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Pleading for responsible politics

Thursday, May 2, 2019

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Money drying up for Ireland's religious as care costs rise

Latest figures show some congregations face 'unsustainable' future

EXCLUSIVE

Greg Daly, Chai Brady and Colm Fitzpatrick

The financial situation of many religious orders in Ireland is at breaking point, with some admitting that their future is financially unsustainable, an investigation by The *Irish Catholic* has revealed.

Overall, the majority of orders in Ireland are spending vastly more than they are raising with care for ageing members being a considerable expense. A dearth of vocations also means that many orders do not now have younger members earning income for the congregations such as from salaries as a

Spiritan Provincial Fr Martin Kelly, whose order is responsible for some of the country's most prestigious

schools including Blackrock College and St Mary's College in Rathmines, said the situation can not continue for much longer.

"What we're living off is shares and bank loans,' he told The Irish Catholic, explaining that with the order having spent almost six million euro more than it received between 2014 and 2017, reliance on shares and loans would not be possible for much longer. "We're talking about a matter of years, single-figure years," he said.

Figures published by the Charities Regulator show similar patterns across the vast majority of religious orders in Ireland, with orders typically only having higher income than expenditure figures after the sale of properties

Fr John Hennerby, whose

» Continued on Page 2

New mural remembers rock'n'roll legend Phil



Sr Bernadette Sweeney RSC (right), Director of the Community Centre for Music and Arts (CCMA) in Crumlin, marks the launch of a mural commissioned by Dublin City Council with the CCMA orchestra. It celebrates music legend Phil Lynott and the environment as the mural was created using recyclable materials. Pictured (left-right) are CCMA worker Denise Divers, orchestra members Jim Slater, Joyce Donohoe, John Whelan and Sr Sweeney.

DAVID QUINN

Mixed signals from Government

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MARY KENNY

Sex education is not easy to teach

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A dream becomes reality as the Holy Land offers time to recharge

Jerusalem, I was an impressionable 21-yearold. I fell in love with the place. Everything about the city was intoxicating to me: the sites, the smells, the sounds, the food, the religious diversity cheek by jowl...I

was captivated on my first visit and it was to be the beginning of a love affair with the city that is holy to the world's three great religions.

I have returned many times and have always wanted to spend an extended period there. That dream came closer to becoming a reality when I signed a contract to write a book about the Holy Land late last year. The dream will become a reality this week as I leave for a three-month stay in the Holy Land.

Despite my youthful appearance(!), I turn 40 this week and am approaching 19 years as a journalist – almost 14 years with The Irish Catholic (seven as Editor).

I don't need to tell you that these have been challenging years in the media and in the Church. They have taken a toll on all of us and many people have had their faith shaken as we have tried together to find God in the midst of crisis.

What one might call a period of exile for the Church in Ireland has also been a time that has convinced me of the piercing need for quality, independent Catholic journalism at the service of the Gospel that can be a real alternative in a world

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increasingly dominated by a new and stifling consensus. Modern Ireland suffers from a great deal of groupthink and this is neither safe nor healthy.

We know that the Church is not. and will not be able to be as present in society as it was in the past"

More than ever, alternative voices are needed and The Irish Catholic continues to be a space for alternative voices. It is my honour to work with a great team in editorial and a broad range of

contributors to achieve this. The Irish Catholic is

131 years old and it is my privilege to have inherited the mantle as Editor and serve you – the readers - as we continue to grow together in faith and deepen our commitment to the

These are times of change in Irish society and in the

We know that the Church is not, and will not be able to be as present in society as it was in the past. But we are also confident in the knowledge that - in the words of St Paul - God has great things in store for those who love him.

Like the Israelites of old, we also know that the only way ahead is to go forward in joyful hope. The story of salvation is a story that assures us that the Promised Land is always ahead of us never behind us.

Editor's Comment

Michael Kelly

As I take this sojourn and step back from my responsibilities with *The* Irish Catholic I hope to find the time and space to recharge my batteries physically, emotionally and spiritually.

I look forward to taking up the challenge anew in August.

Please pray for me.

Michael Kelly is co-author of a new book with Austen Ivereigh How to Defend the Faith - Without Raising Your Voice - it is available from Columba Books: www.columbabooks.com.

michael@irishcatholic.ie

Religious orders increasingly dependent on their reserves

» Continued from Page 1

Augustinian province is currently in the process of selling land in Ballyboden, south Dublin, said that it can be necessary to eat into capital reserves if orders are to continue in their ministries. "At the moment there is a need to withdraw from reserves to balance the books each year," he said, adding that such a

for any organisation.

In the medium term, however, this situation is unavoidable, according to Ireland's Franciscan Provincial. Fr Aidan McGrath. "My bottom line is it's not sustainable in the long term, but in the medium term it's something that has to be done." he said. adding that today's religious are dependent on the actions of their forerunners.

"I suppose the prudence of

previous generations is now bearing fruit," he said.

With Ireland's Presentation Sisters having spent more than €17 million than they received between 2014 and 2017, Sr Sheila Kelleher told The Irish Catholic that the income for today's sisters generally comes through a return on investments as well as pensions.

Explaining that healthcare costs for ageing sisters entails "considerable expenditure". Sr Sheila said that "proceeds, if any, from disposal of property, are set aside for care of the sisters and continuation of our ministries into the future", while running costs of communities are constantly adjusted.

The order has made a point of donating properties to house homeless and other needy people, she said, stressing that its congregational mission always must be kept to the fore. For Sr Rita Minehan of the Brigidine Sisters' leadership team, such donations are a matter of leaving behind a legacy true to the order's charism. "Even if we can't be out there in the field. we would be supporting others who can, who will be, into the future," she said.

1 See pages 12-15.





The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

Sri Lankan attacks a 'heartbreaking' reminder of today's martyrs

Greg Daly

The martyrdom of Christians in Sri Lanka should underline how Christians are threatened worldwide, Archbishop Eamon Martin has said.

Speaking in Armagh Cathedral, the Primate of All-Ireland said it was "heartbreaking" that Sri Lankan Christians were unable to gather for Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday following the Easter Sunday bombings in the south Asian country.

"These atrocities remind us of the life-threatening conditions of our fellow Christians in many parts of the world," Archbishop Martin said, adding that he plans this July to unveil a shrine in the cathedral to St Oliver Plunkett, his martyred predecessor as Archbishop of Armagh, and to all those who face persecution for the Faith.

"The shrine will honour all the martyrs of yesterday, today and tomorrow, recognising that persecution and martyrdom of Christians does not belong to the past – it is sadly a present-day reality for many of our brothers and sisters and this situation is likely to continue, or even get worse into the future," he said

Praying for peace



The Faithful gather to remember the victims of last month's Sri Lanka bombings in the Pro Cathedral during a special Mass on April 28.

Sisters to donate €1.5m Cork city land to charity

Chai Brady

The South West Province of the Presentation Sisters are in the process of donating three acres of valuable land in Cork city to charity.

The site of the Presentation Convent in Turner's Cross is set to be donated to the Good Shepherd Sisters in Cork who run Edel House, in order to "alleviate the housing crisis".

Provincial Sr Sheila Kelleher told *The Irish Catholic* this is but one in numerous asset donations over the years to combat the extreme social issues in Ireland, including homelessness.

Their aim is to further the charitable mission of the order.

In face of the declining number of sisters she said any judgements regarding finances are taken with the "best financial policies and practices" used.

She said: "This is crucial in the light of the dwindling numbers of sisters and the requirement to provide for the care of the sisters into the future and to continue the mission of the congregation."

Process

The process of the land sale at Turner's Cross is still at an early stage but it is believed it will be used for housing.

The sisters have consistently donated land and properties over the years to promote social and environmental justice.

Among other donations they gave a convent worth €235,000 to Rathmore Social Action Group in 2016, who have built apart-

ments for the elderly. Five sisters are also living there.

The same year they donated a three-bed bungalow worth €200,000 to the not-for-profit housing association Cluid in Ballyspillane in Killarney.

Regarding the environment the South West Presentation Sisters have decided to conserve 20 acres of bog land valued at €42,000 for flora and fauna to flourish.

Employment

Speaking of the future of the order Sr Sheila said: "...We are confident that through the employment of lay people, the work of Nano Nagle will continue into the future, supported by funds from the Presentation Sisters and grants from various agencies."

MAY ON LOUGH DERG

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A DAY OF FRIENDSHIP & PRAYER - Wednesday 15th May

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Francis' vision key to Vatican evangelisation reform, bishop says

Greg Daly

A new Vatican department focused on evangelisation will succeed if it can channel the vision Pope Francis mapped out at the start of his papacy, Raphoe's Bishop Alan McGuckian has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about plans for a Vatican 'super-dicastery' Bishop McGuckian said he hoped that the plan will point to real leadership from Rome as the Church seeks to focus more on mission than on maintenance in line with the Pope's 2013 document *Evangelii Gaudium* ('The Joy of the Gospel').

"My sense is that the power of Pope Francis is contained in his vision in the Joy of the Gospel where he really gave us his plan of action for the Church," Dr McGuckian said. "I would certainly hope that a 'super-dicastery' named for evangelisation will signal that everything Pope Francis wants for the Church is going to be led from Rome."

Structures

Acknowledging that structures do not guarantee success, Dr McGuckian said: "I will always be amazed by the *Joy of the Gospel* and the vision that's there, and I hope that the structures

serve that vision.'

It is understood that a new draft constitution for the Roman Curia proposes merging the long-established Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, focused on 'missionary territories', with the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation, established by Pope Benedict in 2010 to respond to the secularisation of traditionally Christian countries. *Evangelium Praedicate* ('Preach the Gospel') as the constitution is believed to be called, could be signed as early as June 29, and is the fruit of six years of work by the Pontiff and his Council of Cardinal Advisers.

Asked whether he believes a clear Vatican focus on mission through the new constitution can serve as an example to the Church as a whole, Dr McGuckian agreed, calling for a constant focus on the vision outlined in Evangelii Gaudium.

"Absolutely, and yet I want always to go back to how for me the *Joy of the Gospel* has to be taken on at every level," he said. "The *Joy of the Gospel* has to flow through these new institutions at Vatican level, diocesan level, and parish level, and when it does, it will be well."

4 See page 26.

NI peace process still failing young people – priest

Colm Fitzpatrick

The priest who spoke at the ecumenical service of murdered journalist Lyra McKee has said there has been no progress in many areas since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

Fr Martin Magill, who gave a eulogy in Belfast's St Anne's Cathedral in memory of the 29-year-old woman killed by a dissident republican group, said that while the peace process has changed the country in a positive way, many areas have yet to see any real benefit from it.

"Imagine what difference the peace process has made over 21 years; of course, I'm going to acknowledge the fact that there are people living today, and that's obviously the primary benefit of it. But at the same time, there's maybe certain areas of Belfast or Derry, or other places and other towns – there are a lot of places in Northern Ireland – that haven't seen any real benefit," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

Fr Magill added that some young people in the North have not seen "any advantage of our peace process", and that the response to Ms McKee's death offers an opportunity for real transformation to happen.

"It gives us another chance, it gives us an opportunity of something new, new hope and I suppose I'm obviously imbued by the whole Easter spirit, and I think there's an opportunity here that all of us can take."

(1) See Page 11.

Trinity theologian announced as Fellow



The Director of the Loyola Institute Dr Fáinche Ryan, is elected a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, for excellence in research, scholarship and teaching. The institute offers postgraduate programmes in Theology in the Catholic tradition. (I-r) Dr Cornelius Casey Associate Director Loyola Institute, Dr Fáinche Ryan, Provost Patrick Prendergast, College Registrar Prof. Paula Murphy and Prof. Paul O'Grady, Department of Philosophy. Photo: Paul Sharp/SHARPPIX

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Aontú condemns 'targeted' poster attack

Colm Fitzpatrick

The pro-life party Aontú have condemned the theft and vandalism of local election posters which they say are aimed at destabilising the success of their running candidates. Cathaoirleach of the party, Pádraig Ó hÉacháin, told this newspaper that many posters have been stolen and defaced in the Wexford area in the hopes of affecting the election outcome.

"As of today, we really think it is a targeted campaign against us. And it's quite a concerted campaign against us. From our point of view, it's very annoying – we're new entrants to local politics, a lot of people don't even know we exist, so we're depending on the posters to build a bit of awareness about ourselves.

"All we have is that and social media," Mr Ó hÉacháin said.

He added that such illegal activities are also an attack on democracy itself.

"We're putting ourselves forward with our own policies and our agenda, and we're seeking a mandate based on that, what they're trying to do is prevent us from reaching people. It's sad really."

NEWSIN BRIEF

Cross

exhibition explores Armenian links

A photographic exhibition coinciding with the 104th anniversary of the 1915 Armenian genocide will run throughout May at Dublin's Christchurch Cathedral.

The exhibition, which was formally launched last week, will explore the similarities between the Irish High Crosses and Armenian Khachkars, in the hope of drawing the Government's attention to the genocide which saw 1.5 million Armenians killed.

A service of remembrance at Christchurch Cathedral was attended by the Armenian ambassador to Ireland, Dr Arman Kirakossian; the Armenian Primate in Ireland, Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, who led prayers at the Khachkar Memorial in the grounds of the cathedral; as well as Archbishop Michael Jackson of Dublin and Glendalough.

Primate encourages students to 'seek to make a difference'

The Primate of All-Ireland has said students have the power to change the world, and must get "stuck in" to make this transformation a reality.

In his homily at Dublin's Trinity Monday Service of Thanksgiving in the college's chapel this week, Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin said: "The young people who study here at Trinity have the gifts and the capacity to change the world. This is how you must seek to be remembered - that you made a difference, that you discovered you could weep before the tragedies and harsh realities of life, but you did not stand back; you used your talents and "got stuck in" to the problems of the world, tackling at the same time any inconsistencies in your own values and behaviour."

Would you like to see your parish photos published in The Irish Catholic?



If you're present at a celebration or event in your parish, why not take a photograph and email it to:

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Photos in jpeg format are fine and please do tell us who is in the photo, the occasion and the parish.

The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

Sex education is just not that easy to teach

hen people of my generation look back at the subject of sex education, I think many would conclude that it was frankly woeful. Basically, there wasn't any 'education' in what was then known, euphemistically, although not untruthfully, as 'the facts of life'. It was considered indelicate to explain too much, and much energy was expended on keeping young people 'innocent' for as long as possible.

I think youngsters from farming backgrounds did better than us city kids. They were aware of the most elemental facts of life: you brought the bull to the heifer and the ram to the ewe. Animal husbandry is all based on procreation – and fertility. You couldn't be totally ignorant about the consequences of the mating season if you were raised on a farm.

For the urbanites, it was mostly a matter of nudges and winks, and for many girls, the reading of quite soppy romantic literature. This chick-lit did elevate sexual encounters to a higher sphere of aspirational

Mary Kenny

relationships and dreams of happy-ever-after. But it omitted the darker side of passion and lust, which can lead to cruelty, abuse, murder and destruction.

Perhaps we should have been compelled to study the life of the Marquis de Sade, who advanced cruelty and homicide as pleasurable aspects of the sex drive – thus inventing 'sadism'.

Warnings

Of course there were plenty of moral warnings about 'occasions of sin'. But these sometimes came with so much forbidding finger-wagging that they were discounted. Some of our generation, including yours truly, went a bit wild when the era of sexual liberation hoved into view.

In consequence, I am in favour of sex education for school students, although it must be a difficult subject to teach – imagine having to stand in front of mocking adolescents and go through the intimacies of sexuality! It's not hard to understand why, in a survey of 5,000 students, teachers and parents, many were critical of the way sex education is taught: it's not that easy to teach, and it must be challenging to reach an agreed standard.

People want holistic sex education"

Some respondents said they received little information about sexual consent, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender) issues, or 'positive' aspects of relationships. Some were critical that lessons mentioned "abstinence" and "risks and dangers"

All this is complex territory. Sexual consent seems straightforward – nobody should ever be forced into intimacy - but it often turns out not to be that simple to define. There is an entire history of flirtation – and popular music – about wooing and persuasion that muddies the waters. Shakespeare himself described "consent' as coming from eye contact: "Sometimes from her eyes I did receive fair speechless messages." (Prove that in a court of law, Will!)

On LGBT issues, there is a wide spectrum of opinion. Some gay campaigners do not accept 'transgender' rights (the British lesbian lawyer Julie Bindel is one such). It's a minefield, frankly.

People want more 'holistic' sex education – that is, considering the whole person. Positive relationships certainly should be stressed. But in examining a complicated area, and devising a revised programme for it, there's something to be said for getting back to the biological basics of 'the facts of life'. 'Risks and dangers' are certainly part of those 'facts', and 'abstinence' – once called 'chastity' – can also be a positive choice. That's holistic too!

Congratulations on becoming Irish... now read these!

It's impressive to see a gathering of 2,500 people at Killarney Convention Centre who have just become Irish citizens – coming originally from 90 different countries. May they enjoy many happy and fulfilling times being Irish – and probably, maddening and argumentative times as well, since that is also part of the package!

But here's a thought. The French education system had a mission to 'make Frenchmen'. That is, to inculturate citizens – be they from minority backgrounds such as the Basques, or immigrants from other lands – to the point of being French in their culture, not just in their paperwork.

How would Irishness be 'inculturated'? I'd start with literature, and give to every new Irish citizen a collected selection of the short stories from Daniel Corkery, Padraic O Conaire,



Irishness.

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6 News The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

Positive religious feeling shadowed by 'hostile' media – psychiatrist

Chai Brady

A well-known psychiatrist has said she is "surprised" at survey results which found more Irish people disagree that religion does more harm than good, despite hostility in mainstream media.

Prof. Patricia Casey said there seems to be "anti-religious" sentiment among the majority of journalists and politicians. These are "out of touch" with a large proportion of the population, she added.

The Sign of the Times Survey 2019, published by Behaviour & Attitudes, found that 36% of people disagreed with the statement 'Religion does more harm than good'. This is compared with 35% who agreed and 29% who remained neutral.

"There are very hostile people commenting on Twitter, and indeed writing in newspapers by and large - the vast majority of journalists. So I was pleasantly surprised," said Prof. Casey.

"It suggests that they are out of touch, the problem is they will not act and modify any of their views unless they see the public speak out."

Prof. Casey mentioned the dispute that erupted regarding the planned change in patronage of a Catholic primary school in Dublin last

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Speaking of the parents that spoke out she said: "I think it will be in areas like that that it will become more obvious as time goes by but the public do need to have the courage to speak out about it.

"There has to be a media forum in which they can do it and in which people can express different opinions whether they're religious opinions, political opinions or opinions on social issues."

She added that many people know the harm that religion has done, but are also aware of the good.

"I'm also hoping that people's own personal faith has remained, people would accept that a lot of evil things have happened but still tend their own faith," Prof. Casey added.

The UCD professor recently published an article in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health with two other academics entitled 'The Role of Religion in Buffering the Impact of Stressful Life Events and Depressive Symptoms in Patients with Depressive Episodes or Adjustment Disorder'.

The survey also found that there may be some backlash regarding recent social and cultural changes in Ireland. Out of those surveyed 69% agreed that 'society is too politically correct'.

Regarding the #MeToo movement 45% of men and 38% of women said it had gone too far. Of those surveyed 61% said that 'Everything changes too quickly' while 46% said they were neutral or had no pride in the same-sex marriage result which contrasts with the 62% of people who voted in favour of it in the 2015 referendum.



The Solemn Monastic Profession of Bro. Jaroslaw Kurek OSB, at Glenstal Abbey Church, Murroe, Co. Limerick, joined by fellow Monks and Abbot of Glenstal Brendan Coffey OSB. Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan

Feargal Quinn hailed as 'independent' man of Faith

Greg Daly

Feargal Quinn was a "pragmatic" businessman and politician who was confident in his Catholic identity, according to Sen. Rónán Mullen.

Describing Mr Quinn, who died last week aged 82 at his home in Howth, as someone who "grew up in an era when to be Catholic was normal", Sen. Mullen said the one-time supermarket entrepreneur and senator had been a member of the Knights of St Columbanus and a Papal Knight of St Gregory.

"He was a pragmatic businessman who had been formed in the Faith and had grown up to be a member of the Church.

He understood the huge contribution that Faith made to society and that the Church has made to society," Sen. Mullen told *The Irish Catholic*.

Culture

"Where he differed from some of his peers was that whereas they had also been formed in Catholic culture, they either didn't know it or didn't appreciate it, and they let it go when the cultural drift came," he continued.

"Fergal had the independence to say this is something I agree with, this is something I believe in, this is my faith and it's part of me."

Maintaining that Mr Quinn had been comfortable with dealing with different points of view, Sen. Quinn said: "He wasn't a cultural warrior, but he knew where he stood and he wasn't going to change where he stood on things simply because fashions had changed in Ireland."

Catholic schoolchildren numbers break records in NI

Schools census figures have revealed there are now more Catholic pupils in schools than ever in the North of Ireland.

Government statistics show 175,617 Catholic students enrolled this year, making up 50.7% of all enrolments. This is the first time the figure has increased over 175,000. This is contrasted with a plunge in the amount of Protestant students who made up 33%.

Over 56,000 pupils identified as 'other'. Nineteen years ago the amount of Catholic students in schools was the same, at 50.7%, while Protestants made up 42.7%.

Enrolment

It is suggested however that many Protestants are not identifying as such, with the decline coinciding with the rise in

'other' or 'non-Christian' pupils.

The Department of Education stats also show that Catholic families are more inclined to send their children to schools in other sectors, while Protestants children enrolment in Catholic schools remains low.

Currently there are more Catholic children in secondary, grammar, primary, nursery and special schools.



