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Changes to 'awkward' language at Mass could be on the cards

EXCLUSIVE

Chai Brady

For the second time in just over a decade, Irish parishioners could be facing changes in the words used during the Mass.

Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian SJ told *The Irish Catholic* that he would "love" to see some of the prayers at the Mass changed to make some of the language less "awkward".

"Our opening prayers, sometimes I find, are awkward" he said. Bishop McGuckian said that he would personally like to see changes made "in the light of the new principals of translation" outlined by the reforms of Pope Francis.

In a document *Magnum Principium*, the Pontiff points out that liturgical translations must reflect contemporary language and culture as well as the original text. "I would love to see that happen," he said.

"I am aware a full translation of the Missal is a hugely onerous, costly and ultimately disruptive thing to do and I don't think we hear from the faithful that it is a top priority. But I think we have to be open to it and in the light of the more modern translation principles that there are parts of the Missal that would be good to revisit, but we have to weigh that up," he said.

He said that the issue did come up in some of the recent synodal discussions.

Bishop McGuckian is the Irish representative to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), the transnational body which

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'Wedding bells are ringing in the chapel...'



Kevin and Geraldine McGuckin pictured after their recent wedding in St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast.

JANE MELLETT

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DAVID QUINN

Porn in the classroom

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DR KEVIN MCCARROLL

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Changes to 'awkward' language at Mass could be on the cards

» **Continued from Page 1** advises English-speaking bishops' conferences on translations of the Mass and other liturgies.

His comments come as a Church assembly in Australia last week agreed to several reforms including a new translation of the Roman Missal.

Prof. Liam Tracey OSM of St Patrick's Pontifical University Maynooth said the 2011 Missal now in place in parishes "has failed, and it does not communicate to the assembly and often for the presider it is impossible to proclaim...All of which was pointed out when this translation was going through the various stages of approval.

"I noted that it seems that the Australians are calling for this new translation to be prepared in Australia. Like many, they have lost faith in the ability of ICEL to respond to the needs of its member episcopal confer-

ences," he said.

The call for a new translation was echoed by liturgist Dr Tom Whelan CSSp, who said it would be "very high up on my Christmas wish list".

Dr Whelan insisted that "there are some very, very good things in the new translation, but there is an awful lot of stuff that is problematic," adding that "liturgical translation is a massively slow and detailed process.

"The translation is one thing, but the challenge is putting it in to a 'speaking' English - an English that people are able to pray with easily. An English that flows and also sits neatly and nicely on the ears of those listening - that is the first principle of liturgical translation, not syntax or Latin," he added.

The Irish Catholic also reached out to Archbishop of Tuam Francis Duffy - who chairs the Church's Commission on Liturgy - but his office said he did not wish to

Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty celebrates Mass in the cemetery in Cross-Patrick, Allen Parish, Co. Kildare, July 15. The cemetery hosts the remains of penal-times Bishop James Gallagher.

Irish people support levy on disposable cups

Liam Fitzpatrick

A majority of Irish people support a levy on disposable cups, according to a poll from Ireland Thinks.

In a poll requested by environmental campaign Sick of Plastic, respondents answered the question, "Do you support the Government's plan to bring in a levy, like the plastic bag tax, of 20c on disposable

comment on the issue of a new translation.

The current Roman Missal was rolled out across Irish parishes in 2011, marking the first major change since the liturgical reforms following Vatican II in the early 1970s. It

Carol Nolan TD of Laois-Offaly said the Christian message is increasingly countercultural "and for that reason alone it is critically important that free speech is robustly protected under any proposals to introduce so-called hate speech laws".

The Department of Justice said in a statement that the new law will legislate for hate

crimes by creating new, aggravated forms of certain existing criminal offences, where those offences are motivated by prejudice against a protected characteristic.

The department added: "It will also update the previous 1989 legislation on hate speech to reflect the current context more accurately; including online hateful content."

Ms Nolan said: "I for one will vigorously oppose any effort to reclassify traditional values and their promotion as akin to 'hate speech'. Speech, informed by Christian values around life, marriage, the family, is an antidote to the incomprehensible and incoherent nonsense that routinely passes for enlightened 'dialogue' in Ireland. It must be protected from prosecution."

Legislation

Mattie McGrath TD of Tipperary said the legislation must not be used "as another stick to beat Christians, beat Christian values and browbeat Christian families".

"We must protect freedom of religious expression and

give it greater protections," he said, adding: "There's a daily and constant undermining of Christian family and personal Christian values in the Dáil."

The protected characteristics set out in the Hate Crime Bill are: race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, gender (including gender expression and identity) and disability.

The Department of Justice also said of the legislation: "The new legislation will set the threshold for criminal incitement to hatred as intent or recklessness. This means a person must either have deliberately set out to incite hatred, or at the very least have considered whether what they were doing would incite hatred, concluded that it was significantly likely, and decided to press ahead anyway.

"The legislation will contain robust safeguards for freedom of expression, such as protections for reasonable and genuine contributions to literary, artistic, political, scientific or academic discourse, and fair and accurate reporting."

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Excitement builds as Faithful gather to honour grandparents

Chai Brady and Liam Fitzpatrick

The Faithful will gather on July 24 for a pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, as well as in parishes across Ireland, to celebrate the second annual World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly. It will be the first time the “amazing day” will be marked in person due to Covid restrictions last year.

The Catholic Grandparents Association (GCA) in Ireland were instrumental in advocating for a day for grandparents to be

held, and met the Pope’s announcement with “unbelievable excitement”. Catherine Wiley, founder of the CGA, said the association has been “at the forefront in campaigning for a greater recognition of grandparents”.

“I was so unbelievably excited because it concretised the role of grandparents in the family, in the Church and in the world so that forever more, one day every year, our children and our grandchildren and our great grandchildren can gather in honour and

in thanks of their grandparents and all they have done for us, and of course particularly in passing on our faith,” she said.

This will also be the first time the new Archbishop of Tuam Francis Duffy will be in attendance. He is the new patron of the CGA.

This year, Pope Francis designated the theme as Psalm 92:14: “They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green.”

The CGA has prepared resources for parishes for the day which include a ‘plant a tree’ initiative, a

book of remembrance, a peace card and the children’s prayer appeal.

On the Sunday in Knock there will be Anointing of the Sick at 2.30pm. The pilgrimage Mass will begin at 3pm. There will also be a procession with families and young people.

Ms Wiley added: “The Pope has asked especially that people in care homes and the elderly that have no one are looked out for on that day and are visited. So we have grandchildren all over the country who have sent beautiful cards to care homes and they’re being delivered to all the residents in the care homes, with little hearts and kisses and everything on them. It’s honestly and amazing day.”

For more details see www.knockshrine.ie and www.catholicgrandparent-sassociation.org.

Irish prelate joins Vatican panel choosing new bishops

Chai Brady

Pope Francis has appointed Dubliner Bishop Paul Tighe to the influential Vatican body which advises the Pontiff on choosing new bishops.

A priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin, he has served at the Vatican since 2007 in a number of roles and has worked in the Council for Culture for the past five years.

Sixty-four-year-old Bishop Tighe is a protégé of the retired Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin. Both men worked closely in Dublin before the former’s promotion to Rome and Dublin priests have long considered Dr Tighe to have been a close confidant of Archbishop Martin.

The new role on the Dicastery for Bishops will give Bishop Tighe a huge role in influencing future episcopal appointments in Ireland.

Pope Francis appointed him along with 13 others, including three women.

In 1990, then Fr Tighe was appointed as a lecturer in moral theology at the Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin and at Holy Cross College.

In 2004, he was named as director of the communications office of Dublin Diocese and a year later headed the now defunct office for public affairs.

The three women were appointed to the dicastery – the first to serve in such a role – Sr Raffaella Petrini FSE, secretary general of the governorate of the Vatican City State, Sr Yvonne Reungoat FMA, former superior general of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and Dr Maria Lia Zervino, president of the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations.

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New life in Ukrainian community



Chaplain to the Ukrainian Catholic community in Ireland Fr Vasyl Kornitsky baptises baby Emilia in the Church of Our Lady of Consolation, Donnycarney, Dublin, July 16.



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Catholic education body welcomes sex-education curriculum changes

Ruadhán Jones

The Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) has welcomed proposed changes to the Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum, which will see more of a focus on "human relationships" and less on "mere biology".

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

published Monday a draft Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), drawn up following consultation with students.

The changes drew controversy after *The Irish Independent* reported that pornography would be taught in classrooms,

but CEP CEO Alan Hynes said the reports were "misleading".

"We're broadly happy with the draft curriculum," Mr Hynes told *The Irish Catholic*.

"The controversy was the way in which it was presented, I think *The Irish Independent's* headline was somewhat misleading.

"We're quite happy that it can be harmonised with the ethos of any Catholic school."

Mr Hynes said there is a need to "address critically" the prevalence of pornography use among teenagers and its effects on them.

"The Church sees the need... to enable young people to critically engage with it," he added.

It's important that young people develop "a critical sense" in dealing with "the flood of pornography", Mr Hynes warned, quoting from Pope Francis' encyclical *Amoris Laetitia*.

He added that he was aware there are pro-pornography use campaigners out there, "but that's not what's being proposed here at all".

The CEP, an umbrella group for Catholic primary, second-

ary and tertiary institutes, also welcomes the new focus on the relationship element of RSE, Mr Hynes said.

"It's based on feedback from students themselves. I think a lot of the feedback came to a request to move away from a mere biological treatment and to more human relationship focus," Mr Hynes said.

Plans are currently underway for the Church to develop its own RSE curriculum for second level education, to complement the Flourish programme used in Catholic primary schools.

Pilgrimage travel avoids airport chaos

Staff reporter

Irish pilgrims have escaped the worst of the summer travel chaos in Dublin airport and abroad, Marian Pilgrimages have said.

While many travellers have struggled with cancelled flights and lost baggage, pilgrim tour operators use of charter flights and regional airports means they have been largely unaffected by these issues.

"We are having the same issues as everyone else with Dublin airport, and it is a bit of a pain getting through, but we've escaped the majority of it," Niall Glynn of Marian Pilgrimages told *The Irish Catholic*.

Airports in Cork, Shannon and Knock have not been as badly affected, while many sites of pilgrimage are "a bit off the beaten track" for the majority of tourists.

"We use charter planes as well, which means that, as happened last week, even if someone is delayed 30 or 40 minutes going through security, the charter plane waits for them where it is," Mr Glynn said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

€75,000 announced for healthcare chaplain training

Financial assistance of €75,000 to help people wishing to undertake third level education for healthcare chaplaincy has been announced by the Healthcare Chaplaincy Board – a sub-committee of the Council for Healthcare of the Irish Catholic Bishops.

The 'Healthcare Chaplaincy Bursary' will assist those aiming to complete their academic education in preparation for certification in Roman Catholic Healthcare Chaplaincy (board certified chaplain) from the Healthcare Chaplaincy Board and to work in the health service within Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The bursaries may be granted to people who have been offered placements in the following approved courses: Theology (at a recognised institute), the Post Graduate Diploma in Pastoral Theology (Healthcare Chaplaincy) and Masters in Theology: Specialisation in Pastoral Theology (Healthcare Chaplaincy) at St Patrick's The Pontifical University, Maynooth. Applications are accepted only for each academic year. This bursary is provided by the Bon Secours Health System.

Those interested can email: informationhcboard@gmail.com or john.kelly@tuh.ie

Killala reveals diocesan appointments

The 2022 clerical changes and appointments for the Diocese of Killala have been announced by Bishop John Fleming.

Ballina Pastoral Team: Fr Aidan O'Boyle (Moderator), Fr Kieran Holmes and Fr Anthony Gillespie.

Belmullet: Fr Eddie Rogan to be PP of Belmullet. Fr Tom Doherty and Fr Tony Cavanagh SSP to be assistant priests serving the three parishes, Belmullet, Kilcommon Erris and Kilmore Erris.

Kilmore-Erris: Fr Kevin Hegarty to be PP of Kilmore-Erris and Kilcommon Erris.

Backs: Fr Michael Reilly to co-pastor Backs with Fr Michael Flynn.

Ballycastle: Fr John Loftus, PP Ballycastle.

Dromore West: Fr Joseph Hogan to be PP Easkey and PP Dromore West.

Woman's Airbnb in North cancelled because she is Catholic

A woman had her accommodation in the North of Ireland cancelled earlier this month due to her being Catholic, she has alleged.

The woman, called Ciara, called in to RTE Radio 1's Live-line last week saying that she and her partner were traveling to the North to celebrate her birthday on July 12 – 'Orange-men's Day'.

After booking an Airbnb they were waiting for their host to accept the reservation. Cliona said she was contacted by the host asking whether she was Catholic or Protestant. Soon after, their booking was cancelled.

Cliona said the host told her "given I was from the Republic and I was Catholic, it would probably be best to cancel the reservation. He apologised".

Number of 'working poor' in Ireland growing

Liam Fitzpatrick

The Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin has seen an increase in the number of 'working poor' availing of the centre's services in recent weeks as the cost of living continues to rise.

Irish prices and apartment costs have drastically increased over the past year, making it difficult for those working low-pay jobs to provide for their families. Apartment prices have risen 17.6%, and overall prices increased 7.8% between May 2021 and 2022.

"What we're noticing at the moment is the number of families that are trying to make ends meet, and the difficulty that the people that lose

their jobs are having, great difficulty," Brother Kevin Crowley, founder of the Capuchin Day Centre, said.

According to Social Justice Ireland (SJI), 17% of the over 660,000 Irish in poverty are 'working poor', or those living in poverty who are currently employed.

SJI estimates that over 130,000 people fall into the 'working poor' category.

About 1,000 people turn to the centre for breakfast and dinner service every day. The centre also provides baby nappies and formula, fresh clothing, and basic medical care including a doctor, nurse, dentist, and chiropodist.

See more on page 20.

A new shepherd for Meath...



Fr Barry White (right) is pictured with Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan after Fr White was ordained to the priesthood on Sunday, July 1, in the Cathedral of Christ the King 7.

Religion and the Conservative attraction...

One of the remarkable aspects of the recent tussle for power and leadership in the British Conservative party has been the number of candidates from an ethnic background.

Rishi Sunak, former Chancellor and always the front-runner to replace Boris Johnson, is from an Indian heritage; while a rising star, Kemi Badenoch comes from a Nigerian family. Other contenders have included Suella Braverman whose parents were from Mauritius and Kenya, Nadeem Sahawi, an Iraqi Kurd who came to Britain as a child refugee from Iraq and Sajid Javid, whose parents were poor Punjabi immigrants.

Commentators

This has astonished commentators, because it was expected that the Labour party should be the natural home of immigrants to Britain. Certainly, back in the day when Irish emigrants became involved in British politics, they tended to join Labour, as did most Afro-Caribbeans.

So why are those from ethnic backgrounds now



Mary Kenny



The race to replace Boris Johnson has surprised many for the diversity of the candidates. Photo: CNS/UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor/handout via Reuters

attracted to the Conservatives? Charles Moore, Margaret Thatcher's biographer (also known as Baron Moore of Etchingham), suggests that immigrants are more likely to have had 'real-life' experiences, come from an intact family, and have stronger religious values – which draws them towards conservatism. They are less likely to have trendy 'woke' ideas, too.

Traditional

Sunak comes from a traditional Hindu family, who were able to send him to a posh school, Winchester, where he was head boy. Kemi Badenoch was born into a Methodist Yoruba family and describes herself as a 'cultural Christian'. Suella Braverman is a Buddhist. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, which was Nadeem Sahawi's background. Sajid Javid and his four brothers

The spirituality of ill-health

I've been fortunate enough to dodge Covid-19, so far, but I was hit over the past couple of weeks by a thoroughly nasty chest infection which laid me low. On these occasions, I have recourse to the Victorian remedy – bed-rest. (The Victorians thought bed-rest was the answer to everything – Florence Nightingale spent the last 40 years of her life in her bed.) And indeed bed-rest may assuage many ailments.

But when feeling unwell, you come to

realise that the notion of total autonomy over your body is an illusion. Your body is subject to nature, chance, and the vagaries of age, malaise and decay. There isn't always a 'pill for every ill', and sometimes you just have to accept that sickness will take its course, and you are not in control of nature.

There's also a spiritual exercise involved in being unwell: it is, in a way, a preparation for departing this world, as one day we must.

were brought up "to believe in God", as Muslims: he is now married to an observant Christian, Laura, and Christianity is the faith of the household.

These candidates have had stable family lives and a religious formation – and a noticeable absence of divorce or extra-marital affairs.

Maybe there are other elements which attract those from a migrant background such as personal ambition to succeed and prosper, which may be more associated with the Tories – both Ms Sahawi and Mr Sunak became wealthy, and Mr Sunak's Indian wife is very rich.

But Baron Moore's thesis is interesting nevertheless and may well, in the near future, have some resonance in Ireland.

People from an immigrant heritage in Ireland, too, may be more likely to adhere to conservative family values and to traditions of religious faith.

And by the way, it's surely laudable, that British politics have become racially and ethnically diverse.

● *Benediction* is an interesting movie portraying the life of the great war poet Siegfried Sassoon, seen recently in the cinema, but also just now available on DVD.

The director, Terence Davies, emphasises Sassoon's hedonistic youth in the 1920s – after the horrors of the First World War – and downplays the poet's conversion to Catholicism in old age. Sassoon, who died in 1967, is seen in the film as a sour old man, portrayed by Peter Capaldi.

Yet the publisher Rupert Hart-Davis wrote, of Siegfried Sassoon, that his old age was serene, and that he found peace in an "unconditional surrender" to God. "The comfort and joy with which his religion filled his last years was celebrated in a spiritual anthology of his poetry *The Path to Peace*, (1960) printed and published by his dear friends, the nuns at Stanbrooke Abbey."

The terrible experiences of the Great War haunted Sassoon, but he did find peace in faith, expressed in his last devotional poetry.

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Ossory takes fight for vocations to local level

Ruadhán Jones

Each of the 13 “pastoral areas” in Ossory diocese will have a vocations director, as the diocese brings the fight for vocations to the local level.

The move addresses one of the “key areas” identified by the diocese’s 2015 pastoral plan, according to co-ordinator of the plan’s implementation Gemma Mulligan.

“One person will be nominated for each area specifically for the promotion of vocations,” Ms Mulligan told *The Irish Catholic*.

“We are working very hard at trying to

focus the work of vocation and encourage people.”

Those responsible for promoting vocations advertise and co-ordinate initiatives like vocations Sunday.

“They might organise gatherings or prayer services, whatever is needed... to promote vocations for the parishes the pastoral area has care for,” Ms Mulligan added.

The pastoral areas will replace the system of deaneries previously in place, apostolic administrator for the diocese Bishop Denis Nulty announced July 9.

The pastoral areas, which will have care

of the 42 parishes in the diocese, combines lay and clerical leadership.

The diocese hopes that this structure will help it model the “synodal Church” that Pope Francis has called for, Ms Mulligan said.

“We are responding to the changes that we see in parishes and the new needs that come up.

“The pastoral area model is the future for Ossory, it’s where our energy will go.

“Working together is a huge part of what this is about, showing co-responsibility, working in a synodal way to share tasks

and planning for the future in a prayerful way,” Ms Mulligan said.

Speaking at the Mass to mark the transition to pastoral areas, Bishop Nulty said that “transition is never easy”, adding that the pandemic slowed the “bedding down” process.

“But some areas blossomed with local initiatives and outreaches including webcams, foodbanks and shared newsletters,” he continued.

“The 13 pastoral areas... are not just an option, they are the future structure that is Ossory Diocese,” Bishop Nulty said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New form of ‘team ministry’ in Ferns

Priests in the diocese of Ferns will be assigned to a “team ministry” to cater for parishes without a resident priest, Bishop Ger Nash has said.

The appointments, which take effect August 15, are as follows: Fr Jim Doyle has been appointed Chaplain, Irish College Paris for a three year period.

Fr Danny McDonald, PP Marshalstown and Castledockrell to retire.

