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Dublin priests fret over pay as donations are in freefall

EXCLUSIVE

Chai Brady

Priests in Dublin have expressed fears that the diocese may soon run out of money to pay their modest salaries due to a huge shortfall in collections *The Irish Catholic* can reveal. This comes on top of a 25% cut in pay back in May in a bid to plug the financial hole exacerbated by the pandemic and suspension of public Masses.

Several Dublin-based clerics said they were concerned by figures which showed that funds were depleting at a rapid rate with donations not matching what was being spent.

Figures seen by *The Irish Catholic* show that in the six-month period from mid-March to mid-September donations to the 'common fund' had fallen by 68% from €4,660,893 for the same

period last year compared to just €1,497,196 for this year.

The Irish Catholic understands that by January, there is expected to be just enough money to cover two months of costs including priests' pay, but the situation will be much worse if public Masses are not restored in early December as hinted at by Taoiseach Micheál Martin.

When it comes to the 'Share' collection – which is used to support parishes that are struggling financially and support diocesan administration – the picture is worse. Last year, in the period from Mid-March to mid-September parishioners donated €3,043,920 to this collection. Figures for the same period this year show that just €757,195 has been raised – a dramatic drop of 75%.

One Dublin parish priest told *The Irish Catholic* that he

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Receiving their due



The 2019/2020 St John Paul II award participants from St Brendan's Community School, Birr. As they were unable to travel to Ennis for the usual presentation ceremony, they received their awards in school this week. Also pictured are Katherine Haines, coordinator, and Fr Pat Gilbert, Chaplain.

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To make Advent Mass a reality, we need to keep the pressure up

Many people were relieved to hear Taoiseach Micheál Martin indicate on *RTÉ Radio* that public Masses will likely begin again in the Republic by early December when level five restrictions are set to be eased. Under the original framework, public worship is currently also banned under level three (the restrictions we are expected to move to) but Mr Martin has indicated a willingness to be flexible here.

Efforts

Thankfully, more and more priests and Church leaders who were willing to accept all Government restrictions in the first lockdown have taken heart from the huge efforts that were made when churches re-opened to keep parishioners safe. Bishops and priests are on the ground and they realise just how cautious local parish communities have been in facilitating a return to public Masses – that's why they're more vocal on this occasion and are raising their voices and lobbying members of the Oireachtas for a relaxation on the draconian rules.

I suspect that many also realise that it is not so much that people of faith are being singled out or discriminated against in the ban on public worship, our rights are just not being taken seriously. This is why it is important that voices

are raised – in a respectful way – to ensure that policymakers and public health officials know of the efforts that have been made to keep parishioners safe and the ardent desire of Massgoers to return to the sacraments and the common celebration of our Faith.

“Many also realise that it is not so much that people of faith are being singled out or discriminated against in the ban on public worship”

The High Court is again due to consider a legal challenge to the ban on public worship on December 8 – the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. It would be a pity if it falls to the courts to have to decide on an issue that common sense would dictate should never have arisen. At the same time, if there is the prospect of future lockdowns ahead of an expected widespread

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



vaccination programme then perhaps a definitive decision from the courts on the constitutionality of banning people attending public worship is necessary.

In the meantime, Bishop Kevin Doran has said that the hierarchy cannot do all the running themselves – and he's right. All of us who care about a safe return to public worship should ring, email and write to our TDs and Senators

and let them know the basic facts: we have demonstrated that we can worship in a way that is safe and physically distanced and we should not be denied this any longer.

❗ To join Friends of The Irish Catholic and support Catholic journalism, please phone the office on 01 6874094 for more information or to make a contribution.

The advent of printing



Sisters Maria Therese and Liz examine Glencairn Abbey's new printer, which will allow them to expand the range of cards they offer.

» Continued from Page 1

and colleagues are reluctant to raise concerns “because we know that so many people are suffering financially.

“But, at the same time our pay is modest, and we are fine with that – but it does mean that most priests live month-to-month and have no savings to rely on,” he said.

Another priest said that he knew that confrères were concerned about having to ask their own families for support. “Many of them are struggling to make their own ends meet,” he said. “The last thing they need is having to support someone else.”

Yet another Dublin priest who spoke to this newspaper said that “many parishioners have continued to make their regular donation, but many have not. When Mass does start again [in early Decem-

ber] many lads [priests] will be reluctant to raise the issue because they'll just be so glad to see people back and will not want to burden people who may have lost income themselves,” he said.

However, he said that the figures “speak for themselves” and “it makes for a very grim financial future if there will only be enough money in January to cover two months,” he said.

In the six-month period covered, just 9% (€139,412) came via online donations. Just 20% of this came via the diocesan website with the remaining 80% coming from donations made via 79 parish websites.

Curates in the Dublin Diocese are currently paid €17,250 per year. The 2009 recession also saw priests take a 20% cut in their income which has never been restored.



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ENDING
EXTREME POVERTY
WHATEVER
IT TAKES

Pressure mounts on Government as Church leaders call for a return to public worship

Chai Brady

Church leaders in Sligo and the Bishop of Raphoe have mounted pressure on Government by issuing statements calling for public worship to be reinstated. Eighteen Christian leaders, including Bishop Kevin Doran, signed a letter issued by their group 'Sligo Churches Together' saying they are "disheartened" that at a time when their Christian community "is most in need of God's grace, love and the comfort of the sacraments our churches are forced to close".

People do not only have physical needs but also psychological and spiritual ones too, they continued, saying: "So many suffer from

depression and anxiety; hopelessness and fear are features of so many lives at this difficult time.

"There is evidence within our community, and we have also seen this as priests and pastors in our churches that there are increased incidents of self-harm, alcohol abuse, physical harm to others in terms of domestic violence. The life-line that the churches offer in their community to support people in these circumstances has been impaired when most needed."

Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ of Raphoe diocese said he "supports the call to open our churches for the public to be permitted to attend Mass".

He added that there "appears to be no scientific evidence

to support the closure of our Churches as sources of community transmission of Covid-19".

"I call on our Government and legislators to allow our people to attend church for Mass. Many people are struggling and are finding this a hard and painful lockdown. Our churches and places of worship are an essential support and necessity for our people mentally and spiritually in these difficult times," he said.

When people are permitted to attend Mass, people who are vulnerable or "feel uneasy" about attending can join and pray online, Bishop McGuckian said.

In the Government's plan for tackling Covid-19 under level 3 restrictions churches are asked to close for public

worship – remaining open only for private prayer – and for services to be moved online.

Last Friday Taoiseach Micheál Martin indicated

that public worship could return under "modified" level 3 restrictions in early December.

In an interview on RTÉ News at One he said: "We will

make decisions towards the end of the month, I did say that we may look at level 3 as to modifications to level 3 and that could apply to worship as well."

Knock Shrine look for heroes of lockdown with Parish Hero Award

Ruadhán Jones

Knock Shrine want to celebrate the "heart-warming" work being done "under the radar" by local parishioners over the course of lockdown.

Nominations are invited from parishes throughout the island of Ireland, with the nomination window closing on December 4.

In a statement on the award, Fr Richard Gibbons, rector of Knock Shrine, said the "enormous challenges" of lockdown have "highlighted the good-will that exists often under the radar".

"We want to celebrate the kindness and generosity of ordinary people doing extraor-

dinary things," the statement continues. "It's amazing how one seemingly small act of kindness can make a dramatic impact on a person's life."

A spokesperson for Knock Shrine said they hope people across the country will take part.

"We want to shine a light on the work that is being done and give people an opportunity to nominate someone they know who has gone above and beyond in parish life and in their communities."

Winners will receive a gift of appreciation from Knock Shrine and will be acknowledged on the 19 of December 2020 at the 'Carols by Candlelight' service in Knock Basilica.

To nominate your parish hero, visit www.knockshrine.ie and fill out the form provided.

Mickey Harte praises 'peace' his faith gives after Tyrone exit



Former Tyrone manager Mickey Harte

Staff Reporter

GAA legend and devout Catholic Mickey Harte has stepped down as Tyrone senior football manager after 18 years.

Although he was "disappointed" not to lead Tyrone for another season after his request was not granted by the Tyrone management committee, he said he had "immense gratitude for having had the privilege of managing Tyrone at minor, U21 and senior level for the last thirty years".

In an interview with *The Irish News* after his announcement, when asked what he's learned over the years he said: "The past is gone and you can't change it. The future is not ours to behold, unless God gives us that. It's really about living in the now. It's about being peaceful within yourself, and I've found that within my Faith."

"It's a gift that I'd love to give everybody. I'd love everybody to experience the gift that it is to be peaceful and to know that God has given you that peace."



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Govt 'secrecy' around adverse abortion outcomes 'beggars belief'

Ruadhán Jones

Independent TD Carol Nolan has criticised out at Government secrecy regarding post-abortion care, questioning the absence of a national data collection mechanism.

Ms Nolan was frustrated with the Health Minister's response to a question regarding the number of patients who received post-abortion care in maternity hospitals from January 2019 to present.

"It almost beggars belief that nearly three years on from the enactment of the 2018 abortion legislation, the Department of Health still has no mechanisms or national data collection methods in place regarding post abortion care," she told *The Irish Catholic*.

Ms Nolan continued, saying that she believed the absence of the database is not accidental.

"My own sense is that this is a calculated attempt to continue shrouding adverse abortion outcomes in secrecy," she said. "This is profoundly disturbing as the department has itself recognised that the collation of such data is necessary for 'quality assurance purposes'.

Women deserve the fullest possible degree of information regarding abortion outcomes, Ms Nolan argued.

"Unfortunately, there is little evidence to date that either the Minister or the HSE share this view," she continued. "If we do not have access to national data on adverse or dangerous outcomes, then

the field is left wide open for abortion advocates to continue touting the view that abortion is a 'safe' and harmless procedure."

Meanwhile, the couple at the centre of the tragic abortion case at the National Maternity Hospital in Holles Street have personally written to Taoiseach Micheál Martin outlining their distress that a review of the case is still unable to get under way.

The couple were told in March last year, after two tests, that their much-wanted unborn baby had a fatal foetal abnormality and would not survive.

They decided to abort the child, but were left distraught when a more advanced test later showed the baby was healthy.

Kerry locals oppose Eir mast by popular holy well

Staff reporter

The community of Ballyheigue, Kerry, fear a new telecommunications mast near Our Lady's well and grotto will take away from its spiritual look.

The Ballyheigue holy well attracts upwards of 5,000 people for the annual Pattern Festival held in September.

Ballyheigue local Brendan Moriarty said that the move "doesn't make sense" and says the community have voiced their opposition to it.

"The grotto is a very secluded area where people stop for prayer," he said. "People come on a regular basis and they come even more as churches are inaccessible at the moment. If you have a big mast overlooking it, it will take from the spiritual look of the whole place."

Mr Moriarty said locals only heard about the planning permission through word-of-mouth before joining together in opposition.

"We don't have an objection to improving the services for telecommunications," he said. "Our concern is that it shouldn't be where it's going at the moment, there are other sites."

Priest defends outdoor Mass broadcast after two noise complaints

Chai Brady

A Galway priest has defended his church's broadcast of Mass through their outdoor speakers after two noise complaints were made to the council.

Fr Tadhg Quinn PP of St John the Apostle Church in Knocknacarra said they have been broadcasting the Mass outside the church and online since the last lockdown in March.

"We're getting about 300 in the car park in their cars and everybody is social

distancing, everything is done according to the law and everything else, we're getting big crowds," he explained.

"You supply a service to your community, you try to serve them as best you can and the sad thing about it is if you have people who don't believe in God or don't believe in anything, some people will object to it..."

A Galway City Council warden was sent to monitor the noise level of the Mass being broadcast through the speakers and found there wasn't a noise pollution breach.

"I think a lot of people need to know that somebody cares. We come not as a community but as individuals, social distancing, some are sitting in their cars and they are as a support to each other in one sense or another they're there," Fr Quinn said.

"I think a lot of people out there are finding that difficult, they don't see anybody from one end of the week to the other, they come here, they'll see a neighbour, they'll raise their hand, they come to listen to the word of God and be part of the community."

Light up a life



Pictured launching 'Light Up A Life', the annual Christmas appeal at Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services in Harold's Cross is four-year-old Doireann Brophy with Staff Nurse Gilda Jalop and Healthcare Assistant Mary Ruane. Photo: Mark Stedman

Deep sorrow as Carmelite convent closes after 340 years

Ruadhán Jones

Dwindling vocations and an aging sisterhood has led to the closure of St Joseph's Carmelite convent in Loughrea, Co. Galway, founded 1680.

Of the five remaining sisters there, three will join the Carmelite convent in New Ross, Wexford, one will go to Dublin and one will return to her country of origin, the Philippines.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Sr Catharina of Loughrea convent said that it is a "great loss and a challenge" for the sisters and the local community.

"We feel mixed emotions having to leave Roscrea, after 340 years here – it's a long time," Sr Catharina said. "And the people themselves are very sad also."

Sr Catharina, who had been at the convent more than 20 years, said they knew the closure was coming as the congregation dwindled.

"But sure we could see it was coming because no vocations were coming for some time and some elderly sisters were dying and others were getting older," she said.

"It's a different world these days, people just don't see the religious life in the same way anymore," she continued.

"For us, it meant so much. The prayer, the times of prayer, meant so much. We weren't just praying for ourselves but for the rest of the world really, you know."

At the Mass of Thanksgiving and Farewell for the Carmelite Sisters, Bishop Michael Duignan sympathised with the sisters' "sad task".

He recalled the great service they gave the community

in the 340 years: "Generation after generation of people have come to ask the Sisters for prayers in times of trouble or sickness or need," the bishop said. "For many, great peace came as a result of those prayers."

The community do not have a set date for their departure, but it will be "well before Christmas", Sr Catharina said.

It is yet to be determined how the convent buildings will be used after the sisters have left.



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Senator Mullen criticises Seanad Bill on 'Hate Crimes'

Jason Osborne

Senator Mullen has voiced opposition to legislation that has come before the Seanad, viewing it as being full of errors and "dangerous to the legitimate freedom of human expression".

The *Criminal Justice (Hate Crime) Bill 2020*, was initiated on November 6, and seeks to provide that a court may impose the maximum penalty for offences where it is judged that the offence was aggravated by 'hate

crime' which is defined as an offence that is perceived as being based on prejudices towards certain categories of person.

This includes prejudice towards people on the grounds of an "individual's asylum or refugee status, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity, sex characteristics, age or perceived age".

Senator Rónán Mullen has said that while he understands what the pro-

ponents of the Bill are trying to do, which is send the message that identity-based prejudice has no place in Irish society, the Bill as it's drafted is "confused, erratic and counter-productive".

"For example, the drafters of the Bill appear to be unclear whether 'hate crime' is an offence motivated by certain prejudice or simply a perceived attitude of prejudice contributing to an offence," he said.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

On the last Sunday of the liturgical year we celebrate the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. It is a relatively modern feast, instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925. In the aftermath of World War I, peace was barely surviving on uneasy foundations. Atheistic communism was expanding rapidly. Pius XI appealed to the world to look at the ideals of Jesus Christ for the true foundation of peace. He is the Prince of Peace and King of the Universe.

In the gospel we read that when people set out to take Jesus and make him king, he fled back to the hills alone. Their idea of kingship was radically different from his idea. People wanted a king to liberate them from Roman rule. Later, when Jesus was being tried by Pilate, he was asked if he was a king. He agreed that he was but assured Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world.

From the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus set out to establish the kingdom of God on earth. He wanted to lead people away from the wrong ways of living to a new way. The preface of Mass today describes his kingdom as one of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace. If these ideals were to be taken seriously, what a wonderful world we would enjoy. Truth and life: holiness and grace: justice, love and peace.

The charter of his Kingdom, what we might today call his mission statement, is set out in the Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes rejected the sort of kingdom founded on prosperity, power, domination,

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



injustice and persecution of any opposition. From the moment of his coming into this world he was born, not in a grand palace, but in a cave shared with farm animals. His crown was made of spikey thorns and his throne was a cross for the execution of criminals.

A Shepherd King

So, if he wasn't the typical sort of king, what was he like? The readings at Mass today compare him to a shepherd who leads his flock, cares for them, feeds them, protects them and searches for the lost one. Ezekiel, in the first reading, tells us "I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray and make the weak strong." Then he says: "As for you, my sheep, I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats". Ezekiel there sets the scene for the final judgement as described in today's Gospel (Matthew 25:31-46), the final sermon of Jesus.

When we were young pupils facing the house-exams we would hope that our teachers might drop hints about the examination questions. Jesus did not merely give hints but he told us clearly what would come up in the final examination. It would be all about how we treat other people. St John asks us how can we love God whom we have never seen if we do not love the people that we can see (1 John 4:20)? In one of the Peanuts cartoons, Charlie Brown says, "I love humanity: it's people I can't stick."

Practical Love

Love is a word much used but little understood. It is more than a feeling, an infatuation or simply liking another person. Maybe it would be better if we used the gospel word, compassionate. "Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate" (Luke 6:36). Compassion means entering into the suffering of another person. Compassion will try to let everyone have food and drink, clothing and housing. It welcomes strangers and migrants. Outcasts and prisoners are not despised but are treated with dignity and respect as children of God.

Pope Francis, whose care for the poor is straight out the gospel, suggests that if you give some money to a beggar, don't just drop it into a hat or bowl but hand it to the person if possible, make eye contact and say something. These marks of respect might mean more than the money.

You did it to me

In the gospel parable take note of the surprise of people on either side of the separation. When did we see you hungry and feed you...or did not come to your help? Then we hear the great answer of Jesus: "In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Compassion means seeing people not only with our eyes but with our heart. St Teresa of Calcutta would encourage people to exercise her five-finger programme...counting out the five words "You did it to me". When faith is enlightened by compassion it sees Christ in other people.

Breda O'Brien

The View



Separating God and religion reflects our radical individualistic culture

What is religion for? We know that NPHE, or at least, Dr Ronan Glynn, then the acting Chief Medical Officer, did not think religion sufficiently important as a source of social contact to allow people to continue with public worship. In response to a question by David Quinn, he said that the aim of level three restrictions is to "decrease contacts in areas that as a society are, relatively speaking, in the context of a pandemic less important".

Contract

So is religion just a source of social contact? Or a form of social tradition? Is that why exceptions were made to level 5 so that people could visit graves more than 5km away because it was November, a traditional time of remembrance of the dead? And is it to facilitate twice-a-year visitors to Church that we may be allowed to have Mass around Christmas?

“Faith is a radical awareness of the depth of God’s love for us, lived out in a messy, sinning community”

In a recent *Irish Times* column, Sean Moncrieff cheerfully declared that religion can be “a cover to carry out all sorts of appalling acts, in this country and around the world. It can be to protect the ‘institution’. Or it can be vicious tribalism”.

He then expresses puzzlement about people who declare that they lost faith in God because of the sexual abuse of children by clergy: sympathy, but puzzlement, because “they were human actions. Nothing to do with God. Religion only proves what we know already: that people can be great or awful”.

“Sean Moncrieff cheerfully declared that religion can be ‘a cover to carry out all sorts of appalling acts, in this country and around the world’



People attending a pre-Covid Mass at St Eugene's Cathedral in Derry. Photo: Stephen Latimer

He then says that religions can be useful for bonding communities, “but if God does exist, they seem to be just about the worst way possible to connect with that deity. Religions are essentially bureaucracies, forms of quasi-government that seek to deny the essential messiness of the universe”.

It is important to realise that Sean Moncrieff is not an enemy of religion, more a slightly bemused but sympathetic outsider. He even wrote a book on religions, called *God – A User's Guide*. Despite its flippant tone, it shows a real interest in religion as a human phenomenon.

Agnostic

In a 2006 *Irish Times* interview, he declared himself a fence-sitter or agnostic when it came to belief in God but that his wife was an atheist. Nonetheless, they decided to raise their children as Catholics. They believed that it was better to have a story which you could later change than to have none.

