

# The Irish Catholic

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# Plea that abuse not be used as 'political football'

**EXCLUSIVE**  
Chai Brady

Ahead of an unprecedented summit on abuse opening in the Vatican this morning (Thursday), Archbishop Eamon Martin has rejected the idea that the abuse scandals can be attributed to priests who are gay. Speaking exclusively to *The Irish Catholic*, Dr Martin also insisted that the Church has to do a lot more research on the impact of an unhealthy approach to celibacy by some priests and religious.

Archbishop Eamon expressed the view that the "danger is that the issue – the horrendous chapter of abuse in the Church – becomes some sort of ecclesiastical political football, which is batted about between different wings within the Church".

Abuse, he said, "is like a virus that destroys and infects everything that it touches".

On the issue of homosexuality in the priesthood, Archbishop Eamon asks in meeting "with young women, or women who were abused as young girls, what do we tell them? Do we tell them it was heterosexuality? It was the very same dynamics of deviance, of deceit, of cover-up, they all happened".

He warns against looking for sim-

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## Gifts for life



Pro-life students from Trinity College, Chloe Kennedy and Inés Lonergan, donate some practical gifts to mothers and babies as part of Love Both's 'Show Your Love' campaign which runs until the end of the month.

## Help parishioners aid refugees, bishop urges

Greg Daly

Parishioners need to be helped welcome refugees into their communities and cannot simply be taken for granted, Elphin's Bishop Kevin Doran has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* after the publication of a joint statement with Bishop Francis Duffy of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, Dr Doran said "our responsibilities as a nation under international law, and also our responsibilities as a Christian community in the light of the Gospel, are to welcome refugees".

The two bishops had issued their statement after two fires at the Shannon Key West Hotel in Rooskey on the Leitrim-Roscommon border were attributed to opposition to the hotel being used to house refugees. "Militant opposition, expressed in the destruction of property, is simply not consistent with the Gospel," they said.

Dr Doran played down suggestions that opposition

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# Ireland can make a humble but vital contribution to the universal Church



## Editor's Comment

### Michael Kelly

I'm in Rome this week attending the unprecedented meeting on the protection of minors within the Church. Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon – as president of the Irish bishops' conference – is here sharing the experiences of the Church in Ireland with his brother bishops.

Even before the summit got underway this morning (Thursday) people were keen to dial down expectations. Organisers insist that one four-day meeting is not sufficient to address such a major crisis. What they are convinced of, however, is that the meeting will be a decisive step on the road to helping the global Church to face up to this issue.

The abuse of children and vulnerable adults is not a problem exclusive to the Catholic Church, it is a problem all across society. There will always be people who have malevolent intentions towards children. What is necessary as a Church is that the policies and procedures are in place to ensure that such people do not have the opportunity to abuse and ensure that policies and procedures are in place to create a culture of accountability and ensure that those who are shown to present a risk to children have no place within the family of families that is the Church.

### Guidelines

The Church in Ireland has a good news story to tell on the issue of abuse. The hard-won guidelines that are in place across the entire Church here truly are the gold standard – and are acknowledged as such by independent verification.

The mistakes made in the past in trying to come to terms with this cri-

sis have been learnt. Key to that was understanding the absolute necessity of a 'one Church' approach where each and every entity in the Church in Ireland was held to the same standard and followed the same procedures. A vital ingredient in this has been the outstanding supervisory work of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC).

### “The Church in Ireland has a good news story to tell on the issue of abuse”

Vital to the success of safeguarding standards in the Church is engagement from people all across the Church. We can take humble pride in the fact that there is an army of committed lay Catholics in parishes and religious institutes all across Ireland who have stepped up to the plate to take on responsibility for safeguarding in their community. It is, in fact, a wonderful example of co-responsibility within the Church where people take seriously the call of their baptism to have responsibility for building up the Body of Christ, the Church.

There are many parts of the world – particularly in developing countries – where there is not yet the heightened awareness about abuse and safeguarding that is now part

and parcel of ecclesial life in Ireland. Here, the Church in Ireland can have a sacred mission to help other countries and cultures evolve their understanding. God knows, this is a humble mission given the past failings and the history of disappointment and betrayal that has been part of the journey. But, this is truly something that the Church in Ireland can help the Church universal to understand.

This Rome meeting will not solve the issue of abuse, but it will be a success if bishops who believe that abuse is not an issue in their country or culture can be brought to understand that it is and it is something they must face with honesty and humility.

Catholics will also be looking to Rome to ensure that the key piece of the jigsaw that is accountability also becomes the norm. It is not good enough that those who are negligence in their governance of the Church simply retire discreetly. An important step in rebuilding confidence in the Church and the hierarchy's moral authority will be obvious signs that people are held to account.

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



## Plea that abuse not be used as 'political football'

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plistic answers or scapegoating. "Let's be cautious about thinking that we can explain away the horrendous breach of trust and breach of vocation that is abuse by a priest, or a religious. By all means,

with the help of proper expert research, let's look at all the issues," he said.

Turning to the issue of mandatory celibacy, Archbishop Eamon insists that the Church needs to "reflect on why did this happen, what are the tendencies, what was

it about who we were as a Church that led to this?"

"There's been very little theology of the priesthood done, or reflection done on the whole area of sexual integration for priests, religious, those who take vows of celibacy or chastity. What does that do to their sexuality, what does that do to the way they live their lives?" he asked.

The archbishop went on to explain that "you can have an un-integrated sexuality as a celibate person, or indeed as a married person. And very sadly, we know from society that a large amount of abuse can take place within a home."

"And the earth-shattering impact of abuse in the family or families that is the Church, mirrors the catastrophic impact of abuse inside a family home with all the same tendencies towards cover-up,

denial, anger, traumatic breakdown and separation, and then guilt and shame. All of those same things.

### Celibacy

"When we're looking at the issue of an un-integrated sexuality, that can indeed happen with the priesthood, within religious life. When somebody who has chosen a life of celibacy, has not been able to integrate that into their lives in a healthy and fruitful way.

"Sometimes priests and religious have to learn that through a very bitter experience, should they fall in love for example.

"But the un-integration of sexuality that leads to abuse, in my view, is a deviance of sexuality which can exist within the clerical and religious world, but equally within married life or single life.

"It knows no bounds, and perhaps it would be simplistic of us to try to explain it away."

See Pages 12-14.

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## Irish cardinal appointed to top Vatican job

Colm Fitzpatrick

Pope Francis has named Irishman Cardinal Kevin Farrell to a senior Vatican position that will see the Dublin native take on a key role between the death or retirement of the Pontiff and the election of his successor.

In a communique, the Holy See Press Office announced that Francis had appointed Dr Farrell as *camerlengo* or chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church.

In this role, Cardinal Farrell takes charge of the goods and temporal affairs of the Holy See between the death of the serving Pope and the election of the next.

The role only officially commences upon the death of the Pope. Church law stipulates that as soon as the cardinal is informed that the Pope has died, he "must officially ascertain the Pope's death, in the presence of the Master of Papal Liturgical Celebrations, of the Cleric Prelates of the Apostolic Camera and of the Secretary and Chancellor of the same".

The *camerlengo* must also place seals on the Pope's study and bedroom and ensure that the papal apartments remain vacant and secure until a successor has been elected by the conclave of cardinals. He also takes the Pope's ring – the sign of his authority – and ensure that it is defaced to prevent documents being forged with the late Pope's seal.

As well as this, Cardinal Farrell will be responsible for notifying the Cardinal Vicar for Rome that the Pope has died so that the people of the diocese can be notified that a period of *sede vacante* has begun.

## Church will work to unite, even if border divides – bishop

Greg Daly

The Church in the North will continue to resist efforts to divide the community even if a hard border follows a no-deal Brexit, Derry's Bishop Donal McKeown has said.

Speaking against the background of a UNESCO-backed report that claims young people in the North would be groomed into violence by extremist and terrorist organisations following the imposition of a hard-border, Dr McKeown warned that sectarian tensions could be taken advantage of.

"There's a number of concerns about the whole Brexit thing," he told *The Irish Catholic*. "One is the economic

effects, one is the existential effect, in other words the uncertainty about the future for young people, and one would be the political effect, because as we all know all the research shows that sectarianism is a resource that is used by people in order to keep their tribes in line."

"It's not something that happens. It's something that's useful to certain groups," Dr McKeown continued.

"There's always the possibility that people with other agendas exploit the potential for division. That's the reality of human nature."

Stressing, however, that the Church will continue to work against such agendas, the bishop said: "It's possible to build hope for the future,

and we reject anyone who wants to build division."

### Violence

Dr McKeown's comments come following a study by the chairs of two UNESCO committees, which found that a return to some level of violence is inevitable if a hard border is introduced. The study, by Pennsylvania State University's Prof. Mark Brennan and NUI Galway's Prof. Pat Dolan, found that the generation who have grown up since the Good Friday Agreement has little memory of the harm caused during the Troubles.

Clogher priest Fr Jimmy McPhillips, parish priest of Lisnakea, Co. Fermanagh, said that a hard border could defi-

nately lead to a resurgence of violence.

"Living here in a border area, there's definitely a major concern that this could all kick off again, because the memories of the people in this area during the Troubles times was of the British army and permanent checkpoints, and of other mobile checkpoints from the UDR and the RUC, people have very bad memories of all that," he said.

"If there's going to be a hard border they're obviously going to have to man it, and that will without doubt encourage those who are of a different view to politics to reengage again. I've no doubt about that."

## Help parishioners aid refugees, bishop urges

» Continued from Page 1

to refugees being housed in the hotel is widespread in the area.

"The local people for the most part are not involved directly in any protests. It wouldn't be true to say that they're necessarily out there waving flags either to welcome refugees or to stop them coming," he said.

"To be honest, part of the problem in a sense is that nobody has ever talked to them about what's going to happen," he added, noting that people in Rooskey are "upset" at portrayals of them as being opposed to refugees.

### Centres

Clarity about the purposes of specific refugee centres is vital, Dr Doran said, noting that there can be anxiety about the opening of direct provision centres, "places where people can languish for seven or eight years".

When opening a centre such as that in Rooskey or elsewhere, Dr Doran said, "the people don't just need a roof over their heads, they need the structures of community".

"In the planning of anything, the connections between the centre that's going to be opened and the local community need to be considered not only so that the local community is looked after but so that the local community will be helped constructively welcome refugees," he said.

Patricia Heaton.

## Faith and charity go hand in hand, says TV star

Staff reporter

A famous Hollywood actress has said that her Catholic faith pushed her towards supporting charities and tackling causes of injustice and poverty.

Patricia Heaton, best known for her roles as Debra Barone on the long-running hit comedy *Everybody Loves Raymond* and as Frankie Heck in *The Middle*, said that donating to charity was important to her Catholic family. Speaking with

*The New Times* from Rwanda as part of her charity work with the Christian humanitarian organisation World Vision, the Catholic mother of four boys said that her faith and supporting charities go hand in hand. "I am Catholic and I know that my father always gave money to charity even though we didn't have a lot.

"We weren't poor but there was not a lot of extras because he paid for all of us to go to Catholic schools.

"But even so, he made sure that he would give money to charities, and that is what it has always been in my mind."

## 'Be honest' prelate asks ahead of abuse summit

Prelates and the Vatican itself must own up to past failings on safeguarding children the Archbishop of Dublin has said. Speaking ahead of the Vatican summit on sex abuse Archbishop Diarmuid Martin asked participants to be "very honest" about the past.

"For a good period of time the Holy See

wasn't responding adequately and in fact, at times, was causing great difficulty," he said after a Mass in Dublin this week. "I was a bit surprised to hear some comments by the organisers saying that this was something that came to public attention in the US in 2002. The Irish Church had norms in 1996."

## What's your opinion?

Let us know by writing to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, or email: [letters@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:letters@irishcatholic.ie)



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# Was Nora too nice for politics?

I was sorry to learn of the death of Limerick's Nora Bennis on February 11, aged 78. Nora had been a defender of a woman's right to be a homemaker, founding the Irish Mothers Working at Home Association as well as leading the Solidarity Movement which supported family and Faith values.

She stood for election to the European Parliament – gaining some 18,000 first preference votes – and subsequently, for the general election three times, as a representative of the National Party, though unsuccessfully.

Nora's father had been a veteran of the Easter Rising of 1916, and the family had always had strong links with the GAA, notably through her husband Gerry Bennis. She represented a gentle strain of the Irish tradition of Faith and fatherland, and of wider historical Christian values.

I met and interviewed Nora Bennis back in the 1990s when she was active in several campaigns and what struck me was that she simply seemed a very kind, nice person. She was devoted to her family – her husband, three daughters and the son that she adopted and cared for deeply. And if she failed in politics, which, in the end she did, perhaps it was because she was too nice. Her values were held with sincerity and commitment, but she probably lacked the toughness required to carry a campaign into a political dimension.

## Personalities

I'd seen personalities like Margaret Thatcher and Mary Whitehouse up close, and their defining



Mary Kenny



The late Nora Bennis: her values were held with sincerity and commitment.

characteristics wasn't just conviction, but an armour-plated hard streak at the core.

**“A woman's entitlement to be a full-time homemaker is still in play”**

Feminists claim that if a woman is to succeed, she has to be more ambitious, more ruthless, more competitive than a man: it's not always true, but many women who do succeed as leaders have that adamant, tough element. Nora struck me as a softly feminine person who perhaps wasn't as egotistical and domineering as people sometimes need to be in the political arena.

Perhaps she also made the strategic error of focusing on too many diffused campaigns. Divorce, abortion and mothers as homemakers can be linked in a system of values, but it's probably more effective to concentrate on one identifiable issue which can make a difference.

A woman's entitlement to be a full-time homemaker is still in play, when Article 41.2 of the Constitution becomes the subject of a referendum. Many people, I believe, recognise that the homemaker and carer contributes a great deal to the common good and the State should not efface that fact; Nora Bennis's contribution to this recognition is surely part of her legacy.

## Go, Gurteen!

● It's great to see Gurteen, Co. Sligo, running a robust campaign to retain its vital post office. An Post promised it wouldn't close post offices in any community with a population over 500; Fiona Tansey of Gurteen has established that there is now a population of 512, so An Post is going against its own rules and should be held accountable. Best of luck to Gurteen!

## Interesting take on a 'real' family

As I have previously observed, American culture has always had a positive attitude towards adoption. America has never stigmatised adoption as some older societies have done in the past – including ours – by not rating adopted kids on a par with 'blood' family.

A new movie just out, *Instant Family*, is a warm-hearted (if sometimes schmaltzy) narrative on the theme of fostering and adoption, and the caring and supportive way that American agencies encourage couples – and single people – to foster a child, or children, with a view to adopting.

Ellie (Rose Byrne) and Pete (Mark Wahlberg) are a smart young couple with no children of their own, who more by chance than by plan find themselves fostering three Latino kids – a teenager

and two younger siblings. They go through all the hoops of anger, rebellion and tantrums from the kids, and then an emotional conflict when it seems that the birth mother – in jail with associated drug problems – will come back into the children's lives, and the follow-on adoption won't go through.

This territory has been explored before and the tug-of-love scenario sure tugs at your heartstrings. But what the film – based on the experiences of the director Seán Anders – shows is that parental love is something that grows, rather than instantly appears. And although there is sympathy – or perhaps pity – for the birth mother's circumstances, the storyline favours the adopters as the 'real' family for these needy children. Interesting.



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## 'Heroic' Ballymurphy priest ignored after making emergency call

**Chai Brady**

A priest who called the British army for help just 30 minutes before he was killed was "taking his life into his own hands without hesitation" to help others, according to Belfast-based Fr Paddy McCafferty.

Fr Hugh Mullan, one of the 10 people shot dead during the Ballymurphy Massacre in 1971, had called for assistance to defend Catholics in the beleaguered Belfast community, and afterwards said "we're going to get no help, there's no help and we're on our own", the Ballymurphy inquest has heard.

"Basically being told you're

not getting any help, this really deeply shocked him. He came off the phone really shaken, shortly after that he was killed as he went to help injured people," said Fr McCafferty.

Giving evidence last week, Terence Curran told the court he visited the priest on the day of his death on August 9 to find him in a state of shock after finishing the call.

### Shot

Fr Mullan (38) was later killed by members of 1st Battalion, Parachute Regiment, in a field near where he lived in Springfield Park while he was administering Last Rites to

Bobby Clarke who had been shot while helping children cross the same area of land.

Francis Quinn, who was just 19 years old at the time, also ran to help the priest. He was shot in the back of the head.

Mr Clarke, who spoke at the inquest on the same day as Mr Curran, said: "I hold myself responsible for two people losing their lives."

Fr McCafferty said that he hopes the proceedings will help Mr Clarke: "He has carried that heavy burden for all these years, causing him enormous mental suffering and anguish."

"He was out there trying to

help people and could just as easily have been killed himself. These people are heroic, they were ordinary people who were caught up in a terrible situation and they responded with heroism, they sought to help the injured and the dying and some of them paid with their lives.

"Listening to the descriptions it was like a description of hell on earth, people are traumatised and are still traumatised to this day," he added.

With a break in the inquest this week it will begin again next week and is expected to continue until May.

## 'Pro-choice doctors only' rule could hurt conscience rights

**Greg Daly**

Ireland will be in "uncharted territory" if it makes a willingness to participate in abortions a condition of employment in hospitals, Baroness Nuala O'Loan has warned.

Baroness O'Loan, who has been an outspoken advocate for the conscience rights of medical professionals, was speaking after the National Maternity Hospital advertised posts stipulating that successful applicants would be required to participate in abortions.

While the hospital has stated that the roles are specifically for the provision of abortions, Baroness O'Loan said there could be a problem if doctors changed their minds after performing abortions and felt that in conscience they could no longer partake in such procedures.

"I think you're into uncharted territory," she said. "It is expected that practitioners are learning constantly, and therefore it's the product of that learning that will change their view on whatever it is they're doing – then their change of view would have to be analysed in light of current guidelines."



Students from St Anne's, Killaloe, who have journeyed to the Missionvale Care Centre in South Africa to offer needed help and food to the poor in the area. Standing at the tree marking where Co. Clare's Sr Ethel Normoyle started the Missionvale Community there 31 years ago are (l-r) Devlin Staunton, Alison McGee, Dylan McMahon and James Power. Photo: Missionvale Ireland

## Archbishop's tribute after death of Tyrone priest

The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland has paid tribute to a Tyrone priest after his sudden death over the weekend.

Fr Phelim McKeown was a "caring and pastoral priest" who had a "particular empathy for those who were suffering and struggling in

any way".

Fr Phelim was ordained in 1996 in Mullaghbawn and served in parishes both north and south of the border.

He became parish priest of Kilsaran in August 2014 but had to leave due to ill health in 2016.

"In recent months, Fr Phelim had begun a gradual return to his pastoral duties, all the more reason why his death has come as such a shock to all of us," said Archbishop Martin.

His funeral took place on Wednesday, February 20.

## Huge crowds set for Dublin's Divine Mercy Conference

**Staff reporter**

A charismatic Capuchin preacher is set to draw huge crowds to this year's Divine Mercy Conference in Dublin, according to conference organisers.

Describing the conference as especially important against the background of the introduction of abortion legislation, conference committee chairman Don Devaney told *The Irish Catholic* the conference would

give people "a spiritual boost and a spiritual fill-up".

Among those speaking is Fr Hayden Williams, a Capuchin priest from Malta who Mr Devaney has said is "one of the most amazing speakers we'll have had in 28 years".

He said he had been encouraged to invite Fr Williams after Sr Briege McKenna drew attention to his preaching at the annual Intercession for Priests at Maynooth.

Other speakers include Fr Eunan McDonnell, Fr Pat Collins and Niamh Uí Bhriain, with Masses on Saturday and Sunday being celebrated by Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and papal nuncio Archbishop Jude Okolo.

Ticket sales for the conference, being held in the Royal Dublin Society this weekend, were about 40% higher at the start of this week than at the same point last year, Mr Devaney said, adding that he expected them to keep rising.

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## Maria Steen

### The View



# Shutting out those who would cherish and protect human life

In the aftermath of last May's referendum, there has been a dearth of pro-life commentators on radio and TV broadcasts to discuss the implementation of the new abortion laws.

But ignoring those who represent a third of the voting public is not enough for those in journalistic circles who influence what we read, hear and see. No, rather a campaign has been underway to vilify pro-life people at every turn. The pro-abortion lobby are officially the

soonest winners ever; it is not enough that they 'won', they are intent on burying every last dissenter, first by name-calling and social ostracisation, eventually by trial.

As those who call themselves pro-choice are implementing a horrific regime in our hospitals, certain journalists are setting about 'undercover work' to expose and inform on those who have a different opinion from the new orthodoxy – and to ensure that they have no choice but to accept the terms of the brave new

world in which we live. The truth about abortion must not be revealed at any cost, and the first thing to be done to achieve this is to undermine the credibility of those who would question the new law.

Among those uncovering dissenters is one Ellen Coyne of *The Times*, Ireland, who was interviewed on Morning Ireland on Monday, without challenge or even one hard question.

She reported that an American pro-life sidewalk counselling agency was training people in Ireland. This 'news' was considered so important by RTÉ that it made the headlines in RTÉ's prime morning news spot, with all the legitimacy that that lends to a report.

Ms Coyne delivered the story with the urgency of an informer and was allowed by Colm Ó Mongáin to make outrageous statements such as "these groups actively want to move away from traditional anti-abortion tactics of describing the woman as a murderer, of yelling abuse at her", without so much as the proverbial raised eyebrow from the broadcaster.

Coyne revealed, with all the horror of a pearl-clutching Victorian, how pro-life activists were "targeting" women who are rape victims or those with "fatal foetal abnormalities" in hospital carparks to persuade them to change their minds about abortion.

#### Disbelief

The disbelief and disgust obviously overwhelmed the studio too, causing all rational thinking to be dulled, as no one stopped to ask how it would be even possible for an individual in a carpark to identify – by sight presumably – a pregnant woman in the first trimester or know whether a woman was a rape victim or had been given a poor diagnosis for her baby.

But no matter, reason and logic should not be allowed to get in the way of a good story – particularly one that vilifies those opposed to abortion.

RTÉ played an excerpt



from Ms Coyne's undercover tape, in which an American woman allegedly advised the undercover journalist to pose as a pregnant woman in order to find out information about an abortion clinic. The American admitted that technically it was a lie to employ these tactics, but that she was doing it in order to save lives. Back in the studio, there was criticism of the methods used by this American agency, though Ó Mongáin never challenged Ms Coyne that she was employing the exact same tactics, having her reporter lie to find out information.

Much was made of the advice allegedly received from an American, though no evidence was offered of these things actually taking place in Ireland. The manner and prominence given to this item by RTÉ had all the importance of the reporting of a serious crime, but even taking the story at its height, the offence being committed was no more than someone trying to dissuade a woman from having an abortion and offering support to her and her child – something that pro-choice activists never do.

This method of bad-mouthing and undermining someone's credibility is the classic first step in

ostracising opponents. The idea is to take away any power of persuasion that pro-lifers might have, in order to eliminate their influence.

**“The manner and prominence given to this item by RTÉ had all the importance of the reporting of a serious crime”**

In the past number of weeks there has been lots of oxygen given in the media to the persistent calls by abortion activists, and others with vested interests, for exclusion zones around hospitals and GP clinics to guard against the spectre of pro-life protestors. The worry seems to be that these 'protestors' might just change people's minds – and prevent GPs and other doctors from collecting their €450 from the taxpayer for every life aborted.

The wave of prejudice and hostility towards those of a pro-life persuasion is now being seen too, as those of us who took part in the referendum debates said it would, in the workplace. Last week, ads appeared in national newspapers

advertising consultant posts in obstetrics and anaesthesia in St Vincent's University Hospital and the National Maternity Hospital.

Under the National Maternity Hospital's logo *Vita Gloriosa Vita* with the motto "delivering the future", with no trace of irony, the wording of the ad stated: "The post-holders will provide in-patient, on call service and out-patient care along with teaching, administration and management duties, which as of 2019 includes elective termination of pregnancy services and the post-holders will be expected to contribute to this new service as part of their practice plan."

This ad represents the first step in ostracising Catholics and anyone else who believes that it is ethically wrong deliberately to kill an innocent human being. The message is clear: post-holders will be expected to contribute. In other words, Catholics need not apply.