The parishes of St Aidan’s, Enniscorthy, St Senan’s Enniscorthy and the parish and curacy of Marshalstown and Castledockrell to be assigned to the pastoral care of a team of three priests, Frs Tom Dalton, Paddy Banville and Billy Caulfield. Fr Michael Byrne will assume the pastoral care of the curacy of Galbally and Ballyhogue.

Lay ministers among Killaloe appointments

The appointment of lay ministers in Killaloe diocese was announced for the first time alongside the clerical changes for the diocese.

The 24 lay ministers include 13 ministers of pastoral care and 11 ministers of catechetics, and will work alongside priests and parishes.

The appointments take effect August 26 for the duration of three years, when they will be reviewed.

Announcing the changes, Bishop Fintan Monahan said the ministers will “reach out to the wider community”, helping to ease “the burden of work on the diminishing number of priests in the diocese”.

Ministers of pastoral care will offer “care and support” in a manner similar to a lay chaplain, while catechists’ will facilitate all those “searching for meaning”.

Knock national novena announced

The national novena to Our Lady of Knock will take place in August from Sunday 14-22 offering nine days of reflection and prayer. This year’s theme is ‘A Journey in Hope’.

Following a two-year break due to the pandemic, rector of the shrine Fr Richard Gibbons said: “So many of the people who joined us online over the course of the pandemic are now coming back to visit the shrine which is great to see. “The novena is always a very special highlight of the year, and we are delighted to be able to proceed with it this year.” Ceremonies will take place at Knock Basilica at 3pm and 8pm over the course of the nine days with guest speakers present during each ceremony. There will also be the candlelight procession which takes place following the 8pm ceremony (weather permitting).

Carlow College offered to State with ‘no strings attached’

Staff reporter

Catholic third level institute Carlow College has been offered to the State with “no strings attached”, An Taoiseach Micheál Martin said in the Dáil.

Mr Martin, responding to questions from TDs about the Church’s involvement in education, said the “issue of the role of the Church within education” has “evolved significantly”.

He cited the example of Carlow College, St Patrick’s, which he said has been offered to the Department of

Further and Higher Education for use by what was formerly Carlow IT.

“Provided it is retained for teaching and education purposes, there are no strings attached,” Mr Martin said Jun 28.

“It is a fantastic site in the middle of Carlow.”

In a statement to *The Irish Catholic*, a spokesperson for Carlow College said discussions with the Department regarding the college’s “strategic positioning” are ongoing.

The college is “currently exploring all possibilities, including the offer of

the College Campus and its activities to the state for possible integration into the higher education framework in the South East Region”.

When contacted by *The Irish Catholic*, Bishop Denis Nulty’s office said he is not commenting the college’s proceedings. Bishop Nulty is chair of Carlow College’s governing body.

The college is one of two remaining publicly funded Catholic universities following the integration of St Angela’s College Sligo into the Atlantic Technological University earlier this year.

Poor Clares Galway chapel reopens after renovations

Staff reporter

The chapel in the Poor Clares’ convent in Galway has been reopened to the public after “badly needed” repairs to nearby buildings.

The roof of some of the convent buildings was “badly in need of repair with rain coming through the ceilings of the top floor bedrooms”, the order said in a statement.

“As the dangerous work has been completed the scaffolding will be dismantled in the next few days,” the sisters continued.

“So we are glad to announce that it is safe for the public to attend Mass and the chapel is now re-opened for Mass again.”

The Poor Clares’ said they were “very grateful” for the assistance they received through funding allocated from the Historical Structural Fund.

The order has had a presence at Nun’s Island, Galway City, for centuries, and celebrated the solemn profession of Sr Clare Marie, their newest sister, earlier this year.



Poor Clare Srs Faustina and Colette sit on the scaffolding on the monastery to get a birds-eye view of the renovation work just completed on the convent’s roof.

Niamh Uí Bhriain

The View



Fleadh Cheoil provides inclusivity for musicians with special needs

Most parents of children with disabilities will tell you that they've been forced to fight hard to obtain the services their children need to develop their full potential.

Despite repeated claims by the State that their objective is to ensure that no child gets left behind, advocates for people with disabilities point to staff shortages, under-resourced services, and a failure to implement programmes which assist in flourishing and independent living.

In recent years, however, people with disabilities have been forging their own paths, achieving new heights in sports, education, public speaking, employment and in the arts. Research into the benefits of music therapy have shown that playing an instrument or participating in musical education can have hugely positive effects on development, inclusion and well-being.

“The Leinster Fleadh, held this year in Portlaoise, also offered a very unique series of workshops for people with additional needs”

Therapists believe that because music can be a non-verbal means of communication, it can help those with special needs to develop new means of connecting and understanding. They say that listening to and performing music stimulates almost every area of your brain, and almost all of your sensory systems, and that its positive influence on cognitive functions is therefore enormous.

One orchestra for people with special needs, Hearts for Music, describes the support they provide as “transforming disabilities to abilities”. That's a US programme, but the sentiment is echoed in an initiative by Comhaltas Ceolteoirí Éireann which is focused on including people with intellectual disabilities.

Fleadhs, at provincial and all-Ireland levels, have placed a special emphasis on including people with additional

needs by supporting and encouraging active participation at several levels.

Since 2016, Comhaltas has made additional provision for musicians with special needs at its flagship summer school Scoil Éigse, attended by hundreds of music students of all ages from all over the world. Amongst the 900 or so who packed the classes in Ennis that year were 16 students with special needs who were part of a pilot project to make the school more inclusive.

Inspired

Scoil Éigse director Kieran Hanrahan said that he was inspired by his then 17-year-old niece Orla who enjoyed taking part in the foundation level classes and found the experience a hugely positive one. The classes are free of charge for children with special needs, as Comhaltas says they want to ensure those students are “part of the Scoil Éigse experience”.

Each evening, tutors at the summer school, which runs for the week before the fleadh, host a session for the students and those with additional needs are welcome and play an important part in the atmosphere and energy generated at the all-Ireland event which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year to play music, listen to sessions, and watch performances in every corner of the town, from concert halls to pub corners.

The Leinster Fleadh, held this year in Portlaoise, also offered a very unique series of workshops for people with additional needs. Tommy Hayes, a music therapist and well-known trad musician, directed therapist-led workshops for up to 250 people over the course of the week, covering music, voice, movement and percussion. An inclusive Céilí where participants, carers, family members and members of the public registered to attend was also held free of charge.

These workshops and classes are part of what's being called ‘a fleadh for all’ and it feels like genuine inclusivity for musicians with special needs and those who want to develop those skills.

Music transcends barriers, and participation is usually a highly rewarding, positive experience for people

of all ages who might have not always felt included in musical or other activities. Most of all, of course, being part of a music session can just be great fun, something every traditional Irish musician will know, and it's wonderful to see that being shared as widely as possible.

It's a great initiative, and more power to Comhaltas for putting a formal structure on what has always been a part of the culture around traditional music, which has most often been conserved and progressed by families and communities and was inherently inclusive as a consequence.

“Since 2016, Comhaltas has made additional provision for musicians with special needs at its flagship summer school Scoil Éigse”

I've been going to fleadh since I was a child and I remember musicians with physical or intellectual needs being accommodated pretty seamlessly into the craic, with assistance from their families and friends. One such young musician was Donncha Ó Briain, a member of the famous musical O'Brien family from Dublin. He had muscular dystrophy, but was an extraordinary musician and has been described as one of the best tin whistle players of his generation.

His music was full of spirit and conviction and marvellous ornamentation. In 1980, Donncha received a ‘People of the Year’ award which recognised “his triumph over disability, his musical prowess and the inspiration he gave to so many”. The Leitrim fiddler and composer, Charlie Lennon, wrote a tune in his honour called *The Flying Wheelchair*. Donncha's own album, *Irish Traditional Music on Tin Whistle*, remains a master class of fine whistle playing.

Inclusivity has its own rewards then: not just for the students or the musicians who benefit, but for all of us who are left enriched by the musicianship of people like Donncha who improve all our lives by their own flourishing.



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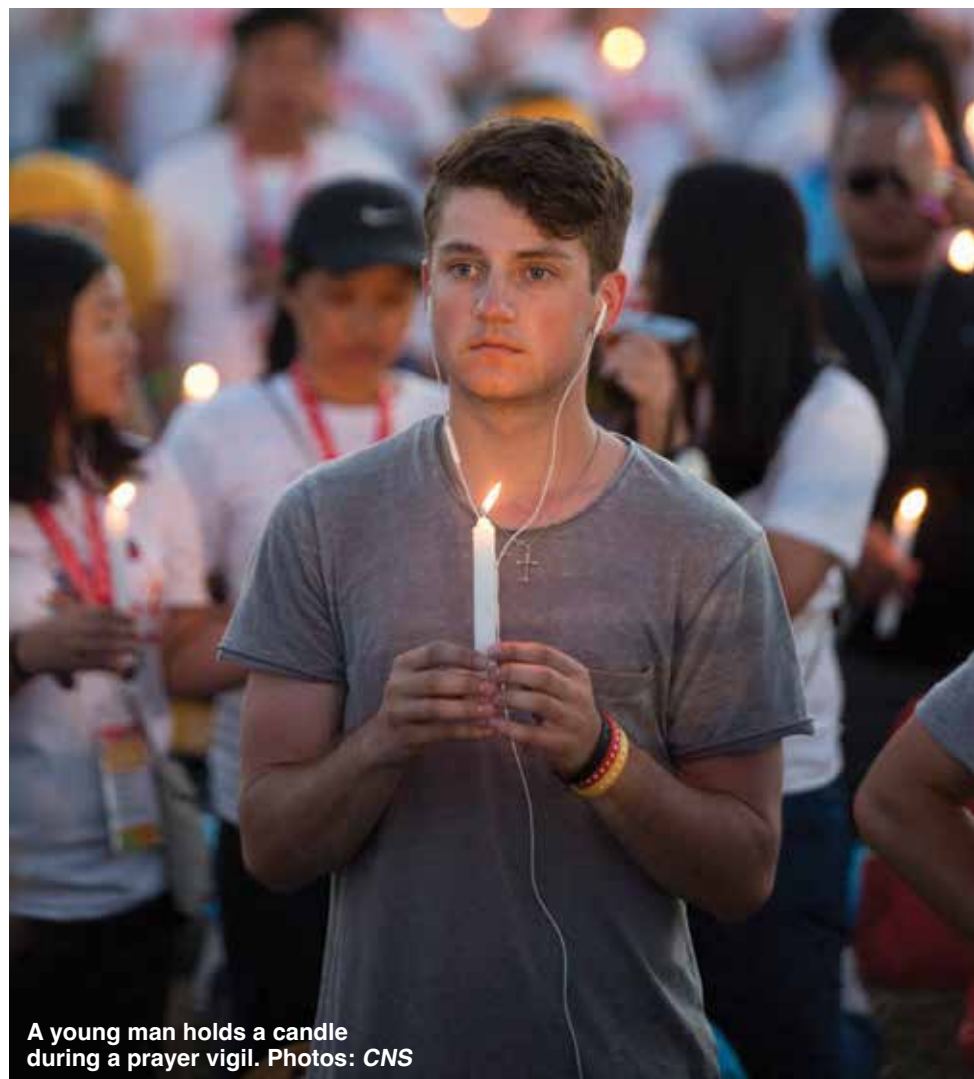
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Youth groups must be about mission – not themselves



A young man holds a candle during a prayer vigil. Photos: CNS



We must resist the temptation to make Catholic organisations our own form of safe spaces, writes Ruadhán Jones

Lay Catholic societies and youth groups play an important role in the modern Church. My experience of University College Cork's informal Catholic society was vital to my faith, strengthening it by uniting me with like-minded Catholics. We enjoyed dinners together, prayed together, there was a student Mass – it was excellent.

“If we want to have Catholic groups and societies grounded in the heart of the Lord, we need to be missionaries”

Catholic groups do provide safe havens, as it were, for that kind of fraternal support. But if we treat them as just being safe havens, then we risk becoming insular and bickering amongst ourselves.

This is a live temptation, because the world around us is so clearly against us. But the risk becomes that we shut ourselves off from the world.

Our arguments become purely about ‘our Church’ and our disagreements – what it is to be like, who is to be allowed in, who I like and dislike. Small-minded or uncharitable bickering is the unintended result.

Those who run or who offer spiritual guidance to such groups should be aware of this, particularly as the problem has become more acute with the advent of the internet and social media. They corral people, narrowing their vision and exposing them to ideas without proper guidance. Well run Catholic groups are important in combating this, but if they are not careful they can become part of the problem.

But even if such groups do offer catechesis and guidance, what use is that if the guidance has no end in mind? What use is it if we do not put our knowledge and understanding to good use? In other words, without a missionary outlook, catechesis goes to waste.

Stations

A friend of mine who is involved in organising Catholic youth groups told me that he views such groups as being akin to filling stations. When we enter them, we know it's not meant to be our permanent home – it is where we go to refuel in order to go out into the world with renewed energy. This is a subtle vision and a deeply liturgical one.

In saying that, I'm thinking of the great 20th Century liturgist Fr Louis Bouyer. He wrote in *Life and Liturgy* that the purpose of the liturgical life is to bring Christ to the everyday. In saying that, I'm sure he had in the mind the saying of Pope Pius XI, who wrote that the Mass is in the principal organ of the Church.

What is the principal organ? I can only assume that it's the heart. And what does the heart do? It takes in blood that has used up its oxygen in ministering to the body, and pumps out oxygenated blood.

That is roughly what we do when we go to Mass and receive the Eucharist – we offer up our labours to the Lord and leave rejuvenated to go and preach the good news.

I apologise to any scientists reading this if my terminology is wrong, but no matter, the metaphor stands. If we want to have Catholic groups and societies grounded in the heart of the Lord, we need to be missionaries.

Look to the example of some Catholic institutions that have lasted, like the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the Legion of Mary and the Capuchin Day centre, to name but a few. These have lasted for decades, even centuries, always renewing themselves to do the work of the Lord.

“Even if such groups do offer catechesis and guidance, what use is that if the guidance has no end in mind?”

And it is simple work, in a way: house visitations, handing out miraculous medals, feeding the poor and the hungry. But it is work that gives us a grounded connection with those outside the Church, those for whom we should be preparing ourselves in our Catholic groups.

If we don't speak to them or interact with them, we will never understand them. That is why if we treat Catholic groups as a retreat into a safe space, we will become insular – we will have forgotten our purpose, which is to speak to the lost and the broken, those in need of the Church's saving ministry!

The Church has a great deal more to offer than many realise. Let's not become insular, bickering among ourselves – let's go out and offer the good news in humility and with charity.

The Irish Catholic

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'Shocking rise' in abortions in Ireland continues



Abortion figures for 2021 show the number of abortions in Ireland is at almost 20,000 in three years, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

Figures released by the Department of Health last week revealed that around 6,700 abortions took place in Ireland in 2021, bringing the total number to almost 20,000 since abortion was introduced three years ago.

The Government has been accused by the Life Institute of having a "see no evil, speak no evil" policy in the face of the continued rise.

Spokeswoman for the Life Institute Megan Ní Scealláin said the figures are a "devastating indictment of a bad law that continues to produce horrific outcomes for both mother and baby".

“She was critical of proposals to remove the mandatory three-day waiting period, saying that no reasonable person wants a further increase”

She added that it was "disturbing" that Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly was conducting a review of the operation of the abortion act without acknowledging the "shocking rise in the number of abortions since law came into operation in 2019".

When taken with the figures for 2020 (6,577) and 2019 (6,666), the 2021 figures show that the new law has led to as much as a 70% increase in the annual number of abortions.

The Government have demonstrated a "steadfast refusal" to admit there is a problem, despite the "death toll rising", Ms Ní Scealláin continued.

She was critical of proposals to remove the mandatory three-day waiting period, saying that no reasonable person wants a further increase.

"Most people have some compassion and some common



Attendees at the Rally for Life, July 2, when thousands of pro-life demonstrators took to the streets.

decency, would prefer if less abortions, not more, took place," Ms Ní Scealláin said in her statement.

"Stephen Donnelly needs to wake up to this reality, and start taking actions to offer women a better answer than abortion."

The findings of the third annual report on the *Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018* was released July 13. The report shows that in total 4,577 medical procedures carried out under the Act in 2021 were notified to the Minister.

In the Health Department's statement, said that this figure was likely distorted by the effects of the cyber attack on the HSE in 2021. In a note accompany the report, the Department estimates the figure of 6,700 based on the number of requests from GPs for payments for abortion services.

Emergency situation

Just nine abortions took place where there was a risk to the life or health of the mother, and two where there was an emergency situation which threatened the life or health of a mother.

The vast majority of abortions took place in early pregnancy (4,513), while 53 abortions were carried out due to a "condition likely to lead to the death of the foetus".

Eilis Mulroy of the Pro Life Campaign said it was "unacceptable" that the department doesn't

have clear figures. "The Minister for Health [Stephen Donnelly] needs to take steps to rectify this situation immediately", Ms. Mulroy said in a statement.

She questioned how it is that GPs couldn't notify the Government that an abortion had taken place, but could submit their claims for the €450 payment per abortion.

“The 1 in 3 voters who voted 'No' in the 2018 referendum deserve to be represented at the decision making table, but are currently excluded”

"The Department of Health cited the 2021 cyber attack on the HSE and Covid-19 as possible reasons why so many GPs had failed to file the proper notifications with the Minister for Health for the abortions they had performed," Ms Mulroy said.

"However, the explanation given by the Department does not add up when all the GPs who carried out abortions somehow found a way to get paid in full for what they did, in spite of the cyber attack or Covid-19."

As the Department of Health

continues to conduct its three-year review of the 2018 act, Ms Mulroy also criticised Minister Donnelly for not engaging with pro-life representatives.

"In addition, the individuals he has appointed to assist with the review have strong pro-abortion leanings, with some of them representing the most extreme elements of the pro-abortion lobby," she added.

Enlightened Ireland

"It's a terrible indictment of the 'new, enlightened Ireland' that all the focus is on abortion to the exclusion of everything else."

"The 1 in 3 voters who voted 'No' in the 2018 referendum deserve to be represented at the decision making table, but are currently excluded. This has to change," Ms Mulroy said.

Earlier, Ms Mulroy had warned that HSE research released July 12 highlights the Government's "highly selective" approach to the issue.

Lead investigator for the Unplanned Pregnancy and Abortion Care (UnPAC) research Dr Catherine Conlon said the restrictions on abortions for babies with life-limiting conditions has a "chilling effect" on doctors.

The research, based on interviews with 58 women who sought an abortion since 2019, says those who sought and were denied terminations for medical reasons,

"felt absolutely let down and devastated at what they felt was a failure by the State to live up to the spirit of repeal".

In response to the research, Ms Mulroy said terms like "chilling effect" are used again and again" to press for wider access to abortion.

“Why is the research commissioned by the Government all pointing in one direction?”

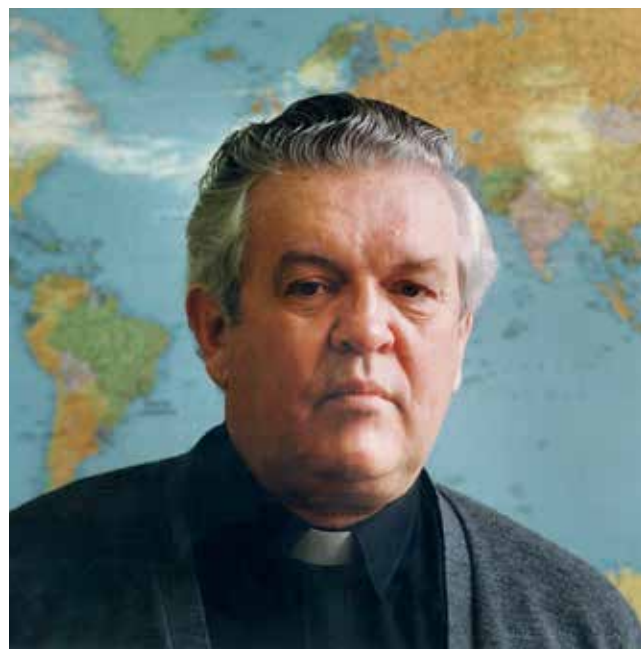
"The truth is that Ireland now has one of the most extreme abortion laws anywhere in the world, permitting unrestricted abortion in the first 12 weeks and allowing gruesome late-term abortions in certain circumstances," Ms Mulroy continued.