And who could deny that religions prove that people can be great or awful? Bishop Robert Barron was interviewed by John L. Allen of CruxNow about the release of a Vatican report on ex-priest and ex-cardinal Theodore McCarrick, a notorious

serial abuser who was allowed to continue his abuse for decades while being promoted within the Church. Bishop Barron referred to it as showing “tragic incompetence” driven by a “self-referential and self-protective” clerical culture. He describes the culture as “sclerotic and dysfunctional”.

That is not too far from Mr Moncrieff's evaluation that religions are essentially bureaucracies. And yet, Moncrieff would also argue McCarrick's case is nothing to do with God, just with the awfulness of people.

“People who are active members of a religious community tend to live slightly longer, to have better self-control”

Catholics would agree in one sense, in that human institutions will always continue to sin, to fail and to damage people to a shameful extent. In this case, the Church allowed people to be abused through unwillingness to deal with a serial predator.

However, taken to its extreme, Mr Moncrieff's view that religions represent the worst possible way to try to connect with a deity,

should become religious because it is good for you. People who are active members of a religious community tend to live slightly longer, to have better self-control, to have happier marriages and their children are less likely to abuse substances.

Benefits

All that those benefits do, as Timothy Radcliffe OP has said, “is to suggest that the truth claims of Christianity are not trivial, and are worth investigating”. If people do not believe in the truth at the heart of a religion, however, it becomes hollow and crumbles.

The idea that faith in God and religion are entirely different things reflects the radical individualism of

our culture. Belief in God is private: religion is just an optional extra that may be actively damaging.

Those who see religion as a useful or less useful form of social bonding or contact, no matter how benign their misapprehension, miss the essential nature of religion to those who believe.

To me, faith is a radical awareness of the depth of God's love for us, lived out in a messy, sinning community, practised daily, essentially sacramental, and transformative. Our Lord told us that we are members of a body, radically dependent on each other, with Him as our head. We need each other, including the need to worship together.

How would you like to be remembered?

Leave a priceless gift as part of your legacy

One small action now could change the future for a child like Nalukena from Western Province, Zambia.

By including Sightsavers in your will you can help our hero surgeons like Mr Ndalela (pictured at the right) treat and protect children like Nalukena from avoidable blindness in some of the poorest parts of the world.

Nalukena is now smiling as she received medication that will protect her from the painful eye condition trachoma for a year.

Last year, generous support from those who chose to leave a gift in their will to Sightsavers was enough to protect 8,695 communities from the pain of trachoma.

Please remember Sightsavers in your will

To discuss leaving a gift to Sightsavers or to request further information please call Declan on 01 6637666 or email dwhite@sightsavers.ie

www.sightsavers.ie/beremembered

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Sightsavers

Dublin now needs an archbishop who is not afraid to be counter-cultural



Church leaders should be realistic without constantly going for a downbeat assessment of the future of Faith, writes **David Quinn**

In his latest thoughts on the future of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin notes that 'no religion' is the second most ticked box in the religion section of the national census. This, he says, is "the fruit of choice". Is it though, or are people being conventional about the matter, in the same way most of us have always been conventional?

“Archbishop Martin made his comment in a homily to mark the feast day of Laurence O’Toole, the patron saint of Dublin”

One of the complaints about religious practice is that so much of it is done out of habit. In the past, we are told, we went to Mass because everyone else was doing the same. This implies we were not really doing so out of choice, and there is an element of truth to that.

Human beings

But human beings are permanently creatures of habit. We follow conventions constantly. It is how our brains are wired. We are social creatures, adapted to living in society. Therefore, it is too simplistic to say people are ticking the 'no religion' box out of choice. (For the record, 9.8% of people did so in the 2016 census).



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin. Dr Martin has said that he believes his replacement will be announced before Christmas.

It would also be far too simplistic for anyone to suggest that older people still go to Mass out of convention, but younger people are not doing so out of choice. Young people are easily as prone to copying their peers as older people, and probably more so. The great majority of 20-year-olds don't go to Mass, so it takes a fairly brave 20-year-old to stand out from the crowd by doing so.

Archbishop Martin made his comment in a homily to mark the feast day of Laurence O'Toole, the patron saint of Dublin.

It was characteristically downbeat. He rarely praises the Church of the present or the past. If he surveys the long history of the Church to find examples of where it made a positive difference to social attitudes and the lives of ordinary people, there is little evidence of it.

Once again he speaks of the "harsh, authoritarian Irish Church" of the past, as though that is all there was to it, as though countless Catholics, lay and religious, did not also live lives of devoted service to others, carrying out all the corporal and spiritual works of mercy on a daily basis.

It is not balanced to focus only or mainly on the crimes and misleads. The good that

people do should not be interred with the bones.

We should, in fact, learn to marvel again at the fact that the Catholic Church produced vast religious orders run by women that founded enormous international networks of schools, hospitals and other charitable outreaches that to this day transform for the better the lives of tens of millions of people every single day.

Welfare state

It would be good as well to reflect on the fact that this huge charitable outreach is what eventually led to the welfare state, which we now take for granted, and which often grew out of what the Churches had previously founded.

To focus so disproportionately on the negative side of the ledger would be like looking at the history of any given country, Britain or France say, and looking only at their colonial pasts, and nothing else. It would produce an entirely distorted and demoralising view.

Would it behave, for example, a leader of Fianna Fáil to be consistently downbeat about his own party, and to be overemphasising its undoubted failings and current decline?

At the end of his homily, Archbishop Martin says: "The

“He says nothing about growing family breakdown or the number of children growing up without the benefit of a good father”

hearts of the indifferent and of those who feel disillusioned by their experience of the Church will only be reached by a Church marked by holiness, care for the poor and by engagement in bringing an authentic Christian contribution to the common search for goodness and truth."

This is true, but needs to be fleshed out. It should acknowledge, for example, that the Church has always done a tremendous amount to care for the poor. In fact, in the Western world at any rate, the Church practically invented the practice of caring for the poor. What pagan religions or philosophies back in the days of the Roman Empire produced the great charitable outreaches of the Church? The answer is none.

Also, what is "an authentic Christian contribution to the common search for goodness and truth"? What does it consist of? Indeed, those very terms "goodness and truth" need to be looked at. What can they mean in a relativistic age where there is my

'truth' and your 'truth'? Does morality have any objective content at all?

One aspect of the Christian contribution to this "common search for goodness and truth" must be a willingness to scrutinise the intensely individualistic, relativistic morality that is so prevalent today and is ruining so many lives.

Scrutiny

This is a form of scrutiny the Archbishop of Dublin has always seemed unwilling to undertake. For example, he has been almost completely silent on abortion since the referendum was passed more than two years ago, even when it was revealed that 6,666 abortions took place here last year.

He has said nothing I'm aware of about moves to legalise assisted suicide.

He says nothing about growing family breakdown or the number of children growing up without the benefit of a good father. He is silent on the havoc the sex revolution has wreaked in the lives of countless people.

These don't even have to be his top issues. Any given Christian might prefer to make poverty, or the environment their big issues. But as the leader of the country's biggest diocese, his silence on the above matters is deafening.

Pope Francis is not silent about them. He frequently condemns abortion, he speaks out against assisted suicide. We know he does not devote as much attention to these issues as his two immediate predecessors, but he does not ignore them either. By no means.

We don't yet know who the next Archbishop of Dublin will be. But whoever it is, he needs to be better at speaking positively about the Church and its history, without downplaying the negative aspects obviously, and in respect of the currently prevailing individualistic morality, he must be more willing to be counter-cultural, even if that invites inevitable criticism.

Living with COVID-19 threat in Africa's biggest slum

By Kevin Jenkinson

THIS mother-of-two has told how hard it is to live with the threat of COVID-19 and hunger in one of the world's most overcrowded slums.

Single parent Margret Wanjiru (33) lives with her 10 month old daughter, Charlyne, and a friend, in a small, windowless, one-room shack in Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya – Africa's biggest slum and home to 250,000 people.

Each shack has earth and wooden walls and corrugated iron roofs and they are so close together that neighbours can easily reach out and touch each other's doorways from their own.

“I feel bad. I would like to leave here if I got the opportunity, but I can't. I have no money”

It has narrow muddy streets between makeshift buildings that are strewn with rubbish and rotting debris – and there are open sewers where children play and animals graze amongst the waste.

Margret doesn't have and cannot afford electricity and sometimes goes without meals for days so her baby – who survived severe malnutrition just months after being born – can have enough to eat.

She has no bathroom or toilet of her own and has to use a shared public toilet that is a five minute walk from her home that everyone has to pay to use.

“The situation here is very tough. I don't know what to do,” Margret told aid workers with Irish humanitarian organisation, Concern Worldwide, who are helping Margret and her family.

“I feel bad. I would like to leave here if I got the opportunity, but I can't. I have no money.

“I would like a house that the rain doesn't get into. Somewhere that is dry – but I can barely even afford rent here.

“I have gone two days without food so that my child can eat. The difficulty and worry of everything is making me sick. I have ulcers in my stomach and they get worse from stress.”

Margret has been living in an area of the Kibera slum known as Makina for 15 years after moving there from a rural village.

Her older child, Kamau (15), had to move to a cousin's larger home



Margret and her baby Charlyne in the alleyway outside their home in Kibera, Nairobi. Here, homes are very close together and most live in one-room shacks.

“I wait for somebody to call me to work to do the washing, but nobody has called because of the pandemic”

in a neighbouring village at the start of the pandemic in an attempt to adhere to the social distance guidelines.

She told Concern that she really wants to try keep Kamau in his school, which she has to also pay for.

Before the pandemic, Margret earned a living by washing clothes, which saw her earn enough to cover her living needs. Her friend helped to mind Charlyne while Margret went out to work.

However, she has since had little or no work and has been relying on handouts and whatever she could get from begging while walking on nearby roads with her baby.

“I wait for somebody to call me to work to do the washing, but

nobody has called because of the pandemic,” she said.

“We can only eat when we have worked and I have no income so I go and walk on the roads with my baby, and sometimes people give me maybe 20 or 50 shillings [20 or 40 cent].

“My neighbours sometimes give me baby food. They say she is an angel.

“Sometimes, people buy me cheap food too, which is a huge help.”

The impoverished mother said she tries to eat one meal a day, which is usually Ugali (maize flour) with green vegetables.

Margaret's situation – one that is experienced by millions of people living in slum conditions around the world today – means she struggles to adhere to the most basic health advice to try and prevent her family from getting the COVID-19 virus, despite her best efforts.

The confirmed number of cases in Kenya as of 9th November is 61,769 and they have so far had 1,103 deaths in a country with a population of over 51 million people.

COVID-19 restrictions mean that residents in the slums are asked to stay indoors and social distance as much as possible.

A 7pm curfew is also in place in the region to try and keep case



General view of the centre of Kibera slum area in Nairobi including uplifting street art from Art 360 artist collective

numbers down and those who break it face the possibility of jail.

Margret said the Kibera slum has become more dangerous since lockdown started and that at times she doesn't feel safe.

“Concern aid workers are providing residents like Margret with food and enough cash so she can afford to keep her home and buy food”

Concern aid workers are providing residents like Margret with food and enough cash so she can afford to keep her home and buy food.

“I am going through a lot of problems here with my baby. I do not even know if my son is getting enough food every day where he

is, but I am very thankful for all the support,” she said.

Concern Worldwide has launched an appeal to help children and families facing severe hunger this Christmas.

The aid agency said at the start of this year 135 million people were food insecure, but that this could double to 265 million by the end of 2020, largely due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The charity estimates that by Christmas, up to 10 million more children could face severe malnutrition.

To find out more about and how to support Concern's work

CONCERN
worldwide

Visit www.concern.net
Call Kevin Byrne on 01 417 7777
Email kevin.byrne@concern.net



Kibera Slum traintracks

Two-thirds of Ireland's dioceses don't have exorcists despite Vatican protocol

Chai Brady

Only one-third of Irish dioceses have an exorcist despite the Vatican requiring each diocese to have at least one specially trained priest, researchers have discovered.

Out of Ireland's 26 dioceses there are nine exorcists according to a group of European academics, fewer per diocese than other countries in their study.

However, the limited new research, which is ongoing, also found that many dioceses were "little competent" regarding information sought regarding exorcists and their ministry by the team.

All of Ireland's dioceses were contacted. Nine confirmed the presence of an exorcist, nine didn't have an exorcist, two refused to participate and six didn't respond.

The research covered England and Wales, Scotland, Italy and Ireland.

The team found that despite the early stage of research "it has been possible to determine some systemic-structural issues at European level".

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, one of the researchers involved, Prof. Francesca Sbardella of the University of Bologna said: "In many occasions, the dioceses have appeared to be excessively fluid and little competent about the data and the information sought by our research staff."

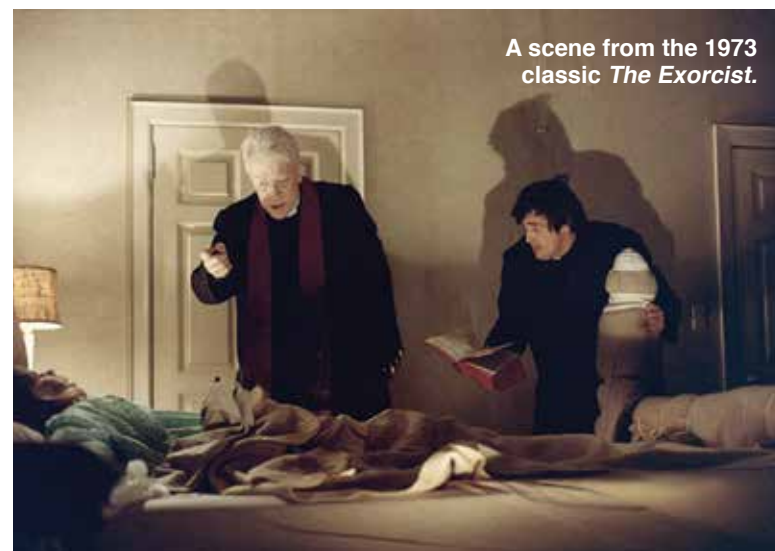
"The relationship between the person in charge of a diocese, who is supposed to monitor and verify the exorcist's activity, and the exorcist themselves seem to vary from case to case. For this reason, even the existence of an exorcist has been hardly verifiable among the data collected."

The project is being taken on by researchers from GRIS (Research and Socioreligious Information Group), Pontificio Regina Apostolorum and the Department of History, Cultures, Civilisations in the University of Bologna.

One member of the research team, Giovanni Ferrari, told *Catholic News Agency* that the group is the "first in the world" to carry out the level of research on the ministry of exorcism in the Catholic Church they're engaging in.

Italy reported the largest number of exorcists. Out of 226 dioceses, 160 responded. Overall, of those dioceses there are 283 official exorcists. There are 37 dioceses without official exorcists, five dioceses refused to participate and 11 didn't respond.

In England and Wales there are 16 exorcists and 22 dioceses. While



A scene from the 1973 classic *The Exorcist*.

Scotland has fewer exorcists than the other regions in the study – in its eight dioceses there are three – it still has a higher percentage compared to Ireland per diocese.

Regarding the data around allegedly possessed people and their family, Prof. Sbardella said: "The family context around the persons who are considered possessed is almost impenetrable. This context remains in the background, but it actually orients the approach to the diocese."

"This research area should help us better understand not only the motivations of the allegedly possessed person but also the motivations of the diocese itself. In fact, the diocese takes action not only towards individual persons but also towards their family," she added.

While exorcism ministry is largely secretive, with little known about it among the general public, the researchers hope to shed some light on the topic and collect data and statistics which currently, by and large, don't exist.

QUB Catholic chaplaincy partners with L'Arche

Jason Osborne

The Catholic chaplaincy at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) has partnered with L'Arche Belfast to provide them with shelter and space for their activities over the winter months.

L'Arche Belfast is part of a worldwide organisation which seeks to provide support for those with intellectual disabilities.

With the arrival of Covid-19 in Ireland in March and the ensuing lockdown, those who benefit from L'Arche's support struggled greatly with the upheaval as services moved online.

QUB has provided space for them for autumn and the coming winter, which enabled L'Arche to continue its outreach programmes in a suitable setting.

Commenting on the development on behalf of

L'Arche, project manager Alison Pettigrew said: "Our projects put an emphasis on the idea that all people have something meaningful to contribute to the community. Our programmes encourage participation from other marginalised groups in society, such as individuals who are homeless."

Chaplain in QUB, Fr Dominic McGrattan, said, "Chaplaincy is happy to provide L'Arche with a home for the winter months and to welcome young adults who might otherwise struggle to access third level services to be part of an inclusive university family which values everyone."

"I expect that we have much to learn from the members of L'Arche. Our university students are an impressive bunch, committed to service and care for others. I have every confidence they will be keen to get involved and volunteer."



Maria, Tracy, Ross and Katriona, members of L'Arche Belfast are pictured at the main entrance to Queen's University Belfast. Photo: Molly Campbell

Hundreds of NI healthcare workers oppose 'at-home' abortions

Ruadhán Jones

Almost 300 healthcare workers signed an open letter to the Minister of Health rejecting the legalisation of 'at-home' abortions in Northern Ireland.

The 277 healthcare workers drafted the letter following a campaign by abortion advocates for the provision of over-the-phone abortion services.

The letter demands better care for

women and children than "unsafe and unacceptable at-home abortion schemes".

A Northern Ireland GP, Andrew Cupples, called on Minister for Health Robin Swann not to "bow-down" to the "cynical ideological" campaign for at-home abortions.

"This is a cynical ideological move to seize ground while the attention of the politicians, health service and population are otherwise occupied

with Covid-19," Dr Cupples said. "Far from protecting vulnerable women, it opens the door for further coercion and abuse."

Dr Cupples argued that patients who receive telemedicine abortifacients will not have received a proper assessment.

"The notion of properly informed consent, a pillar of good medical care, is thrown out the window," he said. "It flies in the face of good medical care."

NI Health Authorities criticised for 'presuming' 6500 abortions

Pro-life group Precious Life have criticised health officials for assuming and making plans for up 6,500 abortions per year in Northern Ireland.

The figure was found in the notes of a meeting involving officials from Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Board held last December.

Health officials discussed how many

abortions they would need to cater for in NI, presuming that abortion rates will be the same as England and Wales at 25% of all pregnancies.

Director of Precious Life, Bernadette Smyth said the figures were "outrageous": "Northern Ireland has a pro-life culture. We can't go from culture of life to a culture of death overnight."



Special Mass of Remembrance

Sunday 22 November, at 12 noon

**An online Mass to remember all those who have
Died from Covid-19 on the island of Ireland.**

Join us at www.knockshrine.ie/watch
or on Facebook@knockshrine

This Mass will be celebrated by Most
Rev Michael Neary, Archbishop of
Tuam and streamed live to the world
from Knock Basilica.

As we come closer to the end of this
difficult year, we come together as a
community of faith in support of one another and to pray
for strength and hope for ourselves and each other.
Petitions may be submitted online prior to the Mass. These
will then be placed on the altar and prayed for during the
Mass. Further information from www.knockshrine.ie



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t: +353 (0) 94 93 88100 e: info@knockshrine.ie
w: www.knockshrine.ie

Upcoming Events Online

Comfort on the Journey

— a series of online Vigils this November



In the special month of November, we remember our
departed loved ones.

Join us online each Friday evening as we come
together virtually for a period of extended prayer and
reflection.

Nov. 20: *Comfort On The Journey*

We gather comfort and strength in our moments of grief,
loss and anxiety in these difficult times in this period of
prayer and reflection.

Nov. 27: *Facing The Future*

In these challenging times, we come together as we pray for
the strength to face the future with faith, hope and courage.

Join us online for Rosary at 7pm, Mass at 7.30pm and Holy Hour at
8pm on our website www.knockshrine.ie

'The Christian Vision of Life After Death'

— a series of online talks by Brian Grogan S.J.

These short talks will be streamed on our website
www.knockshrine.ie at 8.30pm every Wednesday
evening in November and on the Knock Shrine
Facebook page.



