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Pope pleads for shorter **homilies**

Priests should challenge parish

Colm Fitzpatrick

Priests must challenge parishioners if they want to make the Mass relevant to their lives and prompt them to delve deeper into their Faith. Irish religious and lay-catechists have called for homilies to be "more accessible" and really connect with people if they're to make an impact.

Speaking about the importance of preaching, Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap. told The Irish Catholic that all homilies should be simple, clear, direct and well-adapted so that the reading of the day is "connected to the life people are living".

Author of Homily Hints and Prayers: Daily Mass Readings, Fr O'Flynn emphasised that the homily isn't a "lecture", but should be integrated into the Mass so that it appeals to "the mind, the heart and the imagination" of listeners.

His comments come after Pope Francis told a gathering of 10,000 people on a one-day trip to

DAVID QUINN

We must see the Faith as a way of life rather than an ideology PAGE 9

Palermo in Italy over the weekend that homilies should only be eight minutes long.

Speaking about the Pontiff's remarks, Petra Conroy of Catholic Voices Ireland, said that, like a torch, the homily is "really a source of light and heat" and so it's important "to get it right".

Context

Parishioners tend to be interested in homilies, she said, "if you've got a priest who can communicate well in that context because at the end of the day for an awful lot of Catholics who attend Mass only sometimes, that's probably their only Faith input from the Church".

Ms Conroy emphasised that the homily should be directed to those who are connected to the Church but are not really involved in it, like busy parents or businessowners. In this way, she said, people who attend Mass can go home "challenged" by it, and think about how they can act on what they've heard. See Page 8.

GREG DALY

How well-informed was Francis during his visit to Ireland? PAGE 11

Greg Daly

Pope Francis' visit to Ireland showed

angry voices as well as joyful ones,

Speaking in Poznan, Poland, at

England's leading cleric has said.

a meeting of European bishops,

Westminster's Cardinal Vincent

visit had been "remarkable" and

Nichols said the Pope's Irish

the need for the Church to hear

"unlike any other papal visit in my knowledge".

Negative media coverage in the days leading up to the papal visit had been normal, the London-based prelate said.

In his experience negative voices have tended to give way to a positive and warm expression of welcome to the Pope and joy in the Faith of the Church, he said, adding

Angry voices marked papal visit - English cardinal that in Ireland he noticed the angry voices of survivors continuing to be heard after the Pope's arrival, with the media continuing its concentration on past wrongs and criticism of Church leaders.

The recently published Pennsylvania Grand Jury report and events surrounding the former Cardinal Theodore

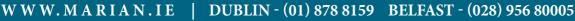
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MICHAEL KELLY Unanswered questions after historic visit PAGE 2

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MARY

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innocent – the new

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Fr Ron Rolheiser Bridging the unbridgeable gap Page 30



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Perhaps it was too soon for Pope Francis to visit Ireland

or those who participated in events surrounding the World Meeting of Families or the Papal visit, feelings of joy will continue to warm their hearts. Whether it was in the intensive preparations that took place in the dioceses around the country, the pastoral congress in the RDS or events led by Pope Francis this was a time of immense grace for the Church in Ireland.

But, amidst the joy and gratitude, I detect a sober reflection on what detracted from the events. The issue of clerical sexual abuse was always going to be part of the story of any papal visit to Ireland. But many people are left asking whether certain sections of the media dwelt too much on this rather than reflecting the lived reality of the Faith.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster entered the fray this week with his observation that he felt the predominant spirit around the Pope's visit to Ireland was one of "anger and condemnation".

In my experience of other papal visits, as with Pope Benedict's visit to the UK in 2010, these negative voices give way to a positive and warm expression of welcome to the Pope and joy in the Faith of the Church.

"In Ireland this did not happen," he said.

He went on to express the view that "the media continued its concentration on past wrongs and the criticism of the Church was sustained".

Devastating revelations of abuse

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

cover-up from the US days before the Pope was due in Dublin didn't help. The fact that prominent

campaigners like Colm O'Gorman were dumping on the event before it even happened also meant that the Pope had an uphill struggle to be heard. Every time he spoke about the issue of abuse, the immediate reaction for either "not far enough" or "too little, too late". It was a no-win scenario for the Pope.

With the benefit of hindsight, he really ought to have given expression to the concrete actions that he intends to take to root out the issue of abuse and punish those responsible for the cover-up. It wouldn't have curbed the anger, but it would've demonstrated more forcibly that the Church was responding to the genuine feelings of many Irish people.

Was it unfair to invite him into a hostile culture..."

When historians come to write about the legacy of the Papal visit of 2018, the easy part will be the comparisons to John Paul II's 1979 visit. The more difficult task will be to unpick the long-term impact of the visit. Certainly, they were days that will live on. Days of unparalleled joy

and celebration for those who were touched by the Pope or their experiences during the World Meeting of Families

Questions remain. Was it too soon for a Papal visit to Ireland? Was it unfair to invite the Pontiff into a hostile culture that was perhaps unready to hear his message of atonement for past wrongs and appeal for healing?

Was it a mistake to restrict the Pope from visiting the North? Might a trip North of the border with a focus on all that has been achieved in peace and reconciliation on our island have lightened the mood? Might the Pontiff praying with the DUP's Arlene Foster and Sinn Féin's Michelle O'Neill for a return of power-sharing have provided the world's media with the moment they needed to capture?

The questions are valid, the answers not easy to come by. What remains undeniable is that those who were open to the moment of grace that the papal visit was were not left unrewarded.

A sincere and heartfelt 'thank you' to everyone who has called, sent cards or written emails to compliment the IC on the coverage of WMOF and the papal visit. We have been genuinely overwhelmed by the generosity of the feedback and read every line - even if it hasn't been possible to respond personally. Know that it is appreciated.

Angry voices marked papal visit – English cardinal "It is the voice of those

» Continued on Page 1

McCarrick fed into this, he added, describing the sustained criticism as "unsettling, to say the least", but also something that taught him a lesson.

Admitting that he had been wrong to hope that joyous voices would overcome angry ones, he said: "Both

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voices have to be heard. Both voices must find an echo in our hearts. Both voices are the voice of Jesus, crying out in his Church and in the world today.'

heard in the second voice.

community of the Church, the voice of those whom we, the pastors, have let down While the Lord's voice can for we have failed to protect be heard when people prothem from the wolves in our claim their joy in the gift of midst. It is the voice of many Faith and the Church, he said, who suffer, whose need we the voice of Jesus must also be recognise and in the spirit of solidarity we wish to help,'

who have suffered abuse

and mistreatment within the

he said.

Pope Francis managed to heed both voices while in Ireland, he observed: "Somehow, in his person, he held them together, attending to each, responding to each, being true to each. His was a remarkable witness and a testimony to the deep peace of his soul which surely rests profoundly in the Lord."





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Pupils from religious homes more likely to succeed, survey reveals

Colm Fitzpatrick

Students raised in religious homes are more likely to succeed, regardless of whether they went to a faith school or a not, a new study has found.

Research by the UCL Institute of Education found that pupils from Catholic and Church of England families did well due to their upbringing, rather than because of the school they attended.

Analysing data on more than 10,000 people born in England and Wales, researchers found that a faith-school education was only associated with better academic results in the short term.

However, at A-level and degree level, there did not appear to be any academic benefits of a faith school education compared to peers who had a religious upbringing and other similar characteristics, but did not go to a faith school.

Findings

Speaking about these findings, Prof. Alice Sullivan, the study's lead author, said: "Pupils who were raised in religious homes were more likely to succeed academically than those from non-religious backgrounds, whether they went to faith schools or not, and any small academic advantage that could be due to faith schools themselves was short lived. "The much-vaunted

'Catholic school effect' was mostly explained by the fact that Catholic school pupils were usually from Catholic homes."

Advantage

Prof. Sullivan added that we can speculate the academic advantage of a religious upbringing at home may be due to cultural differences, such as differences in parenting practices and attitudes to education, as well as to religious belief or practice itself.

"For example," she said, "British Catholics at this time were often of Irish or European origin, bringing different cultural norms to those raised in other faiths, or none."

With parents making decisions about their children's education by comparing schools based on their performance, the study shows that considering the religious background and upbringing of the pupils may be more important for academic success. Top actor puts Faith above Hollywood's glitz and glamour

Staff reporter

Some say that showbusiness is just fun and games, but for award-winning actor and iconic role model, Mark Wahlberg [pictured], it's not all glitz and glam.

Last week, Wahlberg posted an Instagram story of his full day that would put some monks to shame, as he wakes up at 2.30am, prays for half an hour, and only then eats his breakfast at 3.15am. This is followed by two gym sessions, work and family time, and praying before bedtime at 7.30pm.

The celebrity hasn't been shy in speaking about his Faith journey and the difficulties he has faced.

He was sent to jail when he was just 16 for attempted murder, and it was then that he reached out to a parish priest for help. Now aged 47, he attends daily Mass and is a devoted husband and father.

His wife, Rhea, converted to Catholicism after being inspired and moved by his commitment to the Faith. He has previously spoken about how his religion is the most important part of his life.

In light of this, he has founded the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation to help inner city kids avoid the mistakes he made in his own youth.



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'Time of the essence' as Westminster set to vote on abortion in NI

Staff reporter

A new pro-life Poster Campaign aims to ensure legislation regarding abortion in the North of Ireland (NI) will be dealt with by Stormont rather than in Westminster, with campaigners saying "the battle is on'

Churches across NI will be contacted by Precious Life who hope they will encourage parishioners to send the group's postcards to Northern Ireland's Secretary of State, Karen Bradley MP.

The Director of Precious Life, Bernadette Smyth, said: "Our new Postcard Petition calls on the Northern Ireland Secretary of State to ensure that the democratic process in Northern Ireland is respected in Westminster, and ensure that any legislation regarding abortion in Northern Ireland will be dealt with by our Assembly only."

This comes as Labour MP Diana Johnson is to introduce a 'ten-minute rule bill' calling for the de-criminalisation of abortion, with MPs in Westminster expected to vote on it next month.

The process allows a backbench MP to argue for a new bill in a speech lasting up to ten minutes.

An opposing speech can be made before a decision is reached on whether or not the bill should be introduced.

'We either have devolution or we don't. Time is of the essence, we need to be on the phone, we need to be tapping on doors and asking the Church to do this. It's not about us collecting the petitions it's about the Church promoting it and encouraging their congregations to put a stamp on a card and sending it directly to Karen Bradley," Ms Smyth told The Irish Catholic.

"We're just giving people a voice here. Be the voice for democracy, be the voice for life - the battle is on for sure."

Bishop dismisses denial of Church's good works as 'ideologically driven'

Chai Brady

People who deny the good work that the Church in Ireland has done are not being fair and instead are being driven by ideology, Bishop Donal McKeown has said.

Referring to the Taoiseach's speech with Pope Francis at Dublin Castle, Bishop McKeown pointed out how Leo Varadkar said "the Church in Ireland has done many good things"

Dr McKeown said that "any denial of that reality is ideologically driven". However, he also added that Catholics "do a huge injustice to Christ, to ourselves and to others if we pretend that the past was not scarred by Original Sin.

"The temptation to power, to arrogance and to blindness was no less real a hundred

years ago than it is now," he said.

In a homily at the National Padre Pio Pilgrimage in Knock on Monday, Bishop Donal McKeown said that instead of condemning others for their sin, the first task of a Catholic is to be sure that parishes and dioceses are credible witnesses of Jesus, "people who have known forgiveness and who want others to know the joy that it brings".

Evil

In facing evil in Ireland, Dr McKeown said that secondly, like Jesus, "we have to speak the uncomfortable truth in love to our contemporaries".

Acknowledging the Church's failings in the past "frees us to comment on where our society is also marked by sin".

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Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor is pictured with Sr Anne of the Divine Mercy from Tipperary, after her First Profession in the Adoration Convent on Belfast's Falls Road.

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Emptying the meaning from words such as marriage, gender and love removes fundamental reference points for young people discovering who they are, Dr McKeown said.

By removing God you "stimulate hunger for selfindulgence", leading to the Church being replaced by the power of "corporations and strong feelings", he added.

He said young people are dying not because of Christ's call, but because they are told to obey their "thirst", and that life is too short to say no.

Finally, he said, evil can only be cast out through prayer and fasting and that facing sin and its consequences is "possible only for those who have opened themselves up to Christ's grace through prayer".

NEWS IN BRIEF Derry announces clerical changes

A Derry-based priest who was previously cleared of an indecent assault charge in the criminal courts is to retire to restricted ministry after accepting the outcome of a Canon Law trial, the diocese has said.

Bishop Donal McKeown announced this week that Fr Eugene Boland, who previously stepped aside in 2014, "has accepted the outcome of the process initiated at that time and has retired into restricted ministry. He will continue to assist in a capacity compatible with the restriction applied to this ministry," the bishop added in a statement.

Other changes include Fr Chris Ferguson who will become diocesan vocations director and priest-in-residence Three Patrons Parish, Fr Seán O'Donnell, curate in Glendermott and Strathfoyle will also serve as chaplain to the hospitals in Derry City.

Fr Ignacy Saniuta of the Diocese of Vitebsk in Belarus will serve as a curate in Omagh and as chaplain to the Polishspeaking community

European bishops praise volunteers

The work of Christian volunteers touches the lives of countless people across Europe, the continent's bishops have said following their meeting this week.

The Presidents of European bishops' conferences, including Primate of All-Ireland Eamon Martin, wrapped up their annual gathering in Poland at the weekend. "Volunteer work involves millions of Christians in Europe and is a remarkable and pervasive activity, that can reach many poor and marginalised people living in our opulent societies, with a peculiar dynamism of love

Parish appeals for parish priest not to be moved

Colm Fitzpatrick

A community in Dublin have appealed to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin to keep their parish priest, after learning he will be moved to another area at the end of September.

Fr Hugh Kavanagh, from Tinahely, Co. Wicklow, has been asked to move from East Wall parish in inner city Dublin to minister in two Clondalkin parishes.

A petition asking him to remain racked up over 1,400 signatures, but the priest has spoken out and said that by responding to the archbishop, he is "responding to God", and is "happy to go along there".

Fr Kavanagh said that his current parish is a very "closeknitted community", and as a family people want you to remain part of it, but that finding priests for parishes is very "challenging" so it's important to try and find people who are free and able to move.

Although he is anxious to "get the move over", he is looking forward to meeting new people, take on new challenges, and build up the community.

The accused is guilty till proved innocent - the new world order

Mary Kenny

IF – an individual does something reprehensible at the age of 17, possibly under the influence of alcohol, does that bar that individual from the responsibility of public office for the rest of their life?

Second question: if a person is accused of a reprehensible act, does that automatically make them guilty?

Such are the situations facing the American Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, who has been accused of a sexual assault, as a teenager, on another teenager, some 36 years ago.

Christine Blasey Ford, a professor of psychology (and a donor to the Democratic party) says that Judge Kavanaugh pushed her into a bedroom at a teenage party in the early 1980s when she was 15, locked the door, turned up the music to silence her

screams and forcibly lay on top of her.

Judge Kavanaugh denies that. Certainly, the charge should be investigated and Mrs Blasey Ford listened to. Although questions might also be asked if this has been a trauma in her life, why she did not make the claim public until now.

Are we also to assume that over the course of a life, nobody learns anything?"

The allegation has been facilitated by Dianne Feinstein, the leading Democrat on the judiciary committee, and a strong advocate for abortion rights. On Twitter the accusation

The year-on-year success of the National Ploughing Championship - now in its 85th year - is a tribute to rural Ireland's continued vitality, and continuing witness that despite urbanisation the grá for the land runs deep. Wish I was there!

If you're not ill, don't take the pill!

Ever since I graduated to the status of 'senior citizen', I've been advised to take an aspirin a day to prevent heart attack and strokes. But I wasn't comfortable with the advice. some of which came from doctors. because I don't think we should take medication until we have to, or until we are ill.

Now it turns out that taking aspirin every day

Pope confirms Irish synod participants

Pope Francis has confirmed the nominees of the Irish bishops' conference for next month's global gathering of bishops in Rome. In a communique issued on September 15, the Holy See Press Office announced that the Pope approved Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin and Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown as the Irish delegates.

The meeting of the Synod of Bishops is scheduled to take place from October 3-28 and have as its theme 'Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment'.

"may cause older people more harm than good", according to a major new study carried out at Australia's Monash University.

A healthy older person who takes a daily aspirin is, according to this study, more at risk of cancer and stomach bleeds. Unless diagnosed with heart problems, any benefit of daily aspirin is outweighed

NEWS

Its stated aim is to "accompany young people on their way of life towards maturity so that, through a process of discernment, they can discover their life project and realise it with joy, opening the encounter with God and with men, and actively participating in the building up of the Church and society".

600 set for D&C convention

Up to 600 people are expected to attend the Diocese of Down and

by the risks.

As Dr James Le Fanu says in his very sensible book Too Many Pills, far too many pills are being suggested or prescribed these days, and that can include statins, which can have a negative impact.

If you're not ill, you don't need medication (though I make an exception for that useful winter practice of taking a tonic).

Connor's annual Faith and Life convention later this month. Held in Belfast. the event brings together parishioners from across the diocese to reflect on the future of the Church.

Due to be held on Saturday, September 29, the convention will focus on 'Faith in the Family' and the keynote speaker will be Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga - a close confidant of Pope Francis.

There will also be more than two dozen workshops looking at various issues affecting faith in contemporary society.

It will be held at Our Lady and St Patrick's College in the city - see www. faithandlifeconvention.org



is now assumed to be proof Nobody corrects what the of the crime. Innocent until proved guilty, and due process, are fast losing ground. led lives of abandon and

But even if Brett

Kavanaugh did behave in a

dreadful way when he was a

teenager, does that bar him

later? Are we also to assume

that over the course of a life,

Nobody repents of anything?

from high office 36 years

nobody learns anything?

French so shrewdly call "les folies de la jeunesse" youthful madness? Many of our finest saints

young - Francis of Assisi, for example.

debauchery when they were

Men have been murder-

ers, criminals, rapists, slaveowners and come to see the errors of their wavs

I blush to think of some of the ghastly mistakes of my own youth: and indeed, that of others I have known. There are more than a few people in high positions today who behaved like

bounders in their early days: but it doesn't condemn their characters now. They have changed and developed.

Are we only to have individuals in public office who have never made a mistake, never acted badly or stupidly - especially under the influence of drink - never, in short, sinned? If that is the standard, then who shall attain it? And who shall we have in office who understands the weakness and errors of human nature?

If only paragons of virtue are deemed worthy then we have a world without clemency, or insight, or wisdom. As we seem, already, to have a world where guilt is presumed without due process.

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Sore losers aren't listened to, Dublin priest warns

Staff reporter

A prominent Dublin priest has defended having congratulated the 'Yes' side for having run a successful campaign in the abortion referendum, saying "people don't listen to sore losers".

Speaking at the Kennedy Summer School earlier this month, Ballyfermot's Fr Joe McDonald complimented Deirdre Duffy of the Together for Yes referendum campaign for the campaign's "wonderful work"

The Pro Life Campaign's Cora Sherlock has criticised Fr McDonald's comments, saying she was "quite shocked" by his praise for a campaign

that "will lead to the introduction of abortion, the devastation of women who regret the loss of their children, and the ending of human lives".

Comments

Fr McDonald, however, told The Irish Catholic that his comments were intended as an attempt at reaching out graciously. "If we present ourselves as people who have nothing new to sav and want to rehash a fight that has been wellbeaten, then I'm not sure that they'll listen to us," he said.

"Whereas they do listen to me when I say something like 'Well done, you won. I am the loser, and I want to say something to you'."

Govt figures are 'not real' and ignore hidden homeless - MQI

Chai Brady

The number of homeless people in Ireland is far more than 10,000 according to the CEO of a major homeless charity, and Government figures don't "recognise the scale of the problem".

Speaking at the launch of Merchants Quay Ireland's (MQI) 2017 Annual Report, outgoing CEO Tony Geoghegan said the figure of 9,846 in emergency accommodation ignores many people in similar situations.

"They're not the real figures," he told The Irish Catholic, "that doesn't include all the women in domestic violence units around the country that are homeless and

can't move out of those units until they get housing, and I think there are nearly 2,000 people in domestic violence units."

"Then we have people in direct provision who have been legitimised here, they're allowed to stay here, but again they can't move beyond direct provision because they don't have anywhere to go."

He also spoke of the growing number of rough sleepers who don't avail of emergency accommodation, citing the Spring 2018 Rough Sleeper Count which totalled 110 people, and those that avail of MQI's Night Café.

Mr Geoghegan said this 'pushes it way up nearer, heading over 15,000 for sure".

Overall in 2017 MQI assisted over 10,000 people with needs relating to homelessness, addiction and mental health.

They provided over 107,000 meals, almost 20,000 'safe sleeps' in their Night Café, dental care for 629 people and more than 6,102 GP visits to name a few of their services.

Battle

A long-time user of MQI's services, who preferred to remain anonymous, said throughout a battle with addiction and homelessness 'Merchant's Quay was always there"

"My life changed for me in May about three years ago,

All-Ireland **Primate** recalls Pope John Paul II's plea for peace

Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin at the side chapel in the cathedral in Poznan, Poland dedicated to the memory of Pope St John Paul II. In a post on social media. Dr Martin said: "I recalled his impassioned plea for peace in Ireland 39 years ago this month.

"Let us never lose sight of the goal of lasting peace and reconciliation," he said on Twitter.

three members of Merchants Quay staff found me outside Dublin City Council, they kept pumping me alive, I was overdosing. They kept me going.

"That would have been the start of recovery. Merchants Quay aren't just life givers, they're life savers as well."

He went through rehabilitation in High Park Residential – part of MOI's detox and rehab services - and is currently three years in recovery.

Mr Geoghegan is set to retire from Merchants Quay after three decades of service, with long-time staff member Paula Byrne taking the reins as the new CEO.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Diocese welcomes bomb memorial resolution

St Michael's Diocesan Trust has welcomed the resolution of a disagreement about the siting of a memorial to the 1987 Enniskillen bombing. Twelve people were killed and 68 others were injured in the Rememberance Day bombing by the IRA in the Co. Fermanagh town.

A memorial was unveiled at an event marking 30 years since the attack. However, it was taken down and put into storage after the Diocese of Clogher, which owns the land it was on, revealed it had not been consulted by the council.

The groups involved have now agreed to place it within the gable wall of the Clinton Centre in the town.

In a statement. St Michael's Diocesan Trust said: "We welcome the good progress that has been made and the solution that has been reached by all parties with regard to the siting of the memorial for the Enniskillen Remembrance Day bomb.

"The events

in Enniskillen on Remembrance Sunday in 1987 must be suitably remembered. We look forward to the parties concluding the work regarding outstanding technical matters as soon as possible," the statement added

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vocations, Pope tells Jesuits something that worries me: Staff reporter

Lack of vocations in Ireland is due to orders becoming "sterile" said the Pope during his private address to Jesuits during his visit to Ireland.

The text of Pope Francis' meeting with Jesuits, a regular occurrence during papal trips, was published almost a month after his visit to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families.

Speaking to members of the order from across the country, he said: "This is

vocations", after he was told the Irish province has just three novices, two from Britain.

"What happens if people no longer become enthusiastic for our life? We have to look again at our life to be blessed with future generations. Or are we already sterile?" Francis said.

"When we discover our sterility, if we put ourselves in prayer with the desire to be fruitful, the Lord will give us fecundity. Have Faith."

He added that "each one of

us" should show tenderness to children and speak with grandchildren.

After there have been so many saints in society over the ages, he said, the ques-tion has to be posed: "What is happening?'

"With so many young people that there are...I suggest you pray," he added.