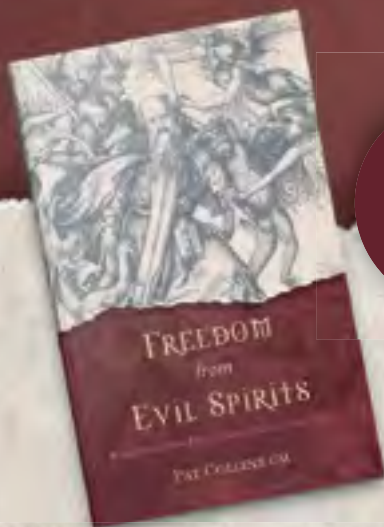
Leaving to one side for a moment the issue as to whether this ad is even lawful – the Employment Equality Act 1998 as amended prevents discrimination in employment on religious grounds, including discrimination in relation to access to employment – we can see clearly the societal consequences of this, as well as the consequences for the medical profession.

No one who believes in the sanctity of human life or the idea that it is morally wrong to take the life of another will go into obstetrics or related disciplines, and if they do, they will have to toe the line and "deliver" abortions rather than babies.

**“This ad represents the first step in ostracising Catholics and anyone else who believes that it is ethically wrong deliberately to kill an innocent human being. The message is clear: post-holders will be expected to contribute. In other words, Catholics need not apply”**


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# Reducing marriage step by step



The Government is set to erode the status of marriage even more, writes **David Quinn**

Ireland is set to have another divorce referendum this year. It is to take place on May 24, the same day as the Local and European Elections. You might be surprised that we are to vote on divorce again. Didn't we do that back in 1995 when we voted in favour of it by the astonishingly tight margin of 0.7%?

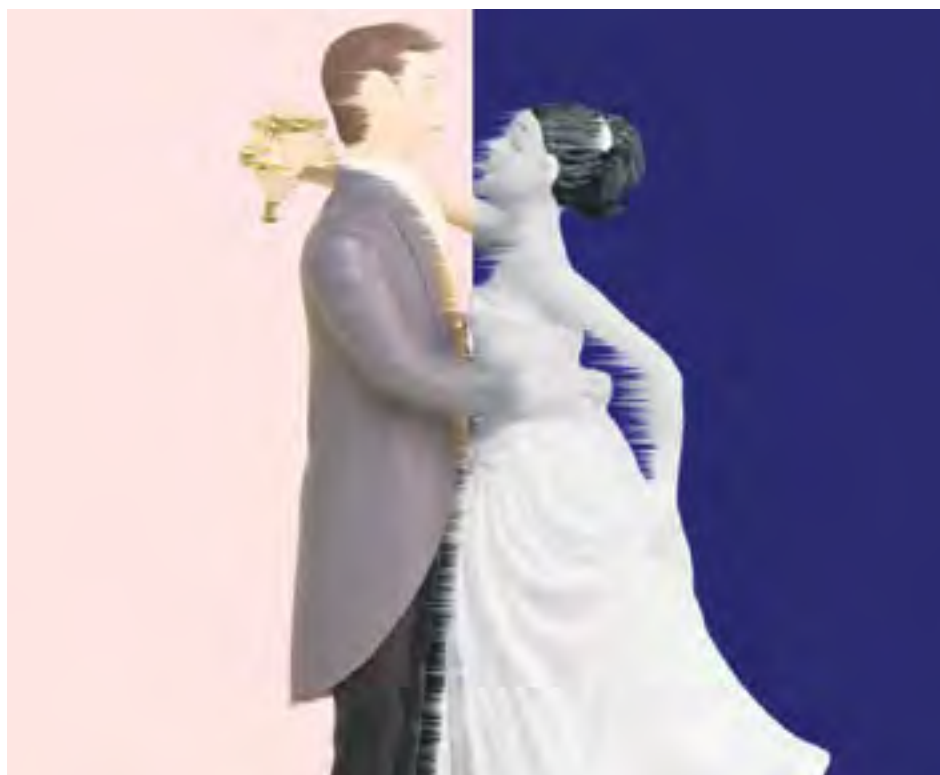
If you recall, one reason why the then Government was able to get the referendum over the line is because they convinced a sceptical electorate that the type of divorce on offer would be very restrictive, which was true up to a point. If we voted in favour of divorce we would also be voting to place in the Constitution a requirement that a couple be separated for four out of the last five years before they could divorce. No other country had such a long waiting period. The idea was that it would act as a break on people getting divorced, that it would give them plenty of time to think about it and act as a deterrent to 'quickie divorce'.

This waiting period is now set to be reduced to two years. The person behind the initiative is Josepha Madigan, Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht who led Fine Gael's campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment last May.

## Requirement

There was talk at one point that a two-year requirement would be inserted into the Constitution, in place of the current waiting period. But now, there will be no waiting period in the Constitution. Instead, the two-year wait will be part of ordinary legislation, which means a future Oireachtas can easily reduce it even further.

A concern back in 1995 was that if we introduced divorce, we might go the same way as Britain or America which have high divorce rates. Contrary to what some commentators



today say, very few anti-divorce campaigners in 1995 warned that the 'floodgates would open' straightaway, but they were concerned that over time a cultural shift would occur, and that marriage breakdown would become more widespread.

So, what has happened in the meantime? Divorce rates have not skyrocketed. On the contrary, we have the lowest rate of divorce in Europe. But the divorce rate on its own does not tell the whole story because many Irish couples separate without ever getting divorced.

For example, according to Census 2016, in that year there were 103,000 divorced people in the country, but 118,000 people who had separated but were not divorced. So, the divorce figure on its own tells less than half the story.

Even adding the two figures together (bringing us to 221,000 people) does not tell the full story, because it does not include those who have previously suffered a broken marriage and have since married someone else. When you include these, the number of Irish who have been through a marriage breakdown is more like 280,000.

This is a big figure by any reckoning. In 1986, the equivalent figure was 40,000. (There was no right to divorce then, but you

could separate.)

In other words, Ireland has experienced a very big increase in divorce and separation even if, thankfully, we are not at the level commonly found in other Western countries.

**“Studies show that children are only better off in the event of divorce when their parents' marriage was high-conflict”**

Probably one reason it has not gone higher is cultural. There may still be more resistance here to getting divorced than in other societies. What is noticeable from census figures, is that when you look at marital breakdown by ethnic group, you find that it is much less common among Indians living in Ireland than among Britons, Latvians or Lithuanians.

It is very hard to believe there aren't cultural factors at work there. Indians are clearly very reluctant to divorce even when a marriage is in trouble. They might well put the common good ahead of their own individual happiness, something we in the West are far more reluctant to do with our total commitment

**“It is very hard to believe there aren't cultural factors at work there. Indians are clearly very reluctant to divorce even when a marriage is in trouble”**

The argument in favour of reducing waiting times is that it is cruel to keep people married against their will and prevent them getting on with their lives. It is another version of the pro-choice argument, which is to say, if people want to divorce, no-one should stand in their way.

**“If we leave it up to the Oireachtas to decide on the waiting time, it is very likely to be reduced below two years over time”**

But it is not that simple. To begin with, people are sometimes divorced against their will. Shouldn't their wish not to be divorced also weigh in the balance?

Also, there will likely be children involved, so there are other lives to be considered. Divorce isn't simply a private act.

It will be counterargued that children are better off if unhappy parents go their separate ways. But what studies show is that children are only better off in the

event of divorce when their parents' marriage was high-conflict. This does not have to involve violence, but more typically means very visible rows and obvious tension.

About half of marriages that end in divorce are high-conflict, while the rest are low-conflict. Children often don't notice when a marriage is low-conflict and it can come as a big shock to them when their parents split up. The results can be long-lasting.

Therefore, we have a strong interest in keeping rates of divorce and separation low.

The one opinion poll on the upcoming referendum shows a big majority in favour of reducing the waiting time or even eliminating it completely. A reduction from four years to two years is something we could probably live with. But if we leave it up to the Oireachtas to decide on the waiting time, it is very likely to be reduced below two years over time. That can only erode the legal status of marriage and reduce it to a glorified form of cohabitation, which is a terrible idea.

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## A survivor of sexual abuse tells **Chai Brady** about finding healing in his Catholic Faith

**F**or many victims and survivors of abuse by priests or religious, their faith is severely tested or even crippled by what they have experienced. It's a cruel paradox that those abused were often the most involved in their local parish community, their predator often trusted beyond reproach.

Those who abused often hid behind the cloak of avoidance of scandal, or felt safe in the knowledge that their victim would not want to cause scandal by making the abuse public.

This spiritual abuse compounded the original offence and caused many people to lose their faith – a loss that is often acutely felt. And it was to try to redress this that the initiative 'Towards Peace' was born to offer spiritual support to survivors.

One man whose faith has sustained him despite his early experience of abuse is 40-year-old Derry man Denis Cairns. Ahead of this week's Vatican summit on tackling the issue, Denis sat down with *The Irish Catholic* and expressed his hopes that the Church will continue to do more to heal the wounds left by abuse by priests or religious.

### Trauma

Denis was sexually abused by a priest when he was an extremely vulnerable 13-year-old. As he recalls it, he was given a handful of change the next morning and had to endure the spectacle of watching the same priest preside at the celebration of the Eucharist that Sunday morning. To this day the trauma of the experience of that Mass still haunts him.

"I went through a period of time that I couldn't go into a church because every time I saw the Lord Jesus and the host getting raised above the altar, it reminded me of that morning after he abused me and he was standing there," Denis recalls.

It kept Denis from the cel-



Finding peace: Denis Cairns pictured at the iconic Foyle Peace Bridge. Photo: Chai Brady

# A journey through pain on the rough road to redemption

bration of the sacraments for a time and robbed him of the spiritual sustenance that was the essence of his childhood faith.

"When I started to get back going to Mass continuously again, I always kept my head down – not looking up at the altar. There would be flashback after flashback after flashback, I was only seeing him, him, him all the time."

Although with a lot of help

along the way Denis now feels that he is past the worst of the trauma, he still experiences these flashbacks at times. But, he says that God has given him the strength to see Him present in the Eucharist and the Mass instead of his abuser.

"This priest has taken a lot away from me, but he was never able to take my Faith," Denis recalls. He sees this as a grace in the midst of what

he has suffered. "Because I know of hundreds of victims whose faith has been ruined because of these evil people, evil priests and bishops".

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Denis doesn't reserve his feelings of betrayal for people who have abused. "Those who have covered it up have a lot to answer for as well," he says.

In Denis, God has a certain

friend in a world that is often deaf to the Divine, though anyone who thinks he will meekly pray, pay and obey would be sorely mistaken. "I will defend my Faith seven days a week, but I will also call out those who have covered up these horrific crimes."

While the Vatican summit this week will tackle the key issue of accountability and responsibility, Denis is in no doubt about what should

happen with bishops and religious superiors who have failed to protect children and implement proper guidelines and norms. "They should be stood down, there should be action taken, no more words, it is action that is needed, there have been a lot of cover ups," he insists.

When people so casually disregard faith, Denis has often been asked how he can return to the Church despite

**“In Denis, God has a certain friend in a world that is often deaf to the Divine, though anyone who thinks he will meekly pray, pay and obey would be sorely mistaken”**



**“Denis first reached out in 1997, five years after he was abused, and reported what happened to him to the police. At the same time he sought support from the Church. It was not a happy experience. He felt that he was treated without consideration, describing it as a ‘nightmare’”**

years, Denis turned to abusing alcohol as a coping mechanism. Although receiving psychological treatment, he now looks back and is frank that he “went off the rails a bit”.

Denis sees the gentle hand of God in his recovery. “I was suicidal. I tried to jump off the bridge a few times, tried to hang myself, but by the grace of God I was saved at all times from killing myself,” he recalls with gratitude.

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In an earlier instance in his life, aged just 17, Denis went underneath a local bridge and began wading in to the water. But someone – a good Samaritan if you like – saw what he was doing and refused to pass by on the other side.

“It was actually a passer-by. I was actually in the water and all – I was just walking in, and in, and in. The passer-by was coming with a dog and he said ‘son what are you doing?’ and he got me out,” says Denis.

To this day, he is convinced that this stranger was, in fact, a guardian angel. Denis recalls how he immediately walked away from the stranger, but says when he looked back he couldn’t see any sign of the man.

The police were involved in another incident in which he was considering jumping off a bridge. He says: “The police were called to the bridge, but something within me as well was saying ‘don’t’. I believe that was my guardian angel.

“The hand of the Lord was upon me – and the Holy Spirit. Because I believe that He had a plan for me in the future: to tell my story which I’m telling here today, to help other victims of clergy abuse within the Church,” he believes.

**“It wasn’t just his wife who has helped him through the worst of his trauma, and Denis is acutely aware of the fact that a mother’s love really is a blessing”**

Denis is now married with two children – a son and daughter – and says the impact on the family of victims and survivors is something people often don’t see and can get neglected in the

healing or therapy process.

He is profoundly conscious of the effects on families. “It wasn’t easy at all for my wife. People have to realise that there are victims of child abuse in any society.

“For myself, I was the victim of child abuse from a priest. I think it’s even more difficult because they’re meant to be shepherds.” Priests and religious who have abused have “basically ruined a lot of people’s lives – I thank the Lord I’m still here to tell my story,” Denis says.

His wife has been a saving grace. “My wife found me at times banging, literally banging my head off floors and walls – all because the pain of the abuse. People have to realise it’s not just the victim that suffers, the family suffers, but through no fault of the victim”.

For Denis as with all victims and survivors, realising that he was not at fault for what happened to him is vital. “For a long time I would have blamed myself. I still do on days, but that’s what they put on you, these paedophiles, and that’s what they are quite plainly.

“They make you feel like the guilty person,” he says.

“A perfect wife – one can find one?” the writer of the Book of Proverbs ponders, only to delight in the knowledge that “she is far beyond the price of pearls” (Proverbs 31:10).

These are words that resonate easily with Denis, he describes his wife as his “rock”. The teenage sweethearts have been together since 1995 and in addition to his own internal struggles the couple were from different religious backgrounds – a particular challenge in a divided society.

Denis hails from a staunch republican neighbourhood while his wife comes from a loyalist area. Despite the conflict quietening down at that time due to the cease-fires, it was still difficult for a Catholic and a Protestant to be together, he says. “A lot of people doubted us at the time, but we’re still here,” Denis says with pride.

The couple were civilly married in Derry in 2001 because of the religious differences, but he says he always wanted to get married before God and make the union sacramental. Many years later, this became a reality.

On August 10, 2017 the couple celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage and just a year later, on the same day, his wife was received into the Catholic Church which Denis describes as a “brilliant blessing”.

It wasn’t just his wife who has helped him through the worst of his trauma, and Denis is acutely aware of the fact that a mother’s love really is a blessing. He says the women who brought him into the world has given him “great support”.

“My mother suffered too because of what happened. She managed to keep her faith and still does to this day – she could have so easily walked away as well but she didn’t,” he says.

Many of his family members did walk away from the Church after what Denis suffered, but – perhaps ironically – it was he who “coaxed” them back, to use his own word.

He gets frustrated when people say they have stopped going to Mass because of the scandals. These terrible crimes aren’t “an excuse” not to go to Mass, he insists.

“As a victim myself that just doesn’t stand with me,” he says.

**“Prayer really helped Denis and he is convinced that it can also help other survivors. ‘I would ask them – if they can – to come back to practising their Faith’”**

The love that Denis has for his Faith and for the Church impel him to want a Church that is reformed, purified and more able to witness to the Gospel which it preached. “Evil priests who have abused children need to be laicised, defrocked, 100%. I’m very strong on that point: I have a great Catholic faith, but it’s the only way we’re [the Church] going to move forward,” he insists.

And it doesn’t just go for abusers. He sees a wider need for atonement within the Church. “It doesn’t matter who needs to fall here: cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests – whoever.”

Without this, he says, the Church will be facing more

scandals in 10 or 20 years’ time. He is clear that “victims need to be heard and listened to. In times past we believed priests and the victims were pushed aside, and I believe this is happening to this day – that attitude has to change.”

Often the most difficult journey for those who have been abused is the road to forgiveness. Some – understandably – can never reach this. After all, forgiveness is a gift that cannot be forced. Prayer brought Denis this blessing. “I prayed for five years before the Blessed Sacrament every single Thursday and Friday, and I actually have prayed for my abuser. The Lord knows I have,” Denis said.

“You’ll not have peace without forgiveness,” he says.

Denis first reached out in 1997, five years after he was abused, and reported what happened to him to the police. At the same time he sought support from the Church. It was not a happy experience. He felt that he was treated without consideration, describing it as a “nightmare”.

He says he “wasn’t contacted once to see how my spiritual life was, to see how my mental health was...they didn’t know that I was still practising my Faith, but quietly. No follow up, no nothing.”

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The years went on, and Denis continued his internal struggle without the assistance of the Church when he stopped going to Mass for a few years. But, there was never a time when faith was not part of his life even if only “one foot in one foot out”.

“But then I seriously got into my faith then about 11 years ago now and I haven’t looked back,” he says with relief.

He is critical of some of the media coverage of abuse in the Church. He believes that many of the priests and bishops doing good work are side-lined and unappreciated for what they do in the community.

Despite his earlier negative experiences with Church authorities, he has since found a ready ear in local bishop Dr Donal McKeown. He made contact with the diocesan safeguarding officer and just a few days later was told that Bishop Donal wanted to meet him.

The two men met in Febru-

ary last year and Bishop McKeown listened to his story.

Mentioning two other members of the clergy who have been hugely supportive, Fr Seán O’Donnell and Fr Paddy McCafferty, he insists that “these people need to be recognised too – these people who are helping victims, not just all these evil priests, these good priests. They’re doing good work in the background”.

## Appeal

Fr Seán was the first priest Denis told about the abuse he suffered and now he is appealing for other people who have suffered to speak to someone about what they have experienced. He thinks this can be harder for men.

“Mostly, as we know, men find it more difficult to speak out. I would urge please tell someone. If it’s not your partner or wife or husband – because ladies have been abused as well, it’s not just men here – tell someone... tell someone you can trust, it could be your local parish priest, please because they can’t suffer this for the rest of their life. Their stories need to be told, and heard and action taken. It’s not an easy fix,” he says.

Prayer really helped Denis and he is convinced that it can also help other survivors. “I would ask them – if they can – to come back to practising their Faith. Don’t let these people destroy it, don’t let them destroy your faith, because there are a lot of good bishops out there, a lot of good priests, more than the evil ones and that’s a fact.

“Different things work for different people. Psychological treatment informed me about the pain I was going through; my childhood and whatever – but I really believe it was the Faith that keeps me going.

“That’s the key: it’s the Faith, it’s not the doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists, it’s the Faith that has helped me most,” he insists.

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what he endured. It’s deeply personal and difficult to excavate. “It’s hard to explain. People have asked me those questions before: ‘How can you even enter a church?’

“It’s the Holy Spirit within me, to be honest with you. To put it bluntly, I just have severe, strong, strong Catholic Faith – that’s the only way I can explain it,” Denis says.

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Abuse wreaks havoc on the lives of those who have experienced being robbed of their innocence. Over the years, Denis has tried to end his life on several occasions. Fortunately, by the grace of God, each time his attempts were thwarted either through his own internal reflection or interventions by the police or a passer-by.

Denis always tried to struggle on through life, but his early experience was a constant struggle. In his career he was doing well and had earned a permanent contract working as an auxiliary nurse in the local hospital. But, his past caught up with him and his livelihood fell apart after experiencing a nervous breakdown.

Suffering intensely for four



# All eyes look to Rome for

The Vatican has a key role to play in acknowledging failures Archbishop Eamon Martin tells **Michael Kelly**



**N**othing has done more to damage the credibility of the Church's witness to the Gospel in recent decades than what we tend to collectively refer to as 'the scandals'. The abuse of children and vulnerable adults by people who should've been leading them to Christ and the subsequent denial and cover-up has left a deep wound.

That wound is acutely felt first and foremost by victims and survivors of abuse. But it is a sore that has touched the entire Body of Christ and, as Pope Benedict noted in his letter to Irish Catholics in 2010, "has obscured the light of the Gospel to a degree that not even centuries of persecution succeeded in doing".

But, far from being a distinctly Irish phenomenon – the abuse of children is tragically something that is part of every society and every culture. This is as true for the Church as it is everywhere else. It is for this reason that Pope Francis has convened the meeting in Rome this week to look at the protection of minors in the Church. One of the key themes is to try and take the learning from countries like Ireland and use that to help in parts of the Church globally where there is not yet the heightened awareness of safeguarding that is now part and parcel of ecclesial life here.

## Listening sessions

The Pope has invited the heads of the world's bishops' conferences and Ireland will be represented by Archbishop of Armagh Dr Eamon Martin.

Ahead of his trip to Rome this week, Archbishop Eamon has engaged in extensive listening sessions first and foremost with victims and survivors.

He has also engaged with fellow bishops and through the Association of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland (AMRI) those in consecrated life. Last month the Primate of All-Ireland also appealed through the pages of this

newspaper for the wider faith community to let him know what they think he should bring to the meeting.

While the meeting is scheduled to take place from February 21-24, Archbishop Eamon told *The Irish Catholic* he is conscious that the time is short and hopeful that the bishops will have an opportunity to share their experiences about this vital issue affecting not only the most vulnerable members of the Church, but also the Church's very credibility.

"I think that peer-to-peer input of the bishops sharing their stories and their experiences with each other would be very useful," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

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Archbishop Eamon is conscious of the bitter reality of abuse in the Church in Ireland. "The reality is that some countries have a very painful lived experience of dealing with this issue, including Ireland. And it's not to say that we're in any way perfect on this issue, we certainly are not. But we've made a lot of mistakes, and if all we were able to do was to share what we shouldn't have done, and perhaps some other poor victims around the world will be spared this sort of trauma that we put them through," he said.

The archbishop is aware that – at least anecdotally – some countries still don't get the issue. They think of abuse as a product of western culture, or something that is alien, for example, to Africa and Asia. "If you have this situation in Ireland, where some people say the Church still hasn't got it, can you imagine what it must be like in other countries?" he asked.

While he is meeting victims and survivors on an ongoing basis, Archbishop Eamon decided around Christmas to begin a structured process to listen to their hopes and aspirations for the future and what they think the meeting needs to do.



"What I decided to do, was to travel to Dublin, to Limerick, I did one here in Armagh, and one in the West. And basically, I stayed there for a full day and met a range of people who were invited to speak to me by those in those areas who were aware of their situations," he said.

Archbishop Eamon's experiences over the years have made him cautious about the Rome meeting since it is specifically addressing the issue of the abuse of children whereas he thinks there is a need to broaden the conversation.

"We know in Ireland, that the sad story of abuse reaches into far more areas than simply the area of somebody who has been abused by a priest. Therefore, in Ireland, our painful chapters of the story of institutional abuse, where religious congregations were in the management and running of these places, mother and baby homes, the Magdalene laundries, and then other issues that are coming

**“We’ve made a lot of mistakes, and if all we were able to do was to share what we shouldn’t have done, and perhaps some other poor victims around the world would be spared this sort of trauma that we put them through”**

to the fore within Ireland, and I think globally now. So therefore we're looking now at vulnerable people, at situations where perhaps young adults, the seminaries, where people were subject to abuse, the abuse of women.

"The fact that there are in Ireland, and indeed around the globe, children of priests. These are issues and areas of this wider platform of abuse, which we have learned are not separate compartments,

but are part of an overall story of abuse within the Church," he said.

Archbishop Eamon is convinced that the painful lessons learned in Ireland have made the Church here more ready to face the bigger picture. "Perhaps it's because we have reached a maturity of reflection on this issue, which other countries may not yet have pieced together. Even we are beginning to join the dots, and see that underneath the

issue of clerical sexual abuse and others was a wider issue of abuse of power, abuse of position, and sadly, abuse of the very special relationship that there was in Ireland between people and their Church".

That loss of spontaneous trust in the Church is acutely felt. According to Archbishop Eamon, "in many victims and survivors, one of the saddest things is to realise that these people were really close to the Church. In many cases, the priest was loved by their family. The priest may even have been considered like a part of the family, or the parish, like an extension of the home.

"Where you have parents who were extremely close to their local parish, who were engaged and involved in the life of the parish, were very trusting – hyper-trusting of their local priest. It was into that context that an abuser was able to get access and was then able to depend upon the deference and respect with



# key abuse summit



Archbishop Eamon Martin.

which he was held to convince the victim that they wouldn't be believed."

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The third element, the archbishop believes, is that abusers used "the hint of scandal as a cover, knowing that their bishop or their religious superior, or indeed the family of the young person, might think, 'Oh my God, what a terrible scandal it would be if this got out.'"