Nov. 18: *Death as Homecoming*

Nov. 25: *God's Project for the World*

Knock Ignatian Advent Programme



*A Series of Online Reflections for
Advent with Jim Deeds and
Brendan McManus SJ*

Join us as we travel through Advent; a time of preparation and
waiting for the birth of the Christ child. Together, we will go on a
scriptural and Ignatian journey through the themes of Advent,
relating them to everyday experience. Our themes are:

- Week 1: *Stay Awake***
- Week 2: *In the Wilderness***
- Week 3: *Joy and Happiness***
- Week 4: *Mary's Yes***

The series will begin on **Tuesday 24 November** and will be streamed
online every Tuesday and Thursday throughout Advent at 8.30pm on
the Knock Shrine website www.knockshrine.ie and Facebook page
@knockshrine.



All events will be live-streamed at: www.knockshrine.ie

NET Missionaries sent forth despite constant 'battles'

Jason Osborne

NET Ministries Ireland has finished six weeks of training and has sent their five teams off to their local areas despite a "battle" due to Covid-19, NET Ministries Ireland Director Tony Foy has told *The Irish Catholic*.

Following a day of celebration of their commissioning, Mr Foy said, "The day was great. It was very, very poignant. It's been like a battle this year, all the way from March right through to November. It's been a battle – a battle to get them into the country, a battle to get places to take them in, it's been a battle to do everything and at the same time stay Covid compliant, which we've managed to do. It was like a victory – the day was like a victory."

All the missionaries from abroad spent two weeks quarantining upon reaching Ireland and the remainder of the training period in lockdown at NET's training facility.

They've been trained to live as a close unit in the areas to which they've been sent, while remaining fully compliant with all of the Government's Covid guidelines.

"They're very strong. They're a very, very strong group of missionaries and as a whole, I think they're feeling very united and, you know, adversity has proven to be a potent ingredient in training good missionaries," Mr Foy said.

"We know that the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church, we're thriving under adversity and we're not lying underneath it. It's something that we feel – we feel compelled to spread the Gospel in Ireland, and we feel that young people need the Gospel."

A recently-minted member of the team, Peter Aherne from Bray said, "For me personally during the first lockdown it seemed like we were just stuck in that situation and there was no way out. So now being a NET missionary it's really important to me that we can meet young people where they're at. We can let them know that beyond the loneliness and fear there's something more."

The sentiment was echoed by Grainne Clancy, a qualified teacher from Armagh: "As an Irish person, it's a privilege to be a witness of Faith to the youth of my own country."



Members of one of the recently-commissioned NET teams smile beneath their masks.



Tony Foy leads training for a group of NET missionaries.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Covid-19 has created poverty in new guises – Bishop Leahy

Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy has called for society to heed the "silent cry" of those who have found themselves facing unforeseen challenges as a result of Covid-19.

Speaking on World Day of the Poor, Bishop Leahy said that poverty has suddenly appeared in a variety of guises, like loss of life but also for those who have been robbed of the security of work.

"There is undoubtedly a silent cry of people who have fallen unexpectedly on hard times," he said. "They may not be visibly poor, but they are beginning to feel the worry of just not being able to make ends meet – for themselves, their children."

'Tower of strength' priest who helped Greysteel massacre families dies

Chai Brady

A renowned "tower of strength" priest who ministered to people devastated by the 1993 Greysteel Massacre in the North has died.

Fr Stephen Kearney (76) was the curate of Faughanvale and Lower Cumber parish in Derry before he died on Friday.

He gave strength to the families of the eight people who were killed after UDA gunmen entered the Rising Sun bar in Derry and opened fire.

Despite being transferred to other parishes he kept in contact with the people from Derry village. The current parish priest, Fr Noel McDermott, told the *Belfast Telegraph*: "The people of

Faughanvale and Lower Cumber express sincere condolence to the Kearney family on the death of Fr Stephen.

"He was curate at the time of the Greysteel shooting tragedy and was a tower of strength to so many families and individuals during that time and since.

"Fr Stephen kept in touch with the parish

over the years and was generous with his time, especially at significant anniversaries of the Greysteel tragedy.

"His kindness and compassion will be long remembered by the people of the parish."

Fr Kearney's funeral took place on Saturday.

The Mass was celebrated at St Mary's Church, Killyclogher.



Young people plead for return to Mass

Staff reporter

A video circulating on social media has seen the youth of Ireland pleading for a return to Mass and the sacraments.

Posted by the "We need Worship" Facebook page, the video has garnered nearly 8,000 views and expresses the view that religious services are among the safest forms of social activity to participate in.

"We believe that closing our churches and not letting us go to Mass is inconsistent and unjust, especially seeing that religious services are deemed to be the safest places of public gathering in Ireland," the narrator states.

"The Church is not an online community. Public worship is at the very heart of who we are, and we need to be able to go to Mass," she continues.

The video concludes with a montage of dozens of young people's video submissions which sees them asking both the politicians of the country and the clergy to "please let us go to Mass".

In November, we remember



Superintendent Tom Calvey and members of An Garda Síochána with Fr Richard Gibbons, Rector of Knock Shrine, outside Knock Basilica for the 12pm Mass for victims of road traffic accidents. Photo: Sinéad Mallee.

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ACN IRELAND

WEEK^{OF} WITNESS

FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

25 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER

Our suffering Church
needs your help



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN IRELAND

PONTIFICAL
FOUNDATION



ACN IRELAND WEEK OF WITNESS FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS 25 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER

Dear Friends,

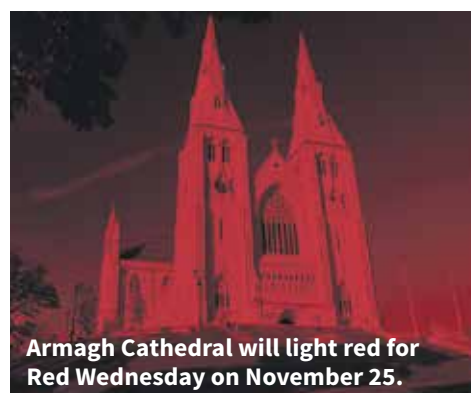
We at ACN Ireland wish to warmly thank you for your continued guidance to the Church during these trialling times. Now especially, being present with and for the most vulnerable of God's people is vital to achieving a truer likeness of justice and peace on Earth.

ACN Ireland began the Week of Witness and Red Wednesday as an invitation to Christians in Ireland to stand in solidarity with, and bear witness to the heroic example of, our persecuted brothers and sisters in faith across the world. Thanks to your continued support, we've been able to grow our mission and strengthen our message of support for the persecuted Church with the faithful of Ireland.

This year, the ACN Week of Witness will take place between 25 November and 1 December, with many important talks to be livestreamed on the theme of

Christian persecution. During the Week of Witness, the Red Wednesday Liturgy of Witness will be held at St. Patrick's Cathedral Armagh. This is a beautiful opportunity for the faithful to gather as a community of witnesses and pray not only for persecuted Christians – but also for the persecutors of Christians.

In support of your efforts to promote the ACN Week of Witness and Red Wednesday, please download our free ACN Ireland Parish Pack at www.acnireland.org/witness.



Armagh Cathedral will light red for Red Wednesday on November 25.

During the ACN Week of Witness, we'd be so grateful if you could encourage among your friends and family some Ways to Witness, including:

- **ILLUMINATING** your Church or school in red to show the world that the sacrifice and suffering of the persecuted and martyred Church is an ongoing reality.
- **WEARING** a red tie, scarf or scapular as a mark of the blood lost by Christians in defence of our Faith.
- **PRAYING** for the suffering and persecuted Church at the hours of the Angelus, 1200 and 1800 and during Holy Mass, or consider giving a homily on the theme of persecution and martyrdom in the Church.
- **ATTENDING** a Red Wednesday Liturgy of Witness (in the Republic of Ireland, due restrictions related to COVID-19, ACN Ireland's events will be live-streamed via www.acnireland.org/mass).
- **DONATING** to ACN Ireland to help in our work for persecuted Christians globally – your donations constitute a powerful corporal work of mercy.

 Aid to the
Church in Need
ACN IRELAND

You, through your help and support of ACN Ireland, can help save lives, save souls and save the Faith. In pursuit of this charism and mission, we at ACN Ireland are so grateful for your witness, your prayers and your alms to help make this reality, by the Grace of God.

Should you have any queries at all in relation to organizing an event in relation to ACN in your diocese or parish, please feel free to contact us via email on info@acnireland.org or via phone at +353(0)1 837 7516 or +44 289 531 3369.

May God, through intercession of Our Blessed Mother, continue to bless and keep you all in your vital ministry.

Yours in Christ,

Michael

Dr. Michael Kinsella,
National Director,
ACN Ireland



LEBANON: Nabil's Miraculous Escape

4 August should have been the happiest day in the life of Jad, a young Lebanese man. For it was the day when his wife Christelle gave birth to their first son, Nabil, in St. George's Hospital, in Beirut.



'Have no fear. He will always be with you.'
Little Nabil and his father Jad.

Their happiness lasted just fifteen minutes. For at 6.07 p.m. 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate exploded in Hanger 13 in the nearby port of Beirut. Over 200 people died and more than 6,500 were wounded.

'Everything flew through the air; I thought war had broken out. My first thought was for my wife and child. It was a miracle. When I see the cradle in which Nabil was lying, I can only give thanks to God. It was directly beneath the shattered window, covered in shards of glass that had bored into the blankets like small lances. But Nabil was completely unscathed, untouched.'

Jad took the uninjured child into his arms – and marvelled. Something similar must have happened in the stable of Bethlehem, around 300 km to the south of Beirut, when Joseph first set eyes on the newborn Child.

At that time, two thousand years ago, God was also protecting the newborn child. But St. George's Orthodox Hospital, the oldest and one of the three largest hospitals in the country, was almost completely wrecked.

Christelle had to be taken with Nabil to another hospital 50 miles (80 km) away. Those were hard and challenging moments for this young father. They changed his whole life, just as Saint Joseph's life was changed when, after being warned by the angel in a dream, he took the Child and his Mother that very night, and fled into Egypt (cf Mt 2:14).

'The explosion has changed my life', says Jad. Despite all the difficulties, he says he has worked and fought to build the country 'which I love. But in order to remain, we need security and the feeling that someone cares about us Christians. We feel quite alone, abandoned, forgotten.'

The destruction is almost beyond belief. 300,000 people were directly affected by the explosion, which particularly devastated the Christian quarter of the city. Thousands have been left homeless and wondering how they are going to survive the winter.

The social, economic and political crisis in Lebanon had already plunged the country into deep poverty. Nonetheless, Jad is still thankful for the 'miracle' in the hospital. *'I say to our child again and again, 'You are alive because Christ has saved you. Your mother*

and I were both injured, but you didn't receive a scratch. Never forget that. Jesus was with you at that moment. Have no fear, He will always be with you.'

The three Wise Men brought the Child in Bethlehem gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. What gift does Jad wish for his child? *'Peace, security – and the strength to bear the cross of Christ. For being close to Christ means shouldering his cross.'*

'My son has lived that reality since the fifteenth minute of his life, and we Christians in Lebanon know this all too well. We have lived through wars and persecutions. We are alive, because we have a mission to fulfil. We must bear witness to Christ.'

His testimony is also a call for help – which ACN has heard. Let us help all those carrying their cross, just as little Nabil and his parents Christelle and Jad are doing.



The cot which Nabil was lying in.



Red Wednesday

Liturgy of Witness for Persecuted Christians

25 NOVEMBER 2020



Gathering Hymn:

Holy God, we praise thy name

Holy God, we praise thy name; Lord of all, we bow before thee! All on earth thy sceptre own, all in heaven above adore thee. Infinite thy vast domain, everlasting is thy reign.

Hark! the loud celestial hymn, angel choirs above are raising; cherubim and seraphim, in unceasing chorus praising, fill the heavens with sweet accord, holy, holy, holy Lord.

Holy Father, holy Son, Holy Spirit, three we name thee, while in essence only one undivided God we claim thee; and adoring bend the knee, while we own the mystery.

Opening Prayer

Lord God, your Son Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His Resurrection, He restores life and peace in all creation. Comfort we pray, all victims of intolerance and those oppressed by their fellow brothers and sisters. Remember in Your Kingdom, those who have died and who continue to die for their faith. Lead the oppressors towards compassion and give hope to all who are suffering. We pray through Christ our Lord,

Amen

A Reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (8:31-39)

With God on our side, who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that He will not refuse anything He can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – He rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand, he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. As scripture promised: For your sake we are being massacred daily, and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of Him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ

Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

All: *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Gospel: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

As long as we love one another, God will live in us and his love will be complete in us.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (5:43-48)

You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike.

For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: *Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.*

Reflection on Giving Witness to Christ: Fr. Peter Johnson (Nigeria)

Hymn: Christ be beside me

Christ be beside me, Christ be before me, Christ be behind me, King of my heart. Christ be within me, Christ be below me, Christ be above me, never to part.

Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ all around me, shield in the strife. Christ in my sleeping, Christ in my sitting, Christ in my rising, light of my life.



Christ be in all hearts, thinking about me, Christ be on all tongues, telling of me, Christ be the vision in eyes that see me, in ears that hear me, Christ ever be.

Intercessions

Archbishop: Turning to God in faith and trust, we pray for the needs of the Church and of the world.

1 Let us pray for the Universal Church, for our Holy Father Pope Francis, our Bishops, Priests and Religious and all who serve the Church.

Lord in your mercy.

All: *Hear our prayer.*

2 Let us pray for Aid to the Church in Need and its work with persecuted and other suffering Christians throughout the world, especially children who have been made refugees or left displaced by war

Lord in your mercy.

All: *Hear our prayer.*

3 Let us pray for the faithful departed, remembering especially deceased friends and benefactors of Aid to the Church in Need and for those worldwide who have given their lives rather than abandon the faith.

Lord in your mercy.

All: *Hear our prayer.*

4 For those suffering because of their Christian faith, that the Holy Spirit may fortify them with the courage to remain strong in faith, as well as with the charity to forgive their persecutors.

Lord in your mercy.

All: *Hear our prayer.*

5 For those who persecute Christians, that the light of God's truth and mercy may penetrate their hearts, and that they may come to recognise the common humanity of all peoples and cease committing acts of hatred.

Lord in your mercy.

All: *Hear our prayer.*

Archbishop: Lord our God, you have called us to follow you in faith: in faith we also make our prayers to you, trusting in your grace and mercy. We make these and all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

Amen

A lighting of candles to commemorate all Christian martyrs of yesterday, today & tomorrow.

Prayer in honour of St. Oliver Plunkett

Gracious God and Father, we praise you for the faith and courage of St Oliver Plunkett and all the Martyrs of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. In their time and place, they gave heroic witness to your mercy and love, even in the face of hostility and hatred.

St. Oliver Plunkett was a man of peace and worked tirelessly to promote justice and peace wherever the road of life brought him. We ask you to give us something of Saint Oliver Plunkett's faith and courage. In particular, moved by his example of prayerful trust in your mercy, we ask you through his intercession for this special intention...

Help us to give witness to you in our homes, schools and places of work and play now and always. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen



St. Oliver, Pray for us.

All Holy Martyrs of yesterday, today and tomorrow, Pray for us.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God, we remember all who have gathered this evening in the peace of Your presence, to remember all persecuted Christians.

May that peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among all nations. We pray through Christ our Lord,

Amen

Recessional Hymn:

How great thou art

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds thy hand has made,

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed.

R Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: How great thou art, how great thou art. (2)

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin. (R)

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart; when I shall bow in humble adoration, and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art. (R)



ACN IRELAND

WEEK OF WITNESS

FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

25 November – 1 December
(Red Wednesday)

Every year, from **November 25th to December 1st**, ACN Ireland invites parishes across the country to join us in holding a **Week of Witness** for suffering and persecuted Christians.

This special week in the life of the Church involves important talks and exhibitions throughout the island of Ireland on the theme of Christian

persecution.

This year, **we invite you to join us online** as we, both as a Church and as a Nation, together face the challenges of COVID-19. This year, we pray especially for religious freedom – in Ireland as well as abroad. The inviolable right to religious liberty is increasingly taken for granted and suppressed

across the world, especially against Christians.

During the *Week of Witness*, ACN Ireland will also hold the **Red Wednesday Prayer Vigil** with the prayerful assistance of dioceses and parishes throughout the country, from which many services will be livestreamed. Though we cannot do so in person, this **Red Wednesday is still an opportunity for the faithful to gather together online as a community of worshippers to publicly affirm their thanks to God**, their spiritual union with persecuted Christians – and to pray for those who persecute the Church and Her faithful.

PLEASE JOIN US AT ACNIRELAND.ORG FOR THE FOLLOWING LIVESTREAM EVENTS:

- **Red Wednesday Launch** with **Archbishop Eamon Martin** from St. Patrick's Cathedral Armagh, 7.30pm.
- **Red Wednesday**, November 25th, 8pm – **Livestream interview with George Weigel** hosted by **Maria Steen**.
- Thursday, November 26th, 8pm – **Livestream interview with Fr. Peter Johnson** hosted by **David Quinn**.
- Friday, November 27th, 8pm – **Livestream interview with Lord David Alton** hosted by **Wendy Grace**.



Christianity is the **MOST** persecuted religion in the world

At least **80%** of all religious persecution globally is inflicted against Christians in any given year



Approximately **260 million Christians** face persecution because of their Faith every day in 50 countries



Over **9,500 churches** are attacked annually around the world



Some of the worst countries to be a Christian include: North Korea, China, Pakistan and Nigeria



Even in countries in the West like Ireland, there are increasingly regressive and dangerous precedents being set against Christian identity, teaching & practices – for the first time since the repeal of the Penal Laws in 1829, a priest can be arrested for publicly celebrating Holy Mass

For more details on other events visit acnireland.org/witness

Yes, I would like to make a regular donation to ACN Ireland wherever the need is greatest

☐ €10 ☐ €25 ☐ €50 Other €

*If you are a taxpayer, €21 or more a month can go 45% further towards ACN's work at no extra cost to you.

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*IBAN Account number *BIC are now required under SEPA regulations. You will find these on the top right hand corner of your bank statement.

Please indicate your preferred debit date: ☐ 3rd or ☐ 17th of the month.

Please Sign Here Date / /

Your direct debit are usually debited on the 17th of the month. By signing this mandate form, you authorise (A) ACN Ireland to send instructions to your bank to debit your account and (B) your bank to debit your account in accordance with the instruction from ACN Ireland. As part of your rights, you are entitled to a refund from your bank under the terms and conditions of your agreement with your bank. A refund must be claimed within 8 weeks starting from the date on which your account was debited. Your rights are explained in a statement that you can obtain from your bank.

Yes, I would like to make a one off gift to ACN Ireland wherever the need is greatest

☐ €60 ☐ €130 ☐ €250 Other €

*If you are a taxpayer and donate €250 or more in any given year we can reclaim the tax paid and make your donation go 45% further.

Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa Debit

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A Passion for God's Love

Celebrating Three Hundred Years of the Passionists

Fr James Sweeney CP

Catholic life is richly populated with great and saintly figures. They're very particular people, from their own particular places and traditions, but they belong to us all. The Apostle Paul says the Spirit's gifts are bestowed for the good of the whole Church. So we all have a bit of St Francis and the Franciscans in us, and St Teresa of Calcutta and her Missionaries of Charity – and something of St Paul of the Cross and the Passionists too.

Three hundred years ago this month St Paul of the Cross, a young layman at the time, had a profound, and at times harrowing, spiritual experience during a lone forty-day retreat which he undertook at the suggestion of his bishop who had just clothed him in a penitential habit. Eventually his deep spiritual encounter in a small church room in Castellazzo in Northern Italy bore fruit as the founding inspiration of a religious order – the Passionists.

Paul's struggle during his retreat wasn't about believing in the saving

power of the Cross – as might be the issue for many people today. It was the struggle to experience the Cross in the depths of his own heart. The Cross claimed him – he became Paul of the Cross.

Sometimes we try to avoid this kind of faith struggle – which is in fact the struggle of human living. We give in to wishful thinking that everything's always going to be all right and, when it's not, retreating into bitterness. If we're religious, we might comfort ourselves with God's love as 'cost-free', costing us nothing, and a sentimentalized devotion to the Passion. But in the end, it all breaks down.

