hospital.

Speaking in the Dáil, the independent TD said that "critics with fanatical agendas are claiming that a Catholic ethos" would compromise the hospital's ability to deliver its services.

"These claims are false and completely inaccurate as the new hospital will have operational and clinical independence to deliver all services that

are permitted in the State," Mr Collins said.

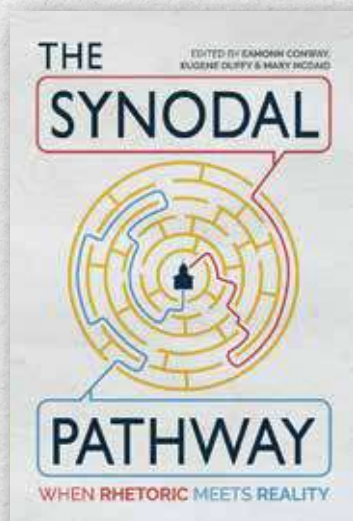
He added that members of the Dáil and "some commentators have wrongly attacked the Religious Sisters of Charity and have made all kinds of unfounded accusations against the order".

Mr Collins said that critics want to "bash the Catholic Church on this issue", describing it as "political point scoring".

On Tuesday, the cabinet signed off on the deal between the Government and St Vincent's Healthcare Group, confirming the ownership and governance arrangements for the new NMH.

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The fruits of charity



Eilis Ni Dhrisceoil and Micheal O'Laighin, pupils at Colaiste an Phiarsaigh, Glanmire, presenting €1,100, the proceeds of a cake sale and a Ukrainian colours day, to Elaine Hill, Trócaire, Cork representative. Included are teachers Deirbhile Nic Suibhne and Sinead Ni Chionaoila who assisted at the events. Principal, Micheal O'Tuama, praised all staff and pupils who gave of their time and money to help those in the poorer regions of the world, May 13. Photo: Mike English.

What's Happening in Uganda Requires your Immediate Attention.

Dear Fellow Pro-Lifer & Irish Catholic Reader,

I'm writing to you on behalf of Family & Life, one of Ireland's oldest and largest pro-life organisations.

As you may know, our St. Patrick's Fund has provided many years of essential support to the work of Irish missionaries in Thailand, Peru and the Philippines as well as aiding Catholic Friends of Human Life, in Poland, as they help re-settle Ukrainian refugees.

But now, there is tragic news about our work in the impoverished African country of Uganda, with its huge Catholic population.

Grinding poverty, women forced into prostitution to feed their children

For the past three years Family & Life's has aided a truly wonderful Christian organisation in Uganda. The organisation is "Rescuing Victims of Human Trafficking."

Ugandans are so poor that many women are forced into the sex trade to support their families. (Incredibly, the average yearly income in Uganda is less than €3,000!)

The story that shocked us - and we thought we'd heard it all!

Sarah is 32-years old and lived in an Ugandan slum with her 14-year old daughter and 8-year old son. With no other way to escape incredible poverty, Sarah joined the sex trade as a teenager. Sarah's young daughter was also facing life in the sex-trade, all brought on by poverty.

But then salvation arrived for Sarah - she was rescued by our friends at "Rescuing Victims of Human Trafficking" who saw to it that Sarah received training as a hairdresser so she could set up her own hairdressing business. Sarah was making a go of it. She was finally out of

the sex trade and best of all, Sarah's young daughter would be spared the agony of following in her mother's footsteps!

But very shortly, Sarah and her children were struck by this disaster . . .

. . . COVID hit Uganda - and it hit hard. Uganda's fragile economy was crushed. Sarah's hairdressing business was forced to close. So, to feed and house her children, she did the only thing she knew how to do: Sarah returned to living in a slum and working in the sex trade.

"Rescuing Victims of Human Trafficking" has sent us the stories of dozens of other Ugandan women, all in dire need of our prayers and immediate support. (I'll spare you the details of those stories - they are all as grim as Sarah's.).

The promise I made to help Ugandan women and children escape the sex trade

I promised a sacrificial grant of €14,500. That's a **HUGE** amount for NGOs in Uganda. In fact, please let me tell you what "Rescuing Victims of Human Trafficking" will accomplish with this €14,500 grant from our St. Patrick's Fund . . .

- This grant will help provide job training for many dozens of women who desperately want to leave the sex trade but can't because they lack job skills . . .
- It will help us reintegrate back into our programme dozens of women - **including Sarah and her family** - forced back into the sex trade because of COVID poverty. . .
- And our grant will help "Rescuing Victims of Human Trafficking" expand its five volunteer bases to parts of Uganda where sex traffickers now have free rein. These hubs are staffed by volunteers qualified to train

women in occupations that include hairdressing, dress making, book-keeping and more.

"David, I want to send a gift that really helps women like Sarah. How much will really help?"

As with all Family & Life projects, this money will be raised through sacrificial gifts in these amounts . . .

€50 €75 €100 €150 €200 €250 €500

It's a badge of honour that we raise the funds we need from readers like you who make sacrifices in one of those amounts.

Yes, we sometimes receive larger gifts of **€1,000, €1,500 and €2,500** (and if you can make a sacrifice in one of these larger amounts, I know you'll do it!). But gifts of **€50 to €100 and €250** are the amounts we will count on to help rescue Ugandan victims of human trafficking, while making sure that all our other programmes for life and family continue.

There is no time for delay - here's why . . .

The great danger is that some women may think, "What's the use of trying again? I'll never get out of this and my children will fall into it too."

That's the kind of despair that could come from delaying our help! So, will you help now, as generously as you always do?

Yours in prayer for Ugandan women like Sarah who need our help right now,


David Manly

PS It will be a very comforting feeling, won't it, to know that your gift is so quickly working to rescue women like Sarah from Uganda's sex trade! Please send a donation by cutting out the section or phone 01-8552145 or donate securely on line today at donate.familyandlife.org

Other ongoing projects of Family & Life . . .

- Family & Life helps lead the fight against late-term abortion... we visit classrooms across the county, teaching sanctity of life issues to young people... we train volunteers to become pro-life leaders... We conduct community education programmes across Ireland...help women in Ireland experiencing unplanned pregnancy.
- We aid pregnancy centres in Poland and other countries... Family & Life works in remote parts of Latin America, providing pro-life services that would otherwise be unavailable
- Plus many more pro-life programmes that help save babies lives!

CUT OUT REPLY

URGENT REPLY To aid Ugandan Women

Cut out and FREEPOST to:
David Manly, Family & Life, 25 Mountjoy Square,
Freepost, Dublin 1, Ireland

Dear David,

☐ **YES!** I will absolutely help Family & Life rescue these women in Uganda from Human trafficking.

Enclosed is my maximum gift of . . .

☐ €50 ☐ €75 ☐ €100 ☐ €150

☐ €250 ☐ €500 ☐ €750

☐ I can make an extra special sacrifice:

☐ €1,500 ☐ €2,500 ☐ €5,000

Family & Life depends on gifts in ALL amounts. So if we can count on you for some other amount, please enter it here €_____

Please make a cheque / postal order payable to **Family & Life.**

Or debit my: Debit Card/Credit Card

Card Number _____

Signature: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____

Mastercard Expiry: _____

CVC NO: _____

Date: _____ Email: _____

You can also phone our donation hotline at **01-8552145**. Or donate now Securely online at: donate.familyandlife.org.

Family & Life is a not-for-profit socio-political NGO.
www.familyandlife.org www.prolife.ie info@familyandlife.org

What our politicians have to say about the National Maternity Hospital saga



A roundup of sentiments expressed by TDs concerning the new National Maternity Hospital



"As a young woman in my 30s, I do not want the Church next or near my reproductive rights. I stood outside the gates of this House demanding that women who were going through maternity care would have their partners with them. I marched with these women, I campaigned on the repeal of the eighth amendment and I campaigned for the legislation for terminations in Ireland. It is because of the murky past and the blurred lines between State and church that I am glad the nuns are gone from our healthcare system. I am glad the Vatican has no role whatsoever in healthcare or maternity care in Ireland because religious influence in healthcare would be as inappropriate as me asking the parish priest to say something in his sermon at Mass. It is Irish law and not canon law that determines our laws and values as a nation." – **Emer Higgins TD, Dublin Mid-West, Fine Gael.**



"Despite the fact that the St Vincent's Healthcare Group has stated that there will be no religious or Vatican influence, we know well that should it be given the lease for this hospital, it will not provide full healthcare to women. We know this because out of the many hospitals on land owned by the Catholic Church throughout the world, there is not a single one that provides abortion services. The Church not only opposes the provision of abortion services, but it also opposes the provision of the likes of IVF and surrogacy services...No religious ethos must be allowed to interfere in the medical decisions made by our doctors and by women in respect of their own bodies. This country decided that those days were well over when we voted to repeal the eighth amendment in 2018." – **Thomas Pringle TD, Donegal, Independent.**



"We believe it is time to call the bluff of the owners of the site and to say that we, as a State, wish to take ownership in perpetuity of the land on which the new national maternity hospital is to be built, to put beyond doubt the future ownership and future availability right into the next century of all necessary maternity and reproductive healthcare services for women. For too long women in this country have been failed by the State and by the Church authorities, often working in tandem. We need to call them out on it now." – **Ivana Bacik TD, Dublin Bay South, Labour.**

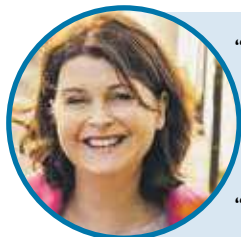
"It is also being demanded, quite rightly, that there be no religious influence in this new hospital. Ireland has a dark history when it comes to the Church and women's reproductive health. I fully understand and fully acknowledge the deep sense of mistrust of many people in Ireland on this issue. I fully agree with the demand for a fully secular hospital. The new national maternity hospital will be fully and completely secular. There will be no religious influence; there can be no religious influence." – **Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly, Wicklow, Fianna Fail**



"It is inconceivable that the Vatican would agree to any arrangement that would allow abortions or other services forbidden by Catholic doctrine to take place in a hospital owned by a Catholic successor organisation to the Religious Sisters of Charity and built on land owned by such an organisation. There is not a single hospital anywhere in the world built on Catholic-owned land that allows procedures such as elective sterilisation, IVF, genetic testing, abortion and other procedures that are specifically forbidden by universal Catholic teaching. This would compromise patient safety." – **Joan Collins TD, Dublin South Central, Independents 4 Change.**



"This State and the religious orders have a shameful track record in their treatment of women and children. It is written into our Constitution, the foundational document of the State, that a woman's place is in the home... [Enda Kenny] issued a State apology for the Church-run Magdalen laundries. No sooner had he issued this apology, than the HSE had to issue its own apology to Praveen Halappanavar, the husband of the late Savita Halappanavar, who died needlessly in my local hospital, Galway University Hospital. She died because religious ethos took primacy over that poor woman's right to life." – **Mairead Farrell, Galway West, Sinn Féin.**



"Our #NationalMaternityHospital must be free from religious ethos and be publicly owned. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past. #MakeNMHOur's" – **Retweeted by Jennifer Whitmore TD, Wicklow, Social Democrats, with the addition, "One year on and the message is the same"**



"The State should not be renting the land for our national maternity hospital from a company connected to an order of nuns and nor should that company have three directors on the board of the hospital. When the people voted for repeal, they voted to throw all of the old rubbish out of the house and into the dustbin of history. Why is the Government now trying to drag it back in?" – **Mick Barry TD, Cork North Central, Solidarity.**



"I wonder if it [concern over the potential religious legacy surrounding the NMH] has anything - anything - at all to do with around 200 years of oppression and control by the Church of our bodies, our lives and the hopes that we had held for the future for women and girls in this country after repeal was won." – **Bríd Smith TD, Dublin South Central, People Before Profit Alliance.**

Golden jubilee for Waterford parish

Ruadhán Jones

St Paul's Parish in Lisduggan, Waterford City celebrated 50 years of parish life May 7, with a Mass celebrated by bishop of Waterford and Lismore Alphonsus Cullinan.

Bright May sunshine greeted parishioners and clergy, as well as the jubilee choir – formed from the three parish choirs – who under the direction of organiser Sean Hennessy performed during the Mass.

Among the symbols presented at the

beginning of Mass were the Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage Registers, as well as a piece of Waterford Crystal in recognition of the industry and craft, around which the local community developed, and the parish mission statement.



Confirmation pupils from The Presentation Convent and St Paul's Primary School who were presented with an icon of St Paul, pictured with Bishop Cullinan.



Bishop Cullinan with St Paul's Scouts.



St Paul's Jubilee Choir.



Fr Pat Fitzgerald, PP and Sr De Lourdes.



Bishop Cullinan making a presentation to Fr Pat Fitzgerald commemorating the Jubilee Anniversary.

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THE HOLY LAND

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OCTOBER 2022**

AND

**6 – 14
OCTOBER 2022**

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Cyclists complete 310km bike ride for Bro. Kevin



Bro. Kevin Crowley of the Capuchin Day Centre with Sheryl O'Dwyer from Baile Ghib, Co. Meath pictured before the Cycle for Bro. Kevin.

Ruadhán Jones

Cyclists gathered in Dublin on Saturday, May 13, to begin their 310km cycle to West Cork to raise funds for Bro. Kevin and Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin.

Bro. Kevin Crowley met the cyclists and wished them well for the journey ahead, which they completed Sunday May 14, finishing in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, Bro. Kevin's home town.

The Capuchin Day Centre said the cycle is an important part of their efforts to combat the challenge of the rising numbers of men, women and children who come to them for dinner each day.

The event had been limited to one day during Covid, but the organisers said the 2022 event was "a special one".

Brother Kevin said the annual cycle is proof that people care about those in need and they want to help others.

"It's fantastic the number of people who are back here again. They're the same people who have been doing it for years and they seem to get a great joy out of," he told *The Irish Independent*.

Concerned

"Not alone that, they're really concerned for the homeless and the people in need. They show great generosity by giving up their time and

cycling long distances which is absolutely fabulous.

"I believe in the generosity of the people and the people are fantastic. Everything that comes in here goes directly to the homeless people.

"During the lockdown we were giving out take-away meals and people were allowed to come in and have their food in the church and it worked out very well.

"I have to say for those who used the church, they respected it with great dignity, and they always left it clean after themselves."

Donations from the public can be made online by following the instructions on cycleforbrokevin.org or capuchindaycentre.ie.



From left to right are, Ollie Brogan, Sheryl O'Dwyer, John Shine and Fran Brogan pictured before the Cycle for Bro. Kevin 2022 left Dublin to arrive in Clonakilty, West Cork on Saturday May 14.



Bro. Kevin Crowley and Fr Kevin Kieran from the Capuchin Day Centre are pictured with cyclists before the charity cycle from Dublin to Clonakilty, West Cork.



From left to right are, Neilus Healy, Bernard Lee and Nick Johnston pictured before the Cycle for Bro. Kevin 2022, which left Dublin May 13 to arrive in Clonakilty, West Cork on Saturday May 14. Photos: Damien Eagers.

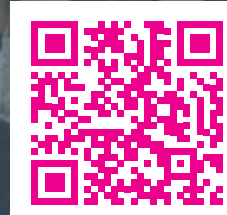


Bro. Kevin Crowley of the Capuchin Day Centre is pictured with Siobhan Donnelly (centre) from Lucan and Marie Twomey from Cork pictured before the Cycle for Bro. Kevin 2022.



**"I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MILK... MY TWO-WEEK-OLD BABY CANNOT STOP CRYING DUE TO HUNGER"
- KENGEN, SOUTH SUDAN**

SCAN TO DONATE NOW →



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Kengen, South Sudan
Photo: Plan International

A MOTHER'S LOVE CAN ONLY GO SO FAR WHEN THERE ISN'T ENOUGH TO EAT.

THE WORLD IS IN THE MIDST OF THE MOST DEVASTATING HUNGER CRISIS EVER SEEN.

CHILDREN ARE ALREADY DYING. THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.



DONATE NOW TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY FOOD TO CHILDREN IN CRISIS

☐ €50 is enough to feed 3 children for two months ☐ or my own amount of _____ €

Name:

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☐ cheque/postal order payable to Plan International Ireland **OR**

Please debit my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

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Please return to Plan International Ireland, 11 Harrington Street, Dublin 8, D08 EK7D.

DONATE TODAY - freefone 1800 829 829 or online at plan.ie/hunger



ICGH215

More than 500 public rosary rallies held across Ireland



Catholics from Dublin City and county gathered in Dublin city centre for a public rosary rally in honour of Our Lady of Fatima, May 14.



An icon of Our Lady of Fatima is processed through the streets of a town in Co. Wexford.

Ruadhán Jones

Thousands of Catholics across the island of Ireland celebrated the 105th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, with 515 public rosary rallies held May 14.

Organisers the Irish Society for Christian Civilisation (ISFCC) said the number of rallies is growing quickly, describing it as "a tsunami of graces for Ireland".

"You can see the joy and happiness in the faces of the attendees," said one rosary rally captain Gregory Murphy. "You also have to remember that this was the first time many of these people publicly expressed their Faith."

"More and more people are looking to the Fatima message because it offers a sure remedy to the moral crisis in society," Mr Murphy continued. "In other words, prayer, penance and conversion are the answer to a world that has abandoned God."



People are pictured at a shrine in St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Lenadoon, Belfast, where a public rosary rally was held, May 14.



A rosary rally held in Phoenix Park, pictured beneath the cross erected in honour of Pope St John Paul II's visit in 1979.



A rosary rally was held in Donabate, Dublin, one of the 515 rosary rallies held across Ireland on Saturday May 14.



A rosary rally in Swords.



Pictured is a group of local people who held a public rosary rally in Malahide, Dublin.

Knights of Columbanus celebrate founder's legacy

Ruadhán Jones

The Knights of Columbanus celebrated the centenary anniversary of its founder Canon James O'Neill on May 6 and 7 in Ballycastle.

The gathering was well attended, with a number of talks from eminent speakers including historian Dr Éamon Phoenix, Archbishop Eamon Martin, Bishop Noel Treanor, Fr Eddie McGee and Mickey Harte.

Fr McGee recounted the life and times of Canon O'Neill, who founded the knights in 1915 and was described fol-

lowing his sudden death in 1922 as having died of "a broken heart for the suffering of his people. He was a hero of charity".

All-Ireland winning manager Mickey Harte delivered the final talk, recalling his faith journey and how his family influenced his faith.

"We have to hand on our faith by showing 'example' to our children and grandchildren," Mr Harte said.

He encouraged people to pray the rosary and spoke about how his faith helped him through hardships: "Prayer is powerful beyond belief," Mr Harte said.



Attendees at the Knights of Columbanus centenary anniversary enjoyed talks and downtime during the event, which took place May 6 and 7.



Supreme Knight Brendan McCann presents Henry Welsh, the Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columba, a remembrance gift to celebrate his visit and the life and anniversary of Canon O'Neill.



Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin gave a talk on the future of the Church in Ireland, reflecting on synodality and how it might affect the course of Catholicism in Ireland.



Historian Dr Éamon Phoenix delivers a talk about the history of the Knights of Columbanus during the Centenary Anniversary of its founder Fr James O'Neill.



All-Ireland winning manager Mickey Harte spoke about his faith journey and encouraging people to hand on the Faith by exemplifying it for children and grandchildren.



Members of the Knights of Columbanus are pictured gathered at the grave of the order's founder, Canon James O'Neill.



Fr Patrick Devlin, Supreme Knight Brendan McCann and Fr Henry McCann



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Supreme Knight Brendan McCann and Fr Eddy McGee

A prelate in the mould of Cardinal Mindszenty



The Vatican response to the arrest of Cardinal Joseph Zen should concern us all, writes **David Quinn**

In February 1949, the head of the Catholic Church in Hungary, Cardinal József Mindszenty, was sentenced to life in prison by the country's communist government, one that had been put into power by Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Union's communist dictator.

Cardinal Mindszenty was convicted of treason, that is, of working to overthrow the communist government and of collaborating with foreign powers, not least the Vatican and the United States.

His case became an instant cause celebre in the West, including in Ireland. Catholics everywhere raised their voices in protest.

During World War II, Cardinal Mindszenty had also been arrested by Hungary's fascist government for his speeches denouncing the oppression of Jews in the country.

The cardinal was not the only one tried and found guilty by the communists, so were several other Church officials, a journalist, a professor, and a member of the Hungarian royal family.

But Cardinal Mindszenty was the most high profile. Despite the international campaign for his release, he remained in prison until the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Cardinal Mindszenty was freed by the rebel leaders and fled to the US embassy in Budapest and had to remain there until 1971, when he was allowed to leave by the communist authorities (who were restored to power when the Russians crushed the uprising). He died in exile in 1975. He is regarded as a hero to this day.

Arrested

In Hong Kong last week, a Mindszenty-type figure was arrested by the communist authorities there, namely 90-year-old Cardinal Joseph Zen, but with few exceptions the event was greeted by little of the international outcry that was sparked by the



Fr Ollevier Willy, a Belgian priest of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Fr Huang Chuan-sheng take part in a protest in Taipei, Taiwan, against the arrests of veteran democracy advocates under Hong Kong's national security law. One of the placards read: 'Cardinal Joseph Zen is innocent.' Photo: CNS

fate of Cardinal József Mindszenty back in 1949.

Admittedly, Cardinal Zen has not been tried, found guilty and imprisoned as Cardinal Mindszenty was, but if the communist government of Hong Kong, under dictation from Beijing, continues on the present course, this may yet happen, although his very advanced age may tell against this.

“The cardinal was not the only one tried and found guilty by the communists”

Cardinal Zen, and several others, were arrested under a new national security law imposed on Hong Kong after the Chinese government decided to crush democracy in the country three years ago.

The prelate, who is also bishop-emeritus of Hong Kong, is associated with an organisation called the '612 Humanitarian Relief Fund', which raises funds to help defend pro-democracy protestors.

The communist authorities say the organisation receives funding from overseas and undermines national security. In other words, Cardinal Zen is effectively accused of treason, just as Cardinal Mindszenty was decades ago in Hungary, and once again by a communist government.

Cardinal Zen was released shortly after his arrest, but it is already clear that being a senior Church official does not guarantee a person any protection once the communist authorities see you as a threat.

In fact, the cardinal may be particularly vulnerable because he has a poor relationship with the Vatican, chiefly because he has been a very outspoken critic of a deal (the details of which have not been made public) between the Holy See and Beijing which gives Beijing a say over who is made a bishop in China. The agreement also recognised the government-backed 'patriotic Church', and seems to further marginalise the underground Church, that has often been subject to savage persecution.



Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun. Photo: CNS

Cardinal Zen's sympathies very much lie with the underground Church (called this because its members spend much of their time in hiding).

Indeed, Cardinal Zen's poor relations with the Vatican have been seized on by commentators in Hong Kong who support the arrest of the prelate.

Alex Lo, a writer for the *South China Morning Post* said, "It's safe to assume the Vatican won't be shedding too many tears for Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun", because it regards him as an "embarrassment" due to his outspokenness.

Truth

There seems to be some truth in this. When Cardinal Zen came to Rome to meet with the Pope in September 2020 in order to protest against the renewal of

the Holy See/Beijing agreement, he had to go home again instead without meeting him.

Cardinal Zen has been particularly critical of the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who he sees as the chief architect of the deal.

Following Cardinal Zen's arrest and released, Cardinal Parolin issued a short statement saying he "very saddened" by what happened.

He stated: "I would like to express my closeness to the cardinal, who was freed and treated well."

“Cardinal Zen's sympathies very much lie with the underground Church”

Note the lack of any criticism of the communist authorities.

On the day of the arrest itself, the Vatican released a statement saying, "The Holy See has learned with concern the news of Cardinal Zen's arrest and is following the evolution of the situation with extreme attention". Again, no real criticism.

This was noted by the aforementioned Alex Lo, who described the Vatican reaction as "muted" in contrast with the stronger response from the likes of the United States. Needless to say, the Irish Government has said nothing. But nor have the

Irish bishops, in contrast with their American counterparts.

Mark Simon, a friend and colleague of both Cardinal Zen and the arrested newspaper publisher, Jimmy Lai (also a Catholic), says that along with the Dalai Lama, Cardinal Zen is the figure most despised by the communist officials who monitor religion in China because of "his moral clarity, his courage and the power of his witness".

Embarrassed

If the Vatican is mainly embarrassed by Cardinal Zen, as Alex Lo says, that is a very bad thing.

What may be said in the Vatican's defence is that when dealing with authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, a certain amount of prudence is often called for. Straight-out condemnations can sometimes make a bad situation worse and therefore backfire. Sometimes soft diplomacy, rather than the megaphone variety, is the best way forward. This, of course, led to Pius XII eventually (and unfairly) being labelled 'Hitler's Pope', and in the future, Francis may be called 'Xi's Pope' (Xi Jinping is the leader of China).

But even if 'soft diplomacy' can sometimes be the most prudent way forward, there is no doubting the essential heroism of Cardinal Zen. Diplomats might sometimes resent the outspokenness of prophetic figures like the cardinal, but in the end it is the prophets who are remembered, not the diplomats.

Irish delegations flock to Rome for latest canonisations

Jason Osborne

Irish delegations attended the canonisation of ten new saints, May 15, the Church's first canonisation since that of St John Henry Newman and four others in October 2019.

Religious and lay alike flocked to Rome to see male and female religious, priests and a lay man recognised for their lives filled with "small acts of daily love", Pope Francis said.

Among those canonised were Charles de Foucauld, French soldier and explorer who became a Trappist monk and Catholic missionary to Muslims in Algeria, and was killed in 1916 at the age of 58, and Titus Brandsma who was a Dutch priest, professor, and journalist who opposed Nazi propaganda in Catholic newspapers before being killed by lethal injection in Dachau in 1942.

India also received its first lay saint in the person of Devasahayam Pillai, who was tortured and martyred after converting from Hinduism to Catholicism in the 18th century.

Serve

"To serve the Gospel and our brothers and sisters, to offer our lives without expecting anything in return, or any worldly glory: this is our calling. That was how our fellow travellers canonised today lived their holiness," Pope Francis said.

"By embracing with enthusiasm their vocation — some as a priest, others as a consecrated woman, as a lay person — they devoted their lives to the Gospel," he said. "They discovered an incomparable joy and they became brilliant reflections of the Lord of history. For that is what a saint is: a luminous reflection of the Lord of history."



Irish Responsible for the Fraternity, Fr Niall Ahern preaches at a Mass for the Irish delegation in Rome.



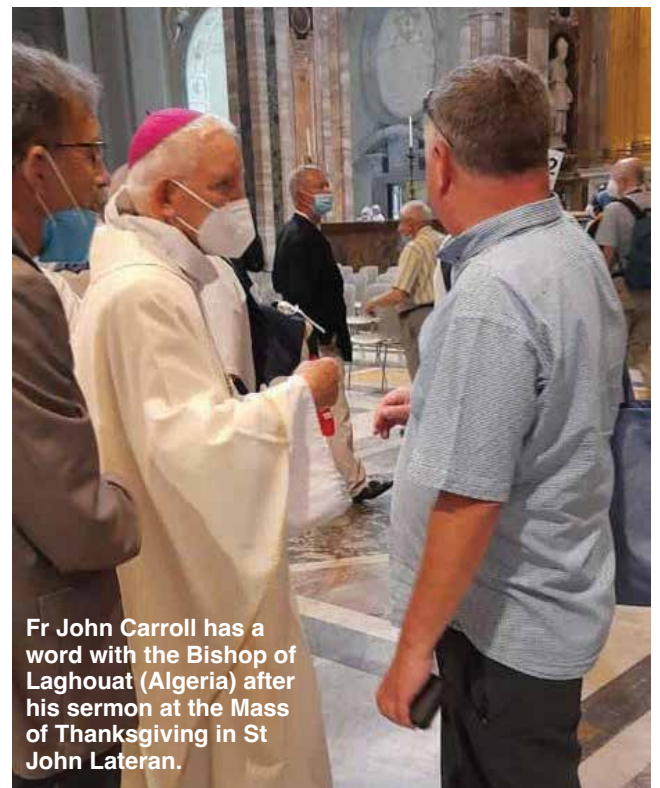
The Irish delegation at prayer in the Sisters of Charles de Foucauld house in Tre Fontane, Rome.



Frs Alan Geoghegan and Finbarr O'Leary share a lighter moment on the trip.



Members of the Irish delegation at Tre Fontane.



Fr John Carroll has a word with the Bishop of Laghouat (Algeria) after his sermon at the Mass of Thanksgiving in St John Lateran.



Members of the Irish delegation – Fr Joe Deegan and Fr Niall Ahern are pictured with Sr Emiko of the Belfast Community of Sisters of St Charles de Foucauld in Rome after an Oratorio in St John Lateran, inspired by Charles de Foucauld.

A MARTYRS' DAY DISCUSSION ON

The
17 IRISH
MARTYRS

MONDAY JUNE 20

AT 7PM

In the John Hand Room, All Hallows
College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

SPEAKERS



FR JOHN JOE SPRING

INTRODUCTION

MARY MCALEESE

AUTHOR OF THE NEWLY RELEASED
BOOK **THE 17 IRISH MARTYRS**



All Hallows presents an evening of discussion and reflection as former President Mary McAleese evocatively uncovers the stories of the 17 Irish martyrs Beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1992 for their faith in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With estimates revealing that over 460 individuals were sacrificed for their convictions, Ms McAleese seeks to conclusively define what made these 17 individuals stand apart from the rest of the fallen faithful.

FREE ADMISSION



Fr Simon Nolan gives a catechesis on Titus Brandsma in St Patrick's Church, Rome.



Left to right: Brazilian Carmelites Bro. Bismael Nogueira De Alencar, Bro. Luiz Otavio Sebastião Da Silva, Fr Genildo DeQueiroz and Bro. Jander Caina Da Silva Santos at St Albert's International Centre.



Members of the Irish Carmelite Pilgrimage at a celebration of the Eucharist in St Albert's International Centre.



Pilgrims view a display on Titus Brandsma in St Albert's International Centre.



Br Theophil Makuni (Zimbabwe) gives the Irish pilgrims a brief introduction to St Albert's International Centre, where Titus lived during his time in Rome.



Fr Míceál O'Neill, Prior General of the Carmelite Order, gives a homily at the opening Mass of the International Carmelite Pilgrimage in the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls on Saturday, May 14.



Fr Míceál O'Neill leads the opening Eucharist of the International Pilgrimage in the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls.



Cardinal Willem Eijk with Fr Míceál O'Neill, O.Carm, Prior General, at the Opening Mass of the International Pilgrimage in the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls.



The Irish Carmelite Pilgrimage group at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, preparing to join the International Carmelite Pilgrimage.



The Irish Carmelite Pilgrimage group at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, preparing to join the International Carmelite Pilgrimage.



The Irish Carmelite Pilgrimage group at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, preparing to join the International Carmelite Pilgrimage.



Left to right: Fr Genildo De Queiroz, Fr Daniel O’Callaghan, Fr Míceál O’Neill (Prior General) and Fr Peter Kehoe at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls.



Participants at the Opening Mass of the International Carmelite Pilgrimage at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls.



Fr Gerard Walsh (British Province) and Simon Nolan enjoying a laugh.



Fr Simon Nolan, Fr Míceál O’Neill (Prior General) and Mrs Aideen Ryan at the Reception held in St Albert’s International Centre following the canonisation ceremony.



Members of the Carmelite family at the Reception held in St Albert’s International Centre following the canonisation ceremony.



Members of the Carmelite family at the Reception held in St Albert’s International Centre following the canonisation ceremony.



Carmelites from various Provinces around the world gather to concelebrate at the Mass of Canonisation at St Peter’s Square.



Fr Daniel O’Callaghan and Fr Michael Troy speak with a member of the Swiss Guard, whose father is from Dublin.



Pope Francis proclaims 10 new saints during a canonisation Mass in St Peter's Square at the Vatican May 15. Five of the new saints are from Italy, three from France, one from India and one from the Netherlands. Photos: CNS



Pope Francis proclaims 10 new saints during a canonisation Mass in St Peter's Square at the Vatican May 15. Five of the new saints are from Italy, three from France, one from India and one from the Netherlands.



Banners of new saints hang from the facade of St Peter's Basilica as Pope Francis celebrates Mass for the canonisation of 10 new saints in St Peter's Square at the Vatican May 15. Pictured from left are Luigi Maria Palazzolo, Italian founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Poor, who lived 1827-1886; César de Bus, the French founder of the Fathers of Christian Doctrine, who was born in 1544 and died in 1607; Titus Brandsma, Dutch priest and journalist, who was born in 1881 and martyred in 1942; Devasahayam Pillai, an Indian layman born in 1712 and martyred in 1752.



People hold a banner honouring new St Charles de Foucauld, a French priest and hermit who was born in 1858 and killed in 1916.



A child sits on the shoulders of a woman as people wait for the start of Pope Francis' celebration of Mass for the canonisation of 10 new saints in St Peter's Square at the Vatican, May 15.



Pictured are the banners of St Carolina Santocanale, Italian founder of the Congregation of the Capuchin Sisters of the Immaculate of Lourdes, who lived 1852-1923; and St Maria Domenica Mantovani, co-founder and first superior general of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family, born in 1862 and died in 1934.



Pictured are the banners of Marie Rivier, French founder of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, who was born in 1768 and died in 1838; and Anna Maria Rubatto, Italian founder of the order now known as the Capuchin Sisters of Mother Rubatto, who lived 1844-1904.



Pictured are the banners of St Giustino Maria Russolillo, Italian founder of the Society of Divine Vocations for men and the Vocationist Sisters, who lived 1891-1955; and St Charles de Foucauld, a French priest and hermit, who was born in 1858 and killed in 1916.



The postulators, or promoters, of the sainthood causes of 10 men and women stand before Pope Francis as he proclaims the 10 saints May 15, during a Mass in St Peter's Square at the Vatican.

Saint Titus Brandsma

Carmelite and Martyr

Introduction

Members of the Carmelite Family in Ireland, the Netherlands and around the world have greeted with immense joy the canonisation of the Carmelite friar, Titus Brandsma, by Pope Francis at St Peter's in Rome on Sunday, May 15th, 2022. Irish Carmelites feel a special closeness to this new saint as he spent time in Ireland during 1935 improving his command of the English language ahead of a lecture tour in the United States.

Titus was a prophetic voice against the oppression of the individual, the media and religion. He was a renowned academic in philosophy and spirituality, but was also active in many other fields such as journalism and ecumenical dialogue.

Titus placed great value on the importance of truth. For him, every profession and discipline had a duty to serve the truth. This highlights a need for dialogue rather than conflict. While recognising cultural and ideological differences we must begin by recognising our common humanity. Only through unity can we find understanding and belonging. Since his death, Titus has continued to be an inspirational figure to many.

Early Life

Anno Brandsma was born to Tjitsje and Titus Brandsma on February 23rd, 1881, at Wonseradeel in Friesland, the most northern province of the Netherlands. Anno was the second youngest in a family of four girls and two boys. Five of the siblings would later enter religious life.

The family owned a dairy farm and herd, selling milk and cheese made on the farm itself. In 1881, Catholics were a minority in Friesland and protective of their religion and culture. Anno's father, a committed Catholic, worked to preserve the Friesian culture within his family and the local community. He participated in politics, serving for a time as chairman of the local election board.

“Titus was a prophetic voice against the oppression of the individual, the media and religion”

Anno received his secondary education at a Franciscan school but decided to pursue his religious vocation in the Carmelite Order. His frail health may have been a factor in this decision. However, he said in later life that his preference for the Carmelites had been determined by their spirituality especially the life of prayer and the close relationship with Mary, Mother of God.

Carmelite Formation

Anno began his novitiate at Boxmeer friary in September 1898 taking his father's name, Titus, as his religious name. He made his First Profession in October 1899. During his student days Titus showed a gift for writing and journalism. He pursued these interests alongside his study of philosophy and theology. He even managed to have an anthology of selected writings of St Teresa of Avila published.

Titus was ordained to priestly ministry on June 17th, 1905. He then went to Rome for post-graduate studies in philosophy and, despite bouts of ill health, gained his doctorate from the Gregorian University in 1909. Those who were his contemporaries at the Carmelite International College of St Albert later spoke of his commitment to the community timetable, his arduous work and good humour. He fostered his interest in journalism by writing articles for Carmelite magazines and other publications in the Netherlands. Titus also developed a profound interest in spirituality, especially in the Carmelite tradition.

Ministry

Titus now returned to the Netherlands permanently, where he taught Philosophy and Church History to the Carmelite students at the House of Studies in Oss. He was taking the first steps that would lead to a University Chair, while continuing to find time for his apostolate of the pen. His initials 'T.B.' were soon to be found in more than twenty periodicals, both national and international. He was also building a reputation, especially as a spiritual master in the Carmelite tradition, through lectures and sermons. His Carmelite life of prayer, solitude and fraternity underpinned his busy life. Titus tried at all times to participate in the different facets of the common life: prayer, meals, and recreation. It was said that 'his hearty laugh' was missed when he was away. He once explained that for him community life was *"indispensable because it provides the framework for*



Titus with his fellow novices.



The Brandsma Family, Anno is on the far left.



Professor Brandsma at his desk.

The following poem was written by Titus Brandsma on February 12th-13th 1942, while a prisoner at Scheveningen Prison. He composed it while praying before an image of Christ crucified.

'O Jesus, when I gaze on you'

O Jesus, when I gaze on
You
Once more alive, that I
love You
And that your heart loves
me too
Moreover as your special
friend.