Before his answer, the Jesuit Provincial, Fr Leonard Moloney, had asked the Pope to pray for vocations, and said: "As you can see, we are not so young – you are one of the youngest in this group!"

'Sterile' orders must pray for

The Irish Catholic

Comment 7



Protecting those who would protect our youngest

reland has a proud record of environmental protection. It is good to see the concern which enables the continued protection of a wide range of animals, with the Wildlife Act conferring strict protection from injury, disturbances and damage to breeding and resting sites for these creatures. Similarly it is illegal to cut, uproot or damage a listed species of flora or their habitats.

Anyone who hunts, kills, injures or wilfully interferes with or destroys a breeding or resting place is guilty of an offence. Penalties include fines of up to €100,000 and imprisonment of up to five years.

Ireland, which recognises the need to protect developing embryonic squirrels, bats etc., will no longer protect embryonic babies, for whom there will now be provision for the termination of their lives.

Context

It is interesting to reflect on these issues in the context of the recently published draft abortion legislation. There are four situations in which an unborn baby will be at risk of abortion:

First, an unborn child can be aborted up to "viability" if there is a risk to the life or of serious harm to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman. Viability is described as the point in a pregnancy at which, in the reasonable opinion of a medical practitioner, the foetus is capable of survival outside the womb without extraordinary life-sustaining measures.

Since all babies born early are treated using a range of necessary life sustaining measures, any such measure could now be regarded as being "extraordinary". In the absence of any definition of "serious harm" GPs and other doctors will have to make an objective decision about what is serious harm to health, mental or physical. This will not be easy.

Those situations should be exceptional in a country like Ireland where good ante-natal care should pick up emerging problems, allowing them to be dealt with before they re-present as a crisis.

Second, in any situation where there is an immediate risk to the life or of serious harm to health, mental or physical, and the doctor thinks it is immediately necessary to do so, the baby can be aborted up to birth.

There is no distinction between a woman with a life-threatening condition



which requires immediate surgery, in which case either the surgery is done or both mother and child die, and the woman who is threatening to commit suicide unless she gets the abortion of her unborn child, or the woman who says she really could not cope mentally with giving birth to a baby who has a cleft palette or a club foot, or even a missing limb.

There will be no protection for pharmacists who will have to dispense the drugs used to induce early abortion"

There is no provision for taking time to attempt to deal with mental health conditions which, rather than being alleviated by abortion, may actually be aggravated when the woman comes to realise what has happened.

Miss C, who was brutally raped was taken into care and had her baby aborted against her parents wishes, said this in 2015, "My name – the C-case girl – is brought up on radio and TV all the time these days as if I'm an ad for abortion...for me, it has been harder to deal with than the rape.

"It only really hits you after you have children. You never forget your missing baby. It plays on your mind every day. Any woman who has an abortion and then goes on to become a mother will know all about it afterwards."

Third, if the unborn baby suffers from a condition affecting the foetus that is likely to lead to the death

of the foetus either before, or within 28 days of birth, the baby can be aborted at any time - even up to delivery. How are we to know what conditions are anticipated here? Many serious conditions affecting children can be treated. The anticipation must therefore be that this provision will only apply if there is no treatment which would keep the baby alive, as so many babies are kept alive in the early days because of their fragility. How are doctors to deal with complexities of this kind?

Fourth, any woman who is pregnant will be able to have an abortion up to 12 weeks on demand. There is no situation in which a pregnant woman can be refused an abortion and there is no provision for time (part from a 72-hour period) for a woman, who may well be absolutely terrified to reflect, find out what help might be available to her, really consider her options.

For doctors who believe in what is described as the first principle of medicine, "to do no harm", and who became doctors and obstetricians to save life, not to carry out abortions, who see before them when they encounter a pregnant woman not one patient but two, these are going to be very difficult situations. There will be no

protection for pharmacists who will have to dispense the drugs used to induce early abortion. There is provision for conscientious objection for doctors. nurses and midwives. The draft Bill states they will not have to carry out, or to participate in carrying out, a termination of pregnancy, other than when immediately necessary to save the mother's life, if they have a conscientious objection.

The key question is what is meant by carry out or participate in carrying out an abortion? To what can medical practitioners lawfully object? It cannot be that participating in an abortion is limited to being in the operating theatre. It must include all aspects of the process which culminates in abortion.

Ireland, which recognises the need to protect developing embryonic squirrels, bats etc., will no longer protect embryonic babies"

Conscience is not the preserve of the religious. Those who think that it is wrong to end human life do so for many reasons: scientific, philosophical, religious and other beliefs. Conscientious objection exists, too, for the protection of patients who can believe that the professionals looking after them can act in accord with their conscience. It will be very important that Ireland protects its doctors, nurses and midwives in this situation. After all Ireland protects its squirrels, its bats, its deer when they are carrying their young; surely it can ensure that it provides proper protection for its doctors, its nurses and its midwives.

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Global child protection bishops' summit could be 'good move' – campaigner

Greg Daly

Vatican plans for a safeguarding summit of heads of bishops' conferences marks an important recognition that abuse is an issue for the whole Church, and not something restricted to specific countries, leading campaigner Marie Collins has said.

Pope Francis announced the unprecedented gathering last week, calling the Church's first ever global meeting of bishops on the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

The summit, which will take place in Rome over February 21-24, was announced following discussions between the Pope and his Council of Cardinal Advisers.

"The positive side of it is that it indicates that the Pope and Vatican now are looking on this as a global issue, rather than just an issue in certain countries," Mrs Collins told *The Irish Catholic*.

Opportunity

"Bringing all the bishops' conferences together from around the world indicates concern for every country, not just the ones where the issue has come to the fore, and that's a good move forward."

Mrs Collins said the Vatican has hitherto been reluctant to deal with it other than as localised phenomena, but that the summit offers a real chance to change that.

"I would hope that it will be an opportunity, obviously, to ensure that every bishops' conference is on the same page, and is committed to child safeguarding and to zero tolerance, and that at this meeting that will be made very clear to them. I would like to see them sign up to that," she said, adding that another good move would be for the bishops' conference presidents to bring their conference safeguarding policies with them, with a view to the Vatican publishing them.

Talking shop

At the same time, Mrs Collins expressed concern that the summit will not live up to its potential.

"On the downside it's five months away, it could end up to be just another talking shop where various opinions on the need for protection of minors

will be discussed," she said. "I hope it just doesn't end up being a lot of talk and nothing concrete coming out of it in the way of action. It's an opportunity – it looks good, and it looks positive, but we've had positive signs before that have not come to anything," she said. **Three novices make First Profession**



Three novices, Benedict MD McGlinchey OP, Christopher Vincent D. Gault OP and Blazej Martin J. Bialek OP of the Irish Provence of the Dominican Order make their First Profession. The novices, who spent the last year in the noviciate in Cork, will continue with the next step in their lives as Dominicans in the Studium, which is St Saviour's priory in Dublin, and will study philosophy and theology to become ordained as priests in years to come.

Concern over Scientology 'recruitment' in Dublin

Staff reporter

Community leaders in south-west Dublin have criticised a 'family fun' weekend organised for the coming week by a recently established branch of the Church of Scientology in the area.

The 'dinosaur giant family fun weekend' takes place in the Church of Scientology's community centre in Firhouse, and includes several entertainment features aimed at children.

Local Labour Party councillor Mar-

tina Genockey said the scientologists have drawn concern among the local community. There has already been several protests outside the centre before and since it was established last year.

"These events they are having are very much aimed at children and families, and a lot of people see it as a way of bringing in people who have nothing to do with the centre. You have to think to yourself, why are they doing this? They are trying to recruit people," she said, according to the *Sunday Times*.

Winners of Pope Francis stamp competition

The five winners of *The Irish Catholic* Pope Francis first-day stamp competition have been announced: Ann Marian O'Connor, Thurles, Co. Tipperary; Michael Carey, Farranshone, Co. Limerick; Teresa O'Neill, Dundalk, Co. Louth; John Killian, Fermoyle, Co. Longford; Sheila McLoughlin, Santry, Co. Dublin.

An Post released two brand new stamps to commemorate the Pope's visit to Ireland in August. They are featured in the quarterly booklet released by An Post, The Collector, and were issued on July 26.

The first day covers are designed by Vermillion Design, based on Distillery Road, Dublin 3. The commemorative stamps and the first day cover can be purchased on www.irishstamps.ie

The age-old question: How long should a homily be?

t's a question almost as old as Christianity itself, and given that parishioners globally have some personal experience of it, it is certainly one worth answering: How long should a homily be?

This question has sparked discussion this week after Pope Francis told a gathering of 10,000 over the weekend in Italy that the homily shouldn't last more than eight minutes. "A 40-minute homily? No." By keeping it short and concise, listeners will easily be able absorb the content and meaning of the homily, and then act on it.

However, it may not be the case that a long homily is necessarily a boring homily, with its success actually depending on the topic being preached or the quality of the preaching itself.

That's the take from Dr David Deane, Associate Professor of Theology in Canada's Atlantic School of Theology, who said that the quality of preaching makes



Colm Fitzpatrick

the difference between a good and bad homily, rather than how long it lasts. Francis' remarks, he said, come from the fact that the Pontiff "has had a pretty poor experience of preachers" as many of us have, and so, the shorter they are the better.

It's totally relative to interest. If you're interested in something you don't mind"

However, now that men are entering the seminary because of their "passion and commitment" rather than as a "great career option" when vocations were aplenty, longer and more appealing homilies should be normalised.

"Thus, drab disinterested services are, in my opinion, less common now than 30 and 40 years ago. Francis is speaking from a particular cultural epoch. My take is that two minutes of boring disinterested preaching is two minutes too long. I could listen to Martin Luther King all day!" he said.

It's a thought-provoking argument and for Irish priest Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap, it might hold some credence. Speaking to this paper, he said that homilies ought to be simple, clear, directed and well-adapted.

He added that homilies should be straight to the point, so that the "whole thing is rounded and connected", but he said, there might not be a direct link between the longevity of the homily and those enthusiastically listening. "To me", he said, "it's totally relative to interest. If you're interested in something you don't mind."

He pointed out that some of the most stimulating talks he has attended have lasted well over an hour. What's important, he emphasised, is that the homily "doesn't take over from the Mass".

"It's integrated into the Mass. It's isn't a lecture. A lecture stands on its own," he said.

People are enthused by a homily when the priest is a good speaker and is talking about an

interesting topic"

So, should homilies be shortened because parishioners don't want to listen to long sermons, or is general dissatisfaction towards homilies due to poor preaching? It's probably a combination of both. People are enthused by a homily when the priest is a good speaker and is talking about an interesting topic, but given that people are constantly juggling their time now-a-days, too long a homily might bore or deter parishioners.

Petra Conroy of Catholic Voices Ireland told this paper that homilies should speak to those who are connected to the Church "but are not really in it", like busy parents or businessowners who are focused on things outside the walls of their church.

Priests, she said, should be trained to better communicate the message of the Gospel and in this way, they can really challenge the listeners.

The sign of good homily, Ms Conroy said, is really if it makes you think about your own life, and how you can act upon the message.

must have its leadership

structures. But structures led by flawed, sinful humans

will always let you down

always be a reason

why any institution

A faith that rests on Jesus

himself can't fail unless we

decide we no longer believe

in him, unless we decide we

have come up with a better

answer in our lives than him.

When lesus asked the

leave too?", Peter replied on

their behalf: "Lord, to whom

shall we go? You have the

That is the answer all

leaders fail, and we ourselves

Christians give when our

fail, to live as we ought.

words of eternal life."

disciples, "Do you want to

loses power and

influence"

There will

eventually.



Our Christian faith ultimately rests on Christ himself, writes **David Quinn**

he faith of many Catholics has suffered another battering recently because of the latest eruption of public anger over abuse scandals. In Germany, a report commissioned by the Catholic bishops there shows that over a 70-year period, more than 3,000 priests have been accused of child abuse, about 5% of the total who have served in that time

When the Pope came here last month, it was in the shadow of the scandals, and in the US, there has been renewed anger at the hierarchy because many bishops must have known that the former Archbishop of Washington DC, Theodore McCarrick, had been sexually compromising his seminarians for many years. It was an open secret. More recently an allegation emerged that he had abused an 11-year old.

But when we say that our Faith has taken a battering, we have to ask, our faith in what, exactly? I think the most accurate answer is, faith in the leadership of the Church. That is a very different thing from losing faith in Christianity itself.

Unfortunately, we have had to learn very painfully that many of the leaders of the Catholic Church have feet of clay, to put it very mildly. Some are simply corrupt (like McCarrick), and others are reluctant ever to take a hard decision, including facing down the abusers in the ranks of the clergy. Self-protection came before child-protection, even though in Ireland the situation in this regard has vastly improved.

Leadership

Mediocrity is commonplace. not that this is limited to the Church. Mediocre, selfserving leadership has been exposed across society; in the banks, in politics, in journalism, in the gardaí and so on. Real bravery and vision are in short supply.

In the leadership ranks of the Church, however, you would hope for something

Sticking with a battered **Church despite everything**



better. You would hope that zeal for the Gospel would result in a willingness to take hard decisions when necessary, to not be so selfserving and self-justificatory, that there would be a clear knowledge that sometimes you have to walk the way of the Cross, however painful that is.

When you think about it a little harder, however, maybe it is not so surprising. Christianity is very frank about the weaknesses of human nature. It knows that we are innately sinful and are well capable of deceiving ourselves about our own true motives and intents. That is why we believe we need the grace of God to ultimately rise above ourselves. We cannot save ourselves purely through our own efforts.

Faith in Jesus is the bedrock of Christianity and of the lives of every individual Christian"

A big problem for the Church in Ireland, and elsewhere, is that when we think of the Church, we think primarily of the institution, of the structures. Instead we need to remember that Christianity is first and foremost a way of life, a way of life based on the figure of lesus Christ.

If we think predominantly of the structure, then it is very hard not to think in terms of power. Has the structure, the institution, a position of power and influence in society or not? If our Faith depends on it

having power and influence, then our faith will wane as that wanes. It has to, because there will always be a reason why any institution loses power and influence and it will usually be because it used its position badly. Again, think of all the institutions in society that have lost status for this reason, recently and through history.

Vision

That is not to say the Church shouldn't seek influence. If we as Christians believe we have something to say about the just ordering of society, then collectively we should seek to bring about that vision.

But throughout history, depending on time and place the influence of Christians in society has waxed and waned and so has that of the institution. In fact, there have been plenty of times and plenty of places where the influence of the Church has never been strong, think of China for instance.

In countries like China, Christians, including Catholics, have never been able to base their faith on the power of the institutional Church. They have always had to base it on something else, and hopefully that something else has been **Iesus** Christ.

Jesus described himself as "the Way, the Truth and the Life". Faith in him is the bedrock of Christianity and of the lives of every individual Christian. No matter how badly or corruptly the Church is led

at any given moment in time, we as Christians have no excuse for not trying to model our lives on Jesus and his example. We are either

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stands up for

his disciples, or we are not Christians at all.

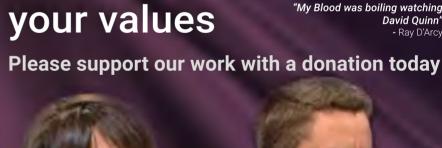
The community of people who follow Christ is called. simply, the Church, and it

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"My Blood was boiling watching David Quinn'



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Irish eyes on the roots of **Russia's revolutions**

he eve of The Irish Catholic in its edition of September 14, 1918 was firmly on overseas developments, with the evolving tragedy in Russia the subject of its lead editorial. Entitled 'The terror in Russia', it addressed the news reports emanating from the country, then still in the grip of the tumult produced by a Bolshevik revolution less than a year old.

While reliable reports were few in number, they told a consistent story: of a country "hastening towards the abyss of destruction" via wholesale massacres, disease and man-made famine.

The paper particularly lamented the murder of Irish-born Captain Cromie, the British Naval Attaché to the country, who had been killed two weeks before when the British embassy in

100 years on

Gabriel Doherty

continues his reflection on issues as identified by The Irish Catholic a century ago

Petrograd (St Petersburg) had been stormed by members of the Cheka, the revolutionary secret police.

In an effort to explain this unconscionable turn of events, the paper, rather intriguingly, focussed not so much on the evils of socialism, but rather on the problems that had been allowed to accumulate and fester in Russian society, and in the Russian Orthodox church,

over the preceding decades. In particular it referred to two authors who had produced pioneering sociological analysis of developments in Russia at the beginning and end of the 19th Century.

The first was Comte Joseph-Marie de Maistre, a Catholic intellectual and diplomat from Savoy, who had fled France following the revolution there, and after 1802 spent 15 years living in St Petersburg.

Editorial

The editorial referred in particular to de Maistre's Quatre Chapitres Inedits sur la *Russie*, a book that had been written during his time in St Petersburg, but which was not published until 1859. This work examined the likely ramifications of the emancipation of Russian serfs, a measure first mooted during de Maistre's time in Russia, but which was not enacted until two years after the book finally appeared in print.

This measure was championed by modernisers within the Tsarist regime as a conservative measure, one that would remove many of the manifest grievances shared by the lowest classes in Russia, while at the same time leading to enhanced efficiencies in the national economy.

He undoubtedly argued in favour of an ending of the schism between the **Orthodox and Latin** Churches"

However, de Maistre had suggested such liberation, in the absence of root-andbranch reform within the Russian Orthodox Church (most notably an improvement in the standard of the clergy), could produce revolution, as the emancipated peasantry would transfer their dissatisfaction with their clergy on to the state with which they were equally displeased and with which the Church



Russia Bolshevik leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin addressing a crowd in Russia.

theologian and philosopher, Vladimir Soloviev, who the paper described as a convert to Catholicism.

Though there is some dispute on this point, he undoubtedly argued in favour of an ending of the schism between the Orthodox and Latin Churches.

His analysis of Russian ills in the late 19th Century were wide-ranging, but focussed especially on the dissatisfaction engendered by the unfortunate combination of an intolerant absolutist regime and a compliant, undisciplined church - dissatisfaction that had been stretched to breaking point by the war, and which had been manipulated by the Bolsheviks to justify their own depravities.

The most charitable comment on Dunne's words was that they demonstrated just how far Irish opinion towards the war had shifted"

In its concern for events of the other side of the European continent, the paper did not entirely neglect domestic

Edward Fitzsimmons Dunne, Mayor of

Chicago 1905-1907

and Governor of Illinois 1913-1917.

concerns, but even here there was an international context.

It took the form of extensive coverage of a speech by the former Mayor of Chicago, and prominent Irish-American Edward Dunne (who was later to play a significant role during the War of Independence).

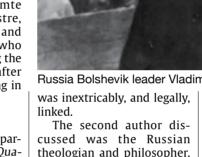
Dunne enthusiastically endorsed an interpretation of the conflict in Europe as "a just and righteous war" against German militarism and Junkerism. Anticipat-ing the defeat of same, and the post-war settlement, he believed that Irish, and Irish-American, support for the war would further Ireland's claims for self-government when the time came for presenting her case "to the conscience of the world's democracies".

The speech, however, ignored the recent mass mobilisation that had taken place within Ireland against the proposal to extend conscription to the country, and the burgeoning power of Sinn Féin, which opposed the recruitment of Irishmen into the British Army.

Perhaps the most charitable comment on Dunne's words was that they demonstrated just how far Irish opinion towards the war had shifted during the course of the conflict, and how little understood this sea-change was understood even among senior Irish-American figures.

(1) Gabriel Doherty teaches in the Department of History, UCC, and is a member of the Government's expert advisory group on the Decade of Commemorations.

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Comment | 11

An innocent abroad



There is reason to speculate on how well prepared the Pope was for his Irish trip, writes **Greg Daly**

"It is not enough to turn the page. Life must be given anew." This quote from Pope Francis headlined the *La Civiltà Cattolica* account last week of the August 25 meeting between the Pope and a group of 63 Irish Jesuits, but though there's much to applaud in the account it's hard not to come away from reading it with a worrying suspicion that the Holy Father had not been especially well briefed ahead of his trip to Ireland.

Apologising for the lateness of his meeting with the Jesuits, the Pontiff explained that he had a meeting with eight survivors of sexual and institutional abuse.

"I didn't know that in Ireland there were also cases where unmarried women had their children taken away from them," he said. "Hearing this particularly touched my heart. Today the minister for children and young people spoke to me about this issue, and then sent me a memorandum. I want to ask you a special help: help the Church in Ireland to put an end to this."

His comments on putting an end to it did not simply mean "stop doing this", of course, instead being a call for the clergy to do what they can to do whatever is necessary to heal wounds and give life back to people.

But what on earth does it mean to say that he did not know about Mother and Baby homes, or how they operated? Certainly, several of those who spoke with him ahead of his meetings with the Jesuits have testified to his astonishment on hearing both about the homes and about Magdalene Laundries.

Translator

Paul Redmond, who was born in a Mother and Baby home, told RTÉ the Pope had "literally had no idea" what a Magdalene laundry was. "It ended up with me giving him a three- or four-minute crash course through his translator as to the institutions of Ireland," he said, with Bernadette Fahy also saying the Pope had "appeared to know nothing" about the laundries or about industrial schools.

Speaking to the *Irish Independent*, Marie Collins said the Pontiff had seemed confused about the different institutions. "He certainly was quite shocked and he asked when he didn't understand. He wanted to know the difference between the Magdalene Laundries and the Mother and Baby Homes," she said, adding: "He wasn't trying to deny it in any way, he actually wanted to know more."

That the Pope should have been so ignorant on these issues beggars belief, some have said, pointing to how in February 2014 he briefly met with Philomena Lee, whose search for the son from whom she was separated while in a Roscrea Mother and Baby home in the 1950s inspired the Oscar-nominated film *Philomena*.

This, at least, seems a slightly unfair criticism: although Mrs Lee attended Mass in St Peter's Square, her encounter with the Pope lasted just seconds, and it's not clear how much he understood from what he was told in those seconds by Steve Coogan, who co-wrote and coproduced the film, as well as starring in it.

A more important problem concerns how just weeks before the papal visit there were still discussions about whether Pope Francis could visit the site of the Magdalene Laundry on



Pope Francis prays in front of a candle in memory of victims of sexual abuse during his visit to St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Dublin.

Dublin's Sean McDermott Street. One would hope that as these ideas were being passed around between Dublin and Rome that somebody might have explained to Pope Francis what the laundries were, how their history is contested, how they related to and differed from Mother and Baby homes, and why all of this matters.

Advising bishops against being aloof might be good perennial advice"

One way or another, shock around being told of these things certainly seems to have moulded the Pope's comments over the course of his visit, which speech after speech being adjusted to incorporate things he had seemingly just heard about, the first of these being his reference in Dublin Castle to his encounter with Minister Katharine Zappone at Áras an Uachtaráin earlier that day.

"With regard to the reality of the most vulnerable, I cannot fail to acknowledge the grave scandal caused in Ireland by the abuse of young people by members of the Church charged with responsibility for their protection and education," he said, continuing, "The words spoken to me by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs still resonate in my heart; I thank her for those words."

The first question put to the Pontiff on the flight back to Rome concerned what exactly Minister Zappone had said, with the Pope saying: "She told me, and she was brief, 'Holy Father, we found mass graves of children, buried children, we're investigating... and the Church has something to do with this." Granted, the term 'mass graves' was

Granted, the term 'mass graves' was absent from the minister's own account of the meeting, and leaving aside how members of the Tuam Home Survivors' Network has dismissed the minister's actions as a publicity stunt, one thing seems clear: the Pope was wrongfooted by the encounter, and left grappling from that point on with immensely serious matters about which he seems to have known nothing.

More broadly, other slightly odd notes were struck later in the Pope's meeting with the Jesuits, when he gave advice on Confession and commented on excessive strictness.