Suffering

Today we see suffering in so many places, in our own lives and in the harsh injustice and despair experienced by others. We can try to turn away from it, as it can seem overpowering. St Paul of the Cross shows us how to respond to suffering, taking it on board within ourselves, uniting it with a deep loving regard for Jesus Crucified.

Paul was able to live the Passion of Jesus as his own,

alongside Mary and the beloved disciple and the women on Calvary. What he saw on Calvary, with luminous clarity, was love. An immense Divine Love was at work: Jesus giving everything – for his own people, for us, for his Father. It was Love that transformed the horror and absurdity of the crucifixion into the Passion. Love transforms us too and our world. Pope Francis, in his recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, dares to call for love even in social and political affairs. The Divine Love inspires love, even in inhospitable places.

This year the Church grants the Passionists the privileges of a Holy Year of Jubilee to celebrate our foundational event. It's a great joy to share this with all of you, the holy people of God. Holy Years are for everyone! We invite you, along with us, to draw benefit from Paul's unique spiritual gift, his charisma of loving regard for Jesus Crucified. It's our mission as Passionists to keep that central feature of Christian faith alive in the Church.

This Holy Year will be celebrated in all Passionist



St Paul of the Cross

churches around the world, and through events such as retreats or missions or pastoral or social projects. I invite you to join with us in your own way – to find your 'inner-Passionist', because the Passion – the Paschal Mystery – is the heart of our Christian life –

living out what our baptism does in us, plunging us into the death of Jesus that we may rise to new life in him.

Fr. James Sweeney CP is the Provincial Superior of the Passionists in Ireland and Scotland

Founded in 1720, the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (the Passionists) came to Ireland in 1856. With communities in Dublin, Belfast, County Fermanagh and County Down, they serve in retreat houses, parishes, chaplaincies and media ministry, with an emphasis on preaching, the teaching of prayer, spiritual direction. In Belfast they are also engaged in counselling and peace-reconciliation work. One of their members, St Charles of Mount Argus was canonised in 2007. Revered for his ministry of healing and reconciliation, St Charles promoted the devotion to Mary Mother of Holy Hope. His shrine at Mount Argus in Dublin is a much loved place of pilgrimage today.

"Saint Paul of the Cross gathered companions to live together and to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all". (Constitutions, I)

Jubilaum
1720 | 300 years | 2020
GRATITUDE | PROPHECY | HOPE
Renewing our Mission

Passionists – Ireland and Scotland passionists.ie



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

As both the United States and Europe face resurgences of the coronavirus pandemic and are moving towards new lockdowns in many places, it's a good time to look back at the experience of the first wave in the spring and take stock of lessons learned.

In Catholic terms, the issues back then – which, in various forms, are coming to the fore again now – break down in three broad categories: Church/state relations and religious freedom; economic, social and political fallout; and pastoral considerations.

Symbolically, a key papal moment over the past few months captures the challenges inherent in each.

Church/state issues

During the first wave of coronavirus lockdowns, public celebration of the Mass was suspended virtually every place, triggering fierce debate within the Catholic world about going along with those government decrees.

Critics argued that it was poor judgment for the Church to capitulate to the notion that worship is not an “essential public service,” and voiced alarm over the long-term consequences of sending the signal that physically going to Mass isn't really necessary. That concern was even sounded by a secretary to Pope Francis, Father Yoannis Lahzi Gaid, writing to priest friends in Rome on March 13.

“I think of the people who will certainly abandon the Church, when this nightmare is over, because the Church abandoned them when they were in need,” Fr Gaid wrote.

The key papal moment in this sense came April 28, which was about 36 hours after Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced plans for a gradual easing of the first coronavirus restrictions in the country. When Mr Conte's announcement did not include any mention of lifting the suspension of public Mass, the Italian bishops conference swiftly issued a testy statement, and during the next 24 hours it appeared some Italian bishops were prepared to launch a legal battle on religious freedom grounds.



Pope Francis leads Benediction during a prayer service in an empty St Peter's Square at the Vatican, March 27, 2020. CNS.

All that came screeching to a halt when Pope Francis pronounced these words during his livestreamed daily Mass the next morning: “In these days in which we are starting to have regulations to come out of quarantine, let us pray to the Lord that he gives his people, all of us, the grace of prudence and obedience to the regulations so that the pandemic does not return.”

“Throughout the document, Pope Francis breaks down what he sees as wrong with global politics and the current economic system”

That immediately took the wind out of the sails of any pushback from the Italian bishops, and it set a tone across Europe. It's instructive that both in France and Germany, high court cases that either repealed or modified worship bans weren't filed by the Catholic bishops – in France, it was a coalition of right-wing political forces and traditionalist Catholics; in Germany, it was a Muslim association.

A different approach is being taken in the U.S., where the Diocese of Brooklyn has filed a petition with the Supreme Court to block an

executive order by Governor Andrew Cuomo, himself a Catholic, limiting the number of people who can attend religious services.

In the weeks to come, Church leaders again will face hard choices about the extent to which they comply with government restrictions for the sake of public health or defy them in the name of religious freedom. In France, for example, where the government has again decreed a suspension of public worship until at least December 1, some Catholics are pressing the bishops to resist, even launching the hashtag #oursoulsmatter on social media.

Economic, social and political fallout

The key papal moment on this front clearly came on October 3, 2020, the vigil of the feast of St Francis, when the pontiff travelled to Assisi in order to sign his new encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*. It amounts to the Pope's prescription for a post-Covid world, and the drama now would seem to be how effective his team proves to be in making it real.

In essence, Francis argued for a massive global reset, saying the pandemic exposed the world's “false securities.”

“Aside from the different ways that various countries responded to the crisis, their inability to work together became quite evident,” he said.

Throughout the document,

Pope Francis breaks down what he sees as wrong with global politics and the current economic system. He critiques populism, nationalism, and liberalism (along with its economic corollary in free-market capitalism.) He urges multilateral efforts to face global problems, and calls for policies that prioritise the most vulnerable, including migrants and refugees.

He also issues a searing critique of today's hyperpolarised and trigger-happy social media culture, suggesting fraternity as a remedy to the toxicity. He appeals for women's rights and equality, greater care of the environment, defence of the elderly and an end to racism as well as the violent protests recent episodes have provoked.

All in all, Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* lays out a vision for how the shock of the pandemic could create the conditions for social change that otherwise might be seen as too sweeping or radical.

It remains to be seen whether he'll have much luck promoting that agenda, though with the transition to President-elect Joe Biden in the U.S., the Pope may at least find a partner whose instincts are a bit more in sync with his own.

Pastoral care

On the pastoral and spiritual level, no moment better captured the essence of

the challenges created by the coronavirus than March 27, 6:00 p.m. Rome time, in St. Peter's Square.

It was then that Pope Francis delivered perhaps the most extraordinary blessing in the long history of the papacy, offering a surprise benediction *Urbi et Orbi* – “To the City and the World” – in the midst of the agony of the pandemic.

The setting was dramatic indeed: Pope Francis standing alone in that usually overflowing square, flanked by the images of Maria Salus Populi Romani and the miraculous crucifix of San Marcello, his voice carrying out through the rain to an eerily silent city, punctuated only by the harrowing sound of ambulance sirens passing by.

The Pope's language seemed to give voice to the national mood. Translation doesn't quite do it justice, straining to capture the poetry of the Italian original, but probably the most oft-cited phrasing came near the beginning.

“Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, which stops everything as it passes by,” the Pope said.

“We feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost.”

Italians may remain divided about the policy response to the pandemic, with some urging tighter restrictions and others – including the waiters, cooks, hotel workers, beauticians and barbers, and others who fear lost earnings and family hardships – bitterly arguing that the burden of keeping the public safe shouldn't fall disproportionately on them.

Yet they're united in recalling that March 27 moment as the iconic image of the pandemic, the one time when they all felt united in a common sense of dependence on something bigger than themselves.

In a thousand different ways, bishops, pastors, religious and lay Catholics alike will be challenged over the weeks to come to create their own smaller-scale *Urbi et Orbi* moments, grasping what people are feeling and offering them consolation in a way that breaks through the fear and the noise.

One can't just photocopy what Francis did, of course, but one can't ignore the power of it either. Frankly, nothing else that's happened since the pandemic erupted probably better illustrated why the religious and spiritual contribution is, arguably, “essential” after all.

John L. Allen Jr is Editor of CruxNow.com

Merchants Quay Ireland: Caring for our most forgotten this winter

As you can imagine, life is especially difficult for people who are homeless this winter. As day services across the city are restricted because of Covid-19, people who are homeless are enduring greater isolation than ever before. Not being able to get out of the cold weather for a warm meal, a shower, or a comforting conversation. Wearing wet and dirty clothes for days. Suffering the indignity of little or no access to toilets. As the weather worsens and the pandemic wears on, the team at Merchants Quay Ireland is tending to increasing numbers of women and men sleeping outside in doorways and on pavements – often their physical and mental health deteriorating day by day.

In line with public health advice, observing social distance, MQI's Riverbank centre in Dublin 8 is a lifeline connection to practical and emotional support for the most vulnerable this winter. Whether it's the staff who are flat-out giving food at the door, the mental health crisis service comforting those in despair, or the nurse and the GP providing desperately urgent health care.

MQI's teams work Trojan hours day after day, tending to people who are sicker and with wounds in worse condition than seen before the coronavirus. But it's the brokenness inside that's harder to reach. In their own words, MQI staff and clients describe the impact this pandemic is having on the lives of people who are homeless this winter.

For MQI client, Frank, Covid-19 has caused a severe deterioration in his physical and mental wellbeing. "I have asthma, and I'm terrified – a lad got the coronavirus at the last place I was. I just couldn't stay. It's been three months since then and I am trying to keep a bit of human dignity going on. But to tell you the truth, being so dirty now, I'm ashamed to walk past children in the lanes. Ashamed of my physical state. I can't remember when I had my last shower. I'm using baby wipes, like so many other people on the streets. Everything for us has been closed because of the coronavirus."

Keeping body and soul together

Nurse Marguerite, who is part of the team at MQI's River-



“To tell you the truth, being so dirty now, I’m ashamed to walk past children in the lanes. Ashamed of my physical state. I can’t remember when I had my last shower.”

bank centre, sees first-hand the struggle facing Ireland's most vulnerable, as the cold dark winter nights close in. "We all have anxiety about the virus and the flu. At MQI we see so many people whose immune systems are low from being homeless and from other medical conditions that you or I might have. But imagine not having a home, or your own bathroom. God help our homeless people, they have so many other things to deal with."

Marguerite's bright blue eyes drop when she describes the effect the pandemic is having on people who are homeless. "Everything takes so long since Covid. You have to clean every surface that's touched. Wound care can take over an hour. It's hard. You can't physically distance – and the women and

men, they just seem so lost. Straight away, we can give them the prescriptions and the wound care, but they are just so shattered and drained.

"Even for the lucky ones in accommodation right now, they are all asking, 'What will happen when we are made to move on?' Since Covid-19 came we can't provide walk-in appointments, but we have been treating the most ill people without interruption, people who have nowhere else to go. Our homeless women and men are at such a dangerous, lonely, and vulnerable time in their lives."

Chef Dave keeps the stove hot and the pots warm through the pandemic whilst the food service is on a take-out basis. "All of us in the MQI kitchen crew really miss the clients. It was such a comfort

MQI nurse Marguerite



“It’s hard when there’s no one around, it’s like a ghost town. Everybody keeps saying that, don’t they? Well, I’ll tell you, we’re the ghosts.”



MQI staff prepare takeaway meals

for so many at once to be able to eat inside together. Handing them a cup of tea and having that one-to-one banter, seeing how they're getting on. But we're still providing hot takeaway meals twice a day – be that curry, chilli, shepherd's pie, lasagne or pie and beans. Good, hearty food, nutritious and warming with plenty of carbohydrates for the energy. So, no matter what the cold day and dark nights bring, at least there's a home-cooked hot meal still here for them."

Saving lives through warm conversation

Sarah, MQI's mental health case worker, shared a story from the first lockdown. "We had a man in his forties come to our door in crisis. Because of

Covid-19, he had spent weeks alone and was now terrified of becoming suicidal. The isolation he was experiencing was magnifying the problems in his life and severely impacting his mental health. Imagine the courage it took him to open up and ask for help that day. He was so grateful someone was there to listen to and understand him. He left us knowing that he would always have someone to talk to."

When asked about this winter, Sarah explains "There's no doubt that social isolation and increased hardship, caused by Covid-19, is having a negative impact on our clients' mental health this winter. I worry that some people will fall through the cracks. My hope is that our mental health team can continue to help people feel seen and heard, and cared for."

Stephen, who is currently sleeping rough on Dublin's streets, is engaging with MQI's assertive outreach team, who regularly check in on him, bringing him dry clothes, food, and hand sanitiser. He explains his fears this winter as the country goes into another lockdown. "It'll only get worse. I've nowhere to go when it's raining, frosty or snowing. It's going to be hard because you can't even get a coffee or a cup of tea. Nobody is around so no one has any change to help you out.

"Thankfully, I've still been able to get to talk to my key-worker, my GP, and get a bit of food. MQI have been a life-saver, literally. But it's lonely not being able to go in and have a bit of rest, have a sit down. I'm on my feet all day. Walking around, trying to keep warm, trying to keep occupied. It's hard when there's no one around, it's like a ghost town. Everybody keeps saying that, don't they? Well, I'll tell you, we're the ghosts."

Keep our most forgotten close to your heart this winter. To donate please call 01-5240139, visit www.mqi.ie or return the donation form included in your enclosed insert pack. Thank you.



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

If you would like to make a Christmas gift to help Ireland's homeless and hungry this winter, just ring MQI on 01 524 0139, visit www.mqi.ie, or return the donation form included in the enclosed insert to Merchants Quay Ireland, FREEPOST F3736, PO Box 11958, Dublin 8.



Out&About

Remembering the dead



LAOIS: 148 candles were lit at Portlaoise parish's bereavement Mass in memory of those who died in the past year and those who mourn them.



ROSCOMMON: Scramoge native Eloise McDonnell ran a 10k race in her Communion dress, in memory of her late father Michael McDonnell, during the first national lockdown.



DERRY: The RE department of St Mary's Grammar School thanked Gideons International for visiting the school and providing a Bible to each year 8 student to keep.

IN SHORT

Trócaire set to record one million Christmas gifts delivered

Trócaire is set to deliver their one millionth gift to families in the developing world this Christmas.

The charitable agency of the Irish Catholic Church recently launched its annual Christmas Gifts campaign and said it will hit the one million milestone over the coming weeks thanks to the generosity of people who support its work.

Trócaire's Christmas Gifts campaign has seen 972,000 gifts bought across the island of Ireland since 2000 and raised over €38m for long-term work in aid of

families affected by the causes of poverty.

This year's Christmas gift range includes new gifts to help people cope with the impact of Covid-19, including the gift of quarantine care for families who have lost all their income due to quarantine or self-isolation.

Trócaire CEO Caoimhe de Barra said: "I'd like to thank all of our generous supporters who have bought Trócaire gifts. Such kindness allows Trócaire to provide families in the developing world with clean water, essential tools, livestock and help with education. This year your gift really could be one in a million."

"Our new quarantine care kit along with our gift of soap and clean water has the potential to provide protection from Covid-19 and a lifeline for struggling families who are self-isolating. Families across Africa, Asia

and Central America will benefit from the new quarantine care gift."

Trócaire has asserted that families in the world's poorest communities are facing the threat of Covid-19 as well as drought, conflict and other disasters this year, with the gifts providing necessary supplies in the face of their struggles.

UNICEF: Children need continued support in Beirut

It's been 100 days since a massive explosion tore through the port of Beirut, leaving death and destruction in its wake. A new report published on by the UN

children's agency UNICEF warns that many children and families still remain in need of "crucial support" months on from the disaster.

Entitled Rising from Destruction. 100 days of UNICEF's response to the Beirut explosions and the road ahead for children and families, the findings paint a distressing picture.

According to UNICEF Lebanon Representative Yukie Mokuo, "While the immediate scars are starting to heal, thanks to extraordinary efforts on the ground, the deep wounds – both visible and invisible – of children and families in a country experiencing multiple emergencies will require sustained solidarity, commitment and support."

Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



KILDARE: 2nd years at St Mary's College in Naas enjoyed a table quiz during lunchtime.



◀ DUBLIN: Fr Bryan Shortall and Capuchin Provincial Minister, Brd. Sean Kelly take part in a Facebook live rosary and chat.

▼ CHINA: Mass being celebrated at the grave of Fr Timothy Peter Leonard on November 2 in San Gang, Jiangxi, China. Fr Leonard was a Limerick diocesan priest, who joined the Society of St Columban in 1918 following ordination at Maynooth and ministered in China for nine years from 1920 to 1929.



DUBLIN: Sr Helen Mary of the Redemptoristines works on her knitting as part of 'the Needle Club' as she produces knitted items for selling.



KERRY: The Killarney Franciscans hosted a small blessing of the graves in the cemetery alongside the Franciscan Friary chapel following 10am Mass.



Events

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

World Report

IN BRIEF

World Youth Day 2023 organisers urge youth to join 'great national movement'

● The organisers of World Youth Day 2023 invited young Portuguese Catholics this week to prepare for the event by taking part in a two-day nationwide mission. They urged youngsters to join a "a great national movement that intends to bring hope and joy to the whole country," reported *ACI Digital* November 13. Organisers invited young people across the country to dedicate November 28-29, the weekend marking the start of Advent, to the mission. "We challenge each young person to do a mission wherever they are, thus giving expression to the theme proposed by Pope Francis for WYD Lisbon 2023," they said. The Pope announced in June 2019 that the theme of the next World Youth Day would be "Mary arose and went with haste," a verse taken from St Luke's Gospel describing the Virgin Mary's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth after the Annunciation.

George Weigel praises Courage apostolate for fidelity, heroic witness

● Catholic author George Weigel this week praised the heroic witness displayed by members of Courage, an apostolate that ministers to people experiencing same-sex attraction. He encouraged them to stand firm amid societal pressures and recent controversy over comments from Pope Francis regarding same-sex civil unions. "Brave men and women of 'Courage,' thank you for your witness. Please continue to

take up the challenge that St John Paul II issued on October 22, 1978: 'Be not afraid! Open the doors to Christ!'" Mr Weigel wrote in a November 11 open letter published at *First Things*. Courage offers resources to people experiencing same-sex attraction to help them live chaste lives according to Church teaching. Founded in 1980, the group today has more than 150 chapters in 18 countries.

Biden to open US to refugees with increase in resettlements

● Presumptive president-elect Joe Biden says he plans for the U.S. to resettle far more refugees in 2021 than in recent years. The move would be a reversal of standing Trump administration policy. In an announcement for the 40th anniversary celebration of Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), a Catholic organisation which supports and helps resettle refugees in the U.S., Mr Biden stated his intent to multiply the number of refugees accepted by the U.S. in 2021.

"The Biden-Harris administration will restore America's historic role in protecting the vulnerable and defending the rights of refugees everywhere, in raising our annual refugee admission target to 125,000," Mr Biden said on Thursday evening. The current limit on refugee acceptance for FY 2021 is just 15,000, the lowest-recorded number since the U.S. refugee resettlement program began in 1980.

China's five-year plan stresses eugenics in birth policy, says expert

● The Chinese government's latest five-year plan proposal contains a birth policy with an emphasis on eugenics, a China scholar said this week. China, known for its decades-long one-child policy, is now looking to counter its aging population by encouraging Chinese women to have more babies – but only certain kinds of women. Among the Chinese Communist Party's goals listed in its policy blueprint for the years 2021-2025 is to "optimise its birth policy" and "improve the quality of the population." "I am actually very worried," Columbia professor Leta Hong Fincher told a panel of China experts via video link at a virtual event by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) November 13.

Government restrictions on religion reach new peak, Pew Research Center says

Government restrictions on religion are at their highest since tracking began in 2007, the Pew Research Center has said in its new report, finding that 56 countries reached "high" or "very high" levels of restrictions on religion in 2018.