"Where's the Government led research on Ireland's spiralling abortion rate," she asked.

"Where is the research on the pressure women and parents feel from certain medics to abort their babies when given a diagnosis that the baby may have a disability?"

"Why is the research commissioned by the Government all pointing in one direction? Does it not give the game away on what's really going on here," Ms Mulroy said.

“A legacy of *incredible* humanitarian significance”



Fr. Aengus Finucane.

Fr. Finucane's legacy

Fr. Finucane is the cornerstone behind much of what Concern has become today. It was he who expanded its aid work into 11 countries and dramatically increased its fundraising.

Tom Arnold - Concern's CEO from 2001 to 2013 - says:

“There can be few Irish people of his generation, or of any other generation, who have contributed as much to improving the lives of so much of humanity.”

“He inspired a whole generation of Concern overseas volunteers.”

Fr. Finucane continues to inspire as his legacy still influences Concern 12 years after his death.

“Do as much as you can, as well as you can, for as many as you can, for as long as you can.”
– Fr. Aengus Finucane

In 2020 Concern worked in 23 countries, responding to 78 different emergencies, helping 36.9 million of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Concern's vision, mission and work continues to strive to end extreme poverty, whatever it takes. The charity believes that no-one should live in fear of not having enough food.

The devastation of climate change

Today one of the primary causes of acute food insecurity are weather extremes.

Climate change is increasing hunger levels and pushing even more people to the brink of famine. With multiple famines predicted, there are currently 41 million people teetering on the edge of starvation.

Extreme weather caused by climate change is having a devastating effect on the most vulnerable people in the world's poorest countries.

And these calamitous weather conditions are now more frequent and varied. No sooner has one disaster struck than another arrives. People don't have enough food for months, sometimes years on end.

In Malawi droughts, floods and strong weather patterns are a regular occurrence – placing huge stress

on land and crop production resulting in food shortages and hunger.

These weather extremes affect an already vulnerable population where 80% source their livelihoods from the land, 71% live below the poverty line and an estimated 20% are living in extreme poverty.

People like Yona Lambiki and his family.

Yona, a farmer, lives in Nkhambaza village with his wife and five children. He was always able to support his family with the crops and food he grew providing them with a healthy balanced diet. Any excess was sold, with some of the money used to pay for his children's schooling. But two years ago everything changed ...



Crops destroyed by Cyclone Idai.

In March 2019 Cyclone Idai caused devastating floods and loss of life in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The floods completely destroyed crops just weeks away from harvest – food people were relying on for survival.

Although his house wasn't affected, like thousands of others, the crops Yona was about to harvest were completely washed away. There was nothing for his family to eat, let alone any to sell.

Help for now and the future

But thanks to Concern's generous donors and Yona's hard work he is now able to look after his family again.

Yona immediately received a vital cash transfer from Concern. With this he bought food and other basic necessities his family needed to be safe and free from hunger.

Yona received seeds including maize, tomatoes, beans, three bundles of sweet potato vines and other vegetables to grow so he could, once again, support his family. He also received, fertilizer and a hoe to help him grow his crops. As well as five goats for milk and manure.



Photo: Jason Kennedy / Concern Worldwide.

“I would really love to meet everyone that is behind this support so I could thank them in person.” – Yona Lambiki

Like other families in his community, Yona planted the seeds he received in his home garden. What they harvest is used to feed their families, any excess is sold to improve their livelihoods.

But Concern do far more than simply give communities plants, seeds and tools. They provide training in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) to ensure long term, inter-generational support.

providing support for years – possibly decades – to come.

On speaking about the people who support Concern and make our work possible, he said, *“I'm so very happy with the support I have received from Concern. My life and family's life is healthy and can afford everything we could not afford before. I'm so happy and thankful to Concern.”*

Will Fr. Finucane inspire you too?

There's a way you, just like Fr. Finucane, can leave the world a better place. And help improve the lives of families like Yona's both now and for future generations.

How? By leaving Concern a gift in your Will.

When you leave a gift, your legacy lives on - helping for years to come.

*“I know that this is a very personal decision. But I assure you, **gifts in Wills have had a phenomenal impact in reducing extreme poverty, hunger and suffering around the world.** Today, as the catastrophic combination of conflict, climate change and COVID-19 have plunged so many people into the grip of crisis, **your gift will help us to be there in their time of need.**”*

– Dominic MacSorley, CEO, Concern Worldwide

Gifts in Wills are a vital source of funding for Concern.

Your legacy will help families like Yona's reverse the many struggles caused by Climate Change ...

... will provide the tools and knowledge they need to not just survive but help themselves – a gift from you they can pass down for generations.

To find out more about how a legacy gives a safe, secure future, please request your complimentary copy of 'A World Without Hunger' – Concern's legacy booklet.

You'll learn of others who desperately needed help, and how legacies from people just like you have done so much.

There are also answers to common questions people ask about leaving a gift in their Will. And explains how to get started.

Requesting your free booklet does not oblige you to do anything else.

The Irish Catholic looks at a rich and varied life lived in the service of others and of God.

Fr. Finucane was ordained as a Holy Ghost Priest in 1958. In his first assignment in Uli, Nigeria, Fr. Finucane found himself involved in the bitter civil war between Nigeria and Biafra.

Following Biafra's attempt to secede, this widespread conflict had displaced millions. What's more, there was a blockade of food, medicine and basic necessities by the Nigerian authorities.

At the height of the crisis in the summer of 1968, it was estimated 6,000 children died every week.

An Irish effort

In response to the Biafrans' terrible plight, Concern Worldwide – originally called Africa Concern – was founded and began raising awareness and funds to help those suffering.

On 6th September 1968, the 600 tonne, Columille set sail for Sao Tome – a Portuguese island close to West Africa. The cost of chartering the ship and its vital cargo of powdered food and medicines was all paid for with donations from the people of Ireland.

To circumvent the blockade, the supplies were then flown from Sao Tome to Biafra overnight. The following day in Uli, Fr. Finucane was among the Holy Ghost priests who would help distribute the life saving supplies.

With his commitment and

that of the Irish public and priests, this operation grew into one flight a day for 11 months.

Fr. Finucane was deeply committed to helping the poorest of the poor. So after leaving Biafra, in 1972 he became Concern's Field Director in Bangladesh after its war of independence from Pakistan – the war had left millions in desperate need of food.

The period after Fr. Finucane's time in Bangladesh was particularly testing. In Thailand's Kampuchea refugee camps he saw the desperation of Cambodians who had fled the Khmer Rouge's genocide.

And in Uganda the horror of HIV in Kampala, where even in the best hospitals one third of the children born were HIV positive.

Fr. Finucane worked tirelessly to alleviate suffering, and recognised his responsibility to help the poor and underprivileged.

Concern appointed Fr. Finucane as its Chief Executive in 1981.

During his 16 years as the head of the charity he was 'on the ground' during many of the world's worst disasters. These included the 1983-1985 famine in Ethiopia and the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Relinquishing his post in 1997, Fr. Finucane became Honorary President of Concern Worldwide US. He held this post until his death on 6th October 2009.

To receive your free, no obligation booklet – in complete confidence – please contact Concern's Legacy Manager, Siobhán O'Connor. Call **01 417 8020**, email **siobhan.oconnor@concern.net**, or write to 52-55 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2



Webb telescope 'reveals God's creation' - Jesuit astronomer

Staff reporter

The Jesuits at the Vatican Observatory were wowed like most people by the beauty of the photos from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, but the director said they also are excited by the scientific information the telescope will reveal.

Human spirit

"Such images are a necessary food for the human spirit - we do not live by bread alone - especially in these times," said Jesuit Bro. Guy Consolmagno, the observatory director, after NASA released a first batch of images from what the space agency describes as "the largest, most powerful space telescope ever built."

"The images are gorgeous, as anyone can see for themselves," Bro. Consolmagno said. "It's a tantalizing glimpse of what we'll be able to learn about the universe with this telescope in the future."

NASA described Webb's mission as studying "every phase of 13.5 billion years of cosmic history - from within our solar system to the most distant observable galaxies in the early universe, and everything in between."

"The science behind this telescope is our attempt to use our God-given intelligence to understand the logic of the universe," Bro. Consolmagno said. "The universe wouldn't work if it weren't logical. But as these images show, the universe

is not only logical, it is also beautiful."

"This is God's creation being revealed to us, and in it we can see both his astonishing power and his love of beauty," the Jesuit said.

The Vatican Observatory director also noted that "astronomy is a small field," so he knows many of the scientists who helped build the instruments on the telescope and plan its observations.

Their years of effort, he said, "is a tribute to the power of the human spirit, what we can do when we work together."

"And at the same time," he said, "I am amazed and grateful that God has given us humans, his creation, the ability to see and understand what he has done."

Pointing to the telescope's "first spectrum of water vapor in the atmosphere of an exoplanet," a planet that orbits a star outside the solar system, Bro. Consolmagno reminded readers of one of his Jesuit-scientist predecessors.

"It was about 150 years ago when Fr Angelo Secchi, SJ, put a prism in front of his telescope lens on the roof of the St Ignatius Church in Rome, and made the first spectral measurements of the atmospheres of the planets in our own solar system," he said. "I can only imagine how delighted he would be to see the science he pioneered applied to planets unknown to him orbiting distant stars."



The first full-color image from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, a revolutionary apparatus designed to peer through the cosmos to the dawn of the universe, shows the galaxy cluster SMACS 0723. Known as Webb's First Deep Field, the cluster is seen in a composite made from images at different wavelengths taken with a near-infrared camera and released July 11, 2022. Photos: CNS



This image, released July 12, 2022, is an observation of a planetary nebula taken by the Mid-Infrared Instrument, or MIRI, on NASA's James Webb Space Telescope.



The "Cosmic Cliffs" of the Carina Nebula are seen in an image released by NASA July 12. The "cliffs" are divided horizontally by an undulating line between a cloudscape forming a nebula along the bottom portion and a comparatively clear upper portion. Speckled across both portions is a starfield, showing innumerable stars of many sizes.



A group of five galaxies that appear close to each other in the sky is seen in this image released by NASA July 12. Two galaxies in the middle, one toward the top, one to the upper left and one toward the bottom are seen in a mosaic, or composite, of near and mid-infrared data from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope.

Campaigners want porn taught in school



Maybe teaching children something about pornography is inevitable and necessary, writes **David Quinn**

Pornography will now be studied as part of a new Relationships and Sexuality Education programme to be taught at Junior Certificate level in the country's secondary schools. That is the latest diktat from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) that decides a very great deal of what is taught to the country's pupils.

The first instinct of many people will be horror at such a suggestion. Others will be delighted, seeing it as a realistic development in view of how all-pervasive and widely watched porn has become as a result of the internet.

The big question is, of course, how it will be taught. There is nothing wrong *per se* with teaching about pornography. In fact, given how widespread it is, maybe there is no avoiding the subject, and maybe teaching pupils something about it is inevitable and necessary, including in Catholic schools.

But will pupils be taught pornography is morally good, bad or indifferent? There are some influential voices who believe porn can be 'ethical'.

For example, a number of researchers at NUI Galway advocate that pupils should be taught 'porn literacy'. Kate Dawson is one such. Ms Dawson sometimes goes into schools to give children her views on sex, porn and relationships as part of the HSE-funded WISER (West of Ireland Sex Education Resource) programme.

Shame

She has written about trying to reduce the "shame" associated with watching porn.

She was involved in an exhibition at the Tate gallery in London about "pornography as a pedagogic tool", that is, as a way of teaching about sex and how pornography can be 'ethical'.

Former footballer, Richie Sadlier, who often goes into schools to discuss sex and relationships has a new book out called *Let's Talk* where he writes about what he has learnt from talking to teenage boys about these matters.

Mr Sadlier recently told the *Irish Independent*: "I think we have to



accept that porn is an empowering, liberating experience for loads of people, but for young people it is probably, in most cases, the primary educator about sex".

Does the average parent want their children taught that porn can be "empowering and liberating" and how explicit do they want the lessons to get? Ms Dawson believes pupils should be taught about masturbation and has done so, as she has admitted frankly on TV.

“The big question is, of course, how it will be taught. There is nothing wrong *per se* with teaching about pornography”

The push to teach pupils about pornography and masturbation is, of course, part of the general reaction against the often-repressive sexual attitudes of the past. We were too negative about sex, goes the argument (which could certainly be true) and now we need to be positive and do away with feelings of shame and embarrassment.

A few years ago, I was on RTÉ debating Relationships and Sexuality Education. The precise topic was consent classes. I said we needed to go further than mere

consent and that at a minimum most parents would probably want their children to be taught that they should get to know, like and trust their would-be sexual partner first. I was told by the person I was on to debate that this was "shame-inducing".

In reaction to the past, we can go in the opposite direction and teach children that porn can be 'liberating', masturbation is good, and that it's ok to have sex with a different person every night so long as that is what you really want.

Liberated world

In this 'liberated' world, shame has been banished, and people are encouraged to do whatever makes them feel good, sexually speaking, so long as everyone is fully and freely consenting. The sum total of human happiness will be increased as a result, goes this way of thinking.

What is so-called 'ethical' porn anyway? Broadly speaking, it is supposedly pornography where all the actors, male and female, are fully consenting, no-one is being exploited and respect for all concerned is being promoted.

If these conditions are met, then it perfectly ok to watch porn, or take part in it. It can, in other words, be 'sex positive' and those who think porn is wrong in itself are the ones with the problem

because they are being 'sex negative' and are inducing shame in people.

The ultimate 'sex negative' institution, in this way of thinking, is, of course, the Church and it would suit those who want their fully 'sex positive' version of RSE taught in schools if their only opponents are Catholics. In that case, they could present themselves as the representatives of 'modern', 'tolerant' Ireland, and their opponents as the representatives of the repressive ways of the past.

Key question

But this completely obscures the key question, namely what does the average parent want their children taught about these matters? For example, do they really want them to hear that porn can be 'ethical' and 'liberating', that consent alone is enough in sexual relationships and that masturbation is good? Have parents even been properly consulted? It seems extremely doubtful.

Probably the average parent wants their children to hear that pornography is not where anyone should learn about sex, and that even if you somehow believe it can sometimes be 'ethical', the vast majority of it is demeaning and degrading and has severe knock-on effects into everyday life, including teaching both sexes, but especially boys, that this is what they should

expect, sexually speaking, from each other. It is not being 'sex negative' to point this out, it is being realistic, and what is sex negative is really porn and its effects.

Also, even if the average parent now believes the Church is far too strict about sex, it is unlikely they want their children to be taught that consent alone is enough in sexual relationships and therefore it is alright to sleep with a different person each night. They probably would prefer if their children are taught that they should like get to know, like and trust the other person properly first so as reduce the chances of feeling used afterwards, never mind other, much grimmer consequences.

“The push to teach pupils about pornography and masturbation is, of course, part of the general reaction against the often-repressive sexual attitudes of the past”

If this is ultimately a battle between a 'sex negative' and a 'sex positive' view of the world, what is far more likely to deliver the 'sex positive' vision isn't teaching children in primary and secondary school that anonymous sex with strangers is alright, if that is what you want, and porn can be ok, it is teaching them to connect sex to love. If that now seem old-fashioned, 'repressive' and 'sex negative', then we really are selling our children the proverbial mess of pottage.

“But this completely obscures the key question, namely what does the average parent want their children taught about these matters?”

Consultation exercises disappoint when they promise more than they can deliver



Despite the popular appeal of Pope Francis, the vast majority of Irish Catholics ignored the synodal consultation process, writes **Fr Andrew McMahon**

Appreciation is due to this newspaper for its recent *Synodal Times*, outlining the contents of the various diocesan synodal syntheses. From figures contained within the summaries, the participation/response rate per diocese appears to have been somewhere within a range of 0.5%-1.5% of the overall Catholic population, measured against official Church statistics for Irish dioceses. That the figure was as low as this is something that hasn't been much commented upon and it would seem important that it is not overlooked amidst the overwhelmingly positive coverage the synodal process has been receiving.

“My sense, too, is that it is somehow reflected in the syntheses themselves, in terms of what stands out and what seems missing”

These figures for engagement, moreover, confirm personal and anecdotal experience. I, for instance, promoted the consultation continuously in my large urban parish, set up a small planning group which met regularly, made questionnaires widely available, organised two in-person gatherings and yet the response we received was, ultimately, minimal. Furthermore, many whom I consider key to the functioning of parish life, and heavily committed in various ways, neither attended the scheduled gatherings nor even expressed much interest that the process was happening.

My sense, too, is that it is



A delegate holds a Bible leading a prayer walk at a pre-synodal assembly in the sixth-century monastic site of Clonmacnoise in Ireland June 18, 2022. It was in preparation for the universal synod convened by Pope Francis for 2021-2023. Photos: CNS

somehow reflected in the syntheses themselves, in terms of what stands out and what seems missing. A clear pro-life voice, for example, is hard to detect in most of the diocesan submissions. And while we are aware that a sizeable majority in Ireland are on the liberal side of the abortion argument, including some percentage of Mass-goers, it is still surprising that an exercise undertaken within the faith community - even if it did encourage responses from beyond the Church - failed to register stronger concern on

an issue about which many Irish Catholics remain passionate. By contrast, another contemporary 'hot button' issue, the accommodation of persons popularly termed LGBTQ+, features prominently in every diocesan synthesis.

Holy Spirit

Given the considerable imbalance in how these two areas of concern are portrayed and prioritised in media and political advocacy nowadays, is such prominence of one over the other - in these syntheses also - merely a reflection

of that wider public narrative and its inevitable influence on believer and unbeliever alike? Or is it, on the contrary, confirmation of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the consultation process - which appears to be the working assumption of the various diocesan reports?

“This awareness is critical in responding to the material within the syntheses, for another fundamental reason”

I offer these observations, not in an attempt to undermine what has been expressed in the syntheses but to help contextualise it. I offer it also in the hope that it will temper, in an ultimately beneficial way, the very understandable enthusiasm for the reports on the part of those who have worked hard in the compilation of them, and who may be more easily persuaded than others as to the breadth and depth of the responses informing them. For, while it is reasonable

to assume that the percent or so who got involved in the consultation reflected in their views a much wider constituency within the Church in Ireland who did not participate, the question of how representative they are is not that easy to determine. Perhaps, as the synodal journey continues, this will become clearer to us. In the meantime, however, it would be important to honestly acknowledge that despite the popular appeal of Pope Francis, the priority attached to 'having your say' in today's world and the ease of access for the public in this on-line age, the vast majority of Irish Catholics - active or inactive - ignored the invitation to be part of the consultation.

Dominant vision

This awareness is critical in responding to the material within the syntheses, for another fundamental reason. One of the immediately obvious and, perhaps, admirable aspects of that material is the sheer extent of its aspirations. While I generalise to some degree, the dominant vision emerging is of a Church where 'everyone' feels they have been heard, 'no-one' becomes marginal, the gifts and talents of 'all' are offered and utilised - while the 'cliques' and 'elites' often



Missionary Sister Nathalie Becquart, undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, speaks July 5, 2022, during the Catholic Media Conference in Portland, Ore.



Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, Northern Ireland, blesses delegates during a prayer walk at a pre-synodal assembly in the sixth-century monastic site of Clonmacnoise in Ireland June 18, 2022.

viewed as running parishes will be no more. At the risk of sounding cynical about such sincere and well-intentioned thinking, it seems reasonable to wonder if such a community of human beings has ever existed?