"You can see how sadly something as beautiful as the deference and respect and love that people have for their Church, was very cruelly abused by, and betrayed by the abuser".

For Archbishop Eamon, there are now two different dynamics at work on the response to abuse. "One is the operational one: the guidelines, the standards, the procedures, the rules, the protocols, the accountability mechanisms, all of these things which rightfully

are demanded I think by an issue as serious as the abuse of children, minors, vulnerable adults. And that to me, is where you would attempt to structure your way out of this problem.

"The other tendency is one which might reflect on why did this happen, what are the tendencies, what was it about who we were as a Church that led to this? There's been very little theology of the priesthood done, or reflection done on the whole area of sexual integration for priests, religious, those who take vows of celibacy or chastity. What does that do to their sexuality, what does that do to the way they live their lives?" he asked.

There is also an ecclesiological element to it, the archbishop believes. "What was it within the parish structures within the Church that allowed abuse to happen? And then when it did happen, allowed it to be covered up or not handled properly?"

They are piercing questions, but ones the archbishop believes must be faced with honesty. "Because sadly, the issue of abuse has not gone away. It may have changed its way of working, but we therefore need to keep up to date with protocols and procedures whilst at the same time, being in a position where we're now maturely able to reflect with the help I dare say of victims and survivors. Because one of the things I notice is that some of those who have learned to survive and live their lives, carrying with them their life experience of being abused, now believe they have a role to play as change agents. And not simply the token survivor, but they, reflecting on their experiences, are able to offer perspectives on this. Which we can sometimes dismiss, if we're not careful".

Some commentary sees mandatory celibacy as one of the factors contributing to abuse in the Church. The arch-

bishop believes the key is that priests and religious live their vows and promises in a way that integrates their sexuality in a healthy way.

"You can have an un-integrated sexuality as a celibate person, or indeed as a married person. And very sadly, we know from society that a large amount of abuse can take place within a home. And the earth-shattering impact of abuse in the family or families that is the Church, mirrors the catastrophic impact of abuse inside a family home with all the same tendencies towards cover-up, denial, anger, traumatic breakdown and separation, and then guilt and shame. All of those same things.

"When we're looking at the issue of an un-integrated sexuality, that can indeed happen with the priesthood, within religious life. When somebody who has chosen a life of celibacy, has not been able to integrate that into their lives in a healthy and fruitful way.

"Sometimes priests and religious have to learn that through a very bitter experience, should they fall in love for example. But the un-integration of sexuality that leads to abuse, in my view, is a deviance of sexuality which can exist within the clerical and religious world, but equally within married life or single life. It knows no bounds, and perhaps it would be simplistic of us to try to explain it away.

"This is another danger when we go to the phase of reflection: that we look for easy explanations of abuse. This is something that I think we need to be cautious about as we enter into our reflection. Cautious about thinking we can get the answer quickly," he insists.

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This leads naturally to the issue of homosexuality and gay priests. Some commentators, particularly in the United States, have insisted that the essence of the abuse crisis is gay priests abusing young males.

Dr Martin is similarly clear that simplistic answers have little to contribute. In meeting "with young women, or women who were abused as young girls, what do we tell them? Do we tell them it was heterosexuality? It was the very same dynamics of deviance, of deceit, of cover-up, that happened.

"One would wonder if the very easy access that priests had to boys did indeed lead to a greater prevalence of abuse of boys. I don't want to go for easy explanations, but I think



Pope Francis greets Archbishop Eamon Martin after a Mass at the Vatican.

**“The un-integration of sexuality that leads to abuse, in my view, is a deviance of sexuality which can exist within the clerical and religious world, but equally within married life or single life. It knows no bounds...”**

that our psychologists and psychotherapists who tell us that the tendency to abuse is no risk factor, if we were to use this phrase, associated with sexual orientation.

"Therefore, equally I think that it's important for us to honestly reflect on, could celibacy in some cases have led to abuse? If somebody had accepted a life of celibacy, without it being an integrated and free choice that they made, it's going to lead to problems. In the same way as somebody who chooses to marry someone, without having fully reflected on, 'Do I really love this person?' It will lead to problems.

"Let's be cautious about thinking that we can explain away the horrendous breach of trust and breach of vocation that is abuse by a priest, or a religious. By all means, with the help of proper expert research, let's look at all the issues.

"The other danger is that the issue, the horrendous chapter of abuse in the Church, becomes some sort of ecclesiastical political football, which is batted about between different wings within the Church.

"To me, that is not good, and I think that it is gravely dangerous for the Church to

think that we can use this against each other within the Church. Remember, and this came across to me, an act of sexual abuse or indeed any kind of abuse impacts primarily on the victim. It then impacts on their family, on their parish, on their community, it impacts on their relationships with priests in general, on their relationships between priests and bishops, their relationship between Church and society.

"It is like a virus that destroys and infects everything that it touches.

"And we need to realise that it is a terrible awful sin and crime, crying out for proper attention in the Church. Rather than any kind of glib simplistic explanation," he warned.

Archbishop Eamon is realistic about what the Rome summit will achieve. He is aware that amongst some people expectations are too high. "I think that those people, if they were to stop for a moment, would realise that bringing together 200-300 senior people in the Church from all over the world for three or four days is not going to solve the matters of abuse within the Church.

"However, it is a first.

» Continued on Page 14



# 'Victims are deeply aggrieved and hurt members of our Church...'

» Continued from Page 13

Pope Francis is doing this for the first time. It has taken far too long for the Church universally to try to globally acknowledge this problem. I am a strong believer that abuse is best tackled on the ground, and the principle of subsidiarity is one that I would value in this regard – that taking it to the centre is not necessarily going to protect children on the ground.

"I fully understand that for some people, including many victims and survivors, they see the Church, what they would describe as at the top or at the centre, haven't got it yet.

"They're looking for a very clear recognition. And I think that the Holy See has a very important part to play in openly acknowledging that the sins and crimes of abuse have impacted everyone in the Church.

"But I think that the protection of children, of vulnerable adults and minors, must happen on the ground in every parish and every Church activity. So let's not think that we can kick this issue upstairs, this issue belongs to all of us. And I'm absolutely convinced of that."



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 last August.

One of the key themes for Archbishop Eamon is the issue of accountability. What, for example, should happen where a bishop or religious superior has been shown not to be implementing proper Church procedures?

"There is at the moment,

an insatiable desire on the part of many people to get a head on a plate. Sometimes that can be done without due process, it can be done through some kind of court of public opinion, as distinct from a just process.

"What we have seen in

practice is that a priest or a bishop or an archbishop, or even a Pope, who is found to have not followed the Church's own protocols and guidelines, immediately loses the credibility that is needed to be an authentic leader.

"I think that it is worth-

while to ask whether or not a bishop, who very clearly and in a just process, is seen to have very flagrantly ignored the guidelines of their own Church, can they any longer continue as that sign of unity and communion and leadership and teaching that is necessary in the modern world to be a good shepherd?"

**“He also believes that victims and survivors need to be heard more in the ongoing work of reform and renewal of the Church”**

"I think that if it's seen that they simply are not following the Church's procedures, and they are giving rise to grave scandal, which makes their authority gravely damaged. I know that there is a global demand for proper accountability in those cases, and I would tend to agree with it."

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He also believes that victims and survivors need to be heard more in the ongoing work of reform and renewal of the Church. "I'm not sure if

we've yet found the appropriate mechanism by which to do that. I certainly think that every time I have met survivors of abuse, it has changed me.

"I would certainly be encouraging my brother bishops and religious superiors to meet with survivors.

"I think survivors believe that we're afraid of them, that we prefer to deal with them via litigation, or via professionals. But in many cases what they want is to be listened to, and they want a pastoral outreach. They know that we have all these other responsibilities as well, they just want somebody to listen to them, to believe their story, and to shepherd them.

"I think what I have really come to understand fully in the last few months in preparation for this meeting, is that victims of abuse are members of our Church.

"They are deeply aggrieved and hurt members of our Church. And therefore, they are in need of our care. And I actually think that helping them, I've come to see has a corporal and spiritual work of mercy," according to the archbishop.

## Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre 2019 PROGRAMME

### SILENT PREACHED RETREATS

10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>  
MAY

**Martina Lehan Sheehan and Patrick Sheehan**

10am-2pm

**Awareness and Mindful Living.** Through input, guided meditation, reflective music, gentle scriptural reflection and healing rituals, this retreat will provide us with ways of releasing stress, helping us to let go of self-judgement and unhelpful comparisons, and allowing us to live fully in the present.

27<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup>  
MAY-JUN

**Fr Denis McBride, CSsR**

**Where does the Jesus story begin?**

The preaching of the early Church began the story of Jesus with his death and resurrection. In this retreat Fr. Denis looks at the beginning of the Jesus story in the Gospels of Luke and John, seeing how they may relate to the beginning of our own stories. He will conclude with reflections on the spirituality of John's Gospel.

10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>  
JUNE

**Fr. Brendan Comerford, SJ**

**"Mystics, martyrs and poets"** – This retreat will present the lives and thought of such Christian witnesses as Edith Stein, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Brother Roger of Taizé and Jean Vanier.

2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>  
SEPT

**Fr. Mike Serrage, MSC**

**"The One who has Compassion on them will guide them to Springs of Water: (Is 49:10)"** This will be a quiet reflective time, and includes, poetry, meditations and ritual.

4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>  
OCT

**Fr. Gerard McCarthy, SVD**

**Parables to Ponder and Practise.** At some point in his ministry Jesus began to speak in parables. Read wisely, these stories lead us to a vision of God, ourselves and others that enriches our lives as disciples.

### 6 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**JUNE 10<sup>TH</sup> - JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> @2PM**

**Frank Downes, OP and Mary Connellan, SSL**

**SEPT. 2<sup>ND</sup> – SEPT 8<sup>TH</sup> @2PM**

**Dermot Mansfield, SJ and Des Corrigan, SMA**

### 4 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**SEPT. 2<sup>ND</sup> - SEPT 6<sup>TH</sup>**

**Dermot Mansfield, SJ and Des Corrigan, SMA**

### LENTEN RETREAT DAYS

**MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup> - Fr Damian Bresnahan, SMA**

**MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> - Fr John Gallagher, SMA**

### HOLY WEEK RETREAT

**WED APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup> – SUN 21<sup>ST</sup>**

The Dromantine community invites you to join in reflectively celebrating the Easter Triduum, beginning with the Seder meal.

### DEVELOPING PRAYER THROUGH CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Facilitated by Florence Heyhoe (textile artist and spiritual director)

**9<sup>th</sup> March** Contemplative Collage

**21<sup>st</sup> May** Slow Stitch

**25<sup>th</sup> Sept.** Weaving

**SAT JUNE 22<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Des Corrigan, SMA**

**Forgiveness; The journey from hurt to healing, freedom and peace.** This retreat will give participants a deeper understanding of the nature and importance of forgiveness, so that we can let go, move on and find peace and happiness.

**SAT SEPT 28<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Joseph Ralph, OP**

**Lectio Divina.** An introduction to the ancient practice of Lectio Divina: Together we will Read, Recognize, Respond, Rest In and Reflect on the Sunday Gospel, culminating in a celebration of the Eucharist.

**SAT OCT 19<sup>TH</sup> Mr. Declan Coyle**

**The Green Platform: Simply Life –changing.** The internationally renowned, inspirational speaker and author will outline in simple steps his unique methods, which show you how to switch from negative Red to positive Green thinking, and so enable you to live a happier, more fulfilled life no matter what challenges you have to face.

**SAT NOV 9<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Brendan McManus SJ and Jim Deeds**

**Finding God in the Mess.** A practical approach to prayer for the messy times when God seems absent from our lives, or when we feel abandoned or forgotten.

### ADVENT RETREAT

**DEC 6<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> @2PM Fr. Pat Kelly, SMA.**

Advent is a time of waiting for the coming of the Lord. In a world where we expect to immediately get what we want, we look again at the importance of the state of "waiting" in the spiritual life.

**For enquiries or bookings contact:**

The Secretary, Retreat & Conference Centre,  
Dromantine, Newry, Co. Down BT34 1RH  
Tel : 028-3082 1964 ; ( From Rol 048 )  
E Mail: admin@dromantineconference.com  
Website : www.dromantineconference.com





Accord's marriage preparation figures may be dropping, but this disguises an increase in its importance, writes **Greg Daly**

**2018** saw a continuing year-on-year drop in numbers of people attending sacramental preparation courses offered by Accord, the Catholic marriage care service, but as usual it's worth getting behind the headline figures.

On the face of things, of course, the situation looks disappointing. From a high of 17,108 people attending Accord's marriage preparation course in 2016, 16,864 took part in 2017 with just 16,048 doing so last year. It might look, therefore, as though Catholic marriage preparation is in decline.

Against this, however, it's important to acknowledge the degree to which 2016 was a peak year for marriage preparation by what was then an agency of the bishops' conference.

2009-10 had seen sacramental preparation plummet against the background of the economic crash, as 2008's 20,457 participants dropped to 16,632 and then 13,963. This was followed by a steady year-on-year recovery, rising to 17,108 in 2016.

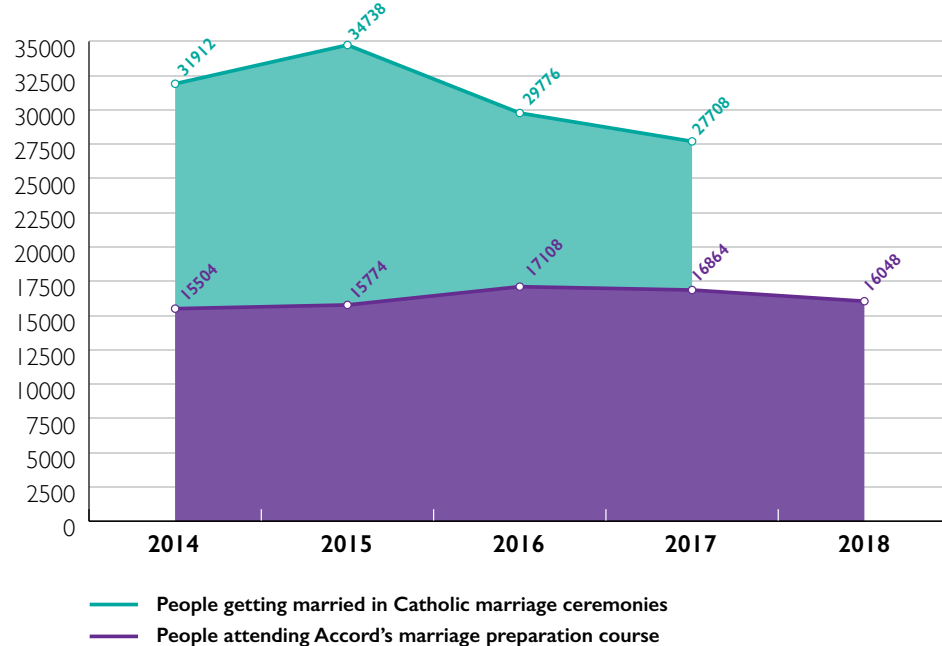
Since then the number of couples availing of Accord marriage preparation courses have dipped, but it remains to be seen whether this will be a real trend or simply a blip. It is striking, after all, that even the current figures are higher than the 15,504 people who did the Accord course in 2014 and the 15,774 who did it in 2015.

### Ceremonies

It is, in any case, worth lining these figures up with broader marriage statistics across both Irish jurisdictions, starting with the fact that 2014 saw 13,072 Catholic marriage ceremonies in the Republic and 2,884 in the North, a total of 15,956.

The following year saw 14,486 Catholic weddings south of the border, with 2,883 in Northern Ireland, 17,369 in all, and 2016, a

# A rise within a fall



bumper year for Accord marriage preparation courses, saw just 12,140 Catholic ceremonies in the Republic while there were 2,748 in the North.

Catholic marriage ceremonies were barely half the total number of weddings in the Republic in 2017, clocking in at 11,219, or 50.9% of the total, such that the odds are that when the Central Statistics Office issues the 2018 figures in a few months time headlines will be ubiquitous about how for the first time ever Catholic weddings will be make up less than half the total of marriage ceremonies in Ireland.

**“It is, in any case, worth lining these figures up with broader marriage statistics across both Irish jurisdictions”**

In addition to that 11,219, of course, there were 2,635 Catholic marriage ceremonies in the North, giving a total of 13,854.

That's the context in which the Accord figures need obvious comparisons, with an especially interesting trend emerging:

● 15,504 people did Accord courses in 2014, a year when Ireland saw 31,912 people getting married in 15,956 Catholic ceremonies across the island of Ireland. That year, 48.5% of all couples having Catholic marriages in Ireland underwent Accord preparation.

● 15,774 people did Accord courses in 2015, when the island of Ireland saw 34,738 people getting married in 17,369 Catholic weddings. This meant a slight drop to 45.4% in the number of couples having Catholic marriages doing Accord courses.

● 17,108 people did Accord courses in 2016, when there were just 29,776 people marrying in 14,888 Catholic mar-

riage ceremonies across both jurisdictions. Not merely was this a bumper year for Accord in absolute terms, but it was a year that saw the proportion of couples having Catholic marriages that did Accord courses first soaring to 57.5%.

● 16,864 people did Accord courses in 2017, when 27,708 people married in 13,854 Catholic weddings on both sides of the border. The proportion of couples doing Accord preparation before Catholic marriages continued to rise to 60.9%.

In the absence of statistical data on 2018 from the Central Statistics Office or the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, it's difficult to drill down on the 2018 Accord figures, but nobody should be surprised if while the number of Catholic marriage ceremonies continued to drop, the percentage of such ceremonies preceded by Accord courses continued to rise.

Accord is not the only game in town when it comes to Catholic marriage preparation – other courses are run by, for instance, the Nazareth Family Institute or Together – but it is quite clearly the 'big beast' in this area, and its relative importance seems to be growing.

It is possible, of course, that the growing relative importance of Accord courses might reflect a greater degree of 'intentionality' by Catholics getting married, but it would be risky to make such a claim without a full breakdown of what sorts of official sacramental preparation all Catholics getting married in Ireland undergo.

Making such a claim seriously would also require Accord and other agencies to collect statistical data on the extent to which participants in Accord courses accept Catholic teaching and partake in Catholic worship.

It is worth noting, after all, that the demographics

most likely to marry in Ireland in any given year tend to be demographics in which religious belief and practice are statistically low, by Irish standards if not by international ones.

Is it the case, then that many of those doing Accord courses are doing so simply to 'get the cert', so they can get married? Surely this must be the case, but rather than being indignant about this,

perhaps it would be better if the Church saw this as an opportunity.

After all, just as Our Lord at least once said "whoever is not against us is for us", so it should be accepted that even those who show a semblance of interest in the Faith are not willing to reject it altogether, and want to maintain some link.

**“It is a little odd that the amount of preparation for marriage as a Sacrament can be negligible compared to the kind of preparation undergone for Communion”**

This gives the Church a chance to reach out, to evangelise to couples who might have lost interest or belief, and to invite people back into a sacramental life.

Doing this, of course, might require that marriage preparation courses be developed further. While those who do the courses tend to

be hugely impressed by the obviously 'human' aspects of the preparation, and to recognise that it doesn't pretend to answer every problem but to point people towards tools, approaches, and ways of thinking that will help them in married life, there is probably scope for developing the more uniquely Catholic aspects of marriage preparation.

Bulking up their theological content would seem one obvious step in the right direction; it is, after all, a little odd that the amount of preparation for marriage as a Sacrament can be negligible compared to the kind of preparation undergone for Communion and Confirmation, and one wonders how many Catholics realise that the Church sees Christian matrimony as a path to sanctification.

Building also on such areas as natural family planning would be an obvious step too, even if just to show people that talk of 'Vatican roulette' is far off modern scientific methods in this area, and that Pope Francis isn't talking nonsense when he sings the praises of St Paul VI for his "prophetic" *Humanae Vitae*.

One way or another, Accord is set to play an increasingly important role in the life of Irish Catholics.

## Leave a Legacy of Hope

When you are making your Will, please remember the vulnerable families you can save from homelessness. Contact Saoirse at Threshold in strictest confidence.

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Visit: [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie)



# Out&About

## JPII awards for four special students



◀ **ANTRIM:** Quadruplets Aoife, Bríd, Córa and Eilís Turley receiving the Pope John Paul II Award with Youth Director Pauline Dowd at St Mary's Church, Belfast.

▼ **DUBLIN:** Sr Athanasius (Athy) celebrates her Oak Jubilee (80th Year of profession) as a Dominican Sister, serving God and his people in South Africa with faithfulness.



**DUBLIN:** A full house of attentive listeners for Fr Thomas Joseph White's lecture on the need for Catholic Intellectual Life in St Saviours Priory, Dublin.



### IN SHORT

#### New Catholic Faith Initiative in Cork

The launch of a new faith formation initiative in the dioceses of Cork & Ross and Cloyne at the end of last month is offering young people across Ireland a chance to explore the Faith in a new and refreshing way. Hosted by the SMA Wilton parish, Cork, Fr Seán Corkery and Máirín Ní Shúilleabháin launched their co-authored project *YOUCAT Companion*.

The event attracted a large gathering from throughout Ireland, and was attended by Bishop John Buckley and Bishop William Crean, both of whom led prayers for the occasion. The bishops underlined the need for all believers to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in a time when people are

often confused or uncertain about what the Catholic Church teaches and why.

*YOUCAT* is short for Youth Catechism. It is designed by young people for young people to give contemporary expression to the truths of the Catholic faith. Fr Seán and Máirín have devised a user-friendly study programme to accompany *YOUCAT* which families, schools and parishes can use to establish small study groups.

*YOUCAT Companion* guides participants through the contents of the Catholic faith in an engaging and positive process of dialogue and sharing. Learning in small groups in this way is ideal for those seeking a sure reference point for life's journey.

*YOUCAT Companion* is divided into 20 sessions which would work well over the course of the school year (10 in autumn

and 10 in spring). Participants focus on the four pillars of the Catholic faith, namely the Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments and The Lord's Prayer.

At the launch, Fr Seán explained that Catholics need to comprehensively know the faith today to make a difference in Irish society: "Pope Francis asks us to be missionary disciples. How can we be positive and constructive? That's the skill we need to develop with peers who don't share the same view that we do as Catholics. What is important for us is to gain a thorough grasp of the language of faith so we can make a positive contribution in the public square."

Máirín spoke of the value of studying the faith in small groups: "I think faith is not lived alone. Young people can be afraid to speak about their faith in school, in

college, everywhere." *YOUCAT Companion* is aimed at giving young people, indeed, all participants, the tools needed to talk about their faith.

Over the 20 sessions, this is something that grows. Máirín says, "it's giving expression to what is deep within – building on knowledge week by week, answering the questions. The course helps them to be convinced so that any ridicule is not affecting them too much".

A *YOUCAT Companion* study group will run for the six Wednesday nights of Lent, beginning on March 6 in the SMA Parish Centre, Wilton, Cork City. If you want to hear more about what is involved or are interested in starting a group in your area, call Máirín on 087 7950325 or Fr Seán on 086 2420240.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**CLARE:** Killaloe's Bishop Fintan Monahan celebrates Mass and anointing for World Day of the Sick with students from St Caimin's, Shannon, and chaplain of the school Cora Guinnane.



**CAVAN:** Bridie Martin and Ann Burns welcoming the relics of St Thérèse and her parents St Louis and St Zélie Martin to St Joseph's Church, Corlea, Kingscourt with Jim Fitzpatrick, Knight of St Thérèse.



**CORK:** Bishop John Buckley and Bishop William Crean celebrate the launch of faith formation initiative *YOUCAT Companion* with its co-authors, Fr Seán Corkery and Máirín Ní Shúilleabháin.



**DERRY:** Ms Una Burns and students from St Mary's, Magherafelt, hosts the Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre to promote the benefits of volunteering and what opportunities are available for the students within their local community.



**CORK:** Students from three primary schools in the parish, Glasheen Boys, Glasheen Girls and Greenmount National schools and also secondary school St Aloysius celebrate Catholic Schools Week in the Lough Church.

## ARMAGH

Sr Mary Roe, RSCJ will offer six sessions once per week of *Lectio Divina* in The Synod Hall, Armagh. The third session takes place on Monday, February 25.