"In 2018, the global median level of government restrictions on religion – that is, laws, policies and actions by officials that impinge on religious beliefs and practices – continued to climb, reaching an all-time high since Pew Research Center began tracking these trends in 2007," Pew said November 10. While the rise from 2017 was "relatively modest," it continues the "substantial rise" in restrictions.

To track trends in religion, the Pew Research Center has created a Government Restrictions Index, a 10-point scale using 20 indicators. It has also created an index of social hostilities. While the coronavirus epidemic has prompted a wave of debate about restrictions on religious gatherings, Pew's latest report concerns the year 2018.

According to Pew's analysis, the Middle East and North Africa region still had the highest median level of government restrictions on religion, 6.2, up from 6.0 in 2017.

However, Asia and the Pacific had the largest increase in government restrictions. For example, 31



Displaced Syrian women and children who fled from Idlib province gathering around a fire in Afrin. Photo: CNS

countries in the Asia-Pacific region witnessed government use of force related to religion, an increase from 26 countries in 2017.

China ranked the worst on Pew's index of government restrictions on religion, 9.3 out of 10. Its restrictions include banning religious groups like Falun Gong and several Christian groups. It bars some religious practices, raids places of worship and detains and tortures people. It has continued a detention campaign against Uighurs in its Xinjiang province, with at least 800,000 people detained.

The Pew Research Center also measures social hostilities, which "encompass eve-

rything from religion-related armed conflict to harassment over clothing." This figure peaked in its 2017 report, and declined slightly in 2018.

India ranked the worst on the index of social hostility, 9.6 out of 10, due to significant religion-related mob violence and hostilities about religious conversions in 2018. India's government restrictions rating also peaked at 5.9 in 2018. Police in Uttar Pradesh state charged 271 Christians with "spreading lies about Hinduism" and allegedly trying to make converts by drugging people.

Christians and Muslims, who make up the world's most populous and most

geographically dispersed religious groups, experienced harassment in the highest number of countries: 145 countries for Christians, and 139 for Muslims.

Jews make up only 0.2% of the world's population, but faced harassment in 88 countries and were the third-most harassed religious group after Christians and Muslims.

The religiously unaffiliated, including atheists, agnostics and those who don't identify with any religion, saw declines in harassment. Those in this group were harassed in 18 countries, a decline from 23 countries the previous year.

UN calls for governments to act after shipwreck kills 74 migrants

The U.N. migration agency renewed its call for increased search and rescue efforts after another tragic shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea claimed the lives of 74 migrant men, women and children.

According to the U.N. International Organisation for Migration, also known as IOM, a boat carrying more than 120 people capsized off the coast of Khums, Libya, November 12.

It was the third fatal incident in less than a week: a migrant vessel shipwrecked November 10, killing 13

people; and the next day, a boat capsized, killing six migrants, including a 6-month-old baby.

"The mounting loss of life in the Mediterranean is a manifestation of the inability of states to take decisive action, to redeploy much needed, dedicated search and rescue capacity in the deadliest sea-crossing in the world," Federico Soda, IOM's Chief of Mission in Libya, said.

"We have long called for a change in the evidently unworkable approach to Libya and the Mediterranean, including

ending returns to the country and establishing a clear disembarkation mechanism followed by solidarity from other states," he said. "Thousands of vulnerable people continue to pay the price for inaction both at sea and on land."

The latest drownings came less than a month after Doctors Without Borders denounced European governments for allegedly preventing nongovernmental organisations from conducting search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean "in a sustained campaign to criminalise saving lives."

Fifth storm in three weeks leaves Filipinos trapped in houses, on roofs

Filipinos appealed for help as a fifth tropical storm or typhoon hit their country in a three-week period. These included the strongest typhoon since 2013 and the biggest floods since 2009.

The latest, Typhoon Vamco

– or Ulysses as it is known in Philippines – left at least 42 dead and 20 missing. Rescue workers said November 13 they were still trying to reach people trapped in their houses, even after the storm blew out to sea.

In eastern metropolitan Manila, water in the Marikina River rose to 72 feet, surpassing Typhoon Ketsana, which left 671 dead in 2009, the United Nations reported.

Ucanews.com said Jesuits

in the Philippines have appealed for material and spiritual support for victims of Vamco; many residents in Marikina City took refuge on the rooftops of their homes to await rescue.



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

Storm after storm



Residents evacuate from their flooded communities in Manila as Typhoon Vamco batters the Philippine capital.

Cardinal Gulbinowicz dies ten days after Vatican sanctions

A Polish cardinal recently sanctioned by the Vatican for sexual abuse has died at the age of 97.

Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz died the morning of November 16, the Polish bishops' conference announced.

Earlier this month, the apostolic nunciature in Poland announced disciplinary measures against the cardinal on November 6 as the result of an investigation into "the accusations against Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz and ... other accusations concerning the past of the cardinal."

The cardinal had been accused of sexually abusing a seminarian in the 1980s and of covering up abuse in another case. Gulbinowicz served as archbishop of Wrocław, in southwest Poland, from 1976 to 2004.

Among the disciplinary measures, Gulbinowicz was forbidden to have his funeral service at the city's Cathedral of St John the Baptist or to be buried in the cathedral.

The cardinal was also required to donate an "appropriate" sum of money to the St Joseph Foundation, established by the Polish bishops in October 2019 to support abuse victims and promote safeguarding.

John Paul II accepted Gulbinowicz's resignation as Archbishop of Wrocław on April 3, 2004, when he was aged 80.

Days after the nunciature's announcement that Gulbinowicz would be prohibited from attending any celebrations or public meetings, Polish media reported that the cardinal had been admitted to the

hospital in serious condition.

The spokesman from the Archdiocese of Wrocław, Fr Rafał Kowalski, responded to the nunciature's announcement by saying that the news is painful "because it shows that in the past some people were seriously hurt by the clergyman who led our diocese."

"These people deserve the words 'I'm sorry' ... We express our respect for them and declare our readiness to support and help," Fr Kowalski said.

The Catholic Church in Poland is in the midst of a protracted scandal related to clerical abuse. In 2019, the Polish bishops' conference issued a report which concluded that 382 clergy sexually abused a total of 624 victims between 1990 and 2018.

Video shows 90-year-old cardinal telling kidnappers: 'I will preach what is the truth'

When 90-year-old Cardinal Christian Tumi was interrogated in captivity by armed separatists in Cameroon last week, he calmly told his captors that he had been called by God to preach only what is true.

A video published on social media November 7 revealed a conversation that took place while Cardinal

Tumi was held overnight by separatist militias while traveling through Cameroon's Northwest Region.

In the video, one of Cardinal Tumi's captors confronted the cardinal about his calls for fighters in Cameroon to lay down their arms and then instructed him to share the separatists' message with the public.

To this, the cardinal responded: "I will preach what is the truth with pastoral conviction and biblical conviction."

"Nobody has the right to tell me to preach the contrary because I was called by God," Cardinal Tumi said.

At another point in the video, the cardinal told his captors: "When I speak, I

speak like a pastor and that I can never stop doing. If I stop doing that, then I will not be faithful to God, the Almighty."

Responding to the separatists, Cardinal Tumi could be heard saying: "If you have done wrong, I will tell you that you have done wrong; if the government has done wrong, I will say that they have done wrong."

Vatican roundup

Pope Francis calls Joe Biden to congratulate him on election success

● Pope Francis called President-elect Joe Biden early November 12 to congratulate him on winning the U.S. presidential election.

"The president-elect thanked His Holiness for extending blessings and congratulations and noted his appreciation for His Holiness's leadership in promoting peace, reconciliation and the common bonds of humanity around the world," said a readout on the call released by Mr Biden's transition team in Wilmington.

It also was all over Twitter. Mr Biden, it said, "expressed his desire to work together on the basis of a shared belief in the dignity and equality of all humankind on issues such as caring for the marginalised and the poor, addressing the crisis of climate change, and welcoming and integrating immigrants and refugees into our communities."

Mr Biden will be the nation's second Catholic president, after John F. Kennedy, who was elected to the nation's highest office 60 years ago, on November 8, 1960. On November 7, the media declared Mr Biden the winner of the November 3 election, but President Donald Trump has not conceded, and he and his campaign have filed several lawsuits in key battleground states, like Pennsylvania, disputing the election outcome, claiming voter fraud and irregularities in ballot counting.

Holy See: certain anti-Covid-19 measures limit religious freedom

● According to the Holy See, the different measures imposed by OSCE-participating states to combat the Covid-19 pandemic have had profound consequences on the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, and have limited the religious, educational and charitable activities of religious communities.

In particular, Monsignor Janusz Urbańczyk warned legislators of OSCE states about the serious consequences that restrictive measures such as those applied due to the pandemic can create in religious communities.

"States must respect the autonomy of religious communities, guaranteeing them the freedom to choose,

appoint and replace their leaders or decide – on the basis of their internal norms – the content of their beliefs, their structure or their name," Msgr Urbańczyk urged.

Noting that the exercise of religious freedom leads to personal fulfilment and helps contribute to the good of society, the Holy See official lamented that, in certain societies, religions continue to be perceived as a source of intolerance and a threat to peace. He deplored attempts to limit religions or creeds to the private sphere, relegating them to temples and places of worship and depriving them of their legitimate role in the public arena.

Vatican seeks to replace its service vehicles with all-electric fleet

● As part of its long-running efforts to respect the environment and reduce its use of resources, the Vatican said it was gradually trying to replace all its service vehicles with an all-electric fleet.

"Soon we will start collaborating with automobile manufacturers who are able to provide electrical vehicles for evaluation," said Roberto Mignucci, director of workshops and equipment for the office governing Vatican City State. He told *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, November 10 that an electric fleet was perfect since the average annual mileage for each of their many service and support vehicles is less than 4,000 miles (6,000 km) given the small size of the 109-acre city state and the close proximity of its extraterritorial properties, such as the papal villa and farm at Castel Gandolfo, 13 miles south of Rome.

Letters

Letter of the week

'Astounded' at treatment of priest by An Garda

Dear Editor, I was astounded to read in *The Irish Catholic* about a priest in Cork who was allegedly threatened by gardaí with punitive action for celebrating public Mass [IC 12/11/2020].

The Department of Health and the Minister of Justice have both said that if a priest celebrated public Mass they were not making a penal offence. That is their interpretation of the temporary regulations introduced to the Health Act 1947, so why is there any confusion for An Garda? To make threats about enforcing the law is a terrible abuse of power, a priest is no criminal for giving his flock access to the Eucharist, he is a saint.

Admittedly, it's important for everyone to be cautious and safe in these times of the coronavirus pandemic but we must keep a keen eye on those who would abuse their authority. Let's social distance, wash hands and all the rest, but we also need some common sense, the world can't just stop indefinitely. The hidden costs of locking down the country will surely be felt for years to come, so there needs to be a balance.

When members of the Republic of Ireland's police service decide that it's their duty to accost a priest and threaten him not to celebrate Mass publicly; that's a line that

should never be crossed. People of faith should not stand for it, as it leads down a dark road. Regardless of whether people of faith think the priest in question was a hero or was endangering people at a time of pandemic, our authorities should not be repressing religious activity.

It's a sad day when people's religious needs are respected and facilitated just over the border, in the North, while on the same island police are reprimanding priests in the south.

*Yours etc.,
John O'Flaherty,
Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow*

Trinity College should explain behaviour towards Catholic society

Dear Editor, Evidence is mounting on Trinity College in Dublin that it's an unfriendly place for young Catholic students, in my opinion. Judging by the article about the college which appeared in your paper [IC 12/11/2020] it seems to be getting worse.

The article states that college's Central Societies Committee wrote to the Catholic Laurentian Society to inform them they aren't allowed to advertise or hold prayer meetings under the society's banner as this would breach its status as a "cultural" society. What monumental rubbish, who is running the show over there and what's their intention? They seem dubious at best. Culture and faith go hand in hand for people who are religious. The 'source' of this article – who probably decided to remain anonymous to avoid bitter condemnation just for being Catholic and defending prayer – stated they felt it was religious discrimination if it was being applied across all religious orientated societies. I would wholeheartedly agree and hope Trinity College find it in themselves to explain and then apologise profusely for such a pathetic display.

*Your etc.,
Gerard Flynn, Cork City, Cork*



Ban on Mass attendance a 'grave deprivation'

Dear Editor, Recent Government directives regarding Covid-19 include the prohibition of attendance at Church services especially the Holy Mass which the Government directs to "move online".

Regrettably I have not heard even one archbishop, bishop, priest or deacon state publicly that such directives are unconstitutional and contravene Canon Law.

The fact is that watching the Mass on TV/screen is not at all the same as being physically present no matter how fervently one prays. Bunreacht na hEireann Art. 14 recognises "the free profession and practice of religion". While it is true that one can pray anywhere it is not possible to fully participate in the Mass, or

indeed, any other sacrament, remotely. According to Canon 1221 "entry to a church is to be free and gratuitous during sacred celebrations".

In the case of the Mass, not being present in church immediately precludes those suitably disposed from receiving Holy Communion which, for Catholics, is vital, and a grave deprivation indeed.

As for marriages, Baptisms, First Holy Communions and Confirmations these too are restricted. And some churches have been closed altogether – again in contravention of Canon Law 937.

This begs the questions as to whether our Government is acting unconstitutionally; and our bishops and priests are ordained to serve themselves or the

needs of the flock entrusted to them.

The fact of seriously ill persons whether in hospital, nursing homes, or their own homes being deprived of the sacraments because the priests did/do not attend them is quite scandalous and to my knowledge has never occurred even in times of plague. One cannot imagine doctors and nurses abandoning their patients in such fashion.

It is time our Government took note and our bishops exercised their authority under God to provide for the needs of the flock entrusted to them.

*Yours etc.,
Loretto Browne,
Ashbourne, Co. Meath*

Plea for public Mass during Christmas

Dear Editor, With the easing of restrictions hopefully in sight on December 1, the desire for public worship to resume, with of course the necessary safeguards in place, is currently to the forefront in the minds of many practising Catholics. The sacraments are absolutely necessary for us and many are now suffering for want of this essential spiritual nourishment. Online worship is an inadequate substitute. We need to be physically present for Mass inside our churches, in the presence of the priest, to receive the sacraments. Most other European countries have deemed it unconstitutional to ban public wor-

ship. Why are the Irish the outliers in this regard?

The extraordinary lengths to which the priests and volunteers in every parish across the country went to a few months ago here, to ensure a safe environment for all church attendees, was exemplary.

Article 44 of our Constitution states that 'The State acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God. It shall hold his name in reverence, and shall respect and honour religion'. Many elderly, and not so elderly people, whom I have spoken to over the last few months are suffering deeply from the lack of the sacraments. It is affect-

ing the mental and spiritual well-being of many Irish citizens at this time. Why should they suffer any longer? Christmas, the celebration of the birth of our Saviour and the highlight of the christian calendar, is only a few weeks away. After months of deprivation of public Mass, we now look forward with anticipation to be able to receive him in person. It is our constitutional right and our plea. The opening of our churches for public worship can ensure Christmas to be celebrated in a manner that is fitting for the feast that it so rightly deserves.

*Yours etc.,
Aisling Bastible, Clontarf, Co. Dublin*

facebook community

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

Trinity Catholic society pressured to stop praying

Are beliefs and values not part of culture any more in this country? Or is one culture trying to crush another?

– **Colette Furlong**

Just another attack on Catholics - nothing else.

– **Sheelagh Hanly**

Everybody seems to be allowed to practice atheism.

– **Gerry Donnelly**

You can be anything but a Catholic in Ireland today.

– **Domhnall Mac Giolla Bhríde**

I don't think they know the meaning of 'cultural'. Its root is 'cult' meaning 'worship'! – **Paraic Joseph Maher**

Cork priest celebrating Mass publicly warned by Gardaí

They have little else to be doing. God bless this priest a true shepherd to his flock. – **Frances Donaghy**

It is time for us as Church to start planning for Christmas Masses in our parishes...perhaps an early booking system as I saw recently at my beloved Brentwood Cathedral thanks to Fr Martin Boland. – **Alan Whelan**

That priest was doing what he was ordained to do. Pity the garda did not concentrate on doing what he was commissioned to do, prevent real crime and catch real criminals. – **Peter Killeen**

Govt urged to re-think 'sneaky' tax on prayer

I am beginning to think they are the government from hell. – **Chris Curley**

Given relatively small return this seems an absurd move.

– **Seamus Dooley**

Render unto Ceasar what is Ceasar's, render unto Ceasar what is God's is what it says. Despicable.

– **Maureen O'Leary**

That tax is getting on my wick. – **Ken Curran**

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

Liberals support 'death solutions'

Dear Editor, Is it not ironic that people who support abortion and euthanasia call themselves liberals? Ironic because is it not pro-life people who are the real liberals? Do we not welcome into society people of all abilities and disabilities, diversity and differences, whereas the people who call themselves liberals i.e. supporters of death solutions, should be more aptly called eugenicists?

*Yours etc.,
Brid Fitzpatrick
Terenure, Co. Dublin*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



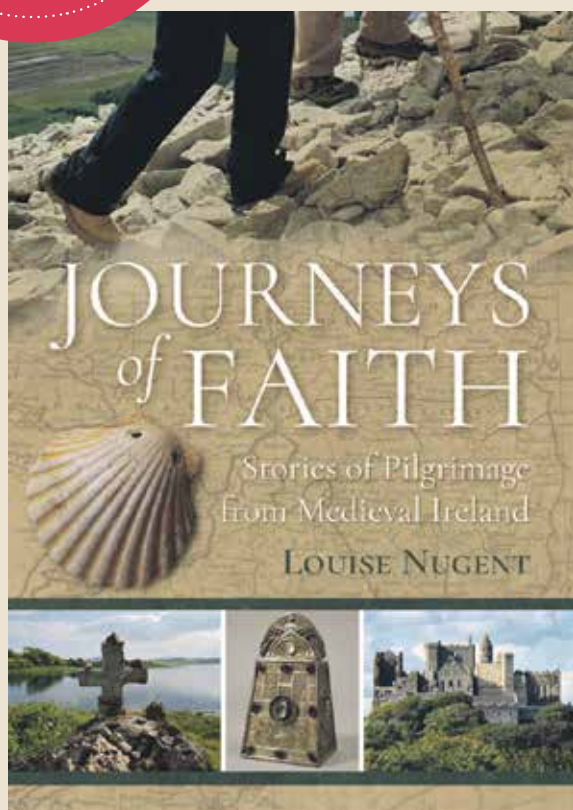
Christmas

GIFT GUIDE

OFFER VALID UNTIL DECEMBER 31ST



❄️ Bestsellers ❄️



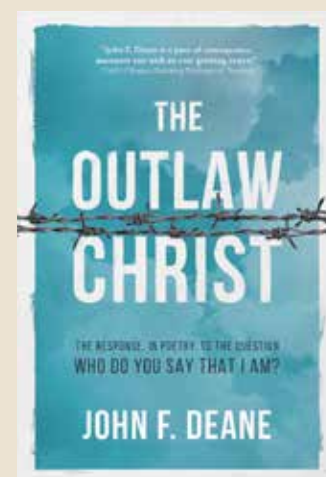
Journeys of Faith
Louise Nugent

€21.60 was €26.99



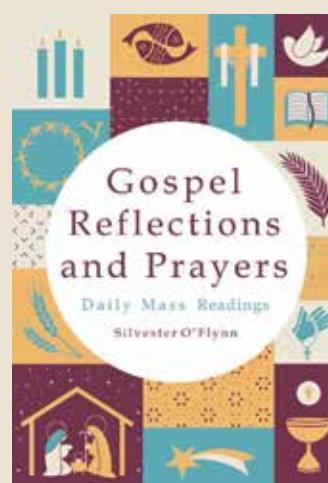
Food Feast Fast
P. Fintan Lyons OSB

€15.99 was €19.99



The Outlaw Christ
John F. Deane

€13.60 was €16.99



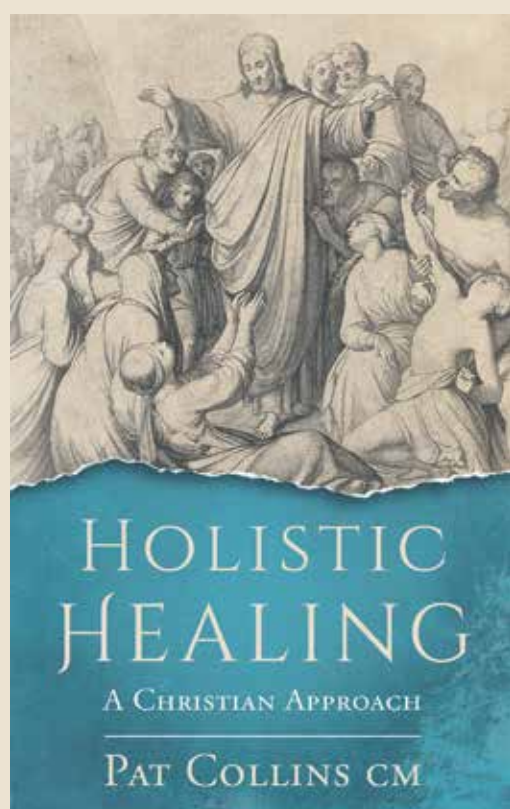
Gospel Reflections and Prayers
Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.