“Their traditional dominance – it seems to me – has simply ensured that laity remain, for the most part, some distance from the inner dynamics of Church life”

Again, is the vision articulated here the fruits of a real ‘discernment’, or a serious engagement with – for example – the experience of the Church in the New Testament? Or is it, again, more likely reflective of those particular concepts of ‘inclusion’ which have come to dominate wider secular discourse? These questions, naturally, require much more probing. More immediately important, however, is the need for a sobering awareness that the hopes and designs contained in the syntheses have been expressed by a small minority of the Irish Church, without any obvious evidence that the greater majority are minded to either engage or be engaged – at least if figures for the consultation itself are anything to go by.

Cynicism, of course, did surface in the course of the consultation. Typically, it was born of a sense that people had sat through similar discussions before and felt they hadn’t been heard – largely because noth-

ing appeared to have changed as a result. Almost always, it was the clergy or hierarchy who were judged responsible for this failure and ill motives were often implied. I believe it is critical that this perception be meaningfully addressed, especially in a process which proposes to focus on how we ‘journey together’ as Church. Consultation exercises (like pastoral plans) generally disappoint, in my experience, because they promise more than they can possibly deliver and expectations too quickly become too great. In this way, they unwittingly contain the seeds of their own demise.

Clergy

A critical factor in this is the clergy, alright – but not in the way that this is popularly perceived or caricatured. Their traditional dominance – it seems to me – has simply ensured that laity remain, for the most part, some distance from the inner dynamics of Church life. Insufficiently familiar with those dynamics, when laity come to propose plans and visions for their parish or diocese they do not take realistic account of the culture in which these are expected to progress. This is, very obviously, not the fault of the laity and, to a certain extent, the calls for more ‘formation’ in the syntheses are relevant here. Rarely, however, is it the result of some wilful ‘clericalism’ or subversive mindset either. Most often it comes down to the reality, so keenly understood in that maxim from the business world, that ‘culture eats strategy for breakfast’.

If we really want to develop effective structures within Church life and meaningful experiences of ‘co-responsibility’ – and I very much hope we do – then we will need to explore, in a much more thorough and sustained

way, a whole range of underlying realities. In a similar vein, what is represented in the diocesan syntheses – and what is absent from them – should be a cause for deep reflection and analysis on the part of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the synodal journey continues.

“If so, then addressing this potentially serious confusion might be the more worthwhile response on the part of Church leadership at this juncture”

In this light, a troubling aspect of recent reaction to the syntheses has been a concern on the part of some bishops and many commentators that these reports be acted upon – with, it seems, the minimum of delay. The reaction appears rooted in a fear that having been asked – yet again – for their thoughts and ideas, the laity will be disillusioned by a lack of such action. While understandable, I feel this is misguided. Past disappointments owe much to the fact that exercises of this kind often sparked short-term initiatives, but failed to address core dynamics. Moreover, the expectation of ‘action’ or ‘results’ may merely indicate a widespread lack of clarity, within the Irish Church, as to the purposes and parameters of the overall synodal pathway. If so, then addressing this potentially serious confusion might be the more worthwhile response on the part of Church leadership at this juncture.

Fr Andrew McMahon is a priest of the Diocese of Dromore.



A delegate carries a bowl of incense during a prayer walk at a pre-synodal assembly.



Discovering who we are through the creed



Mr Kochanski says that the mechanical nature of prayer in Mass means we can sometimes miss its deeper meaning.
Photo: CNS.



The creator of popular prayer app Universalis tells Ruadhán Jones about the power of the creed

We repeat the creed every week at Mass, but do we understand the full implications of what we're saying? Martin Kochanski, creator of popular prayer app Universalis, believes that we don't.

Outrageous claims

In his new book *The creed in Slow Motion*, Mr Kochanski sets out to recover the "unusual, outrageous claims" the Creed makes about God and our relationship to him. Speaking to me on Zoom, he says that we can sometimes take just how novel the creed is for granted.

When we repeat the Creed at Mass, it can become too formulaic, as though we were saying "I believe that I need to keep in step with everyone else, that I mustn't think about what I'm saying because I might fall behind and it will all be a mess", Mr Kochanski explains.

"It's wonderful to be there, to be asserting our shared faith. But at the same time, the mechanics of it do the exact opposite. Because if you suddenly pause for a moment and think, oh, he became incarnate because of us and that opens out vistas in all sorts of directions, how can we cause omnipotence to do something – surely the causing is the other way – you could disappear into a dream very constructive thoughts. But then you think, oh no stop that, I must be saying it."

"It's exactly the wrong kind of angle if you like. And as with a lot of the liturgy in general, I think it's a good exercise sometimes to approach a bit of it as if for the first time."

Christian belief

The creed we repeat at Mass, typically the Nicene Creed and very occasionally the Apostle's Creed, is a formula containing in brief statements the fundamental tenets of Christian belief. That's its technical definition, which Mr Kochanski explains in simpler terms: "I think a creed is a definition of who we are," he begins.

"Well, we can split it into two. One it is a definition of who we are, and it's an assertion that who we are is something valid. So, I remember a friend who was having a turbulent time with religion and the Church in general being told helpfully by a professor that look it doesn't matter who you

disagree with or what idiots you think everyone is – all that matters really is look at the creed, this is the structure, these are the bones on which it's all built.

“Clearly, we aren't just bones, we're bones and flesh”

"If you can stand on that, then you're alright and you can argue as much as you like with whoever you like."

By reflecting on the creed more deeply, we can "discover who we are", Mr Kochanski adds, developing further his metaphor of bones and flesh.

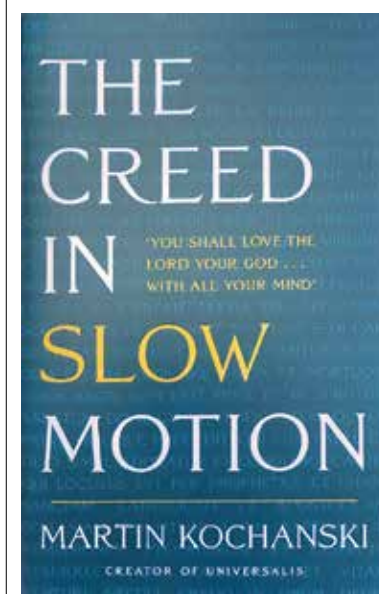
"It's finding your bones, if you like. Clearly, we aren't just bones, we're bones and flesh. But to use a sporting example – Paul always talks about running races – so

let's talk about what you get up to in the gym. If you just randomly do it, let's be big here, let's be big there without paying attention to your posture, you become the most frightful wreck."

Restrictive

In knowing where you are and what your shape is "gives you a foundation to build on", the author says. This is an important point, which he draws out further when I ask him if he considers the stigma that creeds and dogmas are restrictive.

“The creed we repeat at Mass, typically the Nicene Creed and very occasionally the Apostle's Creed, is a formula containing in brief statements the fundamental tenets of Christian belief”





Martin Kochanski, author of *The Creed in Slow Motion* and creator of the popular prayer app Universalis.

"As far as the creed is concerned in particular, no I don't think it is. It's a definition of what we are and rather than say, oh I don't like this, I'm not going to think it – I think the challenge is then to look behind the words and see what they mean.

“The things that you do assert within the creed, you assert because people reasonably or at least non-culpably deny them”

"These things are not true because somebody says so, it's the other way around – somebody is saying so because they are true. They are true because they make sense. And so, if you're not comfortable with something or disagree with something, then the thing to do is to look deep inside to see what sense it makes."

Even in serious disagreements, you will see that "deep down there's a point on which you do see where it's coming from", Mr Kochanski says. He adds that, in

the case of creeds and what they are for, "everything in a creed is in some sense unbelievable.

"You do not stand up and say that you believe water is wet. You do not stand up to say that two and two equals four, because no one could possibly disagree with those things," he says. "The things that you do assert within the creed, you assert because people reasonably or at least non-culpably deny them.

"And to see the thing a bit in its disbelief-ability is to start seeing it clearly and from then you can build. So it's a foundation of thought, rather than a restriction of thought, as far as the creed is concerned. And that's part of the delight of it, because God gave us minds and we should rejoice in using them."

Basic difficulty

There is a basic difficulty in religious education, Mr Kochanski says, that contributes to the view that religion is restrictive. "We get most of our Christian education when we're children, and when we're children, the dynamic tends to be, this is true, learn it.

"Whereas Christianity is meant for adults and so we need to transcend that, oh it says so here so it

must be true, and re-approach the thing. And yes, then indeed it is a liberation."

“The public press are full of the sterile arguments put forth by ‘obsessive atheists’, Mr Kochanski says”

In fact, Mr Kochanski argues, having a creedal faith is important for a strong faith life, naturally complimenting the subjective element. You need both feeling and creed he says, just as you need bones and you need flesh: "One without the other makes you a skeleton, and the other without the one makes you a jellyfish."

His book, *The Creed in Slow Motion*, is not just aimed at Catholics however, but to Christians and non-Christians alike. Regarding other Christian denominations, the creed is something we "can share remarkably widely".

"I've got a friend who is a member of some African Pentecostal Church. And you think, how crazy compared to us – they could well be thinking the same thing

“He gives the example of his treatment of the difficulty some have that a good God needed to send his son to be crucified by us for our own good”

about us – and so I very shyly introduced the idea of, oh yes, I'm working on a book on the creed, expecting this look of horrified embarrassment, as you get from most ordinary people.

"And he was very excited – I think he's probably one of the first purchasers of the book. He said, actually, that his pastor is embarking on a project to take everyone through the creed and study it precisely, phrase by phrase.

"And we then had a very interesting discussion about the Second Coming and what we think we need to think about it based precisely on the creed. So, it's something that actually unites Christians."

And regarding non-Christians, be they atheists or other religions, the Creed is important because it explains what Christians actually believe. The public press are full of the sterile arguments put forth by "obsessive atheists", Mr Kochanski says.

"But when you get down to anybody whether Catholic or Christian or not, who wants some sense of what there is, what you are, then looking at the questions in this clear way makes you end up agreeing with rather a lot.

"At least you get a feeling of disagreeing about the same thing, that for instance, the idea that God is a God, not a kind of cosmic imp fiddling around with the world, which if you think about it is clearly nonsense and nobody believes it and nobody should believe that anybody else can believe it."

Agreements

By studying the creed and reflecting on it, we can come to fundamental agreements regarding the claims of the Faith and more: "What we Christians claim is first of all that there is something you could call being itself, there's some reason or some cause if you like for the world existing, for the world operating according to physical laws.

"And everyone, even an atheist, even a scientist has to believe that otherwise there'd be no point in doing science at all. Without laws there could be no science. So that's not the unusual Christian claim. The unusual claim, the outrageous claim is that this is a person, this is something we can interact with as a person.

"And so we learn that our faith is something exceptional and in that case we need exceptional evidence for it. But the point is that we and the hypothetical atheist at least know what it is we're arguing about and it can be an interesting argument."

In order to appeal to the everyday reader as well as the convicted Christian, Mr Kochanski

has been "very careful" to try and express things in ordinary language. This comes from a conviction that if you can only express something technically "then you probably haven't understood it enough".

His book follows a three-step process. It begins with what is in the creed, placing trust in its veracity. From that point, he works out "in our own language what sense it makes. This is not high-up scholarly theology; this is a kind of sheep's-eye view of it all".

“And those paths for us have become choked with brambles: justice for us means what lawyers do, debt means credit card – none of this can work”

He gives the example of his treatment of the difficulty some have that a good God needed to send his son to be crucified by us for our own good.

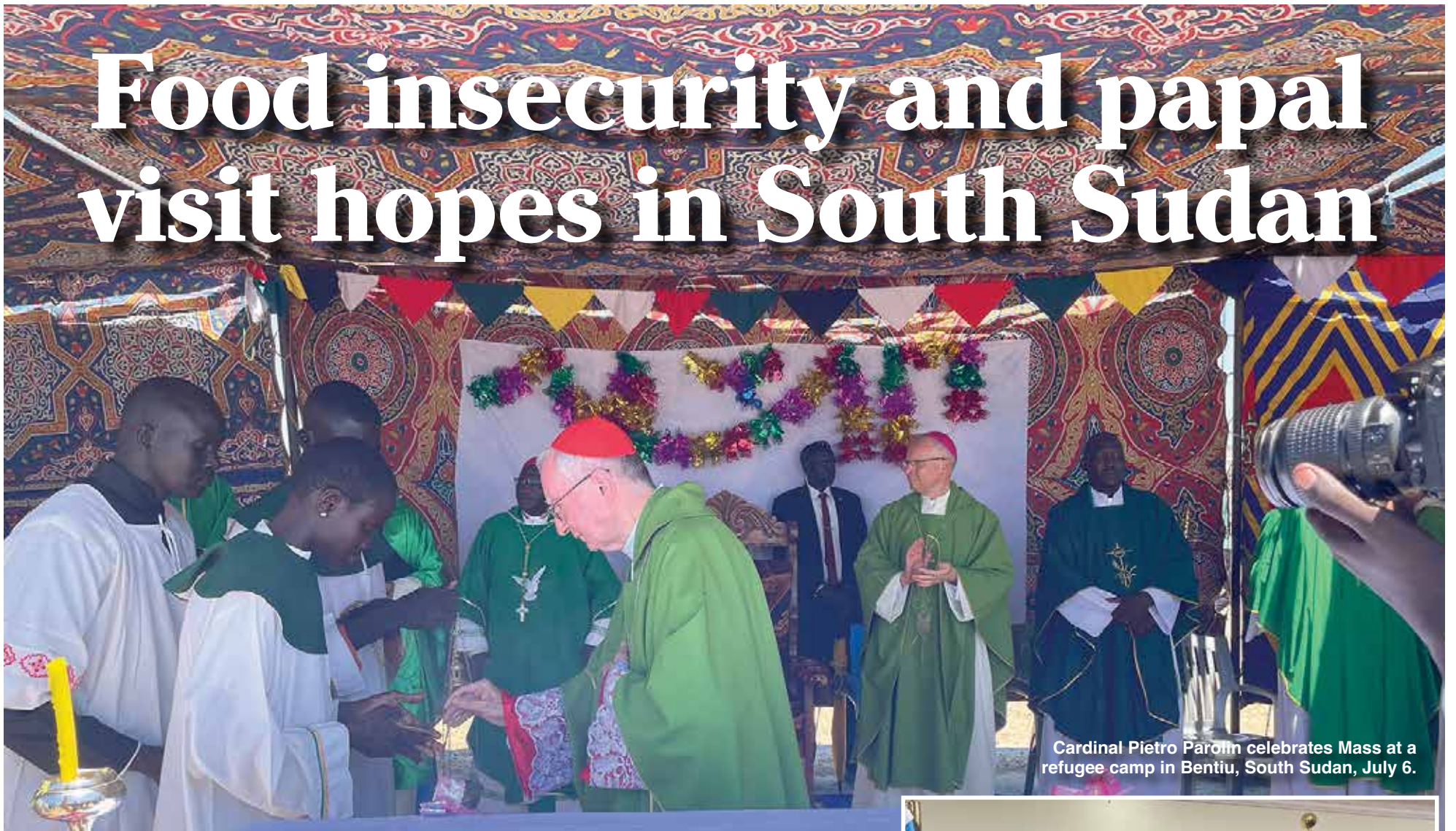
"The picture I have of that is if you imagine the truth being at the top of a hill and there have been various ways to climb up to it, at various times in the past people have found explanations in terms of justice or in terms of a debt that had to be repaid. And those paths for us have become choked with brambles: justice for us means what lawyers do, debt means credit card – none of this can work.

"Digging in and looking at the very word atonement, it's not a great classic Latin word, it just means being at one. And once you see the incarnation as being first and foremost God making himself at one with us, the point of view shifts and as it were you climb the hill by a different route.

"And then everything else is still... you don't explain it away, but it begins to make sense. And the Creed is full of exercises like that, some of them maybe right, which is great. Some of them I may have gotten wrong, which is great too – because if you read it and say oh he's got it wrong, you've thought about it and got it righter than me," Mr Kochanski finishes.

The Creed in Slow Motion by Martin Kochanski and published by Hodder and Stoughton, is available in hardback for £14.99.

Food insecurity and papal visit hopes in South Sudan



Cardinal Pietro Parolin celebrates Mass at a refugee camp in Bentiu, South Sudan, July 6.



Cardinal Parolin's message of peace was welcomed in embattled South Sudan as they await rescheduling of Pope's visit, writes Chai Brady

Despite Pope Francis cancelling his trip to South Sudan earlier this month there was great gratitude that the Vatican's Secretary of State went in his stead, particularly as the nation battles a severe food shortage and an unstable peace.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin's visit from July 5-7 comes at a time when the United Nations has warned of a dangerous deterioration in the country's food security situation. The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) recently suspended rationing programme's in parts of the country due to lack of funding.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Nealla Fitzpatrick the Country

Director for Jesuit Refugee Service South Sudan said the charity has joined their voice with other agencies including the WFP to raise concern to international donors about the impact cuts in food distribution will have on the humanitarian situation.

She said: "Post-Covid global economic downturn and the diversion of a lot of support to Ukraine are having a very significant impact on other humanitarian operations globally, including here in South Sudan where there are more than eight million people still in need of emergency assistance."

Anticipation

Ms Fitzpatrick said JRS has also requested that as much notice as possible be given regarding any further cuts from now until the end of 2022 and into 2023 "to enable sufficient planning, anticipation and mitigation of negative reaction".

"We have seen in the past a violent reaction from communities who have been the subject of food cuts which puts lives and humanitarian operations at risk in another way," she warned, "While we understand such violent reaction can be borne out of desperation, it can never be condoned, and JRS will always advocate for early communication by agencies involved in food supply and distribution as well as engagement with leaders of the communities to be affected, in collaboration with local government to try to manage and mitigate the negative implications of these food cuts."

The charity is also concerned about how WFP food cuts will impact school feeding pro-

grammes which, in many cases, provide "huge relief to parents who are otherwise under huge pressure to provide enough food to feed their children".

"School feeding also really helps to retain children at school, especially girls who would otherwise be in danger of dropping out early," Ms Fitzpatrick added.

“In April 2019 Pope Francis knelt to kiss the feet of South Sudan's previously warring leaders in a dramatic gesture after an unprecedented retreat at the Vatican”

Hopes are high that the Pope will be able to visit the country particularly as there are only about seven months left until the country's transitional government ends. With the country's worsening humanitarian crisis, the UN's Mission Head has stressed the urgency of preparing for elections and keeping the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement on track – an agreement which helped stop violence associated with a civil war.

South Sudan became independent from Sudan in 2011 after decades of war. But, just two years after independence, political tensions erupted into violence.

Pope Francis is no stranger to the conflict. In April 2019 Pope Francis knelt to kiss the feet of South Sudan's previously war-



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, greets South Sudanese President Salva Kiir during a meeting at the presidential palace in Juba, South Sudan, July 6.

ring leaders in a dramatic gesture after an unprecedented retreat at the Vatican. He urged them not to return to a civil war, saying in improvised remarks: "I am asking you as a brother to stay in peace. I am asking you with my heart, let us go forward. There will be many problems but they will not overcome us. Resolve your problems."

Not so high

While Ms Fitzpatrick admitted that the profile of Cardinal Parolin is "not so high" amongst people in South Sudan – and news takes time to travel through the country – the churches in the Archdiocese of Juba did their best to mobilise people to engage in his visit.

Cardinal Parolin's visit to Africa began in Congo on July 1. Before leaving Congo for South Sudan,

on July 5, Cardinal Parolin said his visit to Congo left him feeling "reinvigorated".

“Our history makes us cry out to the Lord, makes us lay before his altar the injustices, the abuses, the persecutions that too many of us still suffer”

Arriving in Juba, South Sudan's capital, the cardinal was welcomed by a throng of well-



South Sudanese people celebrate as the country marks the 10th anniversary of its independence, in Juba, South Sudan, in this July 9,

wishers, some dressed in brightly coloured traditional clothing and crying out with joy as he waved from the airport tarmac.

Meeting with Cardinal Parolin at the presidential palace in Juba, July 6, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir said that upon returning from Rome after the retreat with the Pope – at which when he kissed the warring leader's feet – “we didn't fight anymore”.