Armagh Parish Holy Spirit Prayer Group are hosting the Life in the Spirit Seminars in The St Vincent de Paul Centre, Chapel Lane, Armagh. Feb 26: Fr Eamon Kelly on 'God's Love'; March 5: Fr Owen Gorman on 'Salvation'; March 12: Sr Josephine Walsh will speak 'New Life'; March 19: Fr Peter McAnenly on 'Receiving God's gifts'; March 26: Fr Gerry Campbell on 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'; April 2: Patricia Kelly on 'Growth in the Spirit'; April 9: Archbishop Eamon Martin will speak on 'Transformation in Christ'.

## CLARE

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

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

## CORK

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

Healing Weekend: A weekend of Praise Worship and Healing in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, Cork on March 9-10. Mass and Confessions on both days. Speakers include Maria Vadia Florida, Fr John Keane Macroom, Fr Tony Emeka Nigeria, Canon Michael Fitzgerald Mitchelstown. Mir Music Ministry. Begins at 9am on both days. Enquires to Celia 087 2405568.

## DERRY

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

## DUBLIN

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

Ewe Thina We Walk God's Way: Join other young adults aged in their 20s and 30s for reflective hikes around the Dublin Area. Monthly event. Email: st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie and <https://www.facebook.com/wewalkgodsway>

Lecture titled 'Does Creation Need God' to be given by Mr Joe Drew from The Kolbe Institute of Creation on Wednesday, March 20, at 1pm at Central Catholic Library, 74 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

## FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Tuesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm: [www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly](http://www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly). There is also a St Peregrine

Novena Mass in Holy Cross Church, Lisnaskea on Tuesday nights at 7pm. [www.churchservices.tv/linaskea](http://www.churchservices.tv/linaskea)

Mass in the Extraordinary Form in St Patrick's Church (opposite St Kieran's College) every Sunday at 5pm.

## KILKENNY

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

## LIMERICK

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

St Saviours Dominican Church will be offering Bishop Barron's Catholicism Series at the Church on Thursday at 1.30pm and Fridays at 7.30pm weekly.

## LOUTH

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

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

## MEATH

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

Charismatic Prayer Group: Every Thursday, 8pm, in the Boardroom, Parish Centre of the parish of Trim and Boardsmill. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Tuesdays 2-9pm, Wednesdays 10.30am-8pm, and Fridays 10.30am-9pm. Adoration is held in the Side Chapel in St Patrick's Church.

## OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre 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 Glenree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glenree on the first Saturday of the month.

St Patrick's Prayer Meeting, Tuesdays, 7.30pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre beside St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Christians back shelving controversial citizenship bill

● The upper house of India's parliament has shelved a controversial bill on citizenship amid prayers by tribal Christians for its defeat.

People in north-eastern states where Christians form a substantial population have been protesting the Citizenship Bill that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) want to push into law before general elections due in two months.

The bill aims to accord Indian citizenship to non-Muslims – specifically Hindus, Christians, Jains, Parsis and Buddhists – who entered India from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan before 2014 and have lived in the country for six years continuously. The house shelved the bill as it could not find time on the last day of the parliament before the house is dissolved for general elections.

### First Catholic female elected to Bangladeshi parliament

● A Catholic lawyer has become the country's first female Christian member of parliament in Muslim-majority Bangladesh.

Gloria Jharna Sarker, a mother of two, will represent the ruling Awami League party in Bangladesh's Lower House.

"I thank God for this blessing, and I am grateful to many women and my Christian community who supported and prayed for me all these days. This is a victory for all," she said.

Ms Sarker added that she wants to work for the empowerment of women and the rights of minority Christians.

"...As a Christian I will do whatever is necessary for the empowerment and protection of rights of the community," she said.

### Bishops amused by attempt to change name of Philippines

● Filipino Catholic bishops have laughed off a proposal by President Rodrigo Duterte to change the name of the Philippines to "Maharlika", which reportedly means "noble".

Bishop Arturo Bastes of Sorsogon said the proposal was "distasteful", especially at a time when the country is preparing for the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in 2021.

"The history of our country is very much connected with the arrival

of Christianity in 1521", said the prelate who heads the bishops' Episcopal Commission on Mission.

Bishop Bastes said Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan placed what is now known as the Philippines "under the crown of Christ the King" and the crown of King Philip II of Spain.

The Philippines was named after Spain's King Philip II in the 16th century, when the country was a Spanish colony.

### Hopes of justice and peace in new Vietnamese diocese

● Church leaders expect a newly established diocese in northern central Vietnam, which is prone to natural disasters, to bring good prospects, justice and peace to local people.

Archbishop Marek Zalewski, non-resident representative of the Holy See to Vietnam, presided at a ceremony on February 11 to establish Ha Tinh Diocese and install Dominican Bishop Paul Nguyen Thai Hop as its first bishop.

Present at the special ceremony held at Van Hanh Cathedral in Ha Tinh City were 30 archbishops and bishops, hundreds of priests, representatives of the local government and tens of thousands of people.

### Over 150 priests removed from ministry, Mexican bishops confirm

● The Mexican bishops' conference has confirmed 152 priests have been removed from ministry for sexually abusing minors. In a February 12 statement, the conference published the preliminary figure, while promising: "We will continue with the effort to have a complete diagnosis of cases of child sexual abuse in Mexico."

The statement followed comments from Archbishop Rogelio Cabrera Lopez of Monterrey, conference president.

## Pope lifts sanctions on suspended Marxist priest

Pope Francis has restored priestly faculties to 94-year-old Fr Ernesto Cardenal, who had been suspended in 1984 for holding a cabinet position in Nicaragua's Sandinista government, in violation of canon law.

"The Holy Father has graciously granted the absolution of all canonical censures imposed on Rev. Fr Ernesto Cardenal, accepting the request he had recently made to him through the Pontifical Representative in Nicaragua, to be readmitted to the exercise of the priestly ministry," said a statement from the Apostolic Nunciature of Nicaragua.

The statement, signed by Archbishop Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag, the apostolic nuncio to Nicaragua, said that "Cardenal has been under suspension of the exercise of the priestly ministry for 35 years due to his political party involvement. The religious accepted his canonical penalty imposed on him and has always observed it without carrying out any pastoral activity. In addition, he had abandoned all political commitment for many years."

Cardenal, a poet and Marxist liberation theology activist, actively collaborated



Fr Ernesto Cardenal kneels before Pope St John Paul II in Nicaragua in the famous 1983 photo, a meeting at which the priest said he was asked to "regularise his situation".

with the Sandinista National Liberation Front revolution that ended the dictatorship of then-president Anastasio Somoza. He was appointed Minister of Culture the same day the Sandinistas were victorious on July 19, 1979, an office that he held until 1987.

He was suspended a *divinus* by Pope St John Paul II in 1984 for violating canon law by assuming a public office that involves the exercise of civil power.

John Paul II publicly reprimanded Fr Cardenal when he visited Nicaragua in 1983. In a now-famous photo, the Polish Pope can be seen with a serious expression, standing

before the Nicaraguan priest who is genuflecting and smiling.

Cardenal would say some time later that on that occasion the Holy Father asked him to "regularise his situation".

In a January 2017 interview, Fr Cardenal said that his suspension was still in place and he was "not interested in their lifting it".

The statement announcing the lifting of Cardenal's suspension references a request made by the priest to Pope Francis, indicating a change of position on the part of the priest since the 2017 interview.

According to the *El Nuevo Diario* news, Fr Cardenal has been hospitalised in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua since February 4 for a kidney infection.

Auxiliary Bishop Silvio Báez of Managua posted on Twitter on Friday last a photograph of the visit he made to Fr the hospital.

"Today I visited in the hospital my priest friend, Fr Ernesto Cardenal, with whom I was able to talk for a few minutes. After praying for him, I knelt down in front of his bed and asked his blessing as a priest of the Catholic Church, to which he gladly agreed. Thanks, Ernesto!"

## Abuse list of 'credibly accused' priests released by New Jersey dioceses

Dioceses in the state of New Jersey made public on February 13 the names of priests whom they said had been "credibly accused" of sexual abuse of minors, and one of the names is former US Cardinal Theodore McCarrick.

The former US cardinal's name appears in the list from the Archdiocese of Newark with a footnote that says Archbishop McCarrick "has been included on the list based on the findings of the Archdiocese of New York that allegations of abuse of a minor against then Father McCarrick were credible and substantiated".

ated".

The longest list is from the Archdiocese of Newark, which lists 63 priests among the total of 188, which includes clergy from the dioceses of Trenton, Paterson, Camden and Metuchen.

The Diocese of Metuchen also notes in its disclosure that its first bishop, then-Bishop McCarrick, is "currently involved in a church trial by the Holy See for the abuse of a minor when he was a priest of the Archdiocese of New York".

"The revelations of clergy sexual abuse of minors throughout this past

year have provoked feelings of shock, anger, shame, and deep sorrow throughout our Catholic community," Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark said in a news release accompanying the list from his archdiocese.

"Victims, their families, and the faithful are rightfully outraged over the abuses perpetrated against minors. Additionally, the failure of church leadership to immediately remove suspected abusers from ministry is particularly reprehensible," he said.

## Haiti bishops denounce 'violence against life'

Following deadly protests against Haiti's president and the drowning deaths of at least 28 people in an illegal crossing to the Bahamas, the country's Catholic bishops have said all Haitians must come together for a wise solution to the country's dangers.

"We must wake up to take together the full measure of

the danger that threatens us all. This is the moment to join our forces and our intelligence to save our common boat, Haiti, which is our pride," the Catholic Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Haiti said last week.

They cited the Gospel of Matthew passage in which the seaborne disciples cry out

to Christ as their boat starts to sink: "Lord, save us, we are perishing!"

### Losses

"The hour is serious because there is violence against life. We deplore the losses in both human lives and property recorded recently in illegal travel and demonstrations,"

they added. "We take this opportunity to present our sympathies to the victims and relatives of the victims."

Four days of political demonstrations against President Jovenel Moise drew thousands of people, but also led to unrest that contributed to four deaths and dozens of injuries.





Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie

## Welcoming those who welcome



Pope Francis greets people after a Mass for members of Italian Catholic parishes, religious orders, organisations and individuals who welcome migrants and refugees. Photo: CNS

## Covington students exonerated from any wrongdoing, report reveals

An independent investigation into the much-discussed encounter that went viral between Catholic high school students, a Native American tribal leader and members of another protest group on the Lincoln Memorial grounds in Washington in January found no evidence that the students of Kentucky's Covington Catholic High School issued "offensive or racist statements".

A report on the investigation was released by the Covington Diocese on February 13.

Two days before releasing the report's findings, Covington Bishop Roger Foys wrote to parents of the high school students telling them he was pleased to let them know that his hope that an inquiry into the events of January 18 would "exonerate our students so that they can

move forward with their lives has been realised".

The investigation, conducted by Greater Cincinnati Investigation Inc., which has no connection with the high school or diocese, "demonstrated that our students did not instigate the incident that occurred at the Lincoln Memorial", the bishop said.

### Report

The four-page report signed earlier this month said that four investigators spent 240 hours looking into the events of January 18 when the Covington Catholic High School students – in Washington for the annual March for Life – met up with other groups while waiting for their buses to pick them up. The investigators spoke with 43 students, 13 chaperones

and a number of third-party witnesses. They also reviewed about 50 hours of internet footage or comments focused on the groups' exchange.

Investigators were unable to question Nathan Phillips, tribal elder for the Omaha Tribe, who was chanting and beating a drum by the students, or Nick Sandmann, the student most prominent in viral footage of the encounter.

The investigators also noted that most of the students wearing the "Make America Great Again" hats had bought them in Washington during their visit. In previous years, chaperones said some students bought "Hope" hats in support of President Barack Obama. There is no school policy prohibiting political apparel on school-sponsored trips, the report said.

## Blessed John Henry Newman soon to become saint

Pope Francis has signed a decree recognising a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed John Henry Newman, the English cardinal, clearing the way for his canonisation.

The Vatican announced on February 13 that Pope Francis had signed the decree the day before.

In the sainthood cause of Blessed Newman, Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth

had reported in November that the proposed miracle involved a young law graduate from the Archdiocese of Chicago who faced life-threatening complications during her pregnancy but suddenly recovered when she prayed to the English cardinal for help.

Blessed Newman was born in London in 1801 and was ordained an Anglican priest in 1925. He was a leader in

the Oxford Movement in the 1830s, which emphasised the Catholic roots of Anglicanism.

### Clashes

After a succession of clashes with Anglican bishops made him a virtual outcast from the Church of England, he joined the Catholic Church at the age of 44 and was ordained a Catholic priest in 1846. Pope Leo XIII made him a cardinal in 1879 while respecting his

wishes not to be ordained a bishop.

A theologian and poet, he died in 1890 and his sainthood cause was opened in 1958. Pope Benedict XVI beatified him in Birmingham, England, in 2010.

The date for his canonisation will be announced after Pope Francis holds a meeting of cardinals to formalise their support for declaring Blessed Newman a saint.

## Vatican roundup

### Make human beings a primary concern, urges Vatican official

Left unchecked, unbridled greed and a thirst for profit leads down a slippery slope that endangers the earth and all who live on it, especially indigenous populations, a Vatican official said.

Msgr Fernando Chica Arellano, the Vatican's permanent observer to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the World Food Programme, called on world leaders to make human beings, and not material gain, as their primary concern.

"If this priority is not clear, we will leave withered lands, depleted seas, polluted air, wastelands where beautiful orchards used to flourish as an inheritance to future generations," Msgr Chica said at the Fourth Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum.

The theme of the conference, held at the International Fund for Agricultural Development's headquarters in Rome, focused on "promoting indigenous people's knowledge and innovations for climate resilience and sustainable development".

In his address, Msgr Chica said that the world must not view indigenous people as minorities but rather as "authentic interlocutors" who correctly instruct humanity about the "harmonious and fruitful relationship between human beings and nature, reminding us that man does not have absolute power over creation".

### Pope says prayer and community go hand in hand

Prayer is not just a private and intimate dialogue between a person and God, but rather an opportunity for Christians to bring the needs of others before the Lord, Pope Francis said.

"There is no room for individualism in the dialogue with God," the Pope said during his weekly general audience. "There is no display of one's own problems as if we were the only ones in the world who suffer. There is no prayer raised to God that is not the prayer of a community of brothers and sisters."

Arriving at the Paul VI audience hall, the Pope was welcomed by the sound of a children's choir singing a song based on his own teaching of the three words that are important for family life: "please", "thank you" and "sorry".

Continuing his series of talks on the "Our Father", the Pope said, "avoids falsehood; with God, it is impossible to pretend. It is impossible! In front of God, there is no trick that has power. This is how God knows us: naked in our conscience. And it isn't possible to pretend."

### Francis encourages peace in Venezuela, according to leaked letter

Pope Francis sent a letter to Nicolas Maduro responding to a recent invitation to mediate in the Venezuelan political crisis, according to an Italian newspaper.

On February 13, the Milan daily newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* published a report saying that the Pope had written to Mr Maduro reiterating his desire for the avoidance of violence in the country.

According to the article, the Pope wrote earlier this month that previous peace efforts in Venezuela were "interrupted because what had been agreed in the meetings was not followed by concrete gestures to implement the agreements".

"The Holy See clearly indicated what were the conditions for dialogue to be possible" in December 2016 in "a series of requests", it went on to say.

The Holy See did not comment on the letter, citing the private nature of the correspondence. The report only quoted fragments of the alleged letter, including Francis' reiteration of his desire to "avoiding any form of bloodshed".



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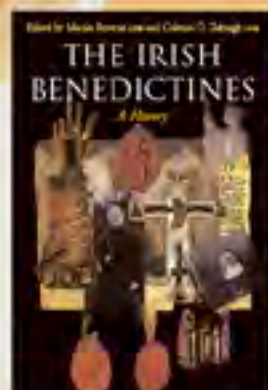
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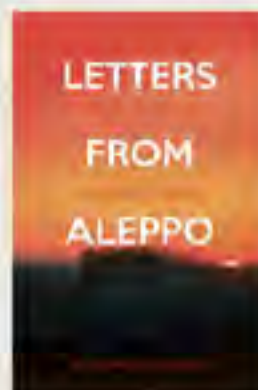
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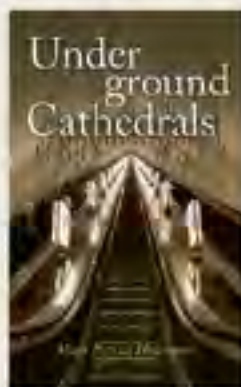
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# Letter from Rome



Carol Glatz

All eyes and ears will be on the Vatican during an unprecedented gathering February 21-24 to discuss the protection of minors in the Catholic Church.

When Pope Francis announced the international meeting in September, it sparked an optimistic note that the global problem of abuse finally would be tackled with a concerted, coordinated, global effort.

The breadth of the potential impact seemed to be reflected in the list of those convoked to the meeting: the presidents of all the world's bishops' conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic churches, representatives of the leadership groups of men's and women's religious orders and the heads of major Vatican offices.

But the Pope tried to dial down what he saw as "inflated expectations" for the meeting, telling reporters in January that "the problem of abuse will continue. It's a human problem" that exists everywhere.

Many survivors and experts, too, have cautioned that it was unrealistic to assume such a brief meeting could deliver a panacea for abuse and its cover-up.

So, what should people expect from the four-day meeting? The following five points hit the highlights:

**1.** It will be first and foremost about raising awareness, including that the scandal of abuse is not a 'Western' problem, but happens in every country.

To make that point clear, the organising committee asked every participating bishop to sit down with a survivor of abuse before coming to Rome and hear that "Me, too," from a person of his own country, culture and language.

**"The meeting will also feature testimonies from survivors from countries where the reality of abuse is still largely ignored"**

Jesuit Fr Federico Lombardi, who is moderating the meeting, said there would be between 160 and 180 participants. He told reporters on February 12 to expect the presidents of about 115 bishops' conferences, a dozen heads of Eastern Churches, prefects of Vatican congregations directly involved with Vatican norms regarding abuse and negligence,



eight delegates from the men's Union of Superiors General, 10 delegates from the women's International Union of Superiors General, three members of the Pope's Council of Cardinals who are not presidents of their bishops' conference and four members of the organising committee.

Everyone invited will be expected to learn what his or her responsibilities are as a leader or a bishop and to know the Church laws and procedures that already exist to protect the young.

**2.** Organisers hope that by listening to victims and leaders who have learned things the hard way, participants will be inspired to adopt a culture of accountability and transparency.

Hearing what abuse and negligence have done to people has the power to transform the listener, "to truly open the mind and heart", Jesuit Fr Hans Zollner told reporters.

Just to be sure those voices are heard, the meeting will also feature testimonies from survivors from countries where the reality of abuse is still largely ignored, said the priest, an abuse expert who is part of the meeting's organising committee.

He said the word "accountability" doesn't even exist in many languages, which often means that culture might lack a clear or coherent understanding of this key concept.

For that reason,

the summit will devote a day to discussing accountability and "what structures, procedures and methods are effective" and viable in the Catholic Church, he said.

Church leaders must know what the norms are, he said, but the meeting also will stress that the procedures themselves "will not magically solve a problem."

For example, he said, it was "a source of delusion" for US Catholics when the 2002 Dallas Charter did not fix everything.

In fact, the meeting will not be about producing any documents, but pushing people to take the needed steps toward greater transparency and accountability, Fr Lombardi said.

Those steps already are spelled out, he said, in Pope Francis' 2016 document, *As a Loving Mother*, on the accountability of bishops and religious superiors.

"It must be put into practice effectively," he said, adding that he was "convinced and firmly hope that this meeting will give a push in that direction."

**3.** There will be a kind of "parallel assembly" as large numbers of survivors and advocacy groups converge on Rome to call for greater accountability, action and reform.

A variety of events are planned, including an evening 'Vigil for Justice' near the Vatican and a 'March for Zero Tolerance' to St Peter's Square, but a major

focus will be media outreach and getting the voice and recommendations of laypeople and victims – many who had gone unheard for years – listened to.

**"The Pope warned against the tendency to play the victim, to scold, discredit, disparage others and point fingers"**

**4.** Pope Francis will be present throughout the meeting, which will include plenary sessions, working groups, prayer, a penitential liturgy and a closing Mass.

In letters to the bishops of Chile and the US, Pope Francis has made clear what he thinks the Church needs to do to respond to the abuse crisis.

Administrative solutions involving new policies and norms are not enough, he has said.

He told Chile's bishops that abuse and its cover-up "are indicators that something is bad in the Church body."

Therefore, they must not only "address the concrete cases," but also "discover the dynamics that made it possible for such attitudes and evils to occur".

Those attitudes are driven by the temptation "to save ourselves, to save our reputation", he told the Chilean bishops.

In his letter to the US bishops, he warned against the tendency to play the victim, to scold, discredit, disparage others and point fingers.

**5.** Expect the meeting to be one critical step along a very long journey that began decades ago

and must continue.

Further measures will be taken after the meeting, Fr Zollner has said. For instance, a task force made up of child protection experts "will probably be instituted in the various continents" to help bishops create, strengthen and implement guidelines.

The different "teams" of the task force should be able to help "for years to come to measure the success of this exercise of realising one's own responsibility, even on the global level, in the face of public expectations," he told the Vatican newspaper in January.

Even though the Church is well aware of larger, related problems of abuses of power, conscience and abuse and violence against seminarians, religious women and other adults, the meeting will focus exclusively on protecting minors from abuse, Frs Zollner and Lombardi said.

The idea is that the attitude and spirit needed to protect the most vulnerable of the Church's members are the same that will protect and promote respect for the integrity and dignity of everyone.

In fact, Fr Lombardi said, "I see this as a test of the profundity of the reform" of the Church called for by Pope Francis.

In other words, the Pope wants people "to examine how we live out our mission, with what coherence and how we can convert our attitudes, both in regard to our attention and compassion for those who suffer, as well as our consistent witness to the dignity of children, of women, and so on".

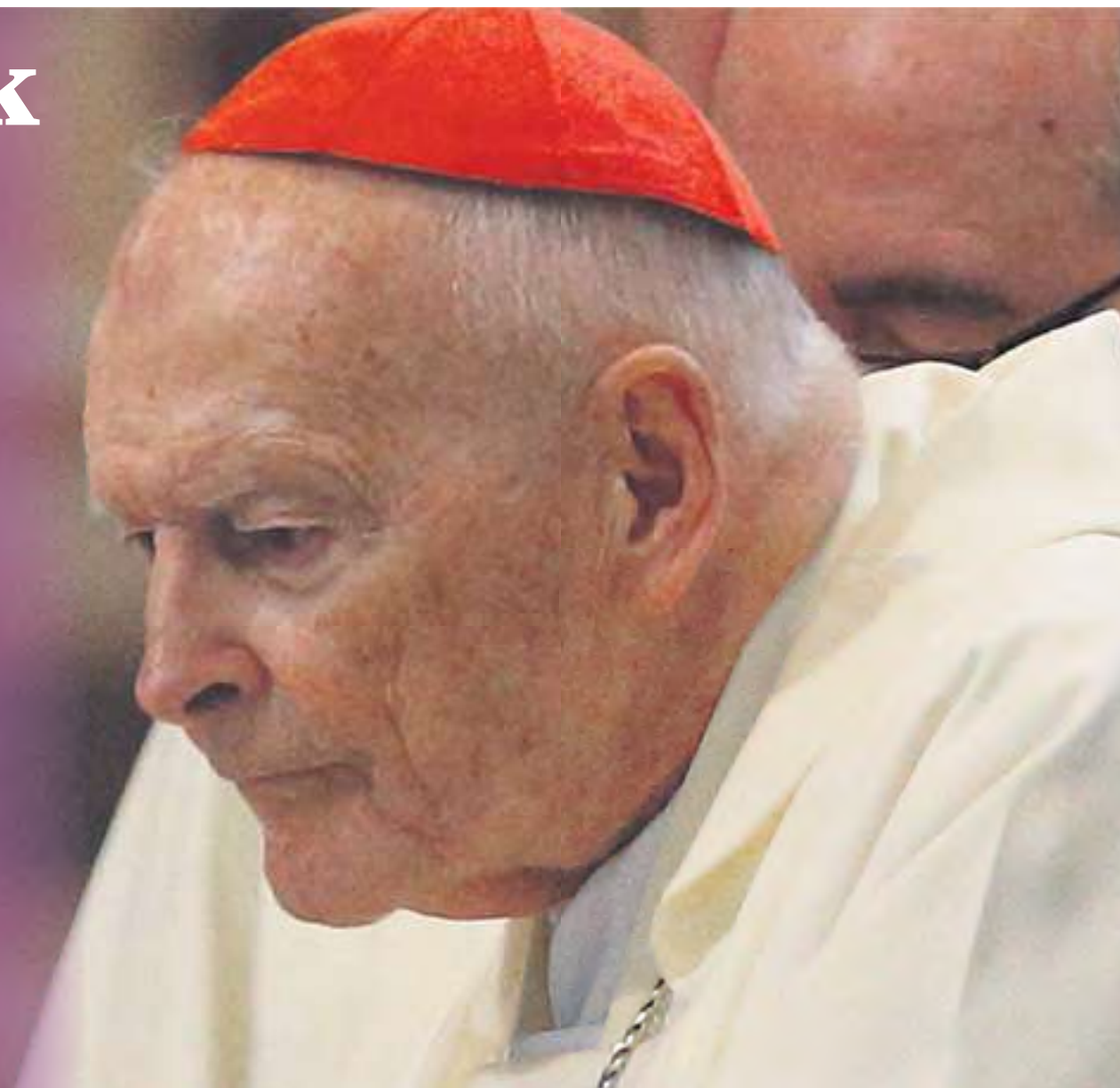
**Carol Glatz is a writer with CruXnow.com**



Fr Hans Zollner leads a briefing for journalists prior to the conference.