€15.99 was €19.99



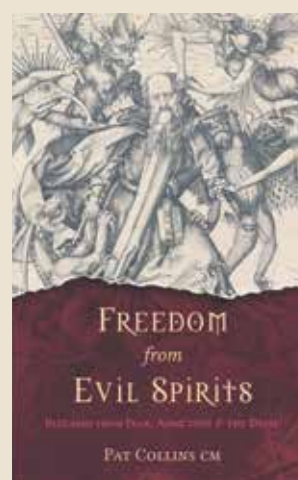
The Sacred Life of Everything
Sister Stan and Sile Wall

€11.99 was €14.99



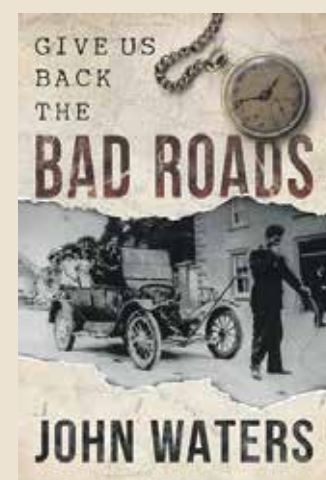
Holistic Healing
Pat Collins CM

€13.60 was €16.99



Freedom from Evil Spirits
Pat Collins CM

€10.40 was €12.99

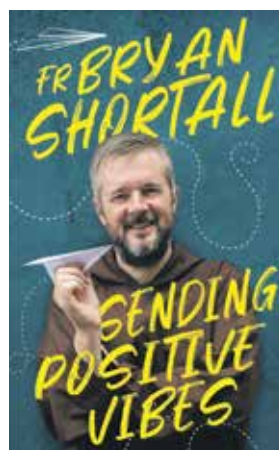


Give Us Back the Bad Roads
John Waters

€15.99 was €19.99

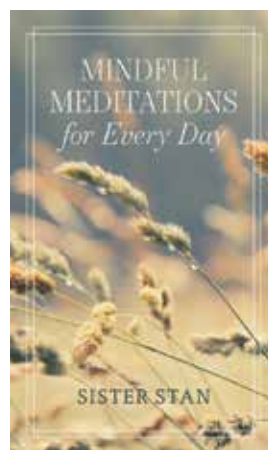


Wellbeing ❄️



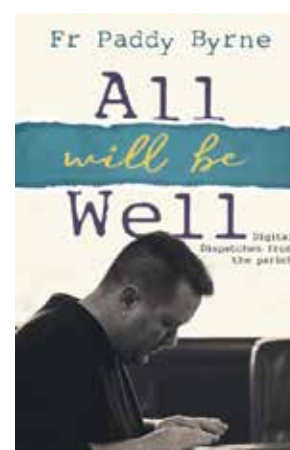
Sending Positive Vibes
Fr Bryan Shortall

€7.50 was €14.99



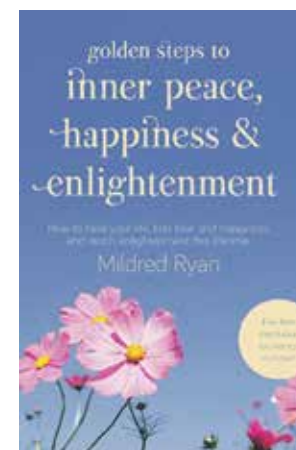
Mindful Meditations for Every Day
Sister Stan

€6.50 was €12.99



All Will Be Well
Fr Paddy Byrne

€7.50 was €14.99

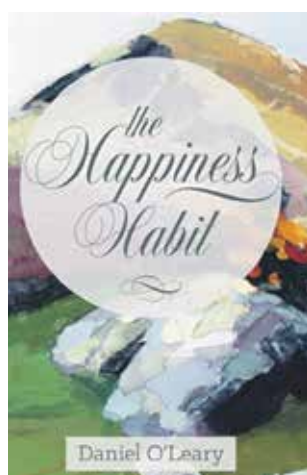


Golden Steps to Inner Peace, Happiness & Enlightenment
Mildred Ryan

€7.50 was €14.99

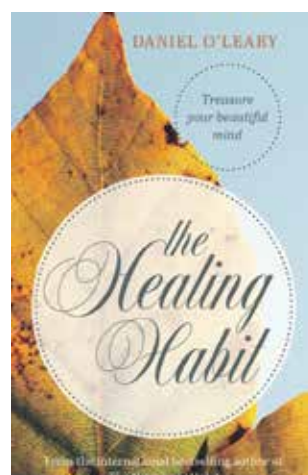


Daniel O'Leary ❄️



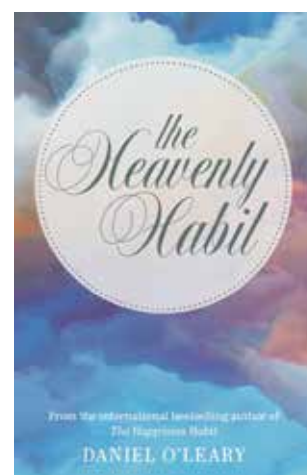
The Happiness Habit

€6.50 was €12.99



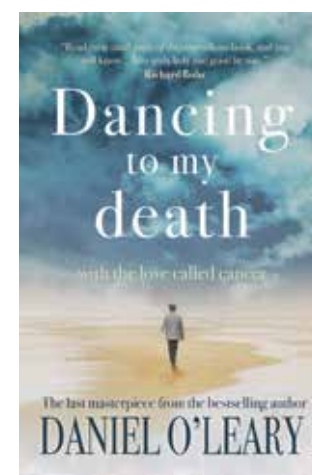
The Healing Habit

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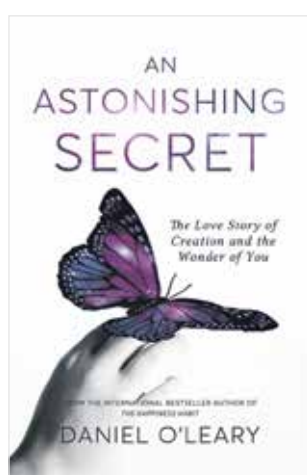
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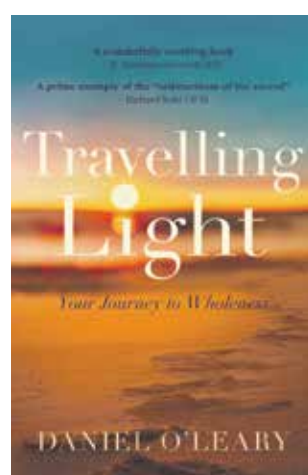
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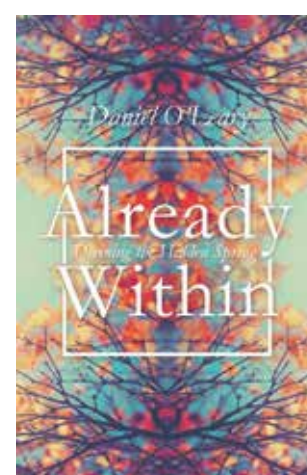
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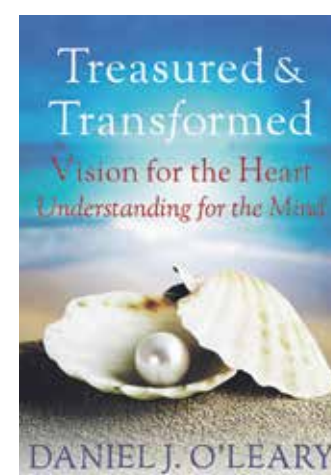
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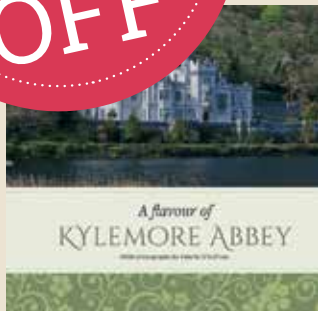
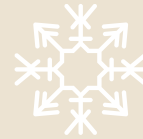


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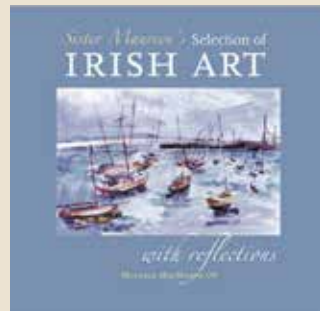


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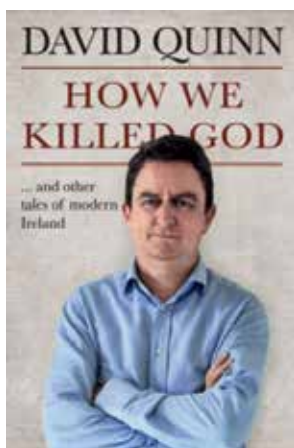


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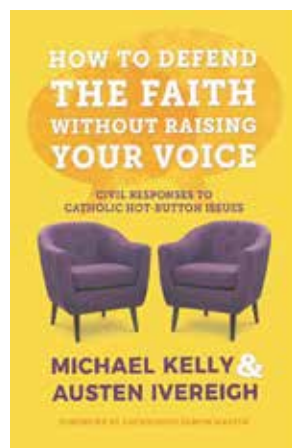


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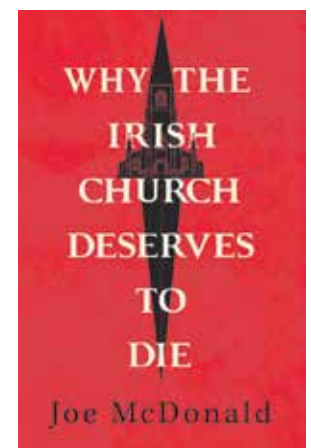
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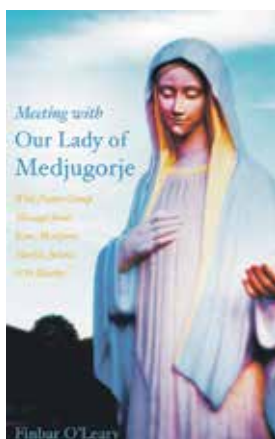


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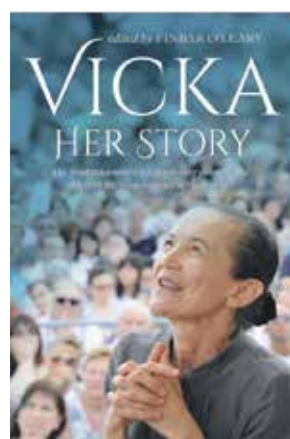


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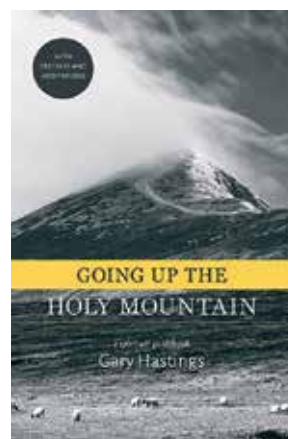
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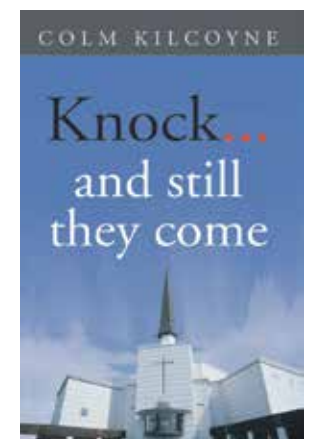
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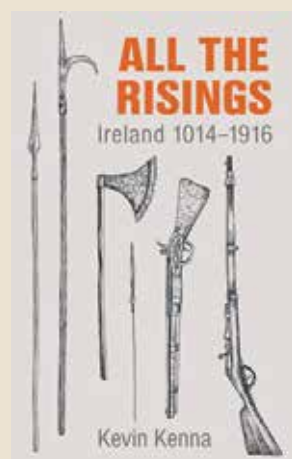
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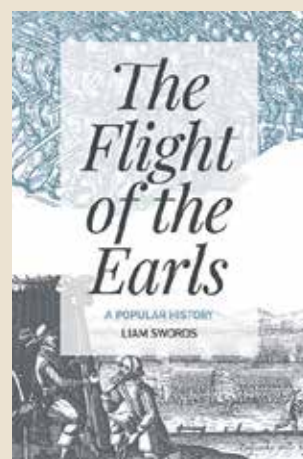
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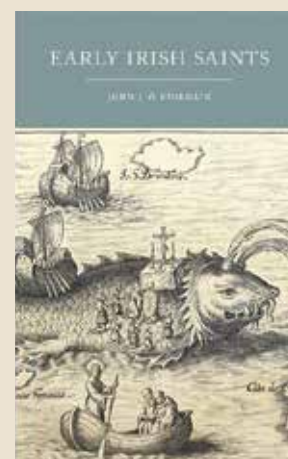
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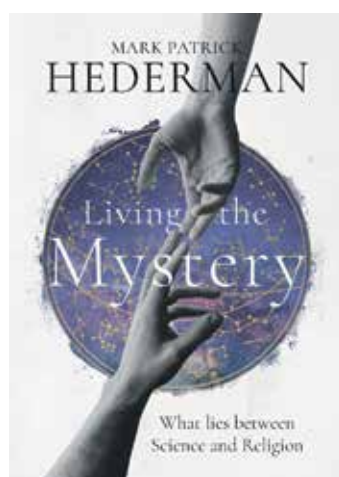


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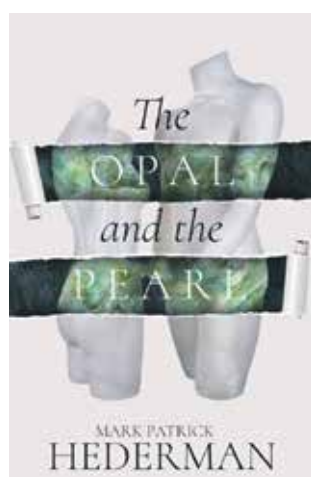
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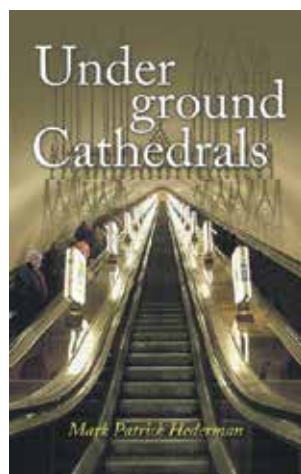
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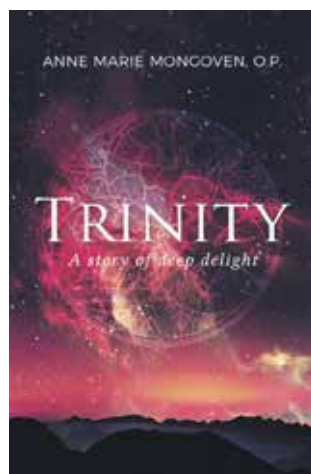
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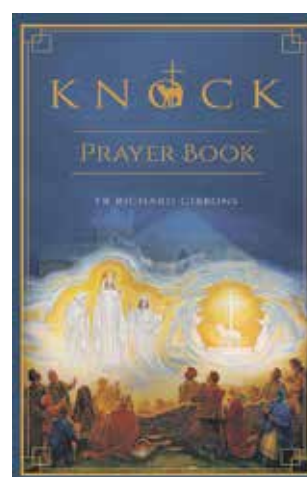


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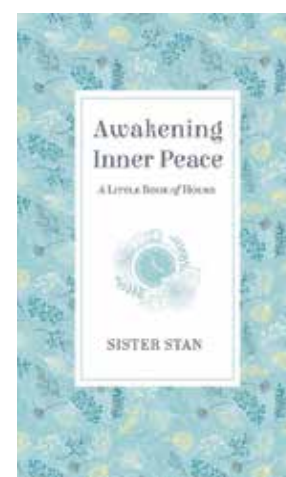
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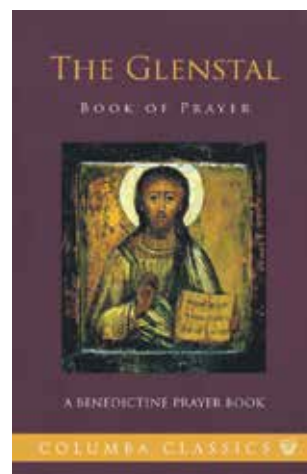
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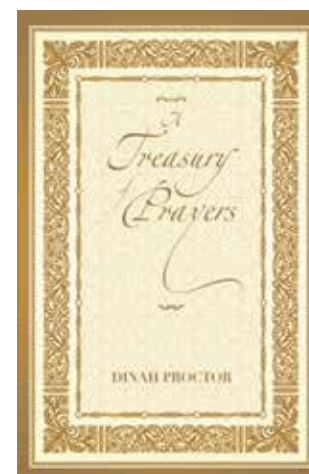
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Around the world



▲ **INDIA:** A woman wearing a protective mask prays inside a church in Mumbai.
 ▲ **USA:** Supporters of President Donald Trump participate in a “Stop the Steal” protest in Washington after the presidential election was called by the media for Democrat Joe Biden a week earlier.



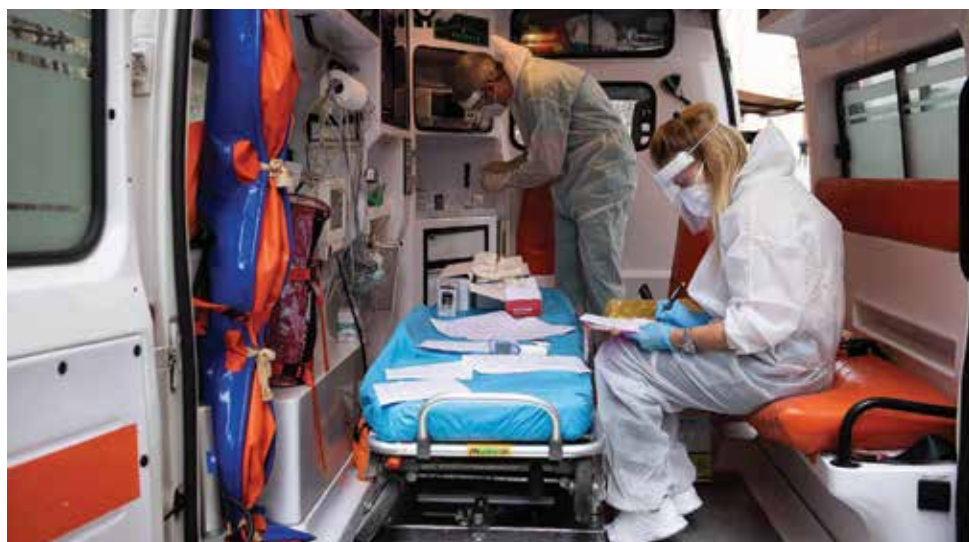
CHINA: Couples pose for their wedding photos in front of St Joseph Catholic Church in Beijing.