We need to defeat authoritarianism and rediscover the obedience of the sending in mission"

"Who among us does not know an authoritarian bishop?" he asked. "Forever in the Church there have been authoritarian bishops and religious superiors. And authoritarianism is clericalism.

"Sometimes the sending in mission decisively and with authority is confused with authoritarianism. Instead they are two different things. We need to defeat authoritarianism and rediscover the obedience of the sending in mission."

He would make a similar point when speaking to Ireland's bishops the next day, when he said: "Do not repeat the attitudes of aloofness and clericalism that at times in your history have given the real image of an authoritarian, harsh and autocratic Church."

Advising bishops against being aloof might be good perennial advice, but there are few fair or informed observers who believe authoritarianism or aloofness are vices that especially plague the Church in Ireland today. Indeed, it has been some decades since that would have been a reasonable criticism, just as it has been some decades since Irish priests would have needed to be reminded that Confession should be "an encounter with Jesus Christ, not a torture room or a psychiatrist's couch".

There's no doubting the wisdom of what the Pope had and has to say on this topic, but while his advice on this subject might have been a boon to the Irish Church of 40 or 50 years ago, it hardly seems something today's priests desperately need to hear.

With seemingly misplaced priorities, and with an apparent ignorance about the various hot-button aspects of the institutional abuse debates, it is hard to avoid wondering how exactly the Pope was prepared for his visit and what he was told by Ireland's bishops, by the Vatican's Secretariate of State, and by Irish prelates in Rome.

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12 Analysis

Are young people the

a major discussion on young people, it's worth taking note of the aims and processes behind what it hopes to address: a crisis in reaching vouth.

s the Church comes closer to

The Synod on Youth will be held in the Vatican from October 3-28 on the theme 'Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment', with bishops attending from around the world.

The document that will be at the centre of discussion. the Instrumentum Laboris. was published in June of this year, and will help steer the bishops regarding issues close to the hearts of young people from hundreds of different societies and cultures.

The Synod of Bishops was established by Pope Paul VI in September 1965 in order to involve bishops from around the world in assisting the Pope in addressing important issues facing the Church. With many young people not practicing the Faith or abandoning the Church – particularly in Ireland as well as many coun-

Chai Brady discusses the upcoming Synod on Youth

tries in the Western world the synod comes at a pivotal time.

This will be the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops and much has been done to get to the bottom of this conundrum.

It was announced on Saturday the full list of priests, bishops, cardinals, collaborators and observers who would e taking part in the synod.

To the list of members elected by national bishops' conferences, Pope Francis added cardinals from 14 countries, bishops from another 10 nations, as well as 10 priests who will be full voting members of the gathering. The observers and col-



laborators include 30 women and several young adults. They participate in the synod discussions, but do not have a vote on the final proposals given to the Pope.

Dialogue

The Church is both locally and internationally "trying to learn to dialogue" with youth and help them discern their vocations, Bishop Donal McKeown told The Irish Catholic.

Dr McKeown will be attending the synod with Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin, and said he was very impressed with the efforts to involve young people in informing the upcoming discussions.

"What's been very interesting has been Pope Francis' approach to the synods, there's been synods of bishops over the years but in early 2016 there was a letter that came out to all bishops' conferences asking them to consult with young people, and to send back comment on the situation, the reality, in their own country," said Dr McKeown.

This began a process of surveying thousands of young people in Ireland and around the world, which received 65,000 responses by October 2017. The Vatican's survey began in June 2017 and focused on people 16-29 years of age, irrespective of religious belief.

The list of 53 mostly multiple-choice questions was divided into seven sections: general personal information; attitudes and opinions about oneself and the world; influences and relationships; life choices: religion. Faith and the Church; internet use; and two final, open-ended questions.

The write-in questions are an invitation to describe a positive example of how the Church can "accompany young people in their choices, which give value and fulfilment in life" and to say something about oneself that hasn't been asked in the questionnaire.

Other questions ask about living arrangements; selfimage; best age to leave home and have a family; opinions about education and work; measures of success; sources of positive influence; level of confidence in public and private institutions; and political or social activism.

This was followed by a presynodal meeting in March of this year in Rome attended by 300 young representatives from around the world. Approximately 15,300 young people from five continents took part in the meeting physically or virtually.

The issues raised included a longing for an 'authentic' Church that is transparent, welcoming and communicative"

Receiving input from 20 language groups and six social media groups, the resultant document was sent to the Synodal Fathers and ultimately informed the Instrumentum Laboris.

The issues raised included a longing for an 'authentic' Church that is transparent, welcoming and communica-



Pope Francis greets a young man as he arrives at a pre-synod gathering of youth delegates in Rome.

present wrongs.

delphia Archbishop Charles

Chaput said he asked Pope

Francis on August 30 to call

off the synod, and instead to

cancel the upcoming synod

on young people. Right now,

the bishops would have absolutely no credibility in addressing this topic," the

archbishop said at a confer-

ence in Philadelphia's St.

Charles Borromeo Seminary.

"begin making plans for a

synod on the life of bishops".

sex abuse scandals relating to

high ranking prelates, hun-

dreds of clergy and even alle-

gations against Pope Francis

himself of being involved in

an abuse cover-up have come

to light in recent months, it's

no wonder there are wor-

ries among young people

and a desire for an authentic

Many young people also

Church.

With revelations of several

In its place, the archbishop suggested that the Pope

"I have written to the Holy Father and called on him to

focus on the life of bishops.

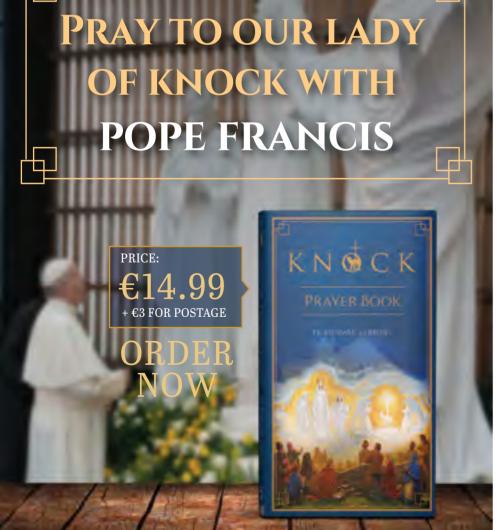
tive one that has zero tolersaid they feel disconnected from the Church, they could ance to sexual abuse and is sincere in admitting past and attend Mass but not feel a sense of community, with This comes as the Philasome saying their Church

communities "seem dead". * * * * * * *

The youth representatives also touched on issues they felt were polarising many in their demographic, these include contraception, abortion, homosexuality, cohabitation, marriage and how the priesthood is perceived in different realities in the Church.

The document, which is a compilation of submissions during the pre-synod, states on this topic: "What is important to note is that irrespective of their level of understanding of Church teaching, there is still disagreement and ongoing discussion among young people on these polemical issues.

"As a result, they may want the Church to change her teaching or at least to have access to a better explanation and to more formation on these questions. "Even though there is internal debate. young Catholics whose convictions are in conflict with



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future of the Church?



official teaching still desire to be part of the Church. Many young Catholics accept these teachings and find in them a source of joy. They desire the Church to not only hold fast to them amid unpopularity but to also proclaim them with greater depth of teaching."

I think the document is very much structured in an Ignatian way... you recognise the reality"

The final document, the Instrumentum Laboris, is broken up into three parts and has been drawn up to mimic the method of discernment. Pope Francis describes the process of discernment in Evangelii Gaudium using three verbs: recognise, interpret and choose.

Commenting on the documents, Bishop Donal McKeown said: "I think the document is very much structured in an Ignatian way, you see, you recognise the reality, and that first section - those first five chapters of that document – were really trying to recognise the reality of where young people are in the society they live in. It begins with an analysis of the reality."

In this section there is a large focus on the most marginalised young people "who are continually rejected by a world that understands itself starting from the paradigm of rejection, of 'buy, use, and discard'"

It states that when this culture is applied to human beings, consideration of their dignity is lost. This manifests itself in labour exploitation, discrimination and social exclusion to name a few.

"The second section that you can see is talking about

With same-sex marriage and abortion becoming legal in Ireland after two referendums changed the Constitution, more than ever young people in Ireland are becoming disillusioned with the widening gap between Church teaching and what

trying to interpret all of that in the light of the Scriptures and then the third section leads up to choosing, making a choice, and deciding what are the priorities for us. The whole process of synodality is really going out to a much deeper level of trying to discern with the whole people of God, what our priorities are, what our ways forward are at the present time. I think it's an interesting process even before we begin to look at the content," Dr McKeown said.

He added that it builds on the approach of Pope Francis to the Synod on the Family, which took place in October 2015, when there was also a questionnaire sent out.

are becoming societal norms"



Pope Francis prepares to take a photo with young people at a pre-synod gathering of youth delegates in Rome. Photos: CNS

adults involved in religious

practice decreased as they

got older. Data collated by the

European Social Survey from

2014-2016 found that 24% of

young people are attending

Church number-cruncher,

Prof. Stephen Bullivant, say-

ing the decline of religion in

with The Irish Catholic, he

said: "It's simply not the case

in Ireland that we've got a

kind of Catholic old genera-

tion who are dying off and

this bright, new secular gen-

eration is taking over. Even

among young adults we see

that Ireland is extremely Catholic, other than Poland,

In a previous interview

This has led to a prominent

Mass weekly in Ireland.

Ireland is overstated.

"I think there was a recognition that much of that initial questionnaire for the one on the family, was rather cumbersome in terms of the language and difficult to respond to. I think certainly they would have learnt from this in terms of trying to hear from young people, both Church going and non-Church going young people, to hear it from them, what is their reality, to enable us as Church to respond to their reality.

The Instrumentum Laboris states it recognises that young men and women are often confronted by the challenge of cultural changes that sometimes disregards spirituality and Church teaching.

* * * * * * * *

In Part I, Recognising: The Church Listens to Reality, it states that many sociological studies show many young Catholics don't follow the Church's teaching on sexual morals, while others call out for clarity on subjects such as homosexuality and gender issues "which young people are already freely discussing without taboo".

With same-sex marriage and abortion becoming legal in Ireland after two referendums changed the constitution, more than ever young people in Ireland are becoming disillusioned with the widening gap between Church teaching and what are becoming societal norms.

Instrumentum Laboris, presented by the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, concludes that holiness is the most attractive face of the Church, and before suggesting it to young people, "we are called to experience it as witnesses, thus becoming a 'likeable' community, as the Acts of the Apostles shows us on various occasions"

In a recent survey of Christian youth in Ireland called Finding Faith in Ireland published late last year, 33% said they attended Church in the last week. The figures also showed the number of young by any other normal comparison."

Prof. Bullivant, director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society at St Mary's University, Twickenham, said the ESS found that the six 'most Christian' nations are all historically Catholic-majority countries, such as Ireland and Poland.

In tackling the issue of young people in the Church, the synod will be addressing the Church's future, a sentiment that reflects St John Paul II's when he visited Ireland almost 50 years ago and he spoke to Ireland's youth in Galway.

He said: "When I look at you, I see the Ireland of the future. Tomorrow, you will be the living force of your country; you will decide what Ireland will be. Tomorrow, as technicians or teachers, nurses or secretaries, farmers or tradesmen, doctors or engineers, priests or religious - tomorrow you will have the power to make dreams come true.

"Tomorrow, Ireland will depend on you.

'When I look at you assembled around this altar and listen to your praying voices, your singing voices, I see the future of the Church. God has his plan for the Church in Ireland, but he needs you to carry it out. What the Church will be in the future depends on your free cooperation with God's grace."



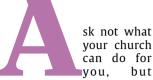
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14 | Analysis

Mission-focused parishes:



you, but what you can do for your church. Msgr Joseph McGuinness didn't say this in any of the recent missives issued from the Diocese of Clogher, but he could have done.

Hot on the heels of a September 4 notification about a gathering for clergy and church leaders entitled 'Looking after the shepherd: pastoral support for clergy', September 8 saw the publication of a notice about "modest changes" to Mass times across the diocese.

That a 15% reduction of Sunday Masses from 113 to 96 could be described as "modest" shows just how pressing Clogher's situation currently is; a more emphatic reduction in Mass numbers could easily have been justified, given the dropping numbers of clergy in the diocese and the aging demographic profile of the

Changes in Clogher mark a realistic direction for the Irish Church, writes **Greg Daly**

clergy.

The decision to reduce Mass numbers comes after a series of meetings of priests across the diocese, and is the first major development to come out of Msgr McGuinness' August 11 pastoral letter, 'The future mission of our parishes'.

Letters and announcements about how dioceses and parishes might look to the future have been, of course, anything but unusual in the Irish Church of late. Bishop Francis Duffy's March 2017 letter on 'Sustaining our Faith community in the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois' was one that caught national attention, but it's easy to think



too of the work of Limerick's 2016 diocesan synod, or Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's call for Dublin parishes to reflect this November on how they might find concrete ways to renew the Church in the coming years.

With just 52 men in diocesan formation for priesthood across Ireland – as well as a further 14 being prepared by the Neocatechumenal Way for ministry in the Archdiocese of Armagh – the national vocational map looks bleak, such that it's not surprising that bishops have been signalling that action must be taken to tackle what must surely be recognised as a national crisis.

Strikingly, however, Clogh-

PRICE:

er's call for action has come not from a bishop, but from a diocesan administrator, Msgr McGuinness having held the reins in the border diocese since October 2016, following the retirement of Bishop Liam MacDaid.

"Given that we are still awaiting the appointment of a new bishop in the diocese, I had hoped that any significant changes could be postponed until that appointment was made," Msgr McGuinness wrote at the start of the August letter announcing extensive diocesan changes. "However, circumstances are such in the diocese that changes are now needed to address the immediate challenges that we face."

Observers of the state of the Church in Ireland have often spoken of how the Church here is approaching a cliff edge, and reading Msgr MacDaid's letter one gets the distinct impression that that cliff edge has now been reached.

How else to describe a letter which details "the serious and challenging situation" facing the diocese, and precedes an exploration of the possibilities that lie ahead by thanking each and every priest of the diocese for their faithful service in ministry, their dedication to the people in their parishes, and their generous commitment to the diocese's work as a whole? That the letter's tone is

That the letter's tone is one of farewell to a clerical model of Church seems all too clear, not least in its gratitude to a passing generation. Mapping out the reality of Clogher today, Msgr McGuinness spells out how there are just 58 priests in active ministry in the diocese, serving 85 churches spread across 37 parishes.

"During the past year alone we have lost the service of seven priests through death, serious illness and other reasons," he wrote. "Although we are grateful to have had one new priest ordained, it is clear that the number of active priests in our diocese will continue to decline."

The age profile of the diocese's clergy makes that at least as clear as do vocational figures, with 28 of the diocese's 58 active priests being over 65, just 7 of the 58 priests being under 50, and the remaining 23 in between.

"There are obvious implications in this for our ability to sustain the levels of pastoral and sacramental provision which have existed until now, as well as the administrative structures within our diocese," according to Msgr McGuinness, who contin-



ued: "The changes which I am making are the beginning of a process to deal with the reality of the present and the challenge of the future."

Msgr McGuinness has been put in a difficult – unenviable – position, and has reacted admirably and proactively"

Clogher's difficulties are far from unique among Irish dioceses, and for Fr Bernard Cotter, a onetime seminary classmate of Msgr McGuinness and author with Diana Klein of How to Survive Working in a Catholic Parish, the Clogher administrator is to be praised for his willingness to grasp the diocesan nettle. Describing him as "a bright and intelligent man, deeply committed to Faith and Church", Fr Cotter says: "He has been put in a difficult – unenviable – position, and has reacted admirably and proactively.'

While praising the i realism and initiative shown in Msgr M c G u i n n e s s's pastoral letter and its recognition of the shifting nature of the Irish Church, Fr Cotter is sceptical of how it appears only priests took part in meet-

ings held to plan for diocesan Mass reductions.

"I do not note any lay involvement in these meetings so I wonder is there a danger that lay people are being seen as passive recipients of any arrangements that the priests, on their own, come up with," he says, adding that this "doesn't look like a Vatican II approach".

Not that the pastoral letter as a whole underrates the laity; far from it, even, with its call for a more practical footing to be given to cooperation and collaboration between priests and people in neighbouring parishes, and in particular with how it invites lay involvement across the board.

"As well as challenges, I have also mentioned possibilities," Msgr McGuinness wrote. "A key element in the life of the Church in our parishes is the ministry of laypeople. Without the generous and loyal help of many lay volunteers, our liturgical and Faith life would be greatly impoverished, and the dayto-day running of our parishes and diocese would be impossible."

So far so good, one might think, but also so far so normal, except for how the previous part of the letter had concluded with a call drawing on Pope Francis's first exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium, which mapped out his blueprint for an evangelical

The DIOCESE of KILMORE

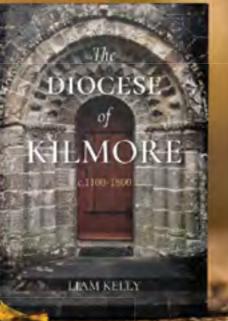
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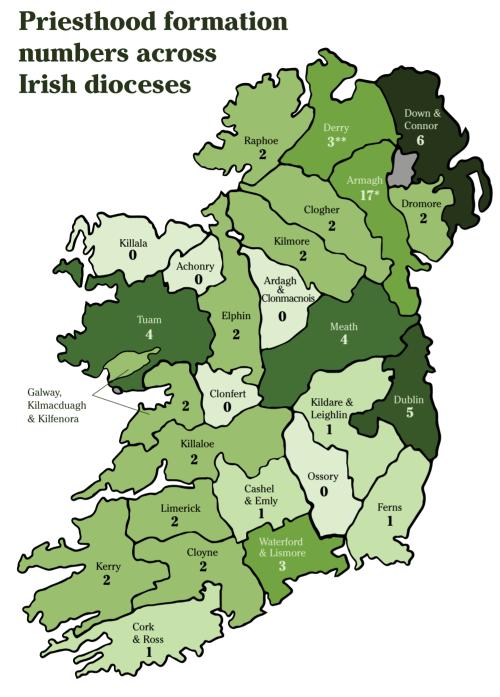
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a vision for the laity



*The 17 men in formation for the Archdiocese of Armagh include 14 students in the Redemptoris Mater Neocatechumenate seminary in Dundalk.

**In addition to these three students, three men are also expected to begin a propaedeutic year for the Diocese of Derry in January.

and mission-oriented Church.

"There is no intention either to dissolve or amalgamate any parishes," the letter noted. "What is needed, however, is the vision and generosity of spirit which encompasses the bigger picture and embraces a collaborative and outgoing sense of Chris-

tian mission. "As Pope Francis puts it: 'The parish is not an outdated insti-

tution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community." Mission, then, lies at the

Mission, then, lies at the heart of Clogher's new pastoral plan, something that Donal Harrington [pictured], author of *Tomorrow's Parish: A Vision and a Path*, says is to be welcomed.

"That's good, because sometimes when dioceses are talking about that kind of rationalisation and downsizing of all of that it's just

and all of that, it's just keeping the ship floating for another few years – it's not really making any change," he says. "If there's going to be

b If there's going to be a different future there's got to be a different sort of parish as well"

a different future there's got to be a different sort of parish as well."

* * * * * * *

Lay ministry, according to Msgr McGuinness, is central to the ministry of the Church, and indeed, it seems to lie at the heart of perhaps the most striking line in the whole letter, a declaration in its opening paragraph "that the call to ministry in our parishes and pastoral areas is open to all men and women and that the time has now come for a new approach to how parishes celebrate and operate".

In his section on lay ministry, Msgr McGuinness outlined how lay ministry is central to Church life and is not something to fill gaps when there are no priests about. Granted, few honest observers of the Irish Church would deny that necessity has been the mother of invention in this area, but Msgr McGuinness's vision is a positive one, one he maintains is not simply something born out of dire need.

"Fully appreciating and expanding the whole range of ministries across our diocese involves both great challenge and exciting potential. This is not about making up for the diminishing numbers of priests," he wrote. "It is a response to the baptismal calling to each one of us. It is about encouraging every one of us to reflect upon what we can give in service to our church community. It is about allowing the gifts of each one of us to find a rightful and fruitful place in the service of God and our neighbour."

It is the hope, he continued, that the range of lay ministries in the dioceses will expand substantially in the future.

(Unfortunately, the first ministry detailed in this section is that of Permanent Deacon, which is an ordained ministry not a lay one, despite the tendency of some to call deacons 'lay deacons'. This seems a forgivable inclusion, however, given the sociological reality that deacons, unlike young would-be priests, tend to be settled adult members of parish communities.)

There may be more men and women who can contribute to the life our parishes and diocese in liturgical ministries, as catechists, lay pastoral workers or in youth ministry, or who have skills in safeguarding, management, finance, communications, and so on. The range and quality of the gifts and talents of the people in our parishes, and the generosity shown already by so many, should be a cause of great encouragement and hope for all of us," he wrote.

Safeguarding is already becoming a case study of the kind of area in which lay people can excel – the recent report from the Diocese of Kilmore has shown that to great effect – but it's impressive to see so many areas where lay people can build vibrant parishes being outlined. Indeed, according to Donal Harrington, it's basically a necessity.

"It's crucial to the future to be able to build the capacity in the parish when there aren't the priests there, that's nearly the most important thing to do," he says. "If there's people around with the energy and the gifts to do it, that's absolutely the way to go, but what the ministries would be - he mentions the catechist and the pastoral workers and so on - you only know what ministries you need when you know what you know what you want to do."

Distinguishing between efforts simply to keep the show on the road and such things as outreach to young families, he says that having a clear mission in this area is necessary, but is full of praise for the call for extensive lay involvement.

"That in itself is kind of revolutionary, really, because in the past people didn't really have a voice and they were silent but now you're asking people to be much more active," he says. "It would have been easier 30 years ago when there were more younger lay people involved in the Church. There's still a bit of time but it's getting late."

It was all the priest, and it's very hard to get stuff going if it's all centred on one person. It's dangerous, really"

For Fr Cotter, meanwhile, one gap in the letter is its failure to address the issue of lay formation.

"The letter points up the effectiveness of lay leadership in the ministry of catechist, lay pastoral leaders and youth ministry, but does not contain any plans for formation of these. Without formation, these will produce more problems than they solve," he says.

Maintaining that the vision Msgr McGuinness maps out is indeed grounds for hope, he nonetheless stresses that "you can't just wander in and minister without some kind of formation as to what it's about", adding as an example that "you can't just say in the morning you're going to be a catechist without knowing what's involved".

A key challenge both Mr Harrington and Fr Cotter identify is the need to move away from a priest-centred mentality. For Mr Harrington, a prob-

lem can be that parish enterprises can sometimes depend for their existence on the backing of individual priests.

rin "It's a diocesan problem – the diocese has got to put structures in place," he says. "When (Archbishop) Diarmuid Martin set up parish councils in the Dublin diocese, the document that went with it said a new parish priest can't come in and dismantle it without consulting him."

This may, however, be a problem with a limited shelf life, Fr Cotter observes.

"One of the major challenges in Irish parishes is how priest-centred they are everything has to go through 'Father', whether he wants that or not. I find that frustrating," he says. "I wonder if the parishes are still seen as priest-centred, even if they do not have a resident parish priest. Has any thought been given to lay parish leadership? I cannot see priest-leadership being very effective as time goes on and numbers decline further.'

Lamenting how the focus on clergy may have stifled creativity in some ways, he says: "It was all the priest, and it's very hard to get stuff going if it's all centred on one person. It's dangerous, really, and that's bred clericalism, I suppose. There's obviously a new church coming but we don't know what it's going to look like."