Although that calls me to
suffer more
Oh, for me all suffering is
good,
For in this way I resemble
You
And this is the way to Your
Kingdom.

I am blissful in my
suffering
For I know it no more as
sorrow

But the most ultimate
elected lot

That unites me with You,
o God.
O, just leave me here
silently alone,
The chill and cold around
me
And let no people be with
me
Here alone I grow not
weary.

For Thou, O Jesus, art
with me
I have never been so
close to You.
Stay with me, with me,
Jesus sweet,
Your presence makes all
things good for me.

Translation:
Susan Verkerk-Wheatley / Anne-Marie Bos.
© Titus Brandsma Instituut 2018



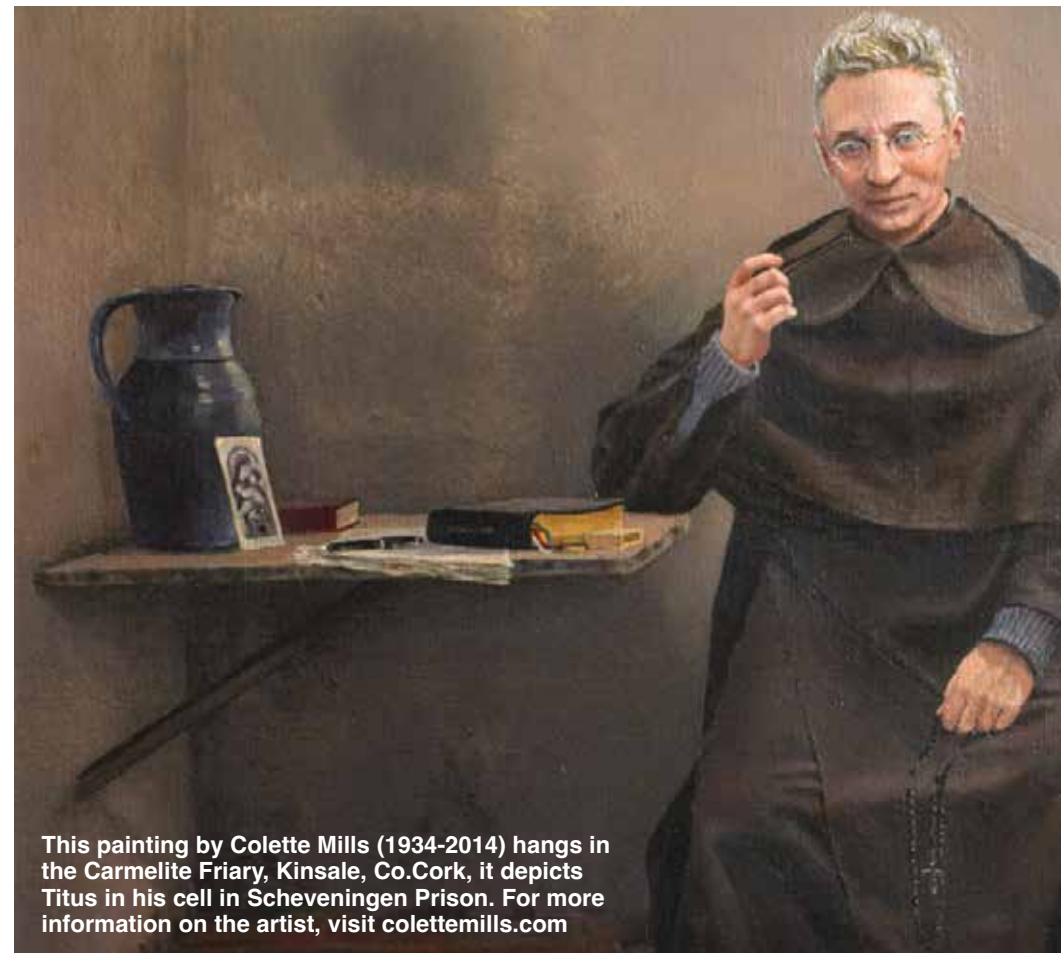
Titus with his pipe at the Carmel, Nijmegen, 1940

support. As an examiner, he tried to encourage students by formulating his questions clearly and courteously. He was always delighted when a Carmelite graduated at the University, an expression of his profound love for the Order.

Critique of National Socialism

As early as 1935, Titus was critiquing the Nazi philosophy in lectures at the University and in his writings. In a letter to the President of the Theology Faculty, he reported that *"in the past academic year, I gave lessons on National Socialism from a philosophical viewpoint; in my course on the Philosophy of History I spoke about the growth and development of National Socialism as a typical example of a reactionary phenomenon."* He condemned particularly its neo-paganism and racism.

Titus warned that the Nazi system denied freedom of speech and was a severe threat to the freedom of all religions, and not least to that of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands. In the face of such challenges, he taught that it was essential to stress the value of the human person in both the natural and supernatural orders. He under-



This painting by Colette Mills (1934-2014) hangs in the Carmelite Friary, Kinsale, Co.Cork, it depicts Titus in his cell in Scheveningen Prison. For more information on the artist, visit colettemills.com

took initiatives in the ecumenical field long before this movement became mainstream in the Christian Churches. He was also one of the first in the Netherlands to denounce the persecution of the Jews. It would appear that he had become involved with plans to help Jewish victims escape to Carmelite missions in Brazil. The Dutch Carmelites had established missions in that country earlier in the twentieth century.

“The Church makes no distinction of sex, race, or people in carrying out her mission”

The Nazi forces invaded the Netherlands on May 10th, 1940, and had crushed the Dutch

Army after only five days of fighting. Titus was already a targeted person because of his public criticism of National Socialism and his defence of the freedom of the individual, religion, the press, and education. Consequently, his activities were monitored by the authorities. At the University he noticed two men, strangers, taking copious notes during his lectures and trying to befriend his students.

Resistance

Since 1935 Titus had been the National Chaplain and Adviser to the Union of Catholic Journalists in the Netherlands. In this role, he encouraged opposition to the publication of Nazi propaganda in Catholic newspapers and in the press generally. Titus was also President of the Union of Directors of

Catholic Schools. Both of these roles placed him in the firing line of the Nazi authorities. Also, as an adviser to the Archbishop of Utrecht he encouraged the bishops to speak out against the persecution of the Jews and the infringement of human rights by the occupiers.

Catholic schools came under pressure when it was decreed that teachers who were members of Religious Orders would have their salaries reduced by 40% and they could no longer be rectors, principals, or heads of schools. A further decree demanded the expulsion of all Jewish students as well as those of Jewish descent from Catholic schools. On September 12th, 1941, Titus wrote to all members of the Union asking that these Government orders not be implemented, *"the Church makes no*

On Mary, the Mother of God

Titus had a profound devotion to the Virgin Mary. He remarked, on at least one occasion, that he had joined the Carmelites because of their close relationship with the Mother of God. He included the words of her Magnificat on his ordination card: *"My soul glorifies the Lord. He who is mighty has done great things for me"* (Luke 1: 46, 49).

In his prison diary from Scheveningen, Titus described how he overcame the lack of a picture of the Virgin Mary in his cell: *"The volume of the breviary I have with me has a beautiful picture of Our Lady of Mount Carmel by Frein von Oer; since I didn't want to tear it out, I simply opened the breviary on a little corner shelf above my bed to the left. When I am sitting at the table I have only to glance up to see her, and when I am in bed my glance falls directly on the Virgin with the star, 'The Hope of all Carmelites'."*

Titus described devotion to Mary as *"one of the most delightful flowers in Carmel's garden. I should like to call it a sunflower. This flower that rises above the other flowers."* He believed that we must cleanse our hearts of everything that does not belong to the Lord. Mary is *"an example of the way in which God must be born in us, of the way he must live in us."*



Titus Brandsma preaching at the Marian Congress in Nijmegen in 1932



distinction of sex, race, or people in carrying out her mission. We cannot refuse admission to anyone who wants a Catholic education." Catholic schools continued to enrol Jewish students until the mass deportations began.

On December 18th, 1941, the Nazi authorities directed that the Catholic press could not refuse to publish Nazi advertisements or news. Again, Titus felt that he had to make a personal stand. After a consultation with the Archbishop of Utrecht he decided to write a letter to all Catholic journalists.

He wrote this letter as Chaplain and Ecclesiastical Adviser to the Association of



Catholic Journalists. Its content reflected not only his own position on the new law but also that of the Catholic bishops in the Netherlands: "the new regulations deny the principles of Catholic journalism and a free Press. The only option is resistance to their implementation." He concluded with words ominously prophetic: "We are not sure if those responsible will resort to violence. But in case they do, remember, God speaks the last word, and He rewards his faithful servant."

He did not send the letter by post but chose to deliver it personally to each editor so that he could explain its more difficult points. He had visited fourteen editors when he was arrested by the Gestapo at the Carmelite friary in Nijmegen on January 19th, 1942.

The Arrest

Professor Titus Brandsma was in his room at the Carmelite friary in Nijmegen when the doorbell rang at around six o'clock on Monday evening, January 19th, 1942. When the friar porter opened the door he greeted

the two burly young men and inquired, "How may I help you, gentlemen?" The younger of the two replied in perfect Dutch, "We would like to speak with Professor Brandsma. I am the student who has been trying to reach him by telephone, but without success. We are in a hurry. Please let him know." The other young man remained silent as the friar ushered them into a parlour.

The porter friar called Father Titus who came down at once and greeted his visitors. It was then that the previously silent young man spoke in German: "My name is Steffan; I am an agent of the State Security Police. By order of the Security Service, you are under arrest. You are to come with me on the 7.35 train to Arnhem. First, however, I must search your personal quarters. Please conduct me to them."

"What is the charge?" Professor Brandsma inquired calmly. "I have ordered you to show me your rooms, Professor. Now!" The search was meticulous as the agents gathered whatever they thought might be useful for their purpose. They escorted the arrested Carmelite down the stairs where the community had assembled near the front door.

Father Titus shook hands warmly with each of his Carmelite brothers, and then, as was the custom before leaving the house, he knelt to ask the Prior's blessing. At the threshold he turned and whispered a "Memento mei" – pray for me – and went into the cold and darkness. Titus Brandsma would not see his room or the Carmelite friary ever again.

Imprisonment

Titus, who had already been labelled 'the dangerous little friar,' was taken to Scheveningen, near The Hague, a police prison. He was subjected to a lengthy interrogation by SS Hauptscharführer Paul Hardegan, a fanatical Nazi, who would disappear on the Russian front in 1944. Hardegan ordered Titus to write an explanation of why the Dutch, and especially Dutch Catholics, opposed National Socialism. In his explanatory essay Titus tes-

tified: "The Nazi movement is regarded by the Dutch people not only as an insult to God in relation to his creatures, but also a violation of the glorious traditions of the Dutch nation. If it is necessary, we, the Dutch people, will give our lives for our faith." He concluded with a beautiful blessing: "God bless the Netherlands! God bless Germany! May God grant these two peoples to return to the path of peace and freedom, and to recognise His Glory for the good of these two nations that are so close." Hardegan and his henchmen were furious and concluded that Brandsma is 'a dangerous man' and must be confined accordingly.

“Those who want to win the world for Christ, must have the courage to come into conflict with it”

Titus spent seven weeks in cell 577 at Scheveningen. The regime was harsh, but he found solitude and peace alone in his cell. He organised each day to the last detail. He wrote poetry, worked on a biography of the great Carmelite and mystic, St Teresa of Avila, composed a series of meditations on the Way of the Cross, and completed two booklets. He prayed his breviary and knelt in silent prayer for two hours each day. Titus had scheduled times for walks in the small cell and for the smoking of his pipe, until they took it away from him. At this time, he wrote to his Carmelite brothers: "I feel at home. I pray, I write. The days are really too short. I am very calm. I feel happy and satisfied." In his prison diary he remarked, "Although I have no way of knowing with certainty just how all this is going to end, I know perfectly well that I am in the hands of God; Who will separate me from the love of God?" Titus also drew inspiration from the Bookmark of St Teresa of Avila, 'Nada te turbe...'

However, on March 12th, the calm was brutally shattered when Titus was transferred to

Titus in Ireland

Irish Carmelites feel a special closeness to the new saint, since he spent time with his Carmelite brothers in Ireland during 1935. He stayed at Whitefriar Street, Dublin, and Kinsale, Co. Cork, while improving his command of the English language ahead of a lecture tour in the United States. Kinsale was then the novitiate. A novice who later spoke of meeting Titus there was the late Fr Patrick (Patsy) Keenan. Fr Keenan died as a member of the Kinsale community in August 2002. It is likely that Titus would have visited the other houses of the Irish Province at the time: Ardavin in Rathgar, Terenure College, Knocktopher, Co. Kilkenny, White Abbey, Co. Kildare, and Moate, Co. Westmeath.

During a lecture, given in the Netherlands some two years later, Titus mentioned his visit to a hospital in Mullingar. He recalled how he had been deeply moved by the death of an eight-year-old girl at the hospital because of appendicitis. Titus sent postcards from Ireland to Carmelites and friends in the Netherlands. He always spoke warmly of his experiences here where he also met, among others, the then President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, Mr Eamon De Valera.

the transit labour camp in Amersfoort. It held eight hundred prisoners from all walks of Dutch life: resistance fighters, intelligentsia and clergy, and was notorious for its cruelty. All prisoners were forced to wear stark uniforms. Titus was deprived of his books, even of his Rosary beads.

Despite his weakened physical condition, Titus began a ministry to his fellow prisoners. He would gather groups together and lead them through meditations on Christ's Passion. He heard the confession of those who wished to celebrate the Sacrament of Forgiveness. He even managed to help the sick and dying in the camp hospital. Survivors remembered him for his courage, generosity of spirit and great faith. One recalled that "his care and concern for the Jews were particularly touching."

Dachau

In late April, the Gestapo interrogated him one last time. He stood firmly by his convictions even when they told him he would be transferred to Dachau.

In mid-June 1942, Titus was transported to Dachau where he

was assigned to one of the three 'clergy blocks'. He met several Polish Carmelites, already imprisoned there, as well as another Dutch Carmelite, Brother Raphael Tijhuis, who had been arrested at the Carmelite friary in Mainz, Germany. Raphael was a physically strong man who would survive Dachau, dying in Mainz on June 5th 1981. He tried to protect and help Titus as best he could.

Titus received many beatings while in Dachau, including one for having hidden a sacred host in his spectacle case. A local priest used to smuggle hosts to the prisoners working in the fields some miles from the Camp. This was extremely risky for both priest and prisoners. Despite the cruel treatment Titus never stopped trying to talk with the Camp attendants and guards, hoping to influence them and, perhaps, soften their attitudes towards the prisoners. In the words of Pope Saint John Paul II at the Beatification in



A sketch of Titus in Dachau



Titus' cell in Scheveningen

On the Eucharist

Titus was convinced that our spiritual life, just as our physical life, requires food. He saw in Elijah, Prophet of Carmel, the pattern of the Carmelite life. Just as Elijah was sustained for his journey through the desert to Mount Horeb by miraculous food from heaven, so we too are strengthened by the gift of the Eucharist as we *"walk in life's journey here below."* *"Walking in the strength of the divine bread"* was tested for Titus between January and July 1942 as he followed his own 'way of the cross'.

While Titus was able to receive Holy Communion at Dachau (including on the day of his death), there were times over the seven months of his incarceration when this was not possible. At Scheveningen prison, Titus described how *"each morning I kneel down and say the prayers of daily Mass, spiritual communion."*

At Amersfoort he led communal acts of spiritual communion with his fellow prisoners. Perhaps, like many people during the recent Covid pandemic, Titus had discovered the value of spiritual communion for sustenance. The great Carmelite, about whom Titus had written so much, St Teresa of Avila, often recommended acts of spiritual communion when reception of the Sacrament was not possible.

1985, Titus *"answered hate with love."*

A severe beating witnessed by his Carmelite brother

Brother Raphael Tjihuis, his Dutch Carmelite brother and fellow prisoner, has left us the following story from Dachau:

“There is no opposition of the contemplative life to the active. The former is the great support of the latter”

How happy Fr Titus was when I would bring him secretly Holy Communion! However, every evening before going into the dormitory there was an inspection of each prisoner to make sure that he had washed his upper body and his feet. The head of the Cellblock would make this inspection, and if a prisoner's feet were dirty he would be beaten.

One evening as Fr Titus was being inspected he was taken aside. A few minutes before, I had passed the Blessed Sacrament to him secretly. He had put it in his spectacle case and hidden it under his armpit. The guard with one blow knocked Titus to the floor. He tried to

get up but the continuing blows knocked him back on the floor. He managed to crawl, under the repeated blows, until he finally reached the dormitory where I picked him up and put him on his bed. I asked him how badly hurt he was, but he only smiled and answered, *"Oh, I hardly felt anything for I was adoring him whom I was carrying"*. The he said, *"Let us say an 'Adoro Te' together"*. I wanted to kneel but Fr Titus said it might attract the attention of the head of the Cellblock, so I remained standing. Silently we adored the hidden God in our midst. He then blessed me with the Blessed Sacrament, hidden in his old spectacle case. The next morning, before inspection, we said a short prayer together and he gave me Holy Communion. Interiorly strengthened, one could face the day. Fr Titus used to say that Holy Communion was not only our spiritual nutrition but also our bodily food. How often did we feel this at Dachau!

Death

After a particularly brutal beating in July, Titus was taken to the infirmary. Since there was little chance that he would work again, he was judged to be an inconvenience to medical staff. He now became the subject of medical experimentation, and

his health deteriorated further.

Titus was soon deemed to be of no further value and was killed by lethal injection on Sunday, July 26th, 1942. He spoke kindly to the nurse who administered the injection and gave her the handmade rosary beads. This nurse became a key witness in the early stages of the process for his beatification and canonisation. In her testimony, given in May 1956, she declared: *"I was brought back to the right way through the intercession of Fr Titus. Personally, I consider him a martyr because National Socialism was a kind of anti-Christ."*

Since the Nazis did not recognise Titus' connection with any religious group, they sent news of his death to his brother-in-law in Friesland. His body had been cremated three days later in the Camp crematorium and his ashes interred in the Grave of Thousands Unknown.

Tribute from Queen

When the war was over and Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands had returned from exile, she publicly expressed her admiration for Fr Titus in a letter to his sister, Gatske de Boer-Brandsma, dated November 4th, 1946:

I feel an obligation to tell you, the elder sister of the deceased Professor Doctor Anno Sjoerd Brandsma, and your two sisters and your brother, of my heartfelt sympathy for the loss of this great patriot.