“I said ‘no’ to new wars. The people perhaps have not seen developments, but they have heard the silence of weapons,” President Kiir told Cardinal Parolin. “We do not allow anyone to start a war. I don't want to fight anymore; now we want peace in the country,” he added.

Highlight

The highlight of the cardinal's visit was a UN-run camp for displaced people in Bentiu, where he was welcomed by thousands of its residents with singing and dancing. In his homily, Cardinal Parolin offered a word of encouragement to the people “in this difficult land that is loved by God” and urged them to “not give up hope amid trials and suffering”.

“Our history makes us cry out to the Lord, makes us lay before his altar the injustices, the abuses, the persecutions that too many of us still suffer,” the cardinal said.

“But we know that this cry is heard by God and redeemed, a cry that he himself will turn into a song of joy, if we know how to ask forgiveness for our persecutors and pray for those who hurt us.”

The next day in a parish in the capital, Juba, Cardinal Parolin said: “I did not come on my own

behalf but rather to bring you Pope Francis' affection. I come, like John the Baptist, to prepare his arrival. The Pope wants to come to South Sudan, he is planning a trip to Juba but the visit is intended for the whole country, to meet all the people.”

Forgiveness

During Mass in the John Garang Mausoleum Park in Juba on the same day he appealed for the people of South Sudan to disarm evil with forgiveness, defuse violence with love, and resist oppression

with meekness, because “evil cannot be overcome by this world's weapons and peace cannot be achieved through war”.

Cardinal Parolin told the roughly 15,000 people gathered for the Mass that they are a people “burdened by the yoke of oppression, poverty, and labor”, repeating the words of the prophet Isaiah, “but who desire to rejoice in freedom.”

President Salva Kiir sat in the front row at the celebration with First Vice President Riek Machar seated beside him – the two men

that hold the future of peace in the country after many years of being in conflict.

Anticipation

Ms Fitzpatrick expressed gratitude at the cardinal's visit but said it is being seen as a prelude to the postponement of Pope Francis' visit and that preparations continue in South Sudan in anticipation of that visit in 2022.

She said: “JRS continues to prepare and support the pastoral preparation of local Church on whatever way we can for this rescheduled visit

as well as supporting the practical preparations in Juba as JRS, and also as part of the Ecumenical Network in South Sudan.

“Violence still breaks out in South Sudan, just not at a national level, and when it does women and girls face serious risks of gender-based violence”

“There was some disappointment at the postponement of this visit, but it is also been seen positively creating more time for widespread communications across the country, and practical preparations to be put in place for the visit,” Ms Fitzpatrick added, “In a country where the road network is very poor, hampered more by the onset of rains, and other challenges e.g. pockets of insecurity the logistical challenges are more, and the additional time to prepare will be positive.”

Violence still breaks out in South Sudan, just not at a national level, and when it does women and girls face serious risks of gender-based violence. Along with severe economic challenges, conflict and climate shocks have created a dire humanitarian situation in many areas. Hopes are high, despite many of the challenges, that the Pope's visit will help the country on the road towards a more lasting peace.



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, greets South Sudanese President Salva Kiir during a meeting at the presidential palace in Juba, South Sudan, July 6.

No questions and no hunger



The Capuchin Day Centre has seen a rise in working families accessing the service, **Liam Fitzpatrick** learns

A man stands at the door to the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin, welcoming visitors, holding a surgical mask and asking no questions. Inside the Centre, Bro. Kevin Crowley offers smiles and handshakes – and still no questions.

Meandering through rows of blue support beams sporting yellow cloths that mimic the Ukrainian flag, Bro. Kevin greets everyone with no accusations and no judgement. He knows how tough it is to ask for help.

“It’s very difficult for people – people find it very difficult to come to a place like this,” said Bro. Kevin. “And again, that’s the reason why we don’t ask any questions. We make sure that their dignity is respected.”



“A diabetic consultant comes once a month, and people can shower every morning except Wednesday”

When the Centre opened in 1969, Bro. Kevin estimates that about 50 people availed of the services offered. Now, for a host of reasons, as many as 1,000 people a day accept meals at the centre, relying on the work of Capuchin Franciscans like Bro. Kevin to feed their families.

“In the morning time, we have about 200 people for breakfast and we have anything from six to seven hundred, maybe 800 people for dinner,” he said.

The Centre also provides medical care to those in need through a nurse, doctor, dentist, optician and chiropodist free of charge. A diabetic consultant comes once a month, and people can shower every morning except Wednesday.

Bro. Kevin noted that, stemming



Bro. Kevin Crowley

from the Irish cost of living and housing crisis, people are finding it extremely difficult to provide for their families.

“What we’re noticing at the moment is the number of families that are trying to make ends meet, and the difficulty that the people that lose their jobs are having, great difficulty,” he said.

“The housing crisis is huge. Huge. And I mean huge. So many people are for years unhoused, that’s gone on and on and there’s not sufficient houses available...” he said.

Irish prices rose by 7.8% from May 2021-2022, effectively pricing lower-income families out of the market and eliminating their abilities to make ends meet. Apartment prices have risen 17.6% this year, increasing the distance even further between poor families and homes.

This group, the working poor who may have a limited income but not enough to match skyrocketing Irish prices, makes up a larger portion of those Bro. Kevin feeds at the centre than ever before.

Though it operates primarily

for the homeless, the Capuchin Day Centre’s mission statement conspicuously includes “people in need of food aid who have no home or are socially excluded”. An undercurrent of nonjudgment runs through the centre, and Bro. Kevin makes a point to accept all who seek his help.

Economic consequences

Since the recession of 2008 and the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, more and more families have sought assistance from the centre. Those who bore the brunt of the downturn, low and middle income families, had nowhere else to go – so they turned to Bro. Kevin.

Once again, he asks no questions, providing families with baby formula and nappies as soon as they ask. He estimates that between two and three hundred families come to the centre looking for those products.

Covid’s impact on society has also forced the centre to modernise. When the world shut down, Covid hit marginalised communities the hardest, and a large part of the reason why Dublin has a strikingly low mortality rate from Covid of homeless and lower-income people rests in the work of people like Bro. Kevin.

“We’ve made sure that nobody,

nobody goes hungry,” Bro. Kevin said.

Now, the Capuchin Day Centre provides anywhere from 900-1100 takeaway food parcels a day, spiking as high as 1800 during the recession according to the Capuchin Franciscans website. With these meal parcels, the Capuchin Day Centre maintains the dignity of its patrons and increases accessibility to all that need assistance, even those with health conditions who cannot leave their residences.

“Stickers of astronauts and planets line the walls behind children and parents sharing a meal”

The drug abuse crisis in Ireland has also taken its toll on the centre, but Bro. Kevin continues to maintain his accepting attitude.

“The drug scene has been huge as well, that too has created problems. We’ve had quite a number of people coming in here on drugs, a number of people overdosing, a number of people that have been hospitalised,” Bro. Kevin said. “And again, there’s not sufficient basis for those people to be rehabilitated,” calling on the Irish government to employ a compassion-first

approach to drug addiction.

Stereotypical perceptions of poverty and drug addiction are prevalent throughout the world, and Ireland is no exception. Some 49% of Irish people attribute poverty or social exclusion to “alcoholism, drug abuse, or other addictions” than any other reason, and 60% believe addiction is the number one reason why people become homeless, according to a 2007 Eurobarometer study.

Putting his attitude into practice, Bro. Kevin continues through the main section, passing by people and offering a chat to anyone seeking company.

As he walks, he comes upon a small rope gate and unleashes it, entering the family section of the centre. Stickers of astronauts and planets line the walls behind children and parents sharing a meal.

A high-five

One family recognises Bro. Kevin and says hello. Though he does not know their names (much less speak their language), he offers a wave to a young boy and girl. The boy reaches up offering his hand for a high-five, and Bro. Kevin emphatically slaps it, the light from his smile dispelling the darkness of worry from the mother’s face.

It’s there, with this family, that Bro. Kevin asks his one and only question – “How are you?”

Out&About

Spaine to Italy to Ireland



LOUTH: Fr Paul Spaine, who was ordained a priest June 29 in Montefiascone, Italy, is pictured with friends and family having celebrated Mass in Holy Family Church, Drogheda, July 9. He is from Navan Road Parish in Dublin and is a member of the Institute of the Incarnate Word (IVE) religious community.



LOUTH: Fr Brendan O'Rourke IVE, Fr Paul Spaine IVE and Fr Stephen Kennedy IVE after Fr Paul's first celebration of Mass in Ballsgrove Church, Drogheda.



ROSCOMMON: Fr John McManus leads the Corpus Christi procession through the town of Castlereagh.

IN SHORT

New discipleship programme in Westmeath

A new young adult faith formation programme is due to open at the Céilí Catholic community centre, Co. Westmeath, in September 2022.

The residential programme of formation in Evangelisation and Missionary Discipleship is being offered to Catholic young adults, 18 years and over, who would spend nine months living in community, receiving faith formation, human development, experiencing community living and be involved in practical missionary experience.

In a statement, a spokesperson for Céilí Community said there is an "urgent need" to attract young adults to be formed and trained, "encour-

aging and developing their talents and gifts to be used in various Church ministries, and helping them discern their vocation in life whether it be to marriage, single life, religious life or the priesthood.

"Céilí wants to provide an opportunity to young people to experience that our Catholic Faith is joy-filled and life transformative," the spokesperson continued.

Céilí Community is also in discussion with a university to accredit its course with a Diploma in Pastoral Ministry so that the lay participants can complete the course with an accredited Diploma for further studies and engagement in parishes.

Further details may be obtained from the website www.ceilicomunity.net or by email to admin@ceilicomunity.net or phoning or texting 087 9789150.

Elphin Apostolic Society sponsors missionary bursaries

Elphin Apostolic Society are sponsoring the formation of two missionaries in developing nations with bursaries worth €1,250 each.

The society will sponsor Sr Yoo Jin, a Korean Columban sister working in the Philippines, who is studying pastoral leadership and teamwork skills, and Fr Larry Ebuk of the Society of St Paul of Nigeria.

The society held its first display day in three years, attended by Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran, as well as representatives from nine religious orders and the national president of the Apostolic Work Mary O'Connor.

The Elphin Apostolic Society also donated €4,000 each to Sr Bridget Tighe FMDM, who works in Gaza Strip; Fr Aiden Fallon SPMS, who works in Sao Paulo Brazil; and Fr Vincent Brennan SMA, who works in South Africa.

The funds were raised through the society's fundraising efforts, and Elphin president Mary Lee encouraged people to get involved.

"If anyone would like to support us by sewing, knitting, selling Easter chicks or fundraise, we would like to hear from you.

"We now have missionary priests here who wish to support the seminarians in their home country by bringing them Mass kits and other items they need."



ROSCOMMON: Elphin Apostolic Society held a display day, at which nine missionary orders were present to collect hand-made items for their ministry. Fr Innocent is pictured receiving a First Communion dress and a wedding dress for his home in Nigeria.



ROSCOMMON: Fr Pravin Dhason receives baby blankets from Mary Lee at Elphin Apostolic Society's display day.



LEITRIM: Fr Oliver Kelly Adm. (front row, fourth from right) is pictured with priests of the diocese of Kilmore July 2 in St Michael's Church, Glenfarne, as he celebrates his golden jubilee.



CLARE: TD Michael McNamara is pictured with members of Crovraghan and Bunratty Search and Rescue while visiting Canon Island, Shannon Estuary.



CORK: Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin visits the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles at their convent in Ardfoyle, July 10.



ROSCOMMON: Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey (second from left) is pictured with priests of the diocese who mark 60, 50 and 25 years of ministry in the priesthood, July 10.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



KILDARE: The newly elected Provincial and Council of the Irish Capuchin order are pictured at their provincial chapter in Maynooth. Pictured are Bro. Sean Donohoe, Bro. Richard Hendrick, Bro. Pio Murat (General Councillor, Rome), Bro. Seán Kelly (Provincial), Bro. Adrian Curran and Bro James Boner.



DERRY: Scouts receive a blessing from Archbishop Martin. Photo: Kerrie Quinn.



DERRY: Members of the first, second and third Derry St Mary's Creggan Scout Group and Leaders are pictured with special guests (seated from left) Mary Owens, County Chair, Archbishop Eamon Martin, Joe Corry, Provincial Commissioner, Deputy Mayor Angela Dobbins, Margaret McGlinchey, Fr Joe Gormley and Cllr Gary Donnelly. Photo: Kerrie Quinn.



DUBLIN: Redemptoristine Srs Mary Margaret and Mary Jacinta get out into the summer sunshine, July 11.



ROSCOMMON: Sr Collette McCann of the Holy Rosary Sisters received a First Communion dress from Elphin Apostolic Society president Mary Lee.

ANTRIM

Singing for Boys Summer 2022 takes place August 8–12 in St Dominic's Grammar School. The 5-day course is aimed at boys aged 8–16 who want to improve their singing voice and musical skills, and concludes with a performance in St Peter's Cathedral. Contact schola@downandconnor.org.

ARMAGH

Pope Francis has announced that the second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly will be celebrated on Sunday July 24, the Sunday nearest the memorial of Sts Joachim and Anne (July 26). Grandparents and the elderly are encouraged to join at any of the Masses at St Patrick's Cathedral on the weekend of July 23/24 as special prayers will be offered.

CARLOW

Graigucullen parish's next pre-Baptism meeting will take place on Monday July 25 at 7pm in St Clare's Church for all parents who will be presenting their child for Baptism in the next few months.

CLARE

Ennis Cathedral and Killaloe diocesan pilgrimage to Lough Derg will take place from Monday August 1 to Wednesday 3. The bus will leave from the Cathedral at 7am sharp. Total cost €130. Early booking is recommended to secure a place.

CORK

St Thérèse the Little Flower Faith Camp takes place Monday July 25–Thursday July 28 in the Town Hall, Mitchelstown. It runs 10am–3pm daily. Cost is €50 per child, €30 for each additional child in the family and it is for boys and girls aged 6–12 years. For more information and booking forms, visit www.mitchelstownparish.ie.

DERRY

Termonbacca to host 'Captivating – Beauty of a Woman' ladies' retreat August 12–14. The retreat experience is based on the book Captivating by John and Stasi Eldredge. Contact termonbaccaderry@gmail.com for more information.

DONEGAL

A relic of St Peregrine, patron saint of cancer sufferers and life threatening illnesses, has been gifted to the Franciscan Friary Rosnowlagh. Individual blessings and anointing of the sick will take place each Wednesday. You must book for your 10 minute slot. Telephone 0044 719852035 on Monday and Tuesday only.

GALWAY

Galway Cathedral's annual series of international summer concerts, continue throughout July until August 11. They take place on Thursday evenings at 8pm. Full details on the concert series' dedicated website: recitals.galwaycathedral.ie

KILDARE

Youth 2000 summer festival takes place August 11–14 at Clongowes Wood College, Clane. The Youth 2000 Summer Festival is a four day Catholic event run by young people for young people from all across Ireland. For more information visit youth2000.ie

KILKENNY

The Mass at Foulkstown Cemetery, St Patrick's Parish, will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday, July 28. The parish asks that parishioners inform relatives and friends, especially those who are away from home.

LONGFORD

The Longford pilgrimage to Lourdes will take place from August 14–August 19. Anyone who would like to go should contact Sr Simon on 086 240 1295.

LOUTH

Irish men's rosary rally to take place August 6 in Carlingford, opposite the village green and outside the coastal wall.

MAYO

The annual Reek Sunday pilgrimage takes place on Sunday July 31 at Croagh Patrick. Confessions on the summit 7:30am–2pm. Mass hourly from 8am–2pm.

National Grandparents Pilgrimage and World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly will be celebrated on Sunday July 24. All are

welcome to this celebration at the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock at 3pm, led Archbishop of Tuam Dr Francis Duffy.

MEATH

Invitation to young adults (18–40) retreat, Saturday July 23 starting at 10am with Mass in St Mary's Church. A prayerful informative day, with testimonies from people in various Christian vocations. Also includes adoration, Confession, personal help if desired, walk and chat. Cost: donation (lunch and tea breaks). Finishes at 5pm. Contact youthretreats@gmail.com.

MONAGHAN

The blessing of the graves ceremony for Monaghan and Rackwallace cemetery takes place Sunday September 4 at 3pm.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois cemetery Mass takes place Saturday July 30 at 3pm. Mass offered from Papal Mass shelter on monastic site.

ROSCOMMON

The annual cemetery Mass in St Coman's cemetery will take place on Sunday August 6, beginning at 7pm.

TIPPERARY

Mary's Meals' 'Step By Step' walk from Thurles to Knock Shrine led by Fr Eamonn Kelly PP, Raphoe begins on Sunday August 7 and passes through Templemore, Roscrea, Birr, Fermoy, Athlone, Roscommon, Ballymoe and Ballyhaunis reaching Knock Shrine on Monday August 15.

WATERFORD

Four-day Medjugorje-style retreat at Glencomeragh Retreat Centre, with Fr Patrick Cahill. Full board accommodation, but spaces are limited so book now. Takes place July 21–24/ August 18–21/ September 1–4. Cost: €260. Full Medjugorje-like spiritual programme. For more information or to book contact info@holymission.ie or (052) 6133181.



World Report

IN BRIEF

US bishops issue abuse compliance audit

● The US bishops' annual report on compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* shows that 2,930 victim survivors came forward with 3,103 allegations during the audit year of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

The number of allegations is 1,149 less than that reported in 2020, according to the audit report by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. "This decrease is due in large part to the resolution of allegations received as a result of lawsuits, compensation programs, and bankruptcies," said a news release accompanying the report. "Of the allegations received, 2,284 (74%) were first brought to the attention of the diocesan/eparchial representative by an attorney." The majority of allegations received were "historical in nature," meaning the alleged victim is now an adult and the abuse happened in years or decades past.

Eastern Africa bishops explore consequences of climate change

● Eastern Africa bishops set aside a week to discuss the consequences of ecological damage in the region as it becomes evident that climate change is exacting a crushing toll on the development of people in both rural and urban parishes. Meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, July 10-18 under the shadow of some of the worst recorded ecological disasters in the region, the bishops from the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa are examining ways to help communities that are struggling to adapt to the effects of a changing climate.

Some bishops, priests and women religious have

responded by moving emergency aid communities affected by ongoing drought that has caused crop failure for three consecutive growing seasons. Church leaders also acknowledge that disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine have further hurt the region.

Bishop Charles Kasonde of Solwezi, Zambia, AMECEA's chairman, said that the plenary meeting will also review how the Church in the region has implemented Pope Francis' encyclical on care of the earth, *Laudato Si, on Care for Our Common Home* in response to the climate crisis.

Catholics sceptical as Sri Lanka PM becomes president

● Sri Lanka's most senior Churchman has said that people remain sceptical about political reform after the outgoing prime minister was sworn in to replace the president who had resigned.

Speaking about the unrest that led Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to announce their resignations, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo said he thought "it was a good thing that the crowds descended on the city."

"They made their leadership understand that they don't have any confidence in them, and therefore the leadership was forced to make a decision" and announce their intention to step down, he said.

"We are sceptics of our political leaders and their promises," he said.

For the past few years Sri Lanka has been in the midst of a massive economic and political crisis that has had a crippling effect on the economy and the population, with poverty rates and inflation soaring as people struggle to afford basic necessities such as food and fuel, and essential medicines become increasingly scarce.

With its economy in a complete state of collapse, Sri Lanka has become dependent on aid from India and other countries as its political leadership has attempted to negotiate a bailout with the International Monetary Fund.

Signs point to papal visit to Ukraine

Although the idea of a papal visit to Ukraine was in the air even before the February Russian invasion, it wasn't until this week that several figures in the know began speaking of a "realistic" possibility that Pope Francis may travel to Kyiv before the summer ends.

In an interview, Pope Francis said that the visit "could be soon." He also acknowledged that, despite having offered to go to Moscow, too, the Vatican has received no response from Russia.