Ruhama report shows high-risk environment of sex workers

Ruhama, an organisation dedicated to supporting women affected by prostitution, found in its 2018 Annual Report that more than half of service users were dependent on drugs or alcohol. Increased risks and housing shortages were found to be a consistent threat to responding women. Sixty percent of women

IN BRIEF

reported dealing with drug and/or alcohol issues, with many using multiple substances, while 40% said they were homeless.

Over 40% of respondents reported being victims of sexual violence, mainly by sex-buyers.

Many also reported feeling that it was safer to contact gardaí since the explicit decriminalisation of sex work in the Criminal Law (Sexual Offense) Act of 2017.

The charity reported supporting 313 women, 122

of whom were suspected victims of trafficking.

Ruhama is currently celebrating its 30th year of service.

IC readers urge Church to speak out on persecution

The majority of IC readers believe that Church leaders need to be more vocal in highlighting the plight of Christians across the globe.

Facebook users were asked: "Politicians rightly get criticised when they

turn a blind eye to the persecution of Christians. But, do we hear enough about it at Masses? Do Church leaders highlight the issue enough or should they speak out more?"

Out of the 162 people who voted, 141 said that Church leaders need to speak out more, in comparison to the 21 voters who said they do enough to highlight the issue.

The poll came in the wake of last month's Sri Lanka bombings in three churches which took the lives of hundreds of Christians.

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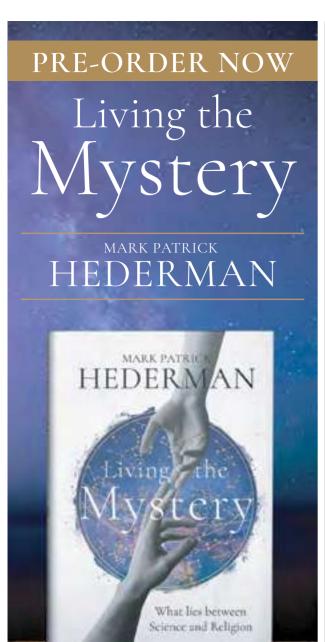
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A moving plea for responsible politics

he Easter period in the Christian calendar is a time of both death and resurrection. When tragedy strikes, there is a challenge, when people are faced by a great and wholly unexpected setback to try and find a transformative response. Three such events occurred around this Easter.

The largest-scale events were the multiple suicide bomb attacks claimed by ISIS on worshippers in churches and hotel guests, which cost over 250 lives in Sri Lanka. It is an island country much the same size as Ireland. where religious and ethnic tensions following a bloody end to the civil war remain high. It might have been better served by persevering with its peace process rather than the pursuit of a controversial all-out military victory.

Ireland is a country that could help spearhead international initiatives to check and counteract the ever-increasing attacks motivated by religious hatred and intolerance against worshippers in mosques, churches and synagogues or indeed religious groups generally. States. members of the United Nations, should be required to extend domestically the basic protections that they expect for their citizens when they travel or live abroad.

All who love France will have been deeply saddened by the fire damage to the cathedral of Notre-Dame, one of the most recognisable symbols of Paris. Even for as secular a country as France, Notre-Dame was recognised as an integral part of its national identity and as something that has to be rebuilt.

Fire

The fire which occurred during refurbishment is a timely warning to everyone, including ourselves, of the dangers involved for old buildings and the need for stringent precautions. St Mel's Cathedral in Longford is one example of a successful restoration after fire, but sometimes a longstanding ruin, if handled sensitively, can be given a whole new life, as was the case in Holycross Abbey in Co. Tipperary in the 1970s.

Given the devastating effects of world wars, a huge amount of experience in

Martin Mansergh

The View

reconstruction is available. Dresden, victim of a destructive and unnecessary night of allied bombing in February 1945, rebuilt the Frauenkirche over the following 60 years with some restitution coming from Britain and America so that from the outside it looks as it did in 18th-Century pictures by Canaletto. De Valera's appeals to save Rome in 1944 during the allied advance may have helped, as did the refusal of the German commander in Paris to obey Hitler's order to destroy the city, including no doubt Notre-Dame, as the German army pulled out.

Historic churches in Moscow and St Petersburg,

be a resource beyond the ranks of believers for all who wish to share in or benefit from their traditions and the rich culture associated with them.

Every country has its demons, sometimes all too visible, but often largely concealed or covered by silence. For France, it has been a case for over two centuries of trying to separate the progressive legacy of the French revolution from the reign of terror and the religious massacres associated with it.

Their ongoing challenge has been to establish a conservative republicanism based on representative political institutions as time round, if it comes to that, the EU should decide on an indefinite suspension of the Article 50 process, unless and until the UK parliament can arrive at an agreed position on withdrawal consistent with its EU obligations, as negotiated by its government.

The murder of Lyra McKee, on the eve of Good Friday, 21 years after the 1998 Agreement, was an awful reminder of the dangerous embers of hatred still to be damped down. Lyra's much quoted words, "We were the Good Friday Agreement generation. destined to never witness the horrors of war, but to reap the spoils of peace, the spoils that never seemed to reach us" were a poignant summation of their life experience.



Stormont - a building in need of public representatives.

despite the devastations of history, are in pristine condition, and in many cases are used by the Russian Orthodox Church, despite being in state ownership. Earlier last month, President Putin re-opened the restored church attached to the Catherine Palace (named after Catherine I, wife of Peter the Great).

Why should a referendum result be uniquely sacred and irreversible"

History teaches that religion should never be scorned as a source of pride in national identity. Equally, churches should opposed to street battles. They are cautious about deifying the people. An architect and early prime minister of the Third Republic Jules Ferry said that "philosophy has not destroyed the infallibility of divine right (of kings) in order to substitute the infallibility of popular right".

That is exactly what the proponents of Brexit are trying to insinuate. The essence of democracy is that the people can change their mind. Why should a referendum result be uniquely sacred and irreversible, when new elections can be held quite regularly, and parliamentary decisions can be revisited practically weekly? Next

For democrats, a parliament is a place you go to solve problems"

Her eloquence was almost matched at her funeral in St Anne's Cathedral by Fr Martin Magill, when he expostulated to the politicians who had come together for her funeral: "Why in God's name does it take the death of a 29-year old woman...to get to this point?"

Strong public applause for his sentiments has led to a renewed attempt by the two Governments to restart talks to restore the institutions One can only hope that what often happens after a widely acclaimed sermon, which is that people revert the next day to the entrenched position they held previously, does not happen again this time. Michéal Martin hit the nail on the head, when he said at Arbour Hill last Sunday "for democrats, a parliament is a place you go to solve problems - not a place you refuse to go to unless your problems are solved in advance".

The dissident paramilitary organisations claim that their actions are intended for propaganda purposes, in which case it is appallingly bad propaganda for the cause of a united Ireland.

In the world today there is a premium on responsible politics, but in too many places a paucity of it.

The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

Mixed signals from the Government don't add up



Mothers and fathers are different and we shouldn't be afraid to say so, writes **David Quinn**

his is a very strange and contradictory Government. On the one hand it is preparing a new law that will allow a couple not to record themselves on a birth certificate as the mother and father of their child. They can record themselves simply as 'parents'.

This would seem to mean that the Government sees no special value in the separate and distinct roles of mothers and fathers, and even is willing to see birth certs erase the basic fact that no child can come into existence without a mother and a father. This new law, an update to the Civil Registration Act. is being advanced by the Department of Social Protection, which is headed by Fine Gael's Regina Doherty.

On the other hand, this same Department and this same Minister has just announced additional paid parental leave, on top of recently introduced paternity benefit, the aim of which is to encourage new fathers to spend more time at home with their children.

Announcing the measure last week, Minister Doherty said: "The evidence shows that when fathers take a more significant and meaningful share in the parenting of their children the individual family benefits."

Natural ties

During the same-sex marriage referendum of 2015, we were told the sex of a child's parents didn't matter. We were also told that the natural ties didn't matter. We were told 'all a child needs is love'. But if this is so, then why is



a Government Minister now saying that "the individual family benefits" when fathers "take a more significant and meaning share in the parenting of their children".

Why the seeming volte face by the Government? Can it be that they have suddenly returned to the traditional, common sense view that men and women are different and so are mothers and fathers? It would be nice to think so, but every other piece of evidence suggests otherwise because its radical overhaul of family law continues. What it is doing to birth certs is only one example. So are its plans for the assisted human reproduction industry

The gap between the average amount of money a man earns and the average amount a woman earns is largely explained by motherhood"

Almost no value is given to the natural ties in those plans, and none at all is attached to the value to a child of having its own mother and father, or any mother and father.

So why is the Government now so keen on new fathers giving up work for a few weeks in the first year of a child's life?

The reason is almost certainly because of a desire

to close the gender pay gap. The gap between the average amount of money a man earns and the average amount a woman earns is largely explained by motherhood. It is not really a gender gap at all but a motherhood one, because the pay gap doesn't really exist among young, childless men and women.

It appears when women become mothers and take breaks from their careers. Men take almost no time off when they become fathers. This means the careers of mothers suffer, where those of men do not.

If mothers and fathers can be somehow induced, or even forced, to take equal amounts of time off work, then the pay gap would close. So goes the theory anyhow, and it has something to be said for

it assuming mothers and fathers actually want to work the same number of hours and in the same kinds of demanding (or undemanding) jobs. That is a very big if.

A new report from the Economic and Social Research Institute looks at this very issue. The authors find that "women place greater value than men on jobs that are close to home and offer good security, and those job preferences are associated with lower wages".

Despite this finding, the authors still won't concede that the above difference might be the result of different natural preferences between men and women. They think the difference could be the result of social norms and expectations, namely that women are

expected to spend more time than men looking after children. Change those expectations, and then men might spend as much if not more time minding children and then, at last, the gender pay gap will vanish.

About 60,000 babies are born in Ireland each year. More than 40,000 women per annum apply for paid maternity leave"

When it was pointed out to Regina Doherty that one reason few enough men have taken up paternity leave is because the amount the State pays them is so low (€245 per week), she got annoyed.

Men on paternity leave receive the same as women on maternity leave. As she correctly pointed out, this hasn't stopped lots more women than men taking time off work.

About 60,000 babies are born in Ireland each year. More than 40,000 women per annum apply for paid maternity leave which lasts for six months. Only 24,000 or so men take up paternity leave which lasts for only a fortnight. How many families could afford to lose the best part of two incomes for six

months?

So, is a world in which mothers and fathers take equal amounts of time off work to mind children either achievable or desirable?

This largely depends on what men and women really want, and what is best for children. Many mothers prefer to breastfeed their babies, for example. Men obviously cannot do that. This is likely to result in a permanent difference in the amount of time men and women take off when their children are very young.

Countries like Sweden have gone as far down the gender equality road as any country in history, and even in Sweden a gender pay gap of roughly 14% exists, about the same as here in Ireland. One reason it continues to exist is that women still take longer career breaks than men and are a lot more likely to be in part-time work, again, just like here in Ireland.

Government policy has to be a response to what parents actually want, rather than an attempt at social engineering which will waste resources and only frustrate people.

By all means, offer men a bit more parental leave, but don't expect too much of a change in male and female parenting choices as a result.



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10 | Analysis | The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

Legalising abortion has not made pregnant women any safer

ast year, we were repeatedly told that Irish women would be safer in pregnancy if the Eighth Amendment was repealed. In fact, when opinion polls showed support for repeal was slipping, The Irish Times rushed to India to record the parents of Savita Halappanavar urging a 'Yes' vote, and an Taoiseach Leo Vardakar, warned voters that pregnant women would die if abortion was not legalised.

So, has legalising abortion made pregnant women safer? It would appear that it has not. In the four short months since the abortion bill passed through the Dáil, two women died in Irish maternity hospitals, and the apparent causes – sepsis and a severe staff shortage –

Simon Harris has halted funds needed to preserve women's lives in order to pay for abortion, writes **Niamh Uí Bhriain**

are the same factors which led to the death of Ms

Last month, Marie
Downey from Limerick, who
had given birth to a little
boy, died in Cork University
Maternity Hospital (CUMH).
It is thought she suffered a
severe epileptic seizure, and
was trying to raise the alarm
when she collapsed on the
floor of her room, trapping
her baby underneath her.
Baby Darragh also died two

days later, and was buried cradled in his mother's arms. Just three nurses were on duty on the ward that night, caring for 31 patients. Like many other maternity hospitals, staff in CUMH have been complaining to the Minister for Health for years about the lack of resources, and the inquiries into the death of Savita Halappanavar found that staffing was an issue in the ability of maternity units to ensure women are safe.

Some of the country's leading obstetricians have pointed out that staff shortages have led to a crisis that is endangering women and babies. Instead of addressing that crisis, all Simon Harris' time seems to be taken up with endlessly tweeting about abortion.



In a separate tragedy, another mother, Karen McEvoy from Kildare, died on Christmas Day after giving birth to a baby girl in the Coombe maternity hospital. Ms McEvoy, who left behind three young children, died of sepsis, which also caused the death of Savita.

In the wake of Ms
Halappanavar's death, the
three separate inquiries
which found she died
of sepsis and because of
medical mismanagement,
also called for reforms in
the sector, including the
implementation of early
warning scoring systems
in the management of
infection.

The HIQA report noted that changes had not been implemented after another woman, Tanya McCabe, died from sepsis in a very similar case in 2012.

But the media wanted Savita's death to be only about abortion – and they exploited the tragedy to build public support for a change in Ireland's laws. So, they kept the public's attention on repealing the Eighth Amendment instead of addressing the crisis in staffing, and the changes in

protocol required to actually protect pregnant women.

The National Maternity Strategy group was tasked with the vitally important task of developing standards and processes to make sure that cases like Savita's did not occur again.

Then came the shocking revelation that funding for the National Maternity Strategy has been halted, because, it seems, Simon Harris needs that money to provide abortions.

According to Róisín
Molloy, a patient
representative on the
National Maternity Strategy
steering group, "the money
that had been intended to
go on the maternity strategy
was effectively being spent
on abortion services since
January of this year".
This is almost beyond

This is almost beyond belief.

The Government is taking money away from a vitally important strategy to ensure women do not die in pregnancy – and giving it to funding abortion. There is no clearer way of showing that their priorities do not lie with protecting women, but simply with ending the lives of preborn babies.

Health Minister Simon Harris

Simon Harris, is by every measure, doing a terrible job as Minister for Health, but the media has given him a free pass for the ever-worsening chaos in the health service because he not only delivered on abortion, he also became a virulent and aggressive opponent of any pro-life initiatives.

It seems
women's lives don't
actually matter that
much anymore, now
that the Eighth has
been repealed"

There was very little reaction from women's rights campaigners to Simon Harris' decision to halt funds for the programme necessary to make sure women's lives are protected in pregnancy and childbirth. It seems women's lives don't actually matter that much anymore, now that the Eighth has been repealed and abortion campaigners have got what they wanted.

The minister's enablers, from the media to the National Women's Council of Ireland, happily ignored this appalling downgrading of women's lives. The money is being spent on abortion, after all, so best not to criticise Harris, or make a fuss in case voters might wake up to the absolute deception that the campaign to repeal the Eighth was from the very beginning.

It seems legalising abortion did not make pregnant women safer after all. Women are dying in maternity hospitals. The government is halting funds to desperately needed measures to save women's lives. It is time for women in this country to wake up and realise that they were horribly deceived.

(1) Niamh Uí Bhriain is a spokesperson for the Life Institute. She will be a speaker at a national pro-life conference in Dublin on May 25 to mark the anniversary of the referendum (see page 7).

THERE'S NO PLANET B RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF 'LAUDATO SI' Saturday May 18th 2019 9.30 AM TO 3 PM ST. JOHN'S CENTRE, **KNOCK SHRINE Guest speakers:** Lorna Gold & Fr. **Dermot Lane** A day to explore Laudato Si and how we can rise to the challenge of caring for our common home. Local communities and committees will also be present to discuss the action they have taken within their own areas. For further details, see www.knockshrine.ie To book, tel: 094 93 75 355 Or email: faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie

KNOCK



The government is halting funds to desperately needed measures to save women's lives. It is time for women in this country to wake up and realise that they were horribly deceived"

The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

Speaking truth to power



A Belfast-based priest remains modest about how his words pricked the conscience of politicians, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**

hen a Belfastbased priest gave the homily at the funeral of a murdered journalist last month, it wasn't expected that his words would have any long-term effect. The remarks would, of course, touch the hearts and minds of those who knew and loved her, but probably be forgotten by those in attendance at the church exit.

This, however, was not to be the case. Instead, the powerful words of Fr Martin Magill in tribute to 29-year-old Lyra McKee reverberated not just within the church walls, but out to an entire island longing for hope in a time of anguish.

Northern Ireland's political leaders were some of the many who gathered in Belfast's St Anne's Cathedral for a special ecumenical funeral service in memory of Ms McKee, who was murdered by a dissident republican group on April 18 in Derry. Her death shocked the country, not least because as a self-described "ceasefire baby", she became the victim of an issue which she had spoken in her life so passionately about.

Impatience

But her death also provoked anger; exasperated with the deadlocked political parties who were able to stand in solidarity with one another in the church, but unable to do so in Stormont.

This frustration prompted Fr Magill to say to the congregation: "I commend our political leaders for standing together in Creggan on Good Friday. I am however left with a question: 'Why in God's name does it take the death of a 29-year-old woman with her whole life in front of her to get us to this point?" Before he even finished the sentence, people in the pews



rose to their feet applauding this lucid remark, including the politicians to whom the comment was directed, eventually.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about this watershed point in Northern Ireland's history, Fr Magill says that the reaction to the homily indicates the presence of a general dissatisfaction and vexation at the North's current failing political situation.

"They started clapping, people started standing. And suddenly, they gave power to what I had said. I had clearly tapped into something," he explains.

The moment has been played continuously on radio and television for the last week, but as Fr Magill is keen to stress, it's important to remember that behind the standing ovation is a sobering message about the future trajectory of the country.

"My question referred to the five main parties – I think it got a bit lost in the last few days, that the different party leaders stood together. That needs to be acknowledged. It was very clear that people wanted that, working together, standing together, for them to be working through whatever issues are holding them back," Fr Magill says.

says.
"I'm certainly not going to say you need to be doing x, y and z, because I'm not a politician, I've no desire to be a politician, I've no expertise, I'm certainly not going to give any guidance on how they do that, but it's very clear that people are frustrated, they want to work through whatever difficulties they're facing."

The younger generation need jobs, they need a better health service and education. They need a life, not a gun put in their hands"

Frustration is, perhaps, one of the tamer words to describe the emotions of Northern Irish citizens at this time, given that Stormont has been left in limbo for well over two years. There have been numerous failed attempts to restore power but divisive issues like the status of the Irish language and same-sex marriage continue to remain sticking points.

There's maybe certain areas of Belfast or Derry, or other places and other towns – there are a lot of places in Northern Ireland – that haven't seen any real benefit"

As a result, no significant legislative developments have been implemented in almost 30 months, leaving people disenfranchised at a government who has let them down at every turn.

For Fr Magill, this failure extends far beyond the current political stalemate as many communities are still waiting on the social and economic progress that was envisaged following the signing on the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

"Imagine what difference the peace process has made over 21 years; of course I'm going to acknowledge the fact that there are people living today, and that's obviously the primary benefit of it. But at the same time, there's maybe certain areas of Belfast or Derry, or other places and other towns – there are a lot of places in Northern Ireland – that haven't seen any real benefit," he tells this newspaper.

One demographic that has been particularly affected by a government at constant loggerheads, Fr Magill stresses, are young people. Quoting a friend of Ms McKee in his homily, Fr Magill says: "The younger generation need jobs, they need a better health service and education. They need a life, not a gun put in their hands'," noting that there is a clear correlation between these areas of attacks and social deprivation.

"All our young people need a life that gives them an aspiration for the future.

"As our politicians we need you to be working together to make that happen so that especially for those living in deprived areas that they will feel the peace process is working for them as well – and especially for young people living in these communities."

* * * * * * *

Fr Magill's words seem to have had some effect, as last Friday Prime Minister Theresa May and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar made a joint statement announcing an agreement to establish a new "process of political talks involving all the main political parties in Northern Ireland, together with the UK and Irish governments" in the aim of re-establishing Stormont.

The new talks, which have been welcomed by both Sinn Féin and DUP leaders, are set to begin on May 7. It is hoped that they will be the impetus for restoring the political institutions in the North, and create a framework where voters are fully represented.

While Fr Magill describes Ms McKee's death primarily as a tragedy, the collective response to her story has been unexpected and "amazing", as strangers of different faith traditions and political backgrounds have stood together in calling for a better future for the generations of today and tomorrow. It is the hope that this long-awaited call will finally be heard loud and clear by leaders of the country.

"My prayer is that out of this horrific situation, again thinking about the whole time of it – Holy Thursday into Good Friday, celebrating resurrection – that it's actually a doorway.

"It gives us another chance, it gives us an opportunity of something new, new hope and I suppose I'm obviously imbued by the whole Easter spirit, and I think there's an opportunity here that all of us can take."



12 | Analysis The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

facing up to an unsusta

Ireland's religious orders are increasingly facing financial

challenges, write Greg Daly, Colm Fitzpatrick and **Chai Brady**

he frantic call for funds to restore Notre Dame de Paris after the disastrous fire at the start of Holy Week will have baffled many, as will have done stories some months ago about how Ireland's Diocese of Waterford and Lismore had to dip into reserves to pay out priestly stipends towards the end of last year. Isn't the Church rich? How on earth could the Church not be able to pay for such things?

Of course, those more clued in to these things tend to realise firstly that even the Vatican has an annual turnover vastly less than, for example, UCD, and that the Church is best understood as a family of families or network of networks, rather than as a single coherent organisation. In a practical financial sense, there's a case to be made that there is no such thing as 'the Church'.

