Eco-friendly parenting: How 'green' is your family? – Pages 31 & 33



# Future of small dioceses in doubt as Rome stalls bishops' appointments

### Dioceses must be fit for mission, says Primate

### EXCLUSIVE Greg Daly

The future of Ireland's smallest dioceses is coming under increased Vatican scrutiny with a policy to withhold appointing bishops once a small diocese becomes vacant. *The Irish Catholic* understands at least three of the smallest dioceses will not receive new bishops and will likely be amalgamated over a period of time.

Amalgamating dioceses in Ireland was first mooted in Rome to the Irish bishops at the height of the abuse scandals by the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops, Cardinal Battista Re, but was shelved to avoid it looking like a punishment for the Irish episcopacy.

However, as vocations continue to decline and clergy retire, it is an issue that clearly has to be tackled.

The dioceses most likely to be affected are Dromore,

### **DAVID QUINN**

The rise of the Green 'Holy Joe' PAGE 9 Achonry, Clonfert and Killala, the first two of which are vacant and the other two have bishops, one of whom reached retirement age five years ago and the other who is four years from retirement.

### Speculation

Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin, who has been Administrator of the Diocese of Dromore for the past two months understands why there has been speculation by priests and laity that Dromore could be amalgamated with his own diocese, but told this paper that while he will oversee Dromore for several years he has not been asked to work towards a diocesan merger.

"The only thing is that at the moment I have not been asked by the Holy See to move towards amalgamation of Dromore," he said.

However, The Irish Catholic has been told by impec-

» Continued on Page 2

Joy on the double in Limerick



Fr Taras Kchik CSsr blesses seven-week-old twins Lucy and George Griffin, pictured here with their mother Susie, and Mary Reale, as part of the Solemn Novena held at Mount St Alphonsus, Limerick. Photo: Keith Wiseman

### FANNING THE FLAME

LAST

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Letting Faith shine in the Diocese of Derry PAGES 18 & 19



### **MARY KENNY**

Ireland's attitude towards women far from unique PAGE 5



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### **Inside this week**

### An invisible disability

Born without a family tree Page 10



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**Coping with last** vear's toll on your garden Page 34



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie Assistant Editor: Greg Daly, greg@irishcatholic.ie Northern Correspondent: Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie Multimedia Journalists: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie Colm Fitzpatrick, colm@irishcatholic.ie Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026 Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie Layout: Declan Moroney Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094 Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020 Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9.30am-5.30pm Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

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# **Government climate plan is** unrealistic, says eco-theologian

### Greg Daly

The Government's Climate Action Plan lacks vital practicalities and doesn't allow for necessary incentives and infrastructural changes to enable Ireland to play its part in tackling the global climate emergency, Ireland's leading eco-theologian has said.

"We've had so much of aspirational things for the last 25 years," Columban Fr Seán McDonagh told The Irish Catholic, expressing scepticism about whether the Government has given sufficient thought to necessary infrastructural changes around transport, electricity and housing, Fr McDonagh said it's vital also to have plans in place so areas hitherto dependent on, for example, peat processing would not become unemployment blackspots.

"What are we going to do in counties like Offaly, and what are we going to do

in West Clare when Moneypoint is no longer working? Again, I want to want to see concrete proposals on how the people who work there are actually going to get work into the future," he said.

### **Energy efficient**

Similar plans need to be in place for changing agricultural patterns, with the State helping people to, for example, retrofit houses to make them energy efficient he added

"I'm also not sure if they are going to help people, for example, to get good loans from the bank, in other words that you're incentivised to do this, because on the one hand you're putting out a bit of money, but then you're not paying for your petrol or your kerosene. I'm not too sure if that's thought through in this thing.

While welcoming the plan's rhetoric, Dr Ciara Murphy, Environmental Policy Officer with the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, said she fears that it "fundamentally underestimates the challenges we face, and the opportunities now open to us".

"This plan takes Irish society as it is, and tinkers with it to make it more green.

"What we need is a much bigger imagination," she said, with the JCFJ's social theologian Dr Kevin Hargaden echoing her concern.

Commenting on how Pope Francis has warned against taking environmental action solely on the basis of financial calculations, he noted that the plan features the word 'cost' 171 times while promising from the outset that the plan envisages no extra Government spending.

"The present Government may not like to hear it," he said, "but this plan falls well short of the scope of imagination we find in a papal teaching!"

### Meath couple honoured by Pope Francis

Chavalier Brendan O'Reilly and his wife Dame Aine Fitzgerald O'Reilly walk through a guard of honour of Papal Knights after being invested as Knight and Dame of the

Pontifical Equestrian Order of Pope St Sylvester, in Ashbourne parish church, Co. Meath. Photo: John McElroy

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### Future of small dioceses in doubt

### » Continued from Page 1

cable sources that Rome does intend for the smallest dioceses to be amalgamated over time. Archbishop Martin conceded: "Whatever happens, it's obvious that consideration needs to be given to the future of the smaller dioceses in Ireland."

The archbishop was keen to point out that the Irish Church should not get caught up solely in the structures of dioceses but needs to ask "how are we going to hand on the Faith?'

### **Optimum size**

"What is the optimum size of a diocese, or conditions within a diocese which will maximise mission and making disciples," he asked. "In other words, what is too small to provide the best possible provisions for handing on the Faith?" The Archbishop also posed the question of whether a diocese could be too big.

Stressing that synodality needs to be the guiding principle behind any changes, with consultation with people and priests being essential in the dioceses and with a national synod being a real possibility in a few years time, Dr Martin said: "I would be disappointed if the reorganisation of dioceses in Ireland took place at a boardroom table in Rome. I think it needs to begin on the ground and move from the ground up."

*(1)* See Pages 12 and 13.



The Irish Catholic, June 20, 2019

# **Heroic Irish nuns receive** awards for outstanding work

### **Colm Fitzpatrick**

An Irish nun committed to empowering young women in one of the world's most volatile countries has received an award in recognition of her vital work. Wicklow-born Sr Orla Treacy, of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also known as the Loreto Sisters, was given the Societal

who, through their exceptional ability and leadership, have achieved excellence in their chosen fields of endeavour.

"It's great to see a university like that recognising the work that we're doing in South Sudan," Sr Treacy told The Irish Catholic, noting that it's "nice to feel part of something bigger".

premier girls' school in the impoverished country, Sr Treacy has spent well over a decade empowering thousands of pupils through education, despite ongoing civil conflict and discrimination against young women, such as forced marriage.

### **Vulnerable**

Describing the current situation in the country, Sr Treacy said: "I would use the word nately the hunger is still there and there are estimates that a lot of people will go hungry this year again in South Sudan.'

She added that the Pope's recent call for peace to the country's leaders "has been a great sense of hope for us".

Meanwhile, a Co. Galway Mercy Sister has won an award for her work helping Irish prisoners in the UK. Sr Moira Keane, who is one of the Irish Chaplaincy's Prison

### Charity welcomes acquittal of human trafficking victim

A Christian charity in Northern Ireland has welcomed the decision to clear a Vietnamese man of all criminal charges on account of him being a victim of human trafficking.

Hung Van Nguyen (43), who had been living in Co. Tyrone, became the first person to be exonerated under NI's Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act 2015 last week.

He stood accused of cultivating and possessing cannabis with intent to supply. His defence team argued he had only committed the offences because he was a human trafficking victim.

Mark Bailie of CARE said: "No-one should face criminal convictions for crimes they were made to commit under the intense pressure of being held captive in modern slavery.'

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### Poorest can't pay price for climate change action - SVP

### Staff reporter

Outreach volunteers, is the

2019 winner of the Irish in

Britain's Individual Volunteer

in the north-east of England,

the nun now volunteers her

time with prison visits and

giving support for distressed

carers. The national charity,

Irish in Britain, set up the

awards to celebrate the role

volunteers play in delivering

much needed services to the

Irish community.

A former prison chaplain

Award.

Any levies or taxes introduced by the Government to mitigate carbon emissions should not impact those living in poverty, the President of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) in Ireland has said.

"The vast majority of the people that we visit rely on fossil fuels to heat their homes," Kieran Stafford told The Irish Catholic. "As it stands, half of those living in consistent poverty go without heating due to the cost, so any additional taxes in respect to that will draw those people into a more dire situation than they are.'

Speaking following the publication of the society's pre-budget submission 'Investing in a Just Society', Mr Stafford said: "Traditionally people that we visit are people on a low income, in consistent poverty and are in inefficient energy homes. There needs to be a two-pronged approach in that accommodation must be upgraded so that they're warmer and cheaper to heat."

### News | 3



### **Boston-style Church archives** could preserve Irish records

### **Greg Daly**

A religious archives repository along the lines of one newly established at Boston College in the US would be "a really good idea" for the Irish Church, Dublin's diocesan archivist has said.

"I think it's a really good idea," Noelle Dowling told The Irish Catholic. "I think instead of people trying to invest in archives and putting money into building new repositories and everything when really there is an uncertain future ahead, I think personally the way to go would be to have some sort of Catholic depository, though it would need an awful lot of careful assessment, because it couldn't become a dumping ground."

### Conversation

Cautioning that such a project could take 20 years to

happen, she praised the work of the Delaney Trust for laying down a template for such a body by drawing together the archives of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin with those of Carlow College, the Brigidines and the Patrician Brothers.

"It's a conversation that's been going on for the past five-odd years among the archival and historical communities," she said.

### SMA misses out on major United Nations prize

### Chai Brady

The Society for African Missions were "shocked" to be shortlisted by the UN for their work to tackle desertification in the Sahel region.

Fr Maurice Henry said it was great for the order "to be recognised" beside organisations with massive resources aiming to mitigate the climate crisis.

They were shortlisted along with eight others, but were pipped to the post by

MERET (Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transition) Project of Ministry of Agriculture of Ethiopia.

The 'Land for Life Award' is organised by the UNCCD (UN Convention to Combat Desertification) and the winners were announced on Monday in Ankara, Turkey.

### Awareness

The SMA's Laudato Tree Proiect placed them in the competition. It is an awareness and fundraising campaign

which supports a major initiative to combat desertification in Africa called the 'Great Green Wall'.

This initiative was launched in 2007 and aims to restore degraded landscapes and transform millions of lives in one of the world's poorest regions by planting greenery across the width of the continent. Once complete, the wall is expected be the largest living structure on the planet stretching 8,000km.

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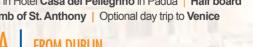
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# **Pro-life student gets death** threat after Irish Times article

### Colm Fitzpatrick

An outspoken pro-life advocate is encouraging others with the same convictions to not be "silenced" in the face of intimidation or bullying.

21-year-old student Gavin Boyne is urging the pro-life community to be resilient in the face of criticism after he received online abuse and a death threat for sharing his views.

"I'm a little bit surprised considering how long it's been since the referendum. It's been over a year since the referendum and I really would have thought things would have calmed down.

But apparently not," the philosophy student told The Irish Catholic.

The slew of abusive comments on Twitter which included a desire for him to have been aborted, as well as revealing false information about his personal life, came in response to an Irish Times opinion piece he wrote about the future of a pro-life Ireland.

'There's just been uproar, so I think it must have really struck a nerve or two," Mr Boyne said, adding that online trolls have "no actual argument" against his claims which is why they "resort to ad hominem attacks and the attempted character assassination"

While the backlash Mr Boyne received was from pro-choice supporters, he was eager to point out that this behaviour doesn't reflect the community at large.

"I've even had a few prochoice people in my Twitter comments actually saving this isn't on. So fair play to them - obviously it's not the majority.

### **Backlash**

He added that the pro-life community shouldn't be dissuaded from expressing their strongly-held beliefs even if it is met with backlash.

"If you have been ver-

bally or physically assaulted that isn't okay and it isn't acceptable. If you have been defamed, sue. If you have received death threats, get the police involved. We may have lost the referendum but that doesn't mean that we've lost our dignity or the fact that we ought to be treated with respect," he said.

'The reason why tensions are so high is because at the end of the day what all of this boils down to is a fight between life or death, and I mean that guite literally. We can't afford to be silenced by fears of threats, because the day our voice goes silent is the day we've really lost.'



Cork for Life volunteer Damien Murphy takes part in the pro-life group's Father's Day event, celebrating dads in the county.

### **Bishops defend how RSE is** taught in Catholic schools

### Staff reporter

The bishops have rejected claims that Catholic schools do not teach about facts in Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) classes.

In their latest quarterly statement, the hierarchy responded to criticisms of the way RSE is taught in their schools.

Health Minister, Simon Harris, said in a recent Tweet that RSE "must always be based on facts, not on ethos". A review of RSE ordered by the Department of Education is currently underway.

The bishops in their statement said that "Catholic

schools encourage excellence in relationship and sexuality education, and in all learning'

They said: "In Catholic schools young people learn about values, about respect, about consent, about selfesteem, and about a whole range of other important issues in relation to relationships and sexual health in age appropriate ways, and in cooperation with parents.

"Contrary to some recent negative commentary, in Catholic schools young people do learn facts as part of their relationships and sexuality education."

### Aontú leader accuses Govt of sweeping abortion case 'under the carpet'

### Staff Reporter

Aontú TD Peadar Tóibín has said the family at the centre of the Holles Street abortion case feel they're not being "treated fairly" and that the government is ignoring the issue.

After speaking to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar under Dáil privilege last week concerning a couple who opted for an abortion at the National Maternity Hospital when they were falsely told their baby had a fatal foetal abnormality, Mr Toíbin said that the government leader's response was 'shocking"

Basically, what's happened here is the government is looking to sweep this under the carpet," the Meath West TD

told The Irish Catholic, adding that a letter the family sent to Health Minister Simon Harris three weeks ago has been ignored.

### **Public domain**

"It's not the case that the Taoiseach doesn't know anything about it. The Taoiseach said it is a private issue but the family have said to me through the solicitor that they want it brought into

### What do you think?



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the public domain because they feel they're not be treated fairly whatsoever. So, his response was ludicrous," the politician added.

Responding to critics who have accused pro-life advocates of exploiting this case to advance their agendas, Mr Toíbín said: "Well first of all, we've just gone through five years of individual cases being raised by people on the prochoice side in the means to further their own argument.

"So, for anybody on that side of the debate to make that charge after five vears of it is incredible.

"As well, and this is a key point; it is equally as interesting that no one from the pro-choice side has raised this in the Dáil.'



In A Different Dublin photographs of mothers feeding their babies from Guinness bottles are juxtaposed against shots of teenagers enjoying St Stephen's Green on a summer's day. It is filled with memories of times gone by; of a time when there was only one Poolbeg chimney; of a time before the shopping centre was built on corner of St Stephen's Green. But it is also filled with so much that has not changed: children playing, young couples in love, homelessness.



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# In this attitude, Ireland was by no means unique

hat happened to former Garda Majella Movnihan pressurised into yielding her baby son for adoption, back in the 1980s, after she became pregnant out of wedlock - is distressing and upsetting.

And it's certainly unjust that women were stigmatised when this happened while the fathers were seldom held responsible for a pregnancy they had engendered.

It's being described as characteristic of "Ireland's dark past", and it's been reported that the Gardai were "very influenced by the Church" in their attitudes. (It's also been reported that the Archbishop of Dublin saved Majella from being dismissed from the police force – apparently because penalising single mothers might encourage abortions.)

### Disapproving

But Ireland was not unique in disapproving of birth outside of marriage. This was almost universally practiced until the 1960s

### The dire side-effects of opium

British Conservative contender Rory Stewart [pictured]

has admitted that he smoked opium when visiting the Middle East, which caused some ripples. My late husband, Richard, also tried this experiment in Vietnam.

He was brought into an opium den where wizened men lay listlessly on couches with their opium pipes. He thought they were in their 80s. but in fact they were only in their 40s or 50s: the drug had aged them by 40 years. They were also desperately afflicted by constipation, a known side-effect.

He tried the opium, and since it is a painkiller, found it initially a pleasant shield against any reality. But the sight of those wizened opium addicts never left him, or the human cost of their addiction.

## Mary Kenny



- and it is still a source of discrimination in Japan, for example.

A slew of British movies and novels appeared in the 1960s which highlighted the plight of the 'outcast' status of pregnant young woman, especially when abandoned by her child's father: Shelagh Delaney's A Taste of Honey, Lynne Reid Banks' The L-Shaped Room, Margaret Drabble's The Millstone. Drabble's title involving a 'millstone' speaks for itself about an unmarried



I eslie

Caron

a single

plays Jane,

Biblical allusion to a doomed fate (Drabble was raised a Quaker). In The L-Shaped Room, the unmarried pregnant girl is shacked up in a boarding house with 'other misfits'.

Yes, the treatment of unmarried pregnant young women was often unkind and uncompassionate; but it wasn't uniquely Irish.

In many professions, it was also believed - up to the 1980s - that it would be difficult for a woman to

continue in a stressful job if she had a young child. Air stewardesses everywhere were obliged to resign on marriage since it was supposed they would subsequently start a family. It is still a controversial debate in some armies and in some firefighting units - about whether a woman can be an effective soldier when pregnant, nursing or caring for a young child.



All these patterns are changing and adapting, and proper arrangements for maternity leave certainly help women take time for motherhood while continuing in their professions. And vet only this week, the British Labour MP Stella Creasy has claimed that the House of Commons makes it almost "impossible" for a woman politician to have a baby and get equal treatment in the Mother of Parliaments.



I have come rather late to the writings of John O'Donohue, the former priest and poet who died, aged only 52, in 2008. He was a Hegalian scholar who wrote his PhD thesis in German. He was also a Clareman who grew up in an Irish-speaking ambience, and steeped in Celtic spirituality. From his first book Anam Cara, his writings attained almost cult status.

O'Donohue seems to touch on a need for a wider spirituality than the institutional churches can provide - he resigned from the priesthood because he found the institutional Church almost arid. In his book Divine Beauty, he writes with some contempt about "the worn platitudes of staid authority"

Divine Beauty is a paean of praise

to beauty in all its forms, including the transcendental. In this, he has also touched on the spirit of the age. "To behold beauty dignifies your life; it heals and calls you out beyond the smallness of your own self-limitation to experience new horizons. To experience beauty is to have your life enlarged," he wrote.

Yet, despite his concerns that our modern consumerist world lacks beauty, there is a huge appetite for beauty today. Art exhibitions are packed to the gunnels including, sacred art by such as Da Vinci, Caravaggio and Burne-Jones. Operas, ballets, classical concerts are booked out as soon as announced.

Beauty is indeed something 'divine' and people hunger for it.

### Lough Derg Pilgrim Stories June 2019



### **Pilgrim Siobhan**

### "I'm here to celebrate my 50th birthday"

"Not too long ago I set myself a personal commitment to do Lough Derg when I reached 50! I did it once before when I was doing my exams, the equivalent of the Leaving Cert today, based then in my home county, Donegal. I've been living in New York for many, many years and wanted to come back some day. No better time to return to Lough Derg than when facing a milestone birthday.

### "This pilgrimage takes will-power!"

What has struck me during the pilgrimage is the reassurance that the faith is still alive. People are still showing their faith and coping with the challenge that is Lough Derg. It's not like going to Fatima or Lourdes or anywhere else - those pilgrimages are easier. This pilgrimage takes will power! This is seen in the sheer faith of people, the fact that they are willing to come back year

**(**)

after year, and then there is the number of seniors doing the pilarimage, enduring the challenge - this reminds me of my own parents being here.

### "My mother and father both did Lough Derg"

Being from Donegal, both my mother and father did the pilgrimage. It was the done-thing back in those days and they too endured the challenge like I've done these past few days. To have done something that they have done has helped me have a good experience here.

### "Wow, wholemeal wheaten bread"

Maybe I didn't recall it from before, but we got wholemeal wheaten bread as part of the Lough Derg pilgrimage meal. What a surprise that was! It gives you energy to keep going.

My greatest surprise was the fact that the pilgrimage hasn't changed that much and that people, despite other changes, are still doing it young and old and even us 50 vear olds!

### LOUGH DERG THREE **DAY PILGRIMAGE CONTINUES UNTIL 15TH AUGUST**

"Here on Lough Derg we are committed to keep open the space for the less obvious things, the deeper things, the things that get squeezed out of our busy lives and put on the long finger. Time for the deeper self, the hidden self, the real self. Time for self and God. Come and see. - Fr La, Prior

Pilgrims arrive daily on Station Island, Lough Derg, Co Donegal between 11am - 3.00pm. No booking required. Three Day Pilgrimage €75.00 (concessions for youth & seniors).



# **Catholic higher** education – a bright future?

n recent years, Mary Immaculate College students have volunteered at a school for children with special needs in Siliguri, India. It is a small operation run by religious sisters and struggles to survive.

Just across the road is a highlyresourced fee-paying boarding school. Over the entrance is a giant crest containing a cross, an image of the Sacred Heart and a motto in Latin. The school's website displays a photograph of a beautiful but non-existent Church. In fact. it is not a Catholic school. It is a private for-profit school run by wealthy businessmen. Why the pretence? Because in India Catholic education 'sells'. Catholic schools have the best reputation. They are known to put their pupils first, to have the most dedicated teachers and to get the best results.

### **Globally, Catholic** education is flourishing

At a time when we here in Ireland may be in danger of losing confidence in the mission of Catholic education it is useful to remind ourselves that globally, Catholic education is flourishing. Since 1970, the number of Catholics worldwide has remained a constant 18% of the increasing world's population. Yet during this same period the number of pupils in Catholic primary schools has doubled and those in Catholic post-primary schools has trebled. The number of Catholic Higher Education institutions globally is also growing, especially in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

In Ireland we have tended to think of Catholic schools and colleges as an extension of the family and the parish. We see their role as serving primarily the Catholic community. In other countries, especially where Catholics are in the minority, Catholic education has also been understood as an important leaven in society generally. It serves evangelisation by witnessing to the Christian understanding of the human person and by enabling constructive dialogue between the Gospel and the wider culture.

### A trajectory of decline

In Ireland, however, the Catholic influence in education is in decline. Nowhere is this more evident than in the higher education sector. Back in 2011, in an effort at greater consolidation of resources, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) sought the merger or closure of smaller higher education institutions. Most of these were Catholic.