Building a social aspect into Church life – as exists even among our nearest neighbours, where tea in the parish hall immediately after Mass is the norm – should be part of the future, Mr Harrington maintains.

"I think even just looking at our own Church, you can see how impoverished it is because of the lack of that. We have this conditioning and his culture of you just 'get Mass', so it's a very individualistic thing. Like, I go to the church and I go to mass but it's just me on my own and the fact that you're sitting beside me doesn't really make any difference," he says, adding that the absence of a social element in our celebrations has helped to weaken parish life.

You can't just wander in and minister without some kind of formation as to what it's about"

Msgr McGuinness's letter did not neglect the need to pray for and encourage vocations, spelling out that without priests there can be no Mass and our Catholic communities cannot be nourished by the Eucharist, but for Mr Harrington vibrant communities are themselves essential to a vocational culture.

"And if the Church wants to get vocations in future that's the way to do it - it's to create a living community, participative and all that. You won't get it just by praying for it. If you have a vibrant community you'd expect some interest in priesthood would come out of it," he says.

Out&About

Celebrating St Ciarán



OFFALY: Bishop Francis Duffy stands with local priests at the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois's Pattern (traditional pilgrimage of St Ciarán) day, which was held on St Ciarán's feast day. 'Pattern' is a word derived from 'Patrún', the Irish word for patron.



WESTMEATH: Secretary Peter Fagan and Chairman Joe Monaghan celebrate their birthdays at a Mullingar Deanery Pioneer function to mark their birthdays, pictured on the night are (left to right) Mary and Tom Riggs, David Colgan, Christy Wright, Joe Connaire, PJ Egan, Rose Carey, Rita Clarke and Peter McCrum.



.....

CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan stands with past and present principals of St Conaire's NS, Shannon, at celebrations for the school's Golden Jubilee.

Ireland must open eyes to child trafficking – charity

Mercy Efforts for Child Protection Against Trafficking with The Hospitality Sector (MECPATHS) have launched a research report on child trafficking by a UCC graduate who has called for Ireland to tackle the problem "head on".

JP O' Sullivan's report explores the vulnerabilities Ireland's international neighbours have experienced in relation to keeping children safe.

With valuable feedback from the hotel and hospitality sector, the report offers a number of key recommendations, including the need for organisations to work in collaboration, nationally, to counter this global, and now

national, epidemic.

It also highlights the need to increase awareness of human trafficking and wider modern-day slavery, which bonds an estimated 45 million people around the world.

"Between 2009 and 2016, there were 512 victims of human trafficking identified in Ireland – 143 were children. Children are being exploited in Ireland, across the country, for sexual gratification," said JP O' Sullivan.

"We, as responsible adults cannot allow this to find a comfortable and steadfast home in Ireland. We cannot allow the children of Ireland to become modern-day slaves, under our noses. We quite simply have to act responsibly, recognise the problem and meet it head-on."

Representatives from several organisations joined the launch including

Kevin Hyland OBE, the UK's former first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and CEO of ChildFund Ireland, the Department of Justice AHTU, the Garda human trafficking unit, Mary Immaculate College, Froebel College and a number of national and international NGO's.

To find out more about the work of MECPATHS visit mecpaths.ie

Kerry's solution for plastic pollution

The Diocese of Kerry has taken up the challenge of plastic pollution for the Season of Creation 2018 on the theme: 'Be part of the solution to plastic pollution'.

The season runs from September 1 to October 4, when Christian churches around the world focus on prayer and action to

protect the natural world.

This year all Catholic dioceses in Ireland have been asked by their bishops to celebrate the season. This began in Kerry on September 1 with a prayer event in Tralee Town Park at 11am.

Sylvia Thompson of the diocese's JPIC Committee said it was an "ideal opportunity for all Christian churches to come together... as we all know of the huge challenges facing our common home, that home for all creation".

In Killarney, St Mary's, Church of Ireland, hosted the celebration at 10.30am in its own grounds.

All parishes across the diocese have received copies of the leaflet explaining the theme with suggestions of practical actions to be taken: available at www.dioceseofkerry. ie

Edited by Chai Brady chai@irishcatholic.ie



CAVAN: Bishop of Kilmore Leo O'Reilly, unveils a plaque commemorating the 150th anniversary of St Patricks Church, Drumalee, along with Fr John McTiernan PP Annagh/Belturbet, Seamus Shannon and Brian McDonald. Photo: Sean McMahon





DUBLIN: Fr La Flynn, Prior of Lough Derg, sits with Fr Edward Mulwra from Kenya at the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) pastoral congress in the RDS. Photo: Chai Brady **DUBLIN:** Kevin Hyland OBE, Sr Mary Ryan, JP O'Sullivan, MECPATHS, Sr Patricia O'Donovan and Ann Mara, MECPATHS, gather to launch a recent research report by UCC graduate JP O'Sullivan on child trafficking.



DUBLIN: Music group The Priests attend the WMOF pastoral congress before performing at the Festival of Families. Photo: John McElroy



DUBLIN: Cois Na Labhna from Co. Clare provide some music in the grounds of the RDS during the WMOF. Photo: John McElrov



DUBLIN: Over 90 young people from across the Diocese of Kilmore volunteered as Ministers of Holy Communion as part of the John Paul II Award at the recent papal visit.



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication

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.
- Ennis Parish, led by Fr Tom Hogan, will make a pilgrimage to Italy on October 15-22. Details: Mary 087 124 7669.

CORK

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

DERRY

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

DUBLIN

The Encounter: Join other young adults for a night of live acoustic music, reflective prayer in adoration, with guest speaker on life, Faith and purpose followed by pizza and refreshments on Friday September 21 at 8pm in St Paul's Arran Quay. Email st.pauls@dublindiocese. ie and www.facebook.com/ theencounterdublincity.

Mass in Celebration of St Pio – 50 Years since his death, 100 years since receiving the Stigmata – Friday, September 21 at 7.30pm at St John the Evangelist Church, Ballinteer, Dublin 16. Celebrant Fr Martin Bennett OFM Cap. Blessing with Padre Pio glove.

- Agape Charismatic prayer meeting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, Tuesdays, 8pm (Mass last Tuesday of the month), Disciples of the Divine Master Oratory, Junction of Newtownpark Ave./Stillorgan Road. Bus: 46A/C/D or 58C. Tel: 087-6509465.
- 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 8pm-9pm.

FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm. ww.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly

GALWAY

- Fr Raymond Flaherty PP of Headford is running a Novena to 'Mary Untier of Knots' in Headford Church from September 20-28 at 7pm each evening
- Healing services at Emmanuel House, Clonfert, led by Eddie Stones and team weekly on Wednesday from 12-2pm and Thursday 7-9pm and a healing day every first Saturday from 10.30am-5pm with Confessions available and Mass. Please bring a packed lunch.
- The Poor Clares in Galway are hosting a Cloister Day on Saturday September 22 from 10am to 5pm. The day is designed to help young women who are exploring the possibility of a religious vocation to find out

more about the Poor Clare way of life. Ages: 21-40. Bookings at: poorclaresgalwayvocations@gmail.com or contact vo-

tions@gmail.com or contact vo cations director Sr Faustina at the same address to arrange a chat.

KILKENNY

First Saturday Devotions, Adoration, Rosary, Divine Mercy and Prayer for Healing from 7-9pm ir St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy.

LIMERICK

- Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm, Crecora on Thursdays, following morning Mass until 12noon and from 6-10pm, and in Mungret Church on Wednesdays, from 10am to 12noon.
- Young adults ages 18-35 are invited on a pilgrimage with the Dominicans to Bracciano and Rome from October 25-29 Please email limerick@op-tn. org for more information or to request an application. Spaces are limited so apply soon.
- The Dominican Sisters in Limerick will be offering Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori-based religious education programme, for children ages 3-9 beginning in October. Interested parents please contact limerick@op-tn. org or 085 2255796.
- Corda Girls' Group: On Wednesday nights from 7-8.30 young women ages 13-18 are invited to Corda with the Dominican Sis ters, a night of fun, Faith, and fellowship. Please email limerick@ op-tn.org for information.

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.

MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday evening at 7.30pm in the parish centre, beside SuperValu – all welcome.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday September 21 and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085 7746763.

ROSCOMMON

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

WICKLOW

- The Glencree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glencree on the first Saturday of the month.
- St Patrick's Prayer Meeting on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre beside St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town.

Out&About





KERRY: Fr Pat Crean-Lynch, Rev. Phyllis Jones, Rev. Jim Stephens and Sylvia Thompson enjoy Kerry Diocese's ecumenical celebration of creation in Tralee Town Park.



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KERRY: Celebrating the Season of Creation with prayer and contemplation in the Town Park Tralee.



DERRY: John Anthony Wilson and Charles Collins were awarded Benemerenti Medals, and Marie McVey, Ann Wilkinson, Mary McKinless and Teresa Bell received an Apostolic Blessing in recognition of their distinguished service to the Church in a ceremony held in St Patrick's Church, Ballinderry. They were conferred on behalf of Pope Francis by Archbishop Eamon Martin.



FRANCE: Students from Manor House School in Raheny, Dublin, enjoy their last day in Lourdes after a five-day pilgrimage.

Cornerstone Building tomorrow's parish today

Donal Harrington

An Evangelising Parish: Parish as a place of mission

Page 22

OLV Gospel Choir & Youth Group

Ciaran Coll

n 2007, Our Lady of Victories Parish on Ballymun Road, Glasnevin began an outreach to welcome more young adults to Mass. Inspired by the depth and appeal of Gospel music, the OLV Gospel Choir was formed as part of this parish initiative. The choir and band, small at first, began providing music for the weekly 6:30pm Sunday Young Adult Gospel Mass. Ten years later, their numbers have grown, but their purpose remains the same: to serve their parish community and the Lord by enriching this Mass with their faith, song and music. Striving to improve and develop their work, they have quickly become friends, supporting and helping each other as the OLV Gospel Choir family.

Ten years on, under the leadership of Ciaran Coll, its current director, the OLV Gospel Choir has now become one of Dublin's most renowned gospel choirs. This 30 strong choir and dedicated band have enjoyed many highlights, including successes in choral competitions, international

A cornerstone is the first

of a building from which

all other stones will be

set in reference to, thus

structure. The Irish parish

determining the entire

of tomorrow should be

(Ephesians 20-22).

built "in reference to" the

Church's cornerstone: Jesus

is building tomorrow's parish

today; inspired by the Great

there are features relating to

Scripture, sacraments and

service as well as shining a

spotlight on vibrant pastoral

Commission, each week

The focus of Cornerstone

stone set in the construction

exchanges with other choirs, and performances televised on RTE, one of while was the opening ceremony of the 2012 International Eucharistic Congress in the RDS, Dublin. Other high points have included working with the renowned Gospel Choir director Mark De Lisser from ACM Gospel Choir, London and traveling to perform internationally in Vienna, London. Nice and Rome. All of these experiences have helped the choir enrich the Sunday liturgy in OLV Parish, and develop its music ministry.

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Wondering why we have called it Cornerstone?

Editor's Note by Eoin Walshe



key component Cornerstone is shining a spotlight on vibrant pastoral ideas being realised in parishes around the country. Fr. Joe McDonald has written that 'anything that is not rooted in the gospel, Christo-centric or enhancing the life and mission of the church is not valid evidence of vibrancy." This week's parish spotlight is on the OLV Choir & Youth Group and further to their amazing music, details how they endeavour to support belonging and believing

Welcome to Cornerstone: Building Tomorrow's Parish Today

within their group and their parish. It is an inspiring and youth-centred story of faith, music and parish community. Psalm 104 reads: "I will sing to the LORD as long as I live. Whether your parish sings psalms with lyre and harp like King David, sings their hearts out while strumming acoustic guitars or is led by an organist and choir, music is a powerful form of praise, worship and prayer. Music can also be the "go-to" when brainstorming ideas to "attract young people." Although music can be a big draw for young and old, it shouldn't substitute the real

big draw of the church, the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the USP (unique selling point) of every parish for people of all ages. If that all sounds a bit aspirational then check out this week's parish spotlight!

Also this week: Donal Harrington peeks under the lid at what it actually means to be a parish of mission; asking what is an evangelising parish? Dr. Fáinche Ryan, a leading Irish theologian, continues her series on the sacraments. This week, Ryan looks at the connection between the Church and the Eucharist. Once again we have next Sunday's Second Reading; reading what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today. Don't forget to check out the weekly 'People of God' profile to hear about a little bit about one of our sisters or brothers in Christ. And, this week's 'Fish & Tips' is a simple idea fostering a praying parish, with room to expand!

Join us on the journey of the building tomorrow's parish today! If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on

eoin@irishcatholic.ie

ideas being realised in parishes around the country and beyond. Our aim is to help every parish best answer

the call to 'saying, doing and being' Christ in their context; sharing the good news! Whether actively involved in parish ministry, feeling disconnected from your parish or both; Cornerstone is for you. Cornerstone, bringing together best practice and resources from parishes around the country and beyond can help to encourage and energise local parishes. Every week there is a mix of input from well-known experts and those involved in hands-on ministry, providing a new, weekly onestop-shop for parishes looking to actively engage in mission and ministry. How does your parish enable and encourage belonging and believing?

OLV Gospel Choir & Youth Group

» Continued from Page 19

In April 2018 the choir released their first studio album to mark ten years of making great Gospel music. This album was designed to bring the listener on a journey of joy, love, faith and inspiration. In August 2018 the Gospel Choir led some of the music for the World Meeting of Families in Dublin: at the Pastoral Congress in the RDS as well as the meeting of Pope Francis in St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral with couples who are preparing for or who have recently celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage. The choir are honoured to be part of these very special gatherings and sharing their music, faith and friendship.

The OLV Young Adult Group

Like the choir the Young Adult Group is made up of young adults aged between 18 and 35. This group that was set up alongside the gospel choir to animate the young adult mass liturgy, this took the form of welcoming people at the doors while handing out leaflets, being ministers of the Word, ministers of the Eucharist, etc. This is a mass for young people lead by young people, so when young people come into the church they see people their own age involved in all the ministers. This has a powerful effect, this means that they are more likely to want approach either the choir or the young adult group to ask about joining.

Links between Young Adult Group and Gospel Choir.

The links are important between the two groups, the Gospel Choir works for the same purpose as the Young Adult Group, which is "creating a young adult Liturgy that is vibrant and life giving". This means that its important the dots are joined up, that we have a clear plan for our Sunday, the theme/message of the reading of that Sunday, the music matching this, the image on the overhead projectors and leaflets that are printed has a phrase and image that captures the overall message of that Sunday. In order for this to work the Young Adult Group meet every two weeks with the celebrate of that Sunday and the director of the choir and in a Lectio Divina style the group reflect on the reading of the next two Sundays and then out of these reflections a message emerges which helps plan the music and leaflet/images etc. This reflection sharing as a group on the readings of the Sunday also gives the celebrant ideas for their homily. Once again, the dots connect and the homily then links into the phrase or message picked by the group. The simple rule is, good liturgy nourishes people's faith, when people are nourished they will return the next Sunday after Sunday.

Back to the Music

The OLV Gospel Choir recently celebrated 10 years since they were founded. As part

of the celebrations the choir recorded and released an album entitled "One Love" The selection of songs, range from those learned in the first years of the choir to some of the most recent pieces learnt and written. The album was designed to bring the listener on a journey of joy, love, faith and inspiration, in a way that will speaks to people's heart. The music is a key part of the Young Adult Gospel Mass, good music is part of achieving a vibrant Liturgy that life giving. Early on in the choir's development it was important for us to make sure that we chose music that connects with the Liturgical time and season as is best practice. At the time of the revised mass translation, it was difficult to find a mass setting that had a gospel style, even some of the new mass setting from contemporary choirs just didn't seem to fit our context. So, I wrote my own, which became the "The Mass of Our Lady of

Victories". It is sing-able for the



congregation and has a nice upbeat feel with is brought to life with the band we have with the choir each Sunday, comprising of Drums, Bass Guitar, E. Guitar, and Piano.

Using a common Psalm for each Liturgical Season has been a great development in line with best practice. We now have a lot of Psalms in our repertoire now and the congregation over time have gotten used to the ones we use each season which encourages them to sing with us.

Each year, the choir and youth group go away together for a weekend; reflecting and looking forward. This year they visited Glendalough, Co. Wicklow.

Once again, all these factors are contributing to a Liturgy that connects with people's lives, and to the people who walks off the street into this mass, everything connects. Good music that connects with the Liturgy, when it is in line with the planning the Young Adult Group do, the homily, the phrase and image of that Sunday, the welcome at the door, the young adult proclaiming the word of God, the young adults as ministers of the Eucharist etc., this creates a space and an experience of Liturgy where young people feel they belong. In this belonging faith can be nourished and grown.

OLV Young Adult Gospel Mass 6:30pm The choir sing at the 6:30pm Young Adult Gospel Mass every Sunday from mid-September to mid-June in Our Lady of Victories, Ballymun Rd, Glasnevin, Dublin 11. Check it out! The OLV Gospel choir also feature on our Cornerstone Spotify playlist mentioned in last week's "Fish & Tips". Also, keep an eye out for their free "Voices of Hope" concerts that take place throughout the year reaching out to people, especially young people, who may feel disconnected from their parish and/or their faith.

Scripture

Reflecting on Scripture is an important part of the Christian faith. Often, however, we Catholics do not allow ourselves the time to really reflect on the Word of God. This weekly series will explore the Second Reading from the coming Sunday's Mass. While originally written to the early church communities, Scripture is the living Word of God, so each week we can read what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today. We hope that this feature will provide an opportunity for small groups, friends, families and individuals to engage in prayer, reflection and discussion. It may also serve as a useful preparation tool for lectors, priests and those involved in parish ministry.

James 3:16-4:3

Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don't have what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.

Spend some time in prayer with the reading.

1. Find a quiet place, and give yourself fifteen minutes without distractions. Read the section once, and then pause for reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and response to the passage.

2. Read the passage a second time. Ask yourself: What do I find challenging about this reading? Is there anything that I can try to do differently in my life as a response to it? What is the message in this reading for our parish? Write down anything that comes to your head.

3. Pause in silent reflection, and then read the passage a third time



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FAMILY & THE PARISH

Mass is boring, Daddy!





f I had a EURO for every time I've heard that one...I'd be taking you to dinner. Actually, it would probably be dinner at McDonalds. Maybe just dinner for you and a milkshake for me - you see, it's not really THAT bad. Then again, as we look at the big effort of a Sunday morning, what helps young parents be encouraged to bring children to mass? Going with kids can be daunting - it goes against our modern instincts, fed by the culture, to follow our pleasures. Children won't enjoy it! They will cry, scream, whine, sprint up the aisle towards Father in the middle of the homily, declare loudly that a gentleman over there has a large nose (during the consecration of course...) To keep doing something uncomfortable, or embarrassing, seems counter-intuitive. When we had 3 - aged 3 down to 0 (newborn), we would sneak to a nearby parish that had a lot of unused space at the back of the building...did I often really participate in mass? My wife and I would walk back to the car and ask each other if we had heard the Gospel. Sometimes we would have to look it up later. It's times like that, for young parents, that 'ex opere operato' comes in

the rigors of the world today. handy – you've been there, no matter how many times you snuck out! God understands - even if some fellow parishioners struggle to. We are still able to receive the grace from The Sacrament and, frankly, we find ourselves in need of it in the week ahead. There did come a time, when our eldest was a preschooler, that we knew we had to 'require' our children to participate in the mass properly– we have 5, our eldest is just 8, so this was, and is, a piece of work.

Now, we are very blessed in our local parish – parishes can do huge things for families."

Now, we are very blessed in our local parish - parishes can do huge things for families. Ours has 'Pew Packs': folders with crayons, kids readings, even a book inside. My small children go in and grab them, and it provides something for them in the environment. Not every parish can manage this kind of innovation - or the lollipop afterwards, which acts as the perennial carrot to the grumpy toddler. These simple gestures of welcome and hospitality are gratefully received. Children are usually welcome at our parishes - more than that, there are usually really kind-hearted and gifted people who would love to 'do something' for kids. We should seek those people out - they are around, the ones who smile at kids and say nice things to parents like us – and see what ideas they might have. As Frank Duff said, 'never assume you can do something better than someone else.' There are great people who would contribute to parish life, in these and other ways, if we asked them to.

After the World Meeting of Families,

Dominic Perrem looks at how we can

go about supporting Catholic families for

Whether or not we have the blessings of a lollipop or resources for the little ones, our children are likely to inherit our attitude towards the mass. If we groan and sigh and 'put up with it', zombie like, trying to sneak out as soon as possible, then they will also. But, if we are loving and reverent, taking the time to talk about the gospel afterwards, or share with enthusiasm our love for the Lord in the Eucharist, then the kids will look forward to it as well. St. Iohn Paul II told us that we are an Easter people, and we can live that out if we are a Sunday people. Think of ways you can build a "Lord's day" culture in your family. We try to make the Mass the centre of our day, coming home afterwards to a nice lunch, or watching a movie all together. We try to get involved in our local parish as far as we are able, and even shaking Father's hand after mass lets the kids feel like they are part of the community. They can look forward to their First Holy Communion, or perhaps see themselves serving the parish that is their own. I'd also say that if you have ever had a negative experience bringing children to mass - please don't be discouraged! In the gospels, we learn that Jesus made a point of welcoming children even in the face of his disciples' opposition: "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them ... " If you are a parishioner wondering how you can strengthen your local parish, start by looking out for young families, for '...the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.' (Mt 19:14)

Dominic Perrem is a broadcaster (Spirit Radio) and works for Alpha Ireland in parish evangelisation. He has led youth in groups and retreats for many years and is a member of a lay Catholic Community (Nazareth) in South Dublin. He and his wife Annie have 5 children who they are homeschooling. Dominic loves Land Rovers and cheese.

😒 Fish & Tips **Daily Ideas for Disciples**



"Fish & Tips" is all about daily ideas for disciples; often simple ideas which you can try out and see if they are helpful in your life. So far we have featured an app called "pray as you go" and creating your own Spotify playlist of Christian music.

This week, during mass, make a mental note to pray for a person you share the sign of peace with for the remainder of mass and/or throughout the week! What a simple but effective way to grow as a praying and caring community. Perhaps you could change the person you pray for each week or maybe you could set up

"prayer partners" in your parish "Prayer partners" could commit to ongoing prayer for each other or others; which could also build community through grabbing a coffee together and sharing the journey of life and faith together! After all, we are sisters and brothers in Christ; let's treat each other and pray for each other like a family should!

If you have any "daily ideas" that have helped you in your faith journey and daily discipleship then please share them via email (eoin@ irishcatholic.ie) or on the Cornerstone Facebook page (@CornerstoneOnlineParish).

People of God

Anne-Marie Whelan (40)

Parish: I have been involved with many Parishes over the years. I grew up involved in my home Parish Borris-in-Ossory. From an early age I was a member of the choir, and even when I moved to Dublin after school I still staved involved and from there began to find my feet in ministry. I began to see the gifts that I had to offer, not only in music ministry, but I began to become more involved in the parish community. I was on the Parish Pastoral Council, helped organise many events and courses for parishioners, and catechesis with young adults.

Current Occupation: Evangelisation & Vocations Officer with Sisters of Bon Secours Congregation

Describe your faith in 7 words: Comforting, challenging, sustaining, life-giving, surprising, nourishing, inspiring.

What helps keep you connected to your parish? I feel welcome in my current Parish in Macroom and as I get to know people from the area I am starting to feel that sense of belonging not just geographically, but spiritually People need to feel welcome when they come for any occasion - even a once off visit. If they are challenged and questioned and told what they can't do, why would they come back? I always feel that encouragement to actively participate in parish life is essential. Every person has a gift, a talent, and these should be acknowledged, from the person who makes the tea after Mass on a Sunday, to the person



who smiles at you when passing the collection basket. Each person who comes to our parishes should be welcomed and given a sense that they belong.