For all that, though, it's possible to get a sense of financial realities facing today's Church, and those interested in the future of Irish religious life could do worse than to look at Ireland's Charities Regulator, where headline figures for scores upon scores of orders, congregations and communities can be examined.

At face value, the picture they present is bleak: looking at the figures for the financial years ending in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 it seems that there wasn't even one priestly order in the country that broke even consistently year upon year, while not one province of Ireland's Sisters of Mercy or Presentation Sisters received more money than it spent between 2015 and 2017.

It's not a situation that is sustainable, says Fr Martin Kelly, whose Spiritan Province almost broke even in 2017, after two years where it spent more than two and three million more than it received. "What we're living off is shares and bank loans, he says, adding that the situation cannot continue indefinitely. "We're talking about a matter of years, single-figure years," he says. "Care for the elderly is one of the main expenses. But also we have care for missionaries overseas, and we have also works in Ireland."

While income can fluctuate depending on bequests and profits from sales of property, Augustinian Provincial Fr John Hennebry agrees that the current situation is not sustainable. "At the moment there is a need to withdraw from reserves to balance the books each year. That's my point: for any charity, any business, or any family that's not sustainable," he says

Basically what vou do is vou have to make cutbacks, though there's only so much you're able

While the Augustinians are currently in the process of selling land in Ballyboden, south Dublin, and are looking into how they might continue their ministry in a changing Ireland at the moment, Fr Hennebry says, the challenge is to maintain existing ministries and commitments in Ireland and abroad, while the aging profile of the province takes its own toll on the order's purse.

'We try to maintain, obviously, our present ministries we have commitments both here in Ireland and overseas. and we're anxious to respect them. I suppose a new feature on the landscape is healthcare, but that is in many ways probably replacing former expenditure on formation. so while I wasn't provincial at that time I suppose there must be a certain balancing out of those two," he says.

mitted to assisting developing provinces in that area of formation as well. I would say that certain of the other provinces are richer in personnel and poorer in financial resources," he continues. "We

Augustinians

to cut back on..."

and wherever we can." While administrative costs

"But then we are also comassist whenever we are able

Camillians -303,310 2,934,255 3237565 2,873,906 3,191,104 Capuchins 4,497,631 4,509,671 -12,040 4,337,095 3,860,013 Cistercians - Mellifont 1.038.384 1.701.745 2.909.768 1.871.384 1.660.818 Cistercians - Roscrea 1,623,039 2,230,355 -607,316 1,574,545 2,930,065 **Discalced Carmelites** 300,000 3,300,000 3,000,000 2,789,580 3,424,710 Columban Fathers* 8,654,823 8,869,838 1,062,042 **Divine Word Missionaries** 3,705,897 2,643,855 2,879,156 2,667,044 **Dominicans** 10,000,000 13,300,000 -3,300,000 12,509,611 13,012,635 -1,820,341 Franciscans - OFM 8,679,241 10,499,582 8,951,045 12,319,243 Jesuits ** 6,537,492 10,323,980 Kiltegan Fathers 10,926,683 10,781,787 144,896 11,425,304 11,516,984 Marist Fathers -664,921 1,365,240 1,616,612 2,281,533 12,922,551 Missionaries of Africa - White Fathers -134,180 643,453 724,567 858,747 735,183

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2014

Expenditure

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Society of St Paul 144,010 800,593 656,583 743,356 610,198 **Spiritans** 10,862,180 13,012,976 St Joseph's Society for Foreign Missions 2,302,181 2.284.259 17,922 2,473,941 2,276,950 Vincentians 1,302,913 2,271,811 -968,898 21,268,260 5,305,139

* In 2018, the Columban Fathers' expenditure of €11,397,180 exceeded income of €8,497,097 by €2,900,083

** The Jesuit figures aggregate the figures from the Charitable Trusts of the Jesuit Fathers, the Jesuit Jesuits' expenditure of €13,384,652 exceeded income of €4,388,613 by €8,996,039.

are a new expense which the order has to grapple with, Fr Hennebry says that cutbacks aren't especially on the agenda since individual communities and the province as a whole tend generally to be diligent and prudent with their expenses.

Sacred Heart Missionaries

Society of African Missions

Oblate Fathers

Passionists

Rosminians

Servites

Redemptorists

Pallottine Fathers

Fr Joe Bulman, Provincial Bursar of Ireland's Dominicans, who have in recent years sometimes spent a third again as much as they have received, says there's only so much that that kind of prudence can achieve.

"Well, basically what you do is you have to make cutbacks, though there's only so much you're able to cut back on, and then after that you have no choice but to dip into the reserves," he says, adding that this situation is for all that not very sustainable. "It won't

be long before very serious questions have to be asked," he says, adding that the Dominicans' biggest expenses are formation and healthcare.

"It's the vounger men coming in and looking after the older men," he says, noting too that as well as domestic missions the Irish province supports men in India, Trinidad, and South America, as well as contributing to subsidise the order's work as a whole including through the 'Angelicum', its pontifical uni-



versity in Rome. "We pay taxation to the Generalate, and they pay from there," he says, adding that Ireland is one of the provinces that contributes most to the order's total funds. "I think we're number six on the list at the moment,' he says.

Everything goes up about 200% per week, so what vou'd save here would be nothing by comparison with what's spent out there"

With the closures of the Dominican communities in Athy and Limerick and struggles around an attempted closure in Drogheda having hit headlines in recent years, an obvious question is whether cost is a factor in these decisions.
"It is, but cost is a very

minor consideration." he says. "It has to be on the list obviously, but closure has to do more with manpower and focusing our abilities."

* * * * * * *

Incomes and expenditures for

5,443,075

8,458,172

3,509,328

1,294,268

7,082,690

1,568,985

6,226,120

311,484

930.607

Net

-1052769

1,116,542

-1,638,573

791,087

-776.825

258,661

-21,669

60,338

-1,336,082

2015

Expenditure

7,132,777

8,727,632

4,834,074

790,920

1,608,983

11,373,940

2,454,429

8,767,810

292,530

Only last week Ireland's Franciscans announced that they would be withdrawing their community from Waterford, and Fr Aidan McGrath, the order's provincial in Ireland, says this is similarly a question of manpower rather than costs, though he says that the

financial situation for the fri-

ars in Ireland is precarious.

"My bottom line is it's not sustainable in the long term, but in the medium term it's something that has to be done because things are being put in place, planning for the future, where you have a lot of older men, and men with particular needs," he says, adding that when it comes

to nest eggs having been put aside, "the hen is laying". Admitting that this shorthand take is crude, he

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nable future

major Irish clerical orders

		2016		2017				
Net	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net		
-1,689,702	6,337,667	7,170,086	-832,419	8,905,736	7,707,565	1,198,171		
-317,198	2,888,443	3,665,233	-776,790	3,073,784	3,802,229	-728,445		
477,082	3,982,015	4,398,338	-416,323	4,318,701	4,657,687	-338,986		
40,927	1,452,820	1,544,483	-91,663	1,553,713	1,588,957	-35,244		
-1,355,520	1,343,200	2,581,892	-1,238,692	1,750,932	2,176,035	-425,103		
-635,130	3,037,253	3,925,752	-888,499	3,094,477	3,371,453	-276,976		
-215,015	8,377,486	9,023,783	-646,297	10,161,988	8,622,789	1,539,199		
212,112	3,000,477	2,925,563	74,914	3,118,646	2,827,140	291,506		
-503,024	9,808,121	12,941,748	-3,133,627	10,676,276	12,111,923	-1,435,647		
-3,368,198	9,183,551	12,947,019	-3,763,468	8,722,302	9,490,313	-768,011		
-3,786,488	4,274,719	11,666,679	-7,391,960	5,111,887	12,701,731	-7,589,844		
-91,680	10,673,204	8,279,218	2,393,986	11,425,304	11,516,984	-91,680		
-11,557,311	1,223,296	1,964,109	-740,813	1,183,303	2,196,683	-1,013,380		
-91,730	273,131	340,042	-66,911	868,090	537,198	330,892		
-269,460	7,931,209	8,169,761	-238,552					
-1,324,746	3,332,797	5,418,407	-2,085,610	1,464,483	4,721,379	-3,256,896		
503,348	1,657,781	1,092,836	564,945	1,480,703	1,168,569	312,134		
-678,376	920,194	2,029,182	-1,108,988	823,066	2,507,378	-1,684,312		
-4,291,250	6,587,095	7,497,143	-910,048	9,144,206	7,902,986	1,241,220		
-885,444	817,000	1,124,831	-307,831	895,819	1,305,000	-409,181		
18,954	681,064	277,769	403,295	365,732	336,536	29,196		
-2,541,690	7,867,068	8,955,060	-1,087,992	7,550,583	10,245,750	-2,695,167		
133,158	612,021	678,088	-66,067	638,972	605,829	33,143		
-2,150,796	11,273,271	14,563,046	-3,289,775	13,404,634	13,759,735	-355,101		
196,991	1,976,660	2,065,906	-89,246	4,216,209	2,261,753	1,954,456		
15,963,121	1,147,327	1,829,013	-681,686	3,010,942	1,910,432	1,100,510		

Fathers Gardiner Street, and the Rathfarnham Charitable Trust of Jesuit Fathers. In 2018, the

nonetheless says the reality is stark, and that today's Franciscans are now reliant on the actions of their forerunners. "I suppose the prudence of previous generations is now bearing fruit," he says, pointing out that the order has costs both at home and abroad. "We have huge responsibilities here in Ireland, but also for example we have to sustain an entire mission in Zimbabwe, and there's absolutely no saving there," he says, adding that with high inflation in Zimbabwe, it's impossible to make savings in Ireland on the scale necessary to generate necessary funds for the African mission.

"Everything goes up about 200% per week, so what you'd save here would be nothing by comparison with what's spent out there. All of those things are all taking a toll," he says, adding that the domestic costs for healthcare and converting houses so they are suitable for elderly men

is taking a toll at home. "It's not really unforeseen but as life goes on, what was tolerable 40 years ago is no longer tolerable," he says.

Caring for elderly community members is a pressing priority nowadays, and according to Sr Elisabeth Healy, Congregation Prioress of the Dominican Sisters Cabra, that at least is guaranteed.

"I can assure you that we do have a system in place to ensure that our elderly and frail sisters are looked after," she said, while Sr Rita Minehan, a member of the Brigidine Sisters' leadership team says a curious challenge for Ireland's aging orders can be what to do with resources when aging provinces no longer need them due to declining numbers.

Property

"We would still be okay asset-wise, with property and things like that. We don't have that immediate worry like some of the orders probably might have, because we're also looking at what we're leaving behind, our legacy to the future," she says.

In a sense, the challenge of how to pass on what the order has is about maintaining a mission focus to the end.

"Even if we can't be out there in the field, we would be supporting others who can be, who will be, into the future," she says. "That would be our hope, while we need to care for our elderly sisters, we're all quite elderly now, but at the same time that the focus would remain on mission."

One example of this, she says, is how the order gave its convent school at Mountrath in Co. Laois to the local community. "It's a resurrection moment for Mountrath in the sense of the future potential of the building and how the community group are running with it," she says, adding that the order has also built a new spirituality centre in

Kildare town, and donates to Focus Ireland and the Society of St Vincent de Paul, since housing is one of the "urgent needs of our time", she says.

"We have gifted quite a bit and we'll continue as long as we can to do that kind of thing into the future, while at the same time we have to make sure we have enough that we don't become a burden on the State, for the future," she adds, noting too that while some of the sisters, though aging, are still directly involved in ministry, the real challenge now is looking to the future, and "leaving a legacy".

"We would also be very conscious of where we have ministered overseas and of helping those missions as well, and also where we haven't been that are appealing for help – we would be very conscious of that in the developing world," she says, expressing the view that while the sisters' model of

» Continued on Page 14

Look beyond headline stats to discover the true position

Headline figures from the Charities Regulator can be somewhat misleading, according to Fr Bill Toner, Treasurer of Ireland's Jesuits, who explains that in the first place the Irish province's accounts are divided between a range of trusts.

"What happened with us is that the treasurer way, way back, long before my time, rather than setting up a single trust for the Jesuits set up trusts for every house, and the colleges had all different trusts. A few of them have sort of gathered here if you like," he says, admitting "I'm afraid it's a rather complicated picture."

Pattern

One common pattern across the accounts is that expenditure is consistently higher than income, Fr Toner says, although he maintains that this is partly due to increases in the value of investments not being counted as income.

"Unfortunately at the moment the only thing you see is the information we put in taken from the profit and loss account. We don't put in the balance sheets and we can't do it – it's not allowed. We were thinking of putting in more information, but the regulator said they're not permitted by law to display it," he says.

"If you have, for instance, an investment of €10 million you could probably get about €300,000 a year out of that, but that doesn't appear – all that appears is income," he continues, adding that the Jesuits certainly couldn't keep going based on the headline figures, where the "income could actually be quite small in a technical sense".

Investments

Real incomes are very small nowadays, he says, since the order is no longer receiving teachers' salaries and so forth. Instead, he says, it is mainly reliant on investments and is careful not to erode its capital reserves.

"We send in the full accounts to the charities regulator, but the only

thing that's displayed at the moment is those figures that we take out of the accounts. I've actually asked the regulator if we could put in the whole story: it'd be a bit complicated because we'd have to put all the trusts together, but he said no, we're not allowed by the act," he continues.

Describing this information as "very limited", he says "the older charities survive through investments, and the capital growth in investments, but this is not displayed in the published accounts yet".

Aside from healthcare at home, especially at the Cherryfield nursing home in Milltown, a major expenditure is formation abroad, he says.

We give a lot of donations, if we can. Part of our trusts would be the relief of poverty and we would give to those"

"We send a lot of money to Rome for formation because they have more vocations in places like Africa and the Far East than they have money for. That would probably still be our biggest single item," he says, adding that other expenses include education, communications, administration, spirituality, and the Centre for Faith and Justice and the Jesuit Refugee Service.

"We give a lot of donations, if we can. Part of our trusts would be the relief of poverty and we would give to those. Abroad, famine relief, or it could be in Ireland, the refurbishment of a church or something like that. We get a lot of appeals and can only answer some of them," he says.

As things stand, then, things are sustainable for Ireland's Jesuits

"We don't have any immediate financial crisis – some of the other orders may have, but we don't have," he says.

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Ireland's religious orders are increasingly facing

Incomes and expenditures for major Irish women's religious orders

	_									
	2015			2016			2017			
	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net	
Bon Secours Sisters	8,678,439	5,592,540	3,085,899	10,147,498	15,251,036	-5,103,538	8,190,168	5,572,307	2,617,861	
Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul	6,064,245	13,380,836	-7,316,591	7,002,795	10,638,109	-3,635,314	40,172,783	9,652,745	30,520,038	
Dominican Sisters	11,892,177	11,664,447	227,730	7,738,463	8,659,160	-920,697	4,614,917	8,564,069	-3,949,152	
Little Sisters of the Poor	10,168,780	9,583,456	585,324	10,146,279	10,149,699	-3,420	10,536,889	10,858,157	-321,268	
Brigidine Sisters	1,387,068	1,841,596	-454,528	1,534,598	1,874,643	-340,045	1,195,143	2,034,939	-839,796	
Good Shepherd Sisters	1,883,634	2,983,845	-1,100,211	2,055,295	3,916,520	-1,861,225	2,236,059	3,875,692	-1,639,633	
Loreto Sisters	5,606,593	7,950,582	-2,343,989	5,130,358	7,652,031	-2,521,673	7,003,964	11,482,071	-4,478,107	
Sisters of Our Lady of Charity	3,200,118	3,796,000	-595,882	3,094,575	4,026,372	-931,797	2,973,387	4,478,779	-1,505,392	
Religious Sisters of Charity	12,274,771	9,626,584	2,648,187	9,497,657	10,054,198	-556,541	9,269,362	10,292,853	-1,023,491	

Presentation Sisters
South West Province
North East Province
Generalate

2015			2016			2017			
	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net
	6,892,000	7,226,000	-334,000	5,626,925	7,171,137	-1,544,212	5,514,509	7,321,251	-1,806,742
	9,893,415	15,824,373	-5,930,958	9,815,623	13,472,652	-3,657,029	10,866,735	15,657,548	-4,790,813
	2,137,564	2,661,789	-524,225	1,907,422	3,078,619	-1,171,197	2,528,929	2,831,242	-302,313

Sisters of Mercy
Northern Province
Southern Province
South Central Province
Western Province
Congregational Leadership

	2015			2016			2017	
Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net
5,789,713	7,287,722	-1,498,009	6,170,279	6,930,495	-760,216	6,134,220	6,351,419	-217,199
10,356,760	13,971,868	-3,615,108	11,456,136	12,836,306	-1,380,170	12,934,307	13,166,846	-232,539
14,225,111	17,927,800	-3,702,689	13,994,906	16,693,171	-2,698,265	14,429,117	17,438,806	-3,009,689
12,055,337	14,109,542	-2,054,205	12,818,135	14,596,111	-1,777,976	12,138,198	15,221,834	-3,083,636
9,776,755	1,940,648	7,836,107	917,635	1,821,996	-904,361	613,150	1,812,592	-1,199,442

» Continued from Page 13

religious life is approaching its end, she is hopeful of new forms of lay ministry emerging, possibly drawing its inspiration for the early Irish Church.

The inspiration of Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Sisters, remains a guiding light for the sisters today, according to Sr Sheila Kelleher, Provincial Leader of the order's South West Province. She says being financially sustainable into the future will be vital if the order is to live out its charism through spirituality, education, and parish and a range of other ministries, including the iScoil learning community, the Lantern Project, and the Cork Migrants Centre.

"The charity's investments are pooled centrally and invested at Central Leadership level, to maximise total return through diversified portfolios, whilst providing an adequate level of income for the day to day running of the unit," she says, adding that the sisters' investment strategy sets them up well for the future.

"We believe that this strategy will contribute greatly to economic sustainability into the future and enable us, with the employment and support of lay people, to continue the mission of Nano," she says, explaining that the province's income is mainly generated through return on investments, salaries and the sisters' pensions.

Against this, she says, building costs remain high and some larger convents are being sold to reduce maintenance costs, while administrative and care costs continue to increase. "Care of an ageing Unit is a significant expenditure. Currently 16

very elderly sisters who need ongoing care are in nursing homes."

Despite an aging membership and rising costs, the order remains active in various ways, Sr Sheila stresses, adding that "reasonable and prudent" decisions need to be made around managing finances.

Before we were the ones that were sending money out to our various missions, but that has changed now in recent years"

"Proceeds, if any, from disposal of property, are set aside for care of the sisters and continuation of our ministries into the future," she says, adding that the order tries to match its reserves to its needs. "Rationalising the running costs of community living is ongoing through economies of scale, increased efficiencies, moving out of large buildings to smaller houses and investment in sustainable energy sources."

Pointing out that the order has donated a number of properties to house homeless and other needy people, and that this is ongoing, she says "we are constantly evaluating our ministries and properties to determine if they continue to serve the mission of our congregation".

Teaching brothers were once another omnipresent feature of Ireland's religious landscape, and though they are in decline their bald financial figures do not always make this clear, with occasional spectacular jumps in income and expenditure, such that it can be hard to spot the pattern.

According to Bro. Edmund Garvey, provincial leader of the Irish section of the Congregation of Christian Brothers European Province, this

ers European Province, this can be explained by sales of properties, included in the accounts at historic cost value.

value.

"The balance sheet will be low, but on those occasions when we sell a property, a big income item appears in your statement," he says, pointing to a large one-off income of over €20 million in 2015. "Those properties sales were done to fund a big expense in 2016, and what that was, was the voluntary contribution we were making to Department of Education for contribution to the Residential Institution Statutory fund." This will be completed in May, so those spikes will not be experienced again. "That will be one big expense we will not have to meet," he says.

At the same time, he adds, the order is still struggling financially.

"The funding of our annual deficits is a pressing matter for the trustees, they're meeting regularly and they're consulting with advisors," he continues. "That's looking at our property, our property needs as we having an aging membership into the future and can our investment sustain us into the future? So, what's happening is the investments that we have, the income, that income sustains the charities."

With investment incomes being drawn down alongside occasional property sales the order keeps going, such that "there are sufficient resources to continue the charitable objectives of the order into the long term", he says, adding that almost all resources expended are on charitable

Incomes and expenditures for major Irish orders of religious brothers

2015 2016 2017 Expenditure Net Expenditure Net Expenditure Net De La Salle Brothers -1,280,787-1,035,929 3,129,163 4,409,950 3,328,618 4,202,905 -874,2872,608,209 3,644,138 -15,642,305 **Christian Brothers** 20,984,029 10,225,522 10,758,507 8,087,131 23,729,436 7,176,774 7,651,921 -475,147 -546,500 567,998 709,158 -141,160 824,556 1,371,056 736,718 865,858 -129,140Marist Brothers 894,891 990,160 -95,269 791,700 1,285,113 -493,413 852,373 1,345,205 -492,832 Patrician Brothers -914,000 **Presentation Brothers** 1,341,000 1,759,000 -418,000 1,514,000 2,428,000 1,027,000 2,144,000 -1,117,000

financial challenges meeting rising expenses

activities.

"We're running institutional ministries, supporting the brothers, and where possible supporting the Christian Brothers' mission throughout the world," he says, adding: "At present, particularly in relation to the overall question, we are sustainable and will meet our historical liabilities and commitments. And we are trying to position ourselves in such a way that we can meet all of our home needs but increasingly contribute to developing parts of the congregation. We see real possibilities for that."