In 2013, the Catholic Education Service (CES) listed 14 Catho-



### Fr Eamonn Conway

lic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs). The following were in the area of initial teacher education: Froebel College, run by Dominican Sisters

The Marino Institute of Education, founded by the Christian Brothers and linked to TCD.

 Mary Immaculate College, founded by the Mercy Order and whose Trustees include as Chair the Bishop of Limerick, linked with the University of Limerick.

• The Mater Dei Institute run by the Dublin diocese.

 St Patrick's College Drumcondra, founded by the Vincentians.

St Angela's College, Sligo, founded by the Ursuline Sisters. St Mary's University College, Bel-

fast. St Patrick's College Thurles, a former diocesan seminary that was training secondary teachers.

The CES also identified the following as Catholic institutions dedicated to theology, pastoral care, humanities and social studies: All Hallows College, Carlow College, the then newly-founded Loyola Institute at Trinity College, The Milltown Institute, The Priory Institute (Tallaght) and St Patrick's College Maynooth.

In the past six years the landscape has changed considerably:

Froebel College of Education was incorporated into NUI Maynooth in 2013.

The Milltown Institute closed in 2015.

All Hallows College was closed and the campus sold to Dublin City University in 2016.

St Patrick's College, Thurles, was incorporated into Mary Immaculate College in 2016.

The Mater Dei Institute and St Patrick's, Drumcondra, were incorporated into Dublin City University

in 2016. St Angela's College, Sligo, is edging towards incorporation into NUI Galway.

This leaves the Marino Institute of

**b** Religious authorities need to approach negotiations with secular universities and Catholic colleges that are publicly funded with their eyes wide open"

Education, Mary Immaculate College and St Mary's in Belfast still functioning in the teacher education sector, and Carlow College, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, and the Loyola Institute in TCD, serving ministry, theology and the human sciences, while the Dominican Priory Institute continues to run programmes online. The Marino Institute of Education is under the co-trusteeship of Trinity College. The Lovola Institute. though founded by the Jesuits, has had difficulties securing formal recognition as a Catholic entity.

At first glance this might still seem like a healthy presence in higher education for a small country. The reality, however, is that colleges that are publicly-funded are prone to internal secularisation while those dependent upon the Church for resources, though freer to determine their ethos, struggle for survival financially.

Unfortunately, there is no reasonable expectation that the trajectory of merger and closure outlined above is not set to continue.

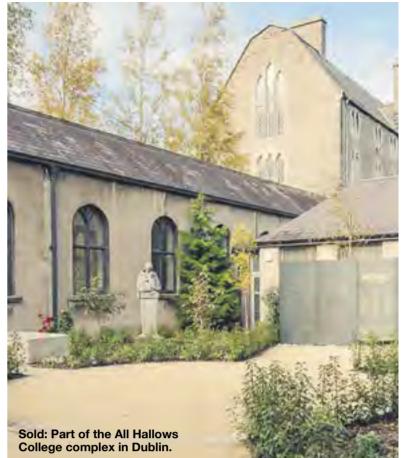
### **New initiatives**

In the past few weeks several Church-owned properties have been put on the market. Many were former educational facilities, including Clonliffe College, once the Dublin diocesan seminary, and the Milltown Institute. The monies raised have been ear-marked for several worthy causes: social justice projects such as the provision of affordable housing, contributions to the redress scheme for abuse survivors, care of elderly priests and religious, and investment in the legacy of religious congregations.

### **Consider re-investing** in higher education

Given, however, that many of the facilities being sold off were educational it would seem in keeping with the intention of donors to consider re-investing some of these monies in Catholic education. If so, the priority should be in higher education given that this is the sector that has been hit hardest in respect of a Catholic presence.

Such investment is needed to ensure that we have teachers who are genuinely formed in the Catholic tradition to teach in our schools and so that high quality theological formation is available to people, lay and cleric, who will minister as chaplains



#### and in our parishes.

It is not just about the pragmatics of training personnel, however. Catholics see education as a lifeenhancing gift essential to human dignity. This view of education is an indispensable counter-balance to the increasing tendency in public policy to measure educational outcomes in terms of their contribution to economic productivity and the market-place.

### What are the options?

Attempts to found a new Catholic university in Ireland in recent years have barely got off the ground. In the present climate it could be very difficult to garner the necessary resources, which are considerable, receive formal state recognition and meet the ever-increasing demands for high quality research, teaching and learning required of a contemporary university.

### **Co-operation but with** eyes open

More feasible is enhanced co-operation in the delivery of Catholic education within higher education institutions whose futures seem secure, at least for now. For example, coinciding with the incorporation of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and the Mater Dei Institute into Dublin City University, a Centre for Catholic Religious Education was established and a number of posts in Catholic theology and religious education guaranteed. Along similar lines, the trustees of St Patrick's College, Thurles, surrendered their valuable campus to Mary Immaculate College along with a generous financial endowment on condition that an Irish Institute for Pastoral Studies would be established and resourced to serve not only the diocese of Cashel and Emly but the Church nationally.

Such initiatives have been commonplace in other countries but are in their early stages here. They remain fragile. Yet if successful they can imbue confidence in similar forms of partnership and co-operation into the future. If they fail, of course, that will convey a different message.

Partnerships between Church and publicly-funded higher education institutions can be win-win. The internationalisation of Irish higher education campuses is a key strategic goal in higher education. A Catholic identity is immensely advantageous for networking given that the Catholic Church is the largest provider of education worldwide after state authorities.

The increased availability of bursaries and scholarships for students and for research projects endowed by religious bodies is welcome"

What's needed is for religious congregations and dioceses to work together to develop a shared vision and strategy for Catholic higher education in Ireland into the future.

The increased availability of bursaries and scholarships for students and for research projects endowed by religious bodies is welcome. Yet better co-ordination would allow for greater critical mass and longerterm impact.

Religious authorities need to approach negotiations with secular universities and Catholic colleges that are publicly funded with their eves wide open. It is essential to secure the necessary commitments that would allow for the Catholic vision of education to inform and underpin initiatives being supported by Church funds.

What's needed most, however, is to recover confidence within the Irish Church in the mission of Catholic education, and invest accordingly.

*i* Fr Eamonn Conway is Professor and Head of Theology & Religious Studies at Mary Immaculate College – University of Limerick.

### **Comment** 7

# **Overcoming an ancient spiritual ill**



ome years ago, a dedicated, active, hardworking, popular priest who ran marathons for the hospice in his spare time, found himself experiencing something he had not anticipated, and did not recognise. He described those days as a time of "crisis in my ministry...my work was consuming me. I was too busy. Self-care and time off were not priorities. It felt like my vocation and belief in God were beginning to erode. It was as if the busyness of ministry had taken me away from my true self, from my core identity, from my reason for being a priest."

That is a tough admission for any priest, yet I am sure that he is not the only one to experience those devastating feelings. Wisely, he sought a sabbatical. Providentially he went to Worth Abbey. There, Abbot Christopher Jamison diagnosed acedia.

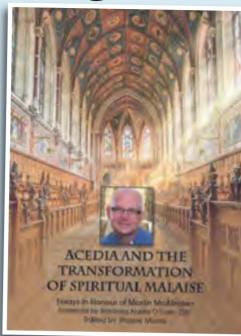
This ancient temptation offered a descriptive theological reflection of what was happening for me spiritually and professionally as I tried to live with the stresses and changes of contemporary ministry," wrote Fr Martin McAlinden. "It also offered the possibility of transformation in that writers. ancient and contemporary, have described remedies for acedia.

"It was in these early explorations of acedia that I first realised the potential for using this ancient tradition as a way of understanding the experiences of spiritual malaise among Irish Catholic clergy today and to begin to think also about ways towards transformation. It is this potential of acedia, as both diagnosis and remedy for clergy today."

### Honesty

With great honesty, Fr McAlinden wrote about what had happened, because he wanted to share with his brother priests what he learned at Worth Abbey and in the years which followed, so that others might learn what he had learned, but possibly, less painfully.

He knew that he was not unique in this journey, writing that: "Underneath so much of the unhealthy dynamics in ministry and Church life, such as burnout, cynicism, addiction, loneliness and the formation of models of Church and ministry focused more on



it is profoundly important

for what it is, because it is

so destructive, and because

when we know what we are

doing wrong, we may come

were not really taught, such

way of the Cross, we cannot

do so 24/7 and we have to

accept that self-care is not

need to find time to pray no

selfishness and that we

matter how busy we are

something I struggle with.

Laborare est orare, we

were taught - to work is to

pray. Yet the risk is that we

work so much that we do

fellow priests about their

experiences. He identified

the challenges they faced

numbers of priests, a

the institution of the

that seemed to not be

sense of frustration with

Church and its hierarchies

supporting priests ...a sense

of feeling uncared for by

the institution, that when

priests were struggling or

seemed to be interested or

And again and again,

what he described as "one

of the biggest challenges

well-being today: feelings

of profound loneliness and

to ministry and priestly

He explored with those

to whom he spoke what

had happened to their

unable to cope, nobody

there was mention of

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including: "Rising workloads as a result of decreasing

Martin asked his

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as that while we are called

to accept things that we

to live like Christ, giving

everything, walking the

to be able to recognise it

management than service, may be lurking the ancient 'demon' of acedia. The invidious problem is that most clergy have never heard the word 'acedia' and consequently are unaware of its dynamics."

There was mention of what he described as 'one of the biggest challenges to ministry and priestly well-being today: feelings of profound loneliness and isolation'''

#### He wrote: "It was at Worth that I began to find myself again in my relationship with God, began to believe at a deep level that it is in Christ I live and move and have my being (Acts 17:28)...in all of this the presence of God, leading and guiding, always intimately present, seemed so real. I felt cared for by God and experienced a renewed sense of calling to ministry."

Martin believed that "the word acedia needs to be reclaimed and defined and used to diagnose and describe the spiritual malaise common today in the lives of clergy, and more generally".

I liked that "more generally". For acedia is not something unique to priests – every human being of faith may experience it, and

Fr McAlinden wrote about what had happened, because he wanted to share with his brother priests what he learned at Worth Abbey"

prayer life since leaving the seminary. Many priests found that the patterns of prayer learned and practiced in seminary were not often useful for ministry afterwards, he wrote. Yet ...many had discovered alternative ways of praying, of being energised, of connecting with God, of being immersed in the love of Christ, but these had been 'discovered', not taught. stumbled upon later in life when it seemed as though what had been taught and learned in seminary was not doing what it should. Perhaps one of the challenges for seminary formation for the future would be to find space to explore multiple spiritual practices that involve those traditionally taught like the Office, saying Mass, and so forth, but also introducing seminarians to some of those alternative practices" ...so that "when new priests go into parish, they would be aware of a range of

go into parish, they would be aware of a range of different possible ways of living, moving and having their being in Christ that enables them to be resilient in their daily lives".

He described the many ways priests had found to pray: some found preaching was a way into prayer, some said the daily Office, some talked of learning to see God in nature or in people, others talked about practicing mindfulness, some used pilgrimage as a way into prayer, others reading spiritual texts, and, finally, some found nourishment in the ancient prayers and traditions of Ireland.

When new priests go into parish, they would be aware of a range of different possible ways of living"

And so he set out to identify the characteristics of a "spirituality post-acedia for priests today, or even a spirituality pre-acedia for the priests of the future".

Fr Martin did not finish his work on acedia, for he died of cancer three years ago this week, but he worked with his fellow priests to identify what could prevent acedia from eroding and destroying the selfless love which lies at the heart of priesthood.

What he had learned is published now in a book: Acedia and Transformation of Spiritual Malaise: Essays in Honour of Martin McAlinden.

Not many of us could have written with such searing honesty of our spiritual struggles. Martin did so because he had found the cause of, and the remedies for, what had happened to him. By continuing to work with his brother priests through what he had found at Worth, he was able to set out a vision for others to ponder and, hopefully, to develop.

He concluded: "May the priests of today, together with the laity and hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Ireland have both the courage and the vision to work towards such possibilities, inspired by Christ who loves each one of us so completely."



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A new book on meditating on Jesus' love comes from hard-won experience, writes **Martin O'Brien** 

ou come from a conversation with Jim Deeds uplifted and refreshed. Those who have attended the retreats he has recently conducted at Lough Derg (with his friend and fellow author Fr Brendan McManus SJ) or listened to his talks to various faith groups say the same.

Mr Deeds (47), writer, pastoral worker and former university dropout, born and brought up in Belfast where he has lived all his life, is a multi-dimensional person with many talents.

First and foremost, Jim is husband of Nuala and father of their three children, Brendan, Joe and Eimear. They live in the Catholic Glen Road area in west Belfast not far from Jim's parents Brendan and Ann.

He recalls being an altar boy "until I grew a beard and became taller than the priest".

"I learned two different spiritualities from my parents. From my mum, a very devotional liturgical spiritualty. She taught me to pray and introduced me to the Bible and to a God who loved me.

"And from my Dad I learned an everyday solid practical Catholic spiritualty summed up in two phrases: 'If you live right it will all come right in the end' and 'your family comes first."

He also recalls the influence of a succession of priests singling out "my mentor" the late Msgr Tom Toner, one-time local parish priest whose picture rests in "a sacred space" along with a rosary and other religious objects in his office.

### Opportunity

A former social worker, Jim is parish development co-ordinator and training and facilitation officer in the Living Church Office of the diocese of Down and Connor on north Belfast's Cliftonville Road.

When the opportunity came up to apply for the post, "I recognised it as a calling...otherwise I would still be a social worker."

A writer of spiritual books and a broadcaster – a regular on BBC Radio Ulster's *Thought for the Day* – as well as being a poet, musician and woodturner in his spare time, Mr Deeds's latest book, *Deeper into the Mess – Praying Through Tough Times* has just been published. Cowritten with Fr McManus, it's a

# Under God's eye in the mess



sequel to their well-received Finding God in the Mess – Meditations for Mindful Living which is to be republished by Loyola Press in the US next year.

The new book, modelled somewhat on St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, is striking for its invitation to those "in an emergency" to meditate on Jesus' love for them personally, to read powerful words from Scripture and to take action to remind them they are not alone.

I came back to practising through my children, I wanted them to have what I had [in my upbringing] and realised what I had missed"

If the laboured diocesan job title suggests a deskbound post, you couldn't be more mistaken. He keeps attendance in his office, where he spoke to *The Irish Catholic*, to a minimum.

"My job has always been out and about. I am an itinerant pastoral minister, so I travel round," he says. "My real passion is people, my passion is building community, my passion is being curious about how God moves in different parts of the diocese in different ways.

diocese in different ways. "I have a real passion for infusing professional 'as good as we can get' facilitation skills with Scripture and prayer."

He spends a great deal of his time with people in parishes the length and breadth of the diocese – the second largest in Ireland after Dublin.

Much of his time is spent working under the leadership of Living Church director Paula McKeown in rolling out the diocese's pastoral plan, including the development and formation of parish pastoral councils and providing training in the teaching of the Faith at local level.

An enthusiastic user of social media, he deploys Facebook and his Twitter account @gymforthesoul as effective tools of evangelisation and of affirming community endeavour.

Gym for the Soul is also the title of his first anthology – subtitled 'Poems for a Spiritual Workout'. Deeds won't claim credit for the title, reminding me that it was inspired by a schoolboy who heard him speak about the faith to his class at a Belfast school.

The boy had just been to PE and remarked: "Jim's class is like going to the gym for our souls."

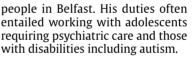
His debut book was Surfing Life's Waves: Reflections for Everyday Life.

You are not in Deeds' company for long without discerning his love for Ignatian spirituality stemming from the influence of Alan McGuckian SJ, Ireland's first Jesuit bishop who before his translation to Raphoe in 2017, was the inaugural director of Living Church from 2011.

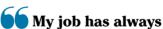
He also acknowledges the influence of Jesuit writers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Fr William J. O'Malley "who have tried to understand God through the lens of science".

In his almost 20 years as a youth social worker prior to his appointment to Living Church in 2012, Jim worked at the cutting edge of care for some of the most troubled young

**From** my Dad I learned an everyday solid practical Catholic spiritualty summed up in two phrases: 'If you live right it will all come right in the end' and **'your family** comes first"



Particularly stressful was an 18-month stint working with children who had been abused by older siblings. "The abused children were the same age as my own children," he says. "Reading the files was distressing."



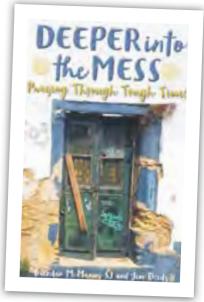
been out and about. I am an itinerant pastoral minister, so I travel round," he says. "My real passion is people"

After schooling at St Teresa's Primary and St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar, near his home, Jim secured a place at Queen's University to study history and anthropology only to drop out after two years and take up busking in Belfast city centre to make ends meet prior to becoming a social worker.

"I wasn't mature enough for university, I was deeply unhappy."

He recalls "a hedonistic period and lots of partying" extending from his time as a student into his 20s during which he fell away from the practice of his Faith "while never losing my faith in Jesus Christ".

He said: "I came back to practising through my children, I wanted them to have what I had [in my upbringing] and realised what I had missed in the practice and exploration of my Faith and became active



in my parish in my 30s."

His Faith has developed, he says, primarily through the reading of Scripture and meditation.

As an ordinary young Catholic who "never even for a moment" felt tempted to join the IRA, he recalls persistent petty harassment by the security forces and being particularly fearful of certain regiments.

"I remember being absolutely petrified by the Paras [Parachute Regiment] and the UDR," he says, trying to explain the non-appeal of the IRA, "I imagine it has a lot to do with being brought up with Faith, having a radical non-violence person as my hero, Jesus, being brought up to read about him and getting to know him and having that reinforced at Mass.

"For me that cemented my sense that radical non-violence is the way to go."

to go." While naturally dismayed by the collapse of the Good Friday institutions, this political failure makes Mr Deeds even more determined to work for reconciliation. Loath to blame politicians "who are a reflection of all of us in concentrated form", he stresses the importance of building relationships at community level that promote healing and the growth of a more mature politics providing a better context for "sharing this piece of land together".

A few years ago, he was appointed a director of the 4 Corners Festival in Belfast, an inter-Church initiative founded by two clergymen, Fr Martin Magill and Presbyterian minister, Rev Steve Stockman. He had previously attended festival events and performed readings of his poems. Mr Deeds says: "The 4 Corners

Mr Deeds says: "The 4 Corners Festival examines society through the prism of Faith, and I was inspired to find out more about it by Fr [Martin] Magill."

Fr Magill has, of course, recently made international headlines after his address at the funeral of journalist Lyra McKee.

Asked to describe the God that he has got to know better over the years, Jim Deeds immediately cites the story of the rich man "who thought he had everything sorted" that Jesus "looked steadily at and loved" (Mk 10:21). "That is the God that looks stead-

"That is the God that looks steadily at me in my mess that I write about. He looks steadily at us and loves us."

() Deeper into the Mess – Praying Through Tough Times *is published by Messenger Publications.* 

**Comment** 9

# The rise of the Green 'Holy Joe'



Talk is cheap when it comes to environmental piety, writes **David Quinn** 

reta Thunberg is a 16-year-old Swedish schoolgirl who has risen to prominence lately by warning us of an impending environmental apocalypse if we do not immediately make drastic changes to the way we live.

Thunberg was the initiator of the first school strikes for climate action last year in her native Sweden. We have now had two of our own in this country.

Thunberg has addressed major meetings around Europe. She recently warned British parliamentarians that without radical action now, by 2030, just 11 years away, we will have set off "an irreversible chain reaction beyond human control, that will most likely lead to the end of our civilization as we know it".

Before then, she warned, "permanent and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society [must] have taken place, including a reduction of CO2 emissions by at least 50%".

### Emissions

Our own parliament recently declared a 'climate emergency', making us only the second country in the world to do so after Britain. This week. the Government published a major report outlining what it plans to do to tackle climate change in the coming years. Presently, Ireland is far behind the target it has agreed with other EU countries to reduce carbon emissions. If we don't get our act in order, we are going to be hit with huge EU-imposed fines.

In the recent local and European elections, the Green party performed well. It received 5.6% of the vote in the former and 11% in the later. There was much talk



If Green voters mean it, then they must cut out foreign holidays, among many other lifestyle changes.

of a 'Green wave'. We seem to be prepared to do what it takes to save the planet, but is it really true? Are we really prepared to make the necessary sacrifices or is it mainly talk, cheap and easy 'virtue-signalling' with no real substance behind it?

Religious people are very familiar with the figure of the 'Holy Joe', that is the person who puts on a great display of public piety in order to make themselves look good in the eyes of their peers. Even when we were a lot more religious than we are today, people didn't have much time for 'Holy Joes', and Jesus certainly didn't. He loathed fake piety.

We are also familiar with the figure of the à la carte Catholic, that is, the person who picks from Catholicism the bits that suit them, usually leaving out the more difficult and challenging parts.

Are we now in the era of the Green 'Holy Joe' and the 'à la carte environmentalist'? That is to say, do we now have lots of people who say they are 'Green', who insist that the planet is doomed unless we follow the advice of Greta Thunberg, but are not leading by example in their own lives?

Most Green support is to be found in well-off middleclass areas. The middle-class Western lifestyle is a massive contributor to climate change. Middle-class people commonly have more than one car, often big SUVs. They live in well-heated houses, usually using oil or gas for the purpose. They drive their children to and from school.

They fly off on at least one foreign holiday a year. We nearly all use smartphones and upgrade them when we can. These use huge amounts of data and the data-centres run by the tech companies use vast amounts of electricity.

In middle-class homes today, each child usually has a room to themselves. In other words, middle class people do not live 'small'. Their carbon footprint is large.

How many dioceses and parishes are striving to reduce their carbon emission to net zero?"

If Green supporters are right, and we really are faced with a climate emergency, increasing carbon tax by a bit won't go half far enough. Nor will reducing our use of single-use plastic, or cutting a portion of meat from our diet, or declining the next phone upgrade. We have to go much, much further than this.

Greta Thunberg, for example, has stopped flying on planes. She now gets about by train, even if it takes several days to reach her next destination in Europe. How many of the pupils who demanded more action on climate change outside Leinster House recently are willing to do this? What about their parents?