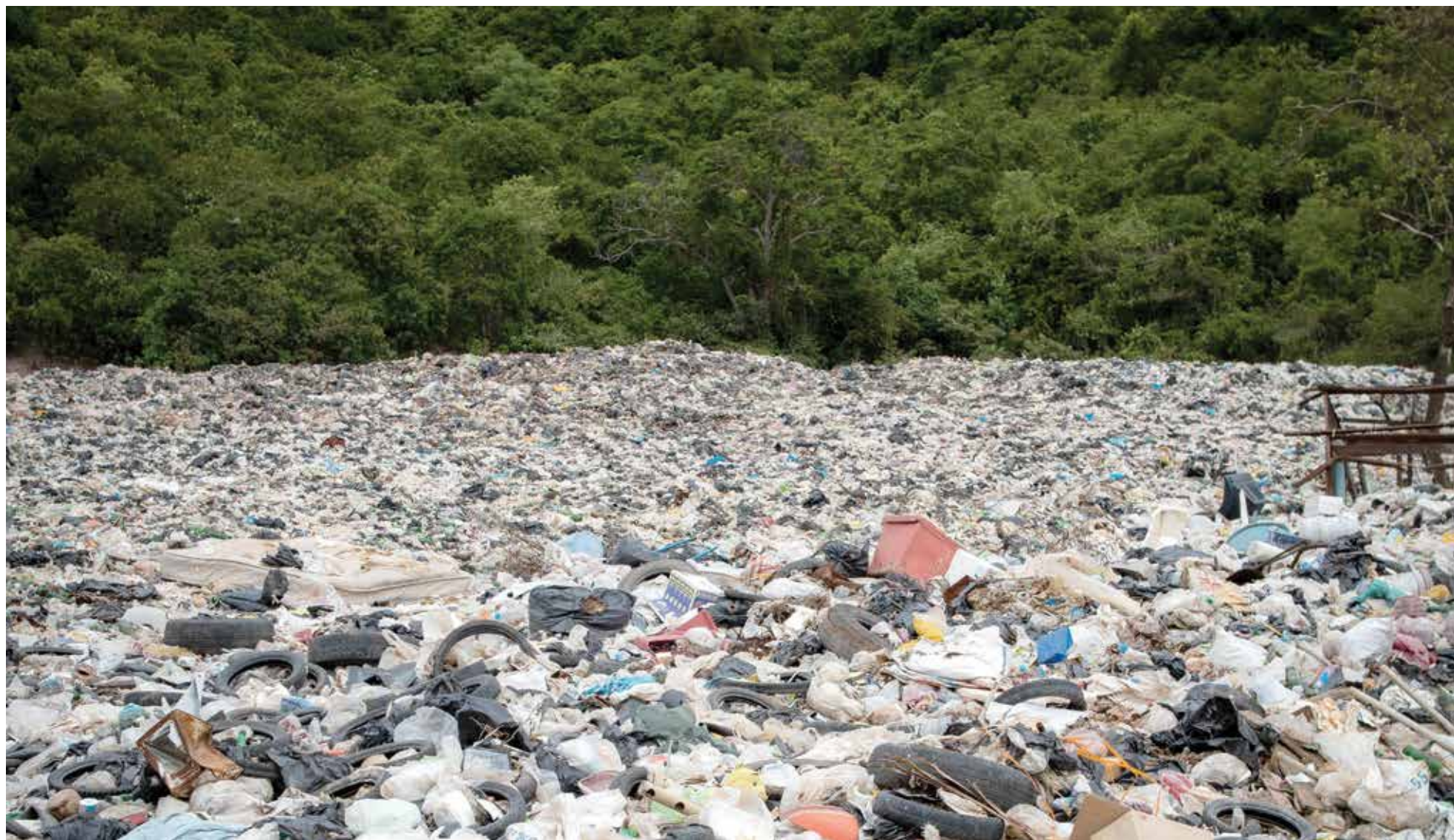
IRAQ: A girl near Mosul plays on a makeshift swing at Hammam Al-Alil camp where displaced Iraqis prepare to be evacuated.



PHILIPPINES: A woman cleans mud from her home in San Mateo after flooding caused by Typhoon Vamco.



VATICAN: Medical workers are pictured in a mobile clinic set up for Covid-19 tests outside the colonnade bordering St Peter's Square November 14, 2020. As part of the Vatican's observance of World Day of the Poor, free Covid-19 swab tests were available for people who need them in order to stay at a homeless shelter or to return home abroad.



Can the Earth feel pain and cry out to God?

Does the Earth feel pain? Can it groan and cry out to God? Can the earth curse us for our crimes?

It would seem so, and not just because ecologists, moralists, and Pope Francis are saying so. Scripture itself seems to say so.

There are some very revealing lines in the exchange between Cain and God, after Cain had murdered his brother Abel. Asked where his brother was, Cain tells God that he doesn't know and that he's not responsible for his brother. But God says to him: Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you will till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength.

“What God says to Cain about the earth crying out because it is soaked in murderous blood is more than a metaphor”

Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground... and from now on the ground will curse you! Is this a metaphor or a literal truth? Is the ground we walk on, till and plant seeds in, build highways and parking lots over, and call Mother Earth, nothing other than simple dumb, lifeless, speechless, brute matter which is totally immune to the suffering and pain that



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

humans and other sentient beings feel or indeed to the violence we sometimes inflict on it? Can the earth cry out to God in frustration and pain? Can it curse us?

Provocative book

A recent, wonderfully provocative book by Mark L. Wallace entitled *When God was a Bird – Christianity, Animism, and the Re-Enchantment of the Word* would say, yes, the world can and does feel pain and it can and does curse us for causing that pain. For Wallace, what God says to Cain about the earth crying out because it is soaked in murderous blood is more than a metaphor, more than just a spiritual teaching. It also expresses an ontological truth in that there is a real causal link between moral degeneration and ecological degeneration. We're not the only

ones who bear the consequences of sin, so too does the earth.

Here's how Wallace puts it: "The earth is not dumb matter, an inanimate object with no capacity of feeling and sentiment, but a spirited and vulnerable living being who experiences the terrible and catastrophic loss of Abel's death. Its heart is broken and its mouth agape, Earth 'swallows', in the text's startling imagery, mouthfuls of Abel's blood... Bubbling up from the red earth, Abel's cries signal not only that Cain had murdered his brother but that he has done lasting, perhaps irreparable, violence to the earth as well... [Now] wounded and bloodied, Earth strikes back. Earth has its revenge. Earth does not passively acquiesce to Cain's attacks and stand by and watch his gory rampage proceed with impunity. On the contrary, Earth retaliates

and 'inflicts a curse' on Cain by 'withholding its bounty' from this farmer-killer who now must roam the land unprotected and without security." The earth now refuses to give its bounty to Cain.

Beliefs

What Wallace affirms here is predicated on two beliefs, both true. First, everyone and everything on this planet, sentient and non-sentient being alike, are all part of one and the same supreme living organism within which every part ultimately affects all the other parts in a real way. Second, whenever we treat the earth (or each other) badly, the earth retaliates and withholds its strength and bounty from us, not just metaphorically but in a very real way.

Perhaps no one puts this more poignantly than John Steinbeck did some eighty years ago in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Describing how the soil which produces our food is now worked over by massive steel tractors and huge impersonal machines that, in effect, are the very antithesis of a woman or man lovingly coaxing a garden into growth, he writes: "And when that crop grew, and was harvested, no

man had crumpled a hot clod in his fingers and let the earth sift past his fingertips. No man had touched the seed, or lusted for the growth. And men ate when they had not raised, had no connection with the bread. The land bore under iron, and under iron gradually died; for it was not loved or hated, it had not prayers or curses."

“There are some very revealing lines in the exchange between Cain and God, after Cain had murdered his brother Abel”

Measure

When Jesus says that the measure we measure out is the measure that will be measured back to us, he's not just speaking of a certain law of karma within human relationships where kindness will be met with kindness, generosity with generosity, pettiness with pettiness, and violence with violence. He's also speaking about our relationship to Mother Earth. The more our houses, cars, and factories continue to breathe out carbon monoxide, the more we will inhale carbon monoxide.

And the more we continue to do violence to the earth and to each other, the more the earth will withhold its bounty and strength from us and we will feel the curse of Cain in violent storms, deadly viruses, and cataclysmic upheavals.

“Whenever we treat the earth (or each other) badly, the earth retaliates and withholds its strength and bounty from us”

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Sometimes TV throws up an unexpected surprise

I keep a sharp eye on what's coming up on a wide range of TV and radio channels, and plan ahead accordingly. But sometimes it's nice to get an unexpected surprise.

Late last Sunday night I was having a look at what Shalom World TV, an online Catholic channel, had to offer and was lucky to stumble on **The Face of Mercy**, a well-made and inspiring documentary about St Faustina and the Divine Mercy devotion. It wasn't even on their schedule for that time. Made in 2016 it had actor Jim Caviezel as narrator and high-profile commentators like John Allen, Scott Hahn, George Weigel and Cardinal Marc Ouellet. The historical background was absorbing as we learned of Sr Faustina's low-key journey to religious life in 1930's Poland. Her very personal relationship with Jesus was at the heart of it all, and the message of mercy was shown to have affected so many lives for the better. The story of that iconic Divine Mercy image and how it came to be painted was also enlightening. There were several inspiring stories – the priest who, as a younger man had been a drug mule for a Japanese gang, the New York detective almost killed by a young gunman, the young woman who narrowly escaped being a victim of the genocide in Rwanda, the young wife whose husband



Pilgrims pray before relics of St Faustina at the St John Paul II National Shrine in Washington DC. The Face of Mercy shed fresh light on the Divine Mercy devotion. Photo: CNS

was murdered on his morning jog – all suffered greatly, but came through it with a firm belief in the Divine Mercy and a commitment to forgiveness of those who had so grievously offended against them.

Devotion

We learned of St John Paul II's devotion to the cause of his fellow Pole, and revisited those emotionally charged scenes when tearful crowds gathered in St Peter's Square as he lay dying around the time of the feast of Divine Mercy. Pope Francis also figured large in this film, and I was particularly moved to see him bringing the message of mercy to prisoners on a visit to Bolivia. If there

was any downside, and it was only trivial, it was the constant background music which I found irritating after a while. Sometimes it's enough just to listen to the unadorned testimony of inspirational people.

The film was followed by some words of recommendation for Shalom World TV from Bishop Denis Nulty. I'm not so sure about the promo material that referred to 'God's own channel' but I'm certainly going to explore more – the programmes are viewable online through the website and various apps across a range of platforms.

That same day saw the return of **The Crown** (Netflix) for a fourth season. Much

anticipated, I thought it was a rather flat return, though there was some Irish interest as the killing of Lord Mountbatten in the boat bombing at Mullaghmore was a central element. It packed quite a dramatic punch and the sense of impending disaster was heightened for those who knew the history. Irish political context was inserted by the inclusion of some archive footage and the reading of IRA statements, none of it particularly effective from the point of view of dramatic art. The first episode was also much hyped for the appearance of Gillian Anderson as Margaret Thatcher. A big fan of her role as Scully in *The X-Files*, I found

PICK OF THE WEEK

JOURNEY HOME

EWTN Saturday (night) November 21, 3am and Tuesday November 24, 10 am

Former Atheist Jennifer Fulwiler returns to talk about her on-going faith journey with Marcus Grodi.

DANIEL O'CONNELL - FORGOTTEN KING OF IRELAND

RTÉ One Thursday November 26, 11.45pm
Olivia O'Leary journeys from Kerry to Glasnevin to Rome to chronicle the trailblazing life and the contemporary legacy of Daniel O'Connell, champion of Catholic emancipation.

FERN BRITTON MEETS

BBC Four Friday November 27, 7 pm

Fern Britton speaks to recording artist and actress Barbara Dickson who talks about how her conversion to Catholicism helped her overcome many obstacles and how faith is a key part of her life.

her performance here overly mannered though not quite reaching the point of caricature. And I still have reservations about historical dramas about the lives of real people, especially those still living – is it really fair to them when so many scenes are made up for dramatic purpose?

Dissatisfied

Earlier that evening I was disappointed with **Dead Still** (RTÉ One) after initially being enthusiastic about this quirky drama series. Now three episodes in, this Irish-Canadian production originally managed to be both grim and whimsical, as it tells the story of a trailblazing photographer in 19th Century Dublin. The plot is somewhat ragged

– e.g. there's a serial killer plot in the first episode but it seems to be going nowhere. Initially the few gratuitous F-Words were annoying, but in last Sunday's episode three things really went downhill, with crude and degrading elements that makes one wonder how, in this #metoo age, actors can be put through such scenes. The whimsy is well and truly dead.

Sadly, it's so difficult to find a television drama that one can recommend wholeheartedly, and almost impossible to find one suitable for family viewing.

boregan@hotmail.com,
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Film

Aubrey Malone



Documentaries shed light on Donald Trump's character flaws

In the aftermath of one of the most controversial and divisive presidential elections in American history, it might be an opportune time to survey what President Trump did in his four years in office. There are a number of DVDs on Amazon that deal both with his presidency and his life up to it.

There's *Nation Under Trump*, *Donald Trump v The Environment*, *Donald Trump – Master of the Deal* and *Trump's Road to the White House*.

You can also buy Trumpian documentaries like *Billionaire Inside*, *Deal Maker*, *The Art of the Insult*, *The Making of Trump* and – perhaps most interestingly – 2024 – *The World After Trump*.

It was gratifying to see the Christian bills he put through

Congress, but people have to practise what they preach. We need to view Mr Trump's espousal of family values against the backdrop of his severe character flaws.

He did the right things for the wrong reasons. I have grave reservations about his evangelical zeal and his religious pronouncements.

A pro-life stance has to have more to it than being anti-abortion. It shouldn't stop at birth.

Pro-life

How can we call Mr Trump pro-life when we look at his attitude to NATO, capital punishment, climate change, poverty in developing countries, the World Health Organisation, the Good Friday Agreement (pace Brexit),



Donald Trump. Photo: Gage Skidmore

the Black Lives Matter movement, even the National Rifle Association?

How can we call him pro-life when we think of how irresponsibly he dealt with the Covid-19 virus? He trivialised it at its onset when he

knew how lethal it was, as we learned from a leaked interview with Bob Woodward. He went on to hold rallies that were 'super-spreaders' of it.

Nearly 240,000 Americans have died as a result of coronavirus as I write. Such a

statistic smacks of genocide when we look at Mr Trump's failure to wear a mask for so long – or to encourage social distancing.

He was pro-choice in his past. Why the u-turn? The Biden/Harris endorsement of abortion is of course distressing. Those of us who object to this deserve a better advocate for it than someone with Mr Trump's revolting sexual history. Will that come in four more years? Hopefully.

How many of his bills resulted from genuine concern for unborn children and how many from political expediency? How much of his much 'trumped' Christianity was motivated by vote-seeking directed towards a certain demographic?

The documentaries above testify to money as his real God. After the killing of George Floyd last June he was castigated by the Chicago Episcopal bishop Michael Curry for standing outside St John's Episcopal Church in Washington holding a Bible. This was after having peaceful protestors tear-gassed. The bishop saw it as hypocritical.

To deliver a strong pro-life agenda we need a president who hasn't been labelled a liar, a bully, a narcissist, a misogynist, a racist, a con-man, a xenophobe and a fascist. These aren't Christian qualities. They make one question the integrity of an administration that was guilty of duplicity in so many respects.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

Quiet Times With God: a Devotional

by Joyce Meyer
(Hodder & Stoughton, £14.99)

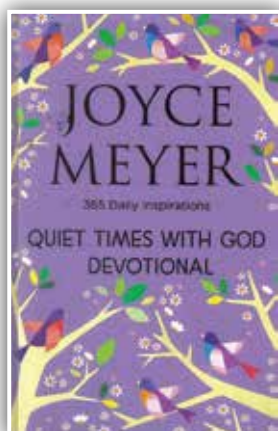
This is the sort of book that has a very long history in Christianity. Common in the Middle Ages and earlier, they changed their form at the Reformation. Some, like the book of hours of the Duc du Berry, were wonders of the illuminator's art. Other were quite simple, a little *vade mecum* of faith, for those who could read to use or to share with those who couldn't.

But what so many Christians want these days is a book that provides what this title offers, "a quiet time with God". Our days are overfilled and far from quiet; indeed people seem unable to bear silence: they have to have some morning-show voice on the radio. This might be understandable in a newsroom, but not at home. Silence, for some, is indeed golden. But for others it is fearful.

A skilled writer and editor Joyce Meyer provides here a 365-day book of devotion. The format is a short phrase from scripture, an exposition arising from this and a thought for the day, with a prompt directing the reader to another passage in the scriptures to look up.

So it goes around, with every step the reader makes moving them more and more into the Old and New Testaments.

Certainly a book to give to the right person. But more than that, a book for one's self, to give one those quiet minutes with the very power that moves the universe all the year round.

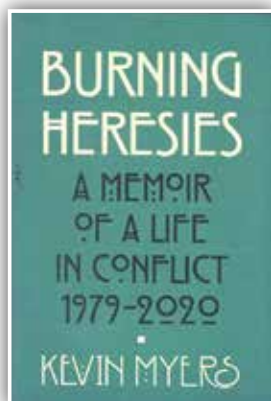


Burning Heresies A Memoir of a Life in Conflict 1979-2020

by Kevin Myers
(Merrion Press, €19.95/£17.99)

In his long career as a journalist Kevin Myers (sometime of *The Irish Times*, and since of many other papers), has assiduously cultivated enemies - always he says in the name of truth. Some think him badly treated in recent years. But he has been a provocative writer, and provocation always leads to a reaction, equal and opposite. This reviewer, however, has to say that having been the victim of his colourful phrasemaking, in which I felt ill-treated over his reporting of the facts relating to a Flann O'Brien exhibition in Newman House, I would think that on the whole he has done well for himself. In this case what he wrote was in my opinion misleading, but many others he wrote about seem to have felt the same. This book "tells his side of the story", but he has always done that. Those who have liked him the past, will like this second memoir. Those who didn't, won't.

And yet one feels for him in the crisis that brought his career as a columnist to an end in 2017. He admits the piece was carelessly written, but the editorial supervision seems also to have been poor, and, of course, the instant critics of the social media world took care of the rest, within minutes. In every way it is a moral tale of our times.



Mysteries of a Doctor's Mind

Psychiatrist in the Chair: The Official Biography of Anthony Clare

by Brendan Kelly and Muiris Houston
(Merrion Press, €22.95 / £19.99)

Charles Lysaght

Anthony Clare (1942-2007) attained, by the age of 40, an eminence in the medical profession in Britain not surpassed by any graduate of an Irish medical school since King George VI's radiologist Peter Kerley and Terry Millin, the pioneer of prostate surgery.

A founder boy at Gonzaga and a graduate of UCD, Dr Clare was acclaimed for demystifying psychiatry in his book *Psychiatry in Dissent* (1976) and did important research on premenstrual tension. In 1981, he became a professor at St Bartholomew's - a leading London teaching hospital.

“Keen to put this country to rights, he joined in debates on abortion, divorce and other issues”

That was not enough for him. A champion student debater and inveterate controversialist, he craved audiences. As fluent on paper as in speech, he wrote articles for newspapers and magazines on a range of topics, many unrelated to his profession. Radio and television producers invited him on their programmes. He was counted as charming and amusing as he was hard-working.



His two roles came together when, in 1982, the BBC gave him a radio programme of his own entitled 'In the Psychiatrist's Chair', a clever play upon words which gives this biography its title. He used the questioning skills he had honed as a doctor to explore the inner lives of those interviewed.

A succession of eminences subjected themselves to this. It was great listening. Interviews, such as those with comedian Spike Milligan, the eccentric politician Anne Widdecombe

and cricketer Geoffrey Boycott (not mentioned in this book) were long remembered. The programme made Prof. Clare a national figure in Britain.

The wishes of Jane

In 1989, unable to resist the lure of the old sod, he acceded readily to the wishes of Jane, his wife of over 20 years and mother of his seven children, to return to their native Dublin. He became Professor of Psychiatry at Trinity and medical director at St Patrick's Hospital.