Andrii Yurash, Ukraine's top diplomat to the Vatican, said that his government is currently working to make the Pope's sign of support a reality, which would be widely appreciated.

He said: "I have many doubts that this [will] happen in August. Maybe September...however, it all depends on God's will."

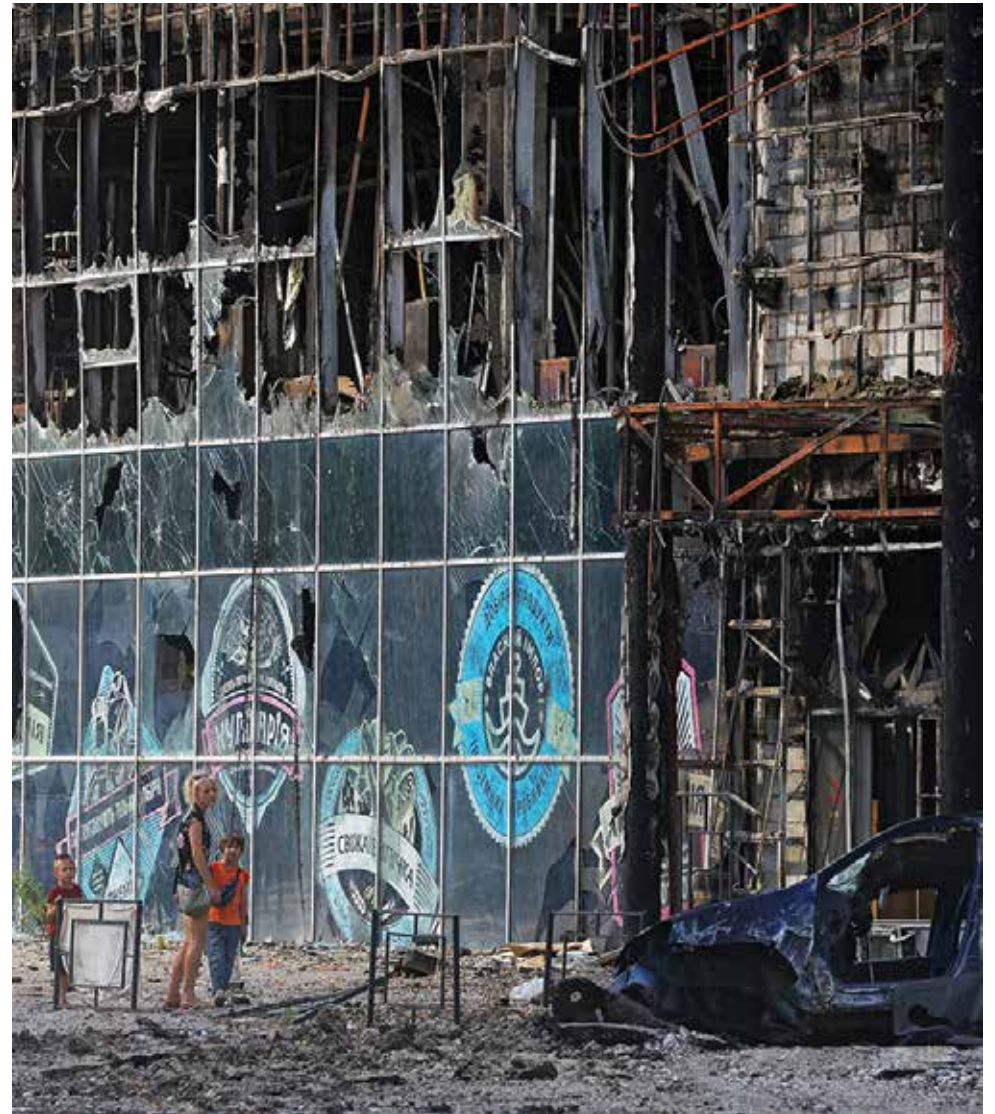
"It's not just a formal gesture, it's a real gesture of support," he said. "It's a real gesture of understanding."

The ambassador stressed that the visit would not be a political one, but a "spiritual blessing for the country."

According to the Vatican's foreign minister, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, "Pope Francis will definitely go to Ukraine."

He said over the weekend that "the Pope has the will to make the trip to Kyiv. He will go, [but] when and how is not known."

He also said that the Vatican intends to study the possibility of a papal trip to Ukraine upon Pope Francis' return from Canada at the end of July, and that the Pope



Local residents stand next to a building destroyed during the Ukrainian-Russian conflict in the Luhansk region of Ukraine, July 4.

is "very convinced" that such a visit would have positive results.

The pontiff will be in Canada July 24-29 (see page 27). At the Pope's request,

Archbishop Gallagher was in Ukraine from May 18-21, and visited several cities, including Kyiv and Lviv.

Speaking to journalists, Archbishop Gallagher reit-

erated the Pope's desire to visit Ukraine, stressing that the dates have not been set, nor have the logistics been worked out.

Italian journalist who helped shape Francis narrative dies

Eugenio Scalfari, a highly acclaimed journalist who helped found Italy's Radical Party and its most widely-read leftist newspaper, who also made waves throughout the Catholic world for his eyebrow-raising and often questionable conversations with Pope Francis, has died aged 98.

Mr Scalfari is widely regarded as one of the most acclaimed Italian journalists of the 20th Century.

His most prominent analyses focused on the areas of politics and the economy.

However, more recently his writings touched on issues related to secularism, morality, and philosophy.

After his death was announced, Mr Scalfari was praised by Italian President Sergio Mattarella as not only an accomplished journalist, editor, essayist, and politician, but also a "lucid and passionate witness" to the history of the Republic.

A self-proclaimed atheist who was often critical of the Church's role in Italian politics, Mr Scalfari became some-

what of a lightning rod in the Francis papacy early on, as he was famous for publishing exclusive conversations with Pope Francis under eye-grabbing headlines that caused a stir among readers and alarm among Vatican personnel.

The Pope's relationship with Mr Scalfari began with two editorials Mr Scalfari published in *La Repubblica* in July and August of 2013 containing a list of questions he would ask the Argentine Pope, who was elected in March of that year, if he ever got the chance.

Indian cardinal cleared over real estate deals

A cardinal who leads India's Syro-Malabar Church has been cleared by his state government of charges of wrongdoing related to real estate deals estimated to have resulted in losses of around \$10 million.

The financial controversy led to protests from some of

his own clergy and laity, and his temporary loss of administrative authority by Vatican edict in 2018.

Officials of the Kerala state government, where Cardinal Mar George Alencherry's Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly is located, recently filed an affidavit with India's

Supreme Court asserting that nothing illegal took place with regard to the land deals.

The Syro-Malabar Church is one of 22 Eastern Churches in full communion with Rome, claiming a following of roughly 2.5 million in Kerala and 4.25 million worldwide.

Last year, a state court

in Kerala ruled that Cardinal Alencherry and others involved in the land sales should stand trial, a decision the 77-year-old prelate had appealed to the Supreme Court. In its affidavit, the government of Kerala said it had incorporated the results of a police investigation.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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A papal blessing



Pope Francis greets the crowd as he leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St Peter's Square at the Vatican on July 10.

Pope: If I resign, I'll hear Confessions and visit the sick

In yet another wide-ranging interview, Pope Francis said that he doesn't plan to step down anytime soon, though he prays for the strength to do so when the time is right.

If the day comes when he does resign, the pontiff said he would prefer to be considered the "bishop emeritus of Rome rather than Pope emeritus" and to dedicate his time to the confession of the faithful, the practice of charity, and visiting the sick in some Italian parish.

"If I survive after resignation, I would like to do one thing: confess and go to see the sick," he said.

On other fronts, the Pope said pro-choice Catholic politicians should "talk to their pastor" about their "incoherence" with Church teaching,

and he repeated a familiar warning about the risks of a third world war.

Francis also answered – and, to some extent, dodged – questions about Ukraine, the Covid-19 pandemic, the clerical sexual abuse scandals, abortion, his resignation, and why he doesn't go back to his home country, Argentina.

The Pope's remarks came in an interview with Mexican journalists Valentina Alazraki and Maria Antonieta Collins, published on the Vix streaming channel of *Noticias Univision* 24/7.

On the subject of war, Francis noted he changed the Catechism of the Catholic Church to say that both the use and possession of nuclear weapons is immoral, because an accident could lead to the

killing of half of humanity: "We cannot play with death in our hands like that. We were playing with death."

Regarding his decision not to mention Russia when he speaks about the war in Ukraine, Francis said that he prefers to "speak of the victims more than about the perpetrators. I speak of the country that is being attacked."

He also insisted on keeping a door open to dialogue. He said that the chance of being able to persuade the antagonists to "change or resolve or stop" is more important than wagging a finger and saying, "You are a scoundrel because you are doing this."

On criticism he has received, including accusations of being pro-Russian,

Francis said, "I laugh. I mean, the capacity people have to express an opinion is limitless. There are sensible, healthy opinions, and those that are about the latest message on Twitter."

The pontiff also stated, "I have no intention of resigning. For the moment, no," and noted that it all started after a female journalist "whom I admire and respect a lot" wrote an article bringing together a series of things that could be interpreted as pointing to a resignation.

He acknowledged that he always thought his time in the Vatican was going to be brief, "but I didn't realise it and nine years have already passed," he said.

Archbishop calls Biden's order on abortion 'deeply disturbing'

The U.S. bishops' pro-life chairman said it is "deeply disturbing and tragic" that President Joe Biden has chosen to use his power as the nation's chief executive "to promote and facilitate abortion in our country" than support resources for pregnant women in need.

Mr Biden is "seeking every possible avenue to deny unborn children their most basic human and civil right, the right to life," said Baltimore Archbishop William Lori, chairman of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

"Rather than using the power of the executive branch to increase support and care to mothers and babies, the president's executive order seeks only to

facilitate the destruction of defenceless, voiceless human beings," he said.

President Biden has signed an executive order to safeguard access to medication abortion and emergency contraception; protect patient privacy; launch public education efforts; and strengthen "the security of and the legal options available to those seeking and providing abortion services."

Before signing his executive order, Mr Biden condemned what he called the "extreme" Supreme Court majority for overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

The court's June 24 ruling came in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organisation*, a challenge to a Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks.

In affirming the law 6-3, the high court also voted 5-4 to overturn 1973's *Roe v. Wade* ruling, which legalised abortion nationwide, and 1992's *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* ruling, which affirmed *Roe*.

The ruling sends the issue of abortion back to the states.

"In response to the *Dobbs* decision," Archbishop Lori said in his statement, "I called for the healing of wounds and repairing of social divisions, for reasoned reflection and civil dialogue, and for coming together to build a society and economy that supports marriages and families, and where every woman has the support and resources she needs to bring her child into this world in love."

Vatican roundup

Pope Francis names three women to office that helps him choose bishops

● Ten days after saying he would name two women to the group that helps him choose bishops, Pope Francis appointed three women to the office.

The Vatican announced on July 13 that the Pope had named 14 new members of the Dicastery for Bishops.

For the first time ever, the members include women: Sr Raffaella Petrini, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, who is secretary-general of the office governing Vatican City State; French Salesian Sr Yvonne Reungoat, former superior general of the order; and Maria Lia Zervino, an Argentine who is president of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations.

The dicastery is led by Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet and is responsible for helping the Pope choose bishops for Latin-rite dioceses outside of the Church's mission territories. Members meet twice a month to review dossiers submitted by Vatican nuncios about potential candidates and to vote on the names they recommend to the pope.

Before Pope Francis' reform of the Roman Curia took effect in June, members of the dicastery were only cardinals and a few bishops.

The other new members of the dicastery include: Cardinals Anders Arborelius of Stockholm; Jose Advincula of Manila, Philippines; José Tolentino de Mendonca, Vatican archivist; and Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops.

Pope Francis also named as members several bishops who will become cardinals in August: Cardinals-designate Arthur Roche, prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; Lazarus You Heung-sik, prefect of the Dicastery for Clergy; Jean-Marc Aveline of Marseille, France; and Oscar Cantoni of Como, Italy.

The other new members are: Archbishop Drazen Kutlesa of Split-Makarska, Croatia; Irishman Bishop Paul Tighe, secretary of the former Pontifical Council for Culture; and Benedictine Abbot Donato Ogliari, abbot of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome and apostolic administrator of the Abbey of Montecassino, Italy.

Humanity has 'moral obligation' to fight climate change

● The care of the environment and the fight against climate change is not a lofty goal for humanity but a moral imperative, Pope Francis has said.

The worsening climate crisis can no longer be ignored, and it is up to all human beings, who were entrusted by God as "stewards of his gift of his creation," to act, the Pope said in a message July 13 to participants at a Vatican conference on climate change. "Care for our common home, even apart from considerations of the effects of climate change, is not simply a utilitarian endeavour but a moral obligation for all men and women as children of God," the Pope said. "With this in

mind, each of us must ask: 'What kind of world do we want for ourselves and for those who will come after us?'"

The July 13-14 conference, titled 'Resilience of People and Ecosystems under Climate Stress,' was sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. According to the academy's website, the conference aimed to "bring researchers, policymakers and faith leaders together to understand the scientific and societal challenges of climate change and develop solutions for enabling resilient people and resilient ecosystems."



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

A new publication by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life has drawn criticism over contributions from some theologians arguing for a distinction between moral norms, such as the Church's condemnation of artificial birth control, and the pastoral application of those norms in concrete circumstances.

Basically, the suggestion seemed to be that in some limited circumstances, couples might be justified in choosing contraception. A similar case was made on artificial reproduction.

“Both have a reputation as strongly conservative, and regularly carry critical content about the Francis papacy”

That such casuistry would generate blowback among some conservative Catholics, who worry it portends the unravelling of the norms themselves, is as predictable as the rising and setting of the sun, and probably not terribly revealing.

However, the episode does offer some interesting food for thought on three other fronts, having to do with the unique profile of the Academy for Life, the broader role of pontifical academies, and – to borrow a baseball metaphor – when not to swing at low pitches.

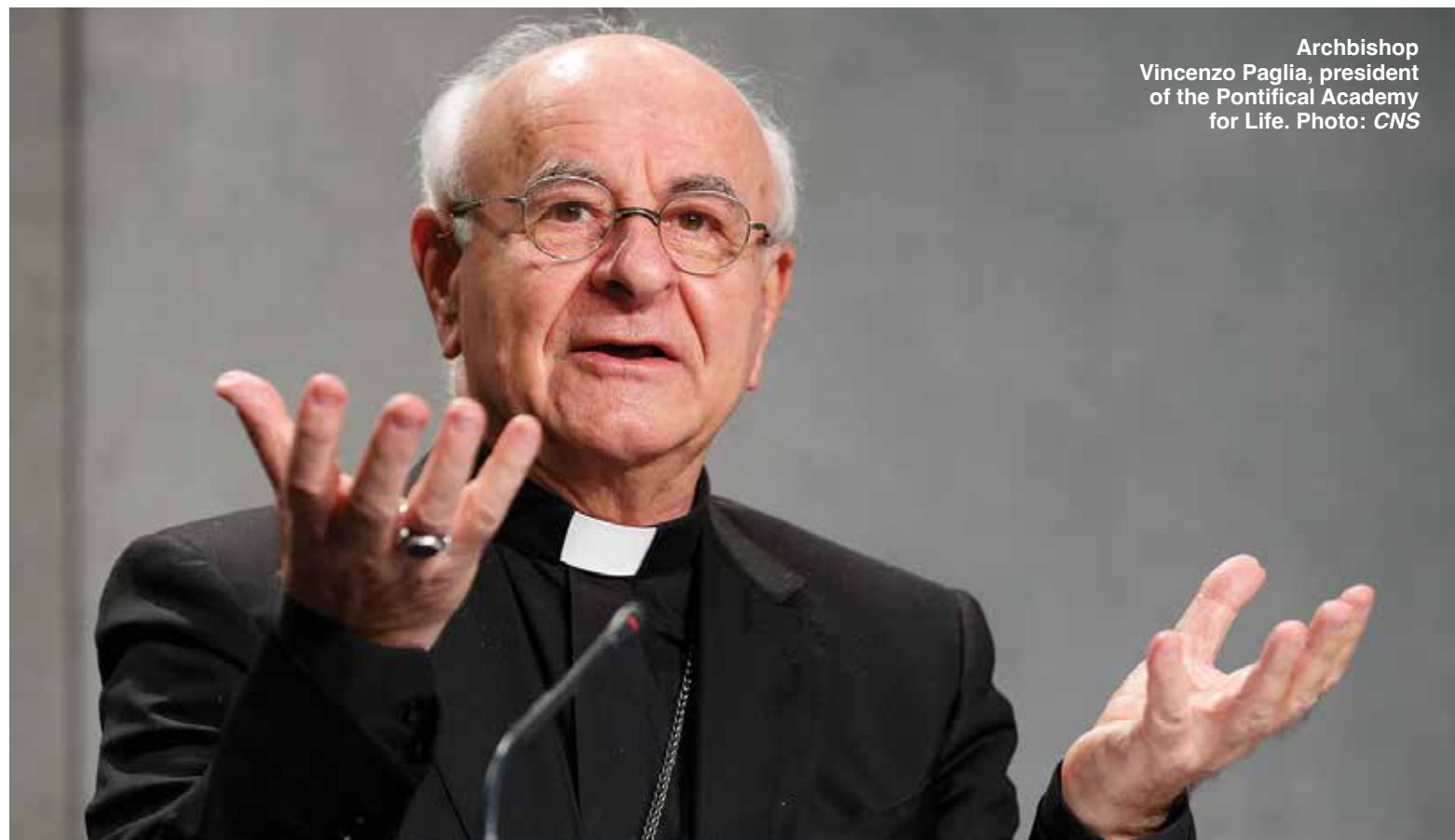
The new volume is titled *Theological Ethics of Life. Scripture, Tradition, Practical Challenges*, and collects papers delivered during a conference sponsored by the Academy for Life last year. Criticism has come from the Italian web-based news agency *Nuova Bussola Quotidiana*, whose English version is titled *Daily Compass*, and has been picked up by *LifeSite News*.

Both have a reputation as strongly conservative, and regularly carry critical content about the Francis papacy. Here's how *Nuova Bussola Quotidiana* characterised the new document on July 11: “It's the negation of *Humanae Vitae* and the magisterium of John Paul II, not to mention the end of Catholic moral theology with the impossibility of establishing moral absolutes.”

Nuova Bussola Quotidiana also weighed in on the issue of in vitro fertilisation, accusing the academy of either “not wanting to see” the clear teaching of the magisterium against the practice or “pretending not to see.”

There's also been some grumbling on social media along similar lines, with a handful of negative tweets

Latest row at Academy for Life raises questions of purpose



Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life. Photo: CNS

“Despite all that, the reaction illustrates the lightning rod role that's been played by the Pontifical Academy for Life since its inception under Pope John Paul II in 1994”

making the rounds. One tweet, for example, asserted that this “is not the same academy founded by St John Paul II, but a dissembler with the same name.”

Before proceeding, an important caveat: The publications of a pontifical academy do not carry magisterial authority. Although journalists and social media denizens may insist on reporting them as if ‘the Vatican’ has just declared x, in reality an academy is basically a think tank designed to stimulate reflection, not to settle questions definitively.

There has been speculation that the academy's publication might be a harbinger of a future papal encyclical. Perhaps, but for now it's no more than a stimulus to discussion – and, it's worth noting, the trash heaps of history are littered with encyclicals once rumoured that never came.

Despite all that, the reaction illustrates the lightning rod role that's been played by the Pontifical Academy for Life since its inception under Pope John Paul II in 1994.

There are 11 pontifical academies, but the Academy for Life has always been the most high-profile because it

deals with the most sensitive issues in Catholic moral teaching, including birth control, abortion, euthanasia, IVF, and the family. During the 1990s and 2000s, the academy was seen as the primary beachhead in Rome for the Church's most aggressive pro-life activists, which made it controversial on the Catholic left.