If this is a climate emergency, and if the next decade will literally decide the fate of the planet, then we have to immediately make huge and painful changes to the way we live. We must also be willing to face and cause a massive economic downturn.

There is simply no way to change to renewable energy on time. The modern economy has been made possible by fossil fuels, and for the foreseeable future, we are going to be dependent on fossil fuels to maintain our standard of living.

If we reduce our use of fossil fuels drastically and soon, then we must face up to a massive economic contraction. That will not alone mean a big reduction in our living standards, but greatly reduced spending in areas like health and education. Are we ready for this? Will it really be politically and socially acceptable if push comes to shove? Will voters rebel?

### **Action**

What is the Church doing? How many dioceses and parishes are striving to reduce their carbon emission to net zero? They talk about the issue a lot, but action speaks louder than words. For example, is it acceptable to preach about climate action and then organise annual pilgrimages to Lourdes, Rome and the Holy Land? All those flights emit lots of carbon.

In other words, we must decide now if we are really serious about tackling climate change and how much pain we are willing to accept in that fight. If we are not serious, then environmentalism will simply become the new form of fake piety.

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As a historian of languages and someone who learned Irish as an adult, Caoimhín De Barra offers both academic and personal insights into Ireland's complex relationship with its national language.

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Being the child of donorassisted reproduction can be like having an invisible disability, **Susan Gately** is told

Joanna Rose was conceived in 1971 using an anonymous sperm donor. She found out when she was eight. Her dad was crying. "I wouldn't let it go until he told me what the matter was."

As they walked along he explained he was not her biological father. "I understood it but I didn't understand it." Wiping her father's tears away, she reassured him he was the only father she knew and loved. She tried to look after everyone else's feelings but was left alone to process what it meant.

She always looked different. Her family of father, mother and brother were smaller than her. Her Jewish Dad had dark skin and curly hair. Joanna – tall, with freckles, white skin and blue eyes, was treated "with surprise like a giant beanstalk".

Moving to Australia in the 1990s, the implications of her conception began to hit home. One night she had a dream. Her Dad was talking to her on the phone. She was looking through a porthole window into a sterile hospital unit. He stared back at her but his lips were not moving. "I was saying 'Dad where are you?' and he was saying 'I'm here Jo' but the guy staring at me wasn't speaking. I woke up in absolute terror."

### Realisation

The realisation struck - she had two fathers, and "the other mustn't look like my Dad". She ran to a mirror and tried to make her hair into a beard, a moustache – asking "What does he look like?"

Her search for his identity led to a doctorate in Ethics and Sociology and eventually a Human Rights test case in the UK which upheld a person's right to obtain information concerning their genetic

# Born without a family tree

identity. Seventeen years later, Dr Rose is still searching for her paternal kin, and although a mother herself, feels unsure of her identity. "It's like an invisible disability. To not know half of where you come from creates a haunting absence."

### Googling 'egg donor' immediately brings you into the world of competing national and international fertility clinics"

More than eight million children have been born through IVF since 1978. Hundreds of thousands come through sperm and/or egg donation. Googling 'egg donor' immediately brings you into the world of competing national and international fertility clinics. A Spanish clinic gives a "pregnancy and childbirth guarantee" or your money back.

When the same-sex marriage referendum was passed in 2015, same-sex couples gained the same Constitutional rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples. Does this include the right to establish a family? Dr Séan O'Conail, lecturer in Constitutional Law in UCC, referring to Murray vs Ireland which recognised the right to have children – although "it was not an absolute right" – says there is "certainly an arguable case that a [same-sex] couple could claim that they need modern fertility treatments to access their rights."

By the same token a right has been recognised for "children to know their birth mother but the case was poorly defined so the extent of the right is unclear" he says.

Seeking presumably to vindicate both rights, the government introduced the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 which lays down rules for Donor Assisted Human Reproduction (DAHR). The Act, which is yet to be implemented fully, bans anonymous sperm and egg donation. Instead clinics performing DAHR must register the details of donors which will ultimately become part of the National Donor-Conceived Person Register "to vindicate the rights of a donor-conceived child to

She always looked different. Her family of father, mother and brother were smaller than her. Her Jewish Dad had dark skin and curly hair. Joanna – tall, with freckles, white skin and blue eyes, was treated 'with surprise like a giant beanstalk'"

access information on their genetic heritage" according to the Department of Health. When a child is 18 he or she can seek to find out about genetic origins.

### Requirement

However the Irish fertility industry is railing against this requirement and has appealed to the Department of Health to lift the ban on anonymous donations for at least 10 years. A submission to the Department from the Irish Fertility Society (IFS) says no donors currently being used in Ireland would meet the criteria in the Act. In other words, most are anonymous and wish to remain so. Currently most sperm comes from Denmark and eggs come from clinics in the Czech Republic and the Ukraine.

### **Provisions**

Meanwhile, the Civil Registration Act 2019 has been signed into law which implements some of the provisions of the 2015 Act, allowing the names of two women to appear on a birth certificate. Under the act, the names of a mother (defined as the woman who gives birth to the baby, who may not be the

genetic mother) and a second 'intending parent' (like another woman in a same sex partnership) may appear on the birth certificate of a baby.

The intending parent undertakes "to care for, and exercise responsibilities" as if she were the parent. Where two women are registered as parents, a father's name will not appear on the birth certificate, because he's not registered as one of the parents.

Even a child growing up in a loving family has a 'visceral need to know. 'Who am I?'"

Emma O'Friel M.Psych.Sc. who has researched DAHR says this is "profoundly discriminatory to donor conceived children". "To say that ownership of a person created in a lab can be transferred to a non-related person is to discriminate against this 'donor-conceived' person. Our genetic link is protected whereas the parentage of these children is altered at the hands of a third-party."

Ms O'Friel, who spoke about DAHR before the Joint Committee on Health in December 2018, says this amounts to condoning false birth certificates. Last year Minister Katherine Zappone was upset when it was revealed that the births of an unknown number of adopted children were registered incorrectly and she said it was a disgrace, she says "and yet we are doing the same thing for another generation in a different guise".

Joanna Rose

Genetic origins are a vital component of our identity formation, she says. "Every human being in the world knows that they came from one man and one woman." Even a child growing up in a loving family has a "visceral need to know. 'Who am I?""

There are many questions facing the government, said the Taoiseach in January, "including what forms of surrogacy will be allowed" and whether to continue with anonymous sperm and egg donation. "I can understand why people would want that to continue but if we are pursuing a child-centred policy, where children have the right to know who their parents are and that speaks to our history, perhaps that is something we should not allow."

Meanwhile, Dr Joanna Rose appreciates the irony of a world in which traceability and transparency is key for agricultural products but not human life. "They want transparency in terms of what they eat, yet you can literally construct human beings internationally," she says.

"A person can have a surrogate mother in one country, an egg donor in another country and could have been conceived by the sperm of a dead person in another country – this is happening now. And they don't even have the right to know that on their birth certificate."

# WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE HOLY FAMILY IN...

# THE HODING

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Killal



Decisions about Ireland's dioceses must be driven by discipleship, Archbishop Eamon Martin tells **Greg Daly** 

t was inevitable that questions would be asked about the future of the Diocese of Dromore when, just weeks after a new auxiliary bishop was announced for the Archdiocese of Armagh, Bishop Philip Boyce stepped down as Dromore's diocesan administrator this April, being succeeded by Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin. It looked as if the two northern dioceses were being merged, if not formally at least in practice.

"In fact on the day that I went up there, the first day, that was all the speculation in Dromore and our own diocese," Archbishop Eamon tells *The Irish Catholic.* "Does this mean that Armagh and Dromore are now being amalgamated? And I can understand that question."

#### Controversy

It's important, he cautions, to understand how quickly decisions had needed to be taken around Dromore when Bishop John McAreavey announced his resignation – not even waiting for the Pope to accept it – in March 2018, against the background of controversy concerning his knowledge of allegations of abuse made against the late Fr Malachy Finnegan.

"McAreavey resigned very suddenly, I think taking everybody by surprise," Dr Martin says, explaining that it was immediately recognised in Rome that the diocese needed to be calmed in the face of the storm around the bishop's resignation.

"I think they were very anxious because of the Chrism Mass coming up, they wanted to give stability, and they asked Bishop Philip to go in," he says. "It was after that that they began their consultation as they always do in the case of a vacant see – they begin to consult. And the very first round of consultation in any diocese that's vacant is a very general one which they send out to the bishops, to a range of priests, and to a range of lay people in the diocese. They basically ask 'what are the needs of the

# Napping a Church fit for mission



diocese?'"

It became clear, the archbishop continues, that the consultation would not be a speedy affair.

"The situation in Dromore would be that Bishop Philip had been I think waiting a few years in Raphoe before his retirement was accepted – he's an old man, he'll be 80 in a couple of months time – and I think that everyone accepted that it wasn't a good long-term solution to have Bishop Philip staying there in the role of that, especially given that some of these diocesan consultations now are taking several years," he says.

Under the circumstances, he explains, it made sense to ask him, as metropolitan of Ireland's northern episcopal province, to oversee the diocese.

"In situations around the world where the bishop resigns suddenly, it's quite normal to ask the metropolitan of the province if he would oversee the diocese in the meantime, though I think in Dromore's situation there's probably a little but more to it than that," he says, describing the diocese as being in "a lot of need" and how he has been consulting closely with diocesan clergy over the past two months.

"Essentially what I've been asked to do is to go there and assist the diocese in trying to get back on its feet in some ways," he says. "As you know, the horrific sequence of allegations that have emerged there mean that it's an extremely difficult situation to send in any new bishop, any new man without experience to go in there and put that right."

#### \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

Nobody expects the task of steadying the ship to be a speedy one, he says, anticipating several years at the helm.

"Essentially what they've done is asked me to go in there and oversee Archbishop Eamon Martin.

the diocese for a number of years," he says. "I said to the priests in Dromore, listen, this is not just a case of me holding the fort here for a few more months, because if that was the case I imagine they probably would have asked Bishop Philip to stay on. I think they believe that now at least in the short term – short to medium term – that I will be in the diocese."

It's in this context that the announcement of an auxiliary bishop for Armagh makes most sense. Dr Martin says he submitted a request for an auxiliary early last year, before Bishop McAreavey's resignation, with Armagh having typically had an auxiliary bishop since the middle of the last century. Given how full the archbishop's schedule tends to be – as Primate of All-Ireland and President of the bishops' conference he has a huge range of national roles – it was understandable that he should have sought help in his pastoral ministry in Armagh. Adding oversight of Dromore to his portfolio only made this need more pressing, he adds.

Galway, Kilmacduagh

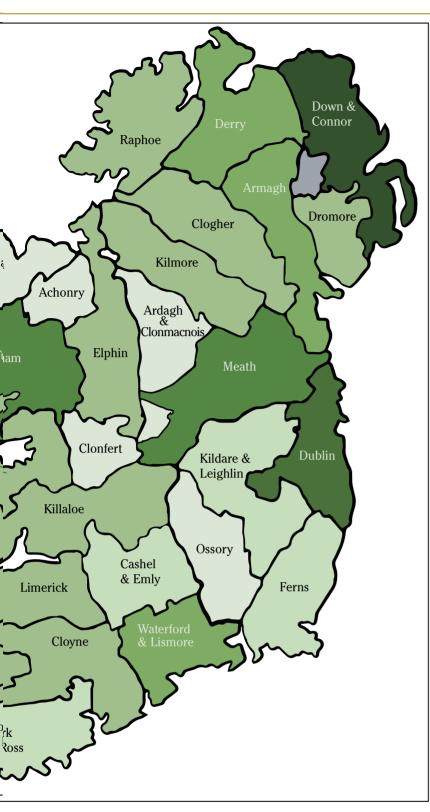
& Kilfenora

"When they did ask me to undertake the role in Dromore, I said that would be nearly impossible for me to do without an auxiliary bishop in Armagh, so they granted me that quite quickly and I think that was indeed an acknowledgement of the extra work that I was being asked to do," he says.

Not that Fr Michael Router – or Bishop Michael Router as he shall become next month – should be understood as a *de facto* Bishop of Dromore.

"Some people might think the auxiliary bishop will go into Newry and look after Dromore, but that is not the case," he says. "It's my intention, and I have already begun the work in Dromore, and I will be the apostolic administrator of Dromore. Of course, my assistant bishop can

**(b)** The horrific sequence of allegations that have emerged there mean that it's an extremely difficult situation to send in any new bishop, any new man without experience to go in there and put that right"



assist me in any duties like Confirmations or special Masses that I would ask him to assist me with."

#### \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

With the archbishop looking ahead to several years overseeing Dromore, which remains a formally vacant see, it is hard to shake off the suspicion that this is a step towards the amalgamation of Dromore – one of Ireland's smallest dioceses – with Armagh.

"I said to the priests that I understand all the speculation: everybody understands that, Dromore is a small diocese, and I suppose in the longer term the future of these smaller dioceses is something that we really need to think seriously about," Dr Martin concedes, before clarifying that he has not been asked to work towards a diocesan merger.

"The only thing is that at the moment I have not been asked by the Holy See to move towards amalgamation of Dromore," he says. "Therefore what I am doing is I am seeking to establish in Dromore all of the governance arrangements from Dromore for Dromore. In fact, I don't do any Dromore business here in Armagh, nor do I do any Armagh business in Dromore," he continues, stressing that at the moment his priority is to help Dromore get back on its feet.

That "at the moment" seems important, but Dr Martin says while it is obvious that the long-term future of Ireland's smallest dioceses – Dromore, Clonfert, Achonry, and Killala in particular – needs serious consideration, he is currently "not aware of any grand plan for the reorganisation of dioceses in Ireland".

Such a reorganisation was mooted a few years ago, following a request from the Congregation of Bishops in Rome, he says.

'When they came to the Irish bishops six or seven years ago, my understanding is that the recommendation was that at that time because of the huge focus in Ireland on child safeguarding the bishops were reluctant to give any sense that the reorganisation of dioceses was in response to the scandals," he says, "so their recommendation was that each time a diocese becomes vacant, that the question is asked: 'what about Fr Michael the longer-term Router.

future of this diocese?"

Acknowledging that it would be reasonable to ask that question of Dromore, Dr Martin says he has not initiated that process. "I actually said to the priests, look, I'm going to take a full year just to reform a council of priests, reform your diocesan governance structures, so that then we can properly and synodally consult with the people and the priests and take a very decent look over a period of time at the future of the diocese."

### To me the real appetite for a national synod would be to enable the questions about handing on the Faith"

Whatever happens, he says, "it's obvious that consideration needs to be given to the future of the smaller dioceses in Ireland".

"There's no doubt about that," he continues, "and I would imagine that in the consultation that the Holy See is undertaking, for example, that they're writing out to people in Achonry or Clonfert, their questions include not just 'who do you think would be a good bishop?' but also 'what do you consider to be the most pressing need for the diocese at this time?'"

It's important to remember, he stresses, that dioceses aren't simply administrative units. "A diocese is a portion of the people of God in communion with a bishop," he says, turning to how this understanding, and the Church's missionary character, needs to define any changes to how the Church in Ireland is organised.

"I think the question that I would be asking in all of this – and I am indeed asking this question because I think it's very important for the Church in Ireland now to start very much asking these questions – is: what is the optimum size of a diocese, or conditions within a diocese which will maximise mission and making disciples? Because ultimately that's what we're about. The question there would have to be how are we going to hand on the Faith."

### \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

Given how widely Irish dioceses vary in size – there are fewer than 40,000 Catholics in each of Achonry, Clonfert and Killala, while the Archdiocese of Dublin is home to over a million baptised Catholics – questions about optimum sizes for mission could prove contentious.

"I ask that question for example, what is the optimum size for mission: in other words, what is too small to provide the best possible provisions for handing on the Faith? But equally – this could be a controversial thing - what is too big? So, for example, are there some dioceses in Ireland too big to have that portion of the people of God in communion with their

bishop and

in communion with Rome?

"I actually wonder myself about the creation of huge dioceses which become really like bureaucracies or big structures, rather than in touch with people on the ground," he muses, reflecting on how the great Italian Church reformer St Charles Borromeo had said that the proper pastoral care of even one soul is diocese enough for any bishop. "It's a beautiful quotation in this context: if you are doing mission properly, then the size of the diocese is a secondary question," Dr Martin says.

The key thing, he says, is focusing on the Church's mission.

"That may not necessarily be an administrative question or a bureaucratic question about a curia," Dr Martin says. "It's more likely to be: are we unleashing the roles, for example, of our lay faithful? Are we calling our young people to play their part in the mission of the Church? What are we doing to maximise the proclamation of the Gospel? What are we doing to assist with catechesis?

"These are questions that are very much to do with the way we do things as much as the structural questions. I think it would be a mistake for Ireland to think that we can structure our way out of the particular challenges that we have in the Church at the moment," he continues. "Even within a diocese, we say 'let's amalgamate all the parishes', or 'let's cluster the parishes' – where that has worked best is where the lay faithful have been engaged, where they understand what's being asked, and the decision is being taken synodally."

**\* \* \* \* \* \* \*** Synodally, again, seems to be a guiding principle here. "I would be disappointed if the reorganisation of dioceses in Ireland took place at a boardroom table in Rome. I think that it needs to begin on the ground and move from the ground up," he says.

"My situation in Dromore provides an opportunity to look at this question seriously with Dromore, and I think whatever happens in Clonfert now, I hope that even if a new bishop is put in to Achonry, that immediately the consultation on the ground with the parish pastoral councils, with the prests in the dioceses, with the priests in the dioceses, immediately begins about the future," he says.

Not that it's just the smallest dioceses that need to face this reality, he adds. With reduced numbers of clergy, even his own Armagh will soon need to grapple with how it can fulfil its mission, he says, adding that it's important that these issues be examined together.

"It may mean that the change that you're talking about here is not instant, but it is staring us in the face, and it's something that we need to be serious about over, I would imagine, the next five to 10 years," he says. "But I would like it to be a process that engages both priests and laity, pastoral areas, team ministry, all of them, and I think that's happening in Dromore, people are saying can we manage as a diocese on our own? Do we need to look to being part of a bigger unit?" Making the Irish Church fit for mission going forward is a matter of evolution not revolution, he says, noting that even historically the country's dioceses did not happen overnight: although diocesan boundaries were laid down in the 12th Century, the great synods of Cashel, Rathbreasail and Kells in many ways simply recognised existing realities, and even then dioceses merged and were created over the centuries.

"So that evolution can be gradual or it can be sudden, but I do think that at the moment there's possibly a good reason to bring an issue like this, certainly within the next 10 years or so, to a national discussion," the primate says, saying that a national synod would be a good way of doing this.

"Why not? I would be absolutely in favour for us moving towards a national synod," he says. "I would be a bit iffy about holding a national synod that was going to concentrate on diocesan structures, because to me the real appetite for a national synod would be to enable the questions about handing on the Faith. They're all related questions."

Personally sceptical of the merits of redrawing diocesan boundaries, given their historical identities and connections with local saints, Dr Martin says: "I would be a wee bit frightened about carving it up as though we were doing local authority boundaries, though it is interesting that if you take somewhere like Dublin, from the point of view of the civil authorities, Dublin has now been effectively divided into four, so take that question that I asked earlier: what's the optimum size?"

With reduced numbers of clergy, even his own Armagh will soon need to grapple with how it can fulfil its mission, he says"

It's a question that's been raised in Italy, he says, where despite St John Paul's suppression of 101 dioceses in 1986, there are still over 200 dioceses even now, with the Congregation for Bishops taking the view that dioceses of under 100,000 inhabitants are unsustainable.

The key point, the archbishop says, is to focus on what dioceses are for. "In terms of evangelisation and all of that, whether or not Armagh and Dromore are one diocese or two dioceses I don't think is going to make a huge difference on the ground unless the decision was taken in order to enable mission."

Maintaining that one way or another change should be motivated from the ground up, Dr Martin says it might not take too much to unlock the unrealised potential of the Irish Church.

"The Church does move slowly, and I think if you were to take a look at Ireland I think you could probably, without too much massive change, effect some very important and significant developments," he says. "That would be my thinking – I'm very open to it."



### The Camino is more than just a physical trail, writes Colm **Fitzpatrick**

s I walked through the town of Arzúa on a blistering hot day, a message engraved into a wooden post stopped me in my tracks. It read: 'Why go to Santiago it's all in your head anyway?'

The faint inscription was a poignant one - pilgrims from all over the world journey on the Camino to contemplate and pray, so, why would travelling to another country help in that interior endeavour? Whatever problems you're facing, the Camino won't solve them.

The sign immediately reminded me of a passage in The Life of Samthann, where when a teacher asks permission to postpone his learning in order to travel overseas on pilgrimage, the abbess replies that one can arrive at the Kingdom of Heaven from any land. These jarring words provoked in me a whole host of conflicting ideas in the face of a scorching heat that would usually render any focused thought impossible.

Is it really the case that people who choose to venture on this arduous hike do so to run away from their personal issues at home - or is there a more noble cause to the Camino, one that embodies both strength and hope?

### **Unconscious decision**

It's certainly true that many pilgrims travel this ancient path to escape the monotonous routine of everyday life, whether it be from relationships or work. Making strides from town to town, listening to stories about unease or boredom at home are aplenty. Others, however, make an unconscious decision to go, unaware of why they're going or what it means to them.

"I think it's for many different reasons. I think some people go maybe for the romance of it, other people go because they feel they need a break in their life to get away from all the ups-and-downs of home life, work life or in their relationships, maybe. I think they just need to take time out and find some sort of guidance or peace of mind," Marian Pil-grimages guide Michael Murphy tells The Irish Catholic.

# Why go to Santiago? It's all in your head anyway!





"I think lots of people I've met on it tend to go - they don't really know the reason why they go - but while they're on it, they discover the reason why they're on it and that could be a spiritual thing or it could be anything."

While the Camino – sometimes called 'The Way' - has widespread appeal today, the original or formal reason

why pilgrims walked it dates far back to the 9th Century when supposedly the remains of St James the Apostle, also known as Santiago, were discovered in northern Spain after being carried by boat from Jerusalem. It is thought that King Alfonso II organised for the relics to be buried in a specially-built chapel, which would later become known as

the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. The pilgrimage to the Galician capital was very popular in medieval piety as an alternative to Rome and Jerusalem. Highly travelled by hundreds of thousands, pilgrims sought to reach the apostle and receive a plenary indulgence, all the while experiencing spiritual transformation and renewal.