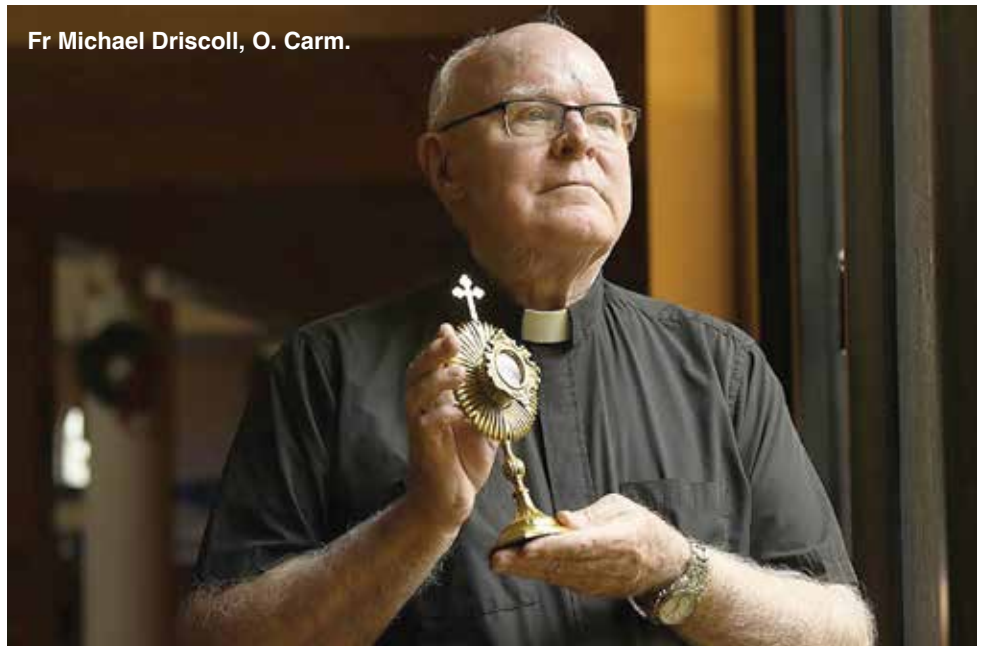
As a Catholic priest and professor of the Catholic University of Nijmegen he did not hesitate for a moment to set our clearly the religious and patriotic principles for all those who sought his advice. Even from prison, he was unafraid to express his evaluation of National-Socialism. Similarly, in his diary, he allowed us an insight into his own inner spiritual strength, a witness that today as then is a great value for all.

Through his death in the concentration camp of Dachau we have lost a great patriot and you a most dear member of your family. May his courageous example of fidelity remain for all of us a continuous comfort for our lives.

Canonisation

On November 5th, 1985, Pope Saint John Paul II beatified Titus Brandsma as 'a martyr for the

Fr Michael Driscoll, O. Carm.



Prayer of the Carmelite Order on the Canonisation of Titus Brandsma

God of peace and justice, you open our hearts to love and to the joy of the Gospel even in the midst of countless forms of violence that take away the dignity of our brothers and sisters, fill us with your grace, so that like Saint Titus Brandsma,

we may in tenderness see beyond the horrors of inhumanity and contemplate your glory that shines forth through the martyrs of every age, and so become your authentic witnesses in the world of today. Amen.

faith'. The process for his canonisation continued, building on the testimonies given in preparation for his beatification. About half of those testimonies were given by people who had met him during the seven months of his imprisonment, including that of the nurse who had given him the lethal injection on July 26th, 1942.

In 2007, the Dutch Bishops wrote to the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of the Saints encouraging the progress on the cause of Blessed Titus Brandsma. In their letter, the Bishops highlighted the very positive effect that his canonisation would have on the Dutch Church and on Dutch society. The life and witness of Blessed Titus was recognised beyond the Catholic Church and the Carmelite Family in his native land. He is a national figure with streets, schools and institutions named after him. In 2005 the people of Nijmegen chose him as 'the greatest citizen' to have lived in their city.

However, canonisation requires the evidence of a miracle obtained through the intercession of the proposed saint. In 2004 Fr Michael Driscoll, an American Carmelite who had a great devotion to Titus, was diagnosed with Stage 4 melanoma. He was given a relic, a piece of cloth from a suit of Titus, which he now applied to his head each day trusting in the Blessed's intercession. Fr Michael's prayer to

Blessed Titus was supported by the prayers of parishioners and friends. He underwent major surgery, entailing the removal of 84 lymph nodes and a salivary gland. This was followed by 35 days of radiation. The cancer disappeared. Fr Michael recently recalled his relief and joy when his consultant informed him, *"No need to come back...You're cured. I don't find any more cancer in you"*.

“The mystery of the Incarnation has revealed how intimately God wants to be united with us, how precious we are to him”

In an investigation carried out by the Vatican, medical experts stated that this cure was medically inexplicable. A committee of theologians recognised the healing as a miracle through the intercession of Blessed Titus Brandsma on May 25th, 2021. A committee of Cardinals approved their findings on November 9th, 2021, submitting their decision to Pope Francis who announced that Titus would be canonised on May 15th, 2022.

The source of Titus' courageous stance was his profound faith in the God of Jesus Christ, the God of Abraham, who teaches that each woman and

man is made in his image. In a world where human and Christian freedom and values are still being denied to many, not least in Ukraine during these months, the message of Saint Titus Brandsma is one of hope, forgiveness, reconciliation and courage in Jesus Christ, our Saviour. In his own words, *"Do not yield to hatred. We are here in a dark tunnel, but we have to go on. At the end, an eternal light is shining for us."*

The Carmelite vocation is a call to contemplative prayer, community and service in the midst of the people. In his life and ministry, St Titus exemplified these aspects to the greatest degree, culminating in his life-giving commitment to truth, justice and equality. His canonisation is a moment of inspiration and encouragement for all who follow the Carmelite way, not least for those working in difficult and trying circumstances.

For more information, visit www.carmelites.ie



Irish Province of
CARMELITES

A Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate the Canonisation of Titus Brandsma will take place in Whitefriar Street Church on Sunday, May 22nd, at 4.00 pm.

The Most Rev. Archbishop Dermot

Farrell will be the principal celebrant, with homily by the Most Rev. Fernando Millán Romeral, O. Carm. (former Prior General). The music will be led by the Palestrina Choir. All are welcome to attend.



Out&About

Youth for Christ



KERRY: Children from Barraduff and Raheen Schools are pictured after receiving First Holy Communion in the Church of the Sacred Heart Barraduff, Saturday May 7. Photo: Seamus Healy



LIMERICK: The boys from Doon CBS Primary School who received their First Holy Communion on May 7 in St Patrick's Parish Church, Doon, pictured with School Principal Joanne O'Connell, class teacher Elizabeth Doherty and teacher Donal O'Connell.



ARMAGH: Deacon Carlos Esteban Rojo (back centre) is pictured with Bishop Michael Ruter (back centre right) and family and friends at Armagh Cathedral, Sunday May 8 after being ordained to the diaconate.

IN SHORT

President Higgins unveils St Patrick sculpture

President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins unveiled a sculpture of St Patrick and King Laoighre in Sandycove, Dublin, May 6.

President Higgins and his wife Sabina Higgins visited Sandycove to unveil the newly installed piece of public art at Otranto Park.

The standing stone sculpture, designed by sculptor Imogen Stuart and carved by Ciaran Byrne, is carved with representations of King Laoighaire and St Patrick on two sides, with a third side carved in bilingual bas relief script.

The nearly three-meter-tall Wicklow granite standing stone named 'Stele' overlooks Dublin bay.

President Higgins addressed the crowd of hundreds who gathered for the unveiling, commending Imogen Stuart's canon of work and gave thanks for her lifelong commitment to public art.

PLC announces speakers for regional marches

The Pro-Life Campaign have announced the line up of speakers for the regional marches for life taking place in Cork, Galway and Donegal.

The PLC said it will use the marches "to shine a spotlight on Ireland's abortion law and to call for support and positive alternatives to abortion for women".

The five speakers announced are: Dr Calum Miller, who will speak at all three

events; Dr Brendan Crowley will speak in Cork, along with Independent TD Michael Collins; Independent TD Seán Canney will speak at the march in Galway; and Cllr Sarah O'Reilly will speak at the event in Donegal.

The marches take place in Cork City on May 20 at 6pm, in Salthill, Co. Galway on May 21 at 3pm and in Bundoran, Co. Donegal on May 22 at 3pm.

State failing students with visual impairment says NCBI

National sight loss organisation NCBI have warned that students who are blind or vision

impaired are being failed by the state due to barriers to accessing information.

They called on the Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education to take action immediately to address the issue.

"It is extremely disappointing to read the results of the IA Labs Digital Accessibility Index as it clearly demonstrates that students who are blind or vision impaired are being prevented from accessing information that is readily available to their peers," said NCBI CEO Chris White.

Legislation introduced in 2020 requires state and public bodies to ensure websites and applications are fully accessible for people with disabilities, but "not one of the education sector websites audited by IA labs, including those funded by the state are compliant with the legislation," Mr White said in a statement.



WEXFORD: First Communion teachers Mary Kehoe and Aisling Ryan are photographed with Derek Peilow and local priest Fr John Carroll at a specially designed 'Shell Cross', the handiwork of local school caretaker Willie Carley, SNA Derek Peilow and candidates for first communion at Bantown National School. The cross was brought to the church for the First Communion ceremony on Saturday May 7.



CORK: Members of the St Joseph Church Glanmire's congregation are pictured with Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin, Fr John Newman PP and diocesan director for vocations Fr Cian O'Sullivan at the launch of the diocese's prayer card to promote vocations to the priesthood, May 7. Photo: Colm Loughheed.



DUBLIN: Dominican students and novices in Ireland are pictured having met to catch up as they continue their formation. Photo: Sean Blackwell



LIMERICK: Pupils from Sexton St CBS Primary School who received the Sacrament of Confirmation at St Michael's Church, Denmark St, are pictured with School Principal Denis Barry, teachers Eoin Crowley and Timmy Ryan, and Fr Leo McDonnell PP, who administered the Sacrament.



LIMERICK: Fr Des McAuliffe PP Holy Rosary Church, Ennis Road, presents Frankie Naughton with a gold medal Pope John Paul II Award. Frankie is a student at Mary Immaculate College of Education, Limerick.



LIMERICK: Gearoid Hanley is pictured with his teacher Ms Elizabeth Doherty after his First Holy Communion in St Patrick's Parish Church, Doon.



DONEGAL: Students from UU Coleraine and Catholic chaplain Fr Raymond McCullagh are pictured on a chaplaincy trip to Lough Derg.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



DUBLIN: Students from Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School Drimnagh who participated in Dublin Archdiocese's Ember programme as faith leaders are pictured in DCU.



DUBLIN: Students from Loreto Secondary School Balbriggan who participated in Dublin Archdiocese's Ember programme as faith leaders, pictured at DCU.



DUBLIN: Students from St Colmcille's Community School, Knocklyon, who participated in Dublin Archdiocese's Ember programme as faith leaders are pictured in DCU.



WICKLOW: Students from Dominican College Wicklow who participated in Dublin Archdiocese's Ember programme as leaders for the 2021-2022 school year.

ANTRIM

Meeting to discuss the issues raised during the synodal pathway on Thursday the May 26 at 7.30pm in St Joseph's Parish Hall, Antrim.

ARMAGH

Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre presents: 'No Visible Scar: Comfort for Those Bereaved'. Friday May 20 (arrive 5pm) – Sunday May 22 (depart 2pm). Cost €260. Workshop Facilitator: Fr Hugh Lagan SMA and chartered clinical psychologist. Please email: admin@dromantineconference.com.

CARLOW

The 17th Solemn Novena continues on May 23 with a talk from guest speaker and *The Irish Catholic* editor, Michael Kelly in St Clare's Church, Graiguecullen. Rosary recited at 7.10pm and Novena begins at 7.30pm.

CAVAN

Prayer of Blessing for expectant couples at Saturday May 28 6pm Vigil Mass in Kinscourt Parish.

CLARE

Knock Shrine Pilgrimage: On Sunday 22 May, Bishop Fintan Monahan will lead the Killaloe Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine. Ceremonies at the Shrine will begin at 2.30pm. A bus will travel from Ennis. To book yourself a place please contact Cian at Brigdale's Coaches 087 261333.

CORK

A special birthday remembrance Mass will take place in Holy Trinity Church Fr Mathew Quay on Wednesday 25 May at 7.30pm to celebrate the life and mission of Padre Pio.

DERRY

Accord Derry - Virtual Interactive Marriage Preparation Courses: Tuesday May 17 and Wednesday 18 and Tuesday June 7 and Wednesday 8. For a place on the course please go to www.accordni.com. Email derry@accordni.com. Telephone 02871362475.

DONEGAL

The Legion of Mary will recite the rosary for the month of May on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 7pm at the junction of Dr McGinley Road on the Glencar Road.

DOWN

Dromore Diocese pilgrimage to Knock takes place May

29. Booking must be made before May 22. Call Sean O'Kane at 07712655722.

DUBLIN

Holy Hour in St John the Baptist Clontarf Road will be held on Sunday May 22 from 7pm to 8pm. It will be led by Fr Martin Hogan's theme: 'I have seen the Lord'.

FERMANAGH

Rosary and devotions each day throughout month of May at St Joseph's, Ederney at 6.30pm.

GALWAY

Rosary recited every day of May at 7pm at grotto of the Church of the Assumption and St James, Claregalway.

MEATH

Annual anointing of the sick at 11.00am and 12.15pm Masses on Sunday May 22, Ratoath Church.

KERRY

Daily Rosary during the month of May at the Grotto (near Holy Family NS Rathmore) at 8pm and also at Tureencahill Grotto each evening at 8pm.

KILDARE

Rosary at the Grotto each Thursday evening at 7.30pm during the month of May at St Brigid's Parish Church.

KILKENNY

Life in the Spirit Seminars take place at Sacred Heart Church, Moneenroe, continuing with Fr Gerry Campbell on Tuesday 24 May. Theme: Baptism in the Spirit. Holy Hour at 6.30pm each evening and Mass at 7.30pm.

LIMERICK

The Legion of Mary's weekly meetings now take place in the Pastoral Centre, Doon at 7.30pm on Tuesday. The rosary will also be recited at Doon Church every Sunday of the month of May at 6pm.

LEITRIM

Daily rosary in St Joseph's Church, Leitrim Village, at 6pm.

Annual Padre Pio Healing Mass in Saint Patrick's Church, Ballinamore on Wednesday May 25 at 7pm. Celebrant: Fr Bryan Shortall, Capuchin Priest from Dublin.

LAOIS

Rosary recited at Our Lady's Grotto, St Michael's Church, Portarlinton each evening at 8pm for the month of May.

LONGFORD

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

LOUTH

Vocation Discernment Weekend for single women (20-40) from May 20 to 22 who are wondering if the Lord is inviting them to Dominican Monastic Contemplative Life. Contact: Sr Mairead OP, Monastery of St Catherine of Siena, The Twenties, Drogheda, Co. Louth. A92 KR84. Email: sienavoc@gmail.com Tel: 041 983 8524; www.dominicannuns.ie

MAYO

'Music for a Midsummer's Evening' - An evening of Irish and choral music at Knock Basilica Saturday June 11, 7pm featuring the Dublin Pal-estrina Choir, soprano Rachel Croash, mezzo soprano Anne Marie Gibbons, the Marlborough Sinfonia, organist Aleksandr Nisse and Conductor Blánaid Murphy, Doors 6pm. Admission free.

MONAGHAN

Mary Mother of Mercy Church Adoration: Tuesday 7-9pm, Wednesday 10am-9pm and Thursday 7-9pm.

ROSCOMMON

Rosary recited on every Monday in May at 7pm at Our Lady's Grotto, Cortober Hall.

TIPPERARY

The Rosary will be recited daily at 7.30pm for the month of May at the Millenium Rock, Cordangan.

TYRONE

During this month, the Rosary will be prayed by members of the Legion of Mary, in St Patrick's, Castlederg, each Tuesday at 2pm.

WESTMEATH

Mullingar Pioneer Mass and Novena to Matt Talbot will take place on Friday May 20 in St Paul's Church at 7pm. Anyone wishing to be presented with a pin please leave name and number into the Cathedral Shop.

WEXFORD

Mass at Grotto in Wexford Parish, May 30 at 8pm.

WATERFORD

Christ in the City: Waterford from May 22 to June 11. 3 weeks of homeless outreach, community life & prayer. Mass and accommodation included. Ages 18-27. Learn more at www.christinthecity.org.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Pope Francis to visit three cities in Canada in July

● The Vatican confirmed Friday that Pope Francis will visit three cities in Canada during the last week of July.

The Pope will travel to Edmonton, Quebec City, and Iqaluit on July 24-30, the Holy See press office said on May 13.

The Pope had announced last month that he planned to meet indigenous peoples in Canada this summer for the feast of St Anne on July 26.

"You have brought the living sense of your communities here in Rome. I will be happy to benefit again from meeting you by visiting your native lands, where your families live," he said during a meeting with Canadian Indigenous leaders at the Vatican on April 1.

Portuguese bishops' leader seeks abuse victims' forgiveness

● The president of the Portuguese bishops' conference begged forgiveness from victims of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy, as a Church-appointed independent commission predicted many more abuse cases would come to light.

"These attacks are particularly serious; in addition to direct physical harm, they affect the fundamental system of

affection, trust and values that sustains personal, relational and spiritual development," said Bishop José Ornelas Carvalho of Leiria-Fátima.

"I hope the liberating courage of victims can motivate others in a similar situation, offering a key contribution to the creation of a new culture and a dignified, fair and welcoming future," he said.

Vatican audit of Buenos Aires finds crimes

● An audit ordered by the Vatican into the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires has revealed irregularities in the sales of Church assets, with properties being disposed of controversially. The audit said no crimes were committed.

The audit by the Congregation for Clergy did not outline specific transactions, but said two archdiocesan commissions for overseeing financial matters were either inoperative or not fully formed at the time of some sales.

It also said Cardinal Mario Poli of Buenos Aires "is limited to only carrying out economic transactions that are currently strictly necessary."

Pope meets wives of soldiers fighting to defend Mariupol

● Pope Francis met the morning of May 11 with the wives of two Ukrainian soldiers who are currently fighting to defend the besieged city of Mariupol.

After his general audience on May 11, the Pope held the hands of the Ukrainian women, Kateryna Prokopenko, 27, and Yulya Fedosiuk, 29.

Mrs Prokopenko is

married to Ukrainian Lt. Col. Denis Prokopenko, the man currently leading the Ukrainian last stand to defend the Azovstal steel plant in the port city of Mariupol.

"You are our last hope. We hope that you can save their lives. Please don't let them die," Kateryna Prokopenko can be heard telling Pope Francis in a short video of their five-minute meeting.

Peru passes bill supporting parents' rights in education

● The Peruvian Congress May 12 passed Bill 904, which supports the right of parents to educate their children according to their values and principles.

The bill was passed May 5 by a vote of 90 to 18, with eight abstentions.

It was introduced by Congressman Esdras Ricardo Medina and is titled the "Law promoting the quality of educational materials and resources in Peru."