# McCarrick decision seen as a sign that no-one is above the law



**P**ope Francis' historic decision to defrock Cardinal Theodore McCarrick at the weekend (technically, to dismiss him from the clerical state) prompted an immediate wave of responses from US prelates, who lauded the decision as an important step in the Church's broader reforms on clergy sex abuse.

Both the current heads of Metuchen and Newark, New Jersey, where McCarrick served as bishop and archbishop respectively, issued statements.

"It is profoundly disheartening and disturbing to know that a Church leader, who served and led our Archdiocese of Newark for 14 years, acted in a way that is contrary to the Christian way of life as well as his vocation as a priest of Jesus Christ," wrote Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark.

"I am grateful to Pope Francis for his leadership throughout this difficult investigation and decision. His determination reflects his resolve to protect the weak and vulnerable, respect human dignity, accept responsibility and reinforce the Church's commitment to healing, reconciliation, and solidarity with victims," he continued.

"We unite in prayer, support, and service with our Holy Father as he leads the Church to console our brothers and sisters in their suffering," Tobin said.

Bishop James Checchio of

**US bishops have welcomed the Pope's decision on the disgraced former cardinal as a sign of real reform writes Christopher White**



Metuchen said, "It is difficult to find the right and appropriate words to share with you after hearing the news this morning from the Holy See about the removal from the priesthood of our founding bishop."

"Theodore McCarrick will always be associated with the history of our diocese, and his legacy has become one of scandal and betrayal. However, I was reminded in prayer that our diocese is not founded on Theodore McCarrick, but Christ the Lord, who renews his Church in every age," he continued.

## Removal

"The announcement of his removal from the priesthood by the Church is a just response to the hidden destructive life that he apparently led, and a signal to the Church throughout the world that everyone in the Church is called to the integrity of the Gospel. I am grateful for the leadership of Pope Francis in acting decisively, in expediting this process and coming to this appropriate conclusion,"

wrote Checchio.

The statement from the Archdiocese of Washington, where McCarrick ended his career in 2006 as its cardinal archbishop, said that the Pope's decision "underscores the gravity of his action."

The statement from Washington, however, was left unsigned by a particular individual, as the archdiocese is still waiting for a successor to Cardinal Donald Wuerl, whose resignation was accepted by Francis last October following criticism of his handling of sex abuse cases as bishop of Pittsburgh in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), said the move "is a clear signal that abuse will not be tolerated. No bishop, no matter how influential, is above the law of the Church."

"For all those McCarrick abused, I pray this judgement will be one small step, among many, toward healing. For us bishops, it

strengthens our resolve to hold ourselves accountable to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am grateful to Pope Francis for the determined way he has led the Church's response," he wrote.

In addition, Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, who heads the Pope's Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, said: "The seriousness of the final dismissal notwithstanding, it cannot in and of itself provide healing for those so terribly harmed by the former archbishop's scandalous violations of his ministry or for their families."

**Both O'Malley and DiNardo will be in Rome this week to participate in the Pope's high stakes summit**

"Also, the Holy Father's action, by itself, will not bring about the healing needed in the Catholic community and our wider society; both are justifiably appalled and outraged that the former archbishop could have for so long inflicted harm on minors and young adults vulnerable in the life of the Church.

"As leaders for the Church, as cardinals and bishops, we are rightfully judged by our actions and not our words," he wrote.

Both O'Malley and DiNardo will be in Rome this week to participate in the Pope's high stakes summit on clerical sex abuse, convening all of the heads of bishops' conferences around the globe beginning

February 21.

Other bishops throughout the US also weighed in. Bishop Michael Olson in Fort Worth, Texas, said: "I am supportive and grateful to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for his irrevocable decision to dismiss Theodore McCarrick from the clerical state after due process... justice entails that anyone who assisted him in these actions or covered them up also be held accountable."

Bishop Don Kettler of Saint Cloud, Minnesota, took to Twitter to write: "I hope the Vatican's decision to remove Theodore McCarrick from the priesthood helps bring healing to the victims & all hurt by the sin of sexual abuse. It's a positive step toward increased accountability as the Holy Father prepares to convene this coming week's abuse summit."

In addition to members of the hierarchy, the University of Notre Dame, widely considered the nation's preeminent Catholic institution of higher education, announced it is rescinding its honorary degree bestowed to the now former cardinal and priest in 2008.

James Grein, one of McCarrick's victims, issued a statement saying that "there are no winners here".

"I am happy that the Pope believed me," Grein said. "His great historical and holy situation is giving rise to all Catholics and victims of abuse across the world."

**Christopher White** is a writer with Cruxnow.com



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Abstinence is the default Friday penance

**Dear Editor,** Prof. Stephen Bullivant suggests the Irish bishops follow their English and Welsh counterparts and reintroduce Friday abstinence (IC 7/2/2019).

Until 1966, healthy adult Catholics had to abstain from flesh meat on Friday. In 1966, St Paul VI allowed for substitution of abstinence with certain good works. St John Paul II confirmed this in Canon 1253 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, making Friday (except Solemnities) a day of penance. Local Bishops' Conferences were empowered to regulate this, which the Irish Bishops did later that year. Our Bishops allow a wide variety of alternatives to abstinence, but it is up to the individual Catholic to know their undertaking.

For example, one may attend

Mass on Friday or forgo alcohol or donate to a charity instead of abstaining from meat, but it must be a conscious choice. Abstinence is the default, what might be called the ordinary Friday penance; anything else is an extraordinary form. It might surprise readers that this is one of our obligations as Catholics in Ireland and it has been so for nearly 36 years, even if it doesn't bind under the pain of sin.

It has been said abandoning Friday abstinence was a greater blow to Catholic identity than the near disappearance of Latin from the liturgy.

I would not advocate reviving abstinence to suit some secular worthies admired by the media but remote from its burdens on ordinary people in the name of a perceived

good (veganism may have its own economic and environmental impact).

We could do worse, however, than look to the Orthodox, now Ireland's fastest growing religious group. In comparison, our ascetic practices on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are dwarfed by their fasts through Advent and Lent. The restoration of Friday abstinence would go some way towards common ground with the Orthodox and resurrecting something which has been part of Christianity since apostolic days. If it means solidarity with the developing world poor or if it helps the environment, so much the better.

*Yours etc.,  
Peadar Laighléis,  
Laytown, Co Meath.*

### Clerical celibacy – why can't it be both?

**Dear Editor,** Regarding clerical celibacy, why does it have to be one or the other? Why not both? In a book I wrote some time ago and in letters to the Catholic press I have suggested that both states could be accommodated in the Church.

While the general celibacy rule could remain for the

secular priests, the Church might consider establishing a religious order of married men who would become ordained. They would work side by side with the celibate clergy as do the priests in religious orders at present. Of course they would not live in community but with their families.

Some Catholics do not

seem to realise that while priesthood is a bar to marriage, marriage is not a bar to priesthood. The reason why some Anglican priests are ordained when they become Catholics is because their Anglican ordination is not recognised by the Catholic Church. Not all Anglicans are in this situation if they have

received their ordination elsewhere.

Why not establish such a religious order and see how it works out? The Catholic Church has many married priests in the Eastern Rites in full communion with Rome.

*Yours etc.,  
Francis Bailey,  
Killiney, Co. Dublin.*

### Is torture not a problem?

**Dear Editor,** It was disappointing to read that Fianna Fáil's frontbench spokesperson on Foreign Affairs refused to tell *The Irish Catholic* whether or not he spoke with Iran's ambassador to Ireland about the persecution of Christians (IC 14/2/2019). It is difficult to interpret this stonewalling as other than an admission of silence.

Seemingly Iranian Christians are routinely interned and tortured – is Fianna Fáil not troubled about this? Back in 2017 Fianna Fáil's then Foreign Affairs spokesman pushed the Government to recognise ISIS' actions towards Christians as genocide. I know we can sell things to Iran that we couldn't to ISIS, but it'd be nice if our onetime 'natural party of Government' would have the courage to call a spade a spade for all that.

*Yours etc.,  
Marianne Brady,  
Dundalk, Co. Louth.*



### Dublin's parish structure has failed Irish speakers

**Dear Editor,** Dr Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin asked each parish pastoral council to canvass parishioners in respect of, *inter alia* (a) how can we keep the Faith, promote the Gospel and pass it on to future generations, and (b) how can we as a Christian community be more relevant to all people.

It is evident that a number of priests simply do not have any understanding or appreciation of the pastoral needs of Irish-speaking Catholics. This raises the question as to whether students for the priesthood are made aware that there are Irish-speaking people in the archdiocese, and that Irish-language courses form part of their training.

It is clearly evident that the vast majority of the 199 parishes in the archdiocese have totally abandoned any and all aspects of the pastoral care of Irish-speaking Catholics. The parish structure has failed Irish-speaking Catholics and is not fit for purpose.

Separate pastoral care arrangements are necessary throughout the archdiocese in order to cater for all aspects of pastoral care, general and educational, of Irish-speaking Catholics. It is necessary to recognise that there are Irish-speaking Catholics living throughout the archdiocese and that comprehensive pastoral care, appropriate to their language and their culture, should be

willingly available.

Suggestions as to a structured programme of pastoral care were submitted to Archbishop Martin five years ago but there has been no evidence of any progress in the matter; in fact, the opposite has been the case. It is clear that this matter cannot be resolved at parish level. The 'buck' of pastoral care of Irish-speaking Catholics in the archdiocese of Dublin is ensconced in the middle of the archbishop's desk and will remain there until he implements a comprehensive structure to address this.

*Yours etc.,  
Seamus Mac Giolla Rua,  
Clontarf, Dublin 3.*

## facebook community

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

### Should churches use contactless card systems to allow people to contribute to the collection, or does it risk making the Church too commercial?

I agree that for weekly envelope contributions, direct debit is a good idea. For the payment of pilgrimages, Mass stipends and general church shop purposes, this might be a safer way to offer your 'donation'. However to have a machine at the back of the church is intrusive, cheeky and oversteps the mark. – **David Toomey**

It's a good idea, not everyone carries cash now and I know with two kids in tow I sometimes forget to go and get money from a cash machine. – **Katie Jennings**

The only people I've seen giving out about this on social media so far are those who don't attend Mass anyway. It's so funny...they're outraged and it doesn't even affect them. I think it's very handy, we rarely have cash on us. – **Joanne Marie Burke**

A good idea – as it's not obligatory to use it, you can still continue on as before, if you so wish... – **John Dowling**

No, I do not agree with the idea. Far too commercial and I guess the Church may lose out as older people will not use cards and younger people that go to Mass do not bother with collections anyway. The weekly envelope is more personal. – **Ethna Irwin-Morris**

I personally think it's a vile idea, people going to Mass who contribute, will continue to do so, in the envelope or whatever is their way of giving. Contactless payments are more suitable in shops etc, including church shops. – **Majella Beattie**

It's facing the reality that one day we will be a cashless society. – **Peter O'Reilly**

I think it's a good idea. If I understand correctly, contributing to the collection using a contactless credit or debit card is only an option. The cash option will remain available.

We probably don't realize that the young generation is generally cashless. When they buy a sandwich in a college cafeteria, they pay €2.50 by card. When they order a pizza, one of them pays with a card, and others make quick transfers. If the Church sticks to the option 'cash only', we can quickly run out of any money. – **Maciej Kucera**

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

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis speaks to members of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments during their plenary meeting at the Vatican. Photos: CNS



**COLOMBIA:** Two Yanomami men speak at a gathering of indigenous people from throughout the Amazon in Leticia.



**MEXICO:** A US Border Patrol boat rescues migrants crossing the Rio Grande toward the US, seen from Piedras Negras.



**POLAND:** Ursuline Sister Jolanta Olech, secretary-general of the Warsaw-based Conference of Higher Superiors of Female Religious Orders which has said priests must stop sexually molesting religious sisters, in line with efforts to improve treatment of women in the traditionally Catholic country.

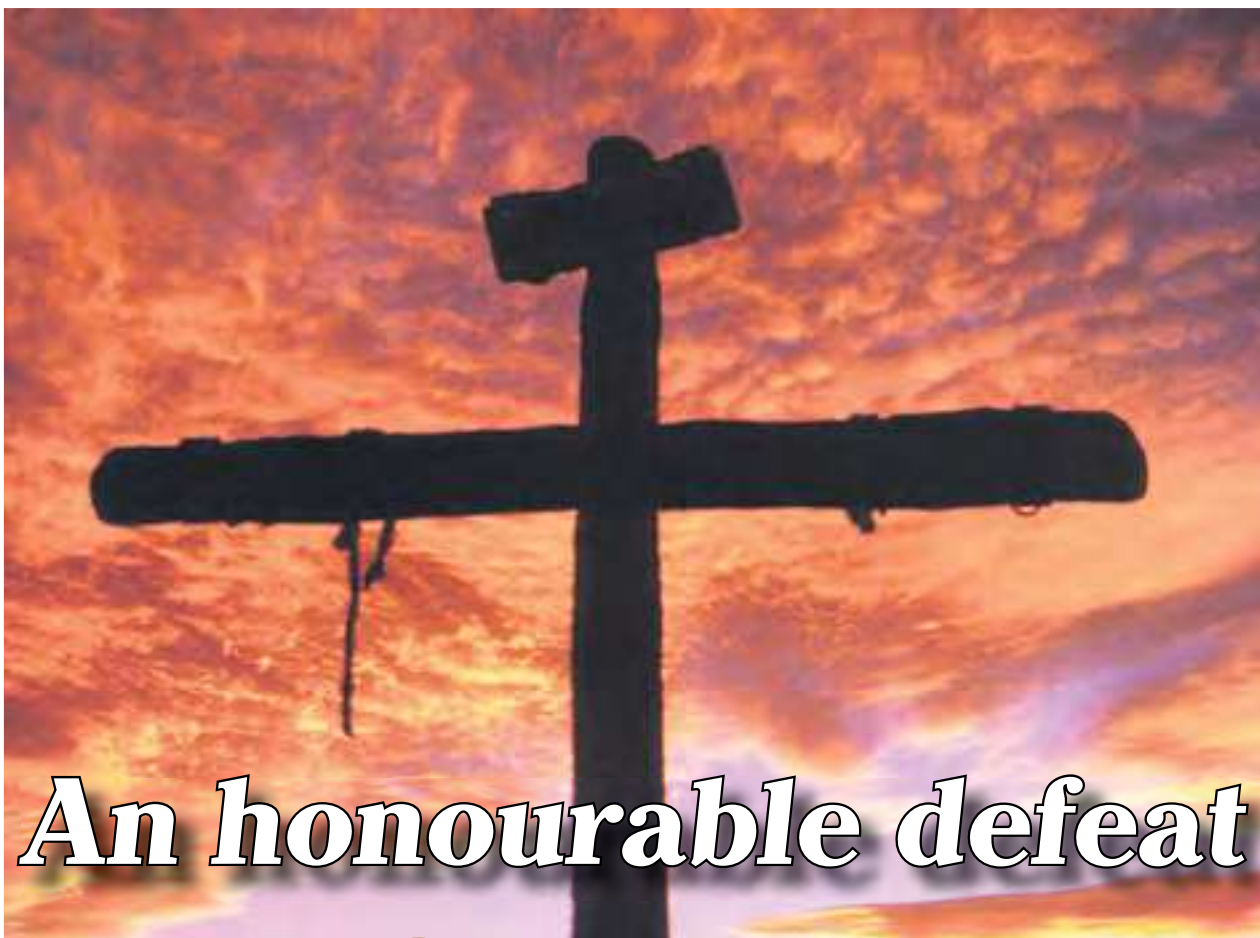


**USA:** Bishop Robert Brennan, auxiliary bishop of Rockville Centre, New York, helps a volunteer serve soup at a Catholic Charities-run respite center in McAllen, Texas.



**ROME:** A member of the Carabinieri honour guard is pictured outside a ceremony marking the 90th anniversary of the signing of the Lateran Pacts between the Holy See and Italy, at Palazzo Borromeo.





# An honourable defeat

In 1970, the famed British writer Iris Murdoch wrote a novel entitled *A Fairly Honorable Defeat*. The story had numerous characters, both good and bad, but ultimately took its title from the travails of one character, Tallis Browne, who represents all that is decent, altruistic and moral among the various characters.

Despite being betrayed by most everyone, he stays the course in terms himself never betraying trust. But the story does not end well for him.

On the basis of his seeming defeat, Murdoch poses the question: where's justice? Where's fairness? Shouldn't goodness triumph? Murdoch, an agnostic, suggests that in reality a good life doesn't always make for the triumph of goodness. However, if goodness sustains itself and does not betray itself, its defeat will be honourable.

So, for her, what you want to avoid is a dishonourable defeat, meaning: Defeat you will face, your goodness notwithstanding. Sometimes you cannot save the world or even the situation. But you can save your own integrity and bring that moral component to the world and to the situation and by doing that you preserve your own dignity. You went down in defeat, but in honour. Goodness then will not have suffered a dishonourable defeat.

That's a beautiful stoicism and if you aren't a believer it's about as wise a counsel as there is: be true to yourself! Don't betray who and what you are, even if you



**Fr Rolheiser**

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

find yourself as unanimity-minus-one. However, Christianity, while respecting this kind of stoicism, places the question of victory and defeat into a very different perspective.

Inside our Christian faith, defeat and victory are radically redefined. We speak, for instance, of the victory of the Cross, of the day Jesus died as "Good" Friday, of the transforming power of humiliation, and of how we gain our lives by losing them.

**“Paul also struggled with explaining how a humiliating defeat in this world could be in fact a victory”**

Earthly defeat, for us, can still be victory, just as earthly victory can be a sad defeat. Indeed, in a Christian perspective, without even considering the next life, sometimes our defeats and humiliations are what allows depth and richer life to flow into us and sometimes our victories rob us of the very things that bring us community, intimacy, and happiness. The Paschal Mystery radically redefines both defeat and victory.

But this understanding doesn't come easily. It's the antithesis of cultural wisdom. Indeed, it didn't even come easy for Jesus'

contemporaries. After Jesus died in the most humiliating way a person could die at that time, by being crucified, the first generation of Christians had a massive struggle with both the fact that he died and particularly with the manner in which he died.

First, for them, if Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, he wasn't supposed to die at all. God is above death and certainly beyond being killed by humans. Moreover, as a creedal doctrine, they believed that death was the result of sin and, thus, if someone did not sin, he or she was not supposed to die. But Jesus had died. Finally, most faith-perplexing of all, was the humiliating manner of his death.

Crucifixion was designed by the Romans not just as capital punishment but as a manner of death that totally and publicly humiliated the person's body. Jesus died a most humiliating death. No one called Good Friday "good" during the first days and years following his death. However, given his resurrection, they intuited without explicitly understanding it, that Jesus' defeat in the crucifixion was the ultimate triumph and that the categories that make for victory and defeat were now forever different.

Initially, they lacked the words to express this. For several years after the

Resurrection, Christians were reluctant to mention the manner of Jesus' death. It was a defeat in the eyes of the world and they were at loss to explain it. So they remained mostly silent about it. St Paul's conversion and his subsequent insights changed this. As someone who was raised in the Jewish faith, Paul also struggled with explaining how a humiliating defeat in this world could be in fact a victory. However, after his conversion to Christianity he eventually understood how goodness could take on sin and even "become sin itself" for our sake. That radically flipped our conceptions of defeat and victory. The cross was now seen as the ultimate victory and, instead of the humiliation of the cross being a source of shame, it now became the crown jewel: "I preach nothing but the Cross of Christ." That gave us the Passion narratives.

## Defeat

We live in a world that, mostly, still defines defeat and victory in terms of who gets to be on top in terms of success, adulation, fame, influence, reputation, money, comfort, pleasure and security in this life. There will be plenty of defeats in our lives and if we lack a Christian perspective then the best we can then do is to take Iris Murdoch's advice to heart: realistically, goodness will not triumph, so try to avoid a dishonourable defeat.

Our Christian Faith, while honouring that truth, challenges us to something more.

## QUESTIONS of faith

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

## What are the Gnostic Gospels?

Most people have heard of or watched pseudo-Christian movies like *The Da Vinci Code* or *Stigmata* which make claims that Jesus had a secret marriage with Mary Magdalene or that the Kingdom of God is in all of us. The role of these movies is to sensationalise commonly accepted teachings about Christianity by subverting them and offering a different perspective to undercut the commonly believed message.

Believe it or not, the plots of these movies are based on real ancient documents, referred to by academics as the Gnostic gospels. Gnosticism, which derives from the Greek word 'knowledge', is the modern name for a variety of sects and religious beliefs that became prominent around the 2nd Century following the flowering of Christianity.

At the heart of Gnosticism is the belief that the material world is bad and the spiritual realm is good. In contradiction with the Genesis account of creation where God describes the material world as "very good", Gnostics viewed the material world as irredeemable, and sought to focus solely on things of the spirit.

This hatred of the material world didn't just apply to objects but also our own bodies. They held that our souls are trapped inside our bodies, much like gold in mud.

## Goal

The goal for the Gnostics then was to escape our inferior body and reach new spiritual heights, which was only possible through a special secret knowledge given to a few select people. This knowledge, Gnostics believed, was given by Jesus and through learning and living it, you would receive salvation.

Often in the 2nd and 3rd

Centuries, Gnostics would try to promote their ideas as true forms of Christianity by writing false gospels and attributing them to the disciples of Jesus. The 2nd-Century Gospel of Judas for example, recounts how Judas Iscariot was really Jesus' true disciple, and he had taught him the real secrets of his divine message.

The Church, however, has routinely condemned Gnosticism for a number of reasons, mainly because it suggests the salvation is based on how much you know, and secondly, because it spouts the belief that our bodies are separate from our souls.

## Composites

Catholics believe that we are 'body-soul composites', which is to say, there is intimate unity between our bodies and souls. The body, rather than a mere appendage, is conjoined to the soul, and it is this relationship which constitutes the human person.

This theological belief is primarily rooted in the Incarnation, where Jesus truly became flesh and the Resurrection where Jesus' spirit didn't just rise again, but also his body. Often, we have the misbelief that in heaven, we will be disembodied spirits, but Catholics hold that in heaven we also have bodies.

We're not entirely sure what they will look like but following the example of Jesus who had a transformed body after he rose from the dead, we can gain an insight as to what it might be like. As a reminder of the heresy of Gnosticism and the true character of Catholicism, simply remember the words we pray during the Nicene Creed: "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come".

**Got a question or comment?**  
Email [colm@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:colm@irishcatholic.ie)



# Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today

**Calling all men:**  
Rise and shine this Lent  
Page 30



## Anyone listening?

**Donal Harrington**

**I**n considering any particular approach to or plan for listening, it is important to ask three questions: Who? Why? What next?

First we ask; who will we be listening to? We want to listen to people who go to church and we want to listen to people who do not. Different methods reach different audiences.

Second, we ask; what is the purpose of the listening? It could be for our own sake; to gather information, to learn, to help us plan. Or the aim could be about the people we are listening to. It could be to give them a voice. It could be to

share experience. It could be for the experience itself of being listened to. If so, the process itself may be more valuable than any outcome.

Third, we think ahead to what comes next. If we listen, we are also committing ourselves to taking on board what we hear. Therefore, some follow-up is usually part of the process. If so, it needs to be built in from the start. Some listening is for its own sake, complete in itself. Other listening is only complete when there is a response. Without that, people may wonder if they were really listened to at all.