The pilgrimage to the Galician capital was very popular in medieval piety as an alternative to Rome"

was a drop-off in the pilgrimage numbers as the Black Death ravaged Europe and the Protestant Reformation created social, political and religious upheaval. Only a few hundred pilgrims travelled the route during this time, but a resurgence occurred towards the end of the last century when it was declared the first European Cultural Route and also named a World Heritage Site. While people are drawn to it today for secular reasons, it's important to keep in mind the original religious motivation

**One key aspect** with the weight of a

It was in this spirit that travelled to Spain with a group of 25 Irish pilgrims to experience the Camino for the first time. While the most popular route is the Camino Francés which stretches 780km from St Jean-Pieddu-Port, our route began in Sarria, just over 100km from our final destination. After the comfortable plane journey across the sea, I was greeted with a luxurious hotel which together deceptively con-vinced me that this was more of a holiday than a pilgrimage. This illusion of cosiness

was quickly dispelled on the first day as we began our 22.4km walk to Portomarín.

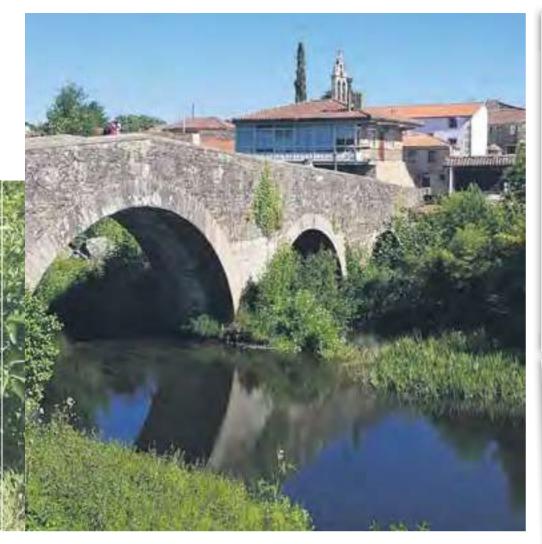
In almost 30C heat, the group moved off together with both excitement and trepidation, unsure of what lay ahead of them. The walk is covered by paved roads, paths, ascents and strong descents as well as many ecclesiastical buildings including the convent of Magdalena, and the churches of Santa Marina and El Salvador.

### \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

The initial kilometres were very enjoyable as I soaked in the sun and acclimatised to my new environment and group. Given the different walking pace of each person, various factions were formed where individuals could have more personal conversations with one another. I befriended quickly, and relished in discussions about politics, our own lives and the stories of why we were here.

One key aspect of the Camino is to travel light so as not to be burdened with the weight of a heavy rucksack. This made the walk much easier, and the group was especially lucky as most of our belongings could be left in the hotel, leaving us to carry only essentials like water, a snack and sunscreen. This is more than just a practical application; at a deeper level it signifies a mental decluttering where addictive attachment to modern day items is examined and quelled.

"I'm a big believer in that we're so caught up in consumerism and materialism that maybe it's time just to stop, take time, lighten the load," Michael explains, adding that technological devices like mobile phones which



connect you to social media and work inhibit one's ability to be truly free.

"I think you need to shed all that stuff and just let your mind be free and be open and just sit with it and let the Spirit work."

### **False impression**

In today's culture, happiness is often conflated with material wealth creating the false impression that a lack property is the cause of one's woes and ills. Paradoxically, by travelling light, the Camino reminds us that freedom is not synonymous with fulfilling our worldly cravings.

Most people doing the full walk carry all their gear in a large backpack, alternating between two sets of clothes during their pilgrimage. As I trudged wearily towards my final destination on the first day, I was amazed at the many pilgrims much older than myself who were carrying these loads on their backs with seemingly great ease.

This bewilderment only intensified as the bus made its way back to the hotel, prompting the realisation that the majority of travellers would probably be residing in a cramped hostel (*albergue*) for the night.

Day two involved pacing through picturesque villages with part of the way crossing the Ligonde Mountain range that separates the Mino and Ulla rivers. Walking became increasingly difficult after muscle aches developed from the previous day's route, with solace being found in the intermittent café breaks. It was here that the group reconnected, replenished and motivated one another to finish the route. The food was usually very basic and surprisingly cheap – once again reinforcing the simple lifestyle the Camino asks of us.

These humorous moments of tiredness and collapse during those food stops are a memorable part of my Camino experience as there was a shared sense of empathy but also a group desire to finish what we'd started that day – which we did, arriving in Palas de Rei that evening.

On the third day, I decided to walk alone and reflect spiritually and mentally. In the busyness of everyday life, it's hard to take a step back from the unconscious robotisation of your existence and think about what really matters. Without the gnawing problem of external distractions, the Camino offers an opportunity for self-reflection and honest thought.

### Even when walking alone however, there is a pervasive sense of safety and direction as small, yellows arrows guide you"

This is echoed by Fr Brendan McManus SJ, when he writes in his book *Contemplating the Camino*: An Ignatian Guide: "The essence of the Camino is that there is a beautiful experience of insight, healing or re-connection awaiting you, but you have to be prepared to pass through some darkness. This could be the ugliness within yourself, a resurgence of past memories or unhealed wounds.

"You need to let this be transformed through the process of walking in nature and being centred and reflective even in the midst of people. There are no shortcuts, easy routes or back doors. The only way is through the fragility of human reality."

Even when walking alone however, there is a pervasive sense of safety and direction as small, yellows arrows guide you through the forests and villages, indicating how many kilometres are left to the cathedral. Often these markers are covered in drawings and signatures from fellow past travellers, acting as a reminder that you are only one of the many millions of people who have walked this path.

### \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

On route, your attention is also drawn to the iconic scallop shells tied to rucksacks of people passing by. It is said to be a metaphor, its lines representing the different routes pilgrims travel from, with all walking trails leading to the tomb.

"The first thing that ever struck me about the Camino when I went on it was that it didn't matter if you were on your own, it didn't matter if you were with a group of Irish people, there was this sense of togetherness, that everybody is one the road and I suppose I often talk about that we're all on the road home in one sense," Michael explains. "People from every walk

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# Why go to Santiago? It's all in your head anyway!









for it. And that's why I felt I came on the Camino – that God sent me to help her." Although it was difficult at times, she was happy to overcome the challenge, and highly recommends the pilgrimage. "It's everyone...it's for any age group."

Geraldine Mooney, Kildare > "I found parts of it very difficult but I really

"I tound parts of it very difficult but I really enjoyed the crowd and the whole thing." Her decision to take on the Camino challenge was for a "very special reason" and she notes that the pilgrimage can be "very spiritual". For those considering doing it she says: "One would have to be very fit to do it as it is hard."





### » Continued from Page 15

of life, every path of life are on that one path, and they have a common goal. They mightn't be able to explain it to you but there's something about where you're on it with them. There's no sense of loneliness and there's definitely no sense of being lost."

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* There are many myths which attempt to associate the shell with St James the Apostle one which states that after his body was lost in the ocean, it washed to shore undamaged covered in scallops, whereas another says the apostle once rescued a knight covered in shells. Regardless of the historical veracity of these accounts, the scallop shell is now seen as an iconic symbol of the Camino and a memento of having completed it.

At a point on your journey when giving up seems like the easiest option, the shell acts an impetus to power through any physical or mental blocks. Without doubt, completing the routes were becoming consistently more difficult as fatigue wore in, and after walking around 25 kilometres, we were all content to be heading back to the hotel that evening.

### **Strenuous**

The third and fourth days were undoubtedly the most strenuous and combined with extreme heat, there was an instinctual desire to complete it as soon as possible. As I pushed my way through each step, I came to the realisation that this struggle is a key component of the pilgrimage. By overcoming adversity and one's own self-imposed limits, watershed moments can occur.

"I think life is like that and if we don't face the struggle and if we don't face the hardship then we're never prob-

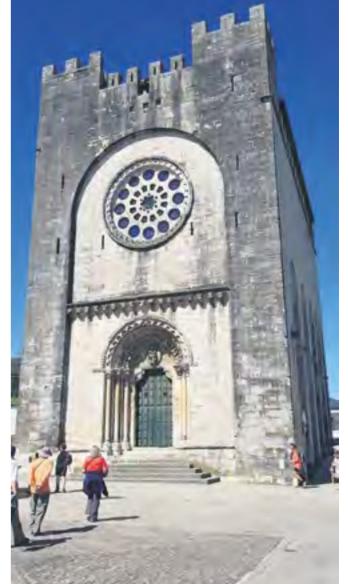
### Colin and Aileen Short, London and Dublin

"It was now or never and we have enjoyed every moment. This is our umpteenth Camino – our life's journey continues."

### Mary Durack, Clare 🕨

"I came on the Camino because I lost my husband in November and I decided in January that I'd go on the Camino not thinking I'd be able to finish it because I didn't do too much practicing for it, but I surprised myself that I completed it and I can't believe the peace of mind, it's so hard to explain. It is brilliant."

Margaret McInerney, Clare "I went on the Camino because I thought it would be



ably going to get through life. You come through darkness to get to the light and the darkness isn't always a happy place and not always an easy place," Michael says.

He adds that every day is a challenge, but that a sense of achievement is garnered on a daily basis from completing the route.

The penitential nature of the Camino allows one to realise their humanness, their successes and shortfalls, and prompt an inward desire to become a better person.

Every individual experiences their own personal challenge, whether it be grieving after the bereavement of a loved one, attempting to mend a broken relationship, or trying to find God in the midst of chaos. Irrespective of the particular burden, the Camino acts as a safe haven for healing, direction and renewal.

The Camino reaches its climax on the last day when you



a challenge and I was dying to see what it was all about. I found it absolutely brilliant, loved every moment of it, meeting the people and doing all the walks along the way."

### Bernadette Moloney, Clare ▶

"I turned 60 and I've been thinking about it for a lot of years," Bernadette said, and after listening to the stories of others who went on the pilgrimage, wanted to see what "she would find". "It's just an amazing trip and would say to anyone, take that chance, go with the flow and enjoy it and slowdown in your life."



travel from the small town of O Pedrouzo to the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela.

On this route, it's common to follow tradition by symbolically cleansing oneself in the river Lauamentula.

#### \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

The terrain changes vastly as forests and streams become roads, roundabouts and townhouses. At Monte de Gozo the city is visible and after manoeuvring through the narrow and saturated streets, I was greeted with an overwhelming scene: thousands of pilgrims gathered in the Praza do Oberdeiro – the main square of the old town – smiling, laughing and relaxing.

The sense of relief is palpable as families, friends and groups snap photos and record videos, elated at their achievement. The journey, however, is not yet over as pilgrims make their way to the Cathedral of St James.

A statue of the apostle presides over the main altar of the cathedral which people usually hug, and beneath this is the crypt. Pilgrims thank St James for his guidance and prayers are offered in his name. After a long journey on foot, overcoming obstacles, weaknesses and fears, the Camino is finally complete.

### **Experience**

The Marian Pilgrimages' group were delighted with their achievement – despite the difficulties along the way, we all managed to make it together in one piece. New bonds were formed and people who seemed like strangers a week prior were now companions.

The day after, the Pilgrim's



Mass was celebrated where thousands of pilgrims gathered to give thanks to God for their experience. For me, this marked the formal end of the Camino, but in reality, it was really just the start of a new one.

The Camino is an ongoing journey of prayerful reflection and thanksgiving; this is a practice and process that extends far beyond Spain. As one leaves the cathedral through the southern door, on the mullion between the arch of the two doors, a monogram of Christ is present, but the letters are backwards.

The Alpha has changed places with the Omega, symbolising that the end is at the beginning.

The Camino has started anew – and this one asks us to grow stronger and more hopeful every day.

So, why go to Santiago then,

if it's all in your head anyway? That cynical inscription assumes that any personal or spiritual development is a wholly inward venture, impervious to any external sources or inspiration – which is not the case.

### The pilgrimage reminds us that we are able to overcome adversity in all of its forms"

We go on the Camino then not to cowardly run away from our problems or worries, but to bravely face them head on in an environment conducive for reflection. As Fr McManus writes: "Something happens on the Camino that people normally only hint at or allude to: people find it good for their spirits, get perspective on difficult personal issues and can often come home transformed.

"The Camino is not just the physical route or trail through Spain or France, rather it is an interior issue. This not just for religious or people of faith; rather everyone seems to be the better for this healing of the heart, that is the Spirit of the Camino."

The pilgrimage reminds us that we are able to overcome adversity in all of its forms, and for people of faith, that God is always present in the midst of this even when it looks like he's gone.

"God works in many different ways and his light seems to shine through, sometimes if it can't come through you, it can come through others and maybe the path is lit that way for you," Michael says.

### In pilgrims' words...



### Tina Casey and Maria O'Reilly, Dublin

"We came to do the Camino as friends. We helped each other over the difficult pathways. On our journey we met amazing people form all walks of life, and each and everyone had their own stories. We came away from the Camino with a different outlook on life, in a better frame of mind to help us through the different challenges we may face in life."

### Colm O'Fatharta, Galway

"I went on the Camino for a rest really and get away from it all, relax and for the exercise," Colm said. He added that he didn't find it difficult and was surprised at how easy it was, but that it was a great challenge."

### Bridget Martina Duggan, London

"I wanted to experience the spirituality of it...day two was the most difficult for me because it was the longest walk and I found the temperature quite hot and

sometimes unbearable but I forced myself to get to the end and I was so pleased I did. It was well-worth it in the end."

### Maura Ward, Cavan

"It was on my bucket list. I have reached a stage in my life where I have a bit more financial security and this was something that I really wanted to do...I'm now at a stage in my career where looking to do a PhD, I wanted a bit of head space and so the Camino was an ideal opportunity to give me that."

### Tara McCarthy,

Massachusetts "I have wanted to walk the Camino ever since seeing the movie *The Way*.

"The views of the Spanish countryside were breath-taking and the people I met were so inspiring.

"Each pilgrim carrying a different reason for walking. I also loved the diversity that I found on the trail. It didn't matter which country we had come from or what language we spoke, we all understood the universal greeting 'buen camino'."









# Fan the flame –

### **Colm Fitzpatrick**

he Annual 'Fan the Flame' Mass for all children who received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Derry during the past year was celebrated in Celtic Park GAA Ground earlier this month. The Mass also marked the end of their primary education. Around 3,000 young

Around 3,000 young people from Donegal, Derry and Tyrone attended, many wearing T-Shirts they had designed, reflecting the gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives and encouraging them to let their light shine.

Long Tower Folk Group led the music and pupils from different schools assisted in the Liturgy of the Word and the Offertory Procession. Every school brought a banner which formed part of the entrance and recessional procession. After Communion, the

After Communion, the pupils from schools in the parish of Cappagh, Killyclogher led everyone in the hymn, 'This Little Light of Mine', supported by members of the Derry Youth Community who had taught many of the children this hymn during their confirmation retreats.

### Balloons

Derry's Bishop Donal McKeown, in his homily, spoke of how important a stage this was in the lives of the young people. He told them, that filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit, they were to go out confidently and to let their light shine for all to see.

At the end of the Mass Bishop McKeown and priests of the diocese, assisted by some school children and post primary principals, released balloons symbolising the breath of the Holy Spirit living in each one of us.

This is the 13th year that the 'Fan the Flame' Mass has been celebrated. The





event was made possible by the many volunteers of all ages who gave their time and talents to ensure that the Mass was an uplifting experience that will remain with the young people for many years.





### **Feature** | 19

# let your light shine for all to see!









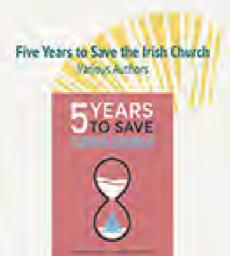








### VALID UNTIL JUNE 30TH



Many believe the death knell of the Catholic Church in Ireland has been sounded. This is the time for radical change. This book is a clarion call from some of the most respected and challenging religious commentators of out time for a new, inclusive form of Church.

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Love Life Catherine McCann

LOVE Alman Alman Alman

Catherine McCann uses her own experience of retirement to show us hew to have a positive approach to our older years and empowers us to out older years and empowers us to opt for quality living over a long life without quality.



Fifty Masses with Children St Francesca Kelly

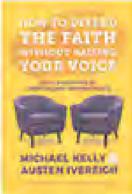


This revised edition of Sr Francesca's bestswilling title includes 10 new Masses being with the best and most popular Masses seen her previous books, which have provided teachers and priests throughout the world with topical and engaging Masses for use with primary school children.



How to Defend Faith Without Raising Your Voice Michael Kelly and Austen Ivereigh

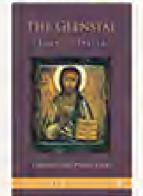
UPTO



How to Defend the Faith Without Raising Your Voice answers some of the most common criticisms of Catholicism and helps Catholics and non-Catholics alike to understand where the Church is coming from on controversial topics like abortion, euthanasia, some sex manuage and the use of condoms in the fight against HW



The Glenstal Book of Prayer Monis of Glenstal Abbey



The Ganstal Book of Prayer is a rich resource for the mysterious, but exciting journey that is prayer. This prayer book draws on the wisdom of the Bible, endhaned in Denedictine Rungs on the properience of modern monks, and on the wisdom of the Christian church.





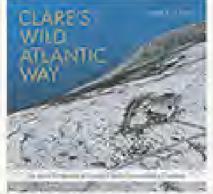
Donal Harrington



This book is for anyone who has an interest in the future of the Church. It will be of particular importance to those involved is parish ministry and parish pasteral councils, offering a fundamental resource for their formation and organisation in a new context.



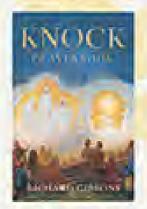
Clare's Wild Atlantic Way Pastick G Ryan



Clare's Wild Atlanto Way is a collection of aerial photographis, taken and compiled by pilot photographer Patrick G. Ryan, that renders Clare's coast in all of its unique beauty. The awe-incoming images capture both the rugged natural landscape of Clare and the man-made structures - castles, towers and lighthouses - that enhance it.



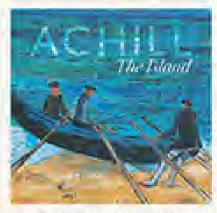




The Knock Royer Book is a resource for those who may not get the chance to pray, have forgotten how to or would just like something simple and accessible to help them journey along the pilgrim road of life.



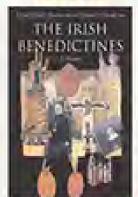
Achill: The Island John F. Deane



Achill The Island brings together celebrated poet John F. Deane and leading Irish souptor John Behan in a tribute to the Island close to their hearts, presenting an in-depth awareness of its people, its heritage, its spirituality and its physical wonder.







These essays celebrate and explore the stories of treese trials Benedictines over a period of 1400 years across Dark Age Europe through Reformation England, war forn Europe and into modern Africa in ende and persecution they established penties of learning and refuge, returning to learning the serving to the devote themselves to these activities, serving to



All the Risings



An intriguing compliation of the major risings in Instand's history – nine principal occasions on which resistance was made to the dominant forces who controlled the occurtry's destiny. From the Battle of Clontarf in Dublin in the year 1014 up to the 1916 Easter Rising, this book is an excellent overview of the main events that have shaped reland's history.



Mindful Meditations for Every Day Sr Sun



Mindful Meditations for Every Day carries the reader through the calendar year, with daily meditations, mindfulness exercises and scripture for each month. The book can act both as a guide to the practice of mindfulness and as a source of daily inspiration.

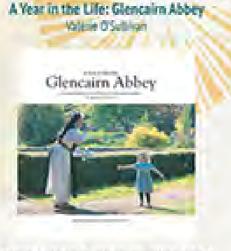


Prism of Love Daniel O'Leary



In Prism of Love, Daniel O'Leary continues to share his passion for exriching the lives of his readers by guiding them through a daily reflection that allows readers to see beyond the present and realise the postance and profound mystery of our Lover Creation in the everyday.





Through a series of images and words, we get a time muight into the daily life of the Sisters of St Mary's Abbey in Glencaim, the only Custercian monastery for women in treland. Their lives are a true, monastic journey fulfilling the motto of St Benedict ora et labora (prayer and work).



Mystics: The Beauty of Prayer Craig Larkin



With Mystics: The Beauty of Proyer Fr Oraig Lankin explores the lives and influence of fasonating characters live St Augustine, Julian of Norwich, Dante and St Teress of Avia. There is abrief excerpt from the writings of each one, followed by the author's own reflections and insight.



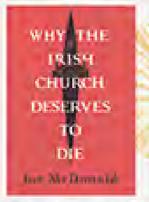
Afterlife Audrey Healy



in Afterlife, people from all over the world, of different ages, backgrounds and beliefs units to share their expeniences of after death communication. After death communication is the spontaneous communication from the deceased to the living, without the use of mediums, upperfect or clauroparts

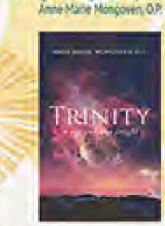


### Why the Irish Church Deserves to Die Joe McDonald



The Cattolic Church in Weland is dying. While this death has been taking place for quite switile, it is now accelerating. Uncomptomising Views, lack of accountability, unrealistic expectations and the inability to connect with younger generations have all taken a toll. Is it too late for salvation or is there still hope?

€8.45



Trinity: A Story of Deep Delight

Sr Anne Marie Mongoven's book delives into the mysteries of the Trinity through investigation of dynamic literary images and reveals what the love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Scielt can testh us about loving each other and ourselves.



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# **Out&About**

### On the right path



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**DUBLIN:** Twentytwo people who completed 'Pathways: Exploring Faith and Ministry' together after their recent graduation ceremony in Holy Cross College with Bishop Raymond Field who presented the certificates. Pictured also are Sr Eileen Houlahan, Director of Pathways programme and Fr Kieran Mc Dermott, **Episcopal Vicar** for Evangelisation and Ecumenism in the Dublin Archdiocese. Picture: John Mc Elroy.