Favourite Scripture quote: :"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you". (Matthew 7:7)

This quote has followed me on my faith journey. There have been times in my life when I thought I was asking God for help, seeking to know what God wanted of me, and knocking on doors to try find that peace and fulfilment that was missing. I love this quote and the word that makes it special is 'WILL'. I believe in the power of prayer. God always provides what we need - not always what we think we need, or at the time we want it, but God always provides in Gods time and in Gods own way.

Biggest influences on your faith journey: My family, and those who have encouraged me on my journey. I am lucky to have had, and still have many Priests, Brothers and Religious that I am blessed to call friends who have encouraged be along the way, and continue to.

Evangelisation efforts, like the Monday at the Monastery series of talks in Glasthule parish in Dublin, can engage and inspire young adults in their faith.

EVANGELISATION What is an Evangelising Parish?

Donal Harrington looks at what it really means to be a parish on mission

e need to start with the word itself, because evangelisation means different things to different people. It can bring to mind the evangelist preaching repentance: the televangelist persuading you to accept Jesus Christ as your personal lord and Saviour; Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses knocking on the door. It can be associated with being on an emotional high, or exploiting fears and vulnerabilities, or even manipulation.

Then there is the related word 'mission'. While central to our discussion, it has off-putting connotations too. While missionaries have done enormous good, we now see also the darker side. We see the condescension; we the enlightened, they the 'pagans'. We see the arrogance; we possessing the truth, suppressing the indigenous faith, no sense that God might already be there before us.

Having cleared the way a little, we can concentrate on the positive meaning of the word. Evangelisation comes from the Greek word ev, meaning 'well', and angel, meaning message. Join these together and we have 'good message'; or it could also mean good news, message of good news, messenger announcing good news. In everyday life it could have meant, for example, a messenger bringing back news of victory in battle. The New Testament transposes this into a religious context. There evangelisation means announcing the Good News of what God is doing in Jesus Christ. Originally 'Gospel' - evangelion was simply the Good News itself (as with the old English word godspell or good message). It was a while before Christians came to talk of the gospels as literature, and of

the authors as 'evangelists'. So, evangelisation is a very positive word. Its mood is joy. It is about something really worth sharing and really worth finding out about. A good definition might be that evangelisation is about introducing people to Jesus Christ. It happens when somebody comes to encounter him, when they begin to glimpse who he is and start to appreciate the Good News he represents. The word 'introducing' has the feeling of something

gracious. To 'introduce' people to Jesus Christ is something done graciously. It is not proselytising or manipulating or corralling them into the faith. It is more the spirit of offering something. It is filled with respect for people and where they are in their lives. And – a key point in all that follows - words are only part of how it is done. We 'speak' through how we act towards others. What people 'hear' is what we do and how we relate to them.

EVERYTHING

Evangelisation is very much what we have been talking about, without actually using the word. We have made church and parish part of the bigger picture of God's mission to the world in Christ. We have seen church and parish as partners in the divine mission. That is evangelisation. We have spoken of the parish's mission to Earth the Gospel, the Good News. That is evangelisation. This leads us to see that evangelisation



There are many short courses available to assist with Parish evangelisation, including the Alpha Course.

is the very identity of church and parish. It is not simply one of the things that the church does. It is not simply one activity among many. And, especially today, it is not an emergency response to a crisis. Rather, it is everything. It is the essence of what Church and parish are about. In a sense, it is the only thing the church does. Thus

Paul VI wrote; "The task of evangelising all people constitutes the essential mission of the church ... her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise ... is linked to evangelisation in her most intimate being."

EVERYBODY

Evangelising is the activity of everybody. Anyone born into the faith community in Baptism is born into this. Pope Francis puts it eloquently. Baptism makes us all 'missionary disciples'. The fact that we have 'encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus' itself makes each of us a missionary; "All the baptised, whatever their position in the church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelisation, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelisation to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients ... Every Christian is challenged."

Being a disciple means aspiring to an ever richer faith in the heart, in the head, in the hands. But an essential dimension is that this faith is always an outgoing faith. This is every member ministry. It is expressed especially through 'faith in the hands'. To talk about evangelising in this way may be new. And yet, if evangelising is not a part of how the faith community and all its individual members see themselves, then we are not fully in touch with our Christian selves. We may be locked into routine, into comfort and complacency. Instead, we need to be making this central to our Christian lives.

Sacraments



What is the Church?

Dr Fáinche Ryan

A famous French theologian, Henri de Lubac, once said that 'the Church makes the Eucharist' and 'the Eucharist makes the Church'. In other words, the two are intimately connected, and so if we are to discuss the Eucharist we need to begin by thinking about the word 'Church' and wondering what it means, or what we understand by it.

Very often we think of the Church as the building that we went to as children, that we loved going to and have lovely memories of, or alternately, as a place we dreaded going to, a place of boredom and cold. Whatever our memories they tend to simply refer to the church building, a physical construction built by humans. Similarly today many understand the word Church as referring solely to the men in Rome, primarily the Pope, and also maybe our own bishop and the priest(s) in our parish. Once again this is a man-made understanding of Church, seeing it solely in institutional terms, and, while very much part of the story, to understand the Church like this is to limit the idea of Church too much.

The Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) devoted a lot of time to the task of discovering how best we might understand what it means to be Church, to be a member of the community that follows Jesus Christ. Looking back over our tradition, and in particular at the early days, the years after the resurrection of Jesus, the teachings of the Second Vatican Council suggested that the Church is best understood as the People of God, all the baptised, equal in the eyes of God. Indeed it is a human structure, composed of human beings, both sinful and holy, and yet we believe in the presence of the Holy Spirit, present and active in the Church, among the people and hopefully guiding us.

The Church is thus best understood as a community of all the baptised, guided by the Holy Spirit, trying to live in the world as Christians. We often say it is both a human institution and a divine mystery. In other words, because it is a human institution it is made up of fallible, fragile human beings and so often makes mistakes, but it is at once a divine mystery with God present guiding us gently. For this reason we believe, in faith, that the Church will always have holy people in it, and that it will ultimately be a source of goodness. We believe that it helps people to both live well in this life and to journey through death to life everlasting with God. This is our faith.

A key point to remember is that the Church in its current form was not always this way. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are central to the Christian faith, one could say they are the foundation events of the Church. This is the story which 'makes' Christians, the story which we retell over and over again as we seek to learn, at a deeper level, what it means to be a Christian. It is important to remember that we are Christian first, Christians who express our faith through the traditions of the Catholic Church.



epending on where you stand on Pope Francis, his decision to call a summit of the heads of the world's bishops' conferences is either courageous or too little too late. It's certainly unprecedented and the February meeting of the presidents of national assemblies of bishops shows how seriously Rome is taking the current crisis. It deserves a chance, but it's a high-risk strategy that could end in failure. Bishops' conference have often shown themselves to be little more than average when it comes to effectiveness

Ever since his election five years ago, Francis has indicated that he wants to give greater authority to the conferences. His two immediate predecessors St John Paul II and Benedict XVI had been less enthusiastic about the bodies. The Argentine Pontiff on the other hand had an extremely positive experience of the working of the hierarchy in his native country and the supranational CELAM across Latin America. That body's Aparecida Document has served somewhat as a blueprint for the Francis Pontificate.

Criticism

In choosing the presidents of the bishops' conferences, the Pope has ensured that he will have a representative from every country at a senior level and also deflected criticism that the body was handpicked by Francis to give him the outcome he wants.

The first item on the agenda for the Rome summit of bishops Francis is gambling with bishops' conferences, but it's probably the only card he has, writes **Michael Kelly**

will be ensuring that the issue of clerical sexual abuse and the appropriate response is viewed with sufficient seriousness. The Pope will need to cut across stereotypes and prejudices articulated by many prelates in developing countries that this is a Western problem or even just an English-speaking problem.

Francis will also want to outline his plan to ensure that those in senior position who are shown to have covered up abuse will be punished"

While Churchmen have often sympathised with their confreres from Ireland and the United States over the scandals. few have been willing to look at their own secret archives. Recent reports from Chile, Germany and the Netherlands, to reference just a few countries, reveal that the abuse crisis is far from an English-speaking problem. One can only assume that in parts of the world where there is not heightened awareness of abuse, it remains a hidden problem. Francis will need to underline



the fact that whether bishops believe abuse to be a problem in their culture or not, they must adopt watertight norms that will make zero tolerance and co-operation with the civil authorities the two gold standards. This will ensure that "we didn't know" as an excuse will be consigned to the history books

Francis will also want to outline his plan to ensure that those in senior positions who are shown to have covered up abuse will be punished, including losing their position if their failing warrants this

Quite apart from the issue of abuse, the Pope will need to ensure that the bishops' conferences are up to what he asks of them. Some view the Church like a multinational corporation with the Pope as CEO. In actual fact, the Pope is powerless unless the bishops work with him.

In 2011, Benedict XVI ordered every national conference of bishops in the world to draw up abuse guidelines. He set them a deadline of a year. The deadline came and went and the Vatican was forced to admit **Cardinal Vincent** that just over half of bishops Nichols. conferences responded.

Few African countries replied, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith acknowledged. What is to stop bishops leaving the Rome meeting in February and doing nothing at all?

There's also the fact that each bishops' conference President is really only a chair rather than a superior of other bishops. Former Bishop of Cloyne John Magee, for example, was able to flout nationally-agreed guidelines. He was eventually forced from office after an independent audit found procedures in his diocese for handling abuse "inadequate and in some respects dangerous". Despite the fact that his episcopal colleagues were furious with him, they were powerless to act against him. Only Rome has authority over bishops.

• One can only assume that in parts of the world where there is not heightened awareness of abuse, it remains a hidden problem"

Progressive-minded Catholics have tended to grumble that Rome has emasculated bishops' conferences. More conservativeminded Catholics point to obvious deficiencies in the current model. Much is made, for example, of Rome's interventions when it comes to controversial clerics like

Redemptorist Tony Flannery. 'Why," it is often asked, "is Rome interfering?"

But, it's precisely because local bishops' conferences often ignore controversies that Rome feels the need to become involved.

Francis' summoning of the bishops is certainly a gamble. He should ensure that representatives from countries like Ireland, the United States and Great Britain are to the fore.

Men like Archbishop Eamon Martin and Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster need to impress upon their episcopal colleagues the importance of stringent guidelines. They need to warn them that sooner rather than later, the issue of abuse will rear its ugly head if it hasn't already. They need to tell of the devastation that the crisis has wrought on the lives of those affected.

Delegates at the summit also need to know the huge effect that the Church's failures in this regard have had on the ability to witness to the Gospel. In his 2010 letter to Irish Catholics Benedict XVI reflected on the fact that the cover-up of abuse in Ireland "obscured the light of the Gospel to a degree that not even centuries of persecution succeeded in doing".

It is a cancer that will wreak havoc in every corner of the Church. Francis must keep this at the fore of his mind and warn bishops that doing nothing is not an option. In reaching out to the bishops' conferences, he's taking a gamble. But it's the only card he's got, and his reputation and that of his Papacy rests on how he takes control on this issue.

World Report

19 martyrs to be beatified in Algeria

• The beatification of 19 martyrs of Algeria, including the seven Trappist monks of Tibhirine, will be celebrated on December 8 in Oran, Algeria, the country's bishops have announced.

Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, will preside over the Mass and beatification rite for the six women and 13 men who gave their lives for the least, the sick and the men, women and young people of Algeria.

The 19 martyrs were killed between 1993 and 1996 while Algeria was locked in a 10-year-long armed conflict between government forces and extremist Islamic rebel groups. The conflict left tens of thousands of people dead.

Chilean prosecutors raid four dioceses during abuse investigations

Chilean prosecutors raided four dioceses in the country as they continue a nationwide investigation into cases of clerical sexual abuse.

Lead prosecutor Emiliano Arias ordered search-and-seizure operations of the diocesan offices of Osorno, Valparaiso, Concepcion and Chillan. This was the third raid authorised by Arias. After the raid, a spokesman for Arias said the information collected from previous raids conducted in Santiago and Rancagua in June led to the search operations in the other dioceses

The information is related to the case of Fr Oscar Munoz Toledo, the former chancellor of the Archdiocese of Santiago, who was arrested on July 12 following allegations that he abused seven minors in Santiago and Rancagua since 2002.

Deal on religion close between Vatican and Beijing

 Beijing and the Vatican are on the verge of an agreement on the status of China's Catholic Church and the controversial appointment of bishops by the ruling Chinese Communist Party, reports indicate

In Taipei, Taiwan foreign affairs spokesman Li Hsien-chang said at a news conference: "I think lately it is looking as if the two sides will sign an agreement on religious matters" Asked if a deal would mean that the Vatican would break off diplomatic relations with Taipei in favour of the Chinese Communist

Indonesian Catholics demand bishop's resignation

 Angry Catholics in Indonesia are calling for their "foreign" bishop to quit and be replaced by a native-born Papuan priest.

The anger in the country's West Papua province allegedly stems from a dispute between two priests that turned into an ethnic feud, which the diocese has denied.

Hundreds of Catholics took to the streets of Sorong in Manokwari-Sorong diocese to demand the resignation of Bishop Hilarion Datus Lega who they accused of being arrogant, discriminatory and unable to solve problems affecting the diocese

Some 250 police were deployed to monitor the protest, which was peaceful.

Universities in Philippines help tribal children

 Displaced tribal children from southern Philippines have found sanctuary in two prestigious Catholic universities

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila and the University of San Jose Recoletos in Cebu have said they will ensure about 100 children displaced by anti-insurgency operations are provided with accommodation and an education.

Dominican priest Pablo Tiong, vice rector of UST, said the Church "understands the ordeal of the tribal students" whose education has been interrupted by war.

At least 60 tribal children from community schools in the southern region of Mindanao will stay in the Dominican-run seminary in Manila while taking classes at the university.

Pope honours priest martyred by Mafia on Sicily visit

Honouring a priest shot at point-blank range by the Mafia, Pope Francis has insisted that true happiness and a real change in Sicilian society will come only when people love and care for one another rather than trying to grab as much money and power as they can.

"Having always leads to wanting. I have some-thing and immediately want another and another without end. The more you have the more you want. It's a horrible addiction," Pope Francis said, celebrating Mass in Palermo.

'On the other hand, one who loves, finds himself and discovers how beautiful it is to help others, has joy on the inside and a smile on the outside, just like Father Pino."

Fr Pino Puglisi, the anti-Mafia priest, was gunned down on September 15, 1993 - his 56th birthday.

Pope Francis made a day trip to Sicily to mark the 25th anniversary of the now-beatified priest's martyrdom.

His homily and speeches



A man raises a child in the air as people wait for Pope Francis' arrival for a meeting with young people in Palermo, Sicily. Photo: CNS

included denunciations of the Mafia and a call for the mafiosi to convert, but he focused especially on encouraging local Catholics to live their Faith and to courageously stand up to all forms of injustice, which flow from and feed into the Mafia's power.

And meeting Sicily's bishops, priests, religious and seminarians in the afternoon. Pope Francis asked for special care in ensuring that the traditional religious festivals of the region's cities and towns not be used, as they have been in the past, to give a pious varnish to members of the Mafia.

"I ask you to be attentive guardians so that popular religiosity is not instrumentalised by a Mafia presence," he said.

Stopping processions with a statue of Mary "and having her bow before the home of the Mafia chief", as has been

known to occur, "this will not do. absolutely not!"

Pope Francis began the day in Piazza Armerina in central Sicily, urging Catholics not to resign themselves to the problems in their lives, their families and their community, but not to ignore them either.

Solidarity

Strength for building a community that is solid and in solidarity with the poor will come from regularly celebrating Sunday Mass together, Pope Francis said. "How many times have I heard, 'Oh, father, I pray, but I don't go to Mass,' he said. "'Why not?' 'Because the homily is boring; it lasts 40 minutes.'

"No, the whole Mass should last 40 minutes," the Pope said, exaggerating. "But the homily must not go more than eight minutes.

The pope's homily later at his outdoor Mass in Palermo lasted 17 minutes, but that included several long interruptions for applause.

CofE to keep Amazon investments despite hypocrisy claims

A Church of England (CofE) archbishop has been accused of hypocrisy after criticising Amazon's tax practices, despite the church being one of its largest investors. In a homily last week the Archbishop

of Canterbury, Justin Welby, attacked the company for paying "almost nothing in taxes" and "leaching off the taxpayer".

Archbishop Welby also described zero-hour contracts as "the reincarnation of an ancient evil", while two of CofE's cathedrals are advertising for zero-hour iobs

His criticisms drew calls for CofE to sell its holding in the company, but the church released a statement saying the

US Vice President Mike

Pence

best way to tackle aggressive tax avoidance was to "be in the room with these companies seeking change as a shareholder"

The Church said its advice on zerohours contracts was issued in 2013, and "does not reflect current thinking".

"As a responsible employer, the Church of England is now reviewing its working practices," it added.

Mr Welby had said on Wednesday: "When vast companies like Amazon and other online traders, the new industries, can get away with paying almost nothing in tax, there is something wrong with the tax system.

"They don't pay a real living wage, so the taxpayer must support their workers with benefits.

"And having leeched off the taxpayer once they don't pay for our defence, for security, for stability, for justice, health, equality, education.'

The church's investment in Amazon is revealed in the 2017 accounts of the Church Commissioners, the CofE's main financial wing, which manages its £8.3 billion of historic assets. Archbishop Welby is chairman of its board of governors and in the latest report said the focus was on "ethical and responsible investment".

Catholics call for US to admit more refugees

Christians in the US have taken the Trump administration to task for a dramatic drop in the numbers of persecuted Christian and other refugees being admitted into the country, even though administration officials promised last year to help.

While administration officials vowed on several occasions to help Christians in the Middle East facing what Vice President Mike

Pence last year called an "exodus" from their ancestral lands, US Christian groups trying to help them condemned the dramatic drop of refugees the Trump administration allowed into the US last year and this year.

The US Department of State recently released figures showing that 14,289 Christian refugees were admitted in 2018 compared to 25,162 the previous year.

Catholics joined a chorus

of pleas by religious groups urging the administration to increase not just the number of Christian refugees but the number of people in general allowed to seek refuge in the US.

On September 12, they joined other groups outside the White House asking the administration to allow 75,000 refugees into the country in the next fiscal vear.

Party in Beijing, Li said not necessarily. "We have been assured by the Holy See that this agreement is purely on religious matters," Li said.



Edited by Chai Brady chai@irishcatholic.ie

And the woman clothed in the sun will shine her light...



A statue of Mary is pictured against a vibrant late summer sunset on the grounds of St Mary Catholic Cemetery in Menasha, Wisconsin. Photo: CNS

Leaked document reveals 3,700 cases of abuse, 'shameful' for German church

A 350-page document leaked to German media documents nearly 3,700 cases of alleged sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests, deacons and clergy in Germany over a 68-year period.

The release of the document caused shock in Germany, with many criticising the German bishops' conference for its detailed knowledge of the abuse and their silence about it.

The four-year study examined cases from the post-war era in 1946 to 2014. Approximately 1,670 priests were implicated in the study, the news outlet *Deutsche Welle* reported. According to Welt news, more than half the victims were 13 years old or younger at the time of the abuse.

Deutsche Welle reported the Church pursued only one-third of alleged abus-

ers, who received minimal sanctions or none, while other accused priests often were relocated to other parishes without any information about the allegations being made public.

The bishops' conference denounced the publication of the document by the media, calling it "irresponsible".

Bishop Stephan Ackermann of Trier released a statement on behalf of the conference, stating the bishops had planned to discuss the study during their autumn plenary assembly on September 25 and would continue to do so, in order to "handle...the consequences to be drawn from it".

"This development is even more aggravating, as until now the comprehensive study was not known even to (some) members of the German bishops' conference," said Bishop Ackermann. "We know the extent of the sexual abuse exposed through the results of the study," said Bishop Ackermann. "It is

depressing and shameful for us." All 27 dioceses in Germany participated in the research project, led by forensic psychiatrist Harald Dressing of Mannheim and conducted to achieve more "clarity and transparency" said the

bishops' conference. Bishop Ackermann said the study provides data for the bishops to analyse to gain insights into the actions of perpetrators and the behaviour of Church officials in recent decades

The conference said that from September 24-27, it would make phone counselling available to people upset about the media reports.

US Cardinal 'hopeful' after meeting Pope about abuse crisis

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston struck a determinedly hopeful tone after his long-awaited meeting with Pope Francis to discuss the growing sexual abuse crisis in the US.

"I myself am filled with hope," he said, "but I also realise all these things might take purpose and time."

The cardinal spoke following a noon meeting last DiNardo, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), was joined in his meeting with the Pope by vice president of the USCCB Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, general secretary Msgr J. Brian Bransfield and Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

week at the Vatican. Cardinal

"The Holy Father is the important figure for us in this," Cardinal DiNardo said. "He sees the problem all over the Church and throughout the world."

While the cardinal did not want to discuss the specifics of the private meeting beyond a statement released by the US bishops, he did describe the encounter as "very, very fruitful". "It was lengthy, and we shared a lot of thoughts and ideas together," the cardinal said, "so I found the meeting very good from that point of view."

"The Pope is well informed," the cardinal said, "and he's also very, very attentive to what has happened to abuse victims in the Church in the US."



Three Baltic countries prepare for papal visit

Pope Francis will travel to the eastern periphery of Europe to honour a Faith that withstood a Nazi invasion and five decades of communist dictatorship and now is striving to help people live in freedom as authentic Disciples of Christ.

The Pope's visit from September 22-25 to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia comes in the year the three Baltic nations are celebrating the 100th anniversary of their declarations of independence after World War I. While declared Soviet republics in 1940, the countries were occupied by the Nazis during World War II and then lived under Soviet rule from 1944 to 1990.

Bishop Philippe Jourdan, the apostolic administrator of Estonia's tiny Catholic community, said the motto of the Pope's visit to Estonia "is a well-known Estonian song, 'Mu suda arka ules', which means 'Wake up my heart'. It is more or less what we all – Catholics, non-Catholics or non-religious people – are waiting for: that the Pope helps us to find a new hope in our heart and in our society, as was the case in the years immediately after the end of the Soviet time."

Pope speaks of 'theology of tenderness'

The words "theology" and "tenderness" seem very distant, said Pope Francis to the participants at a conference in Rome.

"In reality," said Pope Francis at 'The theology of tenderness' conference in the Vatican, "our Faith ties them together inextricably. Theology is called upon to communicate the concreteness of the God of love. And tenderness translates, to the present day, the affection that God nurtures for us."

The Pope said theology is called upon to accompany existential research. It cannot be reduced to a feeling but we must recognise that in many parts of the world, vital questions are approached through current emotions rather than social needs. This has not always been the case, and Pope Francis acknowledged that "one may not like it, but it is a matter of fact".

Pope Francis asked what a theology of tenderness might entail, bringing up two points: "the beauty of feeling loved by God" and "the beauty of feeling like loving in the name of God."

"To feel loved" he said, "is a message that in recent times has reached us more powerfully", from mercy, the essential characteristic of the Holy Trinity and of Christian life.

Unmerciful Christians live like worldly pagans says Pope

Christians are not defined by their baptism but by whether they live their lives according to God's command to love their enemies, Pope Francis said.

While it may seem easier to speak ill of an enemy, Christian logic goes in the opposite direction and follows "the folly of the Cross", the Pope said in his homily during morning Mass at Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"Only the merciful resemble God the Father. 'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful'. This is the path, the path that goes against the spirit of the world," he said.

The Pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading from St Luke, in which Jesus tells his disciples to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you".