Article 3 of the bill "provides for the participation of parents in the process of preparing the content of educational materials, texts and resources".

Cardinal Zen's detention provokes international outcry

Cardinal Joseph Zen, retired bishop of Hong Kong, reassured Catholics he is fine after being detained and held by national security police for his support of anti-government protesters.

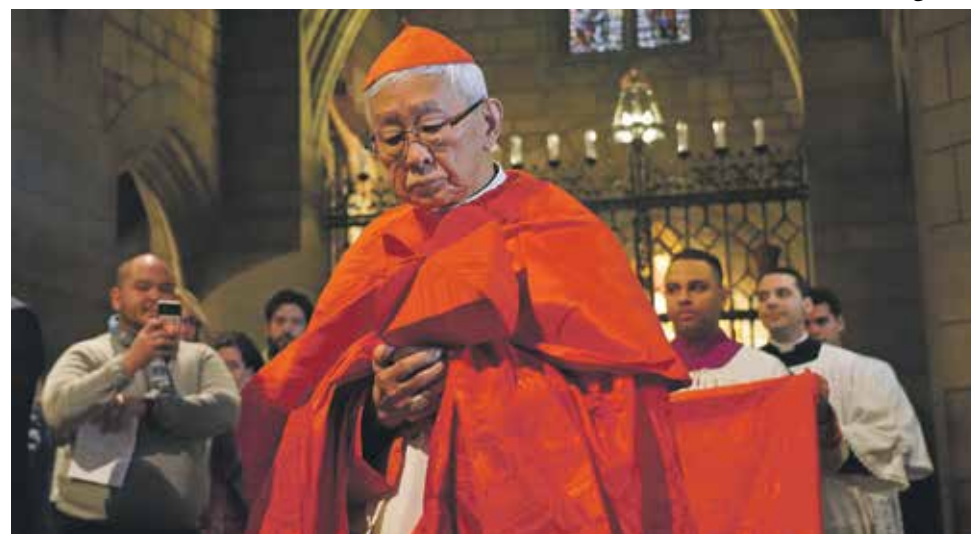
"I have spoken with Cardinal Zen," Hong Kong Bishop Stephen Chow Sau-yan wrote on his Facebook page. "He told me to let his friends know that he is fine. Not to worry. And he wants us to take a low-profile approach for him."

The 90-year-old cardinal returned to his home with the Hong Kong Salesians May 11 after being held several hours.

The cardinal and three other trustees of the now-defunct 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund were detained separately May 10 and May 11, and all were released May 11. The fund was set up to offer financial assistance to those involved in anti-government protests in 2019 and was disbanded after coming under scrutiny by authorities over the past year.

The national security police force was established "to safeguard Chinese national security". The cardinal and others were interrogated in the Wan Chai police station for allegedly colluding with foreign forces.

Hong Kong's 2020 security law made participating in or supporting the pro-democracy movement crimes of subversion and collusion with foreign organisations and allowed for those remanded to be extra-



Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, retired bishop of Hong Kong, processes prior to celebrating a pontifical high Mass at St Vincent Ferrer Church in New York City in this 2020 photo. Photo: CNS.

ditioned to mainland China. Punishment ranges between a minimum of three years and a maximum of life imprisonment.

Critics say that violates the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China. The law, approved by China's National People's Congress in 1990, took effect July 1, 1997, when Britain handed back control of Hong Kong to China. The law safeguards the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and also protects the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents.

In a statement May 12, the Diocese of Hong Kong called on the government to uphold religious freedom in the city and said: "We have always upheld

the rule of law. We trust that in the future we will continue enjoying religious freedom in Hong Kong under the Basic Law."

The statement also urged "the Hong Kong Police and the judicial authorities to handle Cardinal Zen's case in accordance with justice, taking into consideration our concrete human situation". It said it was "extremely concerned about the condition and safety of Cardinal Joseph Zen, and we are offering our special prayers for him".

The Vatican issued a statement May 11 saying it had "learned with concern the news of Cardinal Zen's arrest" and was "following the development of the situation with

extreme attention". The following day, the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, ran a story on the incident with a headline kicker noting the "concern of the Holy See".

Bishop David Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, noted that although the cardinal had been released, "his situation remains precarious". He backed the Vatican statement and invited Catholics to pray for "Cardinal Zen and others who share his current predicament ... and that justice may prevail".

The detentions prompted immediate outcries from international human rights leaders.

Violence and threats condemned after US high court abortion leak

Biden administration officials issued a statement against violence May 9 following protests outside the homes of two Supreme Court justices in the Washington area as well as a spate of vandalism and disruptions targeting locales of groups that oppose abortion, some of which include Catholic churches.

Referring to US President Joe Biden by the Twitter handle for President of the United States, or @POTUS, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that he "strongly believes in the Constitutional right to protest."

"But that should never include violence,

threats, or vandalism. Judges perform an incredibly important function in our society, and they must be able to do their jobs without concern for their personal safety," she tweeted.

The statement came after news agencies reported protests outside the home of Justice Brett Kavanaugh in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and the nearby home of Chief Justice John Roberts.

Others said another justice and his family had to be taken to an undisclosed location because of threats, but it turned out to be unfounded.

After the online news site Politico pub-

lished a report late May 2 from a leaked draft opinion signalling that the majority of Supreme Court justices seem set to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the decision legalising abortion, those opposed to having it overturned have taken to the streets to protest.

But vandalism showing discontent with the potential ruling also seems to be on the rise. *The New York Times* reported May 7 that part of the wall of the headquarters of Wisconsin Family Action, in Madison, was set on fire, leaving behind graffiti that read: "If abortions aren't safe then you aren't either."

Catholic archdiocese in Nigeria announces death of kidnapped priest

A Catholic archdiocese in Nigeria May 11 announced the death of a priest who was kidnapped in March.

The Archdiocese of Kaduna said on May 11 that Fr Joseph Akete Bako died more than a month after he was seized on March 8, reported ACI Africa.

Fr Christian Okewu Emmanuel, chancellor of the archdiocese, said: "It is with a heavy heart, but with total submission to the will of God, that we announce the death of Rev. Fr Joseph Akete Bako, which took place in the hands of his abductors between 18 and 20 of April 2022.

"The fact of the circumstances leading to his death and the date of the incident have been carefully verified, hence this communication at this time."

Fr Bako, 48, was kidnapped by bandits following an attack on St John's Catholic Parish, where he served as

pastor.

Before the archdiocese's announcement, there were conflicting reports about the priest's fate, with some sources indicating that Fr Bako, who suffered from ill health, was tortured to death.



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

Up in flames



Smoke from wildfire rises above a residential area in Laguna Niguel, California, May 12, 2022. Photo: CNS.

German bishops' president asserts Church teaching needs development

The president of the German bishops' conference has expressed his belief that Church teaching needs further development, in response to critique of the synodal path in that country.

The statement came in the latest instance of epistolary exchange between Bishop Georg Bätzing of Limburg and Archbishop Samuel Aquila of Denver.

"Our Church needs change in order to faithfully carry out her mission and take the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of our time. And the urgent need for change also includes the need to further develop the Church's teaching. Such is

my conviction," Bishop Bätzing wrote in a May 5 letter to Archbishop Aquila.

The assembly of the synodal path has voted in favour of documents calling for the priestly ordination of women, same-sex blessings, and changes to teaching on homosexual acts.

Germany's "Synodal Path" is a process that brings together lay people and bishops to discuss four major topics: how power is exercised in the Church; sexual morality; the priesthood; and the role of women. When the German bishops launched the process, they initially said that the deliberations would be "binding"

on the Church in Germany, prompting a Vatican intervention that rejected such claims.

In May 2021, Archbishop Aquila wrote that the synodal path's first text put forward "untenable" proposals for changes to Church teaching. He was among the drafters of an April 11 open letter that warned the synodal path may lead to schism, now signed by more than 100 bishops, six of whom are cardinals. And on May 2 he wrote to Bishop Bätzing reiterating that the synodal path challenges, and even repudiates, the deposit of faith.

In his May 5 response,

the Bishop of Limburg maintained that the synodal path is an appropriate response to clerical sex abuse.

"Based on intensive discussions with those affected and intensive scientific studies on the occurrence of abuse of children and young people by clerics in our country, we had to painfully accept that there are multi-dimensional systemic factors in the Catholic Church which favour abuse. Uncovering these and doing our utmost to overcome them is the starting point of the Synodal Path in Germany, and it is reflected in the four priority areas to be worked on," he wrote.

Prelature prohibited from accepting aid from those damaging Amazon

A Catholic prelature in Brazil's Amazon has decreed that its parishes will not accept donations from any person or company that displaces minorities or damages the earth.

Bishop José Ionilton Lisboa de Oliveira of Itacoatiara has prohibited parishes, pastoral communities, groups and movements linked to the prelature – similar to a diocese – from receiving financial resources from those he says "damage the Amazon".

"We decree, for an indefinite period,

that in parishes, communities, pastorals, groups and movements of the Prelature of Itacoatiara, we will not receive financial resources, in currency or other goods, from politicians, loggers, mining companies, oil exploration companies and gas, which contribute to deforestation and the expulsion of Indigenous people, quilombolas (Afro-descendant communities), riverside communities and small farmers from their lands" says the document.

The decree, addressed to priests and

coordinators of Catholic groups within the prelature, reproduces several quotes from *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis' 2020 apostolic exhortation after the 2019 world Synod of Bishops for the Amazon.

One of those quotes considers "the possibility that members of the Church have been part of networks of corruption, at times to the point of agreeing to keep silent in exchange for economic assistance for ecclesial works".

Vatican roundup

King and Queen of Jordan honoured with Peace Award

● On the occasion of its 29th Annual Gala on 9 May, the Path to Peace Foundation presented the 2022 Path to Peace Award to King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein and Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The prestigious annual award, presented to the royals this year, aims to recognise individuals for their commitment to the development of peace in both nation and international arenas.

Present at the occasion was Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See Mission to the United Nations, and President of the Path to Peace Foundation, who welcomed the 370 guests at the Gala.

During the ceremony, Archbishop Caccia highlighted the awardees' work "in service of peace and interfaith harmony in the Middle East and the wider world", and noted that the proposal to award the King and Queen of Jordan was first made in 2015.

The archbishop said that the roots of the Path to Peace Foundation are in the risen Christ's greetings to his apostles: "Peace be with you!" – a expression of a wish of peace which is common in cultures in the Middle East.

Pope: Low birth rate is a 'social emergency'

● Pope Francis decried the low birth rate in Western countries May 12, describing it as an urgent social emergency and a "new poverty".

"It is not immediately perceptible, like other problems that occupy the news, but it is very urgent: fewer and fewer children are being born, and this means impoverishing everyone's future; Italy, Europe, and the West are impoverishing their futures," Pope Francis said in a message to a May 12 event on the birth rate in Italy.

The Pope's message was read during the

second edition of the meeting "The General State of the Birth Rate," held in Rome on May 12-13. Pope Francis spoke at the meeting in 2021.

"Sorry that I cannot be among you physically this year," he said. "But I will follow your work closely, because the issue of birth rate represents a real social emergency."

"The General State of the Birth Rate" brought together political, business, and organisation leaders to reflect on Italy's demographic crisis, caused by one of the lowest birth rates in Europe: 1.24 births per woman.

'Ukraine has right to defend itself' - Vatican

● The Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, will be in Kyiv next week for a trip that was supposed to have taken place before Easter, but was postponed due to health reasons.

The journey was the starting point for Archbishop Gallagher's interview on Italian television program *Tg2 post* May 12: a twenty-minute long, live conversation focused on the war in Ukraine, as well as the international and ecumenical repercussions in the Holy See's diplomatic approach.

Considering NATO's strategy and the logic of the war in Ukraine, Archbishop Gallagher repeated several times that the Pope recognises the value of any system of security, and therefore defence, as long as it is "proportionate".

The Pope, he said, is "very concerned" that the world "not enter into a new arms race," insisting that there must always be "room for dialogue and discussion in order to arrive at peace".

This is also true with regard to the issue of sending arms to Kyiv, he said. "Ukraine has the right to defend itself," he noted, but at the same time the world must avoid a race to rearm, since the war poses a dangerous risk due to its possible "nuclear dimension".

Letters

Letter of the week

Too much to expect gratitude?

Dear Editor, In all the hullabaloo around the proposed new National Maternity Hospital (NMH), the entire thrust of most mainstream media commentary is an obsession to ensure that a key part of the work of the maternity hospital will be ending the lives of the most vulnerable human beings – unborn children.

The Religious Sisters of Charity have evidently decided to leave the healthcare space entirely after

years of heroic service that ensured that the poorest of the poor could be treated at a time when either the British authorities or the new government in the Free State paid much attention to our citizens. The new healthcare 'ethic' that sees children (and soon older people?) as merely disposable is very far from the ideals of the Religious Sisters of Charity – the many sisters who devoted their lives to the service of the sick and

the needy must be turning in their graves.

The fact is that the sisters have provided sterling service to this country for many years and continue to do so. Is a simple 'thank you, sisters' too much to ask? It seems so.

God save Ireland.

*Yours etc.,
Joe Byrne
Shankhill, Co. Dublin*

From saving to taking lives at maternity hospital

Dear Editor, A new maternity hospital is badly needed but it is depressing to listen to all the debate on the ownership of the land on which the hospital will be built. When my children were born the only focus was on the safe delivery of the baby, plus follow up care for the baby if needed and care of the mother.

It is obvious that the current debate is concern on whether free access to abortion will be hindered. Such a change – from saving lives to taking lives. How low can our country sink.

*Yours etc.,
Pauline Corry
Duleek, Co. Meath*



The Church can never be an inverted pyramid

Dear Editor, Reading the letters page of *The Irish Catholic* and comments elsewhere on the synodal pathway, there seems to be an appetite for fairly radical change, even among senior cardinals (e.g. the relator of the synod itself) and also "among the most committed of parishioners".

Others, for example Cardinal George Pell, are horrified by the direction in

which things appear to be going. Pope Francis (and the Irish bishops) want every voice to be heard, a sure recipe for ramping up expectations. I am old enough to remember the expectation of change before the promulgation of *Humanae Vitae* by St Paul VI and the sense of betrayal among clergy and laity when Pope Paul held the line on artificial contraception.

Many talk about hearing the Holy Spirit, but even the Pope is not guaranteed guidance except under very stringent conditions. Even the apostles got it wrong when, before Pentecost, they chose Matthias by lot; clearly the replacement for Judas chosen by the Holy Spirit was Paul – reading the First Eucharistic Prayer confirms this.

Personally I do not like synodality; it smacks of the approach used by some of our sister Churches with, in my opinion, disastrous consequences. The Catholic Church has been given an authority structure; it is not, and can never be, an inverted pyramid.

*Yours etc.,
Oliver Broderick
Youghal, Co. Cork*

A place we can call home

Dear Editor, It is gratifying to see the Irish bishops reaching out to LGBT Catholics (*The Irish Catholic*, May 12, 2022). They are following the lead of Pope Francis in acknowledging that gay and lesbian people are created by God in his own image and likeness and therefore worthy of a place at the table of the Lord. It's shocking that this needs to be stated and that we need to stand up to the voices in the

Church who would want to 'other' our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters and make them feel not welcome. How dare these voices try to say who is and who isn't welcome at the supper of the Lord.

It is a fact that there are many committed gay, lesbian, bisexual and indeed transsexual people in our parishes – many of them live lives of quiet heroism enduring daily ridicule and

crude homophobic jokes – they are blessed children of the Lord, and the bishops must ensure that they know this.

There is hope in the love that God shows to each and everyone of us – especially those of us who are not perfect.

*Yours etc.,
Joe McDonald
Westport, Co. Mayo*

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

Irish bishops in talks with LGBT Catholics

A theological and moral cul de sac. – **Christopher McCamley**

Why would a bishop make a statement but not wish to be named? Not very courageous leadership alas. – **Lorna Downey**

If we not welcome sinners, the churches will be emptied. I think that is what the Pope is saying. I don't think he ever said homosexuality is fine. – **Guillaume Rouy**

Michelle O'Neill and her teenage pregnancy

Perhaps Ms O'Neill was more humane in her teens than now. – **Eilin Glynn**

'No Doubt' SDLP's abortion position turned away voters, says Baroness O'Loan

Well said Nuala you are a fearless pro-life champion. God bless you. It's very sad to see the cowardice of some of our politicians who claim to be pro-life to get voted in and then they vote for abortion. – **Patricia O'Neill**

Baroness O'Loan has become NI's equivalent of Lord Alton of Liverpool and should be treasured. Both believe in 'speaking truth unto power' without fear or favour. – **Charles Glenn**

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

Politicians in direct conflict with Church teaching

Dear Editor, US president Joe Biden's fervent support for abortion 'rights' seems to be in direct conflict with a fundamental tenet of Catholicism – the right to life.

More worrying than the virtue-signalling antics of a politician however, is the absence of any clear response from our Church regarding the public position of this most prominent of Catholic public figures on this issue.

What are ordinary Catholics to think?

*Yours etc.,
Gabriel Meehan
Bailieborough, Co. Cavan*

What about the priests?

Dear Editor, I'm grateful to the Irish bishops for their outreach to LGBT people in the Church (*The Irish Catholic*, May 12, 2022). It is long overdue. Isn't it time that the bishops also reached out to the many gay priests who are serving us in our parishes and other ministries? They work tirelessly in a Church that has nothing positive to say about them or learn from their experiences.

Gay priests operate in the grey area of 'don't ask, don't tell' which prevents them from being open about their sexuality and the particular challenges it brings them in trying to live chastely.

Let's be open about it, please.

*Yours etc.,
Mary McDaid
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, May 19, 2022

Personal Profile

Coming to God
through prayer and
work

Page 32



Taking a break from social media

Life today can often feel all go, all the time. I'm coming to see that that's a normal part of the human condition – God worked six days and rested only for one, after all – but sometimes we are unhelpfully overloaded, and social media can contribute to this immensely.

Many people spend an enormous amount of time on social media every day, whether it be Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok, LinkedIn or otherwise, and while that time can be well-spent if it's intentional, the vast majority of it is not. Aimless scrolling and purposeless reading and watching constitute much of my interaction with these platforms, anyway, and I'd guess I'm not alone in that.



Taking a break from social media is an essential element of retreat in today's world, writes Jason Osborne

According to an *Insider* article, around the world 3.96 billion people use social media, spending an average of 144 minutes on it each day. These sites and apps are designed to be addictive, with multiple documentaries highlighting the clever tricks and hacks they use to lure you in and keep your attention.

You must be careful, though, as studies have shown that over-scrolling can cause or compound feelings of stress, anxiety,

depression, loneliness and/or isolation. While I've been fortunate to avoid these symptoms, I've certainly grown aware of discontent fomenting in me as I grow aware of how much time I waste on these platforms.