**ARMAGH:** At the PTAA celebration in St Malachy's Church, 60-year pioneer pins were presented to John and Oliver McGirr, Brian and Ann Murtagh, Nora Vallely and Ann Gribbon. A Juvenile Pin was also presented to Anna Carson as she enrolled as a Juvenile Pioneer.



**CLARE:** Bishop Fintan Monahan blesses a commemorative chair commissioned by the Heritage Committee in Cranny in memory of Fr Jack O'Keefe.



**TIPPERARY:** Pupils of Gaelscoil Chluain Meala celebrate their Confirmation in St Mary's Church, Clonmel. Photo: John Kelly



**TIPPERARY:** Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan presides over the Confirmation of pupils from St Marys CBS in St Mary's Church, Clonmel. Photo: John Kelly

### Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick colm@irishcatholic.ie



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**DOWN:** Representatives of the Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch, attend the handover of the school's trusteeship by the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption to the newly elected Assumption School Trust.



**KILKENNY:** The new Diocesan Eucharistic Adoration Committee of the Diocese of Ossory is commissioned at a special Mass offered by Bishop Dermot Farrell assisted by Fr Richard Scriven in St Mary's Cathedral.



**TIPPERARY:** Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo celebrates Mass in Borrisoleigh parish, home parish of Bishop Joseph Shanahan CSSp, to honour the memory of the apostle of Southern Nigeria, with the Shanahan family and the Holy Rosary Sisters founded by him.



CLARE: Locals gather for the blessing of the cillín at Tyreda in Tulla parish on Ascension Day.



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### 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.
- Rosary conscious group prayer meeting on Fridays from 7.30-8.30pm in the Portiuncula Chapel, St Francis Church, Liberty Street. Entrance to the rosary through the Mass office door.
- Annual Novena in honour of Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Sacred Heart Church, from Thursday, June 20 to Friday, June 28.

### DERRY

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

### DUBLIN

- Our Lady of Knock prayer meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month in St Gabriel's Nursing Home. Glenayle Road, Raheny, Dublin 5, from 8-9pm.
- Holy Hour: June 23 at John the Baptist Church, Clontarf Road, fron 7.30-8.30pm, led by Fr Martin Hogan.
- Sacred Heart Novena at St John Vianney parish, Ardlea Road, begins on Thursday June 20 and finishes on Friday, June 28. The services will be led by the resident Sacred Heart Fathers (Dehonians).
- Mass on the Grass: Saturday, June 22 at 3.00pm at Irvine Terrace, under Johnny Cullen's Hill.

### FERMANAGH

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

### GALWAY

- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday, 10-11am and Thursday, 8-10pm.
- immanuel House, Clonfert. All night vigil in reparation from Friday, June 28, at 6pm to Saturday, June 29, at 6am. Celebrant Fr John Mockler SDS. Adoration and Rosary and Stations of the Cross. Mass at 8pm and midnight. Music by Sarah Kelly.

Events deadline is a week in advance of publication

### KERRY Weekly Monday pr

Weekly Monday prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, 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.
- The Annual Corpus Christi procession takes place in Newbridge on Sunday, June 23. The First Holy Communicants will lead the procession from St Conleth's Parish Church, processing down the riverside to the Dominican Church for open air Solemn Benediction. Families, individuals and groups to assemble at the church at 2.45pm.

### **KILKENNY**

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

### 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 Mungret 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.

### 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 Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

### WICKLOW

- The Glencree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church 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.

# **World Report**

### IN BRIEF

# Cardinal calls for peace and combatting anti-Semitism

• Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin marked the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Israel last week by calling for a shared commitment to religious freedom and combatting anti-Semitism.

"The peace process and the future of the region are in the heart of the Pope and the Holy See," Cardinal Parolin said at a ceremony commemorating the anniversary in the Great Synagogue of Rome.

"The Holy See and the State of Israel are called to join forces to promote religious freedom – of religion and of conscience – as an indispensable condition to protect the dignity of every human being, and to work together to combat anti-Semitism," he said.

### Social media site bans pro-life activist group

• Pinterest, a social media site with 300 million active users, has banned pro-life activist group Live Action from its platform, just days after a whistle-blower revealed documents that purport to show active suppression of pro-life and Christian content by Pinterest.

Alison Centofante, Live Action's director of external affairs, posted a screenshot last week of an email from Pinterest informing Live Action that their account was "permanently suspended because its content went against our policies on misinformation".

## German archdiocese off the hook on spending investigation

A court in the western city of Cologne has ruled that Germany's richest Catholic archdiocese doesn't have to reveal what it does with the billions it receives from taxpayers each year.

The investigative

Correctiv had sued for

the information, arguing

Cologne should be bound by laws granting media

that the Archdiocese of

journalism group

access to government information because much of its revenue comes from an income tax paid by Catholics in Germany. But Cologne's

administrative court ruled that the way the archdiocese invests its annual income of almost \$3.4 billion (€3.8b) is protected by the Church's constitutionally guaranteed autonomy.

# Chilean priest resigns from auxiliary bishop position

• Just three weeks after Pope Francis named him to be an auxiliary bishop of Santiago, Fr Carlos Irarrazaval Errazuriz declined the position in the wake of concern over comments he made about the sex abuse crisis, women and Jewish tradition.

The Archdiocese of Santiago announced last week that Pope Francis had accepted Fr Irarrazaval's resignation from the "ecclesiastical office for which he had been elected".

His ordination as a bishop had been scheduled for July 16. "The decision was the fruit of dialogue and joint

discernment, in which Pope Francis valued the spirit of faith and humility of the priest, in favour of the unity and good of the Church," the archdiocese's announcement said.

### Thousands walk across France for Pentecost pilgrimage

• More than 14,000 Catholics walked 62 miles from Paris to Chartres Cathedral in three days in an annual Pentecost pilgrimage of prayer and penance.

Pilgrims from across the globe trekked through the French countryside earlier this month praying the rosary, singing, and talking together, stopping only for Mass and to camp for the night.

"Each year it is a great moment because we can leave our work, leave Paris, leave everything to concentrate on our faith and prayer. I think it is the spiritual summit of our year," 31-yearold Parisian Raphaëlle de Feydeau said.

# Bishop pledges to stand with Hong Kong protestors

As massive protests continued in Hong Kong, the auxiliary bishop pledged to remain with those opposing a controversial extradition bill and the resignation of the Chinese territory's leader.

Although chief executive Carrie Lam announced on June 15 that she had suspended the bill, Hong Kong people were not satisfied and turned out in even greater numbers on June 16 than the one million estimated to have marched on June 9, reported *ucanews.com*.

The Civil Human Rights Front estimated that about two million people joined the latest rally – a record for a protest in Hong Kong – but police claimed only 338,000 attended.

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing of Hong Kong took part in a continuous ecumenical prayer meeting outside the Legislative Council building with thousands of Christians overnight after the latest rally, *ucanews.com* reported.

Asked by media at midnight whether he would leave the young protesters, the 60-year-old bishop said: "I don't care. No matter how long they stay, I will con-



Protestors pictured during the recent Hong Kong unrest.

tinue to stay with them. The

shepherd should not just be

with the sheep but also guide

The Hong Kong Federation of

Catholic Students, the Justice

and Peace Commission of

Hong Kong, Diocesan Youth

Commission of Hong Kong

and the Justice and Peace

Group of the Franciscans

organised a Mass and a prayer

them.'

meeting.

Legislation

Bishop Ha reminded the faithful that the protesters were Christians first.

"Even though the government did many things that we don't like and were very wrong, we cannot demonise them, because this is not our faith request," he said.

The extradition legislation, officially called the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019, would allow mainland China extradition rights over any Hong Kong resident, including foreign nationals and tourists.

In his homily at a Mass on June 16, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, retired bishop of Hong Kong, thanked God that Hong Kong has so many people who care about justice.

"Although we won this battle, we need to continue to use peace, love and justice to arouse society, and Christ will stand by us," he said.

The pressure on Lam increased on June 17 when Hong Kong's most prominent student activist, Joshua Wong, was released from prison and immediately called for the chief executive to step down.

Protesters are concerned that the proposed bill could be used by Beijing to extradite people from Hong Kong on politically motivated or business charges.

"There have been cases when Hong Kong people were charged with smuggling when they transferred Bibles to mainland China. I am afraid it will affect the communication between the churches on both sides. That's why I am against the amendment," Chow said.

# Fear over Ghana Catholics abandoning the Faith

Launching the 25th anniversary celebrations for the Diocese of Keta-Akatsi, Bishop Gabriel Akwasi Ababio Mante of Jasikan said he was worried how charismatic and Pentecostal movements are affecting Catholics in Ghana.

"For Catholics who remain Catholics and yet keep running after Jesus, from one to another crusade or fellowship or prayer camp, I am afraid their faith can only be described as a mirage," he said last week.

"We hope Catholics who have abandoned their faith and left the Church to join these movements are following the dictates of their conscience," the bishop said.

Bishop Gabriel Edoe Kumordji of Keta-Akatsi noted the anniversary was a celebration that would last more than a year, during which parishes would have spiritual and social activities. In November 2020, the diocese will host the plenary gathering of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference.

### Celebrations

But Bishop Mante, guest speaker at the diocesan celebrations, said he was worried that some of the youth in Ghana are easily enticed by their non-Catholic friends to leave the Catholic Church. This often means young people leave their faith behind in their hometowns when they leave home, and many are leaving home because of unemployment.

He also cited the desire among some Catholics to practice the faith the way non-Catholics do.

"This is also the chasing of a mirage," he said. These people "are crippling their own faith, and all I want to say to them is rise up and walk with the diocese in the promotion of the Kingdom of God".

### Sudan cardinal calls for 'restraint' after crack down

A prominent African cardinal has called for restraint in Sudan, as the ruling junta cracks down on peaceful protesters in the capital city, Khartoum.

Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan of Abuja, Nigeria, said African religious leaders rejected the brutal response to the protests. He said the attacks on medical centres and arrests of activists were unacceptable.

use of live ammunition,

### **Protestors**

"We firmly reject and condemn the response of the transitional government to the peaceful protesters," Cardinal Onaiyekan said in

an African Council of Religious Leaders statement. He co-chairs the group with Uganda's top Muslim leader, Sheikh Shaban Mubbaje. "We call upon the military apparatus in Sudan to use restraint and halt attacks on medical centres and further allow safe access and passage to all health services." Since June 3, tensions have escalated in the northeast African country, after security forces violently dispersed hundreds of peaceful protesters in Khartoum. The protesters had camped outside the army headquarters for one week, demanding the departure of the ruling junta.

### | International news | 25

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick colm@irishcatholic.ie

### You may find this more practical, Francis



A firefighter hands Pope Francis a fire helmet made specifically for him to wear on June 16 when he visited the Camerino cathedral, which suffered major damage during an earthquake in October 2016.

# **Bishops vote to revise US catechism's death penalty section**

The US bishops have voted to revise what the US Church teaches its adult members about the death penalty in a passage on the issue in the US Catechism for Adults.

The full body of bishops approved the revised passage by a vote of 194 to 8 with three abstentions. It now will need the approval, or 'recognition', of the Vatican.

The passage was the work of the bishops' Committee on Evangelisation and Catechesis, chaired by Auxiliary Bishop Robert Barron of Los Angeles. On the first day of the bishops' spring assembly in Baltimore, Bishop Barron said the wording emphasises the dignity of all people and the misapplication of capital punishment. Discussion of this wording was not meant to be a debate on the death penalty overall, he added.

The material given to bishops about

the additional passage points out that last year, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released the Pope's revision to the teaching on the death penalty in the universal Catechism of the Catholic Church.

In response to that action, the bishops' Committee on Evangelisation and Catechesis made plans to replace its current text in the US adult catechesis with a revised statement.

The goal is to "keep our treatment of the death penalty in the US Catechism for Adults in alignment with the revised universal catechism," Bishop Barron said.

### **Key features**

He noted it quotes extensively from Pope Francis' addition. Key features of it similarly emphasise "the irreducible dignity of all people, even those accused of terrible crimes" as well as the practical nonnecessity of capital punishment due to developments within civil society and the danger of the "gross misapplication of this penalty".

Bishop Barron reiterated that the bishops were not debating the change to the universal catechism itself or even the overall issue of capital punishment, but simply deciding if the added revision to the adult catechism adequately reflects recent catechism revisions.

He said the passage provides context and justification for the development of this teaching on the death penalty that highlights the dignity of the human person.

### Migrants can't become 'bargaining chips' – Mexican prelates

The Mexican bishops' conference has expressed its concern about the immigration and tariffs agreement reached between the governments of the US and Mexico.

Mexico has agreed to take measures to reduce the number of migrants to the US, in order to avoid tariffs being imposed.

Some 6,000 National Guard troops will be assigned to Mexico's southern border with Guatemala, and some asylum seekers in the US will be sent to Mexico to wait while their claims are processed.

### Convictions

The Mexican bishops' conference last week expressed "its concern for the lack of a truly humanitarian reception for our migrant brothers which reflects our convictions regarding the equal recognition and protection of the rights of all human beings".

"Deploying 6,000 National Guard troops on the southern border is not a fundamental solution that addresses the true causes of the migration phenomenon. The fight against poverty and inequality in Mexico and Central America seems to be replaced by fear of the other, our brother," the bishops said.

"If we as Mexicans have

rejected the construction of a wall, we ourselves can't become that wall," they added.

For the bishops' conference "it is completely legitimate and necessary to make courageous decisions to avoid the imposition of tariffs on Mexican products traded with the US". Nevertheless, the bishops said, "our migrant brothers must never be a bargaining chip".



# Pontiff releases World Day of the Poor message

• Pope Francis has challenged Catholics to be a source of hope for those in poverty, especially in the face of divisions in wealth and a throw-away culture.

Last week the Pontiff released his message for the third annual World Day of the Poor, which will take place on November 17. In the text, he drew a comparison between the financial disparities of people in the Old Testament and current social injustices. As present-day people are trapped in new forms of slavery, he said, it is the Catholic's obligation not only to provide the poor with relief services, but with spiritual hope.

"The hope of the poor will not perish forever' These words of the Psalm remain timely. They express a profound truth that faith impresses above all on the hearts of the poor, restoring lost hope in the face of injustice, sufferings and the uncertainties of life," the Pope said.

"I ask all Christian communities, and all those who feel impelled to offer hope and consolation to the poor, to help ensure that this World Day of the Poor will encourage more and more people to cooperate effectively so that no one will feel deprived of closeness and solidarity," he added.

### Good nuncios can't be 'hypocrites' or backstabbers – Pope Francis

• Apostolic nuncios are called to be men of Faith, focused on proclaiming the Gospel and shunning the power and corruption that can come from the luxurious trappings of their diplomatic status, Pope Francis said.

The Pope met with more than 100 Vatican diplomats last week, who serve either as nuncios – ambassadors – or as the Holy See's permanent observers at UN and other international agencies.

The nuncio represents the Pope and while the nuncio, like anyone, may have "reservations, sympathies or antipathies", a good nuncio cannot be a "hypocrite" and engage in back-stabbing, Pope Francis said in his prepared remarks.

"It is irreconcilable, therefore, to be a pontifical representative while criticising the Pope behind his back, to have a blog or even unite with groups hostile to (the Pope), the Curia or the Church of Rome," the text said.

In the prepared text, Pope Francis listed a "decalogue" or 10 commandments that should characterise the life of a nuncio.

# Church is wounded but not dead, Francis says

• Pope Francis told Jesuits in Romania that tensions and struggles within the Church have left it wounded and that the only path forward is through humble dialogue, not futile arguments.

"I think of the Church as a field hospital. The Church is so wounded, and today it is also so wounded by tensions within it," the Pope told the Jesuits during a meeting last month.

"Meekness, it takes meekness! And it takes a lot of courage to be meek! But you have to go forward with meekness," the Pope said.

"This is not the time to convince, to have discussions. If someone has a sincere doubt, yes, one can dialogue, clarify. But don't respond to the attacks."

As has become customary when the Pope meets Jesuits during a foreign trip, a transcript of his remarks was released weeks later by the Jesuit journal *La Civilta Cattolica*.

According to the text published on June 13, Pope Francis told the 22 Jesuits that in moments of "tribulation and fury", Christians must imitate Jesus who "didn't argue with the Pharisees and the Sadducees as he had done before when they tried to set traps". Instead, "Jesus remained silent".

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# **Solution Contract States and Series and Series States and Series**

### Inés San Martín

hen the bishops from the Amazon region gather in Rome next October, they will discuss the ordination of "elderly people", preferably indigenous, to guarantee that the remote communities in the region have access to the sacraments.

"Affirming that celibacy is a gift for the Church, it is requested that, for the most remote areas of the region, the possibility of priestly ordination for elderly people is studied," says a document preparing the upcoming Synod of Bishops on the Amazon.

The document goes on to say that the elderly people ordained in remote areas should "preferably [be] indigenous people, respected and accepted by their community, even if they already have a family that is established and stable, in order to ensure the Sacraments that accompany and sustain the Christian life".

Though the three language versions of the document speak of "people" and not men, it is referring to the ordination of what are known as the *viri probati*, married men of proven virtue, many of whom already serve as permanent deacons.

The shortage of priests in the Amazon region has long been at the centre of debate, as has been the possibility of ordaining the *viri probati*. However, whenever he's been approached about the issue, Pope Francis is clear that priestly celibacy is not up for grabs, despite the fact that it is a discipline of the Catholic Church and not doctrine.

### 'Proven men'

History's first Latin American Pope has been particularly attentive to the argument in favour of the *viri probati* in the Amazon or the Pacific Islands, where the mostly indigenous faithful can go months without seeing a priest.

As the debate over the ordination of 'proven men' in remote areas reignites, it is worth noting that many eastern rite Catholic Churches allow married men to be ordained. In addition, the Catholic Church allows some married Protestant clergy who convert to remain in priestly ministry.

The document released by the Vatican this week, known as the *instrumentum laboris*, will set the ground work for the Synod of Bishops on the Amazon, that will take place in Rome from October 6-27.

Under the same section where the ordination of married men of proven character is mentioned,



A child in native dress attends a meeting with Pope Francis at Madre de Dios stadium in Puerto Maldonado, Peru. Photo: CNS

'New ministries to respond more effectively to the needs of the Amazonian people', the document also urges the promotion of indigenous vocations for men and women, in response to the pastoral and sacramental needs.

### The document also calls the evangelisation of Latin America a 'gift of Providence'"

"Their decisive contribution is in the impulse to an authentic evangelisation from the indigenous perspective, according to its uses and customs," the document says, referring to both men and women. "These are indigenous people who preach to indigenous people from a deep knowledge of their culture and language, capable of communicating the message of the Gospel with the strength and effectiveness that their cultural baggage has."

This, the document says, will allow for a transition from a "Church that visits" to a "Church that remains", that "accompanies and is present through ministers that arise from their very inhabitants."

Many issues are touched upon through the 60 pages of the document, the original language of which is Portuguese, but which was released by the Vatican also in Italian and Spanish. Among them is the call for the creation of an "economic fund" to support evangelisation, promote human rights and an integral ecology.

Though acknowledging that it wasn't without flaws, the document also calls the evangelisation of Latin America a "gift of Providence", that calls everyone to the salvation in Christ.

"Despite military, political and cultural colonisation, and beyond the greed and the ambition of the colonisers, there were many missionaries who gave their lives to transmit the Gospel," the document says. "The missionary sense not only inspired the formation of Christian communities, but also legislation such as the Laws of the Indies that protected the dignity of the indigenous people against the abuses of their towns and territories."

These abuses produced wounds in the community and overshadowed the message the missionaries wanted to give, among other reasons because the announcement of Christ was made "in connivance" with the powers that exploited the resources and oppressed populations.

Referring to the Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation, the document calls for their protection, noting that they are increasingly at risk due to the increase of mining and deforestation projects. In addition, it claims that 90% of the indigenous violently killed in the region are women.

Despite cultural colonisation, and beyond the greed and the ambition of the colonisers, there were many missionaries who gave their lives to transmit the Gospel"

Speaking about the "urbanisation" of the Amazon region, that has led to an estimated 70 to 80% of the population to abandon rural areas to live in cities within the region, the Vatican document says that instead of integration, it has led to the "urbanisation of poverty" and further exclusion.

According to those who answered the questionnaire, urbanisation has introduced many problems to the region, from sexual exploitation and human trafficking, to drug dealing and consumption. In addition, it's led to the destruction of family life and cultural conflicts that lead to a "lack of sense of life".

The document also touches on education, the key role families play in the sharing of indigenous traditions, and calls for the reform of Catholic seminaries in the region, so that the candidates to the priesthood can be inserted in the communities they will minister.

It also urges the incorporation of indigenous theology and the region's "eco-theology" into pastoral plans and calls on the Church to have an active role in guaranteeing access to formal education and healthcare for the local population.

**()** Inés San Martín is Rome Bureau Chief of cruxnow.com



# US hierarchy stop short of mandating lay involvement in bishop accountability

fter three days of intense debate over the role of the laity in overseeing bishops accused of abuse or its cover-up, the US Catholic bishops voted to enact new standards for holding bishops accountable that include lay involvement, although stopped short of making it a mandatory requirement.

While three major proposals were voted on Thursday last week, during the final day of their annual spring assembly, the most significant vote was to approve directives to enact Pope Francis's new universal laws on bishop accountability on a local level. The document was approved by a vote of 218-1 with an emphasis on how the laity "should" be involved in the process.

Issued in May, Vos estis mux lundi ('You are the light of the world') is the product of last February's Vatican summit on abuse where Francis pledged an "all-out war" on abuse. The new law – known as a motu proprio – makes it mandatory for all clerics and members of religious orders to report cases of clerical sexual abuse to Church authorities, including when committed by bishops or cardinals.

For cases in which a bishop is being accused of abuse or its cover-up, *Vos estis* relies on the metropolitan archbishop to conduct an investigation and allows



### **Christopher White**

for the involvement of lay experts in the process to ensure proper oversight and accountability.

At the start of last week's meeting, it seemed uncertain to what extent lay experts could or would be utilised in that process.

During the ensuing debates, the bishops sought to maximise lay involvement, as allowed for by *Vos estis*, while at the same time doing so in a way that was in accord with the universal law of the Church.