The command to love and pray for one's enemies "is the way to live like a Christian", which entails mirroring God's infinite love and mercy, the Pope explained.

However, he added, those who resort to gossiping and "the logic of insults" live "like a pagan with a spirit of worldliness" that seeks to destroy others.

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Solution Letter from Rome Abuse bombshell effects Church's ability to help children



scandal's impact can be measured multiple ways, with the most obvious being the toll it takes in terms of bad press, litigation and settlements, declining attendance or market share, as well as disillusionment and outrage among the rank and file.

What's often harder to assess is the opportunity cost – what else might an institution have done, had its energies not been focused on putting out its own fires?

That seems an especially pressing question in the United States right now with regard to the Catholic Church, which seems largely to be sitting out two important political fights in which it otherwise might have been a protagonist.

The first concerns a Trump administration move to avoid court-imposed time limits on the detention of immigrant children, adopting regulations that essentially would permit almost indefinite detention of minors together with their families as cases wind their way through often ponderous and backlogged immigration courts.

The new regulation, which would cast aside 20 years of judicial oversight of detention, is a reflection of frustration that immigrants from Central America are continuing to wash into the US, fleeing poverty and violence, in part because those immigrants realise their children will not be incarcerated for long even if they're caught.

According to a recent piece in the *New York Times*, more immigrant children are behind bars in the US right now than in any previously recorded period. The current number is 12,800, according to the *Times* report – a four-fold increase from 2,400 in 2017.

Detention

For at least the last couple of decades, courts have insisted upon only relatively brief periods of detention for children, often citing the 'Flores settlement' from 1985 that required release after 20 days. Those rulings were based on studies of the long-term physical and psychological harm inflicted on children by being held in jail-like conditions for extended periods.

Critics of the new regulation



A man in San Juan, Puerto Rico, places a pair of sandals in front of the capitol building on June 1 to represent those killed by Hurricane Maria.

are almost certain to challenge it in court, but in the meantime indefinite detention is already, *de facto*, the new normal.

On another front, President Donald Trump is openly rejecting a recent analysis of the death toll in Puerto Rico as a result of Hurricane Maria last year, insisting that "3,000 people did not die" and that the new estimate, which has been officially accepted by the Puerto Rican government and by legislators of both parties, has been cooked up by Democrats to make him look bad.

The dispute offers a reminder of concerns about the administration's response to the Puerto Rican disaster"

That estimate, carried out by researchers at George Washington University, compared death rates during and after the hurricane to what would have been expected under normal circumstances, and found an increase of 2,975 additional mortalities.

Trump's dismissal of the estimate on Twitter brought a

rebuke from the Puerto Rican government and objections from various American politicians, including a few members of his own party.

Regardless of the precise number, the dispute offers a reminder of concerns about the administration's response to the disaster and the ongoing difficulties in Puerto Rico to rebuild, which most experts attribute to decades of chronic poverty and neglect.

In both cases, these are issues where one would have expected the US bishops to step up and be heard.

They've been among the most vocal critics of the Trump administration's immigration policies from the beginning, often using remarkably sharp language. They've condemned "bigotry", "fear and intolerance" and called various administration policies on immigration "alarming", "devastating" and "injurious".

Granted, most of the time the bishops haven't been able to do a great deal to get in Trump's way, but they've at least sustained a national debate about the morality of these policies in a way few other actors in America are able to do, and they've also given the Trump team at least some small reason to think twice about the "religious vote".

Similarly, in Puerto Rico, the US bishops might have been expected to underline the need for doing greater justice to the island over the long haul, in part out of solidarity with Archbishop Roberto González Nieves of San Juan and the rest of the Church's leadership there.

Any attempt by the bishops to exercise moral leadership would not only bring scorn and ridicule, it might well backfire"

In part, of course, the bishops have been outspoken on these issues because the people affected are mostly Catholic. Most estimates put the Catholic share of Puerto Rico's population, for instance, at 70%, which would mean roughly 2,000 of the deaths attributed to Hurricane Maria were among Catholics.

More broadly, the US bishops have long styled themselves as a voice of conscience in national affairs, drawing on the tradition of Catholic social teaching.

For the last month, however, the bishops haven't been engaging public policy questions at all, because they've been consumed by the internal fallout of the crisis created by the Pennsylvania grand jury report, the case of ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, and a bombshell accusation from a former papal ambassador that even Pope Francis covered up for McCarrick.

Any attempt right now by the bishops to exercise moral leadership would not only bring scorn and ridicule, it might well backfire, as their unpopularity could rub off on whatever cause they're trying to advocate.

One way of assessing the opportunity cost of the current meltdown, therefore, is this: there may be more victims of the clerical sexual abuse crisis than we previously knew, in the form of 12,800 children behind bars who might have had the bishops as their voice, and who instead find themselves listening to the sounds of silence.

() John L. Allen Jr is Editor of CruxNow.com



Elise Harris

hile many in conservative camps of the Church feared sweeping changes to the structure and function of the Synod of Bishops following the tumultuous 2014-2015 gatherings on the family, Pope Francis largely upheld the current process.

Critics who have been frustrated at the current process, however, might also be disappointed that no significant changes were made in the new constitution on the body published on Tuesday.

In the text, titled *Episcopalis Communio* ('Episcopal Communion'), signed on September 15 and published on September 18, Francis essentially maintained the current structure and function of the synod, mostly keeping in place the same rules for how the gatherings are carried out, who gets to participate, and who gets to vote.

Especially striking is a decision by Francis to uphold the current rules allowing the Pontiff to name whomever he wants to serve on a drafting committee for the gathering's conclusions, which was a major point of contention in the 2014-2015 gatherings, with some arguing that the Pope had stacked the deck in his favour, naming prelates who were likely to produce the outcome he desired.

In that case, the perceived desired outcome was a cautious opening to allowing divorced and civilly remarried Catholics to receive Communion, a conclusion Francis eventually expressed in his 2016 document on the synod process, *Amoris Laetitia*.

Consensus

Suggestions were made by some participants in the 2014-15 summits that members of the drafting committee be decided by vote or by collegial consensus to make the body more representative of opinions within the synod. However, Pope Francis refrained from making any sweeping changes, and has maintained his power to name whoever he wishes to the organising 15-member council and drafting committee.

Francis also stressed throughout the document the ability for a Pope to give the Synod of Bishops, which is a consultative body, deliberative power should he wish, giving it more authoritative, decisionmaking power, while still requiring the Pope's approval.

The publication of the updated norms, which deal specifically with a section of Canon Law dealing with the synod, abrogates the previous canons set into place by former pontiffs.

The new norms come ahead of



Pope Francis leaves after celebrating the closing Mass of the Synod of Bishops on the family in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in 2015. Photo: CNS

Despite criticism, Pope largely confirms current synod process

two scheduled synod gatherings, the first of which, dedicated to 'Young People, Faith and the Discernment of Vocation' is set to take place from October 3-28 in Rome.

Francis said the Synod of Bishops is increasingly 'an adequate channel for evangelisation in the modern world'"

Despite calls in some sectors for Pope Francis to cancel the gathering due to the sexual abuse scandals that have exploded in recent weeks, and which have thrown his pontificate into crisis, the Vatican published on Saturday the official list of participants for the gathering, simultaneously signalling that the event is still on and reawakening concerns that the discussion will again be stacked in Francis' favour, with his appointment of several loyalists as delegates.

A second synod dedicated to the Amazon region is also set to take

place in 2019. It's not clear whether, in either case, Francis may be inclined to entrust those gatherings with deliberative power.

In the constitution, Francis said the Synod of Bishops is increasingly "an adequate channel for evangelisation in the modern world", and has a particular missionary and collegial character.

In comments to the press during the presentation of the constitution, Italian Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, said one of the main objectives of the new document is to render the synod "more dynamic, and because of this, more incisive in the life of the Church".

This dynamic, he said, largely depends on the "the circulatory relationship" between the synod and local churches, Eastern Catholic churches and bishops conferences.

"The synod 'departs' from the local churches, that is, from the base, from the People of God spread throughout the earth", and after the gathering, the synod, "returns' to the particular churches, where the conclusions implemented by the Pope must be translated keeping in mind the concrete needs of the People of God, in a necessarily creative process of inculturation," he said.

Given the document's emphasis on collegiality, the relationship among bishops and with their faithful and the process of consultation with the People of God, Vatican spokesman Greg Burke said the constitution shows that what Pope Francis has termed "synodality" is "not an option in the Church", but is now the basic norm of how it ought to be.

Advisory body

Established by Pope Paul VI in 1965 by the *motu proprio Apostolica sollicitudo*, 'Apostolic Care', the synod of bishops effectively serves as an advisory body to the Pope aimed at strengthening ties with the Pope and with other bishops.

According to the synod's online profile, the body's aim is to provide bishops with an opportunity to "interact with each other and to share information and experiences, in the common pursuit of pastoral solutions which have a universal validity and application".

The synod, the profile says,

can essentially be defined "as an assembly of bishops representing the Catholic episcopate, having the task of helping the Pope in the governing of the universal Church by rendering their counsel."

Prior to each gathering a topic is chosen by the Pope, and members of a Synod Council organise the event based on that theme. The Synod Council is made up of a permanent Secretary General (currently Italian Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri) and Undersecretary (Italian Bishop Fabio Fabene), as well as 15 additional members – three from each continent, with Asia and Oceania (Australia) considered as one, and three others named by the Pope.

The Pope can call an Extraordinary Synod if he believes the topic needs deeper reflection"

From the 15 members, 12 are named by cardinals and bishops participating in the previous ordinary synod, and they serve a five-year term. When the term ends at the close of the synod they are preparing for, a new council is elected to prepare for the next gathering.

The Council for the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops has the task of organising the Ordinary Synod, which typically occurs every three years and which is dedicated to a specific topic of importance for the Church.

In certain cases, the Pope can call an Extraordinary Synod if he believes the topic needs deeper reflection, as was the case with the 2014 extraordinary Synod on the Family called for by Pope Francis.

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DLetters

Letter of the week

There is a lot to be positive about

Dear Editor, In response to Colm Fitzpatrick's article 'National seminary sees lowest student intake ever' (IC 13/9/2018), I would argue that while the figures may indeed be low there is much to be positive about.

While smaller numbers are cause for consideration and deliberation, so too were the vast numbers who entered the seminaries of Ireland in decades past, when a call to priesthood for some was seen for what it should never be, power, prestige, formal education and an autocratic role in society and not what it should be, namely a servant of God and his people. It was a complete opposite to the counter-cultural decision it is seen as today.

Today we seem to forget that, of the

large numbers of men who entered, many did so as a career option and not a vocation (not all of course, I must state) and we have since witnessed many of the calamities associated with such a format. Thus, it is a mistake for us to get bogged down with numbers of any sort.

Today prospective students must complete a number of steps before entering seminary including accompanied discernment. physiological testing and propaedeutic formation. These stages will no doubt reduce the number of applicants for the seminary for a variety of reasons but this can only be seen as a good thing. "Is it not better to have one saint than a thousand indifferent souls?' "For many are called but few are

chosen".

The Church in Ireland has faced shortages in the past before and God has always provided if we are willing to trust in his providence and grace. Let us remember our beginnings with a small band of 12.

Instead of fretting over numbers what we need now more than ever is prayer for vocations and prayer for those men and women who have answered the call to priesthood and religious life. "Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest send out labourers into his harvest."

> Yours etc.. Mark Quinn, St Patricks College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Truth and truth alone serves the Pope's good

Greg Daly's biblical allusions

to silence hardly justify the

Pope's silence. Christ did

the issues and identified

those with the greater sin.

Calvary? Jesus addressed

a question (a dubium?) to

they kept silent! Silence

is not always honourable

or apostolic, particularly

the Pharisees on healing on

invite evidence at his own

trial. He informed Pilate on

Dear Edtor, Your newspaper continues to ascribe epithets to Archbishop Viganò which act to reduce his credibility to the level prostitutes once suffered as witnesses in court in some countries. You endorse Austen Ivereigh's latest gratuitous appellation – "embittered" (IC 13/9/2018). Does this intemperance let slip a certain trepidation at the possibility of Archbishop Viganò's accusations being true? Nor do you aid the Pope.

Cornerstone continues to delight

Dear Editor, Two weeks in, and your new 'Cornerstone' section remains a delight, and a real addition to the paper. Its strong parish focus, its sacramental content, its emphasis on sharing and passing on the Faith, and its simple accessibility make this a truly edifying part of the paper. Not that this should somehow be dismissed as somehow 'light' reading. Its spiritual content is as serious as anything else in the paper, and by concentrating on the spiritual and lived frontlines of church life, it allows the rest of the paper to cover other aspects of Catholic life in even greater depth. Well done!

Yours etc., Barbara Madden, Swords, Co. Dublin.

You do not benefit yourselves. How silent are you on inconvenient testimonies asserting the Archbishop's unimpeachable reputation, universally acknowledged And the women en route to competence, faithfulness, orthodoxy and honesty? A man "exiled" from the Vatican precisely because he the Sabbath. (Luke 14). But, was a "whistle-blower" on financial corruption within the Vatican? Even if unconvinced about these assertions,

spiritual confusion.

Catholic journalism of quality would still abhor the cheap media practice of wanton vilification of the individual, especially in the absence of trustworthy sifting of evidence pertaining to the validity/invalidity of his accusations.

Only truth serves the Pope's good and that of Archbishop McCarrick's victims.

> Yours etc., Neil Bray,

Cappamore, Co. Limerick.



Irish Church might be a model for child protection

Dear Editor, The news that child protection in the Diocese of Kilmore has received a gold star from the national safeguarding board (IC 13/9/2018) is something not merely to welcome but to celebrate, because it shows just how seriously and effectively the modern Irish Church is addressing the issue of

abuse, whether in thankfully rare contemporary cases, or historically.

While the diocese's prompt and proper sharing of allegations with state bodies is, in fairness, what should be expected, the diocese's care for those bringing forward complaints and its use of informal mechanisms to ensure

children are protected through a stable relationship between diocesan and state bodies are both to be especially applauded.

Given our past failings, we shouldn't perhaps crow too much about today's excellence, but it is worth keeping in mind particularly now when questions around Church failures at higher

levels and abroad are constantly in the headlines. Right now it seems that the Irish Church might just be a model for child protection everywhere.

> Yours etc. Louise Clarke, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.

Old Testament readings don't help us celebrate the covenant

Dear Editor, In response to Fr Bernard Cotter's excellent Notebook article (IC 6/9/2018), I would like to make a comment on his suggestion that one should always use the readings of the day. Unfortunately, some of the Old Testament readings leave us with a very bleak image of God. He often appears to be angry, jealous and vengeful – threatening death and destruction. This is certainly not the God and Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ - the one who "lavishes his love on us" (1 In. 3:1)

Personally, I think our liturgists should consider removing such texts from our Liturgies of the Word. After all, the readings at Mass are supposed to be designed to inform us of our Covenantal duties and of the relationship formed between ourselves and God – the two parties in the New Covenant.

In the old tradition, the introduction to the terms of the covenant listed the benevolent deeds of the dominant party as proof of their good will. However, in our case, though God's love is unconditional, we sometimes feel that there is an expiatory or an atonement aspect to Christ's death, as in the Jewish tradition.

Unfortunately, even in some of our Eucharistic Prayers, we find traces of the traditional piacular sacrifice. This was where, in cases where wrongdoing needed to be expiated a human sacrifice to their god was required. In Eucharistic Prayer 3 we read: "Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church and, recognising the sacrificial victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself ...

When we hear these words being read, it is difficult for us to imagine that we are celebrating a renewal covenant celebration with a God who loves us so passionately and unconditionally.

Yours etc.. Pat Seaver, Farranshone, Limerick.

Why won't Archbishop Viganò make himself available to be interviewed?

Dear Editor, One of the many interesting aspects of your '100 questions on the Viganò allegations' (IC 13/9/2018) was how it pointed to ways in which Archbishop Vigano's claims could be supported, if there's truth to them. The fact that the archbishop can cite letters by precise dates, for instance, suggests that he has contemporary records of them: shouldn't he produce them for others' inspection?

One obvious question wasn't asked, though: why hasn't the archbishop made himself available to be interviewed by people other than those with whom he has conspired? That reticence looks even more damning that his slipshod 'testimony'.

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

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.







USA: Junior Deirdre Ambrosi sings with the choir prior to a prayer service on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross at Kellenberg Memorial High School in Uniondale, New York.



CHINA: Police officers rescue a child from a flooded street this week after Typhoon Mangkhut hit Hong Kong. More than three million people moved to safety in southern China as the violent storm moved northward and wreaked havoc across the region.



the conference, "Pope Francis' Theology of Tenderness' in Assisi.

SYRIA: Displaced children are seen at a camp in Idlib.





VATICAN: Pope Francis greets a child during a meeting with people who were to take part in PHILIPPINES: Rescuers search for three residents buried in a landslide after Typhoon Mangkhut hit Baguio.

Bridging the unbridgeable gap

"Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us."

Abraham speaks these words to a soul in Hell in the famous parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16, 19-21) and they are generally understood to mean that there exists between Heaven and Hell a gap that's impossible to bridge. Nobody passes from Hell to Heaven. Hell is forever and no amount of regret or repentance there will get you to Heaven. Indeed, once in Hell, nobody in Heaven can help you either, the gap between the two is eternally fixed!

But that's not what this parable is teaching.

Chasm

Some years ago, Jean Vanier delivered the prestigious Massey Lectures and he took up this parable. The point he emphasised is that the "unbridgeable chasm' referred to here is not the gap between Heaven and Hell as this is understood in the popular mind. Rather, for Vanier, the unbridgeable gap exists already in this world in terms of the gap between the rich and the poor. a gap that we have forever been unable to bridge. Moreover, it's a gap with more dimensions than we first imagine.

What separates the rich from the poor so definitively with a



chasm that, seemingly, can never be

bridged? What would bridge that

gap? The prophet Isaiah offers us a helpful image here (Isaiah 65, 25).

Drawing upon a messianic dream

be bridged. It will be bridged, he

submits, in the Messianic age,

he tells us how that gap will finally

when we're in Heaven because it's

there, in an age when God's grace

is finally able to affect universal

reconciliation, that the "the wolf

the lamb will lie down together")

and lamb will feed together" (or, as

this is commonly read, "the lion and

The lion and the lamb will lie

down together. But lions kill lambs!

How can this change? Well, that's

That's the gap between the victim and the killer, the powerless

the unbridgeable gap between

and the powerful, the bullied

and the bully, the despised and

the bigot, the oppressed and the

oppressor, the victim and the racist,

the poor and the rich. That's the gap

the hated and the hater, the older

brother and his prodigal brother,

Heaven and Hell.

www.ronrolheiser.com

between Heaven and Hell.

If this is what Isaiah intuits, and I think it is, then this image contains a powerful challenge which goes both ways: it isn't just the lion that needs to convert and become sensitive, understanding and non-violent enough to lie down with the lamb; the lamb too needs to convert and move to deeper levels of understanding, forgiveness and trust in order to lie down with the lion. Ironically, this may be a bigger challenge to the lamb than to the lion.

Once wounded, once victimised, once hated, once spat upon, once raped, once beaten-up by a bully, once discriminated against because of gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation and it becomes very difficult, almost impossible existentially, to truly forgive, forget and move with trust towards the one who hurt us.

This is a tough saying, but life can be grossly unfair sometimes and perhaps the greatest unfairness of all is not the injustice of being victimised, violated, raped or murdered, but that, after all this has been done to us, we're expected to forgive the one who did it to us while at the same time knowing that the one who hurt us probably has an easier time of it in terms of letting go of the incident and moving towards reconciliation. That's perhaps the greatest unfairness of all. The lamb has to forgive the lion who killed it.

Violence is what happens when people don't know what to do with their sufferings"

And yet this is the invitation to all of us who have ever been victimised. Parker Palmer [pictured] suggests that violence is what happens when someone doesn't know what else to do with his or her suffering and that domestic abuse. racism, sexism, homophobia and contempt for the poor are all cruel outcomes of this. What we need, he suggests, is a bigger "moral imagination".

He's right, I believe, on both scores: violence is what happens when people don't know what to do with their sufferings and we do need a bigger moral imagination. But understanding that our abuser is in deep pain, that the bully himself was first bullied, doesn't generally do much to ease our own pain and humiliation.

As well, imagining how ideally we should respond as Christians is helpful, but it doesn't of itself give us the strength to forgive. Something else is needed, namely, a strength that's presently beyond

> This is a tough teaching, one that should not be glibly presented. How do you forgive someone who violated you? In this life, mostly, it's impossible; but remember Isaiah is speaking about the messianic time, a time when. finally, with God's help,

we will be able to bridge that unbridgeable chasm.

• Perhaps the greatest unfairness of all is not the injustice of being victimised, violated, raped or murdered, but that, after all this has been done to us, we're expected to forgive the one who did it to us"



Personal Profile The gentle

hand of God





Men's Shed Steeple Antrim is open to men aged 50+. The men work on a variety of activities including joinery, photography, art and IT. They have their own polytunnel where they grow a range of vegetables and plants and they even have their own clay pizza oven in the garden.

ypically, sheds have been understood to be small garden-based shacks which store tools or extra clutter, but a new type of shed taking Ireland by storm is also housing men. And their purpose? To gather for meaningful projects and tackle the male mental health crisis.

Originally founded in Australia, and then adopted in Ireland, Men's Sheds provide an opportunity for men from all walks of life to have a cup of tea, befriend one another, and talk about common interests. In order to facilitate this vision, the Irish Men's Shed Association was formed in January 2011, with a mission of supporting the development of the movement



throughout the whole island. According to co-ordinator of Bandon Men's Shed in Cork, Tom McCleary, Men's Sheds are vital in combating loneliness and providing a space for people to breathe and talk about what's on their minds.

He explains that the sheds began in Australia because in small towns and villages if you didn't want to go to a bar or pub, "you couldn't really go anywhere"

Men's Sheds provide a vital role is combating mental health issues, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**

- so the sheds became a new place for communities to counter this. Once Ireland caught wind of it, they were established in different counties throughout the island.

"It started community-wide in 2011 and the Irish took to it like ducks to water. Every shed around the country is different. They all work on different schedules and what they do and what they don't do. There are some that are actually more than sheds and there are some with two or three lads that have a cup of tea and can chat forever," explains Tom.

He adds that other sheds, like those in Drogheda, are big industrial complexes with steel boardwalks, where men can carry out projects together.

Skills

"The average shed is usually a group of 20-30 men that meet two or three times a week; some people do skills like wood-working skills, we repair furniture for old people, and we make window boxes," Tom says.

Importantly, the sheds provide a safe place where men can share their successes and problems, in a non-judgmental, constructive space as well as talk about their mental health. This is no trivial issue. According to a new survey carried out by iReach, almost half of Irish people do not think mental health is something that can be discussed about openly, and only 29% of people surveyed think there is enough help or support for people suffering.

Notably, men are not immune to these mental health issues, despite the strong exterior they so often display. In Ireland, men are five times more likely to die by suicide than women and many times present late to health services.

"Men don't tend to share much with anyone else", says Tom, and

» Continued on Page 33

Family News. AND EVENTS

Food tingles in Dinale

For food lovers and connoisseurs, the Dingle Food Festival which takes place annually on the first weekend of October will be right up vour street

The festival in Kerry is organised by local people and businesses on a non-profit basis and has quickly become one of the highlights of the culinary calendar for both the Dingle area and visitors. The festival includes cookery



demonstrations and workshops, over 50 market stalls, wine, gin and whiskey tastings, a cider and beer trail and a farmer's forum, as well as street entertainment and children's event.

The highlight of the festivais is the Taste

Trail – which is the only ticketed event – where plenty of outlets from around the Dingle Peninsula will be offering samples of their food and drink. Suitable for the whole family and food explorers, gastronomy has never been made this easy!