Keen to put this country to rights, he joined in debates on abortion, divorce and other issues. But he was less acclaimed here than across the water. Critics panned a series of interviews of prominent Irish figures he did on RTÉ. He polled poorly when he ran in the National University of Ireland constituency for Seanad Éireann.

He kept up his BBC programmes, his Kent home and other London connections. But the resulting bilocation was exhausting and took its toll.

Relicts of Ireland's 'dark past'

The darkness echoing: exploring Ireland's places of famine, death and rebellion

by Gillian O'Brien
(Doubleday, £14.99/€17.99)

Felix M. Larkin

G.K. Chesterton said of "the great Gaels of Ireland" that "all their wars are merry and all their songs are sad".

Thus did he highlight what Gillian O'Brien identifies as our "fascination with the morbid, the melancholic, the miserable, the maudlin (so many 'm' words)".

This fascination underpins an extensive 'dark tourism' sector in Ireland which, with the perspective and sensitivities of a professional historian, she sets out to explore in this book.

She writes not only about places of famine, death and rebellion - as indicated in the subtitle of the volume - but also about places associated with battles, maritime disasters and emigration. Her concern always is with historical authenticity, and she deprecates both the outmoded patriotic narrative of our past that she finds propagated in some locations and the bland touristic version "peddled by those organisations desperate to lure tourists to our shores".

She argues that "curators have an obligation to make complex history accurate, accessible and engaging".

She raises necessary questions of propriety, most markedly in relation to the display of the human body. She rightly states that "tourism doesn't get much darker" than the bog bodies exhibited in

the National Museum - or, as she puns, the National M(a)us(ol)eum.

She points out, in addition, that the mummified bodies in the crypt in St Michan's Church in Dublin - including that of the so-called 'crusader' - have been attracting visitors since the early nineteenth century and that the Medieval Mile Museum, in the former St Mary's Church in Kilkenny, contains three skeletons unearthed during archaeological excavations in the church grounds. She wonders "what the people who once inhabited those bodies might have thought about their remains being put on public display".

Another concern is with what she refers to as "the commodification of tragedy", whether in the often tacky gift shops at places of 'dark tourism'

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.

His book *On Men: Crisis in Masculinity* (2000), treating the problems posed for men by the erosion of their former dominant role, had a mixed reception.

Crisis

By this time his own life was in crisis. He responded by resigning from St Patrick's and abandoned, sometimes rather abruptly, his other activities, apart from the treatment of some private patients. To signal a new beginning he grew a beard, which did not suit him.

He lived between Dublin and Kerry with his wife, whom he described as his "rock". They had met as UCD students. She was a sensible woman who refused to believe herself devalued by devoting her life mainly to the support of her husband and care of her children. She was with him in a Paris hotel when he died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 2007.

This well-illustrated biography is written by Dr Clare's successor as professor in Trinity in conjunction with a leading medical journalist. The thorough research undertaken is attested by detailed footnotes and a comprehensive list of Dr Clare's writings. However, the treatment of psychiatry in the book is somewhat impenetrable for the lay reader.

“He kept up his BBC programmes, his Kent home and other London connections”

The book captures his hyperactive, uneasy, combative personality and the ambition that Dr Clare attributed to maternal pressure. Otherwise it is skimpy on his relations with his parents, the deaths of whom are not even mentioned. His two sisters scarcely figure and only two of his seven children provided

memories. Although he was not neglectful of his children, they seem to have suffered from his impatience and high expectations of them.

The authors skirt around what Dr Clare himself called “the near catastrophic event” that preceded his withdrawal into private life and led to feelings of guilt and failure that afflicted him in his final years. The assertion of a British colleague that he recovered the religious faith that he had lost in his prime is not corroborated.

If the book does not quite tell the full story and tends to the reverential, it is still a valuable record and a well-deserved tribute to a talented, courageous and versatile Irishman, who did more good than most, contributed valuably to public debate and provided entertainment that was illuminating, but who paid a price for the strain he imposed on himself in realising his ambitions.



or otherwise. Her favourite example of this is the chocolate bar on sale during the centenary of the 1916 Rising that had a wrapper showing the 1916 Proclamation and images of all seven signatories. My favourite of the items mentioned in her book is a commemorative 1916 whiskey, mischievously described by her as “a smoky blend, no doubt, complete with notes of cordite and the iron tang of blood”. This book is leavened throughout with such flashes of sardonic humour.

Undoubtedly, the jewel in the crown of Ireland's ‘dark tourism’ is Kilmainham Gaol – which, in Dr O'Brien's words, “occupies a unique, sanctified space in the Irish imagination and identity”.

This is largely because of the execution there of the leaders of the 1916 Rising. While the impulse behind the restoration of the jail – a private initiative in the 1960s – was to tell the story of Irish republicanism, Dr O'Brien notes that “a nuanced reflection on the history of incarceration and of all those held in Kilmain-

ham Gaol is now told in the museum and on tours”. She reassures us that “much of the site remains as it was when prisoners were held there (or at least those held there from the 1860s onwards)”.

Ireland is, of course, not alone in having a ‘dark tourism’ sector. One has only to think of Alcatraz and Robben Islands, the Port Arthur penal colony in Tasmania and, nearer home, the battlefields, military cemeteries and other relicts of the first and second wars, scattered throughout continental Europe to realise that.

However, Dr O'Brien argues that “Irish history is full of darkness...[and] the Irish do have a perverse attraction to nurturing their injuries”. That is the backdrop to the plethora of places that she covers in her book. Those of us with an appetite – and stomach – for such things will find the book most useful in exploring these places for ourselves when we are able to travel again in the post-coronavirus era.

Mainly about books

By the books editor

Robert Gibbings, Cork's multi-talented artist



The great and internationally-regarded art galleries of Ireland (though now for a period of months necessarily closed) are institutions we are all rightly proud of. I sometime think, though, that they do not always do full justice to some talents who worked in what some might think of a lower key.

I think here especially of the Cork-born artist Robert Gibbings (1889-1958). He was not only a painter, but an engraver on wood, a book designer, small press printer, a naturalist and author of a long series of travel books that are in a genre of their own.

He was born of a well-known Cork city clan: his uncle was Robert Day, the noted antiquarian of the Victorian era, whose generous donations of items were the foundation of many local collections, items not just from Ireland, but from cultures around the world. Mr Gibbings often wondered if some of his activities were not due to a quirky inheritance of some kind.

His father was a Church of Ireland clergyman. He might have been Bishop of Limerick once, Robert thought. But rose no higher than a canon of Cork cathedral. He was known personally or by sight to everyone in the Edwardian city.

Great War

Robert went to fight in the Great War as so many of his generation did. Destined before the war for the Anglican ministry, he changed vocations, and decided on art instead. He found that he had little taste for painting. What he did have was a marked talent for engraving on wood. He was one of the leading figures in the revival in etching and wood engravings between the wars. (For Penguin he edited a series of classics with engraving by some ten artists of the day, which are now collectors' items.)

He first made his name though as a fine art printer, very much in the William Morris tradition, founding the Golden Cockerel Press. The books he produced there are also prized items in many libraries.

In a wider market he scored a popular success with *Blue Angels and Whales* (a Penguin Special of 1936), recounting and

illustrating his underwater adventures.

Soon after leaving his post at Reading university, he published *Coming Down the Thames*, which became a bestseller. This was followed by books on the Wye, the Seine and other rivers. These were all written in a gentle allusive but always attractive and engagingly informative style.

Books

He wrote a long shelf of books which I have been re-reading in these weeks of enforced leisure. Through the pages there are many allusion to Irish years, but three of them are whole Irish in inspiration and content: *Lovely is the Lee* (1945), *Sweet Cork of Thee*, and *John Graham Convict*, “an historical narrative” which connects rural Ireland of 1824 with prisoners in Botany Bay.

The South Seas were very much his second home, but in his mind were connected with Ireland. It is two Irish children, inspired by his own children, who live out his Pacific cast-away tale for the young, *Coconut Island*.

In his books about the River Lee he writes about that remarkable couple Timothy Buckley and his wife Anastasia, of Garrynapeaka, whose full story was later told by Eric Cross. When Mr Cross's book, *The Tailor and Anstey*, was later reissued and rediscovered as “a modern Irish classic”, a series of his lovely images of rural Ireland as he had known it in the first half of the 20th Century, were used to illustrate the text.

Later on Mr Gibbings moved to Paris and rambled round France, re-discovering oil painting as a medium. I am afraid I do not care for these as much; but then that is perhaps because I have never seen enough of them. They call for an exhibition. But then his whole life deserves an exhibition to do full justice to it.

Here is a future project for the pandemic-free years soon to come, perhaps for the Crawford in Cork. The imaginative people who run that fine gallery should set to work on it now. This is the time, if ever there was, to celebrate the quiet kindly sides of Ireland in the years of our parents and grandparents, so easily over-looked in the commemoration other affairs.

Leisure time

LITTLE FLOWER PENNY DINNERS



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“May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model”

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

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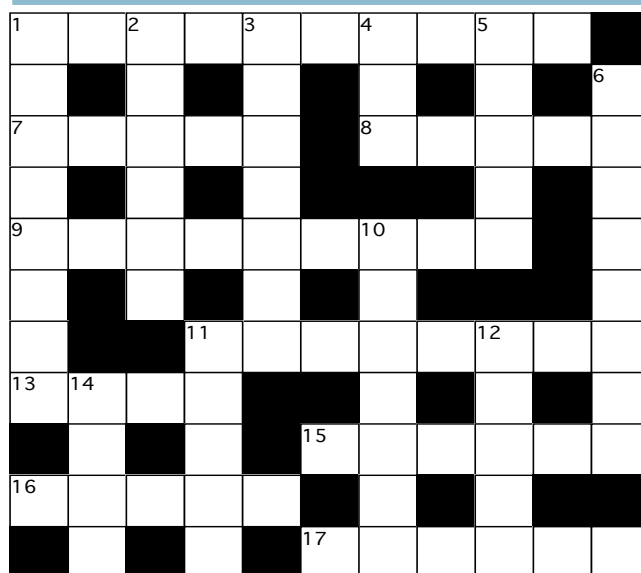
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One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives.

Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 359



Across

- 1 Use it to cut a loaf into slices (5,5)
- 7 You tie them when you put on your shoes (5)
- 8 Used a pen or pencil, perhaps (5)
- 9 The ninth month of the year (9)
- 11 Male horse (8)
- 13 It allows you to hear your own voice coming back from a cave or other place (4)
- 15 Well-mannered (6)
- 16 Material (5)
- 17 USA is the _____ States of America (6)

Down

- 1 The centre of a dartboard (8)
- 2 Get away from being captured (7)
- 3 You might have ice-cream at this part of the meal (7)
- 4 Never before owned (3)
- 5 You might cover it with a carpet (5)
- 6 It begins with a capital letter and usually ends with a full stop (8)
- 10 Be careful it doesn't burst when you blow it up! (7)
- 11 This direction is opposite to North (5)
- 12 Fool (5)
- 14 Visit (4)

SOLUTIONS, NOVEMBER 12

GORDIUS NO. 481

Across – 1 Marriage vows 7 Pro 9 Poem 10 Office 11 Edge 14 Heart 15 Toner 16 Turn 18 Bucks 21 Lurks 22 Clung 23 Haydn 24 Alms 25 Alpha 26 Mushy peas 29 Lake 33 Starve 34 Away 36 Tao 37 Blarney Stone

Down – 1 Mao 2 Ramp 3 Iron Age 4 Gaffe 5 Vicar 6 Spud 8 Oceanography 9 Postal ballot 12 Antrim 13 Crash 14 Hobby horse 17 Usurps 19 Candy 20 Scram 27 Utter 30 Knob

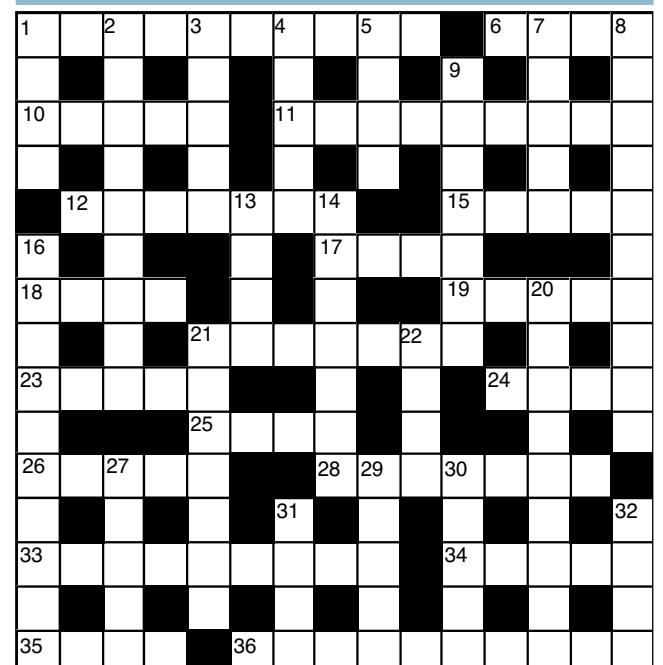
CHILDREN'S No. 358

Across – 1 Jewellery 6 Ladder 8 Infant 10 Yolk 12 Eighteen 15 Grocer 17 Apples 18 Robert 19 Judge

Down – 1 Jolly Roger 2 Waddle 3 Lee 4 Raffle 5 Belt 7 Rich 9 Nun 11 Kitchen 13 Eyelid 14 Waste 16 Rat

Crossword

Gordius 482



Across

- 1 Heraldic device providing inappropriate cover for the Venus de Milo? (4,2,4)
- 6 The origins of a spectacular Irish fantasy? In your dreams! (2,2)
- 10 & 26a Dessert named for an Australian opera singer (5,5)
- 11, 15a, 18a & 33a Shh! Hope you'll fetch crutch here, to abandon in this place of pilgrimage in Jerusalem (3,6,2,3,4,9)
- 12 Have the poem put into fast, musical form (2-5)
- 15 See 11 across
- 17 Town in Offaly (4)
- 18 See 11 across
- 19 That biblical character is some Angeleno chorister! (5)
- 21 Chemical element with the atomic number 20 (7)
- 23 Communication via the internet (1-4)
- 24 The French get the sixth Biblical character (4)
- 25 Panache, flair (4)
- 26 See 10 across
- 28 The oriental cardinal gets behind at sea (7)
- 33 See 11 across
- 34 Leased out once more (5)
- 35 The centre - of an apple, for example (4)

36 Lo, Pleurisy is passed around dangerously (10)

Down

- 1 Just about manage with a religious vestment (4)
- 2 How to sing without instruments while distributing papal lace (1,8)
- 3 Brownish-yellow (5)
- 4 Deliberately misbehave (3,2)
- 5 Unassertive (4)
- 7 Walk proudly when trust is re-established (5)
- 8 On which scale to measure the temperature of an unusually fine hearth? (10)
- 9 Mathematical proposition that needs to be proved (7)
- 13 Great civilization of Mexico (4)
- 14 Outrageous, indecent (7)
- 16 Is what's written here the tune you hum while making the bed? (5,5)
- 20 Decides, despite contrary advice, to move our levers (9)
- 21 Plainly, obviously (7)
- 22 Employs, avails of (4)
- 27 The one Jesus cleansed was some 'people person'! (5)
- 29 Some kamikaze riders, coming from a land in the Caucasus (5)
- 30 T, or something like it, for trunk (5)
- 31 Clarified butter (4)
- 32 Part of a leg, one hears, is to be found in Kildare (4)

Sudoku Corner

359

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 358

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

Last week's Hard 358

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

Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock

And he leaves her a daisy a day

HER FIRST ANNIVERSARY took place a few weeks ago. I spoke with her husband around the days – a phone call to a man who likes to talk – maybe needs to talk. I remember the call when his wife died and my visit to his little cottage where they lived, shared life and their love for many years. “Blow-ins”, some might call him and her for they were not locals. Born in Germany, they lived their lives there but thought they would like to spend the sunset years in Ireland. How that desire brought them to this parish and to a little cottage down a quiet boreen is their story to tell but the decision was never regretted.

I chatted with him the night she died and was fascinated by the story of their lives. They had travelled the world, often to do charitable work, including some time in Calcutta. His brother was a priest and his father a wood carver and the home is filled with the most magnificent wood carvings, including one of the face of Christ. When his brother was ordained, his father made a sculpture that was placed in the centre of their hometown and is still there. He had a smaller model of it that his father made afterwards for the



family. He spoke with me about theology, about Pope Benedict whom he had encountered as a younger man and he chatted about Canon Law. Most of all he spoke about his wife. His heart was broken, and it was clear to me that a part of him had died.

Leaflet

The little leaflet for the funeral Mass had a youthful picture of her and she was beautiful. I could imagine her singing folk songs by a campfire, marching in protests, and wanting to make the world a better place.

Maybe the little piece of our parish they called home, reminded her of what the world could and should be. I remember thinking that, though she had grown old and had, in her final months experienced much illness, he still saw the young woman in the photo, a woman that none of us in the church had ever seen. She would always be that woman to him.

As I spoke with him a few weeks ago, he told me that he gets up every morning at 5.45am, gets ready and walks to the cemetery to visit her grave. He spends some

time there and walks home again. He repeats the journey (I’d say at least 4km round trip) in the afternoon. This is his daily routine. I called to the house again and picked up the conversation. The wood carvings are still there but now too, little night lights burning before precious photos of one loved and gone. I left him, glad that I had called but happy for her too, she must have lived and died knowing how much she mattered and the difference she had made in the life of another.

“I remember the call when his wife died and my visit to his little cottage where they lived”

The tune came to mind: “Now he walks down the street in the evening/ and he stops by the old candy store/ and I somehow believe he’s believing that he’s holding her hand as before/ he smiles as he feels her love with him/ and laughs at the things she might say/ then the old man walks up to the hilltop/ and leaves her a daisy a day...”

In November, we remember.

LET US HAVE CHRISTMAS

A lot of talk about Christmas these days and our need to “have it”, to “celebrate” but sometimes I wonder what “Christmas” is being longed for. Sadly I suspect it could all too easily be the Christmas of reindeer, red-nosed and electrified on the most awful jumpers. It might be nights out, office parties, endless drinks, “toy shows”, crackers with their dreaded and driest imaginable jokes. I wonder is much thought given to that socially distanced shed, a young couple and a new born child? Maybe, just maybe, it’s not about going all out to celebrate but staying in to give thanks and to hope... hope that the Saviour will again find welcome.





YOUR GIFT COULD SAVE A CHILD’S LIFE

The Little Way Association is receiving many desperate requests from missionaries asking for funds for food and health-supplies for hungry deprived children. Sr Lucy of the Visitation Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Eldoret, Kenya, reports that her area had previously been afflicted by the closure of a large farm, infertile land, HIV/AIDS and political violence which orphaned many children. Almost all the local population are below the poverty-line, with children at particular risk, some turning to crime. Sr Lucy writes: “Due to Covid 19 they are faced with many sufferings. The poor guardians are not able to go out for casual jobs to feed them. They lack food, soap and sanitizers to keep them clean and healthy. Most of the children do not have basic necessities and are sleeping hungry.”

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

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Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
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€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
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Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss) (Block letters please)

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Please can you spare a donation, large or small, to relieve a child’s suffering

Every euro you send to The Little Way Association’s fund for hungry, deprived children will be used, without deduction, to relieve suffering among infants and adolescents.



“Do not fear. If you are faithful in pleasing Jesus in little things, He will be obliged to help you in the greater things.”

- St Therese

YOUR NOVEMBER MASS IN THE MISSIONS FOR THE HOLY SOULS

Remember the Holy Souls in November. We will be pleased to send your Mass intentions to missionaries. By helping poor priests in this way you are aiding the work of the Church in mission lands.

We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass.

Our benefactors will be glad to know that in addition to the daily Mass offered for their intentions, Mass is offered each day for their deceased relatives and for all Holy Souls.

HELP FEED THE HUNGRY

Please spare a thought for the thousands who die each year of hunger and disease in mission lands. Your donation will be forwarded to a missionary without deduction.

IC/11/19