### **Directives**

At the start of the meeting, numerous bishops, as well as the National Review Board (NRB) and the National Advisory Council (NAC), insisted that directives being voted on specify that the involvement of the laity in investigating must be made mandatory rather than as a recommendation.

Final language in the proposals dictate that "each metropolitan, in consultation with the suffragan bishops, should appoint on a stable basis, even by means of an ecclesiastical office, a qualified lay person to receive reports of conduct about bishops".

The final language is the result of over 20 amendments that were proposed throughout the week – a process that was managed by the USCCB's canonical affairs committee.

### ••• Our first response will be to provide for the pastoral care of the person who is making the allegation"

The directives go on to enumerate the responsibilities of the lay person, which would include: interacting with the thirdparty entity which would receive reports against bishops; receiving reports himself; informing the public about how to report cases involving bishops; and taking part of the investigation itself.

As open debate over the document took place last week, Bishop Shawn McKnight took to the floor to make a final case for the compulsory inclusion of lay people in the process: "Lay involvement should be mandatory to make darn sure that we bishops do not harm the Church in the way in which we have harmed the Church," said McKnight.

"Who can deny that this is not the most important issue of our generation?" he asked.

Some bishops raised concerns that the process of investigating bishops could be slowed down in Rome, however Archbishop Jose Gomez, vice-president of USCCB, sought to reassure the bishops that this would not be case.

"The Holy See is aware of the urgency of these matters and are responding as fast as possible to the specific situations in the United States," he said.

#### Passage

After the passage of the directives, Bishop Robert Deeley, chairman of USCCB's canonical affairs committee, thanked the bishops for their patience during the process, adding that it had been "a long, difficult year for all of us".

Following the vote, Bishop Michael Olson of Forth-Worth, Texas said that he sees the vote as a response to both Pope Benedict XVI and Francis' call for a "reciprocal responsibility of laity, bishops, and priests".

*Vos estis* enacts these new standards for accountability for a period of three years, after which time the Holy See will review the protocols, which are reflected in the newly approved USCCB directives.

In addition, the bishops voted to approve a new document, 'Affirming our Episcopal Commitments', seeking to recall the vows and obligations of bishops. The three-page document was approved by a vote of 217-1. "Some bishops have failed in

"Some bishops have failed in keeping to these promises by committing acts of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct themselves," the document states. "Others have failed by not responding morally, pastorally, and effectively to allegations of abuse or misconduct perpetuated by other bishops, priests, and deacons. Because of these failures, the faithful are outraged, horrified, and discouraged."

The document pledges "full support" to adherence to Vos estis and specifically addresses the way the Church has previously failed to understand the extent of the scandal of the abuse crisis.

"We understand 'scandal' not only in terms of how such allegations damage the image of the Church, but more so in how such sinful behaviour injures the victim and causes others to lose faith in the Church," the document states. "Our first response will be to provide for the pastoral care of the person who is making the allegation, as well as follow the established church and civil procedures to investigate."

Finally, the bishops voted by a vote of 212 to 4 to approve a new a nine-page "protocol regarding available non-penal restrictions on bishops".

### **Accountability**

The document outlines new accountability measures for emeriti bishops who have resigned or been removed from office due to "grave acts of commission or omission".

In addition, the new protocol invests the diocesan bishop with the ability to restrict the bishop emeritus's ministry within the local church and to make requests of the Holy See for a broader prohibition of his ministry. The document also notes that the USCCB president, in consultation with the Administrative Committee, can request for such bishops to no longer attend USCCB meetings.

Such a move could have broad implications for individuals such as Bishop Robert Finn, the retired bishop of Kansas City-St Joseph, who is the only US bishop to be convicted of the crime of failure to report a priest suspected of abuse to civil authorities, yet nevertheless was in attendance at this week's meetings and in the room during the vote.

On Wednesday, the bishops voted overwhelmingly to design a third party reporting system, which will function as a national hotline for reporting allegations against bishops.

The vote on Wednesday provided approval for the USCCB's executive committee to develop a more detailed reporting system before a full vote by the bishops later this year in November and will serve to meet the requirement in *Vos estis* that every bishops' conference around the world must establish a "public, stable and easily accessible" system for submitting abuse claims by June 2020.

Christopher White is National Correspondent for cruxnow.com

### 28 Opinion

The Irish Catholic, June 20, 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

### Feminist parable warned of surrogacy nightmare

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny's mention of The Handmaid's Tale in her aside about terms like 'forced birther' (IC 13/6/2019) raises an important point that should be borne in mind by those who would claim that pre-Repeal Ireland was akin to Margaret Atwood's dystopia.

In the original novel, women are indeed treated as commodities - or white women are, anyway, as all black people are 'transported' to North Dakota.

Strikingly, Catholics are among the most prominent victims of a dictatorship which regards women purely as means, and never as ends. The heroin Offred describes seeing the executed bodies of a priest and another Catholic, and recalls how nuns were forced to recant their vows of celibacy.

In a powerful passage, Offred relates how older nuns were banished, while younger ones were forced to become 'handmaids', with those who submitted invariably showing the marks of torture and time in solitary confinement. "They don't let go easily," she says

Strikingly, a section of the book detailing how the dystopian Gilead regime arose spells out how new systems tend to be built on older ones and says that the use of surrogate mothers, hired for the purpose, had been a feature of pre-Gilead life that the new regime "legitimised and enforced"

It would be nice if those who claim to be 'not a vessel' would realise such claims are ludicrous while surrogate motherhood is allowed, approved, or campaigned for.

> Yours etc., Cora O'Brien, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

### Some Scripture on just who goes to Hell

Dear Editor, I have waited for an adequate response to Fr Rolheiser's article "Who goes to Hell and who doesn't?" (IC 9/5/2019), but none came. Therefore, in the spirit of charity and brotherly love, I present the following.

The magisterium, in her wisdom in the Catechism of Catholic Church teaches: "There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death. It is the

irrevocable character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels' sin unforgivable" (CCC 393). In Jesus' own words: "Out of my sight you condemned, into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (cf. Mt 25:31ff).

Fr Rolheiser is not the first teacher in the Church to suggest the idea of an empty Hell. It originates in Origen's doctrine of the Apokatastasis,

which proposes the final restoration of all intelligent creatures to friendship with

God. The doctrine of the Apokatastasis was formally condemned in the first of the famous anathemas pronounced at the Council of Constantinople in 543.

Finally, we learn from the children of Fatima that there are in fact many in Hell. We also learn from Our Lady of Fatima what we should do to avoid Hell as well as save

sinners from this terrible fate.

As reported by the children: "You have seen Hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace."

> Yours etc., PJ O Duibhir, Bray, Co. Wicklow.



### Support their holy hands Dear Editor, It was good to see Sr Maura making

altar breads on the front page of The Irish Catholic this week (IC 13/6/2019). Many of the convents that produced altar breads for many years have been forced to give it up due to declining numbers: the Adoration Sisters on the Falls Road, Belfast, recently ceased production.

While it is possible to get hosts from Church supply companies, could I ask your readers to consider giving their parish or community order to contemplative sisters, like Sr Maura and her Redemptoristine sisters? First of all, you can be sure that the breads are made with the greatest care, mingled with that very special ingredient, the prayers of the sisters. Second, it is a way of supporting these communities of very devoted women who live by faith and the work of their hands.

Yours etc.. Fr Brendan McConverv CSsR. Belfast, Co. Antrim.

### Christ alone saves souls

**Dear Editor**, Having reached the groves of old age – the Autumn of my life – I regret that my formative years, were devoid of State education. And, among my reasons for this pained, ongoing frame of mind, is the so-called 'Catholic Ethos'.

Indeed, we have in our midst, a widespread disregard for the Catholic/moral lifestyle in today's society. So much for the Catholic 'ethos': so much for the social separatists (Catholic boarding-school students) whose parents manifested their perceived/believed, chatteringclass mentality, by implementing this social-climbing mechanism. And even if Catholic, cloistered, separatist boarding education does not produce a Catholic/ moral lifestyle - then, I'm rest assured that the so-called Catholic 'ethos' is fruitless. Religious faith primarily finds its roots in the home.

Of course, no school, or no boarding school, or no church, or no denomination saves: only Christ saves - see Acts 4:12.

Yours etc., Jarlath Vaughan, Downpatrick, Co. Down.

# No need for change

Dear Editor, It was reassuring to read Fr Martin O'Brien's comments on how claims about the Pope having changed the words of the Our Father are, basically, fake news. Indeed, never mind French, Spanish, Portuguese and now Italian – even in Irish the Lord's Prayer petitions God not to abandon or allow us to temptation!

The real issue with the prayer is that while in English we say "lead us not into temptation", a more accurate translation would read "lead us not into the testing place". But would such a change be worthwhile?

Yours etc. Conor Byrne. Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

### acebook community

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

### Why do Catholics call priests 'father'?

I understood that priests were called 'father' to emphasise that they are in the role of spiritual parent. Jesus was also a spiritual parent to countless spiritual children. God is our heavenly parent. Jesus expressed this beautiful heart of a parental God in his words and actions. - John Kennedy

Let's be honest there are very few priests in Ireland who like to be referred to as 'father'. Most prefer to be called their first names. Society has evolved beyond titles as academics, medics and even quite a few members of the judiciary all prefer their first names in a day to day context. **Gearóid Pyne** 

Can never understand that. We all have only one father. Anne Byrne

### What Medjugorje means to me

A wonderful place, with great holy spirit awaking people, I've met loads of young people who experienced beautiful holy experiences and changed lives to conversions. The Faith is beautiful in St James where every soul is singing and responding to the celebration of the Holy Mass. John Roonev

Amazing place. - Conall O Coisneachain

### SMA shortlisted by UN for decades of 'tireless work'

Well deserved. Hope they get it. - Noreen Ryan

Amazing and fantastic work. - Ruth Galway Meleady

God bless all who work to help our brothers and sisters around the world. - Peg Faherty Tunney

### WMOF2018 cost less than expected secretary general

Worth every penny, a fantastic experience. - Pauline Kerr Savage

Very strange that at the end of the World meeting, the final figures were disclosed, it stated that it came in over budget. Another collection was taken up and the lay faithful had to fork out. - David B. Toomey

### **Religious vocations 'creeping up'**

Many religious orders are simply not visible anymore since the scrapping of the habits. People think that they do not exist. Perhaps a rethink might be beneficial. - Gerry Donnelly

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.

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# Around the world

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VENEZUELA: Capuchin Franciscan Fr Luis Antonio Salazar VENEZUELA: Capuchin Franciscan Fr Luis Antonio Salazar takes a selfie with devotees after Mass at Chiquinquira Catholic Church in Caracas.
 GHANA: Retired Bishop Anthony Kwami Adanuty of Keta-Asaki greets traditional leaders and faithful at a diocesan calebration. Dectage CNC celebration. Photos: CNS



FRANCE: World Cup soccer fans from Australia smile before a World Cup match against Brazil. The soccer final is July 7



**HONG KONG:** Police officers in Hong Kong fire tear gas during a demonstration against a proposed Chinese extradition bill. The Diocese of Hong Kong issued a statement last week urging the city's government "not to rush to amend" its controversial extradition treaty.



SUDAN: A man in Khartoum, Sudan, holds a national flag. Protesters there demand that the country's Transitional Military Council hand over power to civilians.



ISRAEL: Filipino children demonstrate near Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's house in Jerusalem. Their signs, in English and Hebrew, say they do not want to be deported. Most of their mothers arrived legally in Israel to work as caretakers for the elderly, but then remained in the country after their work visas had expired and have lived in Israel for up to 20 or more years.



he question of intercommunion within our churches today is a big one, an important one, and a painful one. I'm old enough to remember another time - actually, to remember two other times.

First, as a young boy growing up in the pre-Vatican II Church. intercommunion with other Christians, non-Romans, was a taboo. It just didn't happen. An individual maverick may have ventured it, but he or she would have been called out for doing it, were it known. Then things changed. In the early years of my ministry, I worked in dioceses where intercommunion, at least for special occasions such as weddings, funerals and inter-church gatherings, was common, even encouraged.

As a priest presiding at a Eucharist at these gatherings, I was allowed to positively invite non Roman Catholics to receive the Eucharist, as their own faith and sensitivities allowed.

While we all share one Christian community through baptism, we do however belong to different Faith families and families tend to eat in their own houses"

Those times came to an end. Within the space of ten years, by the mid-1990s, those of us who presided at a Roman Catholic Eucharist were asked to positively disinvite non-Roman Catholics from receiving the Eucharist, irrespective of occasion.

The rational given was that the Eucharist is the most intimate act that we, as Christians, can share with each other and that intimate sharing, analogous to the intimacy within a marriage, to be honest and meaningful, demands that we be in communion with each other and given our differences in doctrine, ecclesiology, and

some issues of morality, we simply are not in sufficient communion.

Further still, this argument suggests that accepting the pain of not being able to receive Communion in each other's churches should be the kick in the pants we need to stir us to make greater efforts to come together around dogma, Church and morality.

What's to be said for this? First, it's true and has its merits, save for the one, salient, idea that needs to be lifted out from this apologia and scrutinised more closely, namely, the notion that we are not in sufficient communion with each other to share the Eucharist because of our differences in dogma, ecclesiology and some moral issues.

What does it mean to be in communion with each

one Christian community through baptism, we do however belong to different faith families and families tend to eat in their own houses. True again. But then this question arises: when does eating in another family's house make sense and when does it not? The deeper question

However, beyond the

theological issue involved

namely, while we all share

there's also an ecclesial one,

communion?

which needs to be asked regarding what constitutes intimacy inside the Faith and what constitutes the kind of intimacy that justifies receiving the Eucharist together is not, first of all, one of doctrine or church affiliation but of oneness inside the Holy Spirit. What makes for oneness among us as Christians? When are we



Faith, as Christians, at least in sufficient communion to receive the Eucharist from each other's tables? What constitutes genuine intimacy in faith?

### **Baptism**

Theologically, it's clear; Baptism puts us into the family of Faith. All Christians hold this and so too do the Gospels. St Paul, admittedly, adds a qualification regarding receiving communion.

one family in Faith?

Perhaps no text is clearer than St Paul in the fifth chapter of his Letter to the Galatians. He begins by telling us what does not constitute oneness inside the Holy Spirit. We're not living inside the Holy Spirit or in communion with each other, he submits, if we're living in strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factionalism, envy, idolatry, sorcery or adultery.

These are infallible signs

that we're not in communion with each other.

We are however in genuine communion, in intimacy in faith, in one family, when we're living in charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, fidelity, mildness and chastity. Living inside of these is what makes for Christian communion. oneness, for intimacy with each other.

What makes for oneness among us as Christians? When are we one family in Faith?"

Differences on select issues of dogma, church and morals are, in fact, secondary. More important is whether our heart is

full of charity or anger, goodness or factionalism. peace or strife, impatience or chastity. We are more in communion, in a communion of Faith, with someone of another ecclesial denomination whose heart is fueled by charity, patience and goodness than with someone of our own Church whose heart is angry, envious and judgmental. Ecclesial difference isn't the real criterion.

### Theology

What constitutes the kind of intimacy that justifies intercommunion? I'm not a bishop and so the pastoral decision on that question is not mine to make.

As a loyal son of the Church, I need to trust that the Holy Spirit will work through the persons and offices entrusted to make that decision. As a theologian, however, l've also a task.

My job is to look at issues like this and bring various theological and biblical perspectives to bear on them, accepting that the pastoral decision won't be mine.

So I offer this perspective to those entrusted with making the pastoral decisions about what justifies and what does not justify intercommunion.



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

### Are bread and wine necessary for the Eucharist?

If all the bread and wine in the world disappeared overnight - and could no longer be made, would we be able to celebrate the Eucharist? Assuming that the Church wouldn't make a special case to change its rules on this matter given the bizarre circumstance. the answer is no.

It's common for other Christian denominations to use different food types during this celebration, but for Catholics, the Church is very clear on what matter ought to be consumed to make this Sacrament valid.

In regards to the bread used, the Church teaches that the Eucharistic sacrifice must be unleavened, purely of wheat, and recently made so there's no danger of decomposition. If the bread is made from another substance to such an extent that it would not commonly be considered wheat bread, then it is not considered valid for use in celebrating the Eucharist. "It is a grave abuse to

introduce other substances, such as fruit or sugar or honey, into the bread for confecting the Eucharist. Hosts should obviously be made by those who are not only distinguished by their integrity, but also skilled in making them and furnished with suitable tools." (Redemptionis Sacramentum)

### Incorrupt

Likewise, the wine that is used in Eucharistic celebration must be natural. made from grapes, pure and incorrupt and not mixed with other substances. It's also vital that great care is taken so that the wine is well conserved and not soured.

"It is altogether forbidden to use wine of doubtful authenticity or provenance, for the Church requires certainty regarding the

conditions necessary for the validity of the sacraments

Nor are other drinks of any kind to be admitted for any reason, as they do not constitute valid matter."

While these norms are binding and applicable in most circumstances. there are a few caveats for those people who for varying and grave reasons can't consume bread made in the usual manner nor wine fermented in the normal manner.

### **Jesus is**

### present in both species (the bread and the wine)"

While use of gluten-free bread is invalid, low-gluten hosts are permissible given they comport with certain criteria. An alternative for wine can also be consumed known as mustum essentially grape juice, this is a form of wine in which the fermentation process is stopped just as alcohol begins to form.

Given these norms and the wiggle room around them, it seems that almost everyone can partake in the Eucharist. But what about people who cannot tolerate any gluten whatsoever? Luckily, because Jesus is present in both species (the bread and the wine), it's perfectly fine for a person to receive Communion from the chalice alone. It is no way takes away from the Sacrament to only receive one kind.

While these norms may seem strict or pedantic, it's important to remember that the Eucharist is the "source and summit" of the Catholic faith - and as such should be treated with respect and reverence

Let's hope there isn't a shortfall in bread or wine anytime soon!

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



### **Personal Profile**

Grief inspires deeper faith and mission to inspire laity Page 34



B eing environmentally friendly is something that many people are striving for, particularly in recent years as hundreds of studies and reports are conducted and published from reputable universities, the UN, EU and the Church. Pope Francis has given the drive to be eco-friendly fresh impetus with his encyclical on the environment, but how practical is it for families to change their routines?

Ramily life can be hectic, if there's a new baby on the way, planning how to cut down on the mounds of waste generated by child-rearing might be the last question on a couple's mind. For Catherine Devitt, who

worked as the Environmental

### Chai Brady hears about parenting and being green

o-friendly Jamilies

Justice Officer with the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice (JCFJ), when she found out there was a baby on the way being green was certainly on her mind.

Although no longer working with the JCFJ much of Catherine's work involved looking at how the Jesuits in Ireland can improve their environmental footprint, so when it comes to her home life Catherine most certainly practices what she advises. One of the most important challenges is boycotting disposable nappies which are known to be both environmentally and economically unfriendly. They

can put a strain on the planet as many are put in landfills or burnt, and can also take a toll on family finances. Advice can present itself closer to home. Catherine's mather

to home. Catherine's mother used cloth nappies in the 1980s

before the disposable alternative became mainstream in Ireland, she was on hand to offer her guidance.

For those who are looking for resources and help to find firsthand information about cloth nappies there are many social media groups that have been established for these discussions.

Mother of one-year-old Rowan, Catherine says baby clothes are something that quickly become unusable.

Speaking to The Irish Catholic she says: "They're growing at such a fast rate and we certainly found that parents are very willing to give you clothes that you no longer need. "We found that there's

actually no need to buy new

clothes and that there is plenty of alternatives, whether through charity shops or again online, there are so many groups where people are willing to give clothes that they no longer need." Buying new clothes that will

Buying new clothes that will only be used for a short stint isn't worth the environmental impact, according to Catherine, but it is also a way of being financially savvy as baby clothes can be quite expensive. This is the same for cloth nappies which can be more expensive than their disposable counterparts initially, but in the long term they are a good investment.

Breastfeeding is another way of doing this, although this isn't an option for some mothers,

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### FOR FAMILIES

A Co. Down festival is expected to have delicacies for every palette and is sure to be a hit with all foodies

The Annual Comber Earlies Food Festival takes place in Comber, on June 29 from 10am-4pm

This year celebrity chef James Tanner who has appeared on many TV programmes and is followed by food lovers across the UK, will be making an appearance. Join James at the Festival Kitchen for his hints and tips as he cooks up a treat in demos throughout the day. There is plenty more fun to be found celebrating the Comber Earlies potato, local produce and artisan producers which all the family can enjoy. The festival includes:

- Artisan food market
- · Potato themed children's crafts
- Vintage Tractor Display
- · Jump, Jiggle and Jive interactive children's
- dancing (12noon onwards) Ark Farm Animal Roadshow
- Hay bale picnic area

 And, music by the Cleland Memorial Band, the Lily of the Valley Accordion Band and the Comber Silver Band

### CHICKENPOX VACCINE FIGHTS SHINGLES

US health organisations recommend children receive the varicella vaccine at one year old to protect them against chickenpox, but the vaccine appears to have another benefit: it cuts the risk of shingles, a painful and potentially debilitating rash caused by the reactivated chickenpox virus, by more than half in children over two years old, according to a new study. Approximately 38 per 100,000 children vaccinated against chickenpox in the US develop shingles per year, compared with 170 per 100,000 unvaccinated children, researchers found in a study published in the respected jour nal Pediatrics. Furthermore, shingles infection

rates were lower in children who received both

recommended doses of the chickenpox vaccine

compared with those who only got the first dose.

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Remaining a home for children as they spread their wines.

y eldest daughter is doing the Leaving Certificate this year. It's been a different experience to the time my two sons did it. They were happy to sit back while I poured over the minutiae of the marking system guiding them in the direction of where best to focus their energies.

I have fond memories of the summer my second eldest son was sitting the exam. It was typical Leaving Cert weather. the sun splitting the trees, not a cloud in the sky and my husband and other children dispatched to the wilds of Connemara to facilitate the last minute study efforts. My unruffled, teenage son sat at the kitchen table happy to let me read out long screeds of English poetry notes while the strains of Leonard Cohen's 'First We Take Manhattan' played in the background.

### What could I say to my daughter as she enters this new and exciting phase of life?"

Fast forward several years and my daughter is a completely different creature. Being independent and highly organised, there's no question of needing much assistance from a helicopter mother who can't help hovering around, ever eager to lend a helping hand.