MINDFULNESS CAN BE A PAIN **RELIEF:** Mindfulness has become a popular practice in today's Western

society, and although it is sometimes derided as pseudo-science, there are actually a multitude of studies showing its effectiveness. Take new research led by Fadal Zeidan, Ph.D at the Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, which has shown that people predisposed to mindfulness experience ess pain

The study found that higher trait mindfulness correlated with greater deactivation of the posterior cingulate cortex, which is associated with pain. Conversely, in those who said they had felt more pain, this brain region was more active. "The results from our study Zeidan says, "showed that mindful individuals are seemingly less caught up in the experience of pain, which was associated with lower pain reports.

He hopes that the new findings will help bring relief to those living with chronic pain.

Rain, rain go away!

Moving from summer to autumn means that we all must be cognisant of the seasonal weather changes, in particular, the often dark and rainv nights.

With days becoming pitch black in the early evening, it's important that you're prepared for the darkness and the drizzle. Killing two

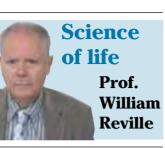
birds with one stone, the Betron Light Saber LED Umbrella with Torch acts as both a normal umbrella as well as strong light source to help you see

well into the night.

The shaft of the

umbrella lights up at the push of a button meaning that you're visible to the traffic and your vision isn't muddied by the darkness. The umbrella is very sturdy against the wind and the edges come down to cover your whole head

This is perfect for those who wants to look stylish and also stay protected in the rain.



ou might think that social class divisions are fast disappearing in our

modern world as we all increasingly enjoy affording things that used to be luxuries, e.g. motor cars, foreign holidays, university education, etc. but a recent review by Antony Manstead (British Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 57, Issue 2, 2018) shows that class remains strongly etched into our psvchology. This review is discussed by Alex Fradera in Research Digest (The British Psychological Society, May 15, 2018).

The three main traditional social classes are working class, middle class and upperclass, but it is more common nowadays to reference socioeconomic status, based on income and education, rather than the three traditional classes. However, the concepts are overlapping and I will use the traditional class categories in this article because they are more familiar and easily understood.

The working class is the lowest paid of the three classes Wages are paid by the hour and members of the working class typically work in 'blue-collar' iobs such as manufacturing. retail sales and food service.

These jobs usually require

manual labour and have low educational requirements.

The middle-class, as the term implies, occupies the middle position between the working class and the upper-class. It includes professional and business people, bureaucrats, some farmers and some high-skilled workers, sharing common social characteristics and values. Middle class jobs are, at least, reasonably well

paid and call for significant educational qualifications. The upper-class holds the

highest social status and its members are typically 'wellborn', rich, powerful and politically influential.

Publican

As to my social class, I would like to report that I am the Duke of Luxembourg, son of Lord and Lady Luxembourg, but I cannot. I am the son of a New Ross publican and his wife. I am middle class – as Conor Cruise O'Brien replied in an exchange with Prof. John A. Murphy of UCC, who had claimed Cruise O'Brien was enunciating middleclass ideas: "If a professor of the National University of Ireland is not middle-class, I must confess that I do not understand the meaning of the term middleclass.

We are each conscious of

The psychology of social class



our social class. Fradera reports disappears.

On the other hand, members of the middle class feel they can control events and have confidence that good things will happen if they make the right choices. The middle and upper classes are motivated more by their internal state of quiet confidence and by personal goals.

They concentrate on how they should shape the world and not on how the world might push them around. In middle-class communities resources (e.g. wealth and social influence) can buffer you from catastrophes and you can develop habits of long-term planning and postponement of



gratification.

The research described by Manstead reports that many attitudes of middle and upper-class people are less attractive than those of the working class. The middle/ upper classes tend to be less empathic, more tolerant of greed and more likely to lie in negotiations than workingclass people. In contrast, working-class people are more empathic and have higher levels of social engagement and interdependent relationships.

There is a common perception that working-class people are more intolerant and biased than middle/upper-class people, for example in their attitude towards immigrants.

Opinion polls do identify unease amongst working-class people about immigration when, as is often the case, the immigrants compete with them for jobs. However, other studies also show that middleclass people are equally biased against immigrants when they perceive that the immigrants compete for middle-class jobs.

Cultural forces

Certain cultural forces in society tend to maintain social class divisions. For example, higher education is seen as a powerful engine of social mobility. However it is not as effective as it could be in this regard. People from lower social classes are quite likely to feel out of place in the university or to perceive that the opportunities available are poor and do not justify postponement of the gratification of getting a job at the end of second level education. The same forces also operate in many of the professions.

There is widespread agreement that we should strive for a more equal society and things are certainly moving in the direction of greater equality. But, a greater understanding of the psychological factors in play would help to move things along more smoothly.

However, the notion of an entirely classless society is a utopian ideal.

The biological range of capacity naturally present in the human race will always ensure that some people thrive better than others. Striving to attain utopia only leads to trouble. Encouraging and facilitating everyone to achieve their full personal potential is the only way to go.

🚺 William Reville is an Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at UCC.

to easily detect our class. Some of the more obvious class markers are clothing (well-cut and more expensive or casual and cheaper); grammar, diction and accent; cultural and leisure pursuits (opera, classical music, bridge, tennis, country and western music, soccer, bingo, and so on). The middle/upper

classes tend to be less empathic, more tolerant of greed "

that it is as important to us

as, for example, our gender

or ethnicity, and we display

outward signs that allow others

More subtle behaviour also gives class away. Picture a group of working class men having a social chat. It is likely there will be lots of laughter (much of it probably arising out of 'slagging'), lots of eye contact and head-nods. This behaviour is confirmed by laboratory studies. By contrast, middle and upper-class people are less verbal and more disengaged when interacting with others.

The psychological consequences of living in a social class are well established. In his book The Road to Wigan Pier, George Orwell, who lived in a coal-mining community for over a year, describes how the miners saw themselves as all being 'in the same boat', confronting the risks and forces of the world.

This bred little interpersonal competition to compete for prestigious career opportunities and no developed habits of postponement of gratification. The latter is probably born out of long experience of uncertainty in life when benefits and good fortune were suddenly snatched away - when something good comes along, better to enjoy it straight away lest it abruptly

» Continued from Page 31



A group working on a building project in a Men's Shed in Letterkenny.

suggests that Men's Sheds allow you to go out for a cup of tea or coffee and then talk to people roughly around your own age. The sheds also arrange courses for attendees with health groups and doctors about mental health. For those who may be shy about joining or want to keep their anonymity, Men's Sheds don't require your personal information, so you're free to attend without this worry.

"Men with mental health [problems] tend not to go seeking advice and help until it's nearly too late. And there are fella's coming in now who might have mental health problems or depression problems and they don't want to say – and we don't particularly ask people 'What's you name?'", says Tony. "Here at Men's Sheds we don't

"Here at Men's Sheds we don't have membership so you don't pay a fee to join. It's free. So, if you come in and say your name is Nick, unless you're really asking for advice, nobody really asks for your second name. It doesn't matter what you do."

Signature

Since its establishment in 2011, the sheds have been developed across the whole country with their own unique signature. As a grassroots movement organisation, the association strongly believes in the autonomy of each individual shed, and strives for a future where all men have the opportunity to maintain and improve their well-being on their own terms within their own communities.

For Tony, the sheds aren't just silos with no upward vision, but actually enable the attending men to better their own lives socially, mentally and even economically.

The number of people that we've had through our doors and said only for Men's Sheds, they would've considered suicide"

"We've had men as young as their mid-20s. You'll notice the younger men who join us – I think that meeting with others is a wake-up



call. They all seem to go out and get jobs then. As soon as you can say that you're with the local Men's Shed, people kind of go out of their way for you and are more helpful."

Tony believes these sheds have changed people's lives, taken them from the edge of despair and given them new hope and purpose. This has been particularly pertinent to men in Ireland, who as fathers or workers, faced serious financial, social and familial pressures after the economic crash in 2008.

"It's a fantastic organisation, unbelievable. The number of people that we've had through our doors and said only for Men's Sheds, they would've considered suicide. People who were in their homes for three or four years never left, and then we opened up and they started meeting other people and realised they were no different than anyone else," Tony says, adding that we all have our own problems which must be faced.

"I think a lot of people's lives, especially people who were pretty well off in 2006-2007, went bust. A lot of people lost their homes. Their wives and kids and families broke up and they didn't know how to handle any of it." Fathers facing this crisis turned to Men's Sheds in 2011 to hear common voices and receive support.

Despite being a charity organisation, the association has managed to establish around 350 Men's Sheds throughout the island. Recognising their important function, the Minister for Rural and Communal Development, Mr Michael Ring TD announced at the end of July a provision of €500,000 to support their ongoing work. He said: "In towns, villages and cities which I have visited as Minister, I am continually struck by the great work that local Men's Sheds do in supporting important local initiatives. Among their ranks they have great expertise, experience and know-how and make a massive contribution to their local communities.

If you come in and say your name is Nick, unless you're really asking for advice, nobody really asks for your second name. It doesn't matter what you do"

Barry Sheridan, CEO of the Irish Men's Sheds Association, welcomed the news, stating: "This announcement is the most significant development in the history of Men's Sheds in Ireland, and we as an association are delighted to have played a role in bringing it about, via our consultations with Minister Ring's Department. This level of support reflects the impact Sheds are making on communities throughout Ireland.

"It's a tribute to the work of all our staff and volunteers, as well as to every single Men's Shed member and supporter who has helped make our Sheds what they are today. Minister Ring's support is opening a new chapter for Irish Sheds, and we look forward to working with the Department through a bright and sustainable future for Men's Sheds in Ireland."

With this new-found encouragement, the association hope they can provide better services to men across the island, and are making sure that any man, regardless of story, creed or background will be welcomed with open arms into their local group. In this way, the association can honourably live out their motto: men don't talk face to face; they talk shoulder to shoulder.

Faith IN THE family

Bairbre Cahill

anny and I will be 25 years married on the 25th of this month. I struggle to understand how so much time has passed since we walked together down the aisle of St Patrick's Church Murlog my own parish having been rather unfortunately double booked! And yet, so much has happened I wonder how we fitted it all in. Our four children have been born, grown up and now only one remains at home but even he is preparing to fly the nest this time next year.

We have lost many who joined us that day to pray for us and celebrate with us – amongst them Danny's mother and my father.

To capture something of the last 25 years, I want to gather photographs and put together a slide show of our family life. There are of course pictures of the wedding, which will evoke yet again that question – why did I choose to put my bridesmaids in emerald green dresses?! We have pictures – cute, embarrassing, poignant – of our children as they have grown.

Frequently when we look through the photo albums particular pictures release a wealth of memories and stories: "Do you remember the time when..."

I am very aware that Danny and I have grown into being married. It is certainly not something that happens all at once, on the day of the wedding. If anything, the wedding day is a celebration of desire – we desire to be a married couple, I desire to put my life and my future into your hands and to receive your life and future into mine so that we can journey forwards together.

Over time, with love and courage and generosity that desire is transformed into reality.

Beautiful image

When Pope Francis met with engaged and married couples in the Pro Cathedral in Dublin he told them of an Argentinian saying about marriage: "You are my half of the orange and I am your half of the orange." That is a beautiful image of how we give ourselves in love to each other.

The reality is though that such loving comes at a cost. It is not easy. We often falter, mess up, have to say sorry and



set out once more.

And this is what maybe concerns me most, looking at our own children and those of friends and family. There is a popular narrative around that tells us we should make the choices that make us happy and that if something is not making us happy we should feel free to walk away. It is a narrative that is shaping our culture and our consciousness. Pope Francis often talks about a "throwaway culture" where people and relationships are seen as disposable.

I want my children to know that love challenges, demands, stretches our very concept of who we are"

If we allow that culture to shape our understanding of marriage we are in danger. I certainly feel a profound responsibility to help my children understand and want more.

I want them to know that love challenges, demands, stretches our very concept of who we are and what we are capable of. More and more I see the need to challenge the culture that sees commitment as a burden and help our son and daughters develop an understanding of marriage as Sacrament, as a place of God's presence and action.



I want them to know how sacred a thing it is to hold the heart and soul of another human being within your hand – and to know that such a gift is for life. And I want them to find someone who knows that too.

After 25 years, Danny and I are still growing into the reality of what it means to be married but I thank God to be able to say: "Danny, you are my half of the orange and I am your half of the orange".

Personal Profile The gentle hand of God

Life is often filled with twists and turns, writes Matthew Carlson

person's life very rarely moves in a straight path and Diocesan Youth Director Dermot Kelly, is no exception to this wise aphorism. From working in Disney to exploring the importance of pilgrimage, Dermot's story is a prime example of how God gently moves his hand in people's lives.

Dermot describes growing up in a home with Catholic parents as helping him now as he attempts to raise his own children in the Catholic Faith. "Now that I am a parent, I can kind of relate to that, the power of prayer through family and the role that females played in my life, especially my grandmother and my own mother," says Dermot. He continues that having such strong role models helped him develop his own Faith, morals and reverence to the power of prayer, as well as devotion to Our Lady.

Direction

Although Dermot is now employed in the Archdiocese of Armagh, his life wasn't always heading in the direction of being employed by the Church. "I worked for Walt Disney World in Florida and then came home and worked in the hospitality industry, I was working for Hilton Hotels in Dublin and in Belfast," he explains. "I was coming straight out of university and was placed in a very good job, a place to develop myself and to grow in a very energetic, exciting industry.'

As a young man, Dermot ended up attending World Youth Day (WYD) in Sydney and his life course



was altered. "I was in my early 20s at that point in life I had gone through school, university and I had already started a career that I believed was for me, perhaps I was influenced by society, maybe I wanted to have the best, or achieve the best and strive to always be the best," says Dermot.

His choice of going to WYD started Dermot on a journey that would eventually end with him being involved in Ireland's World Meeting of Families (WMOF) this vear.

Dermot describes WYD as a platform that increased his understanding of the Church, interacting with Catholics from all around the world. This eventually led to Dermot changing paths completely and joining the archdiocese in Armagh as their Youth Director.

"I started getting involved in my local parish I suppose for a way of release as well, my local church had a young priest and he had a positive influence on me to accept the invitation to come help him at a local youth group," says Dermot.

He continued that over the course of two years and studied for 15 weekends to receive his ministry certificate, at which point he joined on as the youth director.

b There definitely are young people that are yearning to want to know more about their Faith"

According to Dermot, one of the ways that his ministry has reached out and engaged young people is through pilgrimage. "Pilgrimage is something that

we strongly believe in and we believe in giving young people the experience and hopefully in that, young people will recognise their own talents," says Dermot.

Although there are many people that would argue that the Church is increasingly out of touch with the youth, Dermot maintains that there are ways to engage young people in the Church.

"There definitely are young people that are yearning to want to know more about their Faith, they certainly want to know the answers to the questions that they are seeking.

"I would say a recommendation to that is that we would love to see how we can encourage young people, and also to journey with young people on their Faith pathway as well."

As if working with young adults wasn't enough to keep Dermot busy, he is also a family man with a wife and two kids. Dermot says that although his job isn't typically from 9-5, his wife is supportive of him and understands that he thoroughly enjoys his job.

He does highlight however that it's "important" to also spend time with family and friends, rather than being solely focused on work.

His wife is supportive of him and understands that he thoroughly enjoys his job. He does highlight however that it's 'important' to also spend time with family and friends"

According to Dermot, his line of work has just recently began expanding. Historically, young adult ministry was aimed at people from ages 16-20, but recently the Church has been pushing for that to include people older than that, as they are full of passion and have talents to offer.

Outside of the Archdiocese, Dermot was chosen to oversee the Teen Global Village at the WMOF which saw as many as a thousand international young people each day.

Even though his life isn't on the path that he originally envisioned, God called Dermot to a life serving young people and his family in the Church.

He says that sometimes God will put people and circumstances in our life that we weren't expecting, and use us in extraordinary ways.

Sweet **Treats**

Emma Louise Murphy



Chewy cookies are the perfect autumn treat!

here is nothing more satisfying then filling your kitchen with the sweet, sugary smell of chocolate chip cookies. These chocolate chip delights are a perfect treat that you can throw together in minutes

This recipe is really simple and doesn't have a lot of ingredients. In fact, you probably have most of them hiding in your kitchen press right now! Cookies are perfect to give as a gift or simply to have as a treat at the end of a long day.

One of the best parts about this recipe is you can freeze the dough and bake one or two cookies at a time whenever you're feeling like a bit of chocolate goodness!

Ingredients

300g good quality milk or dark chocolate 170g real butter, melted 115g caster sugar 200g light brown sugar 1 tsp vanilla extract

1 full egg, and 1 egg yolk 310g self-raising flour 1 tsp baking powder 1/2 tsp salt Method Preheat your oven to 160°C Fan / 180°C Electric / Gas Mark 3. Begin by lining

a flat baking sheet with greaseproof paper. Melt your butter in a saucepan over a low heat until completely melted and lightly browned. In a mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, whisk together the melted butter and sieved caster sugar until fully combined Sieve in the light brown sugar and mix well again. Add your vanilla extract to the mixture and stir in well.

The mixture should be quite dark in colour and smell incredible. In a separate bowl, whisk your egg and egg yolk together before pouring it in

with the other ingredients. Whisk together with an electric mixer until completely combined with the sugar and butter. In another bowl, add the flour, baking powder and salt. Mix your dry ingredients together before folding into the butter, sugar and egg batter. Do this slowly and with a wooden spoon to avoid flour lumps in your cookie dough. A delicious, sticky dough should now be forming in the bowl

Chop your chocolate into small chocolate chip size pieces and fold into the dough making sure they're spread evenly throughout. Roll your dough into a ball before tearing off pieces and roll them into 1-2 inch round balls. Place each one on your baking sheet, leaving space between them as they will spread out while they're cooking.

Bake in your oven for around 12 minutes or until each cookie is light brown in colour. Leave to cool for about 10 minutes before biting into these chewy treats



Brendan O'Regan

Great expectations delivered by The Rotunda

have mixed feelings about programmes set in hospitals, whether drama or fly on the wall as I'm a tad squeamish, but they can be emotional and thought provoking, especially when on the edge of life and death.

The Rotunda on RTÉ1, on Thursday of last week, was not ideal for the squeamish. We were spared few of the graphic details of childbirth. In particular the up close filming of a C-section birth for mother Fiona was a knockout. And yet, to see the baby emerging in good health was a celebration of life inside and outside the womb. Mother Fiona was so positive - she wanted "everyone getting out safe" and finally 'so happy he's here'.

Nicola was well used to childbirth, as was her mother, who attended the birth and dished out the advice of experience, while the father waited near at hand.

For Shauna and Daryl, this was the first time around and their mutually supportive relationship was touching. I was most taken with the story of Áine and Arnaud who got the devastating news that baby had an abnormality likely to be fatal. After an initial inclination towards termination they took time to think over the Christmas that followed and felt that Malachy was already part of the family, kicking and hearing



Some of the hospital staff features on The Rotunda (RTÉ1).

their music. They felt this was his happy life now and that it made sense to allow him that life until it ended naturally.

At 33 weeks the baby died in the womb and we saw the little basket in the mortuary chapel and the family taking some time creating important moments with baby Malachy. It was so wonderful and life affirming.

Overall I thought the camera was too intrusive at times, though I presume participants had given all appropriate permissions. The midwives impressed with their dedication and good humour, while Ann, the chaplain served with respect and dignity.

I particularly liked the montage at the end which gave us an up-to-date look at the families involved despite their sad loss the family of Áine and Arnaud looked happy, showing a little plaque with ceramic prints of Malachy's little hands.

There was a rather ugly and murderous hospital scene in the new drama series Killing Eve which started on BBC1 last Saturday night (I'd missed the start a few weeks previously on RTÉ2). The plot centres on a psychopathic female assassin (Jodie Comer hamming it up to great effect) and the efforts of a security operative (Sandra Oh of ER

fame in fine form). The script is light and witty, despite the dark plot, which nips along at pace. It's hard to recommend though, with the gleeful and playful amorality of Villanelle the assassin, though so far Eve is a worthy opponent, a good, strong minded, conscientious person, and certainly no wimp.

It certainly acts as a warn-ing of what happens when morality is abandoned or not even considered. The violence doesn't start graphic, but seems to be escalating, and yet there is no question but that it seen as evil.

Skin

Finally, couched in the context of 'cultural appropriation', last weekend's **Sunday** Sequence (BBC Radio Ulster) raised the question as to why Jesus is usually portrayed in art and film as being white, instead of a skin colour more



Audrey Carville.

PICK OF THE WEEK

MY COUNTRY, MY FAITH: IRELAND EWTN, Sunday, September 23, 10.30am, also Wednesday 7pm Divine Mercy - in the hearts of the Irish people. Fr Aidan

Dunne speaks with Fr Owen Gorman.

MASS

RTÉ1, Sunday, September 23, 11am

Fr Henry Barlage, SVD, marks World Peace from the RTÉ studios. Music is led by the Carlow Cathedral Singers, directed by Fr Liam Lawton.

WOMEN OF GRACE

EWTN, Friday, September 28, 4.30pm

Dispelling the myths - addressing the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church and the claims that priestly celibacy is to blame.

appropriate to the Middle East, and whether this really matters anyway.

I suppose this is partly because here we mostly consume Western art, and it doesn't always go for the naturalistic approach (a point that wasn't made). Bruce Clarke, Religious Editor of The Economist didn't seem too concerned and thought genuine religious art (which he distinguished from art that was self-indulgent) had to be transcendent and universal, and was received and "refracted" in different ways by different cultures, like the words of the Apostles at Pentecost.

He also instanced the Black Madonna of Czestochowa with her black child Jesus, and hundreds of similar images in France, as departing from the alleged norm.

Presenter Audrey Carville wondered whether the approach underscored racism effectively promoting the idea that the default human is white, and therefore giving us little empathy for someone from the Middle East.

Writer Raquel McKee shared some of those concerns, e.g. the problem for Caribbean Christians, enslaved by white masters and then seeing Jesus and even God the Father portrayed in that way. I did like her remark that

God made just one race - the human race.

boregan@hotmail.com



Indestructible vigilante hero in famine-ravaged Ireland

Black 47 (15A)

Rambo meets Fionn Mac Cumhaill in this mesmerising drama from Lance Daly. I don't think we've ever had a Celtic action hero before unless we count Braveheart. There's an almost super-human one in this highly unusual film. It starts out as a kind of postcolonial history lesson about the horrors of the famine and those who avoided its worst tragedies by "taking the King's shilling".

Feeney (James Frecheville) is one of these. He's been fighting for the British in Afghanistan. Abandoning his post to re-unite with his family, he learns his mother has died and his brother has



been hanged. The film chronicles the manner in which he seeks retribution for these deaths and all the wrongs perpetrated by Britain when our potato crop failed.

A better reference point for

the film than Rambo would be the Clint Eastwood of Sergio Leone's "spaghetti" westerns. Like The Man with No Name, Feeney is strong and silent. He erupts at the most unlikely places. He's like an avenging angel of death.

Whatever else we may say about this grim-faced assassin, he kills with style. His executions mirror the crimes of his victims. Thus a hanging judge is hanged. A corn dealer is buried in corn. And so on.

This is a fascinating film. Shot in a kind of sub-Arctic white light, it has a grim foreboding about it. It combines elements of Revenge Tragedy and the Celtic Twilight.

Nine lives

The entire British army seems to be on Feeney's trail but he has the proverbial nine lives of a cat. He eludes capture at every turn. Even when he falls into their clutches he has little trouble extricating

himself.

This is all very far-fetched, needless to say. Feeney takes on the role of a self-styled one-man army. His is a David and Goliath-style struggle against John Bull's tyranny.