With all of that said, sometimes it's a good strategy to retreat and recollect yourself. While social media is a part of the world we live in now and can most definitely be used to the good, it's important to switch

off from time to time. I did so for some months after graduating from college, and I reaped the rewards. Here are some of the signs to take heed of that may indicate you too need a break.

You're not having fun

When I was in school, my friends and I had great fun with Facebook, and it really did act as an enabler for much of our extra-curricular socialising. We'd send each other memes and organise events for our group, and I remember those days quite fondly. However, for me and many others, a time comes when you become aware that you're not using the site well – rather, it's draining you to scroll. When that time comes, consider taking a break to re-establish real connections and a purposeful sense of time.

Affecting your life

The figure quoted above, 144 minutes on average spent on social media per day, is a scary one. Over two hours of our time on average is frittered away with very little to show for it. To think that this doesn't impinge upon other aspects of our lives would be a big mistake.

Perhaps you're looking at your phone last thing at night and first thing in the morning, providing your tired eyes and sleepy brain with unhealthy levels of instant stimulation. Maybe in work you're neglecting your duties in favour of scrolling. It could even be the case that when you're out with friends or family, your phone keeps drifting into your hands, stealing your attention away from them.

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Family News



AND EVENTS

MAJOR US RETAILERS
LIMIT BABY FORMULA
OVER SHORTAGES

US retailers including Target, CVS Health Corp and Walgreens said they have limited purchases of infant formula due to a supply shortage.

The limits come after top supplier Abbott Laboratories in February recalled some baby formula including Similac made at its plant in Michigan over complaints of bacterial infections in babies who consumed the products.

CVS said it last month limited in-store and online purchases of the products to three per order, while Walgreens issued a similar cap in March. Kroger has a limit of four products per customer and Target has had restrictions on online sales for weeks.

Abbott said it was “doing everything” it can to address the shortage, including prioritising production of the products and air shipping them from its US drug regulator-approved facility in Ireland.

No formula that has been distributed has tested positive for bacteria, according to the company.

FULLY OPERATIONAL
DELOREAN GOES UP FOR
AUCTION

The wing-doored DeLorean, with an “OUTATIME” license plate and a mock-up flux capacitor, is among a host of movie memorabilia up for auction in California next month.

But unlike Thor’s Hammer, Obi Wan Kenobi’s lightsaber or Wilson the spiky-haired volleyball from “Castaway,” which are also on the block, the DeLorean doesn’t just have to sit on display: you can actually drive it.

“This DeLorean is fully operational, registered and insured with... current mileage of 22,532,” says the auction catalogue published by movie specialists Propstore.

“As this is a functioning vehicle, a legal transfer of title will need to take place before delivery can be arranged.”

The car, which was used for events promoting Robert Zemeckis’s ‘Back to the Future’ trilogy, is expected to go for between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

APPLE PULLS PLUG ON
ICONIC IPOD AFTER 20 YEARS

Apple has confirmed it is no longer making iPods, the trend-setting MP3 players that transformed how people get music and gave rise to the iPhone.

Late Apple co-founder Steve Jobs introduced the devices nearly 21 years ago with his showmanship flare, and the small, easy to operate players helped the company revolutionise how music was sold.

It packed “a mind-blowing 1,000 songs” the company said at the time, and together with Apple’s iTunes shop established a new distribution model for the music industry.

Buying complete albums on vinyl gave way to paying 99 cents apiece for selected digital songs.

Industry trackers and California-based Apple itself have long acknowledged that the do-it-all iPhone would eat away at sales of one-trick devices such as iPod MP3 players.

The trend toward streaming music services, including one by Apple, has made devices designed just for carrying digital songs around less enticing for consumers.

Being drawn into an intimate relationship with God



Today I want to finish up my reflection on the parallels between meditation and marriage. All relationships struggle at some point and, very likely, at several points along the shared journey. Change is inevitable in every aspect of life and not all change is immediately welcome, so struggle is inevitable too and must be seen as a normal part of life.

It is all the more difficult to be faithful when we are struggling; it may seem easier and less painful, to give up. But it is important to persevere, to remain faithful to the relationship and work with the uncertainty and ambiguity that struggle generates until we come out the other side. And, while we wait patiently for an issue to be resolved, we simply live the question.

When we do so we come to understand that the fruits of marriage and meditation flow in part from the struggle, from living our way through the question – we learn to persevere even when we feel inadequate to the task. We just continue to do our best, accepting the dawning realisation that nothing in life is perfect and that, most certainly, we ourselves are not perfect; not even our beloved partner who we love more than anything.

Perseverance, both in meditation and in marriage, can lead to an expanded, enriched sense of who we are at the deepest level of our being. As we allow our sharp corners and edges to fall away, whether ‘knocked off’ by marriage or meditation, we begin to discern a spaciousness deep within ourselves. We may lack the language to give adequate – or any – expression to it, but we feel it nonetheless.

All of the wisdom traditions of the world agree that meditation promotes human flourishing and most of them speak in terms of discovering a deeper sense of

Mindful
livingDr Noel
Keating

identity as one’s centre of gravity moves from the head to the heart. And we begin to appreciate ever more deeply that we are all intimately connected to one another. In the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, we discover that we ‘inter-are’.

A loving relationship in marriage teaches this too. It draws us outside of the ego-centre as we begin to see the world from the perspective of the person we love. Not alone do marriage and meditation awaken each of us to a new way of seeing the outer world, they also awaken us to our own inner landscape. We come to experience how the other person sees us and to apprehend more deeply the essence of who we are at the deepest level of our being. And, so we can say, that meditation and marriage promote greater self-awareness and help to transform our sense of self-identity.

Both marriage and meditation teach us that to accept ourselves as whole is to embody both our strengths and limitations, including our shadow self. Continuing to work our way through the challenges of marriage and meditation leads to inner and outer growth and to greater wholeness as individuals and as a couple, as we discover, in the words of Leonard Cohen, how important it is to:

“Ring the bell that still can ring.
Forget the perfect offering.

There is a crack in everything.
That’s how the light gets in.”

As more light gets in and we grow in wholeness, we discover that, ultimately, love is who we are; that at our core lies original blessing, not original sin. We learn that when we love, we access, and act from, our deepest being, our deepest truth, our true-self.

And that when we fail to live according to love, we act from outside of being – we are not being real. To live outside of love is to succumb to the illusion of separateness. Both marriage and meditation help us to overcome this illusion. It has been a key message of the Christian Churches for centuries that we should see ourselves as unworthy of God’s love and need to be ‘saved’ and ‘redeemed’. But this too is an illusion. I believe it is the primary task of religion to communicate the opposite, to draw us back into primal and intimate relationship with love, with God. This is not to deny our capacity for human



weakness, indeed our sinfulness, but to acknowledge that is not who we are.

In Christian terms, this means to realise, as the first letter of John reminds us, that ‘God is love, and whoever remains in love, remains in God and God in her or him’ (1 John 4:16). Meditation and marriage share this awesome

capacity to awaken the heart and clear away the impediments to receiving, allowing, trusting, and participating in this foundational love. Both teach us that, ultimately, Love is who we are.

Let me sign off with Edwina Gateley’s poem *Beginnings*; it captures what I have been saying about marriage and meditation in this and recent articles:

*Beginnings—
just tiny stirrings
which disturb our even surface,
prodding us into new and
different shapes...
claiming their place
on our horizons—
stretching us
where we would not go—
yet we must.
Driven by life forces
deeper than our dreams,
we dare to rise
and grasp towards
the new young thing—
not yet born—
but insistent—
like a tight seed bursting
for life,
carrying within it
all the power
of a woman’s
birthing thrust.*

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

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While they may seem innocuous examples, taken together, social media can pull us away from many of the things that add up to a good and healthy life. Quality sleep, quiet time, good work and engagement with friends and family can all be threatened significantly by an over-reliance on social media.

'Doomscrolling'

I've written previously about the harmful effects an overly-negative news cycle can have on us, and social media is one of the main ways we get caught in that loop. Twitter in particular can offer an addictive cycle of doom, if not managed carefully.

“The signs mentioned above are but a few of the negative ways too much social media can weigh in on your quality of life”

Keeping on top of the latest news and developments is one way of being an engaged, active Catholic in today's world, but it shouldn't come at the expense of your soul. If the seemingly endless reportage of calamities is dragging you into cynicism, pessimism or despair, it's a good indication that it's time to take a break from the platforms presenting it to you in favour of a wholesome recharge.

Manage your usage

The signs mentioned above are but a few of the negative ways too much social media can weigh in on your quality of life. There are obviously more, but these are a few of the ones I've noticed myself. As stated at the beginning of this article, sometimes the best thing to do is to undergo a total social media 'detox', deactivating or deleting your accounts if you're in a position to do so.

I did this following my graduation from college, and it served me wonderfully in terms of helping me to consolidate my attention and to begin reattributing my time to the things that really matter. However, we're not all in a position to cut out altogether – nor in this day and age should we necessarily. Social media is an inescapable fact of life in the 21st Century world, and a responsible use of it rather than total foregoing of it is probably plenty in keeping with God's plan for most of us.

With that in mind, if you decide not to run for the hills entirely, here are a couple of tips and tricks to get your social media habit under control:

- Schedule specific time for social media: A helpful trick is to allot yourself a specific time or specific times throughout the day for checking and using social media, and leaving it there. 15 minutes in the morning and in the evening, or even 30 if it's really necessary, should give you plenty of time to get essential updates and contrib-

ute to the online sphere yourself. This is obviously conditional of your situation, particularly if you require social media for work!

“Leave your phone out of reach: This is a particularly useful strategy at night, as it will help you to get out of bed when your alarm goes off in the morning”

- Track your usage: Apps can be downloaded and used to tell you just how much time you're spending on social media, and the shock alone of seeing how much time you've given them can help to keep a bad habit in check. 'Offtime' and 'moment' are just two of the many apps dedicated to decluttering your interactions with social media.

- Leave your phone out of reach: This is a particularly useful strategy at night, as it will help you to get out of bed when your alarm goes off in the morning. Scrolling last thing before sleep and first thing upon waking aren't ideal ways to spend those threshold moments, so ensuring your phone is out of reach from your bed is a useful physical barrier for limiting that behaviour.

- Turn off notifications: It's often notifications of likes, retweets or messages that keep us hooked and draw us back in straight after we've put our phones down, so turn off the notifications where possible. It's a case of “what you don't know can't hurt you”.

Whether you quit social media altogether or simply manage your usage better is up to you and dependent on your circumstances, but it's essential that we consciously engage with these platforms that have come to form such a large part of our lives.



Faith — IN THE — family



Charlotte Vard

It was a little over ten years ago when little old me at 18 was put into a leadership role in my youth group and to say I was winging it was an understatement. Fast forward to November 2020 when I officially took up a youth ministry position in my parish, I decided that I could do this. I have a lot of different responsibilities but at the core of my job is to minister to the youth of Newbridge parish. Here are three things that I have learned working with the young people in the parish in just over two years during the pandemic.

Every young person is a witness

It takes confidence and courage for people of any age to bear witness to the experience of the love and mercy of Christ, especially true for those going through their teenage years. Our culture often delivers messages that there is no place for God. But never underestimate the power of your witness – in fact, young people at times can often be more effective in sharing the faith than adults. Timothy 4:12 says “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” It is in the young people's choices – to go to the youth group or to participate in the Pope John Paul II Award. They say yes, and through their experiences they become witnesses. The gift of the Spirit that they received in Confirmation is not the end of learning about the Faith, but a wonderful new beginning. A beginning that they themselves are now actively choosing. They are evangelising and they do not even know it yet! St Pope Paul VI said: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” They are witnesses.

They are giving

Whenever I have asked the young people I work with to get involved in some way – in the parish, the diocese, a Mass or in the community, they have wanted to get involved. Just recently, to show their support for the people of Ukraine the youth pledged

to do a 5km Prayer Walk in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. On Saturday March 19, they gathered with many parishioners and completed the walk. After the walk the young people tried to increase their understanding of the current situation faced by their peers in Ukraine. They took part in a social justice workshop

focusing on the struggles and sacrifices made by many who now find themselves to be a refugee with local teacher Jenny Gannon. They also looked at the impact the war has on the progression of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Papal

Cross participants along with their leaders completed a 'Stay Awake' that night, with prayers, reflections, further refugee awareness sessions, and team bonding – a simple act of solidarity. All ending on Sunday morning with 8.30am Mass in St Conleth's parish church. They have raised €2,370. The young people in our Church want to make a contribution. They want to do something that is real and makes a difference.

Always bring the games.. even on Zoom!

In moments of laughter and fun, amazing things happen. Walls come down between everyone present, and bonds are built. The games and fun lighten the mood to prepare them for the time of prayer or conversation ahead. Games support the development of the group, they promote an openness between all present, they reduce stress and enable all members of the group to bond and grow. Every day I laugh with the young people I work with, I aim to have fun with them. It is in the fun and laughter that deep bonds are formed that enable us to deepen our faith and contribute to each other's faith journey.

I learn every day from these incredible young people that I have the privilege to encounter and I'm learning that it's just that: an encounter. A moment in time, with each of them, with each group. Remembering the importance of connection, real experiences and fun. Let's make the moments count.



Coming to God through prayer and work

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

When Karen Wynne left home to work in Dublin, her mother encouraged her to join a prayer group. But Karen resisted until a trip to Medjugorje open her eyes to the importance of prayer and work in community are to strengthen your faith.

Karen always had a connection to the Faith due to her Catholic upbringing, she explains: "I grew up in a house that said the rosary every night or most nights at least, and went to Mass on Sundays. My parents would have always been encouraging us to pray, even as children, to our guardian angel and to the Holy Spirit."

Holy Spirit

"My dad would say – whether it was before exams or anything if you were in anyway nervous – he would say, 'What are you nervous about? Ask the Holy Spirit, he knows everything anyway,'" Karen tells me. "It was just a very practical faith, blessing yourself going out the door, blessing yourself getting into the car. It was a very Catholic upbringing really."

Even when she went to college, Karen continued to attend Mass regularly, while noticing for the first time that some of her friends didn't. When she moved to Dublin for work, her mother would often encourage her and her sister to join a prayer



Karen Wynne

group.

"But sure I wasn't having any of it, my attitude was prayer groups are for holy Joes," she remembers. "In my mid to late 20s I went to Medjugorje, with my sister or a friend. And a priest in Confession said to me – I'm always amazed I can remember this – he just said, 'You must join a prayer meeting, you're swimming upstream'."

"Even the fact that he said you're swimming upstream – I was big into my swimming at the time – even the fact that he used that analogy I thought was striking. I did, as soon as I came home, somewhat reluctantly. I set about joining Youth 2000 and it took three attempts because Youth 2000 doesn't run during the summer. So whenever I came back from Medjugorje the meetings weren't on. But on my third attempt, I kind of said to the Lord, if you want me to go to this, it had better be

open, because this is my last try. And it was on and I basically from that I kept with it."

Prayer group

Karen was quite private about the fact she was joining a prayer group, she explains, but adds that she quickly developed firm friends from within the Youth 2000 community.

"I got involved with them organising retreats, including the annual retreats down in Clonmacnoise. I was involved for a good few years and was then out of that and got involved in the Elijah group, a charismatic group, for about a year or so. I loved it," Karen says.

"Then for whatever reasons I wasn't involved in anything for two or three years and I was looking to get back into something. I was working down in Eccles Street at the time, always passing homeless people – so it was on my mind to do something

for the homeless."

One of Karen's friends suggested she join the Legion of Mary, and initially she resisted the suggestion: "It's not that I knew anything about them, other than seeing legionaries handing out leaflets of [Legion founder] Frank Duff," Karen says. "I think I just saw them as old people handing out fliers of an old man. I thought it was for old people."

“Karen has also helped out and organised parish projects, which involves going away for a weekend or a week and going door-to-door to encourage people back into the parish”

"As it turned out, I used to go to Mass in Berkeley Road and went to the Triduum for St Therese in maybe 2014. Coming out the door of the third day, I was saying, come on St Therese give me a rose here. As I walked out the door, this lady came over to me saying, 'Karen have you no rose? Here have one of mine'."

"I was chuckling away and she walked me out the gate and wasn't there a legionary outside. She handed me a card for the [Legion hostel] Regina Coeli and I thought, well that's me told. Within that week then, I met one girl who had been an indoor sister there. I met two or three people who spoke about the Regina Coeli to me. I joined for a week or two, and then I started in Regina Paces and there I am still."

Since getting involved with the Legion, Karen has volunteered for a variety of jobs, including organising youth conferences through Legion subsidiary Deus et Patria. However, the homeless hostel remains her primary focus.

"When I get a request or a meeting to go beyond half four, I have to say sorry, haven't time – too much Legion stuff! The Regina Coeli is a lot of light housekeeping work, a front office to keep an eye on who is coming in or out and we'd say the rosary with the sisters and residents and cook evening tea."

"Really we try to get to know the residents, try and focus on the spiritual aspect of it. We're there for the cooking and cleaning, but it's more than that, it's building up bonds with them and encouraging them with the Faith. We try and take them where they're at."

Karen has also helped out and organised parish projects, which involves going away for a weekend or a week and going door-to-door to encourage people back into the parish. From this, she has an increasing sense that people are more open to the Faith than is often thought.

"I think the first parish project I did was in 2016 and then I did a week-long project in Donegal – you just learn so much from it. One thing I really learned is that so many people are willing to engage and willing to listen. I think that's more so now than say, when I went out to help with the abortion referendum – not in my Legion capacity. It was so hostile. Whereas now when you're out on the streets, people are engaging. I do find that when you're going door to door, people are more willing to engage than you'd expect."

"And after a weekend of it, you'd really be as high as kites. It's a great way of getting to know each other and becoming friends. There's nothing like trips to conferences, lots of time in the car getting to know people. You'd have great craic doing them as well, they're very worthwhile."

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

Sweet Treats

Kiley Britten



Delightfully moreish Millionaire's Squares

This recipe is inspired by one of my favourite chefs, Nigella Lawson. Her unapologetic love of butter and sugar, along with her love of eating well, means her recipes are always indulgent and decadent. These millionaire's squares are a wonderful treat for children and adults alike. The shortbread base and gooey cheat's caramel make for a 'can't have just one' moreish-ness. I like to use dark chocolate in my own, but you can use milk if that is your preference. I also find that sprinkling a little flaky salt onto the chocolate, after it has been poured on to the caramel, makes these squares feel a little more grown-up. Either way, they are excellent

to eat while lounging around at a picnic by the seaside, after dinner, or for a mid-afternoon snack- basically, they are just excellent to eat!