Is there a parent out there who doesn't, in some small way, imagine that their adult children are still those stumbling, totally dependent toddlers who need their socks pulled up, their noses wiped and a warm spot in the security of a comforting lap? The good news is that those feisty, funny, sometimes infuriating and equally endearing young people still



need us in ways that we don't even realise.

What could I say to my daughter as she enters this new and exciting phase of life? What can any mother or father say that's worth listening to? Sometimes adults can struggle to understand or be involved in their children's worlds. When I was a child 'woke' was what you did in the morning and 'lit' was definitely something to do with fire or light. If we're even speaking a different language, how do we communicate across the generations and keep that cosy intimacy that we shared when our children were small? Maybe it's all about finding a language that's common to all generations, a language of love.

I was fortunate to attend one of the sessions of the annual Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help which is held every year in a neighboring parish. The speaker on this particular evening was Johnny Murtagh, the legendary jockey, who had a very successful career, winning every major flat race possible as the main jockey for Aidan O' Brien's Coolmore Stud in Co. Tipperary.

He spoke passionately about how he had it all: the success, the fame, the great wins and adulation as well as a lovely wife and children, but he still felt something was missing.

People sometimes refer to death leaving 'a hole in our hearts' but there's also what's referred to as 'a God-shaped

hole', that empty, hollow feeling we have when we don't have God in our lives. Johnny Murtagh described it very well when he spoke of his struggles with alcohol, his lack of happiness no matter how many

races he won. Eventually, he reached an

awful moment where he stared down from the tenth storey of



a Dubai apartment block and wondered if everyone would be better off without him. He threw himself on his knees and begged God to help him. It was an epiphany and Johnny went on to change his life and his whole perspective. In his own words he came to see that life is about "gratitude not attitude".

The message for our adult children is the same one that was shared at the Novena: focus on positivity and all that God has given you; see what you can do for those around you; constantly say: "Thanks, thanks, thanks" to God. Thanks for our lives, our families, our good health. Even when there's negativity, turn it to positivity. Don't worry about tomorrow: just focus on the good you can do today. As Johnny Murtagh

said "Give faith a chance", give God a chance.

The Leaving Cert will fade into the distant past. The results will come out and there'll be highs and lows, happy faces and smiles, disappointments and tears.

### Always have the expectation that they slot in family time.'

Our sons and daughters will stretch their wings, some ready to leave the nest, but our job as parents is still ongoing, probably even more important than it ever was. Keep them close with ongoing contact, conversations and chats. Keep giving advice even if it seems to be falling on deaf ears; they are listening and that ultraconfident exterior doesn't fool us parents. We can still remember them wanting that light on when they were afraid of the dark.

Always have the expectation that they slot in family time. In my view, this is non-negotiable: life is never so busy that there isn't time for a quick coffee with Mum or Dad or lunch with a sibling. Finally, don't be quick to conclude that starting out on a new road means leaving Faith behind. There are numerous Faithfriendly activities connected to being in college or being in a new city. Just follow the Catholic pages on social media and a nudge in the right direction will help our young adults to make like-minded friends or even friends who could lead them back to the Church if they've strayed. And, when everything goes pearshaped, as it inevitably does from time-to-time, be that cosy comfort place that they can. and always will, return to.

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Catherine says it is hugely beneficial in cutting down plastic, bypassing intensive farming and the emissions associated with formula, and for your pocket.

"Every maternity hospital should be promoting breastfeeding for mothers," she says, adding that there should be no stigma associated with it.

There are arguments that in order to save the planet people need to reduce the amount of children they have, or even stop altogether as larger populations create more waste and emissions.

One of the most important challenges is boycotting disposable nappies which are known to be both environmentally and economically unfriendly."

Catherine disagrees saying: "Some people comment that we have an overpopulation problem and we should be talking about some people not having children and so on, I think it's important to really think about how we want to raise our kids and what's the type of world that we want to leave our children, so we try and make a conscience effort of being outdoors with our child.

"I think as well children are really aware of these issues now, they're talking about environmental issues in school. They're probably more eco-conscience than their parents and I think therefore as parents it's really important to talk about these issues and live more sustainably in our homes."

With a five-year-old daughter Joanne McGarry, Campaigns Manager with Trocaire, faces different challenges when it comes to imbuing a respect for nature into her family home. "I try and give her as many messages as I can about the need to be kinder to the environment," she says.

"There's lot of things we do at home to try and get that message through. I take it very seriously. I do my best but I'm not perfect by any means."

### It doesn't end there, Single-use plastics, which have long been the subject of condemnation, are not welcome."

Focusing on children her daughter's age she says it's important to "make them mindful of conserving water and electricity. So she would be going around making sure the taps are turned off".

"We try and grow some food in our garden, it's nothing major but it's nice for her to see where food comes from and that helps us with the messaging about food waste. I'm actually quite strict about it, I would encourage her to finish her meals."

It doesn't end there, Single-use plastics, which have long been the subject of condemnation, are not welcome. One of the most famous cases that highlighted the issue is a giant island of rubbish – which



is mainly plastic – floating in the Pacific Ocean. Known as the 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch' it's reported to measure 1.6 million square kilometres and continues to grow exponentially each year. It was created by plastic being thrown into oceans and streams which is then carried by one of the ocean's five major currents.

Joanne says: "We do our best to reduce plastic that we buy first of all, there's a lot of plastic stuff out there for kids."

"Some of it is reusable which is fine but then there's a lot of very single-use stuff like some toys, straws and packaging. We have paper straws and stainless steel straws and we try and minimise the plastic that we buy. She's [her daughter] getting those messages. She has her own - like most kids now - water bottle that's refilled. We wouldn't buy any plastic bottles."

Focusing on the concept of 'fast fashion' and the negative impact it has on the environment she says: "Some families would be lucky enough to have hand-me-downs coming from all over the place, I'm lucky enough to have a friend who gives me a lot of her daughter's clothes and we do our best not to buy clothes that are very disposable.

"Some people don't have the opportunity to do this but if you're in a parents group or a mothers group or a toddlers group there's lots of passing on of baby things, which can be very expensive. It works both ways because the person passing it on is delighted to be getting rid of it in one sense and delighted to see it getting another wearing, and the person receiving it is delighted because they don't have to go out and buy it."

Changing habits to reduce waste and to create an environment in a household that respects and works toward sustainability can be difficult, but according to some ecomothers it isn't impossible and may even be convenient: both for your wallet and the earth.

### 

# Dad's Diary Rory Fitzgerald

To children, the summer holidays are infinite. Once they begin, their pace of life slows. Mornings no longer involve wolfing down a bowl of comflakes, followed by trantic searches for hairbrushes and missing parts of school uniforms.

Time takes on a looser form, as the normally sharp distinction between weekdays and weekends suddenly disappears. Soon, they are not sure what day it is, nor what hour of the day it. might be - and nor do they care. Watches and clocks become increasingly ornamental as the days roll together into a pleasant blur of late evenings, ice creams, beaches, summer carnos and rainy days spent curled up reading. tretand might not

treland might not always have a proper summer, but it at least has proper summer holidays – long enough to forget that school ever existed. We are glad to be switching back to the trish school year this summer. During the past few years living in England, where summer holidays are as short as five weeks, I pitied the kids each summer.

By the time the English summer holidays begin – at the very end of July – the evenings are already noticeably drawing in. By mid-August, when the kids are just beginning to get into the summer holiday groove - and are beginning to live as free beings, pleasantly lost in time – it is already time to buy new uniforms and to start thinking ahead to the start of a new term, which is just a couple of weeks away.

It seemed unnatural for small children to be constricted by uniforms, and answerable to the dictates of the school bell, in the month of July. In England, families are constrained by strict truancy laws into taking their summer holidays over the same short few weeks, which mean that the motorways grind to a sweaty, frustrated halt all across England, airports have queues out the door and you'd have to take out a small mortgage to rent a mouldy caravan in Bognor for a week.

The M25 becomes a motorway as drawn by Dante:



a vision of hell. I recall being trapped on it for hours in 35 degrees heat, in a car with broken air conditioning, and three small kids, en route to Dover. Motorway services stations come to resemble overburdened refugee camps, as immeasurable throngs of people grab the essentials of human survival: food and water.

At least in treland, we are never short of water, since it



fails so generously

from the skies, and nor does it tend to matter much if the air conditioning is broken. There is a calmness even at the most beautiful spots. Those things that the summer holidays should be all about - peace and relaxation - are far more accessible to trish families, even at the very height of summer. There are thousands of hidden places, known to those who love them. When you arrive at some such pleasant spot, there are not coach-loads of tourists

in our minds, the summer holidays are akin to Christmas, as a totemic aspect of childhood. We each cling to our own warm sepia-toned memories of our own summers long ago. We try to recreate those aspects we remember nostalgically, for our own kids. It gives me joy to see history repeat itself, when kids read the Beano, or go fishing, or play on the same strands I played on as a boy.

It is beautiful to see them relax to their very core, with no worries, no problems and no homework for many happy, languid weeks. For we adults know all too well that neither summer, nor childhood, nor life itself is infinite. Even an eight-year-old child already has most of their childhood summers behind them. So let them enjoy in deep ease those precious, numbered summers of innocence.

# Grief inspires deeper faith and mission to inspire laity



### **Chai Brady**

ngaging laity in social justice issues and helping them discover how to express the Gospel message is the work of one Armagh mother who discovered a more "adult Faith" when she was faced with the death of her parents.

Dympna Mallon, a native of Antrim town and now living in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, was appointed as the Laity Coordinator for the Society of African Missions (SMA) in 2013.

Her desire to better understand her Faith came when Dympna's parents both became ill. Speaking to this paper she says: "My mother was diagnosed quite unexpectedly with ovarian cancer and lived for about 18 months.

"They had moved to live beside us at that point and because I had a very close relationship with her it was a very difficult period of time. At the time Mummy died my sense of bewilderment, in fact almost abandonment, was really very profound.

"It was during that period I began to ask hard questions of myself in relation to my faith, at that point it wasn't enough for it simply to be something that I did, which in a way it had become a bit mechanical because life had been so busy and there were so many demands on time and energy."

The only way she was able to cope with the reality of the situation and support her mother was to believe there was "something greater at work and that there was



some purpose in everything that was happening rather than just her life ending prematurely and in a very difficult way".

Dympna's faith journey began long before this, with her parents being one of the main reasons she had a strong grounding in Catholicism. They would go to Mass every Sunday and sometimes during the week and adhered to days of fasting and abstinence, but it was not these practices that shaped her, it was that Dympna and her four siblings were encouraged to ask questions.

"My parents would have been very open with us as we got older about their own struggles and challenges within their own faith lives and I think that honesty made an enormous impact on me.

Her family would frequently gather together, one person would pick a Bible passage, and they would discuss it.

In addition she spent four years in Kenya when she was 12 years old. Dympna's parents were part of a Marriage Encounter mission which was a "huge learning experience for all of us as a family", she explains.

School life in Ballymena with the Sisters of St Louis was another formative experience. Her principal, Sr Sheila Canty, referred consistently to the importance of knowing and using everyone's name, of respect and the fact that a school is also a form of faith community. In a school of 800 pupils, Sr Sheila could name everyone.

Dympna says: "It certainly made an enormous impact on me about the importance of the individual dignity of each of us as created by God. I would say my school environment was very important in shaping my faith in a broader context than simply within our family home."

After this she went to university to study law and then travelled to New York where she lived for two years. It was after Dympna returned she met her husband Paul. They moved to Dungannon after marriage where he worked, and they had five children together; three girls and two boys.

Over that period Dympna spent the next 15 years raising her children and working in a variety of jobs along the way, some of which tapped into her law qualification. Three or four years after the death of her Dad she took the opportunity to study a course in theology geared at pastoral leadership which had been advertised in her parish bulletin run by the Archdiocese of Armagh.

The six year part-time course moved from a certificate, diploma and then a degree. "When I began to study theology I felt for the first time like I knew what my purpose in life was, I felt I was finally doing what it was I was supposed to be doing," she says.

Two years before completing her degree the SMA advertised for a laity co-ordinator based in Dromantine, which was an opportunity she took.

Speaking about her role she says: "I suppose initially the emphasis might have been the coordination of about 14,000 lay supporters that they would have right across Ireland in different groups."

It became apparent that many of these people were happy with the role they had, some for 30-40 years. There wasn't a desire to move into a different relationship with the SMA.

What began to emerge was the fact they needed to develop new ways of engaging people, a primary vehicle for this became social justice and care for creation. Although aware of the fact Irish people have a "very strong social justice conscience", Dympna says, many don't see this as an expression of Faith or the Gospel message.

Speaking of the Pope's encyclical on the environment she says: "Laudato Si' has been a tremendous resource in that respect, it is inviting people to see much of what they do but thinking through a faith lens."

Dympna is currently working on their Thumbprint Campaign, which promotes climate justice. They have 10,000 thumbprints to date of people dedicated to responding to the "ecological crisis" facing the planet. One of its spin-off initiatives is aimed at helping families make connections between the importance of dialogue and Christian values within the home, while also taking the idea of family and applying it in a broader sense to include their school, community, the global family and the family of creation.

The SMA's also devised the Laudato Tree programme, while relating to planting trees in Ireland it is primarily aimed at helping to plant a 'Great Green Wall' of greenery 8000km long aimed at halting desertification across the Sahel region in Africa – spanning the entire width of the continent.



### Coping with last year's stressful toll on your garden

he exceptionally dry summer last year, and a dry winter and dry spring this year will have put a lot of plants under stress – even large mature trees and shrubs that you wouldn't normally expect to see this on. Trees and shrubs have come into leaf and even flowered and then suddenly started to look as if they are dying – leaves shrivelled up and died and dropped. This is just a sign of the stress they

are suffering: they dropped the leaves to conserve resources. Leave them be, don't do anything; don't fertilize them as this will only make it worse. The rain we had in May and June will put them back on track. A layer of mulch 2-3cm thick of

A layer of mulch 2-3cm thick of homemade compost or bark chips on top of wet soil will stop them drying out. Always soak the ground before applying mulch: this keeps the moisture in the soil. If you do it afterwards the mulch soaks it up and it doesn't reach the root zone. Don't let the mulch touch the trunk or stems of the trees or shrubs; you should be able to fit your finger between trunk and mulch all

the way around and touch the ground. If it is right up to the bark, it may cause the plant to die.

Give wisteria its summer prune (the other is in midwinter). Cut all the long whippy tendrils to 15cm (six inches) – this makes the plant produce short flowering spurs which will produce more flowers and less leaf. Prune philadelphus ht down to a side shoot that

right down to a side shoot that doesn't have a dead flower at its tip. To encourage roses to keep flowering, deadhead them as often as possible. Don't just cut faded flower heads off; follow the stem down to a lower side shoot, even just down to the next healthy leaf. This makes the plant produce more flowers and quicker. Repeat flowering roses are hungry plants: feed them.

Early flowering perennials such as geraniums, oriental poppie, brunnera and pulmunaria can be cut to the ground now they have finished flowering. Give them a good watering after cutting and they will produce a new flush of healthy foliage to fill the gap. Geraniums may even flower again.

Cut back the faded flower spikes of lupins and delphiniums as soon as they go over. Follow the dead flower stem down into the crown of the plant, cut above a side shoot. If there are none, go into the based cluster of leaves and cut.

Check summer bedding every day. Water, feed and deadhead as necessary. Sun and wind can dry them out very quickly. If they start to wilt due to lack of water, immerse the whole container in water till the bubbles stop rising. This will take longer than you think

Check daily that there is a clean source of water available in your garden for wildlife.

### Reviews 35

# O TVRadio Brendan O'Regan Callan kicks off 'Divorcing God' debate

o, you want to explore the state of religion in the country today, what do you do? Send an agnostic, avowedly cynical, gay comedian to do the job? Well, it might work?

That's what happened with **Divorcing God** (RTÉ1, Wednesday) presented by Oliver Callan. The show was interesting, there were some reasonably fresh perspectives, observations and reflections. He certainly wasn't out to do a hatchet job on the Church, and wasn't a fan of an aggressive secularism that would wipe the Church from the national stage altogether (low bar?).

There were mentions of babies and bathwater, but there were gaps: no sign of vibrant Catholic youth festivals, Youth 2000, the Emmanuel concerts, parish catechists and many more green shoots. The role of religion in the arts barely figured, there were no young priests or nuns giving their perspective and other religions were poorly represented.

There were many positives too; Callan was respectful of the religious people he interviewed and gave the impression of one open to religious belief. He certainly acknowledged all the good the Church has done in schools and hospitals, while also reminding us of the pain and hurt caused – the abuse scandals were prominent. He visited



Oliver Callan's *Divorcing God* documentary featured on RTÉ1 last week.

a Catholic school and when asking a class who was proud to be Catholic, most students raised their hands but asking who believed in all the Church's ideas no one raised a hand – hardly surprising given the loaded question!

### Estranged

As a gay person he felt estranged from the Church but had never heard anything homophobic from the altar. He did reference the idea of being gay as a sin, which of course the Church never taught. No one made the distinction between 'being' and 'doing'.

He visited one of the new evangelical churches for a

worship service, and there were plenty of young people there, but someone could have told him that young Catholics can be evangelical too (I didn't get to see the show live because I was with around 300 of them at the Matt Maher concert in St Paul's Arran Quay, where there is a range of lively activities for enthusiastic young Catholics).

He featured a young family who were not into religion at all and a young family for whom Mass going and Catholic schooling were still important, though the mother was in favour of women priests and didn't follow the Church on all social issues. It's hard to find enthusiastic and orthodox young Catholics represented in the media.

In one scene he visited a church with a youthful choir where, though not 'in communion', he received Communion. I wasn't keen on his use at times of the word "we"– who was he presuming to speak for? It seemed his thesis was that the Catholic Church wasn't dead yet and had more life in it than "we" thought.

Not entirely unrelated, **Drivetime** (RTÉ Radio 1, Thursday) featured an item on euthanasia. Campaigner Tom Curran described setting up a more affordable way of offering assisted suicide in Switzerland . He described a new killing machine, but of course it wasn't called that, as euphemism is one of the main tools in the armoury of those who would break down our long-standing and innate



Fr Andrew Pinsent.

### **PICK OF THE WEEK**

### CONVINCED

### EWTN, Saturday, June 22, 9.30pm

While discerning his own conversion, Donald Johnson travelled around the country and met all kinds of people who overcame obstacles and opposition to fully embrace their Catholic faith.

#### MASS

#### RTÉ1, Sunday, June 23, 11am

Live Mass with a gathered congregation from St. Conleth's Church, Newbridge. Celebrant is Fr Paul Dempsey, with music by the In Caelo choir. Musical director: Cora Coffey.

#### ST THOMAS MORE: FAITHFUL STATESMAN EWTN, Monday, June 24, 7pm

The career of St Thomas More is examined for the numerous instances in which he displayed the virtues which distinguished him as a model for others in public and political life.

reluctance to kill others. At times it felt like an ad for the service – the interview was almost entirely unchallenging.

ing. This was followed by an interview with Prof. Des O'Neill who had major reservations. He pointed out the contradiction between this initiative and our society's current concerns about the prevalence of suicide. Both in real life, and in some movies he referenced, euthanasia was often used in situations of inadequate care – he lamented the many misperceptions around care at the end of life.

Significantly he was questioned more robustly than was the case with Mr Curran, with the little god of 'choice' being raised as if it should trump all else.

Euthanasia was one of the issues raised in **Catholic Enlightenment** (EWTN, Saturday). Fr Andrew Pinsent raised a point echoing Prof. O'Neill – the danger of some lives being seen as not worth living.

This ongoing show is rather talky, just a conversation between him and Fr Marcus Holden, but the issues are certainly of interest, with the main emphasis being on what Catholicism has contributed to the modern world – I'd suspect people would be surprised at the number of anti-Catholic myths that get busted!

*boregan@hotmail.com, @boreganmedia* 



# **Pat O'Kelly** Milstein and Hibernian Orchestra's share their riches



Nathalia Milstein.

Until earlier this month I hadn't heard the Hibernian Orchestra for quite some time. I was actually drawn to its latest event at the National Concert Hall by its soloist, French pianist Nathalia Milstein. She took first prize in the 2015 Dublin International Piano Competition when, for once, I agreed with the jury's verdict.

Mlle Milstein has come back to Ireland on a number of occasions including a nationwide tour under the auspices of Music Network as part of her DIPC prize. She also returned to the NCH in May 2018 playing Mozart's *K* 488 Concerto with the RTÉ NSO. This time, with the Hibernian Orchestra, her concerto choice was Chopin's

*E minor Op 11.* Her playing was magical.

Chopin was barely 20 when he completed the concerto, in fact his second in order of composition, but published before his F Minor, which has the Opus Number 21. Chopin had the *E Minor* in his luggage when he left Poland en route, as he thought, to England. However finding himself in Vienna he obtained a passport to Paris. where he lived until his death from tuberculosis in 1849. Playing the E Minor Concerto in one of his early concerts in the French capital, the Parisian audience loved it and judging by Nathalia Milstein's performance, there is no doubt about her grá for the work as well.

The opening Allegro

maestoso found her etching its main theme with expressive grandeur. Nathalia Milstein had a lovely way of emphasising Chopin's melodic lines with both clarity and elegance. While the movement has a lengthy orchestral introduction, neatly phrased by the Hibernian players, once the soloist gets going there is hardly a moment's respite.

#### Words to heart

In the central *Larghetto*, Mlle Milstein's playing was particularly gentle and graceful. Belleek china crossed my mind and obviously Nathalia Milstein took Chopin's words to heart, "not meant to be loud, it is more of a romance, quiet with melancholy. It should give the impression of gazing tenderly at a place, which recalls a thousand dear memories. It is a sort of meditation in beautiful spring weather, but by moonlight".

The orchestra was nicely unobtrusive but rightly assertive when the music demanded in the concluding Rondo. With Polish folkdance rhythms to the fore, the movement is highly agreeable and Nathalia Milstein, with the Hibernian Orchestra under John Finucane's inspired direction, extracted its musical essence perfectly.

The evening's symphony was Rachmaninov's *Second. Containing* almost an hour's music, the 'big play' piece is a challenge for any orchestra. Happy to relate, the Hibernian ensemble came through with flying colours.