» Continued on Page 28

**Welcome to this week's Cornerstone**

### Scripture:

This week's reading is from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians.

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### Fish & tips:

This week presents some ideas from Irish parishes for Lent 2019.

Page 29

### A welcoming parish?

Frank Brown asks this important and challenging question alongside a collection of connected questions.

Page 30



Please spread the word and join us on the journey of the building tomorrow's parish today – a familial community of faith, fostering authentic, intentional discipleship. If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on [eoin@irishcatholic](mailto:eoin@irishcatholic).



# Anyone listening?

» Continued from Page 27



**Donal Harrington** outlines a number of ways in which the parish can listen to people

## Survey

One form of listening is to carry out a census-like survey in order to ascertain just who is living in the parish. With the help of census figures we can work up a 'profile' of the population in the parish area. We find out the age profile of the parish, socio-economic groupings, and so on. We can compare the profile with what goes on currently. Is our parish and its activities geared to the population living here? In this way, listening feeds into planning.

## Suggestion box

Here, a box is placed at each entrance to the church (possibly in other locations in

the parish also), with pens and paper alongside. The question or questions being asked can be displayed on a notice, as well as on the reply forms. The initiative and the reasons for it can be introduced to people at Mass, as well as in the newsletter and on the website.

The choice of questions deserves time and thought. While this form of listening is limited to those who go to church, it has its uses. It puts out a message about wanting to listen. What fruit it bears depends a lot on how well it is presented to people. Also, if something emerges and is seen to be addressed, straight away the usefulness of listening has shot up in people's estimation.

## Questionnaires

The heading is plural because questionnaires can take different forms. The most familiar is when the questionnaire is either left in the church or put in letterboxes. Another option is to call to people with the questionnaire, explain it, then call back to collect it later. Usually, the purpose of such questionnaires is to gather people's views about what is going on in the parish and what is needed.

This idea has its ups and downs. There is almost always a low rate of return. The anonymity makes it easy for people to criticise or to throw things back on the parish. There will be people saying, 'what you should

be doing is ...' There will be people venting about their hobby horses. But those are just the downsides, and are inevitable. If it is carefully prepared, with a clear aim in mind and well presented to the parish, a questionnaire can provide useful data. A lot of the feedback will be predictable. But if some action results, people will have a sense of being listened to.

Another possibility is handing out a questionnaire during Sunday Mass. For example, I was once involved in a survey about adult faith. It had been explained to the congregation the previous Sunday that there would be a questionnaire the next week. After a homily on the topic, pens and paper were handed out. The page listed possible ways of enriching adult faith, such as: how to pray; exploring Scripture;

nourishment for parents; faith and justice; one's own spiritual journey. People numbered off their preferences.

About 750 replies came in, and a very clear picture of people's own perceived needs emerged. This shows the potential for other topics too. In a very simple but structured way, the exercise recovers high quality feedback from a large number of people. It gets people reflecting on themselves and their parish, and makes for a follow-through that is a practical response to felt needs.

A variant on this is to devote the homilies for a few weekends to reflections on a theme such as 'Parish, today and tomorrow' or 'Will our children have faith?' There are pens and paper on the final day, for people to respond to what they have heard over

the few weeks. There could also be a short gathering after the Mass, to share and to gather people's reactions and responses.

## Listening to ministry Groups

Listening to those involved in ministries has two purposes. Part of it is for the groups themselves. It is a form of acknowledgment. They are asked about their experience, how they are getting on, what needs they have. They are invited to make observations, based on their ministry, about where things are at in the parish and what needs a response. The session(s) could also incorporate an element of enrichment for those taking part, to deepen their spirituality.

The other part of it is for the parish. listening helps

the parish evaluate how the groups are getting on and what needs to be improved. It helps identify gaps in what is being addressed in the parish. It helps planning. But maybe most of all, it brings many more voices in on conversations about where the parish is at and what the priorities for planning should be.

There are different ways of carrying out this listening. Groups could be met with one by one, or they could meet in clusters, all those involved in related ministries coming together. Or they could be brought together in one large gathering, where there is a mix of ministries. Each has its own merits. Again there are the two outcomes: collecting feedback for planning, and people feeling listened to.



## 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.

### 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

The first man, Adam, as scripture says, became a living soul; but the last Adam has become a life-giving spirit. That is, first the one with the soul, not the spirit, and after that, the one with the spirit. The first man, being from the earth, is earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven. As this earthly man was, so are we on earth; and as the heavenly man is, so are we in heaven. And we, who have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man.

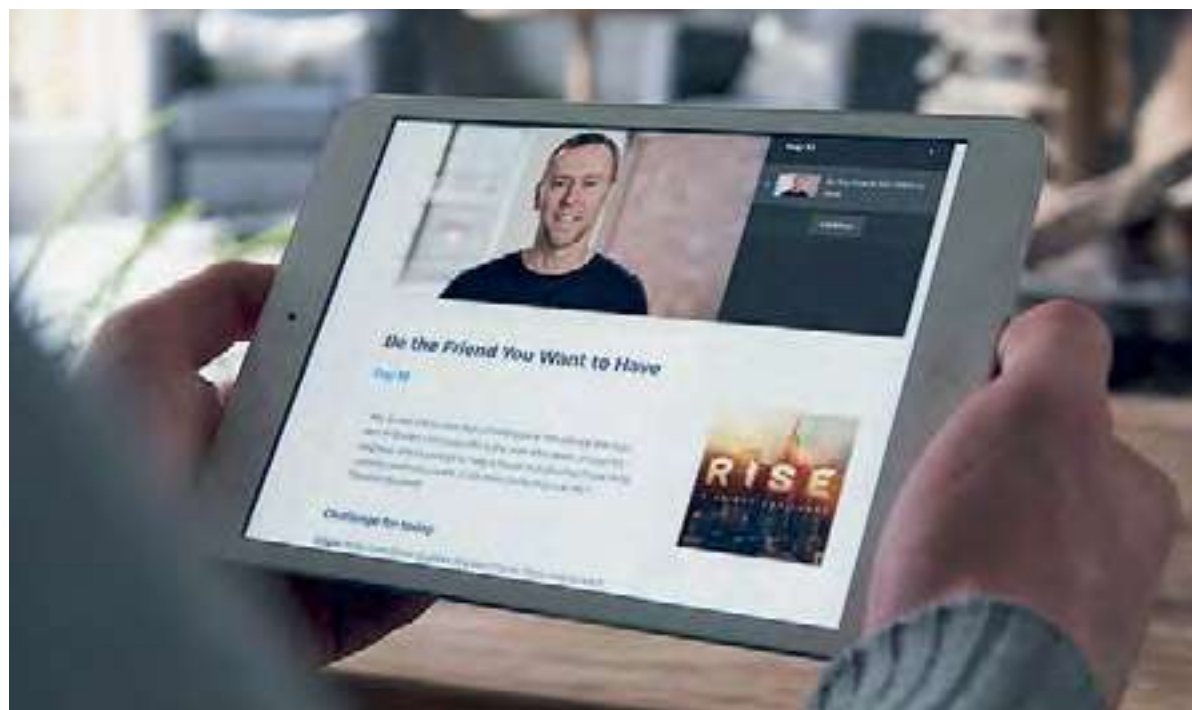
### Spend some time in prayer with the reading.

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.





# Rise and shine this Lent



Imagine if hundreds of men at your parish stepped up and journeyed together, held each other accountable, and committed to becoming better husbands, fathers, brothers... it would literally change your parish, and the world. Parishes around the world are using RISE as a tool to strengthen and engage all men, even those who will never come to a group study. Parish leaders may review it for free and see the real-time impact it's having on men's lives.

RISE is the brainchild of Chris Stefanick (of Real Life Catholic), Bill Donaghy (of the Theology of the Body Institute) and Cardinal Studios. It is a 30-day challenge to men everywhere to start reclaiming their true identity in Christ and their role in the world.

So, what is involved? Essentially, it's 30 days of videos and challenges done individually online, and with additional group meeting options using the Planning Guide available on the website also. Each day has a short video and practical content for dealing with the unprecedented challenges that men face today. Although RISE is a self-directed program, it is set up with the intention of a group of men journeying through the program together, offering encouragement, prayer and fellowship. Each man is encouraged to do RISE with a "brother." This is a critical component to the challenge as it builds accountability and friendship based on a common mission. Archbishop Chaput of Philadelphia has said that "RISE is precisely what is needed today to help men understand and live their unique mission in the world." The archbishop added, "if every man took the challenge, we'd see a transformation in our homes and parishes."

Here's what founder Chris Stefanick had to say about RISE:

"There is a particular way men are called to live: they are called to bless, lead, provide, protect, and love. We see how society crumbles when men don't do their job, so it is an important role. In fact, we can see this is why men have been targeted, but also why we have to push back. Rather than dwelling on the problem, we are pointing to the solution in their everyday lives. The real message of RISE is to help men be who they are. Every man has four dimensions to his identity — father, son, brother, and spouse (even if they aren't married) — that offer specific ways that men love. These are the ways they are called to be like God. So, there are very specific challenges around those four things and Rise is a way to help them live them out. It is about helping men to be intentional about who they are and develop down to earth habits that can change their life forever. This program [RISE] offers real fellowship to men, even if they are not in same town, praying for each other and providing spiritual comradery. I've never seen guys go through something like this, with more authentic connections, encouraging each other, pledging to pray for each other and lifting to each up. It is a real connection and probably why the internet exists. It is the best the internet has to offer. One topic has been about purity," said Stefanick, "and these men are being honest with each other and also pledging to pray for each other through this challenge. Others have lived with despair and are looking for hope, and men have reached out in love to them, bring transformation. The idea that people are being cared for by a digital Christian community are concepts that don't usually go together, but with

prayer it is real. There is a real community forming. And real men are being healed, encouraged, lifted up, and transformed — and changing the world for the better with every step they take closer to the men they were created to be."

**“It's easy to run a RISE Challenge! See their website for the Planning Guide and other resources with everything needs for every parish to try it.”**

In its first year, RISE transformed thousands of men's lives all around the world. Parishes and groups have used the RISE 30-Day Challenge to cast a wide-net to all the men of the parish and bring them together into a common mission like never before. It's easy to run a RISE Challenge! See their website for the Planning Guide and other resources with everything needs for every parish to try it.

Join men from around the world this Lent for an experience unlike any other starting March 6th and begin building tomorrow's parish today. See [www.MenRiseUp.org](http://www.MenRiseUp.org) or [www.cardinalstudios.org/rise](http://www.cardinalstudios.org/rise) for more information and all the resources.



## Fish & Tips

### Daily Ideas for Disciples

## LENT 2019

Further to the international and internet based RISE initiative for men, here is a sample of what parishes are planning for Lent this year locally here in Ireland — if you're nearby why not participate, and if you're not, perhaps there's an idea you could bring to your parish.

### Brackenstown Parish

#### Life in the Eucharist

Over five Tuesdays in Lent (beginning on March 12th), there will be a Retreat on the Eucharist held in the Parish Centre. As Catholics, we are called to participate in the Eucharist and in the life of the Church. Life in the Eucharist (LITE) provides for an opportunity for adults Catholics to share their faith. LITE was developed to help people learn more about our role as active participants in the Eucharist. There are five sessions, each concentrating on a different theme. The sessions are structured as an adult learning programme, so there is time for group discussion as well as input by the members of the LITE team. All are welcome to come along. There is a special invitation to people who come along to weekly Mass but would like to deepen their understanding of what Eucharist is all about. For more info or to book your place, please contact the Parish Office or email [niamh.morris@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:niamh.morris@dublindiocese.ie)

### Cabinteely Parish

#### 'Monday meet ups for Lent'

Let's gather, reflect and connect. St. Brigid's Parish are offering a series of three talks in our Parish Pastoral Centre in the weeks leading up to Easter.

1. Monday March 25th, Fr Alan Hilliard, Coordinator Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Service at TU Dublin. Theme of talk: 'Happy to Be Holy': Can holiness make any difference in our lives? Alan Hilliard's encouraging and 'relevant to life' presentation will take us on a journey through Pope Francis's latest writing 'Gaudete and Exsultate' (Rejoice and Be Glad!)

on how holiness is a matter for us all and is intimately connected to a life of personal and Christian Joy.

2. Monday April 1st, PJ Lynch (Children's Laureate/Illustrator of 'The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey', Kate Greenaway Medal winner, Knock Mosaic Artist. Theme of talk: Miracles and Moonshine: The value and role of Art and Beauty in our Churches and Sacred spaces. PJ Lynch's personal experience of how the recent 1,500,000-piece Knock apparition mosaic was conceived, designed and built, including examples of other of Sacred Art pieces/illustration he is currently working on.

3. Monday April 8th, Fr Pat Claffey - Divine Word Priest, Curate, St. Mary's, Haddington Road, lecturer in comparative religions in Trinity (Loyola Institute). Theme of talk: 'Secularisation - How do we respond?' Fr. Pat promises a lively, well researched presentation, inviting us all to acknowledge changes in contemporary culture and encouraging us to reflect, engage and dialogue. All talks take place in the Parish Pastoral Centre from 8pm to 9.30pm.

### Greystones Parish

#### Journey through Lent

We could consider the Way of the Cross as a pilgrimage or journey, following the path not only of Christ's journey through suffering and death to new life but also our own. Humanity and all of Creation is on a critical journey as we are challenged by climate change. Will this critical journey lead us towards sustainability and new life? These sessions will look at the Way of the Cross in the light of Pope Francis' teachings in Laudato Si. Thursdays of Lent beginning March 7th, 11 — 12noon Facilitator: Sr Miriam.

## SURVEY ON SACRAMENTS

A reminder that the Archdiocese of Dublin is seeking the views of parents, teachers, priests and parish personnel and the wider faith community on how we might improve the way we prepare and celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation.

As many people as possible are invited to take part in this online survey so as to get a wide range of views. Links for the survey and a short explainer video is available at [www.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.dublindiocese.ie). While the initiative is in the Archdiocese of Dublin, the idea and the survey questions could be used in other dioceses and parishes to aid fruitful discussion and much needed action across the country.



## EVANGELISATION

# A welcoming parish?

**Frank Brown** asks the important and challenging question: 'is your parish a welcoming parish?'

Of course our parish is welcoming! This is the obvious and quick answer you always get to this question, is your parish a welcoming parish? But sometimes we can be too close to the trees to see the wood. Sometimes we can take our welcome-ness for granted because we are familiar with the layout, practice and routine in our parish. It's always good to take a quick look around your parish with fresh eyes at least once a year and make small changes that may have a big impact!! Try it and see! It has become very clear in recent studies that people are positively impacted by warm and open hospitality in the parish and the parish community. To that end, here are some questions (and a few suggestions) that your parish (parish staff, parish pastoral council, parishioners, etc.) might consider. We would encourage you to ask these questions from the point of view of a new family thinking of registering in the parish, a visitor or a person making inquiry about the faith. They, rather than the established parishioners, are the ones for whom obvious hospitality is most important.

## THE PARISH GROUNDS AND FACILITIES

- Are the grounds well kept? Is the landscaping attractive and well-tended? Is the parish modelling care for the environment and sustainability? Is there clear signage?
- Is the vestibule of the Church welcoming, with up-to-date information, neat and tidy, with no out-of-date fliers or left-over envelopes and fliers hanging on the board?
- Is there a changing table in the toilets?
- Are the restrooms accessible for those with disabilities?
- Is the parlour/office where a priest might be meeting with a new member of the parish or someone preparing for marriage or arranging a funeral, a place where they will be comfortable, with pictures on the walls, comfortable chairs/couches, an appropriate table, the space not domi-

nated by a big desk?

- Is coffee/tea, water offered to people with appointments at the parish?

## THE PARISH OFFICE

- Is the office person/secretary welcoming, warmly greeting the person coming in? Do they smile, say hello, gently inquire how they might be of service? Is the person before them given priority over everything else?
- Are all people who come to the office/rectory door treated with the care and respect due their dignity as sons and daughters of God?
- If the person needs some more extensive care (beyond have a Mass offered, for example), are they offered a comfortable seat in the parlour/one of the offices and the office person helps them there, e.g. registering, getting their particular concerns and interests addressed, etc. Are they afforded privacy?
- Is there information on the parish readily available that the office person can provide? Does this information include the list of the staff, their positions and their direct phone numbers in their offices? Is the parish welcome integrated between the school and the parish, faith formation and the parish, outreach and the parish? Is this seamless? Is the broad scope of information available at all these points of access?
- What happens when a person desires to speak to a priest, if one is available? If a priest is not available, does the office manager graciously take steps to set up a future appointment with a priest or offer other helpful options?
- Is a priest contactable for sick calls and hospital needs?

## THE WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- Is the parish website attractive and user-friendly? Do we promote communication and promote the parish/gospel mission through web media? Does the parish reach to and communicate with its parishioners through social media platform?
- Is it welcoming, easy to get around to find the contacts and information one



needs? Do we have too much information on the web? Are there too many people able to change web content?

- Is it accurate and kept up to date?
- Have we involved some expert to tell us how it might be improved and what resources are available to help us do it?

## THE LITURGY

- Are their greeters at the entrances, welcoming people and, if appropriate, giving them a worship aid?
- Is there a place set aside for people with additional needs, e.g. wheelchairs, etc.?
- Are listening devices provided for the hearing impaired?
- Is the sound system adequate so that everyone in the Church can participate in the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist and hear the readings and the homily, wherever they sit?

- Is the music sing-able, and is the choir encouraging, supporting and enabling communal singing rather than replacing it?

- Are people encouraged to greet one another before the liturgy begins and perhaps given the time to share their names with one another?

- Does the presider greet the people at the beginning of Mass?

- Are the homilies emphasizing community, the Lord's welcome and forgiveness, rather than judgmentalisms about one group or another?

- Is the way the liturgy is celebrated sensitive to the various ethnic communities that make up the congregation and the parish?

- Do the priests greet the people outside after Mass as long as there are people around?

- Are Eucharistic Ministers trained to give a blessing to those who come up at Communion time and do not intend to receive the Eucharist? Are they trained to smile and personally encounter each communicant?

- Are there opportunities after Mass for people to gather for a time and greet one another? Are they encouraged to say hello to someone they don't know

during that time? Do the priests and other staff members stay around for that time and take particular notice of people who seem to be alone or whom he doesn't recognize?

- Is there tea and coffee provided after every Mass/service/occasion?

- Are there cards in the pews that newcomers and visitors are invited to fill out and place in the collection basket? Are they assured of a follow-up contact when they live in the area?

- Does that parish have a year-round Inquiry Process

for the RCIA instead of a school-year program in order that people desiring to look into becoming a Catholic have someplace to go immediately?

- Are the parishioners frequently encouraged to invite others, (friends, neighbours), to come with them to parish events, social events (e.g. dinners, performances), prayerful events (e.g. missions, special adult education offerings), especially inviting people who are non-practicing Catholics or not affiliated

- Is there a follow-up visit to the homes of new

parishioners by a member of a welcoming committee of the parish, with printed parish information provided and the name and number of that visiting parishioner who will be willing to serve as their contact person with the parish when the newcomers have questions about how to proceed? This same visitor may well be the one to invite newcomers to come with them to parish events, to Mass, etc. as well as just make a friendly phone-call from time to time to see how things are going and to stay in contact for the parish.



## Our Parish Celebrates Children & Young Families

Dear Parents of our **Young Parishioners**,

Our parish enthusiastically welcomes your growing family to fully celebrate with us.

May we suggest:

- **Relax.** God put the energy in little children. Don't feel you have to suppress it in God's house.
- **Sit towards the front or aisle** where it is easier for little ones to see and hear.
- **Quietly explain the parts of the Mass.**
- **Sing the hymns, pray the prayers and say the responses.** Children learn from your actions.
- **If you feel you must leave Mass with your child, please note that we have a soundproof side chapel that you are welcome to bring your children into. Please don't stop bringing your child to Mass - as Jesus said "Let the children come to me"**



### A Note to all Parishioners:

The presence of children is a gift to our Church. Like all of us, they are members of the Body of Christ and a reminder of the growth and future of our Church. Please welcome our children and their parents, and give them a big smile of encouragement!



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 21, 2019

## Personal Profile

Discovering the Way with St John Paul II's help

Page 34



## Is that a fair trade?



Unbeknownst to anyone who buys a product in Ireland, they could be seriously negatively impacting and perpetuating the suffering of a person who is being exploited somewhere in the world.

It's well known that in many countries, particularly in developing countries, workers are paid a pittance to work long hours in sub-par sometimes horrific conditions. Despite extremes often focused on in the media, there are many labourers working in textiles and farming that perhaps aren't being abused but their wages are so low due to pressure from foreign industry that they can barely make a living.



## Chai Brady looks into Fairtrade Fortnight

Making that connection and imploring people to be ethical consumers is one of the goals of Fairtrade Fortnight, which runs from February 25 to March 10.

One instance of an Irish person delving into the initiative is an Irish lay missionary who has been based in the Philippines for over 18 years. Hailing from Belfast she has been working on a project that gives women an opportunity to work in

favourable conditions making Fairtrade eco-friendly bags.

"They're managing their own time and they don't have quotas, they're also earning a living as opposed to a minimum wage," Helen Mitchell (ORDER) says.

"Obviously what we're doing does very much ties in with what's said in Laudato Si' [Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment], but I also think as Catholics prior to Laudato Si'

there's a sense of the common good and how as a community our actions, in the grand scheme of things, affect other people.

Her project began in 2006 and is called Wonders of Waste Bags (WoW). They recycle 80,000 plastic drink pouches a year and create over 2,000 bags.

### Awareness

Trócaire and missionary organisations are an example of this she says, and "people have an awareness, through our baptism, of a connection, we are all a community of Faith."

"So in some bizarre way as a Catholic I have a link with communities in Africa or in Australia even though I may never go to these places so there's

a sense of working towards a common goal."

Charity work has to be linked with work for justice, Helen says, and with WoW bags they are working towards addressing environmental destruction, plastic waste and Fairtrade.

"We work through solidarity networks in Ireland and the UK and all our sales are done via a network of volunteers. This way of working ensures maximum returns to the project which is 100% supported by sales income."

Speaking about the Philippines she says it is not unique to the country, but that the need for Fairtrade is severe.

"Be the change that you want to see, if everybody in Ireland

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## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### A view of the flu

For history lovers and those who want to discover more of their own heritage, the National Museum's Country Life department is offering a chance for attendees to learn about one of the most severe flus that hit the country.

The Enemy Within – The Spanish Flu in Ireland explores the legacy of the Spanish Flu which took hold in the early part of the 20th Century.

The flu outbreak in Ireland began in the summer of 1918 and is thought to have been brought to the country by soldiers returning from the Great War on the continent.

The exhibition investigates the folk medicines and rudimentary cures used by the public to combat the flu pandemic, which infected around 500 million people all around the world, and killed between 50 and 100 million.

In Ireland, 23,000 died and up to 800,000 were infected. The Castlebar display ends in April and admission is free.



**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** After a long and tiresome day of work, it's very convenient to fire a ready-made meal into the microwave and not have to worry about making a homemade dish.

While this has a short-term benefit, a new study appearing in *JAMA Internal Medicine* has shown that consuming higher levels of ultraprocessed foods is associated with an increased risk of mortality. The term 'ultraprocessed' refers to food products that manufacturers have put through industrial processes and contain a range of ingredients.

Some examples include sugary drinks, breads, ready-made meals, confectionaries, and processed meats. Overall, a 10% increase in the amount of ultraprocessed food consumed equated to a 14% increase in mortality risk.

The authors conclude: "Findings from this prospective study of a large French cohort suggest for the first time, to our knowledge, that an increased proportion of ultraprocessed foods in the diet is associated with a higher risk of overall mortality."

#### Driver dilemma deciphered

There are very few things less annoying in life than dropping your keys, loose change or important possessions down the side of seat. This usually results in a flurried attempt to retrieve the item, and upon failing, resorting to using a flashlight and the help of some thin arms.

The Car Seat Gap Filler provides a simple solution to this problem by completely covering the whole surrounding area between the seat and the centre console. It attaches to the seat belt via a built-in slot, and moves with the seat so there's no need to readjust or reinstall it. One size fits most vehicles and the high-grade casing allows you to contract or expand the product to whatever size gap you have.

This will ease much of your driving stress as you will never lose anything in your car again!

# Intellectual parenting doesn't end when our children 'grow up'



I was at a very interesting talk recently in St Saviour's Dominican Priory in Dublin.