Recall

I vividly recall the tenure of the late Italian Cardinal Elio Sgreccia as president of the academy from 2005 to 2008, and then as president emeritus afterwards. Dr Sgreccia was a go-to figure among Vatican journalists needing a juicy conservative soundbite on issues such as Communion bans for pro-choice politicians, which he was always willing to supply.

That profile changed dramatically with Pope Francis and the nomination of Italian Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia as president, accompanied by new members and a new set of statutes. Today the academy is seen as a proponent of a more liberal, pastorally oriented approach, in keeping with Pope Francis' vision, which

means its critics now come mostly from the right.

The take-away is probably that personnel of the Academy for Life should factor in criticism as the inevitable price of doing business, and not project hurt or surprise when it comes.

Second, the situation also raises the question of the role of a pontifical academy. Presumably, the Vatican creates academies to foster dialogue with scholars – scientists, historians, archaeologists, theologians, and so on – and not simply to repeat positions in the Catechism.

There's an analogy with Vatican diplomacy. If Vatican diplomats insisted on speaking only to leaders who agree with the Church on every particular, their ability to influence global affairs would be eviscerated. In similar fashion, if a pontifical academy included only strictly orthodox thinkers, its capacity to leverage broader scholarly conversations also would be limited.

To be honest, this point isn't terribly controversial with most other papal academies. If the Pontifical Academy for Latin were to sponsor a seminar on the declension of some obscure noun and included clashing views, few would take note. When it's the life issues we're talking about, the stakes are much higher – but that doesn't mean the principle is different.

Finally, the latest controversy at the Academy for Life also raises a question about when it's a good idea

for a Vatican agency to engage blowback, and when to let it go.

Granted, it's a delicate balancing act. You don't want to seem deaf to legitimate criticism, nor do you want your silence to signify consent. On the other hand, you also don't want to hand a megaphone to people with axes to grind by appearing to take them too seriously.

Over the last few days, the Twitter account of the Pontifical Academy for Life has been active in responding to complaints about its new document. In one instance, it warned that “what is dissent today can change,” and, in another, it admonished someone that he or she “should give credit to the dicasteries of the curia and not to those who, for biased reasons, say no.”

One understands the impulse to shoot back when you're under fire. Still, it's worth asking whether every negative comment on social media demands a response – or, whether such responses simply invite additional negative commentary, and also, in some sense, compromise the gravitas of a Vatican entity, especially one that deals with such critically important matters.

Restraint is a demanding virtue, never more so than in an era of instant response. Sometimes, however, it may be the best of a series of bad choices.

i John L. Allen Jr is Editor of *CruxNow.com*

Pope's Canada trip: Beginning and ending with 'sorry'



Cindy Wooden

Pope Francis said all the speeches he has prepared for his trip to Canada “begin and end” with asking forgiveness.

In an early July interview, he acknowledged the “cruel way” the Catholic Church collaborated with the Canadian government in “colonisation” by uprooting Indigenous children from their families, cultures and spiritualities and forcing them to attend residential schools where many suffered emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

“Mr Quewezance was one of the first survivors in Canada to speak publicly about having been sexually abused at a Church-run residential school”

Cutting children and young adults off from their cultures “is diabolical, it is to kill life and richness,” the Pope said in the interview that aired July 11 on *Univision*.

Pope Francis is scheduled to be in Canada July 24-29, flying to Edmonton, Quebec and Iqaluit. He also will visit the site of a former residential school near Edmonton, join Indigenous pilgrims at Lac Ste. Anne and celebrate Mass at the National Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré near Quebec.

Ted Quewezance, a former chief of the Keeseekoose First Nation and former executive director of the National Residential School Survivors Society, was at the Vatican in early April when Pope Francis apologised to delegates of Canada's Métis, Inuit and First Nation communities.

And he plans to be there on July 25 when Pope Francis visits Maskwacis, Alberta, home of the former Ermine-skin Residential School, one of the largest residential school sites in Canada.

Mr Quewezance was one of the first survivors in Canada to speak publicly about having been sexually abused at a Church-run residential school. While he still gets emotional talking about it – “when you shed a few tears, more weight comes off your chest,” he said – after the Rome trip he decided it was time to forgive and move forward.

But he said still wants one thing from the Pope: A recognition of “the true inherent right that that was given to us by the Creator through our language, through our traditions, our customs, our ceremonies. And that’s



Members of the Assembly of First Nations perform in St Peter's Square after Indigenous delegates attended an audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican on April 1, 2022. Photo: CNS

a sacred inherent right; it is given to us by the Creator.”

Mr Quewezance will be one of about 100 survivors and family members traveling to Maskwacis with Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, Saskatchewan, who also accompanied the delegates to Rome in late March and early April.

Cultures

“In many Indigenous cultures, when there are issues between families, the fathers of those families must meet to discuss and heal those divisions and wounds,” the archbishop told CNS. “Pope Francis, rightly, is seen as the father of our global Catholic family. In this sense, it is important that he meet face-to-face with the leaders of the Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit families who, even today, continue to be affected by the harms caused by the residential school system.”

The Pope, he said, consistently calls the Church to “walk with others in all manner of woundedness. This is particularly true when those wounds have been caused by the Church herself.”

Susan Beaudin, a member of the Cowessess First Nation, co-chairs with Archbishop Bolen the archdiocese's Truth and Reconciliation Committee and is helping organise the Saskatchewan survivors' trip to Maskwacis. But she will not be on one of the buses. Instead, she will join other survivors of Marieval Indian Residential School who will gather on the Cowessess territory to watch the Pope on television.

She went to the Catholic-run school in the 1950s, from the time she was 8 until she was 13. Her parents and siblings and cousins all went there, too, and the family, like almost all the families of survivors, she said, are

still dealing with sexual abuse, physical abuse, addiction and unhealthy relationships – the inter-generational trauma that began at the schools.

The abuse was spiritual as well. The children “hated the God they were told about” at school, she said, because “if the God of those Catholic nuns and priests was so horrible that he allowed the people that were working for him to do these things to 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, 8-, 9-, 10-, 11-, 12-, 13-year-olds, what kind of a god is that? Can you imagine how confused people were about God?”

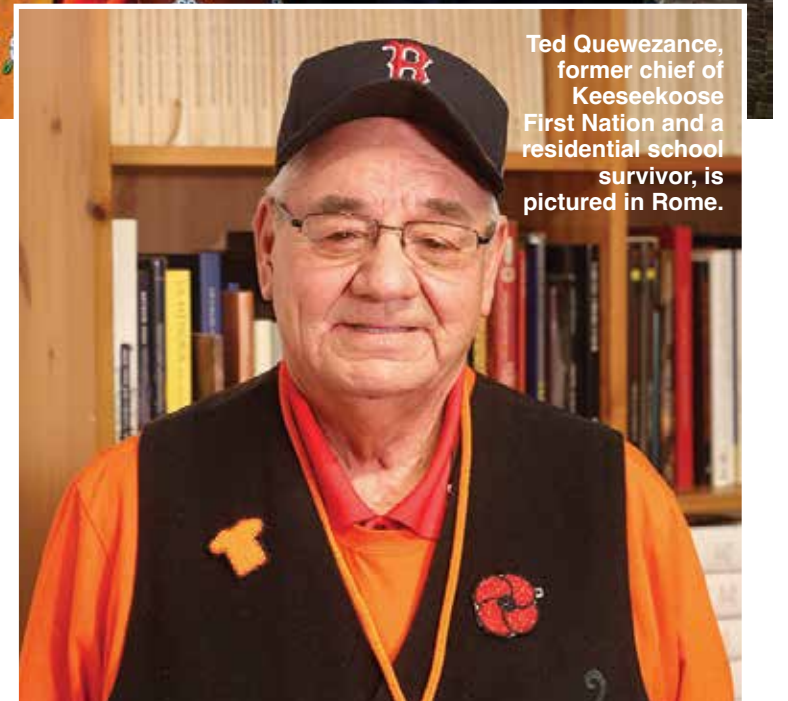
“Those people were working for the devil,” she said.

“Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, will be part of the papal entourage for the trip”

Rediscovering her people's traditional spirituality and seeking healing through their ceremonies, Mr Beaudin said she learned God really is the “all-loving and all-giving Creator and the forgiving Creator.”

Then, she said, “the onus was on me to forgive the Catholic Church. If I was to go further in my healing, I needed to do that. That's why the papal visit is going to be very important to some survivors that need to hear that [apology] in order to continue their journey or to start their journey.”

Cassidy Caron, Métis National Council president, told CNS the Pope's apology in Rome was “the first step in our journey toward truth, reconcilia-



Ted Quewezance, former chief of Keeseekoose First Nation and a residential school survivor, is pictured in Rome.

tion, justice and healing.”

The next step is for the Pope to repeat the apology “in Canada where the highest number of survivors, elders, families and communities would be able to attend,” she said. “It is our hope that Pope Francis, the Vatican, and the CCCB (Canadian bishops' conference) will fully commit to walking the path that we set out for them to join us on following the apology, and understand that this will be an ongoing process, and that it will take time.”

Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, will be part of the papal entourage for the trip.

Asked what more the Pope can do after his apology at the Vatican, Cardinal Czerny told CNS, “It's not a matter of ‘doing more’ but of ‘going deeper.’ An apology can be achieved by a text, whereas reconciliation requires human encounter, a ceremony, a liturgy.”

“Humanly and spiritually speaking,” he said, “if you want to say sorry, taking the trouble to go in person and say it ‘among us’ is very significant; saying sorry is always worth repeating, you don't just say it once and be done with it.”

Communities

And while Pope Francis' visit will focus on the Indigenous communities of Canada, it is clear all Catholics and all Canadians have a role to play in discovering the truth about how the land's original occupants were treated and how discrimination against them continues today.

“Catholics today may feel no share in the errors of the past, but they are called to care for those who today suffer the consequences of colonialism, racism and cultural repression,” the cardinal said. “The sins of the past live on, and everyone has a share in overcoming them.”

Letters

Letter of the week

Obvious bias and the death of journalism

Dear Editor, The article about *TheJournal.ie*'s coverage of the pro-life rally was very humorous [*The Irish Catholic* – July 7, 2022]. Their reporting that “hundreds” of people attended was so blatantly wrong it’s a miracle it was not caught by the organisation’s editors. As miracles are few and far between, in reality it seems to point to a media outlet happy to skew figures to bolster their agenda. While I had a good chuckle, there is a deeper issue that is not at all a source of levity.

Mainstream media in Ireland is becoming less un-biased and increasingly looks like the large number of partisan media organisations in the US – many of which have quite obvi-

ous agendas. This seems to be a process mirrored across the English-speaking world. Abortion coverage is an obvious issue, with much of the mainstream media openly campaigning in Ireland for the repeal of the Eight Amendment of the Constitution before the 2018 referendum.

Many Catholics and pro-life campaigners of course will have noticed this. I could write ad nauseum about the diminution and condemnation of Catholic values, a process which is being spurred on by so-called ‘objective’ journalists – this is obvious. However, another point can be made about the fundamental purpose of journalism in a democratic society. If every journalist

censored views they did not like and focused on those they do, they create a false image of a society. A society they are trying to write into existence. This is demonstrably bad.

For any democratic society we need a ‘fourth estate’ in order for it to function. We need journalists who willingly engage with varying viewpoints and hold those in authority to account – not just those in authority with whom they disagree. If this can not or does not happen, then journalism is dead, and so too, a healthy, functioning democracy.

Yours etc.,
Eoin McCarthy
Galway City, Galway

Pope Francis and the Prodigal Son

Dear Editor, The parable of the Prodigal Son is the model for reconciliation being used by Pope Francis, according to Fr Rolheiser [*The Irish Catholic* – June 30, 2022].

Tell that to the people of the Latin Mass or to the isolated priests who have been silenced for alleging disparities between Francis’s pronouncements and Catholic teachings.

Or tell it to the Archbishop of San Francisco. Francis received Nancy Pelosi shortly after the recall of Roe vs Wade. Maybe Fr Rolheiser can inform us if he has been in touch with her archbishop.

Yours etc.,
Gerald O’Carroll
Ballylongford, Co. Kerry



Pro-choice groups only care about one choice: abortion

Dear Editor, It is astounding that pro-abortion (taxpayer funded) groups really believe there should be basically no limits to abortion provision in this country. Reading Niamh Uí Bhriain’s article [*The Irish Catholic* – June 23, 2022] she makes an excellent argument against getting rid of the three-day wait

period for women looking to procure an abortion.

As she says, no one likes abortion, so why not advocate for measures that actually give women the ‘choice’, a word that all of these groups claim is their main goal.

Instead of trying to get rid of all regulation around

abortion – some crazily radical groups even endeavour to legalise abortion basically up until birth in all cases – why not support women who are pregnant and feel unsupported and alone?

It seems ‘pro-choice’ groups only care about one choice, abortion, and seem to be trying to funnel women

in one direction. Where does their funding come from and why is this the case?

Abortion providers are always delighted to get more business.

Yours etc.,
Roisín Doyle
Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Why tenor John McCormack became an American citizen

Dear Editor, I just read the March 17 article by Felix Larkin. He commented on tenor John McCormack regarding that he annoyed some of his fans by becoming an American citizen in 1919. He actually put in his application in 1917 because he felt he owed much of his success for his career to the United States. Also, he was not an Irish citizen, but a citizen of Great Britain.

Ireland did not exist as a free nation at that time and McCormack felt he did not owe any allegiance to the Crown. This did make his British fans unhappy and he was not able to perform again in Great Britain until 1924.

Yours etc.,
Michael Fitzpatrick
Massapequa Park, New York, USA

Laity must get involved to secure parish future

Dear Editor, It is sad to see that the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin are in the process of reducing the number of Masses. Of course, it is an obvious necessity and speaking to any priest you will realise they are run off their feet and need holidays too.

For those who protest a Mass only taking place one or twice a month in their closest church: this can not have come as a shock. It is an

obvious transition in order to respond to the decline in vocations and Massgoers. We will be seeing a lot more of this in the coming decade and for this reason laity must become more involved in their parishes if they wish them to survive into the future.

Yours etc.,
Mary O’Mahony
Cork City, Cork

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

The synodal process cannot allow itself to be manipulated

Respectfully I would suggest that the Synodal Process must be open to manipulation by the Holy Spirit. Why are so many afraid to feel this fiery wind blow through our Church? ‘It was ever thus’ is not serving the pastoral needs of so many around the world. The voice of the laity, the questions raised and the hopes and fears expressed by all during the synodal process may yet prove to be the prophetic voice of our times for our Church. Holding space for one another’s truth as people of God and not minimising anyone’s lived experience is vitally important I feel. Let’s apply the wisdom and patience of Gamaliel because God may indeed be at work among us and it would be futile to resist, if God is not then it will all come to nought whether we resist or comply with the synodal process. – **Lorna Downey**

Lay leaders vital as retirements take effect, says Bishop Browne

Buy advert space on RTÉ/Virginia media and UTV, promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Why won’t the Church advertise on TV? It’s a no-brainer! Get active, now! Trust me throw enough money to them and they will televise. Trust me! – **Aoibheann Douglas**

Usually there needs to be a strong Catholic culture in the society or the family to support a clerical or religious vocation. That is lacking in a lot of places, because of abuse scandals and other factors. The Church needs to do a lot of work to restore the credibility of priestly ministry as a vocation and a profession, then we may expect becoming a priest will become more attractive once more and the ‘crisis’ will take care of itself. – **Greg Lynn**

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

Inspiring young women who feel alienated

Dear Editor, While I agree with David Quinn that we must try to avoid the synodal pathway being manipulated in a way that undermines core Church doctrine [*The Irish Catholic* – July 7, 2022], the reality among those who attended the synodal pathway meeting in my parish, was that the majority wanted change.

Practicing Catholics that I minister with know the reasons for a male only priesthood, but women in particular are clear that they need to be involved more in decision making at all stages within our Church structures. Women are important role models for girls and their visible absence in sacramental ministry (such as the diaconate) or their limited presence within Church leadership forums, is something that must change and this would not undermine doctrinal teaching but might inspire younger women who feel alienated.

Yours etc.,
Deacon Frank Browne,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

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.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, July 21, 2022

Personal Profile

Welcomed from
persecuted China
to Ireland

Page 32



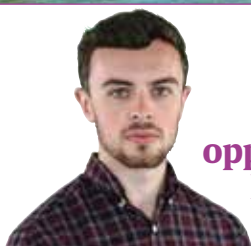
Beating the heat this summer



Much of the continent has been subjected to scorching sun this summer, with wide swathes of Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland and more consistently visiting the 30's and at times venturing toward the 40 degree mark.

While I'm sure we'd have appreciated a little more of that in June, recent weeks have seen the sun burst onto the Irish scene, and it's important we don't become drunk on it. Some may laugh at the idea of the Irish climate giving us a sustained enough blast of good weather for it to do any damage, but unfortunately it can.

Both sun and heat exposure can be seriously detrimental to



Europe has been wracked by heatwaves this summer, and while we've largely had the opposite problem, keeping your head when the heat comes is key, writes Jason Osborne

our health if not handled in a smart, safe manner. To start with the sun, every month, over 1,000 people in Ireland are diagnosed with skin cancers – a number that has increased significantly in the last decade. Most of these cases are related to excessive sun-exposure, and it's a number predicted to double by 2040 unless people start taking precautions.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause damage to the skin and potentially lead to skin cancer, with UV exposure being the main preventable cause of skin cancer, as mentioned above. Unfortunately, experiencing severe sunburn, especially in childhood, increases the risk of developing skin cancer later in life, so it's important to arm yourself

and your kids against it. How does one do that? Fortunately, there are numerous forms of protection at your disposal.

Clothing

As is often the case, the primitive ways and means are your best bet. Clothing "should always be your first line of defence" against the damaging effects of the sun, according to the British Skin Foundation.

Covering as much skin as possible is the best way to defend yourself against the ill-effects of too much sun, but pay particular attention to your shoulders, which burn easily. A hat is a valuable addition to this line of defence,

those with a wide brim being the best as they cover all of the sensitive areas – your head, face, ears and neck. A baseball cap is passable, but your neck and ears will remain exposed.

If possible, consider keeping the clothing when in the water, especially in the case of your children. While cries of protest might ring loud initially, they're better than the cries of pain a bad sunburn can elicit.

Shade

In keeping with the primitive methods, utilise shade as you need it. It's a great way to protect yourself from the sun, especially if

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Family News

AND EVENTS

FREE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES 'VITAL' WITH RISING COST OF LIVING

Turn2Me, a national mental health charity, has stated that free mental health services are absolutely vital, now more than ever, with the rising costs of living. The charity stated an increased number of users reported feeling anxious about the rising cost of living, and that many users said the free Turn2Me mental health services have been a 'lifeline' to them during the pandemic.

Turn2Me offers free mental health services, including free counselling sessions, free support groups and a free 'thought catcher' mood diary. The charity said its services have been in huge demand since the pandemic began. At the height of the pandemic, demand for its services increased by 386%.

Turn2Me is encouraging anyone who is feeling anxious, depressed, isolated or overwhelmed to avail of its free mental health services on Turn2Me.ie. The charity also emphasised that two of its services, the support groups and the 'thought catcher' have no waiting lists and are available to use immediately.

GPS RISKING THEIR OWN HEALTH AT WORK

New research shows general practitioners (GPs) spend more time sitting down than many other occupations, putting their own health at risk.

The research showed GPs spend over ten and a half hours sitting down every working day, putting them at high risk of health problems associated with excessive sedentary behaviour such as cardiovascular disease.

Sitting for long periods is thought to slow the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure and break down body fat. Studies have linked being inactive with being overweight and obese, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and early death.

The research, carried out by Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University and University of Southern Denmark, was funded by the HSC R&D Division, Public Health Agency.

HURLING FOR CANCER RESEARCH IS BACK FOR TENTH CLASH

After a two-year break, top jockeys, GAA, sporting, and TV stars from around the country will line-out again for the tenth renewal of the most unique hurling fixture of the year, Hurling for CancerResearch, on Tuesday, August 16 at St Conleth's Park, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.