Drawing down on reserves is vital for continuing the Presentation Brothers' focus on charitable activities, especially education, according to Bro. Raymond Dwyer, Provincial Leader of the order's Anglo-Irish Province.

"We operate on a deficit budget each year and are required to draw on our financial reserves to meet our operating and charitable expenditure – our charitable activities are such that they do not generate sustainable revenues," he says.

Explaining that many members of the order give their services for free in various ministries, he says supporting elderly and overseas brothers is vital.

"We also support our men in their work in Africa who have little or no means of support locally. In addition, we a have a need to care for members of the Order who have donated all their adult



St Mary's in Donnybrook, Dublin, was sold by the Discalced Carmelites to help maintain financial viability.

life to the furtherance of our charitable objectives.

"Many are now in retirement with little or no personal income," he says, adding the order is "acutely aware" of the need to manage its finances carefully in the future.

* * * * * * *

The resources of the De La Salle Brothers in Ireland are being "ploughed back into schools and also into pastoral centres", according Provincial Leader Bro. Laurence Hughes, who is "very confident" about the order's sustainability.

"All the money that we make, what we've always done in the religious order is to plough it back into the actual mission itself – that's how we can sustain it," he says, adding that a key part of the order's work going forward will be working with lay people – Le Sallian Part-

ners – who work in the orders schools and administration.

"We just had our chapter a week ago in Ireland, we actually had our Le Sallian partners working with us in the chapter itself which is unusual, because normally a chapter is just for the religious but we've included them because of the amount of work that they do obviously running schools, head-teachers etc.," he says.

Stressing that the order is an international one, he says this helps to make it sustainable. "The Lasallian mission wouldn't go under in any one country in the world without help from the mother house," he says. "So, if the desire of the mother house, the Superior General, is that this particular country requires to carry on the Lasallian mission then monies will be found to make sure that happens."

Ireland's Columban Fathers are already in a position of relying on international support, according to Provincial Fr Ray Husband.

"Well, the thing is a lot of our income recently is depending on bequests, and then as a region – before we were the ones that were sending money out to our various missions, but that has changed now in recent years and we rely on income from general headquarters in Hong Kong. They would provide some budget for us," he says.

The main expenses for the province are the upkeep of its Irish headquarters and nursing home at Dalgan Park in Co. Meath.

"The two big drains would be the upkeep of Dalgan itself and then our nursing home facilities," he says. "We have a very, very elderly congregation now, very, very elderly men, but I wouldn't want to paint a bad picture either – people are still sending us money and it goes specifically to our missions and our priests who work abroad. We facilitate that."

Irish people, he stresses, are "very generous", and continue to enable the work of the province in such countries as Pakistan and Myanmar. "Because people respond very generously thank God we are able to send money out there, but the running costs are high," he says.

We're just going to be a poorer Church, and that's not a bad thing. I've never thought that was a bad thing"

Fr Michael McGoldrick, Provincial of Ireland's Discalced Carmelites, said while the headline figures gloss over how some parts of the province can be financially sustainable, there are real problems that have needed to be tackled through the sale of property.

"We had to sell a properly two years ago – we were advised to sell a property because we were heading for, basically, bankruptcy if we didn't. Our accountant said – this is going back, what, three years ago now – to me, you've got to sell something because you're eating into your reserves at such a serious rate there will be nothing in eight or nine years."

The sale of the St Mary's building in Donnybrook hasn't addressed the longer-term difficulties, but it has made things more manageable, he says. "That hasn't fully solved the problem, but we're certainly much nearer to being financially viable. The future's going to be quite problematic in the sense that donations are going down, and expenses are going up, particularly medical expenses."

Supporting the province's mission in Nigeria to the tune of over €200,000 a year is a huge cost, he says. "It's our responsibility until such time – which I don't anticipate happening for a long, long time to come – as them becoming independent. If anything the amount of money needed to go out is going up, because they've increasing numbers in formation."

Medical costs need to be factored in too, he says, both in Nigeria and in Ireland where nursing home care is very expensive, but it is essential, he maintains.

At the same time, he says, these financial challenges shouldn't always be seen as bad things.

"We're just going to be a poorer Church, and that's not a bad thing. I've never thought that was a bad thing. I wouldn't say we'll be on our knees, that would be exaggerating, but things will be very tight and that's not a bad thing. We've a vow of poverty, and if we have to live it a bit more seriously that's not a bad thing."



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"...On this rock I will build









Students give a day-to-day reflection on a recent pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi by the Catholic chaplaincy at Queen's University, Belfast, led by Fr Gerard Magee

DAY 2 – Oisin McHugh

e started off our day with a trip to the St John Lateran Cathedral in Rome. Known as the "Mother and head of all churches" it was an amazing experience to visit this building.

I then really enjoyed the celebration of Mass in the Irish College of Rome with my friends from the chaplaincy, the mosaic icons and the music in particular I enjoyed. It was great to see the building in which my home country is represented and is preparing men for the priesthood in Rome.

Visiting the Colosseum and Catacombs allowed us to get a small insight into the persecution of Christians within Rome and gave us some perspective. Another highlight was visiting St Paul's Outside the Walls Basilica also which was an incredible example of how architecture can be used to glorify God immensely.

Within the basilica, we saw the icon where Pope Francis goes to pray"

Our evening vespers session in the beautiful San Benedetto church followed by dinner was a great way to bring us all together in prayer and end a busy but very satisfying day in Rome with my friends.

DAY 3 – Claire Gibbon

Today we were up early for an audience with Pope Francis at St Peter's Square. We had breakfast and then headed off towards the square to try to get good seats and miss the worst of the queue! I was so excited as I had been looking forward to the papal audience for months. It did not disappoint!

We were lucky enough to get front-row seats in our section so that we were right up close when Pope Francis drove past us. The QUB chaplaincy even got a shout-out before the Pope's reflection began! It was a great morning, and despite the heavy rain, we were





joyful!

Later on, we visited the Basilica of St Mary Major, where we celebrated Mass in a beautiful side-chapel. This is something I was really looking forward to after stumbling upon a beautiful picture of this basilica on Instagram many months ago! This was my favourite part of the day.

Within his basilica, we saw the icon where Pope Francis goes to pray and a piece of what is said to be the crib from Bethlehem. It was an incredible visit.

Finally, we spent our

evening visiting the sights such as the Trevi Fountain and the Pantheon before heading to dinner, where we had live music and great food. Even Fr Gerard got up to sing a song or two! It was a great way to spend our last full day in Rome. I will be sad to leave Rome but am excited to see what Assisi will bring!

DAY 4 – Davog McCaffery

Thursday marked another action-packed day starting off in Rome. It was a really beautiful morning and after breakfast we made our way

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my Church"



to St Peter's Square and Cathedral.

St Peter's is the largest Church in the world and is so central to our Catholic faith with Jesus telling Peter, "upon this rock I will build my Church". I had been to St Peter's before but this visit was particularly special with our tour guide Kieran passing on so much information on the life of St Peter, the Cathedral and its architecture and the Vatican.

We celebrated our last Mass in a lovely little side chapel at the San Damiano – The Crucifix Chapel"

For me, the highlight of our time in Rome was having the opportunity to visit the tomb of Pope St John Paul II and the body of Pope John XXIII before getting to pray in front of the tomb of St Peter which was a wonderful privilege.

Arriving in Assisi, it was worlds apart from the hustle and bustle of innercity Rome. We first visited the Basilica of St Francis of Assisi and took some time to remember the life and works of this central figure in our faith. We celebrated Mass just beneath the main Basilica in a lovely little church.

DAY 5 – Shannon and Amy

After a beautiful evening in Assisi, we headed into the town again this morning to visit the San Damiano, the place where the cross spoke to Francis and where he is said to have written 'Canticle of the Creatures', a hymn of thanksgiving to God, revealing Francis' brotherly relationship with all of



Davrog McCaffery.



Shannon and Amv.

creation.

We celebrated our last Mass in a lovely little side chapel at the San Damiano – The Crucifix Chapel. A beautiful start to the day!

After Mass, we walked along the scenic streets of Assisi to the Basilica di Santa Chiara where we were able to see the tomb of St Clare and the place in which she died. We were inspired by her last words: "Go safely in peace my blessed soul...and you, Lord, be blessed for you created me."

We were able to gain an insight into the inspiring life she led, with the help of our wonderful and insightful tour guide, Kieran. St Francis and St Clare are both wonderful examples of faith and we can learn a lot from them!

We were lucky enough to see some relics associated with both St Clare and St Francis, including their vestments. This was the highlight of the trip for us as it is incredible to see possessions over 800 years









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Out&About

Good Friday pageant in Kerry



KERRY: Cast of Good Friday pageant in St John's Church with Fr Pat Ahern (founder), Brian Caball (director/co-ordinator) and Mike O'Shea (musical director).



LIMERICK: Candlelight lights up Glenstal Abbey, at the Easter Vigil Ceremony at the Abbey late on the Saturday night. Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan



LIMERICK: Bro. Anthony Keane, Forester at Glenstal Abbey, Murroe, stokes up the Easter fire ahead of the Easter Vigil at Glenstal Abbey. Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan

INSHORT

Newbridge parish celebrates 'faith tradition'

St Conleth's parish in Newbridge will be sharing stories of faith and hope during their Novena this year, as the parish prepares to celebrate St Conleth, marking 1,500 years since the anniversary of the death of the saint and patron of Newbridge parish.

The Novena, which has the theme 'St Conleth 1500: Sharing Stories of Faith and Hope', was opened by Kildare and Leighlin's Bishop Denis Nulty, on April 29.

Other speakers for this year's Novena include the Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, local sporting legend Johnny Murtagh and broadcaster Theresa Lowe.

This year's Novena will run for nine

consecutive Monday nights in St Conleth's Parish Church, Newbridge. Large crowds are expected to attend the annual Novena which is dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

This year's congregations will also hear from a number of other speakers including two local priests: Fr Seán Hyland and Fr Paul Lawlor OP.

Sr Catherine Moran, a Holy Family Sister based in Newbridge, will also be speaking about the faith contribution of the sisters to the life of the parish while Julieann Moran, National Secretary of the Society of Missionary Children, will also share her faith story. There will be a focus on young people too as part of the Novena with input from Michelle Ward of Tobar Nua.

Commenting on this year's Novena, Fr Paul Dempsey PP said: "Our annual Novena is a special part of the faith calendar of the parish each year. This year's Novena is taking place as we celebrate the 1,500th anniversary of the death of St Conleth. He is patron of our parish and indeed we are the only parish in the country named after him.

"In choosing the theme for this year's Novena we were mindful of the long faith tradition in our parish and while we are looking back at the history of St Conleth we have asked our speakers to share their stories and to be voices of hope in the present day to our local faith community."

He added: "I am always inspired by the hundreds of petitions that are shared with us over the course of the nine nights of the Novena. These petitions offer us a snapshot of the struggles that people have in their lives. They also offer us a necessary moment of pause in rushed and busy lives that remind us of our responsibility as the local faith community to reach out as Christians to those around us who are in need."

Wexford to host Fatima talks

Families, students and parish groups of Wexford are invited to an evening of film, shorts talks and music about the importance of the Fatima message for our times. Thomas and Solvita McCormack – The Call to Fatima team – will offer key insights about the famous event where the Virgin Mary appeared to the three children Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia in 1917. During the evening, the faithful will have the opportunity to ask Thomas questions and all are invited to be enrolled in the Brown Scapular by the priest.

The first presentation takes place at the Legion of Mary Hall, Robert Street, New Ross on May 1 at 8pm, and the second talk begins at 7.30pm in St Michael's Hall on Green Street.

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Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication

KERRY: Parishioners gather for Dawn Mass at Annagh cemetery Curraheen, Tralee. Photo: John Cleary



MEATH: Jackie Weldon leads a prayer for persecuted Christians during the Walk of Witness on Good Friday in Navan. (I-r) Fr Declan PHILIPPINES: Irish missionary Fr Shay Cullen Hurley, Jackie Weldon, Canon John Clarke and Joe Joyce (cross bearer)



washing feet during Easter ceremonies in Olongapo,



TIPPERARY: Teetotallers show their support at the National Pioneer Ball held in The Anner Hotel, Thurles, and organised by the Munster Pioneers. (I-r) Matt Boylan, National Pioneer President, organisers Willie Shanahan and Sorcha Uí Laoghaire, and Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, Kieran O'Reilly, SMA



TYRONE: John Paull II Award participants join Fr Daniel McFaul and Deacon Declan McGeehan at the Cappagh parish Sunrise Easter Mass at the summit of Mullaghcarn Mountain. The walk was also supported by neighbouring parishes



CARLOW

The 14th annual Solemn Novena will take place in St Clare's Church, Graiguecullen commencing on Monday, April 29, and will run for nine consecutive Monday nights until June 24.

CLARE

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

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

CORK

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

DERRY

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

DUBLIN

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

Mass to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Venerable Edel Quinn in St Saviour's Church. Dominick Street, Dublin 1 on May 11 at 6pm with Rosary prayer before Mass.

FERMANAGH

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

KERRY

Weekly prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, beginning on Monday, May 6, from 8-9.30pm in the Ardfert Retreat Centre.

KILDARE

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

May Masses and devotions at the Shrine at Our Lady of Clonfert Church, Daily Mass (Monday to Saturday) at 8pm with guest preacher and Mass at 12pm each Friday. Sunday Mass at 10am and 7pm each week of May. Full programme available at Clonfertdiocese.ie.

KILKENNY

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

Novena in honour of Our Lady of Fatima at Black Abbey. Daily at 10am and 7.30pm from May 5 May 13 and 3pm on Sundays Preacher: Fr Columba M Toman, OP Each session will begin with a contemplative recitation of the Rosary, followed by the celebration Mass. Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available before and after each Novena session

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

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

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

A Holy Hour with music and reflections to be held in St Mary's Church, James Street, Drogheda on Wednesday, May 8 at 8pm.

MAYO

Adoremus National Eucharistic & Marian Pilgrimage in Knock Shrine on June 14-15. Programme commences on Friday evening at 7.30pm and begins again on Saturday morning at 10.30 am. For more details, call 016625899 or text 0872478519.

MEATH

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

Adoration in St Patrick's Church, Stamullen after 10am Mass every Thursday until 5pm in St Mary's Church, and in St Mary's Church, Julianstown on Wednesdays from 9am and after 10am Mass.

ROSCOMMON

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

TIPPERARY

Three-hour vigil to honour the Feat of Our Lady of Fatima will be held in the Pallottine chapel, Thurles on Monday, May 13 from 7.30-10.30pm. Includes Eucharistic and Maria Hour, concluding with Mass.

WICKLOW

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

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

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IN BRIEF

Pope Francis appoints new Wisconsin bishop

 Pope Francis has named Bishop Donald Hying of Gary, Indiana, as the new bishop of Madison, Wisconsin. The appointment was announced on April 25 in Washington by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican nuncio to the United

Hying (55) is a native of Wisconsin. He was installed as the bishop of Gary on January 6, 2015. Before that, he had been an auxiliary hishon for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee since 2011

In Madison, he succeeds the late Bishop Bobert C Morlino. the diocese's fourth bishop, who died unexpectedly on November 24, 2018. The 71-year-old bishop was undergoing planned medical tests when he suffered what doctors described as "a cardiac event" at St Mary's Hospital in Madison and he

'Disappointment' after Catholic foster agencies hindered

 The US Court of Appeals for the third Circuit has ruled that the city of Philadelphia can bar Catholic Social Services of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia from placing children in foster care with any family because the Catholic agency upholds traditional marriage.

"This ruling is devastating to the hundreds of foster children who have been waiting for a family and to the dozens of parents working with Catholic Social Services who have been waiting to foster a child "said Lori Windham, senior counsel at Becket which is representing CCS and several foster parents who have sued the city.

"We're disappointed that the court decided to let the city place politics above the needs of kids and the rights of parents, but we will continue this fight," she added

Satanic group recognised as an official Church

 A satanic group has announced they have been granted recognition as a Church by the Internal Revenue Service

In a statement published last Thursday, the Massachusetts-based Satanic Temple said that they have received notice from the IRS and that the decision would grant the organisation equal legal footing with other religious

"This acknowledgement

will help make sure the of secular humanist beliefs.

Satanic Temple has the same access to public spaces as other religious organisations, affirm our standing in court when battling religious discrimination, and enable us to apply for faith-based government grants," the statement said. Despite its overtly demonic allegiance. the Satanic Temple was founded by professed atheists and articulates a set

Church condemns use of sexual violence as war weapon

The Holy See has denounced crimes of sexual violence in conflict against people of all ages, saying such egregious acts can never be weapons of war or considered its spoils

The Holy See also reiterated its stand that children conceived and born of sexual violence have the right to exist and be born, and that they be supported and loved instead of being stigmatised. He stressed that these children need attention and programmes to foster healing and full

Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the UN in New York, made the remarks during a UN Security Council open debate on 'Women, peace and security: Sexual Violence in Conflict'

Juba archbishop joyful after peaceful Easter celebrations

 The Archbishop of South Sudan's Juba has praised the country for celebrating peacefully during the Easter season. Archbishop Paulino Lukudu said: "I heard a lot of noise, big noise from people going out and others coming in, (to houses of worship) and singing. It looked like confusion. But then, I could see what was happening...they were looking for God, for Jesus Christ, for peace..

American prelates condemn 'senseless' synagogue attack

Catholic bishops from around the US were quick to condemn the April 27 attack on a Jewish community gathered at a synagogue near San Diego, which left one person dead and three others injured.

'Our country should be better than this; our world should be beyond such acts of hatred and anti-Semitism," said Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in an April 28 statement.

"This attack joins an all too long list of attacks against innocent people, people of all faiths, who only want to gather and to pray. It is a contradiction, a perverting of their teachings to believe that Christianity, Judaism, or Islam would condone such violence.'

Reports

News reports say members of the synagogue Chabad of Poway were gathered to mark the last day of Passover, a Jewish holiday celebrated for eight days, commemorating the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, when shots rang shortly before noon.



Flowers outside the Chabad of Poway synagogue mark the atrocity in San Diego.

One of them ended up fatally striking 60-year-old Lori Gilbert Kaye as well as injuring the rabbi and an 8-year-old girl, among others. Initial reports say the gunman's weapon then jammed and the assailant left, but not before being shot at by a security guard who was inside the house of worship.

Authorities later said John Earnest (19) was arrested and is suspected of the attack. So far, he has been charged with one count of murder and three counts of attempted murder.

San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy asked in a letter addressed to priests in the San Diego Diocese to pray at Sunday Masses on April 28 for the victims of the shooting.

"I know that you join in my profound sadness and outrage that violence born of hatred against people of faith has once again rent our nation, this time within our own diocese. I would ask you to include a prayer for the Jewish community and the Chabad victims in your petitions at Sunday Masses," he

Other messages expressing condolences by cardinals and bishops from around the country followed.

'For the second time in a week, we received news of an act of senseless violence against people at prayer. This time, the victims were our Iewish brothers and sisters. gathered to mark the deliverance of their people from bondage," said Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chi-

Sack Sri Lankan officials for failing to forward terrorist tips - cardinal

The Archbishop of Colombo says that government officials in Sri Lanka should be fired for failing to act on tips that terrorist attacks were imminent in the hours preceding Easter Sunday bombings in the country.

"It's absolutely unacceptable behaviour on the part of these high officials of the government, including some of the ministry officials," Cardinal Malcom Ranjith said in response to reports that Sri Lankan officials did not pass on credible warnings in the hours before the April 21 attacks, including some that specified that Catholic Church would be targeted.

Warnings reportedly came from the Indian government and from other intelligence sources, and said directly that churches could be targeted by Islamist terrorist attacks. Government officials have promised an inquiry into those reports. "These kinds of officials should be immediately sacked, removed from these positions. And human beings who have a feeling for the needs of others and for the people must be inserted into these positions," Cardinal Ranjith said.

The cardinal added that if he had been warned that Catholic churches could be bombed on Easter Sunday, he

would have cancelled Sunday Masses, "because, for me, the most important thing is human life. Human beings, they are our treasure"

"I would have cancelled even the holy week itself," Cardinal Ranjith told Radio

Thousands of Catholics attended Easter Sunday Masses at St Anthony's Shrine in Colombo and St Sebastian's Catholic Church in Negombo, both of which were bombed at 8.45am on Easter morning, as was the evangelical Zion Church in Batticaolo, on Sri Lanka's east

Catholic university backs porn block ban

The president of The Catholic University of America has voiced his support for a student government resolution that asked the university to block the 200 most popular porn sites from its internet system.

"I am so proud of our students," CUA president John Garvey wrote in an op-ed for the Arlington Catholic Herald on April 24.

"This month the student government association, the body that represents our undergraduates, passed a resolution asking the university to prohibit access through the campus network to the 200 most frequently visited pornography websites. I told them we'd be happy to." The non-binding resolution was passed by a vote of 13 to 12.

Libraries

Garvey noted that pornography has become more accessible than it once was; where in the past it could only be found in "leather-bound books in gentlemen's clubs and private libraries", today any six-year-old can find it on a cellphone".

In addition, pornography has become more graphic, and advances in technology not only make pornography more addictive, but also make it easier for people to slip into the mindset of: "We don't need one another for sexual fulfilment.

"We can summon imaginary partners at the touch of



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick colm@irishcatholic.ie

The caravan of desperation



Central American migrants, moving in a caravan through Juchitan, are pictured on April 27 on a train known as 'The Beast' during their journey toward the United States. Photo: CNS

Nigerian bishops appeal for release of female hostages

Several Catholic bishops have appealed to the Nigerian government to expedite actions that will lead to the release of Leah Sharibu and other girls held captive by Boko Haram insurgents.

In their Easter messages, the bishops also urged the government to end the incessant and wanton killings of fellow citizens in the country; no one has the right to kill another person, they added.