It was one of a series of lectures and was conducted by Fr Thomas Joseph White, OP, Director of the Thomistic Institute at the Angelicum in Rome.

In recent months a lot of my social life seems to revolve around attending different events organised by various Catholic groups, orders or organisations. Four of my six children are over 18 years old and I've come to the realisation that Christian parenting doesn't come to a sudden halt once your children make the transition into adulthood.

My sister jokingly uses the term "legal fiction" to refer to the fact that one day a teenager is still viewed as a child needing all the support and care that goes with that title but, the day after their 18th birthday, they're suddenly meant to be adults.

#### Support

As young adults, who still have a lot of growing and developing to do, they're going to need the guidance and wisdom of their parents more than ever. To be in a position to offer that wisdom and constructive support, parents need to be on top of their game. For Catholic parents, that involves continuing their own education in the faith and making the effort to support these various events. There's also a great social aspect afterwards and lots of opportunities to chat and network over a cup of tea or coffee which is often equally as important.

The appealing title of Fr White's talk was 'The Need for Catholic Intellectuals Today' which he cleverly turned around and raised a laugh when he asked if you could truly be an

#### A parent's perspective



Maria Byrne

intellectual and not be Catholic.

A lively presentation and discussion followed which focused on how relativism has taken hold and the challenges involved in making ethics interesting, the compatibility of science and religion and the need for Catholics to deepen their understanding and appreciation of their own faith.

**“As young adults, who still have a lot of growing and developing to do, they're going to need the guidance and wisdom of their parents more than ever.”**

Fr Thomas Joseph White's book *The Light of Christ: An Introduction to Catholicism* is a very accessible exploration of Catholicism that is grounded in traditional theology and connects dogma and doctrine to Catholic social teaching, which is faith in action.

He always links back to the fact that the centre of Catholic social teaching is love in truth. During his talk, he emphasised the need for Catholics to truly know their faith so that they're in a position to explain the reasonableness of what we believe in an increasingly secular world.

I was telling my 18-year-old daughter all about the talk afterwards and was wondering

about her views on the need for more Catholic intellectuals.

It's often hard to sum up the essence of any talk to a person who hasn't attended themselves but I think my enthusiasm was infectious and we ended up having a pretty passionate discussion about the importance of young Catholics being able to have sufficient knowledge to engage in the task of evangelising.

I'm used to encountering and interacting with people who might have a certain level of animosity towards the Catholic Church. However, I've noted a new openness among those of my daughters' generation. In what's been described as a post-Christian era, we're like



missionaries in a new country.

The old presumption of knowledge is gone which leaves the way clear to start anew and to educate others on our vision of God and why religion still deserves to have a key position in the public square. I was quite amused recently when the same daughter was telling me about a conversation she had in her college. Her classmate was puzzled when she was talking about watching some old B-rate horror film as he said that he couldn't imagine a Catholic being interested in that movie genre.

#### Common topic

What Catholics might or might not do seems to have been a common topic among her

school friends and a source of great curiosity and questioning. What surprises me is how quickly we've gone from being a country where almost everyone was Catholic and knew a lot about Faith and religion to a situation where being a practising Catholic is viewed as a bit of a novelty and a good conversation starter.

We have to be armed with the answers to pertinent questions that could spark a journey that may be the first step on the road to conversion.

I think the next time I'm going to a Catholic talk or conference I'll drag my 18-year-old along too. We hear a lot about the role of women in the Church but sometimes our daughters, like our sons, need a bit of encouragement and confidence building to meet the challenge of delving deeper into the faith and fostering the courage and intellectual knowledge needed to engage in discussions on the deeper meaning of life and belief in God.

#### Invigorating

What could be more invigorating for the Church in Ireland than to cultivate an intellectualism of Faith, reason and love? If our search for truth is just about winning religious debates or flaunting our superior arguments and approaches we've lost the vision.

Fortunately, we have the guidance, knowledge and evangelical drive of priests like Fr Thomas Joseph White and orders like the Dominicans who are providing centres of learning that Catholics, young and old, are being attracted to proving that the thirst for knowledge and a more intellectual basis to belief has never been greater.



» Continued from Page 31



bought Fairtrade tea bags what a difference that would make to the world. We can be overcome by these massive, massive problems: You can end up feeling paralysed by issues like the housing crisis, but it also should be believed that you can make a difference," she added.

### Fairtrade Ireland

One of the main promoters of the initiative is Fairtrade Ireland, who are hoping to get Ireland's towns, schools, colleges and workplaces on board.

In September 2013, Clonakilty celebrated the 10th anniversary of becoming Ireland's first Fairtrade town. The purpose of the concept is to contribute to Fairtrade Ireland's aim of tackling poverty by enabling disadvantaged producers from poor countries to receive a better deal, through encouraging support for the Fairtrade mark.

By 2013 there were 50 Fairtrade towns in Ireland alone. Mindful that the promotion and sale of Fairtrade products has changed considerably over 10 years, they reviewed the Fairtrade Towns Goals in September 2013. Regional meetings were held around Ireland and they found that general public awareness of the Fairtrade mark rose from 12% in 2002 to 88% in 2013.

Schools are also becoming increasingly aware of the need to promote ethical purchases and can apply online to become part of the initiative. There are also resources for secondary school CSPE teachers hoping to further their pupils' knowledge of Fairtrade.

**“Just think of the person behind the product, this is why Fairtrade works so well, we have this whole movement in Ireland about buying local”**

Fairtrade Ireland have organised the visit of international guests during Fairtrade Fortnight, with one of them being Blas Arismendis Marcelino Guzman from the north-west of the Dominican Republic.

He is part of Banelino which is a cooperative that represents hundreds of farmers and aims to improve the livelihood of small farmers, workers,

their families and communities.

The bananas they produce are organic and Fairtrade certified. Banelino is dedicated to producing products that are ethical and environmental according to Mr Guzman's testimony.

"Banelino is like my second family, a strong cooperative union of committed persons united for a better tomorrow. I am proud to be a farmer and be able to support my family and others to build decent livelihoods," he says.

However, there are many farmers in precarious situations that are often hit with huge price changes in the global markets.

Project Manager at Fairtrade Ireland, Melanie Drea, says: "It depends on what you're looking at, chocolate, bananas or coffee. For example for coffee, the world market price for coffee is constantly bouncing up and down.

"So for farmers maybe this week they got a dollar, maybe next week they get 80c a pound, so that's the way it goes. The Fairtrade price it's always a guaranteed price that doesn't move up and down, it's steady."

The benefits are huge when businesses become involved, says Ms Drea, adding that well known coffee and tea company Bewleys uses solely Fairtrade products.

"Just think of the person behind the product, this is why Fairtrade works so well, we have this whole movement in Ireland about buying local. I'm very lucky because I live in Wexford and I can buy loads of magnificent locally produced

products, but I also want my tropical commodities – so it's like local meets global.

"We think about Irish farmers, and I think about the face behind Irish farming, but when we're purchasing tropical commodities we have to think globally and we have to think about the people there and of course this is why we bring the guests over every year. They're the ones that can talk about this because they're the people that do it," she added.

**“Through the support of Irish companies and people, the value of Fairtrade sales in 2017 increased by 26%”**

According to Fairtrade Ireland the continued work of Fairtrade is "making a small but growing contribution to help improve the circumstances of over 1.7 million people around the world".

Their figures state that globally, the extra money earned by farmers and workers in producing countries grew by 19% in 2017 to reach €178 million.

Locally, through the support of Irish companies and people, the value of Fairtrade sales in 2017 increased by 26%. And that consumer spending in Ireland amounted to €342 million in 2017.

They add: "Thanks to millions of people, in Ireland and internationally, Fairtrade is making real differences for people, the environment and the planet.

"On a far larger scale, the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent humanities best ambition to address the issues of persistent poverty, environmental degradation and out of control climate change. And all of us will be required to make significant changes in our behaviours and in our choices if we are to succeed in reaching the SDGs by 2030."

**1** If you'd like to know more about WoW bags you can contact: [recycledjuicepack@hotmail.com](mailto:recycledjuicepack@hotmail.com)

**1** To find out more about Fairtrade Fortnight visit: <https://www.fairtrade.ie/>

## Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



**M**y daughter's friend describes himself as not having faith. Then a couple of weeks ago my daughter came to me saying, "When we were in that graveyard, he blessed himself at every grave he stopped at." She asked him why. It would seem that he is not so much an unbeliever as one who believes there is something more but struggles with 'Church' and some of what the Church teaches.

I think that many people, young and old, find themselves in a similar position. It leaves me wondering how good we have been at offering people the space and opportunity to explore any of this. What does it mean to describe ourselves as people of Faith? Do we have freedom to question?

Even more importantly, have people had the opportunity to encounter the reality of Jesus? The Gospel for this Sunday is not for the faint hearted. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly...treat others as you would like them to treat you...be compassionate as your Father is compassionate."

In an age of Twitter and outrage and clashing opinions Jesus' words are nothing short of revolutionary. He isn't asking us to lie down and be doormats but he is asking us to engage with everyone – even those who annoy us most – with compassion and love.

### Wrong

When people are getting hot under the collar about the Church and all they see as being wrong I want sometimes to stop them and say, "Yes, there is certainly truth in a lot of what you are saying, but being Christian isn't first and foremost about Church, it is actually about a relationship with Jesus Christ."

I would like to invite people to take some time to imagine themselves in that situation where Jesus sits down with his disciples and begins to talk to them: "Love your enemies, do good..." What would it be like to sit and listen to this man?

How would the crowd around me be reacting? What would his words stir in my own heart? And if, having listened to all he is saying, I had the opportunity to speak to him, what would I say?

I think I'd be saying, "ah Jesus this is difficult, I really struggle not to react with anger and harsh words when someone hurts me or holds opinions that I find offensive. You are asking a lot of us. I'm struggling with that." And do you know something, I think Jesus would say,

"That's okay, struggling means that at least you haven't given up, that you are trying to move forward rather than walk away."

I think we need to get better at talking about how we struggle – struggle with believing sometimes particularly if life throws challenges at us, struggling with aspects of Church teaching or with attitudes that we encounter which make us uncomfortable in the Church. Struggling is a sign of life and I think we should take it as an invitation to help people explore more, reflect more, talk more.

### Faith

Are we asking our young adults to simply believe because we do? Are we encouraging them to explore what their Faith is about, what it means? Pope Francis emphasises the importance of encountering Jesus. If our young people encounter religious practice and even religious instruction but not actually encounter God as one who draws them into a personal and dynamic relationship then is it any wonder they would question the idea of faith?

That encounter happens in prayer, in good liturgy, in a faith community that takes the Gospel seriously and puts it into practice. It happens when a Catholic school's ethos is vibrant. Above all, it happens within our lives as a family. That relationship with God, is the rock upon which all other aspects of belief are built. Without that, we are building on sand.





# Discovering the way with St John Paul II's help

## Personal Profile



### Chai Brady speaks to a renowned Catholic academic about his life and Faith

**D**o not be afraid to be holy" was then Pope John Paul II's message to pilgrims during World Youth Day in 1989, and that struck a chord with a young man soon to enter seminary.

Dr Neil Xavier O'Donoghue, now a lecturer of Systematic Theology in St Patrick's College in Maynooth, was "impressed" by what St John Paul II said.

"That was his refrain there, and to see that Christianity was an option to me, I see that a vocation is a vocation to Christianity not to the priesthood per say. The main vocation is to Holiness, within that you have to discern what it is, and I discerned that it was a vocation to the priesthood," he said.

However, this wasn't the only thing that helped him on his Faith journey.

#### Serious

Growing up in Ballincollig, Co. Cork, the eldest of two brothers and a sister, Dr Neil became more serious about his Faith after his teenage years.

"I suppose it was at the World Youth Day in Santiago Del Compostela, which was just after my Leaving Cert before starting in UCC. During that year I was discerning and I saw the vocation more clearly at the end of that year," he said.

He joined the Neocatechumenal Way, a charism in the Church dedicated to Christian formation.



After that pilgrimage in Spain with the group's youth community and the then Pope's message, he had a vocational meeting.

His US adventure began when he was chosen at random to go to New Jersey. "I was 18 at the time, it was an adventure it was no problem. At the time I didn't know which side of the US New Jersey was on, but I was up for it," he said.

Dr Neil spent 10 years as a seminarian in the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Newark. Five of those years were spent as a missionary in Atlanta, Miami and

Washington DC.

#### Seminarians

It was in 2013 that Cardinal Brady asked his bishop in the US, Archbishop John Myers at the time, to borrow him to help establish the new Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Dundalk and "get it off the ground". He had already taught seminarians in the US for 11 years and went on to spend five years teaching seminarians in Dundalk.

Archbishop Myers agreed and it was back home for Dr Neil who served there as Vice Rector of



Dr Neil Xavier meeting Pope Francis.

the seminary of the Archdiocese of Armagh and as a curate in a number of parishes in Dundalk and south Armagh.

Discussing the differences between working as a priest in Ireland and the US he said that ultimately there was very few.

**"I suppose it would be his emphasis on forgiveness which would be the most important one with Pope Francis, I suppose the power of Confession is a big deal with him"**

"People are more or less the same on one level, on another level I think the Church is a bit different in the States because it is bigger so you have more room for variety whereas here you have a one size fits all reality. In the States different parishes have a difference emphasis, they have that advantage over us I suppose," he said.

Dr Neil then decided to move into academics after a discussion with his archbishop, Cardinal Joseph Tobin CSSR of Newark.

He said: "I'm settling into the job here I've written a lot about the Church in early Ireland, about the way the Eucharist was celebrated. My doctorate was in the Eucharist in pre-Norman Ireland and so I've done some work on that and on liturgical renewal in general."

Teaching systematic theology, he says the ultimate question within students is whether the Good News is real.

"That's the ultimate question, is all this real? That is the question that each students has to answer for themselves above and beyond the actual mechanics of getting a degree in theology," he said.

Dr Neil also writes a monthly column for the *Messenger of St Anthony* where he focuses on the theology of the Pope.

Speaking about the topic he found most interesting related to his writings on the Pope he said: "I suppose it would be his emphasis on forgiveness which would be the most important one with Pope Francis, I suppose the power of Confession is a big deal with him."

He also does some blogging on praytellig.com, which is sponsored by the Benedictine Abbey of Collegeville and is the author of several books.



## Children's Corner

Chai Brady

## Arts and crafts – what a hoot!

**G**et your children off the couch and away from the TV so they can focus on something much more fun and creative. Making toilet-paper-roll owls is easy and is a great way to make use of something you would otherwise have thrown out.

These colourful creations can be kept to decorate anywhere around the house, perhaps perched on a windowsill, overlooking a playroom or even in bedrooms.

What you'll need to create your owl is toilet-paper rolls, scrap paper, glitter card stock (or plain card brushed with glue with glitter added), foam sheets (preferably with an adhesive back, but if not, use glue to attach), craft glue, scissors and a pencil.

Begin by drawing a half oval at the top of the paper roll, you can use a cookie cutter as a stencil if you wish. Cut the circle out and use it as a template to cut an identical one from the other

side of the paper roll too.

Keep the half-moon pieces you've cut out of either side of the top of your toilet paper roll, as you'll be needing them for the owl's wings.

#### Scrap paper

Place two fingers inside the paper roll and cover the outside in glue. Roll the paper roll onto your colourful scrap paper so that it creates a nice outside layer, then you can trim any excess bits of paper so that the scrap paper first on the outside of the roll perfectly.

Set this aside to dry for a bit. Then cover one side of the two half-moon pieces you cut off the paper (which will be the wings) and roll in

glue and place onto the back of the glitter card stock. Set them aside to dry.

Next, you can cut circles out of white and black foam to make eyes, alternatively you could make the eyes any colour you want if you don't have white and black foam! Cut one big circle to make the eye and one small circle which will be the pupil (make sure not to make the circles too big as they need to fit on the toilet paper roll).

Cut out a small beak from yellow glitter card stock. Attach the eyes, beak, and wings using glue where needed.

Set them aside to dry, and you are done!

These special creations can be a reminder of a great time with your child and just how artistic they can be.





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## A policy at odds with a minister's theology

It was a week of noteworthy interviews in the media. Minister for Culture Josepha Madigan had spoken at a meeting of the liberal group We Are Church and predictably this led to some radio interviews. On **Drivetime** (RTÉ Radio 1), Tuesday of last week, she stressed she was speaking as an 'ordinary' Catholic, but I'd suspect it was her ministerial position that gave her the prominence.

It was odd to hear presenter Mary Wilson stressing, twice, to Minister Madigan that she, the minister, was a "committed" and "practising" Catholic. Who was it that needed the reassurance? Minister Madigan said women were "respected" in the Church, but only in certain roles and "certainly not in leadership roles".

She ignored the significant leadership given by women, particularly in the religious orders, in lay religious groups (sometimes the founders) and in parish councils (a point Wilson didn't make). However, I thought she did have a valid point in relation to some bodies in the Church where women could be more involved without any doctrinal difficulties.

Mary Wilson did ask a challenging question but there was a negativity about the way she phrased it – why did Madigan stay in a Church that told her "woman know



Minister Josepha Madigan featured on a number of radio programmes this week.

your place"? She said she didn't want the Church not to exist as it served the community, and that if "we" abandoned the Church it would never change.

A more interesting question might have been why she didn't join a Protestant denomination whose theology was better aligned with her own, but that wasn't pursued.

She wasn't challenged as to how she squared her membership of the Catholic Church with her prominent

promotion of abortion legislation, thus facilitating an ugly and cruel practice that is as diametrically opposed to Catholic teaching as you could get.

### Reassurance mode

We got more of the same when the Minister got another outing on the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) last Thursday. The palsy interview started with Kenny in reassurance mode – calling her a "devout" and "committed" Catholic, and assuring us (or

her?) that she wasn't an "à la carte Catholic". Later she said she liked the doctrine on the Church "in the main".

Texters did the challenging that Kenny didn't – one brought up her support for abortion legislation, but she said that was "irrelevant to this conversation", stressing "choice" and saying that was "not necessarily a decision I'd make myself".

On that matter I thought it was telling last Monday morning that, across several programmes, a US anti-abortion group setting up in Dublin got much more (negative) attention than a story about an ad for the National Maternity Hospital seeking applications only from those doctors willing to do abortions – questionable priorities.

Another interview last week was rather unsettling. On the **Late Late Show** (RTÉ 1) last Friday night, Fr Pat Collins spoke about his role as an exorcist. It was unnerving as he left us with his experience that Ireland, and indeed Europe in general, was suffering from "almost a tsunami of evil". Fr Collins was no alarmist, but came across as a level-headed priest, exorcist and psychologist. In fact the early part of the interview focused on psychological insights on fear, and how it holds people back, hinders relationships and ruins people's quality of life.

His vocation story was

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### SUNDAY SEQUENCE

**BBC Radio Ulster, Sunday, February 24, 8.30am**  
Topical religious and ethical issues.

#### EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND: THE ANGRY FAMILY

**Channel 4, Thursday, February 28, 7.45am**  
The whole family meets Fr Hubley to uncover what is to blame for the constant family bickering.

#### FÍORSCEÁL

**TG4, Thursday, February 28, 10 pm**  
Can cognitive sciences help us build a better kind of school?

interesting – more inclined to go into medicine than the priesthood until a special spiritual experience inclined him to the latter, even though as a young man he still found the priesthood unattractive. Now he was glad he stayed with it. He used to have theoretical notions of evil, but the reality of evil as literally a diabolical thing came to him in a revelation experience at the Dachau concentration camp site.

He cautioned against bringing such realities into own lives – he found that such things could happen after people opened themselves up to the spirit world through séances, ouija boards and other occult practices.

One other interview that I found impactful was on **Claire Byrne Live** (RTÉ 1) on Monday of last week. In a time of such polarisation her guest Michael Gallagher, whose son Aidan had died in the Omagh bombing, was a model



RTÉ's Claire Byrne.

of gentleness, reflection, balance and empathy as he spoke about his personal loss and the possible consequences of Brexit for Northern Ireland.

Claire Byrne became choked up with emotion near the start of the interview – a genuine and touching TV moment.

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# Film

Aubrey Malone



## No host or surprises for faltering Oscars this year

The only thing that's likely to surprise you at this year's Oscar ceremonies is the fact that for the first time since 1989 it won't have a host, only presenters. Other than that you don't need a crystal ball to forecast what's going to happen. The favourites in all the main categories are so odds-on they're virtually unbackable.

Thus *Roma* is going to win Best Film and Alfonso Cuarón will be Best Director for it. Rami Malek will win Best Actor for playing Freddie Mercury in *Bohemian Rhapsody* and Glenn Close will finally get her Best Actress gong for *The Wife* after being bridesmaid at the Oscar wedding so many times.

Amy Adams, another per-



Glenn Close is likely to win an Oscar for *The Wife*.

ennial bridesmaid, looks unlikely to break her duck for *Vice*. Regina King is way ahead of her in the running

for *If Beale Street Could Talk*. I said a few weeks ago that I thought King's performance here was a bit obvious. I felt

the same way about Mahershala Ali's one in *The Green Book*. But he's probably going to win Best Supporting Actor for this – to go with the one he already has for *Moonlight*.

It's possible Adams could sneak up on the blind side for *Vice* and Christian Bale pull the carpet from under Malek's feet in the Best Actor category for the same film. If such shocks transpired, the bookies would cry into their beers. But the public would have some real drama for a change, instead of the manufactured kind where winners give tearjerker speeches thanking everyone they met since the day they were born.

Remember Gwyneth Paltrow? Roberto Benigni? Kate Winslet? Octavia Spencer?

Halle Berry? Sally Field? These people could power Niagara Falls with their waterworks.

At the end of the day it's a self-congratulatory event where the industry pats itself on the back for how wonderful it is. But all too often its pyramidal nature means the usual suspects get the gravy and many superior independent films get brushed under the carpet.

### Preciousness

I've stopped enjoying it in recent years for these reasons. There's an air of preciousness about it, an air of 'You must like this film because we do.' Which is always going to turn me in the other direction.

We know politics plays a

part in the ceremonies too, and that the Golden Globes are often a better barometer of quality. Then again, who can say for sure what's 'best' in anything to do with the arts? As Woody Allen says, it's not like running a race in the Olympics. Where aesthetics are concerned, opinions always come into play.

Oscar's history is littered with bad choices for any number of reasons: contribution, life achievement, debts owed, sympathy votes, favouritism, fashionable themes and not least finance. Like everything else in life, it costs a lot of money to mount a campaign.

But I'll probably watch the thing anyway next Monday night. Like most bad habits, it's hard to resist.





# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## The ever-changing face of Ireland's people, their lives and beliefs

**Religion, Landscape & Settlement in Ireland, from Patrick to the Present**

by Kevin Whelan  
(Four Courts Press, €45.00)

Peter Costello

**T**his book is one which will interest a wide range of readers. As it is already into a second printing it can be said to have scored a great success with many of them, and many more will doubtless read it in the months to come.

It may not perhaps please everyone in these days of ever narrower fields of study. It has been well remarked that experts dig ever deeper in the individual holes of research, and a different kind of writer is needed on the surface to see how what these scholars have discovered can be connected to provide an overall sweeping view, which is what most general readers and students of Irish culture long for.

Kevin Whelan is the well-known director of the University of Notre Dame Global Gateway in Dublin, an institution that caters largely for American students anxious to learn about Irish history, society and culture in just such a perspective.

If there is one adverse comment to make it is that the book starts with St Patrick. Irish culture cannot be understood except in the full 10,000-year range of the



Kevin Whelan.

human occupation of this island. All the past cultures have left their mark, some on the landscape, some on the memory, some on social life. The 5th Century is very late in the date when culture, and the manifestation of religion (albeit from a Christian perspective – natural religion

had already shaped what there was for the early Irish saints to work on).

### Survey

Dr Whelan begins with a swift survey of the early medieval church, the Gaelic church associated with the friars, and the splintered tra-

ditions that emerged from the reformation.

But as the book progresses it gets more and more interesting. The chapter on "death in the Irish landscape" is of immense interest, so too the chapter on "vernacular religion" in which there is a section on Biddy Early, a person who should interest every student of Irish culture. There is also a chapter on Irish rituals of death and mourning – which have changed more than may realise.

There is a detailed discussion of the Irish Protestant traditions, the social and

political difference between northern Presbyterians and southern Anglicans being well brought out.

The chapter on the Catholic revival since the 1780s provides for Irish readers and foreign students alike a background to much of modern Irish literature, social life and politics.