In the latter stages of the film, his former Afghanistan colleague Hannah (Hugo Weaving) is co-opted by the British authorities to nab him. From now on it becomes Hannah's story as much as Feeney's.

in the context of the film as

Hannah's loyalties shift towards the Irish here. I found middle. this difficult to accept considering the ruthlessness he exhibits towards a freedom fighter in the film's opening scene. If we view the scene

a whole, maybe we can see such ruthlessness emanating from a war he's fighting inside himself.

Black 47 is a must-see film. It re-opens famine wounds but is to be commended for its unrelenting sense of tension. It documents a country decimated both by natural disaster and the fascism of a foreign regime.

It also has Stephen Rea like we've never seen him before. He's a quirky translator play-ing both sides against the

Much of the film is spoken in Gaelic. Some of the subtitles appear in the centre of the screen instead of at the bottom. This is just one more very unusual thing about it.

Aubrey Malone

BookReviews Peter Costello Our teachers, the 'masters' of modern Ireland

Kindling the Flame: 150 years of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation by Niamh Puirséil (Ġill, €24.99)

Daire Keogh

edia reports of the planned retirement of Sheila Nunan as general secretary of the Irish National Teachers Organisation have naturally focussed both on her personal achievement, as first female leader of her union, and the enduring influence of the INTO itself, in stark contrast to the waning fortunes of the wider labour movement.

The INTO was never merely a trade union, but a curious mix of professional association and educational lobby, and it is that hybrid nature which makes the sesquicentennial history of Niamh Puirséil [pictured right] such an engaging read. It reminds us, too, what a central role teachers have played in Irish society as a whole.

The timing of its foundation contributed greatly to the character of the INTO, as did the stature of its first president, Vere Foster. His dictum that "nothing is more important to the welfare of a nation than the education of its children", has remained the mantra of the union together with its constant



reiteration of the correlation between teacher quality and educational standards.

From the outset, the union fought the determined effort of the Board of National Education to "keep teachers down and keep them poor", and of social elites to denigrate the status of teachers.



The context of the union's

ment of a committee of enquiry into national edu-cation in Ireland (The Powis Commission, 1868-70), and that process afforded the fledgling union an unprecedented opportunity to forge its reputation as the collective champion of the 'profession'.

This history was commissioned by the INTO, but it never descends into hagiography or self-satisfaction. Author Niamh Puirséil is the daughter of a former president of the INTO, but she is an independent historian, and author of an acclaimed history of the Irish Labour Party 1922-73. The research for that project is evident in this volume and she is at her most confident in that chronological space.

The breath of the challenge is daunting, but she deftly crafts a broad analysis of the union's story, developing themes of education, power, politics and gender within a chronological framework. Significantly, and uniquely amongst the teaching unions, the INTO is organised on both sides of the border and two chapters are devoted to an analysis of the union's dilemma navigating a non-political, non-sectarian, agenda in a challenging landscape.

.....

Power, and the control of education, is a constant theme and 'the Church' is never far from the focus.

From 1831. the National School system afforded particular influence to local patrons. As a consequence of unintended circumstances, the original plan for 'mixed education' was frustrated and a system emerged where teachers were paid by the state, but, as employees of the churches, were often at the mercy of priests or rectors.

Yet, the union's response to individual cases was uneven and, the abandonment of John McGahern by the INTO is a striking illustration of the dynamics of power in 20th-Century Ireland and the abysmal failure of the state to assume appropriate oversight in the field of education. Yet while the John Charles McQuaid portrayed in this volume in the mould of Lord Voldemort, Puirséil's analysis on the marathon teachers' strike of 1946 offer a nuance to that general caricature.

This history never descends into hagiography or selfsatisfaction"

Sheila Nunan's foreword emphasises the strength, unity, and cohesion of the INTO today, but this history demonstrates that the national teachers were never as united and their choreographed annual conference suggested to the public.

What is striking is how the union addressed differences

within its ranks. 'Lady teachers' were a case in point, and while women were admitted from the get-go, for too long their interests were sacrificed to those of the majority male membership who failed to support Catherine Mahon's campaign for equal pay (1906), or to adequately oppose the Marriage Bar (1932).

A commitment to diversity and Inclusion is now an admirable hallmark of the INTO which, in 1982, was the first trade union in Ireland to appoint a full-time equality officer. Ironically, however, the new divide within the union is based not on gender, but threatening fissures have emerged as a consequence of the inferior conditions imposed on Newly Qualified Teachers by the FEMPI cuts to public service pay in 2011. The resolution of this matter may determine how the next history of the INTO will be written.

Kindling the Flame: 150 years of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation tells the story of an incredible movement, an appreciation of which presents valuable insights into the history of Ireland more generally. Niamh Puirséil is to be commended on her achievement.

Prof. Daire Keogh is Deputy President of Dublin City University.

foundation was the appoint-

The poetry of teaching

Chalk Dust by Noel Monahan

(Salmon Poetry, €14.00)

Seamus Cashman

In my first reading of this collection of some 56 poems (150 pages long!) by the Longford poet, dramatist, and former teacher, I found several poems taking me into imagination, back my own era of 'chalk dust'.

The first poem, 'Still-Life Study', a poem based on the cover illustration for the collection by artist Pádraig Lynch, is a mere seven lines, but spaced into thirteen reflective moments. Utterly beautiful.

Another, called 'Altar Boys' (there were no altar girls those days), is a sonnet on this world of Catholic childhoods everywhere. From its priestly invocation Introibo ad altare Dei...(I

go up to the altar of God) to the altarboy's latin answer... Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam (To God who gives joy to my youth), the poem embraces the pride, the focus, and sense of significance that little children proudly wore under the surplice through the serving at Mass and other devotions.

The participants and conviction believers live within

the rituals of their religions. Ritual, that powerful and living action, was a practice learned by the altar boy early on.

But review space sends me on to the key piece that spoke



shall not be forgotten', there was the poet himself saying much of what I want to say about it: 'Chalk dust became

lines of its final

so powerfully, the

title poem, 'Chalk

Dust'. Do not be

put off by its length

- 55 pages! After

the first two pages, I

could not put it down

and read it through in

one sitting. And when

I reached the opening

section called 'And all

a force of nature. It put names on faces. It lived and grew inside me in some mysterious way. It drew its nourishment from me. I tiptoed across chalk-dust bridges. It swept me along. I shaped images, all the countless joys

and sorrows appeared in a chalkdust fog one night. All the voices resounded in the drifting clouds of chalk-dust. I hear them still in a state of hope and innocence.

He has written for us its laughter and pain, its ironies and pleasures, its ignorance and its learnings"

That opening paragraph of the section is a poet's voice, a poet's manifesto, a telling of the process of creativity and of the making of poems. It is also a tribute to how childhoods were lived in his time, and indeed a decade earlier in mine.

And Monahan in this fine 'dramatic prose poem' faces the darkness of experiences, the

cruelties (of boys, teachers and religious) with extraordinary perceptions and accuracy. And importantly, the poem acknowledges and illustrates vigorously the unbounded joys and mischiefs that thrived and survived inside the cages of those times.

We might be a more enlightened people now, but it would be beyond foolishness to not acknowledge the realities, positive and negative, of earlier times.

Noel Monahan had written that acknowledgment of '...a time / of many questions / and few answers'. But he has written for us its laughter and pain, its ironies and pleasures, its ignorance and its learnings. 'Chalk Dust' is an integrated narrative mix of dramatic prose and poetry about a schoolboy's college times as lived, felt and stirred by the boys themselves. A reading joy.

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 Palestinian woman mourning the loss of her family's olive trees.

Defending Hope: Dispatches from the Front Lines in Palestine and Israel ed. by Eoin Murray and James Mehigan (Veritas, €16.99)

Geoff Day

'Hope is not the solution, nor the end goal: it is just the beginning' writes Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Mairead Maguire in her introduction to this important book of essays from those at the front line of defending human rights in Palestine and Israel. Important because the Palestinians themselves consistently ask for their human stories to be told. I know this from my own experience of working as a human rights monitor in the West Bank for three months with the **Ecumenical Accompaniment** Programme for Palestine Israel (EAPPI) and writing regular blogs about everyday life (at https://eyewitnessblogs.com).

The current political landscape in this part of the world is bleak"

Eighty years on from the enforced expulsion from their homes and lands, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, retain the hope that one day they will return to a more settled and peaceful way of life. It is of course a thin line between hope and despair.

What *Defending Hope*, edited by Eoin Murray and James Mehigan does, is to collect the human stories and relate the small victories and inches of progress which avoid the despair and keep hope alive. The short essays by writers who have lived or visited Palestine and Israel powerfully explains why Palestinians will continue to hope that they can live peacefully with their neighbours despite the occupation by a military force and settlement by Israelis in occupied land which is illegal under international law.

Images

One of the most powerful images in the book is the essay 'Under Siege' which describes life in Gaza and the regular demolition of property – an act which is now more regularly repeated in the West Bank.

Having lost everything in a demolition of his family home a child produces a tray of cardamom infused coffee and pitta bread with the words 'you are guests of ours, please eat and drink'. This generosity and expression of the human spirit is in my experience repeated everywhere across the West Bank.

The current political landscape in this part of the world is bleak and those living there suffer great adver-sity, however, these stories provide hope that they can continue their 'normal' lives and human rights defenders can assist them in small but significant ways - through the law courts to keep property from being demolished, maintaining a presence to avoid olive groves being damaged by settlers, or working alongside sympathetic Israelis who feel able to challenge their own people to desist from making life even harder for Palestinians.

This book also pictorially shows how Palestinians live with the everyday trappings of occupation – the wall and the checkpoints, the encroachment of illegal Israeli settlements and the unnecessary destruction of olive trees.

The most moving picture of a Palestinian woman embracing an olive tree after it was destroyed by settlers.

They are not terrorists or seeking to use violence against their occupiers"

The brave Palestinians and Israelis who stand for nonviolence, peace and compassion united by common goals to restore that traditional peace and friendship, to highlight the injustice of the last 80 years and to seek small but significant gains against often over whelming odds.

If you know little about this ongoing struggle for justice this book will help you to understand. It focuses on the lives of those who live in Palestine.

They are not terrorists or seeking to use violence against their occupiers, rather they are looking for the same human rights and dignity that we expect of ourselves and our neighbours, the right to go to work, to provide for our families and to go unhindered about our lives.

() Geoff Day recently returned from three months in the West Bank of occupied Palestine with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme Palestine Israel www.eappi.org.

WebWatch Greg Daly

Seeking oases of Christian joy in a hostile digital continent

orruptio optimi pessima goes the old saying – the corruption of the best is the worst, and one of the most dispiriting things about the internal quarrels that have increasingly marked the Englishspeaking Catholic internet over the last few years is that commentators, publications, and websites that once were measured and thoughtful have become less and less worth one's time.

I don't mean sites like the likes of churchmilitant. com, of course, which has always been at best unbalanced, and which last week hit a bizarre low by tweeting from @Church_Militant that Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, accuser of Pope Francis, "lives in legitimate fear of his life" and has "activated the death switch, meaning if he winds up dead, a whole cache of documents incriminating Vatican cardinals, bishops & the Pope himself will be revealed".

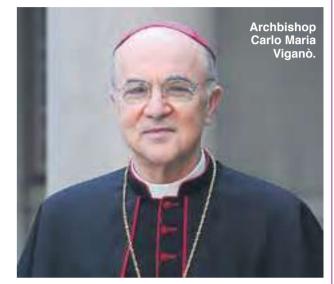
No, it's reading the likes of **firstthings.com**, for instance, that most tends to a dispiriting experience nowadays. While not utterly devoid of interesting content, it's no longer the harbour of thoughtful conservatism and orthodox Catholic debate that it once was.

Among the recent articles on the site, just to take a random example, Ireland's own John Waters has written a baffling piece called 'Francis and the journalists' which starts by claiming that WMOF2018 all but excluded from its panels and speakers people who'd been active in recent Irish referendums.



journey"

This is, of course, nonsense; anyone who visited the RDS during WMOF2018 would have been aware of how the



Pastoral Congress featured speakers as diverse as Wendy Grace, who won accolades for her television performances during the abortion referendum, and Prof. Ray Kinsella, who headed 'Mothers and Fathers Matter' in the marriage referendum.

John further claims he was not invited to speak or even attend WMOF2018, despite being, he says, one of three people who "fought prominently in all three referenda on the side that the Catholic Church might have been expected to lead".

Again, nonsense. John was in a minority among prominent Catholics in thinking the Church should have led a 'no' campaign in the children's rights' referendum, his 'First Families First' group hardly made ripples in the marriage referendum, and his most memorable contribution to the abortion referendum was a public row with Eamon Dunphy. The article as a whole is

a deeply depressing piece, not least for its attempt to treat Brendan Smyth's abuse as comparable with the US findings of the 2004 Jay Report. John's written some beautiful, perceptive, and well-judged stuff in the past, but this kind of stuff can't hold a candle to what he's capable of – and runs a risk of misleading people elsewhere about the realities of the Irish Church. Still, there remain plenty

of oases of hope in what Pope Benedict called the "digital continent", and one interesting and homegrown guide to these oases comes courtesy of St Joseph's Parish in Glasthule, Dublin, which during Advent 2016 set up **newpilgrimpath.ie** to share with fellow Christians some of the rich spiritual resources on the Internet.

Solidarity

Noting how Pope Francis has described the internet as offering "immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity" with this being "something truly good, a gift from God", the site maintains that there are ways to help the ancient and time-hallowed meet with the new in our modern pilgrimages.

"In bygone days, pilgrims typically stopped at holy sites along their way, to refresh themselves for the next stage of their journey. Today, our touch screens or keyboards can lead us on our path; websites can be the stopping points where we draw strength for our continued journey," it says.

The site's pages are devoted to a range of resources, including daily prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, online retreats, inspirational reflections, spiritual poetry, religious broadcasts and sacred music, with 'Website of the Week' and 'Poem of the Week' pages.

Every resource on the site has been visited and found valuable by the site's small team, so we could do a lot worse than try out their tips.

Classifieds

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Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the October 11th Tour.

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Please pray for the beatification of Little Nellie

of Holy God "May God enrich with every blessing all those

who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

- Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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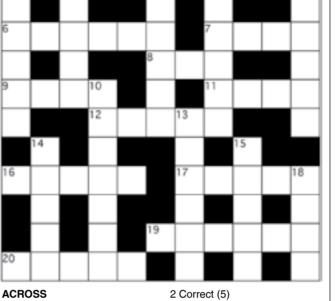
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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Crossword Gordius 250

Gordius 369



3 Captain Hook was one (6)

5 You hope to win a prize in

10 Having a more sugary

13 It helps stop a boat from

14 Put words on paper (5)

15 It is used for shaving (5)

paid in (6)

flavour (7)

drifting (6)

18 Uncommon (4)

this (6)

- 1 Muggles don't realize how important he is (5,6)
- 6 Knife (6) 7 The boss of the kitchen (4)
- 8 Enquire, make a question (3)
- 9 Has some food (4)
- 11 Wicked (4)
- 12 It is ground to make flour (5)
- 16 Command (5) 17 Seat (5)
- 19 Green or blue, perhaps (6)
- 20 Striped animal like a horse (5)

1 Placed out of sight (6)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.368

Across - 1 Nib 3 Cold-blooded 8 Golden oldie 9 Marioram 10 Tiger 11 Brand 13 Basso profundo 15 Handful 16 Odvssev 20 Forge 21 Linus 23 Shiva 25 Medici 26 The patience of Job 27 Tan

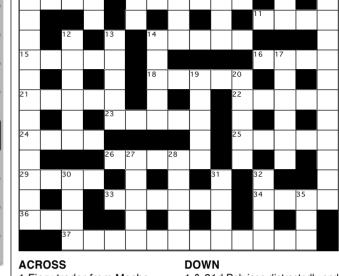
Down - 1 Night school 2 Ballgown 3 Cheer 4 Dampest 6 Durham 7 Dam 12 Dehydration 13 Bluff 17 Satirist 18 Provoke 19 Encore 22 Stuka 23 Suede 24 Pat

CHILDREN'S No.249

Across - 1 Tiger cub 6 Ugly 7 Garden 8 Album 9 Tear 11 Eyebrow 14 Yes 15 Capital 16 Extra 18 Peril 19 Leave Down - 1 Tightrope 2 Germany 3 Canary 4 Bulb 5 Plum 10 Swallow 11 Escape 12 Expert 13 Rattle 17 Tea

Sudoku Corner

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- 1 Fiery trader from Macho
- Central? (4,8) 7 Primitive dwelling (3)
- 4 You get this to show you have 9 Small, biting insect (4)
 - 10 He was a different chap, that philosophical cardinal
 - (6)
 - 11 Salver (4) 14 Denis can be sneaky (5) 15 Port on the English
 - Channel (5)
 - 16 See Mother knock out a shark (4)
 - 18 Fills a suitcase with groups of wolves (5)
 - 21 Prompt someone with your elbow (5)
 - 22 & 23 To the Latin, solid around can be the making
 - of an artier farm (5,5)
 - 24 Produces eggs (4)
 - 25 Liberated (5)
 - 26 Throw out (5) 29 Exclamation from ancient
 - times? Somewhat aged,
 - anyway! (4)
 - 33 Bird taking a quiet
 - paramour (6)
 - 34 Virginians and regular
 - Yanks initially show differences... (4)
 - 36 ... before, poetically,
 - achieving partial serenity (3)
 - 37 With friends, the alien makes some fire irons (9.3)

- 1 & 31d Rob icon distractedly and get musical instruction (3,4)
- 2 This is possibly a star faculty (4)
- 3 & 32d Does this cocktail make the inlet jump around? (4,5)
- 4 Mountain ash (5)
- 5 Stockpile in a way that's
- difficult to hold nothing! (5) 6 Scandinavian god of thunder (4)
- 8 & 20d Divine comforters, according to the twenty-third psalm (3,3,3,3,5)
- 9 Was it a con-iob involving precious metal that the
- Argonauts sought? (6,6) 12 Virginia turned up - lazily but with great interest (6)
- 13 Concise (5)
- 14 Great, fantastic (5)
- 17 Lilo suitable for a nap on a
 - plane? (3,3) 19 Pottery or leatherwork, for
 - example (5)
 - 20 See 8 down 27 See 3 down
 - 28 Witches' gathering (5)
 - 30 Mr Baldwin, perhaps, has
 - lace distributed (4) 31 See 1 down
 - 32 Monsieur St Laurent is in
 - the oratory vestry (4)
 - 35 Furrow or groove in the ground (3)
 - Last week's Easy 249



9 5 4 3 1 5 3 9 7 8

6 2 5 1 3

2 6 1 8 4

4 1 3 9

40 Comment

Fr Vincent Sherlock

Notebook

FOR 21 YEARS I have had the chance to spend a few weeks each year in a parish in the diocese of Rockville Centre, New York – two years in one and the past 19 in another. It seems strange perhaps to combine holidays with working in a parish but, truth told, I'm not run off my feet, I enjoy the change of scene and get a chance to catch up with people I want to meet. I had a few interesting moments this year and would like to share two.

I met a lady after Mass the first weekend I was there. She welcomed me and then asked. in all sincerity: "Are you anything to the Fr Sherlock who used to visit the parish?" I told her that I was a very "close relation" and that it was me she was referring to. She stood back, as if she'd seen a ghost and asked; "What happened?"

I knew what she meant – in fairness I'd had a very close 'zero' haircut in Ballaghaderreen the previous Friday and have "packed on a few pounds" over the years.

It was, nonetheless, a sobering question and it stayed with me long after we parted company.

'What happened?" I think the answer lies somewhere in life. Time brings changes and some of the changes are less welcome or invited than others and some. though not all, are irreversible.

'Men's Sheds for the soul?' Already my hair has grown again; The prayer group was the

peace and reconciliation.

motor cycle accident but Steven

continued, though paralysed from

the neck down, to promote peace

and reconciliation. Along with Fr

as for the gained pounds - now that's another story! The second experience was

more uplifting. I was asked to speak at a prayer meeting for men in the parish and didn't fully know what to expect, how many would be there or what would be expected of me. It was incredible. I'd say there were close on 70 men in the room.

Prayer group

They gather once a month, pray the rosary, reflect a little on their Faith and support one another. They invite someone to come to speak with them or share a thought and that was my role.

Minding what's local

 Recently I attended a book launch. Fr John Doherty (one of our most senior priests and still very much involved in parish ministry) had written a book about his native Charlestown. I went, as a friend, to support him. When I arrived in Charlestown, I realised he was not short of friends! Cars lined both sides of the street and the place was packed. There was something very reassuring about it - about how much John and his ministry mean to people. I stood in a packed hallway, unable to get into the room where the launch was taking place. I left, without seeing John, but happy that he knew the support of people.

I met his nephew a few days later and told him "I got nearer to the Pope than I did to John". There's something very special about the local...that we may never ever lose it.

IC/09/20

Mychael Judge, the New York Fire idea of a New York Policeman Department Chaplain and listed as called Steven McDonald who, as the first victim of the attack on the a young policeman, was shot and World Trade Centre in September paralysed. Early in his recovery, 2001, Steven visited Ireland to he realised that central to that further peace talks here. He started a prayer meeting for men recovery was the need to forgive the young man who shot him. This in his own home and continued he did, and he corresponded with it through the years, though the him through his time in prison to numbers grew to a point where a point where he asked him that. it could no longer be held in his home. Today there are more than when released, the two of them 130 men involved and, though would work together to promote Steven died in January 2017, the On release from prison the group continues to meet in his young man was killed in a name and give glory to God and

Interest

Our Lady. Impressive.

As I stood with them, watched and listened, prayed and shared, I could not help but wonder has a group like this a part to play in the re-building of our Church in Ireland. I mentioned it in our parish bulletin the weekend after I came home and will see if there's any interest but, given the chance to put a few words on this page, maybe it's an idea to put beyond the borders of my own little patch.

There has been such a growth in the 'Men's Shed' movement in recent years, I wonder is there a place for a 'Men's Shed for The

I was in Knock on the Sunday when the Pope came, stood among us and prayed with us. It was a wonderful occasion and it was a powerful witness to Faith to see so many people there on what was, in all honesty, a miserable and wet day. Faith was alive and enriched. When I was leaving Knock, someone asked me: "Did you get to shake hands with the Pope?" "No," I replied, "but I don't think he'll realise that until later!'

Whatever about shaking his hand, he touched our hearts and reached out in a way that was personal and from the heart. The words of the men on Mount Tabor are apt: "It is wonderful for us to be here...

Soul' where the tools of prayer and Faith may be used to tend to the inner Spirit, nourish the Soul and rebuild the parish. Clearly Steven McDonald thought so. What do you think?





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Address	

KERALA FLOODS: FATHER SILVESTER CALLS FOR HELP

Reverend Father Silvester Cottage, Little Way Association Director for India, has managed to contact us after several days during which he was stranded on the top floor of our Little Way Centre in the Diocese of Alleppy, Kerala, without food or clean drinking water and with no means of reaching safety or calling for assistance. Fortunately, his Little Way volunteers were eventually able to reach him, and the flood waters are slowly receding, but almost everyone in the area has lost their

home and essential possessions in the floods, or in landslides caused by torrential rain and rivers bursting their banks. Father Silvester praised his volunteers who have been giving practical assistance to the flood victims, despite themselves being in desperate circumstances. But financial help is urgently needed, now and for rebuilding in the months ahead.

Can you spare a donation to help Fr Silvester and the flood victims in Kerala?

The whole of the State of Kerala has been seriously affected by these floods and The Little Way Association is in contact with other missionary Societies, too, who are also helping the needy in affected areas. Your donation, large or small, will be sent direct, without deduction.



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