Ingredients

- 225g plain flour
- 60g sugar
- 375g butter
- 397g tin sweetened condensed milk
- 4 tablespoons golden syrup
- 325g chocolate

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 170°/ Gas 3. Line a large baking tin or dish with baking paper.
2. Place the flour and sugar into a bowl with 175g of the butter. Rub or cut the butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs. Press this mixture

into your lined baking tin and smooth out. Prick with a fork and cook for 5 minutes. Lower the temperature to 150°/Gas 2 and continue baking for 30 minutes, until the shortbread is golden brown. Let it cool for around 30 minutes.

3. Melt the remaining 200g butter in a saucepan on a low heat, then add the condensed milk and the golden syrup. Mix everything together and turn the heat to medium. Stirring the whole time, let the mixture thicken and turn a light golden-brown colour- this will take about 5 minutes. Pour the caramel over the shortbread, allowing it to cool for another 30 minutes.

4. Break apart the chocolate and place into a small saucepan on low heat. Melt the chocolate, stirring every so often so it doesn't burn. Once it is melted, pour over the caramel. Allow the chocolate and squares to set completely. I usually leave them overnight in the fridge.

5. Allow the squares to come to room temperature before lifting them out of the tin. To cut the squares without cracking the chocolate, you can gently heat a knife over a gas flame before each cut.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Radio Maria offers a cheerful and uplifting menu

Up to last week I'd never heard of a Mariathon before. Well, it's a worthy fundraising drive by Radio Maria Ireland as I discovered when I dipped in to a few shows on the station during the week. It's a great service for Catholic listeners and is widely accessible by Saor-view, YouTube and its own excellent app. The station is devotional, cheerful, pious, prayerful, sincere, traditional and modern by turns.

On Wednesday one of the regular shows was replaced by a show featuring songs from various musicals, like *The Sound of Music* and *West Side Story*. The young presenters were certainly enjoying themselves. This was followed by a live rosary, and prayer is certainly central throughout the schedule, including on **Prayer During the Day** after Midday most days. Mass is broadcast at 10am every day which is a great facility for those at home by necessity, an alternative to the TV Mass on the RTÉ News channel.

Later on Thursday I heard some of the **Faith and Reason** show, with discussion of all sorts of issues – including whether there would be a need for privacy in Heaven! That afternoon on the **Book Club** programme Fr John McCarthy explored the memoirs of Sr Lucia one of those who experienced the



On May 13, papal nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo celebrated Mass in the Radio Maria Ireland studio for the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima and to mark seven years of Radio Maria Ireland.

apparitions at Fatima. I enjoy the regular **Chatechesis** with Fr Eamonn McCarthy. Last Saturday Fr Eamonn pointed out that there is a Radio Maria channel in Ukraine, which I hope acts as a consolation in that war-torn country.

Sometimes I find the programme listed in the schedule (as shown in the app at least) is not what turns up – e.g. as I was expecting **Ceol agus Craic** on Saturday afternoon, I got a repeat of **Encounter**, which was quite interesting, where an American girl, Catherine, from the House of Brigid community interviewed Dan Donnelly an American student from Notre Dame who had gone

from being atheist to living in a Catholic community of young adults – quite upbeat and reflective.

One qualm – some shows are hosted by a pair of presenters, and their banter may be more enjoyable for them than for the listener – the same issue applies across several stations – e.g. Shane Coleman and Ciara Kelly on *Newstalk Breakfast*, or Aasmah Mir and Stig Abel on *Times Radio Breakfast*. Speaking of which, last Sunday saw the last appearance on that latter show of presenter Jenny Kleeman – her professional and good-humoured approach will be missed, though I hope we'll still catch her from time to

time as guest on *The Papers* (BBC News, nightly).

The third and apparently final series of **The Spilt** ended last week on BBC One. As I've written before it is excellent adult drama, adult in a good way. Mature themes abound but the story is largely character-driven, enhanced by marvellous acting and scripting, and for the most part controversial issues are handled with a light touch. For example, assisted suicide was a recurring theme but I didn't feel I was being browbeaten by an agenda as a character feared the onset of motor neurone disease. I found it nudged towards choice and autonomy but also flew the flag for

PICK OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY

BBC Radio 4 Sunday May 22, 7am

Topical religious and ethical matters, usually presented by William Cawley.

QUEST FOR SHAKESPEARE

EWTN Sunday May 22, 9am

Host Joseph Pearce discusses Hamlet's relationship with Ophelia, and examines the parallels between espionage in the play and the real-life spy network by which England's Catholics were besieged.

MASS

RTÉ One Sunday May 22, 11am

Mass with students and staff of Coláiste Muire, Cobh, Co Cork. The musical director is Dominic Finn, and the celebrant is Fr Tom McDermott.

palliative care.

The series is aptly named as the main characters are a family of divorce lawyers with their own marital difficulties, with children the victims of the adults' self-indulgence. I thought that last episode was a tad preachy, not typical of the whole series, with some rather wordy rationalising on the concept of 'the good divorce'. I don't buy it. On the plus side the issue of grief was handled beautifully as one character had to deal with the death of her husband. In that episode there was a heart-breaking graveside scene, all the more so as the character didn't seem to believe in an afterlife. And then, in one of the most moving scenes

I've ever seen in TV drama, we saw her listening to her husband's beating heart – in the chest of a man who had benefitted from her generous willingness to donate that organ. There's also a very touching and subtle friendship between a woman and a widowed vicar. If I'm being vague here it's just that I want to avoid too many spoilers – for when it turns up later on RTÉ.

Also noteworthy were the fine original songs contributed to the series by Olivia Bradfield – you'll find the album on Spotify.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
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Music

Pat O'Kelly



A feast of Brahms awaits in Dublin

The NSO's concert at the National Concert Hall tomorrow evening – Friday 20 – brings together two pianist/composers whose lives were intrinsically linked following their first meeting in Düsseldorf in 1853. The senior, by 14 years, was Leipziger Clara Schumann married to composer Robert Schumann; the other was Hamburg-born Johannes Brahms.

Robert and Clara were immediately attracted to Brahms' music as well as to the young man himself. The deep bond established between them lasted until Clara's death in 1896. Following Robert Schumann's death in an asylum in Erlenbach, near Bonn, in 1856, Brahms was highly



Baritone Ben McAteer, supportive of the Schumann family particularly towards the children's education.

There is nothing to suggest the Clara Schumann/Brahms relationship was anything other than platonic with both

respecting each other's integrity completely. Almost invariably Brahms, in Vienna, sent Clara, in Berlin, his compositions for her critical approval before publication. A strong willed woman, Clara was also kindly and affectionate.

Her early life had been difficult. Her parents Friedrich and Marianne Wieck separated when she was five leaving her and three brothers with their truculent father who remarried in 1828.

Speak

Strangely Clara never spoke until she was four years old with her parents, and others, assuming she was deaf. However, her piano playing was prodigious and she began

appearing in public from the age of nine.

She met Robert Schumann when he came to study with her father in 1834. Over time an emotional bond was forged between them and they became secretly engaged in 1837. When Schumann sought Clara's hand in marriage he was smartly dispatched by the irate Wieck.

The couple then applied to the Court of Appeal, which granted approval for Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann to marry on September 12, 1840. Wieck, who considered Schumann a drunkard, was beside himself with rage.

The marriage was not without its difficulties especially as Clara continued her performing career giving concerts through-

out Europe, including one at Dublin's Antient Concert Rooms on May 30, 1856. With Schumann's physical and mental health in decline he died on July 29 that year. They had seven children, the last of whom, Eugenie, lived until 1938.

Brahms

Tomorrow's concert, in which the main work is Brahms' *A German Requiem*, opens with Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto. The piece dates from 1833 when the composer was 14. It began life as a *Concertsatz*, or concert movement, and as such was premiered by Clara the following year.

She then decided to add another two movements with the *Concertsatz* becoming the

ensuing concerto's finale. Clara gave the first performance of this version with Mendelssohn conducting at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on November 9, 1835. Romanian/UK pianist Alexandra Dariescu plays the piece here.

Brahms took the text of his Requiem from the Lutheran Bible starting with *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*. In the seven-movement work, the words are concerned with comforting the living rather than praying for the dead.

Tomorrow's performance, conducted by Gerhard Markson, has the National Symphony Chorus with soloists Jennifer Davis, soprano and Ben McAteer, baritone.

Be loved and liberated by God

In the opening prayer of today's Mass we ask God to help us celebrate our joy in the resurrection of the Lord. The Gospel reading today (John 14: 23-29) sparkles with reasons for Christian joy. It is set in the uplifting conversation of Jesus with his disciples after the last supper. The disciples were confused and numbed when Jesus was telling them that he was going away, but he consoled them with some wonderful promises.

Be loved

The first consolation of Jesus reminds us of how much God loves us. Many people know of God's love with their brains but not in their hearts. Do yourself a favour and get a copy of the booklet of Pope Francis called *Rejoice and be Glad*. He tells us, "Do not be afraid to set your hearts higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself to be guided by the Holy Spirit" (Paragraph 34).

Why does Francis ask us to allow ourselves to be loved and liberated by God? I suggest that we are inclined to take ourselves too seriously and do not take God seriously enough. We think that we have to merit God's love. We do not deserve love. We need to be liberated from the chains of unworthiness, guilt and fear.

“The first consolation of Jesus reminds us of how much God loves us”

Here is a story I came across recently in a book called *The Jesus Prayer* by Frederica Mathewes Green. It happened when Romania was under the brutal rule of atheistic communism. A priest named Fr Iscu was arrested and imprisoned. He was beaten so much by one of the prison officers that his injuries eventually brought him to the point of death. In the meantime, the prison officer fell out of favour and he too was tortured to the point of death. Providence intervened and it happened that both were hospitalised in the same ward. The communist now filled the ward with his cries that he was not ready to die because of all the people he had murdered. Fr Iscu recognised him and asked others to help him totter

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



to the bedside of the wailing man. He embraced his murderer and told him that he loved him. "If I who am a sinner can love you so much, imagine how much Christ, who died to set us free, loves you. He wishes you to be saved even more than you wish to be saved." He explained how he might confess how sorry he was now for all the tortures he had inflicted. The guilty man found the words with tears of repentance and the priest pronounced the forgiveness of God. Both of them died that night. It happened to be Christmas Eve, a night when Christ was born in the heart of a communist murderer. He allowed himself to be loved and liberated.

Home in us

Jesus continues his conversation with the disciples. "Everyone who loves me, will keep my word, and my Father will love them and we shall come and make our home with them." This is called the divine indwelling, which many regard as the best kept secret in Christianity.

St Augustine wrote a poetic description of his conversion to God. "Late have I loved you, O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you. You were within and I was in the external world and sought you there and in my unlovely state I plunged into those lovely creatures which you had made. You were with me and I was not with you." Augustine moved from the things of the external world to the presence of God within. So, if you think that you are a million miles from God, guess who moved! Contemplative prayer begins when we grow in awareness of God's presence in us. Some call it Christian mindfulness, being more attentive to God dwelling within us.

Holy Spirit

Jesus continues to strengthen the disciples, speaking of the Holy Spirit. I grew up in the days when the Holy Spirit, then given the scary name Holy Ghost, was seriously forgotten. It is one of the seeds of hope for the Church today that the role

of the Holy Spirit is more appreciated. Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit as the Advocate. This is a Latin name, meaning the one-called-to-your-side as your friend, your support, your inspiration, your guide. Advocate is an exact Latin translation of *Paraclete* in Greek. Jesus knew that his disciples were confused so he promised that the Holy Spirit would be with them and within them to remind them all that he had taught them.

God's peace

Having spoken about the unconditional, unmerited love of God, then about the divine indwelling and the support of the Holy Spirit, Jesus summed it all up as peace. Not any kind of peace but that same strength in serenity of mind and heart which Jesus showed on the very eve of his painful passion and death. "Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give." His peace is an inner strength drawn from the belief that God is always with us. Not only with us but within us.

“St Augustine wrote a poetic description of his conversion to God”

Jesus continues his conversation with the disciples. "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid...Trust in God still and trust in me."

God is knocking on the door of your heart, longing to set up home within you. Be not afraid. Allow yourself to be loved and liberated.

Without the Holy Spirit God is far away, Christ stays in the past, the Gospel is a dead letter, the Church is simply an organisation, authority a matter of domination, mission a matter of propaganda, liturgy no more than a rigid ritual, and Christian living a slave morality. But with the Holy Spirit, the Cosmos is resurrected and groans with the birth-pangs of the Kingdom, the risen Christ is here, the Gospel is the power of life, the Church shows forth the life of the Trinity, authority is a liberating service, mission is a new Pentecost, the liturgy is both memorial and anticipation, human action is deified. (Drawn from *Reflection of a bishop of the Eastern rite*.)



Love, not excuses, moves things forward



The Church of St Peter in Gallicantu in Jerusalem.

The excusable doesn't need to be excused and the inexcusable cannot be excused.

Michael Buckley wrote those words commenting on St Peter's triple betrayal of Jesus. Here's the context. Peter had betrayed Jesus in his most needy hour, not out of malice, simply out of weakness. Now, facing Jesus for the first time since that betrayal, Peter is understandably uncomfortable. What do you say after betraying someone?

“They went to a party together one Friday night and the wife, partly through the influence of alcohol and drugs, left the party with another man”

Well, he didn't need to say anything. Jesus took the initiative and, as Buckley highlights, he didn't excuse Peter. Jesus didn't say things like, it's perfectly understandable to be afraid in a situation like that! You weren't really yourself! I understand how that can happen! He didn't even tell Peter that he still loves him. None of that. He simply asked Peter, “Do you love me?” and when Peter said yes, everything moved forward. No excuses were needed. The excusable doesn't need to be excused and the inexcusable cannot be excused. Our humanity already explains why



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

we are prone to betrayal; what needs to be spoken in its wake is a reaffirmation of love.

A couple I know had this happen in their marriage. They went to a party together one Friday night and the wife, partly through the influence of alcohol and drugs, left the party with another man. Her husband was unaware of this for a time but, upon finding out what had happened, was understandably very distraught. He went home alone and spent a sleepless night thinking, his thoughts moving through a series of vengeful fantasies to what (through grace) he eventually decided on.

Self-chastened

He was sitting at the kitchen table midmorning the next day when his wife, sheepish and self-chastened, came home. She had her apologies rehearsed and was ready to face

his justified anger and fury. She got something else. Her husband didn't let her voice any apologies or excuses, nor did he explode in anger. Rather, calm and sad, he simply said this to her: “I'm going to move out of the house for a week, so you can think this through. You need to decide. Are you my wife or are you someone else?” He came back a week later to her apologies, but more importantly to her renewed, more radical commitment to their relationship. Their marriage has been solid and grace-filled since. She is now committed to a marriage in a way she never quite was before.

No doubt upon his return, this man's wife did offer some tearful apologies and excuses. His refusal to let her voice them earlier may well have served a purpose long-term, but was admittedly somewhat cruel short-term. Even when

“Strictly speaking, that's true, though sometimes a deeper understanding of things somewhat excuses the inexcusable”

something can't be excused, we still need the opportunity to say we are sorry. Apologies are important, both for the person offering them and for the one receiving them. Until an explicit apology is made, there is always unfinished business. However, explicit contrition is not ultimately what moves things forward when a relationship has been wounded or fractured. What moves things forward is a renewed commitment to love, to a deeper fidelity.

The inexcusable cannot be excused. Strictly speaking, that's true, though sometimes a deeper understanding of things somewhat excuses the inexcusable. Here's an example.

“To his credit, the boy summoned his courage and owned up to what had happened”

Several years ago, this incident occurred in Australia. A Catholic school board had just finished building a new multi-million dollar school. Not long after its opening, one of its students, a boy in high school, started a fire in his locker, unaware that the gas valves for the school's heating system were right behind his locker. A huge fire started and the whole school burned down. To his credit, the boy summoned his courage and owned up to what had happened. Then, of course, a never-ending series of questions ensued: Why would he

ever do that? Why would anyone start a fire in his locker? What accounts for that kind of reckless stupidity? What can excuse the inexcusable?

I very much appreciated an answer given to these questions by one of the Australian bishops. Speaking to a questioning group of teachers and school administrators, his short answer said it all. Why would this young student do something like that? Because he is a boy! Young boys have been (for no explicable reason) starting fires long before gas valves ever appeared on the planet. Moreover, there's no excuse for it, save human nature itself.

Often times, that's the excuse for the inexcusable: Because we're human! Indeed, this was the real excuse for the woman who under the influence of alcohol and drugs betrayed her husband, just as it was the real excuse for Peter when he betrayed Jesus.