Maybe the strings needed a little more body here and there and the tinkle of the glockenspiel in the *Scherzo* was a little swamped but these are only minor details in what was a terrific interpretation of the composer's masterpiece.

Under Maestro Finucane, the lengthy Adagio was unfolded with impassioned purpose, conveying Rachmaninov's romantic vision with flowing momentum that had majestic bearing. The exuberant *Finale* showed the Hibernians' confidence remaining intact to the ebullient concluding bars.

Indeed, a richly satisfying concert.

# **BookReviews** Peter Costello **Rebuilding the shattered fanes**

Picking up the Shards by Donal Murray (Veritas, €12.99 / £11.52).

### J. Anthony Gaughan

he author begins with a story about Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago.

Before he died, in a conversation with some of his priests he said: "I expect to die in bed. my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square." But he concluded: "His successor will pick up the shards of a ruined society and slowly help rebuild civilisation as the Church has done so often in human history."

There are many examples in history of the Church having this role. Perhaps one of the most remarkable was the manner in which Irish missionaries contributed to the restoration of civilisation in Europe following the devastation wrought on the Roman empire by the Barbarians.

In our time Murray sug-

PICKING SHARDS

gests that the Church should and could set about working to restore a more equitable, fairer and more just society, which, since it has been secularised, has been detached from Gospel values.

The need to do so is blindingly obvious. The political elite by their efforts – some intentional, some unintentional - have transformed Christian Europe into a megasecular region. It is a polity characterised by post-truth, fake news, fake opinions, PR

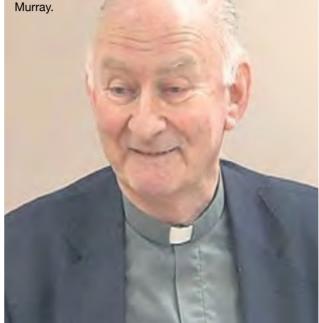
presentations, alternative truths and a pernicious relativism. Objective demonstrable truth takes second place to personal feelings and convictions. Discussion in the public forum is conducted not by rational argument but by emotional manipulation.

The result is the development of a legal system which embraces John Stuart Mills' Utilitarianism and veers further and further away from moral principles. In a society formed by such a legal system the disadvantaged, the weak and the vulnerable are overlooked

### Intolerance

Uniformity is a feature of this new neo-liberal secularised 'progressive' society. Ironically the internet, the world wide web and social media tend to endorse its intolerance towards disparate opinions. In this environment freedom of expression, and at times even freedom of thought, seems to be in peril. Representatives of the media ought to be champiBishop Donal

.....



ons of independent opinion. Yet many of them share a self-assured group-think which is not conducive to dialogue. There are shades of George Orwell's 1984 and 'Big

#### Brother'.

Pope Francis has noted this stultifying uniformity of thought. In a homily on April 10, 2014 he stated: "Today uniform thought has been turned into an idol. Today one has to think in a certain way, and if you don't think in this way you are not modern, you are not open."

**Representatives** of the media ought to be champions of independent opinion"

Murray casts a cold eye on this environment and draws attention to the moral and social deficits of our individualist and consumerist society. He highlights the destructive effect of the modern relativist approach to reality and truth.

Thus the first imperative in attempting the 'Picking up of the Shards' of society is to encourage people to seek the truth and speak the truth. This timely and thoughtful monograph is a clarion call to fellow-Christians to undertake this challenge as their predecessors have done so often in former times.

### **Irish liberators of Europe**

A Bloody Dawn: The Irish At **D-Day** by Dan Harvey (Merrion Press, €14.95)

#### Joe Carrol

The author, a retired army officer, has done extensive research to establish the role played by Irish participants (from the North as well as the South) in the D-Day landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944.

He has also included the Irish contribution to the preparations for Operation Overlord and its aftermath up to the end of the fighting in Europe in May 1945.

Irish chaplains are also included and many will still remember Fr Patrick Crean who returned from the war with a decoration for bravery and went on to serve in the more peaceful confines of Donnybrook parish.

As the number of Catholic Irish in the armed forces increased, Cardinal McRory of Armagh had to send out a call for more Irish chaplains. The religious orders responded immediately and those who ministered in the RAF were given the rank of squadron leader!

### **Irish contribution**

Tracking down the Irish contribution to D-Day and the lead up to it was a daunting task in itself. At times Lt-Col Harvey throws his Irish net very wide indeed when he includes Henry Ford, General de Gaulle and Sam Beckett who while not fighting on the beaches did contribute in their own way to the struggle against



the Nazi tyranny.

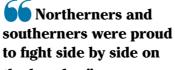
But the emphasis is on the role played out on the beaches, at sea and in the air by Irish combatants, many of whom gave their lives in the effort.

The author estimates that from D-Day to end of the hostilities 11 months later, some 850 Irish died fighting across France and Germany, and that about 400 of these were from southern Ireland.

In the Italian campaign, of the 650 killed about 300 were from the south and in Malaya/Burma, 300, all from the south, were killed.

The author touches briefly on

how many of the Irish combatants may have deserted from the ranks of those at home defending Irish neutrality.



### the beaches"

Irish soldiers who had become bored with manoeuvres on the Curragh and decided to join the struggle to preserve democracy.

The precise figure may never be known although the author states confidently that out of the 42,000 who served in the Defence Forces during the Emergency "4,983 deserted to join the Allied armies fighting Germany and Japan".

In June 2012 the Irish Government decided "to grant a pardon and amnesty to those who absented themselves from the Irish Defence Forces without leave or permission to fight on the Allied side".

In any case, "deserters" were only a fraction of the estimated 60,000 southern Irish who volunteered to fight against fascism. Less than 40.000 volunteered in Northern Ireland which was officially at war

OODY

with the Axis powers, but did not have conscription.

There was some embarrassment for Northern politicians when the full extent of the southern contribution and list of decorations for bravery were published after the war.

But as this book makes clear, northerners and southerners were proud to fight side by side on the beaches whether they were in the Irish Guards or the Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Some Irish women in France also showed great bravery when they joined the Resistance. Many Irish women also served as nurses in dangerous frontline casualty stations.

We can be proud of those Irish who fought to liberate Europe from Nazi tyranny and this book shows why.

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.



# A meeting place for every citizen

The Mansion House and The Irish Revolution, 1912-1923 by Mícheál Mac Donncha (Dublin City Council / Four Courts Press, €25.00)

### Thomas J. Morrissey

The author of this work was Lord Mayor of Dublin, 2017-2018. He has a deep feeling for Irish history, especially with regard to the years 1912-1923. During those years the Mansion House hosted many significant meetings and was associated with major events, including the meeting of the First Dáil Éireann in 1919.

Mr Mac Donncha has brought together in this book the key events that happened in the Mansion House in those tumultuous years. He has done so with an inter-mixture of text and illustration. The work is attractively printed and produced, and its range of photographs from the period includes some seldom previously seen.

### Freedom

In his Introduction, the author pays a special tribute to the Lord Mayor during many of the years under review, Laurence O'Neill, who ensured that the Mansion House remained a place "where freedom of speech and freedom of assembly could be exercised by all".

This was manifested on the

very day of the inauguration of the First Dail. That morning, the House welcomed a group from The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Regiment of the British army. Union Jacks flew in the morning and were replaced by Tricolours in the afternoon.

### The author pays a special tribute to the Lord Mayor during

many of the years under review, Laurence O'Neill"

The book opens with a summary of the history of the Mansion House during its 300 years existence, and then moves to 1912, when John Redmond celebrated in the Round Room the introduction of the Home Rule Bill at the House of Commons in April 1912. It marked the summit of achievements for the Irish Party.

There followed the succession of events linked to the Mansion House that changed Irish history: the North's threat of armed resistance to Home Rule, the rise of the Irish Volunteers in the South, the Great Strike/Lock Out of 1913, the First World War, the deferring of Home Rule, the recruitment of troops for the war and the visit of Prime Minister Asquith (with photograph of his arrival to the Mansion House), and on to 1916 and the eventful years from 1918 to 1923.

The years from 1912 to 1914 are reflected in cartoons by Ernest Kavanagh, who was to be killed during 1916.

The main contestants in those years of change and revolution are photographed in the book, among them, in a photograph rarely seen, a group of men, for and against the Treaty, who met in the spring and early summer of 1922 in an effort to avoid Civil War.

As depicted in the photograph, they were: Liam Mellows, Gearóid Ó Súilleabháin, Liam Lynch, Eoin O'Duffy, Sean Moylan and Séan Mac Eóin.

### **Unusual feature**

An unusual feature of the present fascinating book is that the story is told in English for the first 69 pages, and then, if one turns the book around, the story is re-told in Irish, but with additional photographs.

It is Mac Donncha's hope that the reader of the book will experience some bit of the feeling expressed by Máire Comerford following her presence at the meeting of the First Dail Eireann: "Never was the past so near, or the present so brave, or the future so full of hope."

### Mainly About Books By the books editor

# The summits of sheer stupidity

I have been wondering over recent days what Achille Ratti, later in life Pope Pius XI, would have thought of the recent images of toe-to-heel climbers, some 300 of them, ascending Mount Everest to take a selfie at the summit.

In the course of this insane "bucket-list of awesome things to do before you die" pseudoadventure, into an area rightly called a "death zone", some 11 people have died over the last month.

In his younger and heartier days, Ratti (born in 1857) was an energetic Alpinist among

the mountains between northern Italy and Switzerland. He was said to have 'conquered' something like a hundred previously unclimbed peaks. Such was his renown that he published a book about his adventures, *Climbs on Alpine Peaks* (1923).

He belonged to the pioneering ranks of mountain climbers, not quite the first generation, but certainly the second. Such an activity was then a minority sport the dance

a minority sport, the dangers of which were recognised. It was no safe outing for overweight tourists, as today.

Ratti was an experienced athlete. He knew what he was doing. He also knew when to stop. By the time he was elected Pope he had given up his scrambles in the Alps.

Many of those who are taken up Everest today do not know what they are doing; they are quite untrained, some of them only seeing their equipment for the first time at the base camp. They bask in the conceit that people having fun will not be allowed to die. The trips cost on average about \$60,000; \$130,000 for the *de luxe* service. If anything happens to them they will, of course, in the now universal American manner, sue the company.

### Abode of the gods

In Nepal, Tibet and China, respect for the majesty of natural creation, prevented the local people from climbing these peaks, though what happens now is more akin to assault and battery.

But what can one expect. Every summer we see even Irish charities organising 'fund-raising' climbs of the Ruwenzori, runs in the Andes, Machu Picchu challenges – that sort of thing. With little or no consideration for what this intrusion means to the environment of these places.

But as the great French criminologists Dr Locard taught, "every contact leaves a mark". An ancient Chinese punishment was death by a thousand cuts. We seem incapable of respecting and enjoying things for what they are, from a distance. This is not a new problem. The Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: "Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; / And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; / And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell..."

It has become a truism that humanity itself is destroying the world around us, "our common home".

There ought to be places where no-one should go. The



incessant urge to travel, even if only on a monster cruise liner with 6,000 passengers – the population of Ballinasloe on one ship – ought to end.

Some places have been so destroyed nobody wants go there. One of these places is Chernobyl"

As for Everest, all around the foot of the mountain can be seen the rubbish heaps of bottles and tin cans left behind by previous expeditions and weekend outings. Pictures of these are never published in the papers. "That's not what people want to see," editors always say – let's have a cute panda instead.

Yet ironically, some places have been so destroyed nobody wants go there.

One of these places is Chernobyl, everyone's short hand for the nearly ultimate disaster that kills at once, and goes on killing - for radiation sickness hangs around a long time. Yet the district is strangely enough teeming with renewed wild life, creatures unharried by human intrusion.

And so, thank God, as Hopkins reminds us, and Achille Ratti would have heartily endorsed, "...for all this, nature is never spent;/ There lives the dearest freshness deep down things ..."

[Achille Ratti: Il prete alpinista che diventò Papa, by Domenico Flavio Ronzoni (Bellevita, €15.00, 2009) is still available.]

WORLD MISSIONS

# Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie

To learn how, call Fiona

or email fiona@wmi.ie

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– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912



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weeks

anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie www.hospicefoundation.ie The Miracle Prayer Dear Heart of Jesus, In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for a special one. (mention here) Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Anna Sadlier at 01 679 3188 or

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

Remembering MEMORIAM CARDS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CARDS & NOTELETS BOOKMARKS

The Irish

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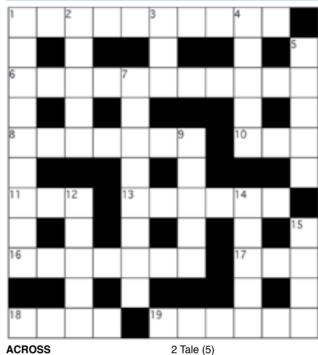
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.



Gordius 287

### **Crossword** Junior



- 1 Throw a ball into a hoop in this sport (10)
- 6 Saying sorry (11) 8 What you keep on this will
- open locks (3,4) 10 Weapon vou shoot (3)
- 11 You put this in a fountain pen (3)
- 13 Newspaper boss (6)
- 16 Controlling a car (7) 17 Insect which makes honey
- (3) 18 Snug, comfortable (4)
- 19 Quicker (6) DOWN
- 1 Bird with dark feathers (9)
- 12 Makes something with needles and wool (5)

secret

14 Go around a planet (5)

3 You might write a name on a

5 A spy is sometimes called a

7 We might cook something

9 Leaving, moving away (5)

with this liquid (5,3)

\_ (5)

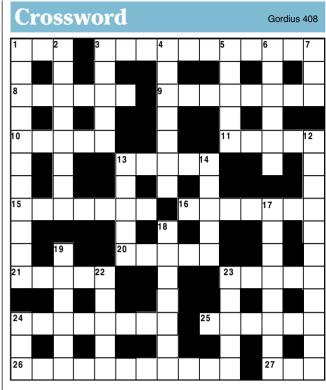
label or (3)

4 Not telling the truth (5)

- 15 An animal like Bambi (4)

### **SOLUTIONS, JUNE 13 GORDIUS No.407**

- Across 1 Sod 3 Chain-smoker 8 Howled 9 The third secret of Fatima 10 Latin 11 Fresh 13 Gauge 15 Stencil 16 Pretend 20 Scald 21 Plums 23 Bored 26 Deerstalker 27 Eat
- Down 1 Scholarship 2 Down time 3 Clean 4 Isthmus 5 Motif 6 Kaiser 7 Red 12 Hard and fast 13 Gains 14 Erred 17 Exorcise
- Across 1 Hoodie 4 Beef 7 Dressing up 8 Secret 10 Eyes 12 Grandmother 16 Break 17 Eardrum
- Down 1 Hedgehog 2 Open Sesame 3 Insect 5 Empire 6 Once 9 Test 11 Stream 13 Duke 14 Over 15 Hour
- Easy Hard 9 4 7 2 8 1 5 6 4 9 8 3 6 8 9 5 3 8 9 4 9 7 1 2 5 2 6 4 5 2 7 9 8 1 2 8 3 1



ACROSS

sky? (5,6)

Roman army (6)

9 A match played in sporting

10 Sinks one's teeth into some

fashion makes for a

legitimate target (4,4)

rarebit, especially (5)

13 Pick-me-up (5)

(3, 4, 5, 7)

11 The sea creature gets a

cardinal some tobacco (5)

15, 20a & 18d Charlemagne

was so entitled to hamper

her more, only differently

16 & 6d Begonia club up in

21 The olfactory sense (5)

23 Nobel Laureate Bob uses

some trendy language (5)

24 The month before last! (8)

25 Ozone's useful if you want

26 How might we frown, maid,

to see what surrounds

27 Fruit with a hard shell (3)

Black Death (7,6)

20 See 15 across

forty winks (6)

Casement? (6,5)

9

6

2

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7

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4

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difficulty, resulting in the

- DOWN 1 The container takes an 1 They are famous for being accountant north (3) famous (11)
- 3 Does it consist of pile in the 2 Do you treat it in a dark room to see what develops? No (8) 8 The principal unit of the
  - 3 Satellites signify love in a Belgian city (5)
  - 4 Deduce no, it's certainly not Heaven (7)
  - 5 Amounts of land (5)
  - 6 See 16 across
  - 7 Draw an item of neckwear (3) 12 With such taste, perhaps
  - one minds recent disruption (11)
  - 13 Grouting is part of this person's trade (5)
  - 14 It takes its turn in the production of butter! (5)
  - 17 With a cuticle, feathers will ensure no wriggle room (4,4)
  - 18 See 15 across 19 Depart with a cardinal to get
  - some veast (6)
  - 22 & 23 Caribbean

6

1

3

- choreography seems
- anything but heavenly! (5.5) 24 Fresh or novel (3)
  - Last week's Easy 286 8 6 4 1 3 9 5 7 2 2 8 9 2 3 1 6 5 4 7 6 4 5 2 9 8 4 2 8 9 6 3 379451628

### Last week's Hard 286

973561482 5 8 2 4 7 3 2 9 8 4 11 4 1 9 8 5 2 7 4 6 8 6 7 1 3 9 9 8 6 2 5

# Sudoku Corner



18 Hateful 19 Quiche 22 Steps 23 Blair 24 Sad CHILDREN'S No.286

### 40 | Comment

The Irish Catholic, June 20, 2019

### Notebook

# The sheer goodness of a man and his magical words

THE 20th CENTURY was the bloodiest of all centuries, a whirlwind time of evil extremes. but it produced some great saints and Christian leaders too: in the slums of Calcutta was found the great-hearted Mother Teresa; in the racist American South, Martin Luther King Jr; in the toxic atmosphere of Communist Poland, a young bishop named Karol Wojtyła; in the shadow of the Third Reich, steely resistance Christians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Sophie Scholl; and in the bloody trenches of the Somme, two young men who would leave a unique and lasting mark on the Christian imagination: J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis.

We often forget that C.S. Lewis was at the frontline of war in his youth. We associate him with the bright goodness of Narnia, all the cheerful squirrels, straight-talking dwarves and hearty breakfasts which appear in his stories. But the innocence of this imagined world is hard-won. It's an innocence on the far side of experience, a goodness that has been tested in the furnace of suffering.

A few months ago, I felt moved to experiment with a C.S. Lewis reading group here in St Saviour's,



C.S. Lewis

Dublin, and the meetings have been immensely enriching so far. We read a book a month, and alternate between the Narnia books and Lewis' non-fiction.

It's really fascinating to see readers of different backgrounds react to Lewis' writing. Some of us guzzled the Narnia books as children, others are opening the Wardrobe for the very first time. Some of us have studied theology and can spot signs of Lewis' scholarship even in the simplest of paragraphs. Others again are actively involved in public debate, and mine the same paragraphs for ammunition. But we all agree that reading and discussing these books has had two clear effects on us: an amplified appreciation for the colour and richness of our Christian Faith and an increased desire for goodness in our daily lives.

### Existence

Just to take one example from *The Magician's Nephew*: it's hard not to read the account of the creation of Narnia – with Aslan, who represents Christ, literally singing the stars and trees and animals into existence – without gaining an increased sense of the Godgiven harmony of our own world.

And when Aslan calls some of the animals to "awake, love, think, speak", and to leave behind their former status as "dumb beasts", the reader likewise feels invited to live up to the dignity of being a human, a 'talking beast' called to love. The goodness of Narnia is so attractive that it makes the reader better.

When we consider what Lewis experienced in war-time, and the other forms of suffering he endured, the sheer goodness of these simple stories strikes us with greater force. Their author witnessed depths of evil most of us can only imagine, but he had the courage to journey further, into the ever greater depths of divine goodness.

**Fr Conor McDonough** 

### ••• The goodness of Narnia is so attractive that it makes the

### reader better"

The Somme, the Reich and the Soviet Union are distant memories to us, but we have a different set of challenges.

Thanks to Netflix and YouTube. we are surrounded by stories and images that do little to lift up our souls. This sometimes results in the Gospel having little hold on us. The bright lights of the online world call us to splash in its shallow waters, and sometimes our faith seems a thin, colourless alternative. If this is how you feel, I can only recommend, with all my heart, that you pay a visit to a bookshop, hand over a few coins for some nicely tattered old copies of the Chronicles of Narnia, and let an old man tell you a story.

# A wise and charming note...

Elements of the Narnia stories were already bubbling away in Lewis' imagination when he was a teenager, but he was 52 years old when he wrote the first complete story, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. He dedicated it to his god-daughter, Lucy Barfield, with a wise and charming note: "I wrote this story for you, but when I began it I had not realised that girls grow quicker than books. As a result you are already far too old for fairy tales, and by the time it is printed and bound you will be older still.

"But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again."





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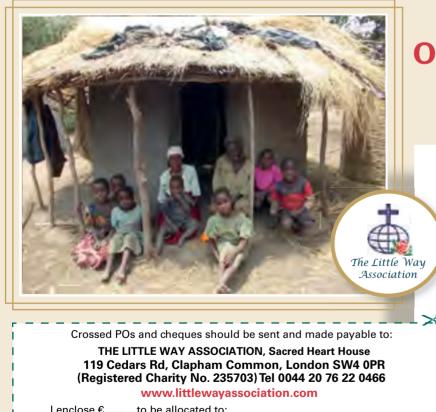
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### SISTERS CARING FOR ORPHANS AND DISABLED CHILDREN ARE IN FINANCIAL CRISIS

The Theresian Sisters run a small rural hospital in the Catholic Archdiocese of Lilongwe, Malawi. The Sisters have had a special care for orphans and disabled children for many years but the number needing help has greatly increased recently, due to the loss of parents to HIV/AIDS. Sister Perpetua, Sister in charge of the hospital, has written to The Little Way Association begging for help: "With the financial crisis we are in, we feel we will be unable to continue supporting all the children unless some people of good-will lend us a hand as soon as possible".

### Can you spare a donation for the Sisters?

The Sisters need to improve the sustainability of their work now and in the future. They want to set up a pig farming project to benefit the hospital and to help the poorest families in the area. Can you be a "person of good-will" for these Sisters and the children they care for? Even the smallest donation will help them.

If you can, please send a donation to The Little Way Association, and we will transfer it to the Sisters without deduction.