The chapter in which Whelan compares and contrasts the religious dimensions of what we might call our two capitals, Belfast and Dublin, touches on topics such as Irish Catholics in the empire and the colonies which needs greater emphasis than the topic usually gets.

**“This book will inspire I think a great deal of reading, research, and travel in both city and country”**

But eventually he has to treat the state of religion in both rural and urban Ireland, and here he rightly points to the development of new religions in the country.

Some Catholic parishes may seem superficially to be almost dead, yet an observant walker in the city will see that

Chinese, Nigerian, Muslim and Sikh communities are thriving, though inconspicuously. Religion is very far from dead in Ireland; it has merely taken on new forms, new ideas, perhaps even new hopes.

### Faith

A couple of adroit pages round out the story, but readers will realise that this story of how communities and Faith have developed, declined and changed is very much an ongoing one.

In an appendix there is a list of some 50 national maps relating to religion which will be of immense use to local historians and many others.

Aside from the actual footnotes to sources, the book also has a very full bibliography, drawing together the literature on the wide range of topics the book has addressed, albeit in a brief manner.

This book will inspire I think a great deal of reading, research, and travel in both city and country. And that will be a very good thing.

This is a book which can be warmly welcomed, whatever the specialists in their ever deepening holes may say.

## The last tales of a great writer

**Last Stories**

by William Trevor  
(Viking, £14.99)

Derek Hand

The title of this posthumously published collection, *Last Stories*, signals that this is the final work from William Trevor who died in 2016. The title is doubly appropriate because the 10 pieces gathered here are imbued with a melancholy sense of things ending.

Trevor as a writer is attracted to the misfits and the outcasts of the world, with the lonely and the troublingly strange populating his fiction. One of his great gifts is one of understated suggestion so that malice and threat often hover disturbingly just below the surface of people's daily interactions.

### Menace

In 'The Piano Teacher's Pupil', Miss Nightingale ponders the mystery of the young boy who steals some little thing from her home every time he comes to practice his scales. Her dilemma is that this rough youth plays so beautifully that she doesn't mind. The menace comes from his side of the relationship, for we never know his



story or his motivation.

'At the Caffè Daria' deals with whole lives in a way that only a meticulously written short story can do: seasons and years pass in a sentence and yet depths are plumbed and revealed with a single thought or memory. Lost friendship is the theme here, but so too is the desire for connection and affection. These themes are taken up again and again in the stories, seen from different angles and in varying situations but always bittersweet.

Of note in the collection is how the urban space, the city streets

of London and Dublin, are open to chance encounters and meetings that reverberate and echo, that have far-reaching consequences beyond the seemingly unimportant initial moment of contact.

Wider historical or political context is eschewed because what Trevor is seeking out is the human sphere of interaction, the emotional worlds of his array of bank clerks and publishers, giving articulation to their hidden fears and wants.

Here are stories of lonely people, of the woman who comes to the

door of Olivia who she believes is having an affair with her husband in 'Making Conversation', or in 'Giotto's Angels' where a man who has lost his memory but comes alive as he loses himself in his work of picture restoration.

Here too are the stories of how people dealing with impossible tragedies, such as the characters in 'The Women', a mother who gave up her daughter for adoption and that daughter, each in their own ways coping with the wounds of absence and disconnection.

**“Of note in the collection is how the urban space, the city streets of London and Dublin, are open to chance encounters”**

The mood of 'The Unknown Girl', perhaps, captures perfectly the tone of the entire collection. The death of a young girl, a cleaner, in a car accident forces her one time employer to reassess her sense of who she is or who she thinks she is.

But the story, too, recognises the power of silences, of what is

not said, can be the real zone of significance and meaning. It is also replete with the kind of detail that brings colour and depth to our understanding. The woman listens to Bach, has prints of Bonnard in her house and reads Beau Geste: "She listened to music, took pains with cooking, gardened, kept up with friends. In Italy the early and mid-Renaissance delighted her. In France the Impressionists did. She read the novels that time's esteem had kept alive and judged contemporary fiction for herself."

Beneath this seemingly untroubled and bright middle class existence are profound anxieties about opportunities not taken and lives not lived, hers more so than that of the dead girl.

The stories here are not an afterthought to William Trevor's celebrated life in writing. Their singular and compelling power lingers in the memory long after the book is set aside. His tales of life viewed from offset angle, their autumnal mood and atmosphere are testament to his brilliance as a prose writer and demonstrate, too, the veracity of the claim for his being a master of the short story form in particular.



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 remarkable sports woman and influential star



Cora Staunton (left) in full flight.

**Game Changer** by Cora Staunton with Mary White (Transworld Ireland, €28.00)

**J. Antony Gaughan**

While Cora Staunton is well-known for her skill and prowess on GAA playing-fields, little is known about her life beyond football or her private persona. That deficit is rectified in this frank autobiography.

Cora recalls her early years as she was raised in a small farm at Carnacon, near Castlebar, Co Mayo. After her secondary education she enrolled at the Institute of Technology in Athlone and qualified as a social worker. Later she completed a Masters in Health Promotion at NUI Galway and secured an appointment as a health coordinator with the Mayo Travellers Support Group.

**“As a little girl she was addicted (her own words) to playing football”**

Cora was a tomboy; with some difficulty her mother persuaded her to wear a dress for her First Communion. Later she insisted on presenting herself in a trouser-suit for her Confirmation.

As a little girl she was addicted (her own words) to playing football and played on mixed teams with her brothers in underage leagues. She revelled in lining out for her home parish team and teams in the various institutions she attended.

Cora describes her play-

ing career as having more “lows than highs”. Among the lows were a number of bereavements. A childhood friend in fourth class was drowned; she lost her mother at the age of 16, and a close friend and teammate on the Mayo team died following a car crash. And there were extensive injuries too.

However, for her the most depressing of the ‘lows’ was the acrimony between her, her teammates and most of their managers (they had seven in nine years). This was compounded by their difficult relationship with the Mayo County Board which generated much adverse publicity.

Notwithstanding Cora’s claim, she had quite a few ‘highs’ to savour. With her Mayo teammates she won four All-Ireland Senior medals and they were runners-up on two occasions. Her home team, Carnacon, won the Mayo County Championship practically every year and the All-Ireland Club Championship six times. She was an All-Star on 11 occasions and enjoyed All-Star trips to Hong Kong and San Francisco. And there was the camaraderie and friendship of teammates and many others besides.

With her playing career coming to an end in Ireland Cora signed on to play Australian rules football. She gives a fascinating account of the club’s premises, her new teammates, the team’s training schedules, and so.

Aussie rules, it seems, is based on structures which Cora explains in great detail. Having already at home signed contracts with Luco-

zade and Puma, she was unfazed by the professionalism of the Australian game. However, rather curiously, she indicates her opposition to the GAA moving into professionalism.

**“With her Mayo teammates she won four All-Ireland Senior medals and they were runners-up on two occasions”**

Cora’s memoir contains two items which indicate that Ladies Gaelic Football will never be a mere mirror-image of the men’s game.

She recalls how because of her competitive spirit she was furious when the manager at a crucial period in a match replaced a leading player with a very average player, even though she realised that he had made this intervention because the latter had recently lost her mother.

Subsequently Cora was a beneficiary of this attitude of concern. Having made a significant contribution to Mayo making the All-Ireland final in 1999, Cora broke her collar-bone and was not fit to play in it. However, the management included her in the team for the final, had her parade before the throw-in and spend a few minutes on the pitch before being replaced.

A special bouquet is due to Cora for her autobiography which cannot but be a significant fillip to the development of Ladies Gaelic Football.

## WebWatch

Greg Daly

## If you read one thing online today, read this

**S**amizdat, before the fall of the Iron Curtain, was the name given to the clandestine copying and distribution of banned literature; in David Foster Wallace’s 1996 novel *Infinite Jest*, however, it means something very different, a captivating film, also called ‘the Entertainment’, that saps wills and paralyzes viewers, leaving them unable to tear their eyes away from the screen.

For Notre Dame University theologian Timothy P. O’Malley, in a fascinating article on [churchlife.nd.edu](http://churchlife.nd.edu) entitled ‘The Addictions of the Catholic *Samizdat*’, the idea has applications far beyond the novel.

“As it turns out, we have created the Entertainment. It is the endless commentary, the outrage culture that drives social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook,” he says. “When Catholics engage in such cultures, we turn away from that transcendent reality of self-giving love that is the cross. We turn away from the truth of existence, the very real world of flesh and blood where concrete acts of love matter more than 280 characters. Perhaps, Catholics have more to fear from the *samizdat* than secularisation.”

● Just days before Prof. O’Malley’s *samizdat* piece, a casebook example of Catholic outrage-bait hit the internet, when [lifesitenews.com](http://lifesitenews.com) and [ncregister.com](http://ncregister.com) jointly published a ‘Manifesto of Faith’ by Cardinal Gerhard Müller, the erstwhile head of the Vatican’s doctrinal watchdog. Scarcely had it been published before some online were calling it an act of schism, with the controversial German Cardinal Walter Kasper echoing this, claiming at [katholisch.de](http://katholisch.de) that his compatriot was promoting “confusion and division”.

In truth, Cardinal Müller’s manifesto is really just a summary of the Catechism. Yes, it says nothing about the papacy, but it’s not as though St Paul VI, in his longer and too often forgotten ‘Credo of the People of God’ said much more.

And yet. Content isn’t everything; context, as they say, is king, and truth lies in proportion.

Firstly, the medium is very often the message, and the cardinal issued his



David Foster Wallace.

He cites as an example the furore surrounding the boys from Covington Catholic at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, saying that the episode was marked by a lack of contemplation before judgment.

**“Anyone interested in what social media means for Catholics should make a point of reading it”**

“We must react immediately. Everything becomes an occasion of instant commentary, whether or not it is newsworthy,” he says.

“The purpose of the commentary is not to seek truth within a community of love but to participate in the endless creation of pleasurable signs for others to read. If we are in a post-

truth era, it is not the fault of some nefarious Russian hacker or a President whose connection to the truth is to say the least, a bit loose. It is our own fault. *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.*”

It’s an extraordinary and profoundly important article. Anyone interested in what social media means for Catholics should make a point of reading it and reflecting upon it.

(The [churchlife.nd.edu](http://churchlife.nd.edu) site is a treasure trove of worthwhile Catholic reading in general, for what it’s worth. Prof. O’Malley’s piece on how ‘The Liturgy is for (Little) Kids’ is particularly good, while ‘The Wayward Daughters’ by Haley Stewart is a marvellous piece comparing Lady Julia Flyte in Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* with the eponymous heroine of Sigrid Undset’s *Kristin Lavransdatter*.)

manifesto through the two English-language media outlets that in August published Archbishop Viganò’s call for Pope Francis to resign. Utterly predictably, one billed Cardinal Müller’s manifesto “a quasi-correction of Pope Francis’ pontificate”, and now has a petition online calling for Catholics to “support Cardinal Müller’s manifesto amid Pope Francis’ confusion”.

Secondly, when some nowadays claim the Church’s teaching around Marriage and the Eucharist is under attack, they argue as though they, and not the Successor of Peter, are rightful interpreters of the Church’s teaching and tradition. If one thing needs clearly restating in the current Church, it is the authority of the Pope, and on this the cardinal is deafeningly and suspiciously silent.

It still seems hysterical to describe Cardinal Müller’s manifesto as schismatic, but it is certainly not to be taken at face value.



# Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email [advertising@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:advertising@irishcatholic.ie)



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When you are making your Will, please remember the vulnerable families you can save from homelessness. Contact Saoirse at Threshold in strictest confidence.



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— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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## Classified Ads

### SERVICES

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### PILGRIMAGE

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### THE THIRTY GREGORIAN MASSES

**THIS IS** the ancient custom, instituted by Pope Gregory the

Great, of having 30 Masses said for one deceased person for release from Purgatory. Can also help in healing family tree. For information please phone 087-9381997.

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## PILGRIMAGE

**CHRISTMAS PILGRIMAGE GROUP** to the Holy Land. ex Dublin 19th – 27th December. Also Holy Land Pilgrimage 31st October – 8th November 2019. Taking in Bethlehem, Jerusalem (Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Last Supper Room and Calvary), Mount Tabor, Cana, Nazareth, Jericho, River Jordan, Dead Sea and Sea of Galilee. **MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGE** for Youth Festival 2019 August Bank Holiday Weekend. ex Dublin 7 nights. Both Pilgrimages can be made by instalments, "this pilgrimage is operated by Joe Walsh Tours who are bonded and licensed". Contact James Treacy 0860572216.

## The Miracle Prayer

Dear Heart of Jesus,  
In the past I have asked for many favours.  
This time I ask for a special one. (mention here)  
Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.  
Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.  
Say this prayer for three days.  
O.C.

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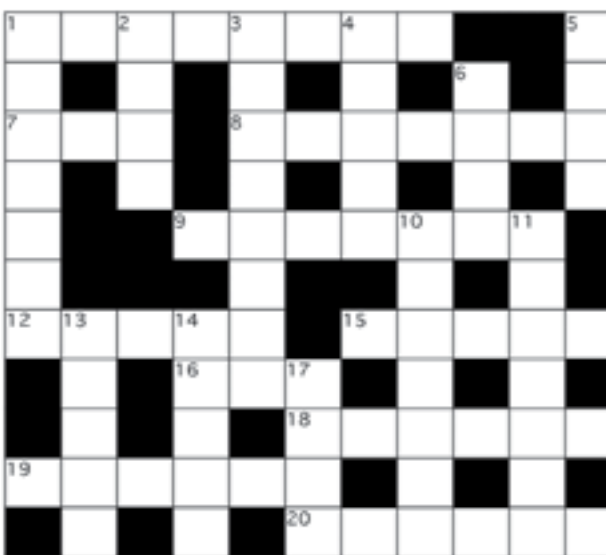
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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 270



### ACROSS

- 1 Important competitions held once every four years (8)  
 7 Use it to open a lock (3)  
 8 The Emerald Isle (7)  
 9 People wear them to keep their necks warm (7)  
 12 Santa's helpers (5)  
 15 Little. (5)  
 16 Tree with 'helicopter' seeds (3)  
 18 Creature. (6)  
 19 Underground place for storing things (6)  
 20 'Simple Simon met a \_\_\_\_\_' (6)

- 2 Toy that goes up and down on a string (2-2)  
 3 Royal daughter (7)  
 4 Shout to encourage your team (5)  
 5 Secret language used by spies (4)  
 6 Ali Baba said 'Open sesame' to get into it (4)

- 10 Dracula was one (7)  
 11 It's like a currant or a raisin. (7)  
 13 Afterwards (5)  
 14 Large bird of prey (5)  
 17 A musician plucks the strings of this instrument (4)

### DOWN

- 1 What an acorn will grow to be (3,4)

## SOLUTIONS, FEBRUARY 14

### GORDIUS No.390

**Across** – 1 Equivocate 6 Taco 10 Saint Valentine 12 Hillock 15 Upset 17 INRI 18 Ruin 19 Radar 21 Portray 23 Sigma 24 Know 25 Roar 26 Cyril 28 Elevate 33 The Moll of Kintyre 34 Polar 35 Dose 36 Prayer book

**Down** – 1 East 2 Utilising 3 Vital 4 Civic 5 Toll 7 Amiss 8 Overthrown 9 Enquiry 13 Ouzo 16 Prosecuted 20 Donatello 21 Parlour 22 Aide 27 Reeds 29 Lofty 30 Viper 31 Blur 32 Trek

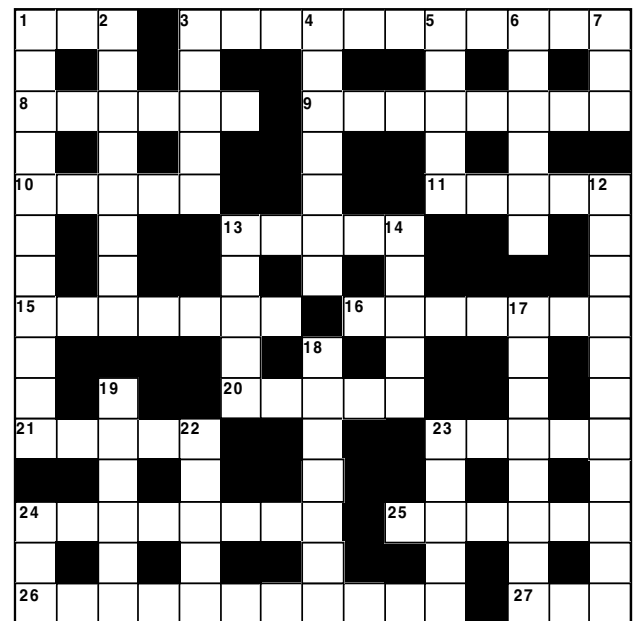
### CHILDREN'S No.269

**Across** – 1 Leap year 6 Oops 7 Ivory 9 Sure 10 Alley-cat 12 His 13 Potter 18 Tea 19 Piano 20 Rhino 21 Reins 22 Art 23 Fat

**Down** – 2 Envelope 3 Perfect 4 Roasts 5 Sports 8 Ache 11 Airport 14 Oar 15 Thief 16 Cabin 17 Mouse 18 Tuna

## Crossword

Gordius 391



### ACROSS

- 1 Juice found inside a plant (3)  
 3 Diving equipment, or directors who meet only in the growing season? (11)  
 8 & 4d May's in scandal, mixed up in a place of offshore accounts (6,7)  
 9 Distribute eel grass? Such generosity! (8)  
 10 In a superior position (5)  
 11 Cast, fling (5)  
 13 Many poems are presented as ciphers (5)  
 15 The Choral's arranged anew for a student (7)  
 16 Delicate flower transplanted from our beds (7)  
 20 He made a famous etching of a pair of hands from part of a Hindu reredos (5)  
 21 A collection or bunch (5)  
 23 Provide food from a crate (5)  
 24 It leaves most pressing matters to religious houses! (8)  
 25 Size of paper (6)  
 26 Murder (11)  
 27 A short sleep is your best bet (3)

### DOWN

- 1 Being convivial, cos liaising is misguided (11)

- 2 & 17d Christian sect originating in Dublin in the late 1820's (8,8)  
 3 & 22d The result of car dismantling, or roles for thin actors? (5,5)  
 4 See 8 across  
 5 HT (as opposed to ht) identifies a wide bay (5)  
 6 Emphasise that the fool has a point, right? (6)  
 7 The tailless stag has a name shared by several rivers in the British Isles (3)  
 12 As eaten before the main course by the British royal family? (7,4)  
 13 This vegetable sounds like it is burnt! (5)  
 14 Clean out thoroughly (5)  
 17 See 2 down  
 18 The senator is mixed up in treachery (7)  
 19 Films (6)  
 22 See 3 down  
 23 Many an impolite word is unrefined (5)  
 24 Vegetable found in a pod (3)

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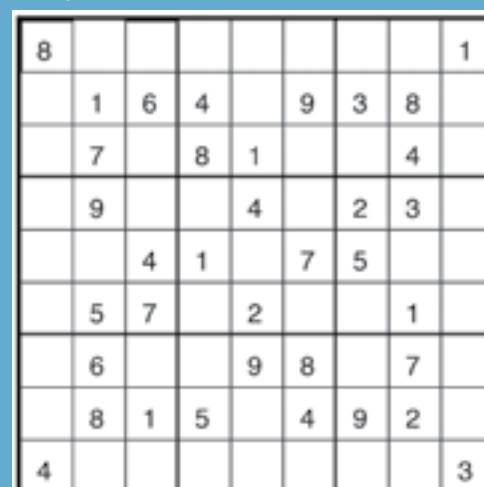
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## Sudoku Corner

269

Easy



Hard



Last week's Easy 268



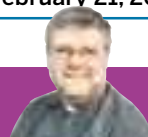
Last week's Hard 268





## Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



# There has to be a realistic solution for coeliacs

**GO INTO YOUR** local supermarket and check out the food section. You'll be amazed at the selection available for coeliacs. Business people know the statistics: more than one in every 200 Irish people is coeliac and needs a gluten-free diet. This fact poses a challenge for churches: one in 200 people makes for a sizeable cohort of our parishes, many of which contain thousands of residents.

When knowledge of this condition first became widely known, 'gluten-free' hosts were manufactured. These hosts, containing not a scrap of gluten, were perfect for coeliacs and could be consumed without fear of ill-effects.

Unfortunately, this position did not last. The Vatican ruled that bread that didn't contain gluten wasn't really bread, and thus couldn't validly be turned into the Body of Christ. The response of manufacturers was to make 'low-gluten hosts' instead, containing a tiny amount of gluten; they continue to provide these today. Many churches still promote these hosts as 'gluten-free', which they are not. We do not provide them in the parish where I minister.



Occasionally I say Mass in other churches. In some places, a *ciborium* or *pyx* containing low-gluten hosts is held by the celebrant at Communion time. Coeliacs mix with the general body of communicants and indicate to the priest that they want the special hosts. The result is that the celebrant has hands covered in gluten (from the regular Communion hosts) as he distributes low-gluten hosts masquerading as gluten-free hosts to coeliacs.

● Thanks to the kind people who emailed me in response to my request for feedback. I got a lovely email from a man who passed a reflection on family life to his own family and got a reaction that delighted him, signing himself "an oul' lad of 89" (called Maurice).

Another correspondent had a word of affirmation for everyone who contributes to the Notebook: "I enjoy reading all contributors to the back page. All of you have something interesting to say and always it is succinct, to the point and relevant. Well done! Keep writing!" (says Eddie).

This practice is highly dangerous. Not every coeliac would be affected by this practice, but some with a high sensitivity to gluten could have their health badly damaged by it. And the outcome may be that coeliacs might avoid Communion altogether, such is the variation in practice. Anyone who believes that Holy Communion is food for the journey through life would be very upset by this.

The only solution for coeliacs,

I believe, is to have a specially dedicated chalice containing the Precious Blood, available solely for them. A segment of the celebrant's host cannot be mingled with this chalice, nor can the celebrant drink from it, nor anyone else who has consumed a glutened host.

## In practice

How does it work out in the church where I minister? Very well, as long as I am the celebrant (other priests can be 'harder to train'!) When the eucharistic ministers come to the altar, they put a small table in place near the altar steps, and place on it a special chalice from the altar, with its own purifier. When a coeliac comes to the Communion station, he or she points to the small chalice and the Minister says "The Body and Blood of Christ", which indeed it is. The coeliac receives from the chalice and wipes it with the cloth. Thus all are preserved healthy! Coeliacs are encouraged to receive in this way from First Communion onwards.

I recommend that all parishes get the advice of local experts when they put arrangements in place that will suit all their local coeliacs.

## 'Woman without her man is nothing'

Your challenge: punctuate the heading above – it's a classic test. It also makes the point about the importance of punctuation, even when we send text messages or emails. Punctuation can be the difference between a message that is highly offensive, or quite benign.

Here's one way of punctuating the sentence:

'Woman, without her man, is nothing.

Now there's a sentiment to get the blood racing and tempers flaring.

Look at the alternative, a more true message:

"Woman: with her, man is nothing!"

Never forget to use punctuation when you communicate in any written medium.



Photo: Water from the lake being brought to the health centre by use of hired donkey carts.



## A CATHOLIC HEALTH CENTRE IN TANZANIA NEEDS CLEAN WATER

The Sisters of the Incarnate Word administer a mission health centre, primary school and school hostel in the Catholic Diocese of Musoma, Tanzania. Sister Irene recently contacted The Little Way Association for financial help to install a desperately needed new water system for the health centre. "Water supply has been an issue since the mission started to expand", she wrote. "Initially the water supplied by water mills was enough to serve the small community, but now we are experiencing great water shortage to the point of hiring donkey carts to fetch water from the lake. This is very expensive and unhygienic. With a solar powered water supply system our health centre patients will get constant, clean water for their use, and the whole community will benefit."

**Can you help the Sisters in their life-saving work for disadvantaged mothers, babies and the sick?**

**A reliable supply of clean water will make such a difference. Every donation that we receive in response to this Appeal will be sent, without deduction, to this project or a project in similar need.**



"True glory is that which will last eternally, and to reach it, it isn't necessary to perform striking works but to hide oneself and practice virtue in such a way that the left hand knows not what the right is doing." - St Therese

In our modern age of materialism and selfishness, when so many are searching for an authentic spirituality, Therese's little way of simple love for God and others has a powerful appeal. Perhaps we too can join her on the 'little way'.

**All Little Way benefactors share in a daily Mass offered for their intentions in the Missions.**

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