Bishop Hilary Okeke of Nnewi said there was a ray of hope regarding the fate of the abducted girls and that Nigeria's bishops "are not relenting" in their efforts to recover them from their captivity.

Leah, 15, was taken hostage with more than 100 girls in the town of Dapchi early last year, in the largest mass abduction since Boko Haram took 220 girls from the town of Chibok in 2014. When the others were freed a month later, she was the only one not released – reportedly because she refused to renounce her Christian faith. About 120 Chibok girls are still in captivity.

Message

The bishops' conference has formally involved Pope Francis, and the Vatican might have reached out to President Muhammadu Buhari on the issue, Bishop Okeke said.

In a separate message, Bishop Stephen Mamza of Yola condemned the unabated killings and violent crimes across the country. The president and security forces should be able to stop the attacks.

he said

"We are really in a dilemma," with Nigerians "feeling that we don't have protection", Bishop Mamza said.

"We have mass burials from time to time, and there is no sign that the government cares about what is happening," he added

Communal violence is widely attributed to a decades-old cycle of conflict between predominantly Christian farmers and Muslim semi-nomadic herders, partly due to competition for arable land.

Bishop Emmanuel Badejo of Oyo said the Nigerian government "should do everything possible to defend and protect Nigerian lives and seriously deal with all forms of extrajudicial killings".

Catholic leaders pray for victims of Philippines earthquake

Catholic leaders have offered prayers for the Philippines after two earthquakes struck the region last week.

A magnitude-6.1 earthquake hit the nation's largest and most populous island of Luzon on April 22. An unrelated magnitude-6.4 quake struck the island of Samar the following day.

Numerous buildings, including a few churches, were destroyed or damaged

by the earthquakes. The wall of a supermarket near the capital city of Manila collapsed on Monday, killing at least five people and burying others who have not yet been found. Electricity has been shut down in some areas to prevent fires.

Vatican News reported that the death toll had risen to at least 20 people, while hundreds more are injured or missing. According to the news website of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the Archdiocese of San Fernando has barred activity in 24 historical churches until they can be inspected for safety.

inspected for safety.

Cardinal Luis Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, encouraged churches to practice safety drills in the wake of the earthquakes

Archbishop Rolando Tirona

of Caceres also urged parishes and priests to revisit safety measures for all church buildings, including seminaries and convents.

"We must always ensure the safety of our churchgoers, and be pro-active in safeguarding our churches and the faithful against human violence and natural calamities," said Archbishop Tirona, according to CBCP News.



Be inspired by the saints of history, Pope urges

In back-to-back audiences with a group of French young people and an Italian association for deaf people, Pope Francis has cited personal example and witness as a vital piece in the Church's evangelisation mission.

Meeting with young people from the Diocese of Aire et Dax in southwestern France, the Pope encouraged them to remain united with Christ through the sacraments and the example of the saints so that they can spread the message that "God wants to give to the world through your lives".

The Pope told the young men and women their pilgrimage to Rome was an opportunity to reflect on the lives of the martyrs who remained faithful to Christ until the end.

The martyrs' example, he added, is important now more than ever "because many people today think it is more difficult to call themselves Christians and live their faith in Christ".

"The current context isn't easy, especially due to the painful and complex issue of abuse committed by members of the Church," the Pope said. "Still, I would like to tell you once again that it isn't more difficult than in other eras of the Church: It is only different."

Peruvian archbishop withdraws lawsuit against journalist

After a court ruled in his favour, Peruvian Archbishop Jose Eguren Anselmi of Piura has unexpectedly withdrawn his defamation suit against a journalist who accused him of knowing about abuses that occurred within an influential Catholic movement.

Winning the initial suit against Pedro Salinas, the archbishop said it "gave rise to a series of unjustified reactions, including within the Church", so for "a greater good, which is the unity of the mystical body of Christ", he was withdrawing his claim.

When the archbishop won his suit against Salinas, bishops in the country distanced themselves from the lawsuit and said the Church needs the help of journalists and survivors of clergy sex abuse to overcome the current crisis.

Salinas and fellow journalist Paola Ugaz co-authored a book titled Half Monks, Half Soldiers, which detailed the psychological and sexual abuse, as well as corporal punishment and extreme exercises that young members of Sodalitium Christianae Vitae endured.

Francis to visit Marian shrine on Romania papal trip

Visiting Romania from May 31–June 2, Pope Francis will stop at six destinations, including a popular Marian shrine in Transylvania. He also will beatify seven bishop-martyrs of the Eastern-rite Romanian Catholic Church, who died during a fierce anti-religious campaign waged under the communist regime. His visit to the predominately Orthodox country will be his 30th foreign trip after visiting Bulgaria and North Macedonia in early May.

The trip will include visits to the Romanian Orthodox and Roman Catholic cathedrals, celebration of a Latin-rite Mass and an Eastern-rite Divine Liturgy, as well as separate meetings with political leaders, young people and families as well as members of the Roma community.

He will visit the capital, Bucharest, the cities of Bacau, lasi, Sibiu, Blaj and the Marian shrine in Sumuleu Ciuc, an important place of pilgrimage for Hungarian Catholics, especially on Pentecost, which is June 9.

The overwhelming majority – almost 82% – of Romania's 20 million inhabitants say they belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church led by Patriarch Daniel. About 6% of the population identifies itself as Protestant and around 4% as Catholic.

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World Report

Chilean bishop denies Easter **Eucharist to Faithful kneeling**

from the centre of the action in Rome, Bishop Celestino Aos, the temporary head of the embattled Archdiocese of Santiago, Chile, has a tough job. He's replacing a cardinal being investigated for coverup of clerical sexual abuse, whose predecessor is also being questioned by local prosecutors.

During the Easter season, Bishop Aos might have made his own job even harder when on Holy Thursday during the Chrism Mass he was filmed denying Communion to at least two faithful who were kneeling down.

The Chrism Mass is one of the most solemn liturgies of the year, and is often the largest annual gathering of clergy and faithful held in most dioceses. Among other things, it's during this liturgy that the oils that will be used for various Sacraments throughout the year are blessed.

The entrance procession included Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati, who's being investigated by civil authorities for cover-up and who's been named in a complaint for failing to report a rape of an adult



man that allegedly took place in Santiago's cathedral. This led to several priests walking out of the service.

Bishop Aos's decision last month to deny Communion to some of the Faithful and to allow Cardinal Ezzati to participate in the procession at the beginning of the Chrism Mass enraged many in Chile.

The Roman Missal, the official set of norms for celebration of the Mass, establishes that Catholics who receive Holy Communion can do so either standing or kneeling. The Vatican-approved Missal for Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay clearly states that both options are possible, unless a bishops' conference decrees differently, something the Chilean conference hasn't done.

As a matter of fact, the Chilean guidelines advise that faithful who don't kneel make another sign of reverence before receiving Communion.

The English version of the Missal adapted for the IIS states that the norm for reception of Communion in the US is standing, but no one should be denied the Sacrament because they kneel.

'Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally, by providing the faithful with proper catechesis on the reasons for this norm," the American guidelines state.

Pope Francis has said that both options are valid, according to "the ecclesial practice".

Devotion

Speaking at a general audience on a Wednesday last year reflecting on the Mass, the Argentine Pontiff said: "The Faithful approach the Eucharist normally in a processional form, as we have said, and, standing with devotion or kneeling, as established by the Episcopal Conference, receive the Sacrament in the mouth or, where permitted, in the hand, as preferred."

Both Cardinal Ezzati and his predecessor, Cardinal Francisco Javier Errazuriz were once powerful and influential within the Chilean Church, with Errazuriz. 85, even being a member of the Pope's council of cardinals that advises him on the reform of the Catholic Church's government.

Today, Chilean lawmakers are trying to take Cardinal Ezzati's Chilean citizenship away. Born in Italy, in 2006 Chile granted him citizenship as a recognition for the "fruitful and valuable work" he'd done in the country.

Bishop Aos, a member of the Capuchin order, was tapped by Francis to be the apostolic administrator of Santiago on March 23.

Since taking office, he has reached out to clerical abuse survivors as well as to a group of priests who suffered the sexual abuses and the abuses of power of former priests Fernando Karadima, Chile's most infamous paedophile

Regarding Cardinal Ezzati's participation in the Mass, Bishop Aos told Chilean journalists that "the Mass is always a liturgical act, a reunion in front of the altar of the Lord and we're there to celebrate what the Lord sent us to celebrate, and he sent all of us, and we all begin the Eucharist saying 'I have sin in one way or the other'."

Faith reminds us to trust God in face of worries, priest says

While recent policy changes in the US have left the people of Cuba facing increasing uncertainty, the message of the Catholic Church is always that security is ultimately found in Christ, said a priest from the island nation.

"This is the task of the Church: to say that salvation is found only is Jesus, who gives concrete, precise answers to the person seeking the truth," said Fr Yosvany Carvajal, pastor of the Cathedral of the Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Havana and director of the Fr Felix Varela Cultural

"Ideologies don't save people, ideologies are ideas. They are a body of ideas that exist in various political systems; but man's definitive salvation is found only in that true man and true God who has come to speak to us of an everlasting love that saves, the priest told Vatican News last month.

He highlighted the participation of the faithful in the Holy Week celebrations, saying that although the Church in Cuba is poor, it is "a living Church" with hope in "the Risen One who has conquered death, sin and evil"

Religious celebrations were publicly banned in Cuba after the triumph of Fidel Castro's revolution. However, Christmas became a holiday beginning in 1997, as a concession to the request by St John Paul II before his visit in January 1998.

Celebration

Likewise, during his visit to Cuba in March 2012. Benedict XVI made the same request for Good Friday. The communist government allowed its celebration as an exception in 2012 and 2013. and made it an official holiday beginning in 2014.

Fr Carvajal said the faith of the Cuban people can be seen particularly clearly during Holy

"Signs of Christianity are seen everywhere, and also popular religiosity. You can see that all this is alive, present in the people,' the priest said. He pointed to the high participation in Good Friday services as a sign that the people desire to be close to Christ in his Church.

The Cuban priest also said the Church in the country "is a Church that accompanies the people.



which is suffering, especially these days due to the embargo policy".

Last month, the Trump administration announced new penalties and tighter sanctions on Cuba. Among the new policies is the activation of a previously unused provision allowing US

citizens to sue foreign companies that operate on property confiscated by the government following the Castro revolution.

As a result of this, Fr Carvajal said, "the population is going through hard times because they don't know what is going to

The economic situation is not easy, but the Cuban people are a joyful people," he said, and they never lose "the sense of the joy of

Signs of Christianity are seen everywhere, and also popular religiosity. You can see that all this is alive. present in the people"

He recalled the visits that Popes St John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis made to Cuba, which "helped greatly the Church to not be afraid".

"The people now find themselves in this difficult situation following the measures announced by the US Government. There is concern," he noted. "But with the message of the Gospel we must always announce the joy and hope of the definitive triumph of Christ. We must always continue on this path of announcing reconciliation and dialogue as the only possible way of seeking the true good."

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Baltimore Archbishop William Lori looks on as Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Adam Parker answers questions from the local media about the Church's abuse crisis. Photo: CNS

US archdiocese releases more names of credibly accused abuse priests

he Archdiocese of Baltimore has published an additional 23 names of priests who had been accused of child sexual abuse after they were deceased.

All of the allegations have been previously reported to law enforcement, in most cases more than a decade ago. Released on April 24, the 23 additional names join 103 other clergy and religious brothers whose names had already been published by the archdiocese.

In 2002, the Archdiocese of Baltimore was one of the first in the country to publish names of those credibly accused of child sexual abuse. At that time, 57 men were named. Other names have been added in the intervening years as allegations became known. More were added in 2018 after a Pennsylvania grand jury report detailed allegations that included some priests who had served in Maryland or cases where the alleged abuse occurred within the boundaries of the archdiocese.

Harassment

"Here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, there is absolutely zero tolerance for any bishop, priest, lay employee or volunteer credibly accused of the sexual abuse of a minor or the sexual harassment of an adult," said Baltimore Archbishop William Lori in a news release accompanying the publication of the names.

"My decision, in consultation with our Independent Review Board, to add these additional 23 names is the result of a further review of deceased members of the clergy who were accused after their deaths and who were previously reported to law enforcement. We are confident that we've implemented rigorous standards of accountability and transparency and we will continue applying those standards," he said.

Auxiliary Bishop Adam Parker, who serves on the archdiocesan Child Protection Team with five other members of the staff, noted that the archdiocese began looking at the criteria for inclusion on the list last summer at the urging of the Independent Review Board and the encouragement of Archbishop Lori.

We're trying to be as transparent as we can about what we know with regard to child sexual abuse cases"

In every case, the allegations had been reported to law enforcement. "The report to law enforcement is to be made at the time that the allegation is made known to us. We now do that immediately. Publishing the names – in the cases of these 23 additional priests – this is coming much, much later after we received the allegations themselves" in some cases. he said.

The most recent alleged incidents related to these newly published names are from more than 30 years ago,

in the 1980s, according to Sean Caine, vice chancellor for the archdiocese. A large majority of the allegations occurred more than 50 years ago. The earliest is from more than 80 years ago, in the 1930s.

One of the newly released names is Bishop Carl Fisher, a Josephite priest who was ordained in 1973, and became an auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles in 1987. He died in 1993. "Multiple individuals have accused Fr Carl Fisher of sexual abuse that occurred in the 1970s in Baltimore," the archdiocese said on the list.

"Our main motivation was increased transparency," Bishop Parker said. "We're trying to be as transparent as we can about what we know with regard to child sexual abuse cases." He said it was important to have a "reasonable threshold" to add the names of deceased clergy to the list, since the accused person cannot defend himself.

The Independent Review Board recommended that an accused person's name not be added to the list if the allegation of child sexual abuse could not be substantiated or was ruled out, or where the allegation was from a third party and the archdiocese could not speak with the alleged victim.

Bishop Parker said the review board gave the archdiocese a mandate to publish additional names, but also said that because of the difficulty in assessing credibility on decades-old incidents, the threshold for publishing a name should be high.

Sri Lankan Easter bombings linked to ISIS, Australian PM confirms

Australia's prime minister has said that the Sri Lankan militant group blamed for the Easter bombings that killed at least 250 people had support from the Islamic State group, a day after Sri Lankan officials said they were still evaluating foreign ties

Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters last Friday that he could confirm links between a local Sri Lankan organisation and "support being provided including the targets of these attacks" by the Islamic State group network, citing overnight briefings. He said Australian police were involved in the investigation.

In the capital Colombo, there was a visible increase of security overnight as authorities warned of another attack and pursued at least five suspects that could have access to explosives.

No security

Armed soldiers surrounded St Anthony's Shrine, one of the three churches struck on Sunday, and nearby shops were closed.

Gration Fernando crossed himself when he looked at the church after walking out of his shop there. Fernando says he, like other Sri Lankans, was worried about further attacks.

There is "no security, no safety to go to church", he said, adding that "now children are scared to go to church" as well.

Authorities told Muslims

to pray at home rather than attend communal Friday prayers that are the most important of the week.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he feared that some of the suspects "may go out for a suicide attack" in an interview on April 25 with the Associated Press.

Afterward, in an unusually specific warning, the US Embassy in Sri Lanka said places of worship could be hit by extremists over the weekend. The UK's foreign ministry advised its citizens not to travel to the island nation off the tip of India.

Everyone is nervous...not just the Muslims. Buddhists, Christians, Hindus – everybody"

Late on April 25, Sri Lanka's health ministry drastically revised down its estimated death toll from the coordinated attacks on churches and luxury hotels in and around Colombo. A statement said "approximately" 253 people had died, nearly one-third lower than the police's estimated death toll of 359.

The discrepancy was not immediately explained, but it fit a pattern of claims and counterclaims by Sri Lankan officials that have muddled the investigation.

In a predominantly Muslim area of Colombo's Maligawatta neighbourhood, vegetable sellers laid their produce on the sidewalks near the mosques as women in long black chador shopped.

Leaders at the neighbour-hood mosques said they planned still to hold Friday afternoon prayers. They said both the police and volunteers would be guarding the neighbourhood to protect the faithful.

Imtiyas Ahamed, one prayer leader, said he planned to preach about how extremists like the Islamic State group were not faithful Muslims.

"In Islam, it is not said to kill yourself and kill others," Ahamed said.

As he spoke, men one at a time came into the mosque in the shadow of a cricket stadium to pray. They sat on their knees and bowed toward Mecca, the sweat from their brows falling on the mosque's purple-and-grey carpet.

Abdullah Mohammed, 48, another Muslim from the neighbourhood, stood outside.

"Everyone is nervous," Mohammed said. "Not just the Muslims. Buddhists, Christians, Hindus – everybody's nervous."

Ahamed also urged people not to think all of Sri Lanka's Muslims were like the people who carried out Sunday's attacks.

"After the New Zealand attack, we don't think every white Australian is an extremist," he said.



People pray during an April 24, candlelight vigil in Islamabad, Pakistan, in solidarity with the victims of Sri Lanka's Easter suicide bomb attacks. Photo: CNS 26 | International analysis |

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Letter from Rome



Inés San Martín

new 'super dicastery' on evangelisation might be one of the most significant reforms of the governing structures of the Vatican, according to a new report.

Spanish journalist Dario Menor Torres, writing for the weekly *Vida Nueva*, reveals several elements of the new Vatican constitution that has been in development for years.

The biggest novelty in the document, called *Praedicate Evangelium* (Preach the Gospel), will be the creation of the 'super dicastery' for evangelisation, which will potentially be more important than the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), often called the Supreme Congregation.

Having its roots in the Roman Inquisition, the doctrinal office is the oldest among the congregations of the Roman Curia, and insiders still call it the Holy Office, as it's tasked with promulgating and defending Catholic doctrine and defending the Church from heresy.

Today, in addition to defending doctrine, it is also tasked with judging priests who've been accused of sexually abusing minors, with 17 officials dedicated almost exclusively to this task.

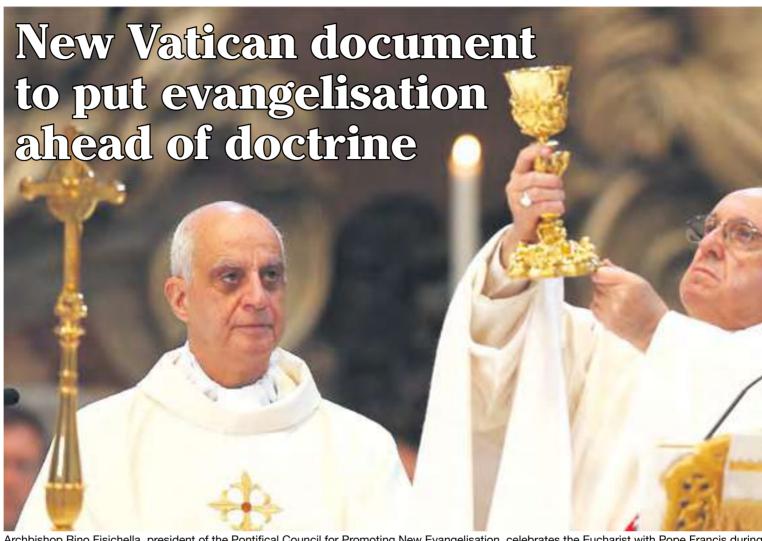
Another of the novelties in the new constitution is that the curia will no longer be divided into 'congregation' and the less prestigious 'pontifical councils'; instead all autonomous Vatican departments will be called 'dicasteries', which has already been applied to several new bodies established by Pope Francis.

The new 'super dicastery' for evangelisation will result from the merging of two already existing bodies: the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, also known as *Propaganda Fidei*, that is tasked with overseeing "missionary territories"; and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation, that was created in 2010 by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to confront the rapid secularisation of Western

Intervews

Menor's report is based on interviews he conducted with Indian Cardinal Oswald Gracias and Honduran Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, both members of the Pope's Council of Cardinal Advisers, which was established at the beginning of Francis's pontificate to help reform the curia.

"Pope Francis always underlines that the Church is missionary," Maradiaga told *Vida Nueva*. "For this reason, it's logical that we put



Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation, celebrates the Eucharist with Pope Francis during a Mass in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican last year. Photo: CNS

in the first place the dicastery for Evangelisation and not the one for the Doctrine of the Faith."

"This way, the Pope sends a significant signal of the reform to the entire People of God," the cardinal said. "The main point of the new Apostolic Constitution is that the mission of the Church is evangelisation. It puts it at the centre of the Church and everything the curia does. It will be the first dicastery. The name of the text shows that evangelisation is the principal objective, ahead of anything else."

The main point of the new Apostolic Constitution is that the mission of the Church is evangelisation. It puts it at the center of the Church"

According to the report from *Vida Nueva*, Francis could sign the new constitution on June 29, the Solemnity of Peter and Paul. The draft of *Praedicate Evangelium* was sent to the world's bishops' conferences, heads of the Vatican's dicasteries and other

Church officials to review the document and send suggestions by the end of May.

The plan is to compile all the suggestions, make the necessary modifications and for the Council of Cardinals Advisers to review it again during their June 25-27 meeting.

Beyond the mega-Dicastery for Evangelisation, the constitution reportedly also stipulates the creation of a Dicastery for Charity and the merger of the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for Culture.

In addition, the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, created by Francis to assist him in formulating measures the global Church can make to prevent and combat clerical sexual abuse, will become a part of the curial structure to make it 'more effective'.

Menor writes that *Praedicate Evangelium* places the curia at the service of both the Pope and the college of bishops.

"As successors of the apostles, the bishops don't have an ecclesiological position that puts them below those who work in the Roman Curia," Cardinal Maradiaga said. Hence, once the constitution is approved, a bishop from any diocese, no matter how small, will have the same hierarchical power as the prefect of a Vatican dicastery.