Human nature

But, this must be read correctly. This doesn't give us permission to appeal to our morally inept human nature as an excuse for betrayal or stupidity. We're human! Boys will be boys! The lesson rather is that whenever our moral ineptness has us fall into betrayal or stupidity, what ultimately moves things forward is not an apology or an excuse, but a renewed commitment in love.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



PEACE ✈

Desmond Egan

just to go for a walk out the road
just that
under the deep trees
which whisper of peace

to break the bread of words
with someone passing
just that
four of us round a pram
and baby fingers asleep

just to join the harmony
the fields the blue everyday hills
the puddles of daylight and

you might hear a pheasant
echo through the woods
or plover may waver by
as the evening poises with a blackbird
on its table of hedge
just that
and here and there a gate
a bungalow's bright window
the smell of woodsmoke
of lives

just that

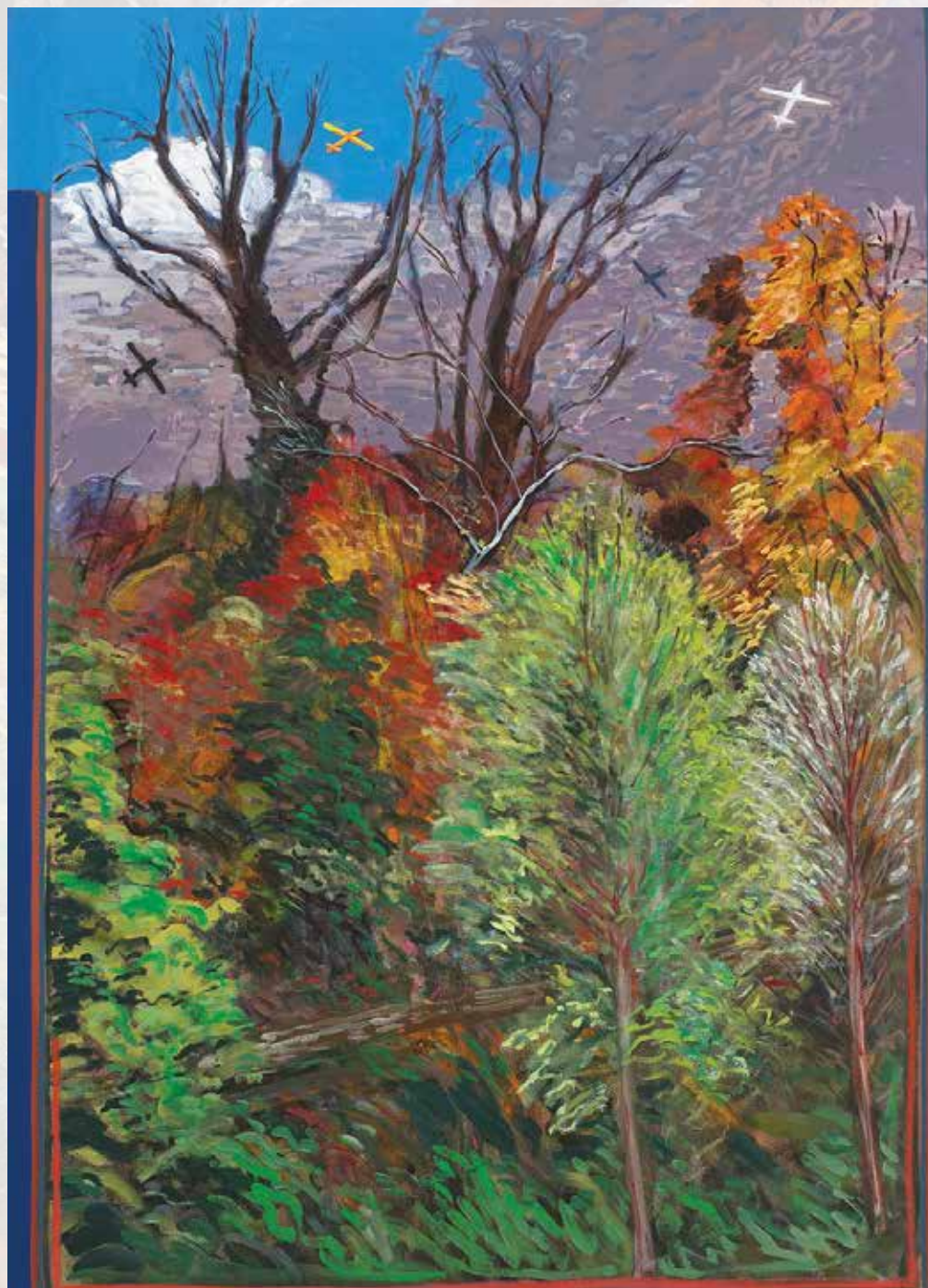
but Sweet Christ that
is more than most of mankind can afford
with the globe still plaited in its own
crown of thorns

too many starving eyes
too many ancient children
squatting among flies
too many stockpiles of fear
too many dog jails too many generals
too many under torture by the impotent
screaming into the air we breathe

too many dreams stuck in money jams
too many mountains of butter selfishness
too many poor drowning in the streets
too many shantytowns on the outskirts
of life

too many of us not sure what we want
so that we try to feed a habit for
everything
until the ego puppets the militaries
mirror our own warring face

too little peace



Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.

The poem (Page 36) was written a quarter century ago, at another time of conflict, but the new war in Eastern Europe has made it relevant again. Poster created by Brian Bourke. A limited edition, signed and numbered, in size A3 poster form, is available from Goldsmith Press, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 X260; price €150 post free.

The receipts from this will be devoted to supporting aid to the people of Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees sheltering in Ireland and elsewhere.

A cloistered home for your spiritual life

The Monastic Heart, 50 Simple Practices for a Contemplative and Fulfilling Life

by Sister Joan Chittister
(Hodder & Stoughton,
£22.99/€27.00)

Peter Costello

The kind of peace of mind and heart which poets and sages write about proves elusive for many of us these days. We need to remind ourselves, or perhaps for many of us, to actually inform ourselves about what in the middle ages would have been called "the Peace of God", the kind of peace that was to be found in monastic settings. And still is, of course.

Sr Joan Chittister hardly needs an introduction. Though she is perhaps better known in the USA for her activities than here. Still she brings to what she writes a freshness that communicates itself to the lay person better than it seems to do to some American bishops.

Vocation

She is by vocation a Benedictine nun, and in this latest of her many books, she aims to provide some access to the heart of that life, not by entering an actual building, but to the monastery that we can make of our own mind. She feels we all know there is a "better place" which is all too often overwhelmed by the restless and sometimes purposeless bustle of the life we are forced to lead. For St Benedict himself living well was not the best revenge, but simply the best way.

In her 50 short chapters she highlights aspects of the Benedictine tradition, from bells to Marian hymns. They are short enough never to become dull, but remain compelling throughout, a few pages which for some may well be life-changing.

Everything she writes is wise and insightful. But the



Benedictine Sr Joan Chittister listens to a reporter's question during a press conference in Rome, April 2005. Photo: CNS

reader will pause at the great task it will be for many to arrange their life of work to fit this life of devotion and contemplation.

Lovely grounds

Someone like me, when I have finished this article, can get up and go for a walk around the lovely grounds of a hospital that cares for many disabled and enfeebled people. Here I can think about things in the peace of both nature and dedication, with in the near distance, the canonical hours being rung in the tower of a nearby High Church parish.

But in what we have made of country and city, I realise many cannot have such a calm and calming retreat. But if we dislike the physical and mental chaos of modern life, perhaps by taking up some of Sr Joan's wise suggestions, we can all find some way (as St Benedict did) of combining work and contemplation to the benefit of all, adding thought to the binary pair in the "work and life balance".

But Benedict did not have to answer to the Regional CEO for Europe of some international corporation.

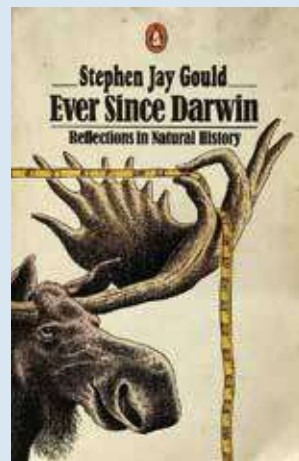
He had only God to answer to.

“In her 50 short chapters she highlights aspects of the Benedictine tradition, from bells to Marian hymns”

The World of Books

By the books editor

President Putin and the Giant Irish Elk



The images from Moscow of the marking of Victory Day, with which the news is filled at time of writing, brought into my mind a fleeting thought that President Putin might like to know more about the evolutionary significance of the extinct Giant Irish Elk.

That it has become extinct is only a part of that great beast's interest. The reason why it became extinct has a lesson for us all.

Along with monastic ruins, round towers, and Irish wolfhounds, the giant Irish elk, over the course of the 19th century, was one of the perennial symbols of Irish nationality, and Irish culture in general. The first three were widely diffused; the Irish Elk was less common perhaps, but was still for many a powerful image.

It seems to these people to represent an Irish entity well equipped for defence and attack against its ravaging enemies, such as the wild wolves then common across these islands. The last wolf in Ireland was

believed by some to have become extinct in 1798 (though naturalists nowadays think otherwise). He was killed off, not in the wild west of Connacht, by the way, but in well-cultivated Leinster.

In that baleful year of revolution what Ireland had badly needed was some entity as well armed as the Irish elk. This the Fenians and the ongoing Republican tradition attempted to provide, eventually according to some freeing Ireland - though this never quite explained how it was that Ireland continued to be a democracy, rather than accept the junta-rule by the IRB army council.

Of course the popular idea about the Irish elk was not very exact, again according to modern scientists. It was not even an elk, such as those in Sweden and elsewhere in North Europe, but a form of overgrown deer.

“The popular idea about the Irish elk was not very exact, again according to modern scientists”

In the Natural History Museum on Dublin's Merion Square the mounted skeleton of a giant Irish elk dominates the entrance way. This was brought in from the Isle of Man. Others like it can be seen in the Ulster Museum, and in museums in Scotland. The creatures stood some seven feet at the withers, and car-

ried a spread of antlers ten feet across that were formidable indeed. As the largest creature ever to have lived on this island they have never been less than well celebrated.

Antlers

But these antlers were seen by modern zoologists as being too large to carry and so contributed to their extinction. And here is the point for Putin. The essay by American palaeontologist Stephen Jay Gould (which can be found collected in his book *Ever Since Darwin* (New York, 1977)) fills in the background on this, and is a useful portal to the ongoing controversies, and what suits animals - and by extension, humans, for defence.

The formidable weapons paraded through Moscow last week are rather in the same category. They may look scary and they are. But they are so dangerous that they would leave a Europe or a world so contaminated that Russia too would not survive. To destroy one's self in defending one's self as Putin claims he is doing seems a deranged thing to do.

But for Ireland, considering increasing its own defence capability might think it better to give more serious thought to pacifism as a moral duty in the life of the Christian: "For all that take the sword shall perish by the sword"; "They who live by the sword, die by the sword."

The words are not mine, but those of a person Christians say they would wish to emulate.



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– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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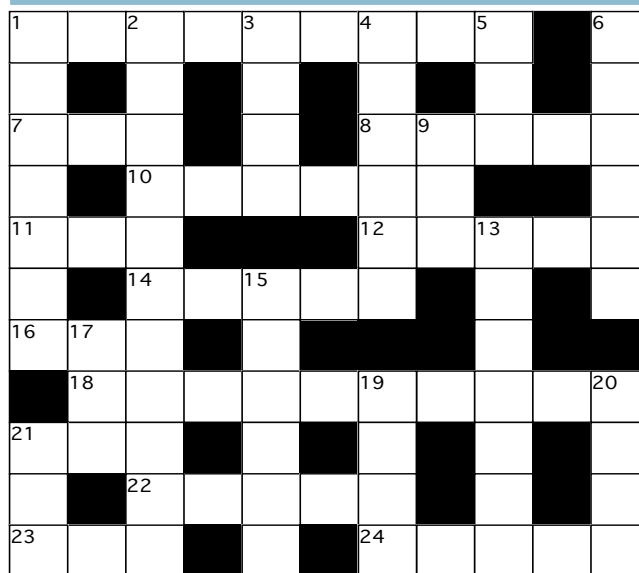
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Crossword Junior

Children's 433



Across

- 1 This part of a game may be played if the match ends in a draw (5,4)
7 Bar and lounge (3)
8 The language of Ancient Rome (5)
10 City where the 2012 Olympics were held (6)
11 What you see with (3)
12 'Not that one, the _____ one' (5)
14 Hard jobs (5)
16 We use 'he' for a boy and _____ for a girl (3)
18 The total you get by adding sixty and forty (3,7)
21 Possess (3)
22 Gets the creases out of clothes (5)
23 Someone named Desmond might be called this for short (3)

- 24 Hold on _____, don't let go! (5)

Down

- 1 Female ruler of an empire (7)
2 It's sometimes called Ping-pong (5-6)
3 It's usually the last word of a prayer (4)
4 Houses made of snow and ice (6)
5 Dine (3)
6 Middle (6)
9 Insect which lives in a colony (3)
13 Sea fish (7)
15 Where pupils and teachers learn together (6)
17 In what way? (3)
19 Bird's home (4)
20 Throw it to try to score a bullseye (4)
21 Ancient (3)

SOLUTIONS, MAY 12

GORDIUS NO. 558

Across — 1 High and dry 6 Epic 10 Wings 11 Count your blessings 12 Memento mori 15 Radon 17 Lost at sea 18 Tang 19 Earth 21 Clavier 23 Metal 24 Aria 25 Ease 28 Rodents 34 Renal 36 Tailor-made

Down — 1 Hewn 2 Ginger nut 3 Aisle 4 Ducat 5 Rout 7 Proud 8 Corinthian 9 Starter 13 Nail 14 Olivier 16 Stamp album 20 Ruritania 21 Cleanse 22 Enid 27 Sheer 29 Ousel 30 Error 31 Inca 32 Glue

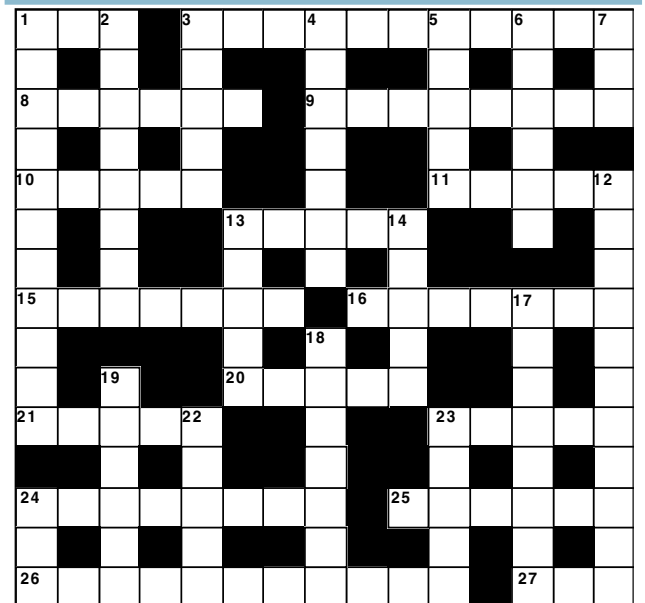
CHILDREN'S No. 432

Across — 1 Piggy bank 6 Raging 7 Small 8 Nose 10 Pot 11 Asleep 15 Art 16 Nicer 17 Ape 18 Rob 19 Biro 20 Light 21 Wee

Down — 1 Porcupine 2 Gigantic 3 Yanks 4 Normal 5 False 9 Ear 12 Stable 13 Energy 14 Pirate 15 Arrow

Crossword

Gordius 559



Across

- 1 Interval (3)
3 Extremely careful in doing something (11)
8 American state, known as 'The Last Frontier' (6)
9 Flower that looks like it should be a sugary vegetable! (5-3)
10 Winter sports enthusiast (5)
11 Stacked (5)
13 Shape that can break sunlight into its constituent colours (5)
15 Beautiful hymn composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber (3,4)
16 Style, haute couture (7)
20 Cleaned out, using a brush (5)
21 Latin-American dance (5)
23 The hero of the Toy Story films, voiced by Tom Hanks (5)
24 Most spacious (8)
25 It's TOE, not toe, that identifies the hallux! (3,3)
26 An extreme response to dangerous riotous behaviour (5,6)

Down

- 27 Ignited (3)
1 Meadow-dwelling insect (11)
2 Member of a traditional Jewish sect or a very self-righteous person (8)
3 Card game (5)
4 Part of the nose (7)
5 Consumed all before one (3,2)
6 Type of antelope (6)
7 Area in India once colonised by Portugal (3)
12 Sum paid as a deposit (4,7)
13 Sits for an artist (5)
14 Intended (5)
17 Incapable of dying (8)
18 Yachting event (7)
19 Bring into the country (6)
22 Extraterrestrial (5)
23 Forego one's right or entitlement (5)
24 Massage (3)

Sudoku Corner

433

Easy

7		2	4			3		1
			2				4	9
	5	3	1			6	8	
	7	8						1
2				3	9			
		9				5		4
9		5		1			7	
6	2			4			3	
1				6	8	2		

Hard

7		4						1
	5			9			8	
			7	4				3
				3		9		
	9	2	1		7	4	3	
		7		5				
9				1	2			
	2			7			4	
5						6		9

Last week's Easy 432

6	2	4	3	7	5	9	1	8
3	7	8	9	2	1	5	4	6
9	1	5	8	6	4	3	7	2
7	3	9	6	5	8	4	2	1
8	6	1	4	9	2	7	5	3
4	5	2	1	3	7	8	6	9
2	8	7	5	1	9	6	3	4
5	4	6	2	8	3	1	9	7
1	9	3	7	4	6	2	8	5

Last week's Hard 432

3	9	8	4	6	1	7	5	2
4	7	6	5	2	3	8	1	9
1	2	5	9	7	8	6	4	3
5	4	7	3	8	6	9	2	1
8	3	1	2	5	9	4	7	6
2	6	9	7	1	4	5	3	8
6	5	2	1	9	7	3	8	4
7	8	4	6	3	2	1	9	5
9	1	3	8	4	5	2	6	7

Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney

The intimate connection to the bog

I HAVE LIVED and worked in a predominantly rural parish in the midlands for the last ten years. In that time, we have had national debates about many issues including same-sex marriage, abortion, Brexit and the demise - and possible resuscitation - of the Celtic Tiger. All of those issues and many more have engaged our parishioners and I have heard debates and strong opinions expressed on all the topics. However, I have never witnessed such energy and strongly held opinions as I have in recent months concerning the ongoing debate about cutting turf. I don't really want to get into the nitty gritty of the current debate, but I would like to introduce a slightly different perspective which probably won't get much of an airing in the national conversation.

Place

When I first came to live in this parish, I must admit that when thinking of the bog I tended to see it simply as the place which provides a valuable source of fuel to keep us warm in the winter and powers many of the ovens and cookers of our parish. However, over the last ten years I have



become acutely aware that, for many people in this community and similar ones in neighbouring parishes and counties, the bog is a unique place, a unique landscape and quite apart from what it produces, it is special, perhaps even sacred to the people around here. In one half of our parish where people live closer to the bog, almost every funeral includes the presentation of a sod of turf in any collection of personal items reflecting the life of the deceased. In trying to

understand the almost intimate connection of many in our parish to the bog I have begun to think of another kind of unique landscape which we do not have in Ireland, the desert. In our Christian spirituality the desert is a place where people go to get away from the madness and the busyness of life. It is a place where people go to reflect on the important things in their own life, a place to think, to make decisions, to meet their God. I have come to the belief that for many in our parish community, the bog fulfils a similar purpose that the desert does for those seeking solitude in other parts of the world. I came across a lovely line recently which said; "Those who are at home in the desert are safe in the marketplace" I think I could paraphrase that line around here by saying that; "Those who are at home in the Bog are safe in the marketplace".

Visit

Last year during a visit to The Séamus Heaney Centre in Co. Derry I was struck by how much the poet drew on the imagery of the bog and the cutting of turf in his poetry. I know there may be many layers and hidden messages in Heaney's use of the bog imagery, but it spoke to me of the importance of being rooted and grounded not just deep into the earth but also into our personal history, our family history, and our faith history. For many in my local community, the bog helps to root them in many ways and so it is a sacred place. With good reason we have been very reluctant to interfere with sacred places even when material or economic progress might suggest we should. As the conversation about cutting turf continues, perhaps we need to include the spiritual as well as the material and environmental so that we can arrive at a solution which is respectful of all.

From 'Digging' by Séamus Heaney

By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.
My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He
straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving
sods
Over his shoulder, going down and
down
For the good turf. Digging.
The cold smell of potato mould, the
squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an
edge
Through living roots awaken in my
head.
But I've no spade to follow men like
them.
"going down and down
For the good turf. Digging."

Children tell it as they see it.

The five-year-old saw the nun who was also a Eucharistic Minister at Mass giving out the chalice. Next day in school the child said to the same nun "Sister, I saw you at Mass yesterday. You were in charge of the drinks"!



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU



Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

- €..... HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU
- €..... UKRAINE APPEAL
- €..... WELLS AND CLEAN WATER
- €..... MASS OFFERINGS (Please state no. of Masses _____)
- €..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

☐ 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

DONATIONS FOR THE
MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT
DEDUCTION FOR ANY
EXPENSES.