Once the text is approved – which will be on a 25-year trial period – the Vatican dicasteries will no longer be instruments for the Pope to supervise local churches, but will actually be there to serve bishops from around the world. They will no longer be a 'body' in between the Pontiff and the college of bishops, but an institution that serves both.

The plan is to compile all the suggestions, make the necessary modifications and for the Council of Cardinals Advisers to review it again"

The new dicastery for charity, that will absorb what today is known as the Office of the Papal Almoner, will come right after the Secretary of State and the Dicastery for Evangelisation, as a reminder that charity is also a key element of the Catholic faith. This office will 'feed' from the donations the

Pope receives and also by tapping into the Vatican's central bank, the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, or APSA. (A separate institution, the Institute for the Works of Religion, is often called the Vatican bank, but mostly serves religious orders and institutions.)

All these reforms are a continuation of changes already implemented, like the merging of the Vatican's media offices into the Dicastery for Communications; and the merger of most of the pontifical councils into two mega-structures: the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life and the Dicastery for Integral Human Development.

According to Cardinal Maradiaga, *Praedicate Evangelium* can give back to the faithful the hope that Francis's pontificate had generated at its

"It offers to the people of God a new and brave perspective of reform in the spirt of Francis," he said, adding that the constitution takes a lot from the Argentine Pontiff's first major texts, such as Evangelii Gaudium, Laudato Si' and Amoris Laetitia.

"I'm personally satisfied with the result," Cardinal Gracias told *Vida Nueva*. "It won't only be a cosmetic change but it will be the impetus for a change of mentality that is already underway."

Inés San Martín is Rome Bureau Chief at Cruxnow.com

66 As successors of the apostles, the bishops don't have an ecclesiological position that puts them below those who work in the Roman curia"

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Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo, Sri Lanka, looks at the explosion site inside a church in Negombo on April 21, following a string of suicide bomb attacks on churches and luxury hotels across the island. Photo: CNS



Elise Harris

n the aftermath of the gruesome and tragic bombings in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, much of the immediate response from the Catholic community has been raising funds to rebuild the churches and properties that were destroyed.

Yet for Cardinal Malcom Ranjith of Colombo, where last Sunday's attacks took place, his focus is not so much on rebuilding churches but lives.

Speaking of the many people who lost loved ones, or, in some cases, their whole families, Cdl. Ranjith said: "We have to help these people by a series of counselling programmes, because some of them are shattered."

Though many who suffered loss are surrounded by family and friends offering their support, eventually they will leave, Cdl. Ranjith said, and survivors "will be left alone to face the reality of loneliness, so we have to help them through programmes of counselling".

He also said the Church will

Sri Lankan cardinal's focus isn't rebuilding churches but lives

also need to offer other forms of assistance.

In many cases, children have been orphaned, wives and mothers are widowed and childless with no breadwinner, and many suffered injuries requiring lengthy and expensive medical treatment, so "there are certain things that we need to help them with", Cdl. Ranjith said, including financial support and education.

Tourist areas

Early Easter morning, a total of three churches and three hotels were bombed in Colombo, killing some 253 people and wounding close to 500 others.

Two of the churches hit were St Anthony's Shrine in Colombo and St Sebastian's Church in Negombo, a Catholic majority town north of Colombo. The churches and hotels are in popular tourist areas. An ISIS splinter group has claimed responsibility for the attacks which caused the most devastation in the Several international charity organisations and even foreign governments have responded, pledging financial support as Catholics on the ground seek to pick up the pieces.

Fr Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka, posted a tweet asking for spiritual and financial assistance, saying: "We seek your prayers and support at this difficult time in our country."

The UK branch of the international pontifical charity organisation Aid to the Church in Need launched an emergency appeal to support the Christian community in Sri Lanka, and the Knights of Columbus have donated \$100,000 (€90,000) to rebuilding efforts.

The Hungarian government through their 'Hungary Helps' humanitarian assistance programme for persecuted Christians has also pledged their support, offering \$31,000 (€29,000) in relief funds for wounded and orphaned children.

In an April 22 tweet, the day after the attacks, Hungary's Secretary of State Tristan Azbej announced that he had spoken to Cardinal Ranjith over the phone to discuss further donations. However, no other assistance has yet been announced.

Suddenly this happened, making life so miserable for so many people"

Cardinal Ranjith said that "everybody is shattered" by the attacks, because they happened "so suddenly and out of the blue without any information whatsoever, and therefore many people were killed who were caught unaware".

"They went for Sunday Mass, Easter Sunday, and they got blown to bits...the whole nation is suffering," he said.

The prelate, who visited the churches after the attacks and who

presided over several funerals of victims, said he has found it difficult to console people.

"It is not an easy thing to comfort people who have lost their loved ones in large numbers," he said, noting that last Thursday morning he presided over the funeral of a husband and wife whose children are now orphaned.

Earlier last week he presided over the funeral of a man and his two children, and whose wife is now alone with "no one to look after her". Prior to that, he buried a mother and her three children whose husband is now alone.

"Terrible' is not the word,"
Cardinal Ranjith said, explaining
that he tries to attend as many
funerals as he can, but "they are so
numerous" that he can't go to all of
them and depends on his auxiliary
bishops and priests.

Terrorism

Asked if he believes the attacks will spark greater religious tensions in Sri Lanka, he said the bombings were not a matter of religion but "a question of terrorism, that's all".

"People who do these things are not people who believe in religion. If they believed in religion, they would not lay their hands on one single person."

Sri Lanka is a majority Buddhist nation, comprising some 70% of the country's population of 21 million, while 13% are Hindus and 10% Christians.

Cardinal Ranjith said people were surprised that extremists would attack Sri Lanka, insisting "we had no reason to be attacked".

"We didn't do any harm to ISIS, we didn't go and fight them, so why they did this to our innocent people?" he said. "We cannot understand why they did these horrible things to innocent people who never raised a gun or anything against them."

In the wake of the attacks, many people are pushing for a full inquiry into who's responsible and their possible motivations, as well as the government's handling of the issue since some officials had been warned by India at the beginning of April of a planned attack.

"We were kept in the dark about this, and suddenly this happened, making life so miserable for so many people," Cardinal Ranjith said, adding that "it is really something unethical and unacceptable".

However, while he will continue to press the government for answers, Cardinal Ranjith's priority is to be there for his people. Where words fall short, gestures are the only comfort he's able to give.

"I like to be with them, I like to console them, I like to caress them, I like to be a person who gives them strength," he said, saying his message is to not give up but to keep going forward "in spite of the serious crisis".

Cardial Ranjith said he tries to encourage children who lost their parents to "carry on, sowing their parents' good name by doing what they have to do as good Christians. I want them to take it up courageously and move forward with their lives".

• Elise Harris is Senior Correspondent at Cruxnow.com 28 | Opinion The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019



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

Letter of the week

Questions about burial need answers

Dear Editor, David Quinn's article on the latest Tuam interim report ('How we buried our poor' [IC 25/4/2019]) was genuinely eye-opening, providing vital context for thinking about ongoing reportage on Mother and Baby Homes.

Lies and presumptions about Tuam have been around the world countless times at this stage, but it looks as if the truth is finally starting to get its boots on: not even one body has been found in a septic tank at Tuam, and Galway County Council - elected by ordinary Irish men and women – must have been aware of deaths and the disposal of remains in Tuam.

Mother and Baby Homes were, after that 'if' are all-important, because all, mandated by the State, owned by the State, funded by the State, regulated by the State, and supposedly supervised by the State.

They were paid for with taxes paid by ordinary Irish people, and were ultimately the responsibility of bodies elected by ordinary Irish people. Perhaps they – like laundries and industrial schools – were ghastly places, but if so, they were ghastly places that Irish people wanted, and if religious sisters ran them badly or harshly, this was something that Irish people at large were content with. And yet, that 'perhaps' and

one alarming feature of so much commentary on these institutions is a disgraceful absence of any serious attempt at informed context. Why is there no commentary on, for instance, burial customs at the time in wider Irish society?

As Mr Quinn says, the reports invite real questions on how the poor were buried in decades past, and how children in general were buried in decades past. These questions need answering.

Yours etc., Gabriel Kelly, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Remembering where Christ is most present

Dear Editor, Fr John Harris's words of praise for Fr Jean-Marc Fournier's actions in rescuing the Blessed Sacrament from the flames of Notre-Dame de Paris (IC 25/4/2019)were a powerful reminder of just how central the Eucharist should be for Catholics.

Too often we can forget this, as we see in the lackadaisical way so many of us can slouch up to receive Communion at Mass, and even – somewhat paradoxically - talk of how Ireland

could face a 'Eucharistic famine' points to this.

After all, when priests lament such a prospect without similarly lamenting the lack of time they need to spend in confessional boxes, they suggest that it's fine to receive the Blessed Sacrament without being in a state of grace. So too does grumbling about a lack of vocations without working hard in realistic ways to promote priestly vocations on the ground suggest that there's no real interest in

calling more men to the way of life Christ instituted so we can share in his Body.

I've even once heard a priest dismissing the importance of Eucharistic Adoration and the Tabernacle, saying that, yes, Jesus is there, but so too he's in the Word of God, and the congregation, and the priest himself, and the very air we breathe. He is, of course, but as was clearly stated in the Second Vatican Council, he is above all present in the Blessed Sacrament, the

source and summit of Christian life.

Fr Harris's actions in Drogheda back in 1994, just like Fr Fournier's actions in Paris, are eloquent testimonies to this. If there's to be a silver lining to the smoke clouds over Notre-Dame, it may be the powerful reminder of how Christ is among us in the Eucharist, and how this should inform our lives.

> Yours etc.. Caroline Murphy, Douglas, Cork.



Headline not surprising

Dear Editor, Your headline of April 25 comes as no surprise, since the 2018 biography Leo: Veo Varadkar, a Verv Modern Taoiseach. by Phillip Ryan and Niall O Connor, recalls that he was totally indifferent to Catholicism as a belief system and showed more sympathy towards his father's Hinduism. Yours etc...

Fr John McCallion, Clonoe, Co. Tyrone.

Vote for...who?

Dear Editor. As the local elections date of May 24 approaches rapidly, now is the time to check out your local candidates carefully.

In the past we have handed over power to people who have not shared our values and principles, hence we now have a country which we barely recognise.

I believe that our hierarchy and clergy have a duty to encourage their communities to vote responsibly and strategically.

This may be our last chance to turn the tide and fight back the anti-Christian movement in this Country.

Yours etc., Anne McGrath, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

Our missionaries, on the ground, know the truth much valuable work has been done and all over the world. They've been the

Dear Editor, Thank you so much for Chai Brady's article about Fr Tom Iordan's reaction to attempts by some in Ireland to play down the extent to which Venezuela is suffering under the Maduro regime (IC 25/4/2019).

Clare Daly's claims about ordinary people in the South American country being guaranteed food essentials every month are baffling, given how they run utterly contrary to what Irish missionaries such as Fr Jordan who have worked for decades on the ground in Venezuela have attested to.

Indeed, Ms Daly's claims about the legitimacy of the political processes underpinning the Maduro regime beggar belief, while her blaming the country's instability on US sanctions sounds like the laziest of 1980s clichés. It's hard to see where she would get such ideas from, especially when Irish eyewitnesses with many, many years of experience helping the poorest of the poor in Venezuela say very different things.

It's worth remembering too that this story is an important reminder of how

is still being done by Irish missionaries hands of Christ everywhere for at least as long as anyone living can remember, and they've been the eyes and ears of Ireland in the wider world for all that

It's a shame that today's politicians are oblivious to this.

> Yours etc.. Michael Byrne, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

acebook community

from The Irish Catholic Facebook page

Experts confident that Cathedral of Notre Dame will rise again

The problem is what will rise. I see one firm of Belgium architects proposing a jet black spire as a symbol of whoknows-what (a counterpoint to light/symbol of unbelief?) I would suggest something which would send a beacon of light soaring upwards. - Peter O'Reilly

The Faith is dead, why bother? What is it being done for? Nostalgia? - John McGirr

Obstacles to Church renewal must be overcome - bishop

Please let them be shepherds of souls not social workers. Educate their people in the truth. - Eilin Glynn

I am concerned about laity. Those who want to be actively involved in parishes would gain for themselves. It could lead to abuse of power. I have had bad experience with feminist pastoral workers. It will not strengthen faith.

- Niall McCormack

Not only must priests get used to inclusive ministry, but let me say bishops must change too to a more inclusive ministry with their priests and journey alongside with the people of their dioceses! - Vinny Connaughton

Why the silence, Leo?

Totally disgusted at this Govt. I and my Irish soul are deeply saddened and sympathies to all the Sri Lanka people on this dreadful murder of innocents. - Marie Mouslev

Clearly for some, Christian lives don't matter. -Peter O'Reilly

It wasn't just Leo. All the Irish political leaders followed suit. Michael D. offered condolences but even that was lame. -**Noel Kelly**

Basically he's a politician, first and last – sits on the fence in the meantime! Like most politicians! - Seán Conway

Shame on our Taoiseach and on those in power who remain silent in the face of such violence and destruction. Indeed RTÉ did not strain itself either. – **James Murray**

Fitting available evidence to the charge

As a matter of interest why do most Irish journalists, politicians and academics roughly have the same views on every subject. Surely a healthy society is one where a diversity of opinions is encouraged. - Brian Thornton

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

The Irish Catholic, May 2, 2019

The week in pictures | 29

Around the world





▲ MEXICO: A migrant from Honduras carries a child in Escuintla last month, as they join part of a caravan of Central American migrants on their journey toward the US. ◀ GREECE: Riot police stand during clashes with migrants and refugees outside a camp in Diavata last month. The migrants and refugees had hoped to cross into North Macedonia, a country Pope Francis will visit on May 7. Photos:



SRI LANKA: A clergyman prays over the casket of 13-year-old Dhami Brindya during her burial in Negombo, Sri Lanka, on April 25, four days after a string of suicide bomb attacks on churches and luxury hotels across the island.



PHILIPPINES: A damaged statue is seen amid debris outside Santa Catalina de Alejandria Church on April 22 following a magnitude 6.1 earthquake in Porac. The Archdiocese of San Fernando announced that all heritage churches were closed to the public after the quake. A second quake hit central Philippines the following day.



VATICAN: Pope Francis greets a child during a meeting with members of the Italian Federation of Associations for the Deaf at the Vatican, on April 25.



USA: Will Beck, a survivor of the attack at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, cries with his family last month marking the 20th anniversary of the school shooting.

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Practising mysticism

"m a practicing mystic!" A woman said that in one of my classes some years ago and it raised lots of eyebrows. I was teaching a class in mysticism and asked the students why the topic of mysticism interested them.

Their responses varied: some were simply intrigued with the concept; others were spiritual directors who wanted more insight into what constitutes mystical experience; and a number of others were taking the course because their faculty advisor asked them to. But one woman answered: "Because I'm a practicing mystic!"

Can someone be a practicing mystic? Yes, providing both terms, practicing and mystic, are understood properly.

What does it mean to be a mystic? In the popular mind, mysticism is most often associated with extraordinary and paranormal religious experience, namely, visions, revelations, apparitions, and the like. Sometimes in fact this is the case, as is true of some great mystics like Julian of Norwich and Theresa of Avila, but these are exceptions. That's not the norm. Normally mystical experience is ordinary; no visions, no apparitions, no ecstasies, just everyday experience - but with a difference.

Imagination

Ruth Burrows, the renowned British Carmelite, defines mysticism this way: mystical experience is being touched by God at a level deeper than words, thought, imagination and feeling. We have a mystical experience when we know ourselves and our world with clarity, even if just for a second.

That can involve something extraordinary, like a vision or apparition, but normally it doesn't. Normally a mystical experience is not a moment where an angel or some spirit appears to you or something paranormal happens to you.

A mystical moment is extraordinary, but extraordinary because of its unique lucidity and clarity, extraordinary because for that moment we are extraordinarily centred, and extraordinary because in that moment we sense, beyond words and imagination, in some dark, unconscious and inchoate way, what mystics call the indelible memory of God's kiss on our soul, the primordial memory of once having experienced perfect love inside God's womb before birth.

A mystic is someone who can give meaningful expression to mystical experience"

Bernard Lonergan, using a different terminology, calls this the brand of the first principles on our soul, that is, the innate imprint of the transcendental properties of God, Oneness, Truth, Goodness and Beauty, inside

We have a mystical experience when we are in touch with that part of our soul that was once touched by God, before we were born, that part of our soul that still bears, however unconsciously, the memory

of that touch. Henri Nouwen calls this a dark memory of "first love", of once having been caressed by far gentler hands than we have ever met in this life.

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Fr Rolheiser

We all have experiences of this to some degree. We all have mystical experiences, though we aren't all mystics. What's the difference between having a mystical experience and being a mystic? It's the difference between having aesthetic experiences and being an artist.

All of us have deep aesthetic experiences and are at times deeply moved in our souls by beauty, but only a few persons become great artists, great composers and great musicians, not necessarily because they have deeper experiences than the rest of us, but because they can give exceptional aesthetic expression to their experience. Aesthetic expression is always according to more or less. Hence anyone can become a practicing artist, even if not a professional one.

The same holds true for mysticism. A mystic is someone who can give meaningful expression to mystical experience, just as an artist is someone who can give proper expression to aesthetic experience. You can be a practicing mystic, akin to a practicing artist or practicing musician. Like a struggling artist, you can struggle to give meaningful, conscious expression to the deep movements vou sense within your soul and, like an amateur artist, you will not be the Rembrandt or Picasso of the spiritual life, but your efforts can be immensely helpful to you in clarifying the movements within your own soul and psyche.

How, concretely, practically, might you practice being a mystic? By doing anything that helps you to more consciously get in touch with the deep movements of your soul and by doing things that help you steady and centre your soul.

All of us have deep aesthetic experiences and are at times deeply moved in our souls by beauty"

For example, in striving to get in touch with your soul you can be a practicing mystic by journaling, doing spiritual reading, taking spiritual direction, doing various spiritual exercises such as the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, and by prayer of any kind.

In terms of centring and steadying your soul you can be a practicing mystic by more consciously and more deliberately giving yourself over to the biblical practice of Sabbath and by doing other soul-centring things like gardening, taking long walks, listening to good music, sharing wine and conversation with family and friends, making love with your spouse, holding a baby, visiting a person who is ill or even just taking up a hobby that healthily breaks the obsession of your daily

There are ways of being a practicing mystic, even without taking a formal class on mysticism.



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

Do Catholics believe in evolution?

It's almost taken as a given today that the origins of humankind can be explained through the theory of evolution: the process by which different kinds of living organisms are believed to have developed from earlier forms.

There's a common assumption today that Catholics don't believe in evolution, and instead adopt a young earth creationist perspective which holds that earth and all of its lifeforms were created a few thousand years ago. While the Church makes no official pronouncements on matters of science, since the 1950s, it has formally been more open to evolutionary theory.

Pope Pius XII's encyclical Humani Generis (1950), for example, allows for the possibility of human evolution from previous biological forms.

However, there is an important caveat to this admission, which is that the Church insists on the special creation of the soul.

"The Teaching Authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions, on the part of men experienced in both fields, take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution. in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter - for the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God." (Humani Generis 36)

Dialogue

This encyclical demonstrated that firstly, no Catholic is required to believe in the theory of evolution, noting that reasoned dialogue is needed to solve the issue.

Secondly, it revealed that if human evolution did occur, it did so under the guidance of God, and that creation is ultimately down to his divine will. The encyclical,

then, countered proponents of atheistic evolutionary theory, which holds that the development of humankind can be explained in wholly naturalistic terms, without mention of God.

With further scientific discoveries in the subsequent decades, the Church became much more open to the idea of evolution. Indeed, addressing the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the topic in 1996, Pope John Paull II said that new scientific findings "lead us toward recognition of evolution as more than a hypothesis".

It doesn't explain the origins of the universe, how earth came to be or the meaning of why we're all here"

While evolution is an idea that Catholics can freely adopt, it's important to remember that the theory only reveals so much. It doesn't explain the origins of the universe, how earth came to be or the meaning of why we're all here. In an atheistic context, evolution tells human beings that we are really just the product of an unquided and random process, with no conscious goal in mind. But as Pope emeritus Benedict reminds

"We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary." (2005)

Boiled down, the Church teaches that Catholics can believe that humans developed from other primitive life forms, but that this process was guided by God, and meaning about our life can only be garnered by looking towards God.

Got a question or comment? Email colm@irishcatholic.ie

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Personal Profile

Pushing for positive change in the parish

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overtime on different occasions throughout their life. However, sometimes an extra shift at work can turn into a much more serious issue.

Workaholism is often referred to as the compulsion to do work. It can manifest itself in taking extended hours, the inability to turn away from work while at home or on holiday, and a marked imbalance between work and personal lives.

"[Workaholism is] where a person has an addiction to work, an over-attachment to work, says Patricia Murray of the Health and Safety Authority. Work begins to take over everything

else "to the detriment of a balanced lifestyle".

According to Patricia, workaholism and work-addicted tendencies are not uncommon, and they can affect anybody in any job. "Anyone with addictive tendencies can become a workaholic," says Patricia. "Most addictions are transferable, so it's the lack of boundaries or willpower or selfregulation in the person which can be used as a pointer or indicate potential danger.'

The symptoms of workaholism are often fairly evident. 'Symptoms of the person [being] 'in addiction' are very obviously doing little else but work, talking about nothing but work and seeing everything that occurs in their work life as being all-consuming," Patricia explains. "The only world is the work world." For work-addicted individuals, there is no separation between the work life and the personal life.

becomes a health risk

Cecilie Shou Andreassen of the Department of Psychosocial Science at the University of Bergen in Norway developed the Bergen Work Addiction Scale, which outlines seven criteria by which work addiction can be detected and measured.

According to Andreassen's study, people who can be identified as workaholics frequently engage in seven basic behaviours: trying to figure out how they can free up more time to work, spending more time working than intended, working in order to reduce feelings of anxiety or depression, ignoring others' advice to cut down

leisure, and working to the point that their health, both physical and mental, begins to decline.

According to Patricia, because the lives of workaholics become wholly work-oriented, things can become "very, very dull for their friends and family". They may find themselves pulling away from their families and friends and making little to no time for themselves.

Andreassen's study also found that workaholics tend to be more agreeable, more nervous or impulsive, and more open to new incentives and impulses. These behaviours may lead them

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AND EVENTS

Have a bloomin' good time

Promoting care and an appreciation of the environment in kids is on all parent's check lists, so what better way could there be than seeing some of the best of what nature has to offer?

Bloom is Ireland's annual garden festival which takes place at the Phoenix Park in Dublin and is one of the top family friendly events in Ireland.

With kids going free, there are plenty of activities, food and garden fun for all ages. It takes place from May 30 – June 3.

The event includes spectacular gardens, horticulture, food, family entertainment, shopping and more.

A full price ticket is €20 while students and seniors (aged 66 or over) can buy tickets at a reduced €16. Children 16 years of age and younger can go for free – up to three children per adult. Tickets can be found on the Bloom website at bloominthepark.com

BULLYING'S LONG TERM IMPACT

Victims of bullying in secondary school have dramatically increased chances of mental health problems and unemployment in later life

New research led by Lancaster University Management School researchers reveals stark consequences a decade on for pupils subjected to bullying. Those who are the victims of persistent or violent bullying suffer the worst consequences.

Emma Gorman and Prof. Ian Walker, of the Lancaster University Department of Economics, along with research partners Silvia Mendolia, of the University of Wollongong, and Colm Harmon and Anita Staneva, of the University of Sydney, found being bullied in school increases the extent of mental health problems at age 25 by 40%.

It also increases the probability of being unemployed at age 25 by about 35%; and for those in work, it reduces their income by around 2%.

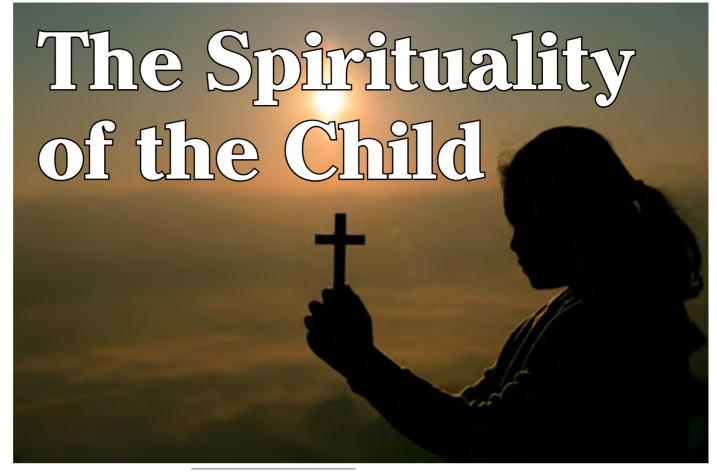
The research, presented at the Royal Economic Society's annual conference at the University of Warwick, analysed confidential data on more than 7,000 school pupils aged 14-16 from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England.

A green thumb needs a flawless fork

For those who love to garden, a little dirt under the fingernails is a small price to pay for the meditative joy of working the soil, smelling the rich earth, planting seeds or young sprouts, and watching the miraculous growth into a beautiful flowering plant or a harvest of vegetables.

But there are things that can make your gardening experience that little bit easier.

Cork-based Fruithill Farm stock a high quality garden fork with a forged steel head made by the long-established German firm SHW, which is available in two sizes which are 240 x 160mm for its smaller border fork or 280x190mm for the larger model, available to order with either an ash T-handle or a rounded handle, from €35.90. There is also an adjustable 'leaf rake' made by the same firm that's perfect for collecting leaves or creating a fine, crumbly tilth for seed sowing.



pirituality can be considered to be an innate dynamism of the human person which inspires us to live life with authenticity; for many it is linked with a specific understanding of the sacred and the transcendent in life.

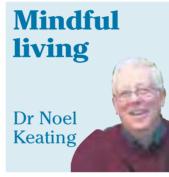
Western culture today tends to undermine any expression of spirituality in the public sphere. It is never easy to come to terms with the mysterious experience of our own spirituality and all the more difficult to describe it.

However, meditation helps us to create space for encountering that essential element of our being. As we grow in our practice of meditation and as we begin to experience this mystery for ourselves, we come to apprehend that there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, and that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence.

Sometimes we have to call on poetry or art to help us to give expression to it. Heidegger once wrote that poetry is language in service of the unsayable and the artist Francis Bacon claimed that the job of the artist was always to deepen our intimate connection with mystery.

Discovery

It is one of the fruits of meditation that it gives rise to the discovery of the true self, to our true nature at the deepest level of our being and to have faith in the validity of this discovery. We learn to value both mental and spiritual knowledge and this gives rise to a more balanced way of knowing which ultimately changes our way of seeing and being in the world. Spirituality. then, is not an airy-fairy concept or an abstruse set of beliefs but something very practical which, when we choose to access it,



informs how we live our lives.

Despite the growing awareness of the innate spiritual capacity of the human person, it was considered up until the late 1970s to require a cognitive capacity beyond the reach of young children. In other words, young children could not be spiritual because they had not yet reached the age of reason, they lacked the capacity for rational thought.

It is one of the fruits of meditation that it gives rise to the discovery of the true self, to our true nature at the deepest level of our being and to have faith in the validity of this discovery."

However, it is now recognised that children do indeed have an innate capacity for spirituality, although they lack the ability to adequately verbalise their spiritual experience. The theologian Karl Rahner believed that all persons, including children, are innately oriented toward God. In other words, our spirituality arises from within, from the very fact of our existence and it finds expression in all kinds of human

experience. He considered that children had a special capacity for 'infinite openness' which enlivens their spirituality.

My recent research into the child's experience of meditation confirms that in the silence and stillness of meditation many children experience their spirituality as a sense of spaciousness within, which, they intuitively understand, is intimately connected with the Divine. In Christian terms, children's spirituality may be understood, then, as that deep, albeit obscure, inner awareness of their true essence, of the true-self, of the reality that we are all beloved children of God

Children are too young to understand very much about



life. In their simplicity, they are comfortable with the limited and emergent nature of their knowledge, with not-knowing; they know they have so much to learn about the world. Because of this they remain open to possibility. They have a trust in their innate way of knowing, in their perceptual knowledge.

By comparison, as we grow into adulthood and our capacity for intellectual knowledge enlarges, we begin to doubt the validity and value of perceptual knowledge. As we become more rational in our thinking, we tend to believe that everything can be explained in words and we tend to distrust anything that can't.

While adults generally feel the need to analyse, to

explain and to control their environment, children are open to allowing life to unfold its mysteries. They are able to leave themselves open to whatever may transpire in the silence of meditation, without having to understand it or explain it. They are comfortable with the mysterious nature of spiritual experience.

One 12-year-old girl has described how, when she hears the bell ring three times at the start of meditation, she imagines it is God ringing her doorbell and she opens her heart to let him in."

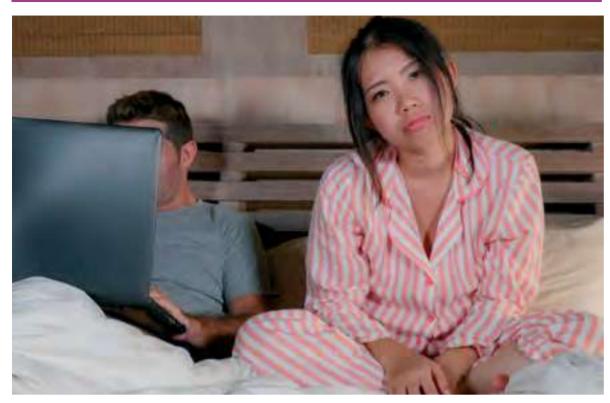
While it is not easy to describe their experience in words, they can make wonderful use of metaphor in speaking about it, as described in my book Meditation with Children. One 12-year-old girl has described how, when she hears the bell ring three times at the start of meditation, she imagines it is God ringing her doorbell and she opens her heart to let him in.

The children's insightful use of metaphor has now been captured in song in a new CD iust released. Called Meditation with Children: Songs and Reflections, the 10 songs are based on how children themselves have described the rich fruits of meditation in their lives. The CD is now available from Veritas, iTunes and elsewhere online and can be used to initiate meaningful conversations with children about their own spiritual experience.

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to take extra hours, work harder, and take on more difficult tasks.

Addictions, including the addiction to work, can be complex, but almost always have a base in personalities. "Addictions are hard to properly analyse," Patricia says. "Theories differ. In my view, there is a personal or inherited component.

"There [may also be] a tendency to replace 'missing things' with work," she explains. People who struggle to make friends, gain social links, undertake novel challenges, seek experiences and engage in learning may use their work to replace these missing pieces. "These people fill the gaps with work. It's easier, if lazier, and so then it's a self-perpetuating cycle as they really don't have much going on apart from work so they work more."

Workaholics may also be more at risk to be exploited by a dysfunctional culture or an uncaring manager. Setting defined boundaries for personal time as well as physical and mental separation from work can help to create a separation between work and personal life.

The key is not a balance in one step, but taking the time to define boundaries that can start to rebuild the separation between a person's work life and their personal life, allowing them to spend more time with their families and friends.

"Supports would have certain rigid rules," Patricia says. The clear establishment of a routine can be one of the first steps to setting these boundaries. "Like most addiction type supports, it's all about sticking to tried and tested 'systems' for living because the person him or herself doesn't have that inbuilt skill. Humility too is needed to understand our own erroneous ways."

One of the first steps is recognising personal tendencies and behaviours that may point to workaholism. "Self-insight is the key to any addiction-type behaviour," says Patricia. "They have to learn to understand why they do what they do. [They have to learn the] triggers which enable this behaviour and things that alleviate it. It might not be the same for all."

Workaholism isn't the only thing bringing down the workplace. According to a study by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), funded by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), job stress among employees in Ireland doubled from 8% in 2010 to 17% in 2015. While Irish workers were more likely to report the pressures of emotional demands and mistreatment, they were less likely to report time pressure than their counterparts.

The study also found that employees in the health, public administration, and manufacturing sectors were experiencing the highest levels of job-based stress. The ESRI's Dr Helen Russell, who worked on the study, found that increased hours of work, increased time pressure, and increased emotional demands of work have contributed largely to rising reports of job stress in Irish workplaces.

"You can pick out which sectors were having higher levels of stress," says Dr Helen Russell. "They see higher emotional and physical demands, and in some situations higher amounts of negative external influence."

Changes in work culture have meant more to do at work, which can also contribute to stress at work. Increased pressure to get more done in less time and to work later or longer hours may contribute to workaholic behaviors, sometimes



bringing on both physical and mental exhaustion in and out of the workplace.

If anything they may go to either occupational health specialists or workplace counselors, or their family might stage an intervention to them and get them around that way"

Even though they begin to struggle to maintain that balanced and separate personal life, many workaholics don't seek out help on their own. "If anything they may go to either occupational health specialists or workplace counselors, or their family might stage an intervention to them and get them around that way," she said.

According to Patricia, the consequences of workaholism can range from marriage breakdown and alienation to mental and physical health problems and depression. "They'll give them ultimatums about time spent away from work," she says, "With the partner or kids or whoever."

Patricia advises caution and receptivity to concern. "Take note of what those around you are telling you," she suggested. "A week or two of busy times makes all of us focus overly on a job or piece of work, but if it goes on and stretches into months where its all work, then think about changing tasks, rearranging things.

"Try reducing your workload, increasing your support system or moving to a different or new job," Patricia says. A change of pace can also help break the cycle of workaddicted behavior.

Lastly, she advises simply avoiding workaholic tendencies from the start. "Be aware that breakdowns don't always give us notice of their impending arrival," she says. "Its better to avoid one than recover from one."

Faith Jamily

Bairbre Cahill

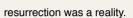
imon, son of John, do you love me?" - a question asked not once, but three times Each time when Simon Peter responds, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you," Jesus invites Peter's response to go beyond words, to action, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." These weeks beyond Easter Sunday present us with the same invitation to respond to Jesus' resurrection. We are invited to reflect on what our lived response to the resurrection is.

l've been
thinking a lot about
responses recently.
On Palm Sunday I
was doing a Children's
Liturgy with those preparing for First Holy Communion.
We spent our time exploring the journey of Jesus from the gates of Jerusalem to the tomb, the thoughts and feelings, possible reasons why people did what they did, what we may have done if we had been present.

We came to the washing of the feet and I asked the children how they would have responded if Jesus announced he was going to wash their feet. "Nervous", "worried about smelly feet", "confused" were some of the responses. Then one little girl said she would feel sad – why sad, I asked. "Because Jesus has been so good and done so much for us and for everyone, we should be washing his feet instead," she explained.

That little girl's response was utterly honest, full of love and wisdom. Is it any wonder that Jesus told us that we need to become like little children if we want to inherit the kingdom of God?

Just before Easter I was present at the wake and on Holy Thursday the funeral of a little boy who died suddenly. In a place where there could have been anger and despair, I encountered gentle heartbreak, love and a deep gratitude for a short life filled with fun and delight. Even in the midst of such tragedy and loss, death was not given the final word. The funeral liturgy was devastatingly sad and yet beautiful. Faith, hope and love shone through and I was so aware that on Holy Thursday morning I was standing in a place where



That same evening a young woman, a journalist, Lyra
McKee was shot and killed in
Derry. The response of the local community has been clear and strong – they want nothing to do with the evil which robbed this talented young woman of



life. People who may previously have had reservations about engaging with the police in Northern Ireland have stepped up and given information on what they saw and heard on that night.

Some of Lyra McKee's friends and colleagues went to the house used by this paramilitary group and left blood red hand prints on the walls. When interviewed one woman was clear, "Lyra McKee has been killed so if I get arrested for doing this or even put in prison for doing this I don't care."

I don't know and indeed it doesn't matter, how many of the people who have spoken out about the murder of Lyra McKee are Christian. What matters is that they are speaking out. They are not leaving the final word to her killers.

These weeks when we approach the resurrection story from different angles and the perspective of different people give us the opportunity to reflect on what our own response is. As Peter found out, words are not enough. We are called to be people of the resurrection, people whose lives are shaped by what happened in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Resurrection cannot simply be about life after death and that we will all be reunited in heaven. It has to be about now too. So, it is about how we respond, how we refuse to be broken, how we hold on to and proclaim goodness and love and hope.

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Pushing for positive change in the parish



Hannah Harn

orking in child safeguarding was a passion for one Kerry woman after a career of teaching, but not everybody was willing to change their operating procedures. When she ran into resistance from her trainees, Bridie Cronin refused to give up.

"I know a lot of parish representatives and priests didn't agree with it initially but we said, 'No, this is it and this is in your own best interest and the interest of protecting children that you adopt this programme," she said.

Bridie, the former Diocesan Coordinator for the Safeguarding Committee, was recognised for her extensive work in safeguarding policies in December 2018, when she and her long-time colleague were presented with the Benemerenti Medal.

"It was a huge shock to the system," said the 77-year-old Ballyhide native of the prestigious award. "We had both retired in 2016 from delivering the programme in the diocese because in 2016 a full-time person was brought on board by the diocese: Jacklyn McCarthy." Bridie and Fred Garvey were presented with their medals at the end of a quiet dinner with their friends by Bishop Ray Browne, the bishop of Kerry.

Even after her retirement from actively delivering the training, Bridie stayed on with the committee to support its ongoing development. "We felt we shouldn't walk away immediately, that we



Fred Garvey (left) and Bridie Cronin (right) receive Papal Medals from Bishop Ray Browne (centre) for their development of best safeguarding practices throughout the Diocese of Kerry.

should stay on and give as much help to Jacklyn as we could."

The Safeguarding Committee, established in Kerry by Bishop Bill Murphy in 2003, was led by Bridie and Garvey, who volunteered their time and delivered safeguarding training to priests and parish representatives around the diocese.

Bridie has lived a life of serving and supporting young people, having led a long career in primary school education. After receiving her teaching certificate from Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, she began her work at the Mercy Convent in Athlone. Soon after, she returned to Kerry to continue teaching

"The mist on the Kerry mountains called me back and I got a job at the Glen School in Ballinskelligs."

She taught there for three years, helping to build a drama group, alongside her teaching, that travelled through Kerry to put

on their shows. She continued to move around, going to do work in Scotland with the Legion of Mary and spending 27 years teaching at St Oliver's school in Killarney, where she lives today.

After retiring in 2004, she found herself called by Bishop Bill Murphy in 2005 to get involved in child protection. "In December 2005, retired chief superintendent of Kerry Fred Garvey and I went to Maynooth to be trained in safeguarding," she said. While they struggled a bit with the density of canon law, she and Garvey "qualified the following June, and then we drew up policies for our own diocese here in Kerry".

Bridie and Garvey began implementing their training system in parishes around the diocese. While they took many steps to make sure parishes were included beyond their clergy, they still ran into some difficulties. Some parish representatives and priests were

less than cooperative.

"The training initially was very difficult because, I suppose, child protection was very new at the time," she said. "As we went along we became more and more familiar with the course and we eventually had our heads around it; that this is the way it has to be."

After retiring in 2004, she found herself called by Bishop Bill Murphy in 2005 to get involved in child protection."

Over her years as Diocesan Coordinator, Bridie watched the programme evolve and grow as new issues were addressed, much to the annoyance of some of her trainees. In fact, she grew those changes herself.

"We once had a day of training [after the innovation portion] at the end of the day and one priest stood

up and said that he hoped there would be no more changes [to the curriculum]," she explained. "And I said, 'Father, I'm sorry, but there will be changes'. Because we're continually learning. We're continually putting different procedures in place to strengthen the programme."

By the time she and Garvey retired in 2016 from travelling around the diocese, she felt they had done "quite a good job of getting the programme up and running in every parish in the diocese".

However, for Bridie, a dynamic, shifting curriculum is essential to keeping the programme effective. "That's what we were doing the whole time, having a look at the situation and seeing where there were weaknesses," she said.

As time went on, she was constantly tinkering with the programme to ensure it would be effective and relevant. "I was continually adding to the questions in the audit, and people were complaining that the audit was getting longer and longer every year, and it was. Because something would happen and we'd need to cover it. That's how it works. We were all the time improving."

Bridie was happy to volunteer her time and effort to the safeguarding initiative, but she was given the time and friendship of others in return. "The programme enriched me," she said of her experiences. "We met so many wonderful people, not only in Kerry but beyond."

Though she is no longer the Diocesan Coordinator, Bridie's continued service to the committee shows her ongoing dedication to the safety and wellbeing of children.

"I think the programme is well-structured," she said. "This programme should be in place not only in parishes but in other organisations. And now most organisations have their procedures and policies. They're all very conscious of child protection."

Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson



Carrot Cake - still a firm favourite

arrot cake is an essential springtime treat, this recipe gives a delicious, moist cake with the perfect balance of nuttiness and spice. If you're not a fan of walnuts, pecans could be used instead. Or if you're a lover of raisins in your carrot cake feel free to add them in when adding the carrot.

Ingredients

For the cake:

- 275g plain flour
- 360g caster sugar
- 100g finely ground walnuts
- 1.5 tsp cinnamon
- □ of a whole nutmeg, ground
- □ tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda/bread soda
- 4 eggs
- 300ml vegetable oil like sunflower oil
- 300g finely grated carrots

For the cream cheese icing:

- 300g icing sugar, sifted
- 240g cream cheese, at room temperature
- 60g unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Walnuts, to decorate

Preheat the oven to 175°C/160°Fan/Gas mark 3. Grease and line two 9 inch/23cm loose bottomed tins. Start by preparing the dry ingredients. Sieve the flour into a bowl along with the baking powder and bread soda. Add the cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and walnuts and stir gently to combine. Next, in a separate bowl using an electric whisk beat the eggs and sugar together for about a minute until pale and fluffy. Then keeping the speed on low, add in the oil. Once all oil has been added, increase speed and beat until fully incorporated, this takes about half a minute. Next, gently fold in the grated carrot. Now for the final step

folding in all the dry ingredients from earlier. Do this until everything has just combined. Distribute this mixture evenly between the prepared tins. Bake in the oven for 42-45 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins for about 15 minutes before transferring onto a wire

rack to cool fully. It is important that the cakes are completely cool before you attempt to ice them!

While cakes are cooling you can prepare the icing by beating the butter until it's pale and fluffy. Then add the cream cheese and vanilla extract and beat until combined, this shouldn't take long. Finally, slowly add the icing sugar and beat until you have a spreadable, smooth, shiny frosting. If the icing is too loose, add a little more icing sugar,

just a spoon at a time to thicken it up. Use half the icing to sandwich the two layers and the rest on the top and sides. Don't worry about being very neat, carrot cake looks best when rustic. Press walnuts gently around the edge to finish and chill for half an hour before serving.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



A question that turned politicians' faces red

prophetic role in the Church and society. and nowhere was this more evident than in the words of Fr Martin McGill at the funeral last week of Lyra McKee, tragically shot dead in Derry.

Fr McGill's words to the politicians assembled at her funeral ("Why in God's name does it take the death of a 29-year-old woman with her whole life in front of her to get us to this point?") reverberated through the media all week, and seem to have given a kick start to new talks between the parties in the North of Ireland, with a view to getting the Assembly up and running again.

Fr McGill was interviewed on **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ1, Thursday), and his passionate advocacy for peace and reconciliation was admirable. Because Ms McKee was a prominent LGBT activist, that aspect of her life was raised in several discussions, including this one, though it had nothing directly to do with the awful circumstances of her

It was put to Fr McGill that the Church's teaching on homosexuality was a problem in this context - an awkward one to throw at him. He did his best to be sensitive without compromising any principles, though I'm not sure about his distinguishing between the 'official line'



DUP leader Arlene Foster (left) chats with Sinn Féin president Mary Lou McDonald at the funeral of Lyra McKee

of the Church and a pastoral approach - I'd love to see Catholic spokespersons embracing more enthusiastically the harmony there can be between these strands.

Further, his suggestion that there was "a variety of views" within the Church on this issue begged a few ques-

One obstacle to the Assembly being re-established is Sinn Féin's insistence on same-sex marriage and abortion. I'd say patriots of earlier generations would be turning in their graves. On Saturday With Cormac Ó **hEadhra** (RTÉ Radio 1) last weekend Sinn Féin TD Louise O'Reilly was very insistent on not denying rights in Northern Ireland, but yet she has campaigned and continues to campaign to remove the very right to life of living unborn children, seemingly unaware of the irony and inconsist-

Sinn Féin is very keen to emphasise that they wish to extend the same rights across the island, to both jurisdictions, but funnily enough they didn't push that line when

unborn babies had more rights in the Republic than they had in the North, Sadly it used to be the case that opposition to abortion was one of the few things that united Republicans and Unionists in the North.

Now Sinn Féin, among others, has created a new division as if we hadn't enough of that, and in their support for abortion find themselves supporting another form of violence even as they've given up (thankfully) on violence of the more traditional kind.

Violence

Terrorist violence, this time in Sri Lanka, continued to be high up the news agenda during the week. On The Hard Shoulder (Newstalk) on Thursday Brendan O'Neill, editor of Spiked, drew contrasts between reaction in the West to anti-Muslim violence and anti-Christian violence -



RTÉ's Audrey Carville.

PICK OF THE WEEK

TURAS COSNOCHTA

RTÉ1, Sunday, May 5, 1.10 pm

Pilgrims at Lough Derg take part in Confession and the staff prepare for the end of the pilgrimage season.

RETREAT: MEDITATIONS FROM A MONASTERY BBC4, Sunday, May 5, 7pm

One monk is a renowned iconographer, another creates manuscripts and rosary beads

NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE, OTTAWA, CANADA EWTN, Thursday, May 9, 4.30pm

Live and complete coverage of the annual National March For Life in Ottawa.

he referred to a "vast double standard" shown by political commentators - very strong on the Christchurch killings at a Mosque but showing a much more muted response after the Sri Lanka massacre even though the fatalities were around seven times higher.

On RTÉ Radio 1's **The** Leap of Faith (sadly, the last episode until the Autumn), Dr Jude Lal Fernando, a Sri Lankan with a Catholic background living in Dublin, had a nuanced take on the controversy. He felt that both Muslims and Christians shared the status of vulnerable minority and he was distressed to see Islamist extremists attacking Christians in their churches. which was most unusual for the country.

He thought that the motivation for the killings was primarily political, and that pursuing a global anti-Christian interpretation only contributed to a tit for tat narrative. He was glad to see Muslim communities offering support to the Catholics in their time of need.

It was a similar story on Sunday Sequence (BBC Radio Ulster) last weekend, when Audrey Carville interviewed Rev. Dr Maithrie White-Dundas, a Sri Lankan Methodist minister working in Belfast. She was glad to see both Muslims and Buddhists offering support to Catholics whose churches were closed that day and was strong in the view that governments must urgently address underlying sectarian tensions in any country rather than letting them bubble away under the

That, she thought, was true for Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland.

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Aubrey Malone

Traveller world affectionately evoked in gutsy drama

Float Like a **Butterfly (15A)**

Imagine, if you will, Rocky Balboa on a beach. As a young woman. And Irish. And a gypsy. Difficult, I know. But it's what we get here.

The feisty spirit of the travellers is endearingly captured in this heartfelt tale of a teenage girl who proves better able to take care of herself than the menfolk in her life when it comes to fisticuffs.

Modelling herself on her hero Muhammad ('The Greatest') Ali – his trademark phrase gives the film its title - Frances (Hazel Doupe) is a 1960s Katie Taylor. She stubs cigarette butts into bales of



Hazel Doupe stars in Float Like a Butterfly.

hay and punches them to

Her mother dies in an early altercation with the gardaí. Her father Michael (Dara Devaney) is a harmless enough individual until drink takes hold of him. He then jettisons whatever tenuous

stability he might otherwise possess. It turns him into a fighting machine.

Tomboy Frances - a Jodie Foster lookalike - has a maturity that belies her tender years. She watches her father intently after he's released from prison. He upsets the

ing on moving her away from the site she's inhabited while he's been 'inside'. He tries to pigeonhole her into his abjectly pre-feminist mould.

Frances doesn't say much but her eyes register everything around her. She's made of strong stuff but she has a big heart. Her kid brother Patrick is much more timid than she is. Michael tries to toughen him up. Frances doesn't.

Writer-director Carmel Winters dwells lingeringly on her face. It becomes like a kind of counterpoint to the action. The storyline is thin but it gives Winters the luxury of panning her camera over a world she clearly loves.

There's Celtic music,

camaraderie, sterling family values. Winters tracks the stunning scenery that's an endemic part of this primitive

There's also lots of mischievous banter. Much of it is provided by Frances' benign grandfather. His homespun witticisms act like another counterpoint.

The film is almost like a documentary. We're 100% in this community. At one point we even get a subtitle for the dialogue. It's that authentic.

Winters captures the pulse of the travelling world to a T. A character in one scene, instead of telling us her husband has died, says: "He's gone off to heaven for himself.'

Float like a Butterfly

era. A nomadic section of society tries to go about its business in peace but faces almost daily conflict from the aforementioned gardai and a bigoted settled community. And even itself.

Winters doesn't idealise the travellers; neither does she sanitise them. She gives us a pastoral portrayal of a world that already seems to have passed us by even though the film is set only a few decades ago.

"The travellers are the blacks of Ireland," we're told in one scene, a phrase reminiscent of Roddy Doyle's The Commitments. Maybe that's the one thing that hasn't changed.

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BookReviews Peter Costello



The Sunni and the Shia... argument really about?

A Concise History of the Sunnis and Shi'is

by John McHugo (Saqui Books, £20.00)

John Bruton

few years back, very few Westerners would have been aware of the distinction between the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam. The aftermath of the invasion of Iraq changed all that.

In a timely book, entitled A Concise History of the Sunnis and Shi'is, John McHugo, who has also recently written a history of Syria, goes back to the beginning of the Muslim religion to outline its history, and explain the origin of the divisions between Shia and Sunni.

His book is well timed because the West now appears to be allowing itself to be drawn, on the side of the Sunnis, into

what appears to be a religious war with the Shia in the Middle East. Does Western public opinion understand what it is getting itself into?

Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran are competing with one another in conflicts in many parts of the Muslim world. Israel has identified Iran as its number one enemy. President Trump appears to follow the Israeli line. This is notwithstanding the fact that the 9/11 attackers came from Sunni Saudi Arabia and not



Muslims have discussed and disagreed over their faith for centuries: desert Arabs in discussion by Frederick

from Shia Iran.

As a result, in order to curb Iran, western companies are being permitted by their governments to supply arms to Saudi Arabia, which are being used against Zaydi Muslims in Yemen, who are being supported by Iran, against a Yemeni government supported by Saudi Arabia.

Sub division

Some say the Zaydis are not Shia; they are in fact a sub division within Sunni Islam. Others say they are a subset of Shia Islam. In fact there are many schools of thought within Islam, and lines between them are not all that rigid. Sectarian distinctions can be exaggerated for political purposes, as we know all too well in Europe.

The conflicts in Yemen and Syria can be looked at differently. They can be presented as a power struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran, that is between an ethnically Arab country on the one hand, and an ethnically Persian one on the other. That too would be an oversimplification. While most ethnically Arab nations line up with Saudi Arabia, some, like Iraq and Syria, lean towards Iran.

In Syria's case the regime is Alawite, a sect which is neither Sunni nor Shia, but is closer to the Shia. In Iraq, the population, though ethnically Arab, is majority Shia. Shia Arabs in Lebanon have lined up on the Iran side in the Syrian Civil War and so on.

There are only four countries in which the Shia are a majority: Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Bahrain.

But there are also significant Shia populations in the oil producing region of Saudi Arabia, and in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.

There is another strand of Islam, the Kharijis, who are a majority in Oman.

Within Sunni Islam itself, there are four different schools of thought, going back to very early times. These are the Malikis, Hanafis, Shafiis and Hanbalis.

- The Maliki school are predominant in most of North Africa.
- The Hanafi school predominate in Egypt, Turkey and Central Asia.
- The Shafiis are strong in West Africa and Indonesia.
- The Hanbali school is strongest in the Arabian pen-

After its defeat in World War I, the **Ottoman Empire** disappeared"

Wahhabism, a strict literalist trend within the Hanbali school, dates only from the 18th Century, and is thus quite recent. From its origins, it has been closely associated with the Saudi royal family. It is promoted and subsidised throughout the world by Saudi Arabia.

The division between the two strands is not so much about theology as it is about

Sights worth seeing

Prayerful Ireland by Helena Connolly (Messenger Publications,

Peter Costello

This richly illustrated book (mentioned briefly at Christmas time) is worth a longer notice, for as the summer days draw out (hopefully) the places she mentions may well be worth a visit.

Her approach is suggested by the cover itself which shows an unusual view of Lough Derg, looking out over the saints beds across the grey water to the bleak mountains: it epitomises so much of the long and complicated history of the shrine.

Throughout the book she manages to see things, shrines, scenes, sites, holy wells and little churches, all with a fresh eye. The mood is one of seeking a spiritual resonance, rather than mere tourism; not that Lough Derg is a place for mere tourists.

This book is not so much about seeing, as seeing sights, in the very largest sense. Her text is in three parts, dealing with the roots of faith, treasures of light, traditions of prayer, and lastly, but very much not least, praying today. She covers a wide range of places from recently created medication centres back through the centuries to Mass rocks, holy wells, ancient monasteries, and Patrician sites.

The photographs, which evoke the quietness of these places, are beautifully composed and created by the author herself. (The book is dedicated to that master of photography Fr Frank Brown SJ.)

The key to much of what is shown and what is reflected upon is summed by an extract from a 9th Century poem: Ba sí in chrích fom - themadar eter lissu lánn locán álain eladglan, os mé m'óener ann.

This was translated by the scholar Gerard Murphy as: "Let the place which shelters me amid monastic enclosures be a delightful hermit's plot hallowed by religious stones, with me alone therein."

Alone except, of course, as the monk would have thought, for the presence of God and his



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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.

what is their

the legitimacy of those who may govern the faithful, teach the faith, and interpret the Koran, and the legitimacy of the sources they may draw upon to do so. The question is both political and religious, with little distinction between the two. Both Shia and Sunni have the Koran in common, and believe its content is the word of God, coming through the Angel Gabriel and dictated to Mohammed.

But what authority may be used to interpret the Koran for life today?

Broadly speaking, Sunnis accept the authority of the teachings and writings of the companions of Mohammed, who were his immediate successors as leaders, and who knew his mind.

The Shia, on the other hand, look to Ali, Mohammed's grandson, and to Mohammed's blood line more generally, as the legitimate interpreters of the Koran and supreme guides of the people.

Ali died in 661 after a power struggle, so these differences of opinion go back a long way.

In Sunni Islam, Shia veneration of the tombs of early imams is seen as idolatrous. and this explains the blowing up of some of these Shia holy places in recent wars.

Islamic scholars have always had greater political authority in the Shia tradition, which explains the particular political system of Iran, where the Supreme religious leader has a veto on much of what the elected government may do

In the Sunni tradition, the Caliph was both a religious and a political leader. For many years the title of Caliph was held by the Ottoman Emperor.

After its defeat in World War I, the Ottoman Empire disappeared and was replaced by the secular Republic of Turkey. Turkey formally abolished the Caliphate in 1922.



This caused deep disappointment among many devout Sunni Muslims at the time and this disappointment explains why Isis sought to restore the Caliphate.

For most of the last 1,300 years, Sunni and Shia have lived together in relative peace. The

Wars of Religion within Christianity in Europe, in the 150 years after the Reformation, were much more severe than anything that has, as yet, happened between Shia and Sunni in the Muslim world.

It is to be hoped that a reading of John McHugo's densely informative narrative will encourage Western leaders to hesitate, before taking sides in a struggle that is not their own.

His book is quite compressed, and focuses heavily on the political history. It would have been interesting to know more about how the lifestyles and thinking of both Shia and Sunni faithful com pare with one another.

WebWatchGreg Dalv

Serious lessons from the flames of Notre Dame

Tower, that other great emblem of Paris," writes Tom Holland at **spectator.co.uk**, "Notre Dame provides the French with evidence that their modern and secular republic has its foundations deeply rooted in the Middle

There's been much to criticise in The Spectator over recent years, but 'Thank God for western values' is a brilliant summary of how much our modern world owes to and is sustained by Christianity.

"The wellspring of humanist values lies not in reason, not in evidencebased thinking," Holland writes, "but in the past, and specifically in the story of how a cult inspired by the execution of an obscure criminal in a long-vanished empire emerged to become - as the great Jewish scholar Daniel Boyarin has put it – 'the most powerful of hegemonic cultural systems in the history of the world'."

Pointing out that the greatest critics of Christianity have had deeply Christian assumptions, Holland says: "The risen Christ cannot be eluded simply by refusing to believe in him. That the persecuted and disadvantaged have claims upon the privileged - widely taken for granted though it may be today across the West - is not remotely a self-evident truth.

"Condemnation of Christianity as patriarchal or repressive or hegemonic derive from a framework of values that is itself nothing if not Christian," he observes, adding that familiarity with the Easter story has desensitised us to the audacity of Christianity's claims.

Artisans

Church art can remind us of this, Isabelle Hamley writes at psephizo.com in 'Why does Notre Dame matter?' Wondering what the architects and artists and artisans of



deeply to many who would not describe themselves as Christian, she writes: "Isn't this part of what cathedrals are for? Isn't communicating the beauty of the Gospel, awe at its power, an essential aspect of mission? And when we recognise our common humanity, and lift our eyes about utilitarianism, then, hopefully, we recognise that there are many, many other situations we need to attend to."

We should be wary of thinking of the fires as metaphors for the ravages of secularisation"

Stressing how buildings can become monuments of our memory and identity, she says it was moving to see journalists struggle to express what Notre Dame meant to them, adding that the flames of Holy Week have enabled a people to be reminded of their past and hope for new life.

"France has tried very hard to push God away, and forget the Faith of centuries," she continues. "But when the people fell silent, the very stones cried out. The question is, now that we remember, what will we do with these memories for the future? There is a small window of opportunity for the nature of public discourse to

France, as Dr Hamley

ambiguous relationship with that past, and it is well worth reading Bishop Kevin Doran's 2012 blogpost 'Laïcité -Secularism French Style' at sabbaticalinaurignac. wordpress.com to get a handle on the history of this relationship and to lessons to be drawn from this.

It's worth reading, too, Alissa Wilkinson's observations in 'Why we wept when Notre Dame burned' at vox.com, on "why some Parisians reportedly wept and gathered to sing near the cathedral, even if they hadn't set foot in it for

Certainly, we should be wary of thinking of the fires as metaphors for the ravages of secularisation, Timothy P. O'Malley writes in an extraordinary article, 'The Notre-Dame Cathedral fire isn't a sign', at churchlife.nd.edu.

"Notre-Dame may have been on fire but the public sphere, so marked by a program of supposed laïcité, remembers," he writes. "Paris remembers the voice of countless pilgrims who have sung such hymns of praise on her streets before. And they will sing again. Paris remembers. How could she not? And in this moment, Paris once more reminded us of the reason for her hope. The reason for this hope is a woman, a woman who is Our Lady, who carries within her womb the sole hope of the human race-the Word made flesh."

The popular art of the local printer

Listowel, a Printer's Legacy: The Story of Printing in North Kerry 1870-1970, Vincent Carmody (Vincent Carmody, €35.00; ISBN:

9780992698898; email: info@listoweloriginals. com or call +353 (0) 87 966 7112.)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This publication provides an account of the Cuthbertson family who conducted a printing business in Listowel for almost a hundred years. Robert Irvine Cuthbertson was born in Saltcoats, Ayrshire, Scotland, on May 3, 1859. From an early age he was apprenticed to his father who was a printer.

He set up a printing office in Listowel in 1880. A Presbyterian, he became a prominent member of the small local Church of Ireland parish. When he died in 1908 his son James took over the family business. James died in 1918 and Robert (known as Bob), his youngest son, took over the

Bob was a popular figure

in the local community and was actively involved in the Listowel Drama Group and the Badminton Club. He had a fruitful relationship with Bryan MacMahon who drew his attention to scores of ballads. These and a number by MacMahon he

The rendition of these ballads became a feature of life in North Kerry. They were sung and sold outside and sometimes inside public-houses on fair days, market days and during the autumn Races Festival. Bob's father printed the poster which was mounted nationwide in which Sinn Féin announced the general election in December 1918 and rallied support for their

Statement

Bob himself printed the signed statement of the members of the RIC who mutinied in Listowel policebarracks in June 1920. Almost certainly the fact that it was printed greatly facilitated its widespread publication.

Bob printed anything and everything: bill-heads invitations, handbills, pamphlets, lists of fairs and markets, raffle tickets, ballad sheets and posters on auctions of houses and land. Carmody reproduces a wide selection of Bob's handiwork.

The posters with their highly informative captions are of particular interest. Those advertising the productions of the Listowel Drama Group led with the defiant claim: "The stage shall never die." The list is so comprehensive as to be a veritable history of the Drama group.

This publication has many other merits and items of interest. It contains scores of pictures of persons and events which will be greatly appreciated by people in North Kerry and beyond. In the foreword and afterword there are delightful reflective vignettes by Cyril Kelly and Fergal Keane of Listowel and its residents.

The lay-out, design and the printing is of the highest quality, and it is a splendid cornucopia of local 40 | Comment | The Irish Catholic, Mav 2, 2019

Notebook Fr Bernard Cotter

A machine that operates with Christian compassion

in her kitchen and asked her how she was getting on. "Not too bad", she replied, "I learned a lot over the days of the funeral. Now I know about the 'funeral machine' and how effective it is."

I was bemused and wondered was this some kind of contraption undertakers use today. Then she explained that the funeral machine consists of nothing mechanical, just good people, working together smoothly, even if they have never worked together before.

These people, primarily neighbours, but augmented by cousins and other friends, together make up the 'funeral machine', a unique Irish creation. Instinctively, they know what a grieving family needs and work together to provide this.

Compassion

They sweep and vacuum and render the house spotless, they make sandwiches and tea (and buy the essentials the family needs), they manage the traffic, they do everything practical, surrounding the bereaved family with compassion and care. The machine cranks up when news of a death becomes public (usually via www.



rip.ie now) and stays in operation till well after the burial.

She pointed out that the time of a funeral, all the bereaved family are required to do is sit and listen and mourn and pray and grieve:

after coeliacs' Communion. Conscious that his own fingers may be covered with gluten at Communion time, he has come up with an ingenious plan. He holds the pyx with low-gluten hosts alongside his ciborium, and when a coeliac approaches and points to the pyx, the priest says "The Body of Christ". He then extends the pyx to the coeliac, who takes the host from the pyx and receives it, without the priest touching it. It seems a suitable way of bringing hosts to those coeliacs able to digest our low-gluten hosts.

for everything else, the 'funeral machine' takes their place.

She couldn't get over how easily the machine slotted into place.

I had heard of this uniquely-Irish operation from another parishioner, though he hadn't been familiar with that phrase. He told me of the sad morning when he returned home after the death of his mother in a nursing home. On entering his house, he found his next-door neighbour on her hands and knees, washing the kitchen floor.

For her the parish funeral team was the 'cherry on the cake'"

In another culture, he would probably call the police, but instead he saw a harbinger of the ubiquitous funeral machine. All he said to me was: "That was when I knew what being part of a

• I heard recently about a clever approach a Cork pastor takes in looking

community means."

The funeral machine has been in operation for years in Ireland, centuries probably, though its form adapts to the needs of the day.

Some may wish to keep their home private; then the funeral machine patrols the environs as effectively as the US President 's storm troopers. Some may wish a non-religious funeral; even in this case the machine adapts itself to the family's wishes.

In the case of the parishioner who spoke to me, for her the parish funeral team was the cherry on the cake'. Members of the local team blended in, according to their speciality: helping the family participate in as full a way as possible, according to their wishes.

She felt those who ministered in this way complemented the funeral machine, as well as leading prayers at times and encouraging family members to help in this also (e.g. each reciting a decade of the Rosary during the vigil in the house etc.).

Have you ever heard of the funeral machine? Or have you been part of one? I learn something new every day in the

Getting what you pray for... eventually!

I manage to pray the Divine Office twice most days (morning and evening) and always have a list of intentions to go through, usually parishioners' needs. Since November 2014 I

have been praying for a 'good, new, bishop' for my diocese. A colleague suggested I add in the word 'holy' but I was afraid that might set the bar too high!

Instead 'pastoral' was added and at last, last month, the Holy Father sent just such a candidate to Cork and Ross.

Which proves that prayer works —even though sometimes the Holy Spirit seems to be very relaxed about it!



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