Legendary racehorse trainer Jim Bolger and dual Aintree Grand National-winning jockey, Davy Russell will bring household names together to take part in the celebrity hurling match – all in aid of the Irish Cancer Society.

There is free car parking at Whitewater Shopping Centre on production of your Hurling for Cancer Research ticket. There is additional parking in Newbridge College grounds.

Gates open at 4.30pm with pre-match entertainment and refreshments before throw-in at 6pm.

Tickets costing €10 for adults and €15 for families are currently on sale at www.HurlingForCancer.ie. Tickets will also be on sale at the gate on the night.

Hidden hazards of air pollution



The air we breathe and the environment around us have impacts on our health that in the past were unknown. In fact, air pollution has been described as the "invisible killer" and has been cited by the WHO as the new "tobacco" and a "public health emergency". Up to 43% of lung diseases have been attributed to air pollution as well as millions of deaths globally but the association with poor air quality and disease goes beyond respiratory conditions. For example, air pollution has been linked in numerous large studies to an increased risk of cardiovascular mortality from heart and stroke disease and might also increase the risk of dementia.

A large proportion result from vehicle emissions and the burning of fossil fuels

Air pollution especially affects those living in large urban areas where road emissions contribute to poor air quality. Importantly, exposure to airborne pollutants can occur in the earliest stages of life in the womb and children may also be particularly vulnerable to its negative effects. Studies have robustly established that it can induce asthma symptoms and exacerbations, contribute to chronic bronchitis and recurrent lung infection and possibly lung cancer. Indeed, research in Ireland has shown that over 50s living in areas with higher levels of air pollution are more likely to have asthma.

But how exactly does air pollution give rise to other non-lung diseases? The mechanisms

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



by which these are mediated are complex. Firstly, there may be different pollutants in the air including particulate matter and gases such as nitrous oxide and sulphur dioxide. A large proportion result from vehicle emissions and the burning of fossil fuels. These chemicals and particulate matter are inhaled into the lungs where they can induce an inflammatory reaction. However, it is believed that pro-inflammatory molecules can subsequently be released into the circulation from the lung resulting in other systemic effects. Furthermore, particles may even be able to access the brain via neurons in the nose where they could result in neuro-inflammation. Air pollutants absorbed by skin might also contribute to skin ageing, psoriasis, acne and eczema.

Longterm exposure

In animal models where there is longterm exposure to air pollution, acceleration of vascular inflammation and hardening of the arteries has been identified. Exposure to particulate matter has specifically been associated with disease of the coronary arteries and with increased mortality. However, it's not just outdoor exposure which poses a risk. For example, the burning of solid fuels emits similar levels of particulate matter indoors in homes as traffic at the roadside.

This is actually greatest with the burning of peat, followed by coal and then wood. Indeed, exposure has been linked to cognitive impairment and dementia in several studies.

More recently, open fire usage in Ireland was also linked to poorer cognitive performance. Interestingly, ultrafine particles that contain metallic iron such as magnetite may be particularly damaging and have also been identified in frontal lobe regions of the brain. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has also classified emissions from burning coal in an indoor environment as potentially carcinogenic to humans.

While not a man-made pollutant, radon gas is the second biggest cause of lung cancer after smoking in Ireland, where



it is linked to about 350 new cases each year. In fact, it is estimated that up to 170,000 homes in Ireland may be located in high radon areas. In fact, we have some of the highest levels of radon in Europe and rank in the top eighth of 29 OECD countries. Radon is a gas formed by radioactive decay of uranium usually found in igneous rocks such as granite. In fact, some part of Galway and Dublin have higher radon levels for this reason.

It can enter homes through cracks in floors, walls, or foundations. Last year a radon map for the country was made available online. By simply enter-

ing your address or eircode, it identifies the probability of being in a high radon area from as low as 1 in 20 homes to as high as 1 in 5. Certain locations are at particular risk and indeed extremely high levels have been reported in a few cases. For example, a house in Kerry was found to have levels 24 times above what is acceptable – equivalent to a radiation dose of 18 chest X-rays per day!

The move towards more 'green friendly' ways of transport and energy production will help in reducing air pollution and its negative effects

To test for radon levels in your home you can order a kit online though it has to be left for 3 months in the house as levels can vary from day to day and month to month. However, if levels are high, fortunately the problem can be fixed relatively easily by improving indoor and underfloor ventilation.

So where we live and what we unknowingly inhale can significantly affect our health! The move towards more 'green friendly' ways of transport and energy production will help in reducing air pollution and its negative effects.

i Dr Kevin McCarroll is a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, St James's Hospital, Dublin.

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you're fair-skinned. Unfortunately for us Irish, just 10 minutes of strong sunshine is all it takes to burn pale skin, so shade is our friend here.

It's particularly helpful between the hours of 11am and 3pm, when the sun is at its strongest overhead.

Sunscreen

Even though a more sophisticated method of protection, sunscreen is best used in conjunction with others, like clothing and shade.

SPF30+ sunscreen offers the best protection against intense rays and it should be applied to all of the areas consistently exposed to the sun. Remember that waterproof is best, even if you're not around water, as it better retains its protective power if you sweat.

“Styles that wrap around, offering the sun no purchase at the sides, are the best by far”

SPF stands for “Sun Protection Factor” and it refers to the level of protection and particular sunscreen offers against UV radiation, which is linked to skin cancer as mentioned above.

Don't forget: your lips, which are also prone to burning, and can be protected with an SPF30+ lip balm and check the expiry date on your sunscreen, as it isn't as effective once it expires.

Eye-protection

When it comes to the sun and protecting yourself from it, your eyes are easy to forget about, but you do so at your peril – exposure to UV light has been implicated in certain conditions such as cataracts and AMD.

If you're going to spend a lot of time outdoors in the sunshine this summer, it is important to ensure that you wear good quality, dark sunglasses with the best protection.

The CE mark or the British Standard (BS EN ISO 12312-1:2013) should be sought, which is the manufacturer's assurance that the sunglasses have been made in compliance with safety standards. Styles that wrap around,

offering the sun no purchase at the sides, are the best by far.

A lower level of protection is also afforded by a hat with a brim or a sun visor – but anything is better than wandering around blinding streets and allowing your eyes to take a beating.

Handling the heat

Sun-exposure at least somewhat dealt with, a word or two should be afforded to the danger high temperatures can pose to your health. Admittedly not a frequent threat in Ireland, it's slowly but surely becoming more frequent in our corner of the world.

The UK government website says that in a hot spell in August 2003 in England and Wales, there were 2,000 more deaths than would normally be expected. It continues by saying that as the climate changes, hot spells are expected to be more frequent and more intense.

All of this aside, most likely everyone has experienced a dizzy moment or two on hotter days. However, there are those that run a higher risk of serious harm, such as: the elderly; babies and young children; people with a serious chronic condition; people on certain medications; people who are already ill and dehydrated; people who misuse alcohol or drugs; people who are very physically active and homeless people.



It's important to keep an eye on and check in on people who fall into these categories as temperatures soar – they may be less mobile than usual, so we ought to go out of our way to look out for them.

“Dress appropriately: If you have to go out into the heat of day, walk in the shade and wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light coloured cotton clothes”

Most of the tactics we ought to adopt are attested to by common sense, but a quick run-through of some of them here is worthwhile:

- Avoid being out in the sun during the most intense heat of the day, scheduling your heavy activity either before dawn or after dusk if possible.

- Drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol: fluid requirements are higher than normal in hot weather and after strenuous activity, as much is lost through sweating. Water, lower fat milks and tea are all suitable options.

- Dress appropriately: If you have to go out into the heat of day, walk in the shade and wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light coloured cotton clothes. At home wear as little clothing as necessary.

- Prepare your home: Even during a cooler summer, 1 in 5 homes are likely to overheat. Check out the UK government's 'Beat the heat: keep cool at home' checklist for preparing your home, as it's more extensive than can be listed here, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england>

Following these few simple rules regarding the sun and its concomitant heat should enable you to better handle the tough love the environment can mete out upon us.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



After two years of character-building Irish staycation holidays, the lure of the sun is strong. The queues of Irish cars loaded with kids and bike told me that summer holidays abroad are back with a vengeance.

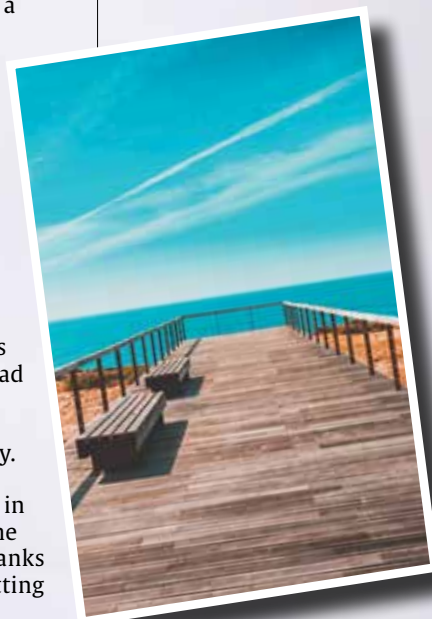
We recently joined the throng for an excursion to France. We thought it would be our first post-Covid holiday. However, even if you are finished with Covid, it doesn't mean that Covid is finished with you. Coughs, temperatures and the usual signs had emerged in the wake of an outbreak at our kids' end of year party. Disconcertingly, our actual departure was in serious doubt until the very last moment, thanks to two of our kids getting Covid. We had even looked into cancelling of the ferry and everything. However, their recovery and negative tests came just in time to enable us to hit the road for the ferry.

Negative tests in hand, we hurriedly piled the bus up with all the holiday essentials and headed to the ferry in convoy with our cousins. Our destination was a campsite in the Atlantic southwest of France, much further south than usual. It was a six-hour drive away – worryingly far with a three-year-old on board. However the journey would be worth it as it was to be a clan gathering featuring over 20 of us from three generations and six households of the same extended family.

After much fun on board the ferry, we arrived in France where the kids began marvelling at the different houses and the different flora and fauna. After a hectic trip down south, we arrived to the amazing beauty of that part of France. The kids settled in quickly, and teamed up with two lads from Kildare for water fights in the pool and the Ireland vs France football games with the French kids. A happy mayhem ensued. We rented bikes and soon a kids' Irish biker gang formed with 12 members patrolling the campsite on their bright orange bikes.

It took a while to persuade them to cycle on the right. However, a few near misses with French kids on their bikes seemed to impress on them the importance of that particular convention.

The weather during the



first few days was sunny with reasonably humane temperatures, but soon the heat soared as a heatwave spread across Europe. Daily highs of 35 degrees are utterly unfamiliar to Irish people and most of us are not genetically designed for such weather. A siesta policy soon had to be implemented, with trips to the pool or beach confined to mornings and evenings while the afternoons were for long salad lunches, chatting indoors, movies and rehydration. The heat and the violence of the sun had to be hidden from at those times, before it melted into lovely warm evenings spent chatting with family while the kids played around the campsite. They gained independence, going to the shops, meeting other kids and calling into other family members whenever they liked.

The days passed in a merry blur, and soon the prospect of heading home became more imminent. There was, as ever, a sense of relief at the prospect of reprieve from the heat and a weariness at living in close quarters for so long. It was a wonderful time away, but we finally saw again the cool, lush green of Ireland, we were happy to be home.

Welcomed from persecuted China to Ireland

Personal Profile



Liam Fitzpatrick

Fr Yanbo Chen felt lost. Working in a job he didn't enjoy, he turned to his faith and a few Catholic monks to provide him with guidance.

The monks presented Fr Chen with a piece of paper that changed his life.

"I knelt down to prayer, and I pulled a little slip of paper out of the jar. I wanted to know what God would like to say to me.

"I take the third slip of the paper, and the words said: 'Don't test your Lord'"

"When I took that [piece of paper], there were only three words: 'Come Follow Me.'"

But he didn't trust that advice just yet. After pulling out a second slip that encouraged him to become a fisherman, he decided to try his luck one last time.

"I take the third slip of the paper, and the words said: 'Don't test your Lord.'"

At that moment, he knew he was destined for the priesthood.

Fr Yanbo Chen SVD now preaches at the Cathedral of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary in Co. Carlow after travelling to the Emerald Isle from China. Though he faced religious persecution



throughout his childhood and doubts about becoming a priest in adolescence, Fr Chen held strong in his faith and, as an adult, is happier than ever to be here.

Childhood

Fr Chen grew up Catholic in a society with heavy religious discrimination against all kinds of Christians.

"Catholics have been persecuted, you know, by the Communist dictatorship, so we have no churches," he said. We have some old churches and some new churches but they are being demolished by the government.

"When I was a child, just a few years [old], we used a small room, a private room and people would gather here for prayer," he said. "It's more like the initial churches of 2,000 years ago.

"During that time, you don't really have a sense of the Church and how beautiful it is with statues and the altar," he said. "It was just holy people gathering together and shar-

ing the Gospel."

After his village built a church when he was in primary school, Fr Chen said that his position as altar boy strengthened his faith even further.

"I was appointed to be the altar boy, serving the Mass and I was so happy to do that because I just didn't want - to kneel down there with my mom on a small mat and pray the Rosary" Fr Chen joked.

"But I loved it - I loved serving Mass."

Because he showed so much enthusiasm for the church, community members started asking the young Fr Chen if he wanted to become a priest. He had other plans.

"I answered the member, the deputy, I said 'Deputy, no! That is not a good idea. I'm going to get married,' he said.

"I knelt down [in front of the picture of Mary] and I said to her, so clearly, I said to her, 'I do not want to be a priest!'"

He continued his education, get-

ting into trouble like most kids.

"When I was in secondary school, I wasn't really a perfect student," Fr Chen said. "I talked back to teachers, talked to other classmates, did not study, just wanted to play."

After his parents asked him, as all parents do, what he wanted to do with his life, Fr Yanbo replied that he was going to Beijing. His parents shot that idea down, and he continued his college studies in psychology and philosophy.

"They welcomed Fr Chen and showed him what he needed to see - that priests are not just authority figures, but community members"

Then Fr Chen joined the workforce and, after a half year, realised he wasn't happy with his career.

"When I was working at the company, every day I was with my colleagues and what were they talking about? They always talk about two things: money and women," he said. "But I really could not be interested in talking about this.

"They thought I was weird. But I thought that they were weird."

After that realisation, he had his fateful meeting with the monks, and from then on decided to dedicate his life to Jesus as a priest. He resigned from the company, then found a place with the Divine World Missionaries.

They welcomed Fr Chen and showed him what he needed to see - that priests are not just authority figures, but community members.

"I tell you, that was the first time I saw a priest cooking for students," he said. "In the kitchen and cooking

for students. And also, we went out and were playing basketball, and priests joined us.

"In my mind, priests were all like a boss, like, you are so far from me," he remembered. "But then I saw this and said 'Oh my goodness, that's a real priest. They're playing together, cooking together, working together, and praying together.

"I was talking to my novitiate master, and I said 'This is the kind of priest I would like to be.'"

His leaders suggested that he leave China to study theology in an English country, initially proposing Australia. However, Fr Chen says he was barred from entry because he couldn't pass a state test.

"It makes no sense," he said.

"I'm applying to study English and theology, but now you ask me to pass the English exam? If I pass that, where would I continue studying English?"

Ireland

From there, Fr Chen had two options: Chicago or Ireland. A "few seconds later", Fr Chen made up his mind and chose Ireland.

"He said 'Are you sure? Ireland? Do you know where Ireland is?' and I said I wasn't sure," Fr Chen recalled.

"He said 'Why?' and I said 'Because I don't know Ireland! I just know they are small and they are Irish and they are a Catholic country. I would like to go.'"

After his ordination, he was asked to remain in Ireland to help fill the void of young priests in the country, but stayed because of the kind-heartedness of his church community.

"My parishioners here make me feel more at home living in Ireland," he said.

"They take really good care of me. Sometimes I'm even spoiled by them!"

Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Living Laudato Si'

Jane Mellett



Developing cultures and policies to protect the planet

For the past seven months we have been exploring the *Laudato Si'* Goals (LSGs) which are a blueprint for the Church community to live out the call of *Laudato Si'*, a roadmap towards achieving ecological sustainability. The LSGs help us to live out our vocation "to be protectors of God's handiwork" (LS, 217).

This month we look at *Laudato Si'* Goal 7: 'Community Engagement and Participatory Action'. This goal encourages the development of cultures and policies that will protect our common home.

This is no easy task and will come only from a desire to care more deeply for our common home, nourished and sustained by a life-giving ecological spirituality (see LSG 6). Actions under LSG 7 call for a team of people to be appointed locally to guide our way.

Regardless of what sector we are in, be it a pastoral council, the board of management of a school,

a family discerning together, the *Laudato Si'* Goals need reflection, time and a steering group who care passionately about them.

LSG 7 invites us to campaign on issues that affect our environment, to engage with decision makers whether they be at local council level, Church hierarchy or national political leaders; we are called to raise our voices in the public sphere in order to protect our common home.

A few examples of this would be to join the 'Fridays for Future' gatherings which take place in towns and cities around the world every Friday. Inspired by the young Swedish activist, Greta Thunberg, people of all ages, but especially young people, continue to come together to call for climate justice. In Dublin, the group gather at 1pm every Friday at the Dáil and this is their 188th week of 'Fridays for Future'. It is a diverse group but many people from parishes and congregations have joined this sustained pro-

test, reminding our political leaders to take urgent action on the climate and biodiversity crisis. Some parishes have invited local TDs to their parish to discuss social and environmental issues. Groups can also keep themselves informed on key policy issues that may arise in relation to climate justice by linking in with organisations such as Trócaire, helping to advocate for change.

LSG 7 invites us to communicate the message of *Laudato Si'* in our locality, through newsletters, local media, blogs and so on. We are encouraged to build community engagement by linking with social and ecological groups in the locality, finding out what they are doing and how we might support one another.

The *Laudato Si'* Goals are a huge challenge for each of us but one which we are called to embrace together in order to heal our relationship with our common home and with each other. Go to www.laudatosiactionplatform.org to find out more.

Jane Mellett is the Laudato Si' Officer with Trócaire

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Shining a light on the darkness of trafficking

Of all the social justice issues that need attention human trafficking must surely be one of the most urgent.

The issue was brought to the fore last week when athlete Mo Farah revealed that he had been trafficked into Britain at a young age. On **Drivetime** (RTE Radio One, Tuesday) presenter Cormac Ó hEadhra interviewed Kevin Hyland, Britain's first independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and Ireland's representative on human trafficking with the Council of Europe. It made for disturbing listening. He instanced the cases of a six-year-old Romanian girl brought lawfully into Britain to work as a house slave in an affluent area of London, and a Nigerian girl trafficked into prostitution in Britain, who was jailed in an adult prison for having false documents until it was discovered that she was only 15. Sometimes the trafficking was done by gangs, sometimes even by families. The most shocking moment of all was when Mr Hyland said: "sometimes families feel they have to sell a child to keep the rest of the family going". It turns the whole idea of family on its head.

Prevalent

It wasn't that prevalent in Ireland, he said, and Ireland's



Mo Farah opened up about his experience being trafficked.

laws were tight, though he thought they should be looked at more proactively. Last year Irish numbers were in the low forties and there had been prosecutions. Overall, 40 million people were trafficked in the world, 1200 in Britain last year, of whom 14 were born in Ireland. It affects children and adults, but the idea of children being systematically abused is just so shocking and abhorrent, such an affront to human dignity.

The following day **The Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk, Wednesday) returned to the topic of the priest shortage in the Church. It had an air of déjà vu and I'm not sure if there were any useful insights that hadn't been teased out before. The host referenced Bishop Brendan Leahy saying he couldn't guarantee Masses every Sunday in all the churches of his diocese. Cue regular radio commentator Fr Iggy O'Donovan, parish priest

of Fethard. He thought the bishop was ahead of "their other lordships", a term I thought rather dismissive. For him the Church was in a "demographic nightmare... a tsunami" but then he said he didn't want to exaggerate. He described the Church as being "literally" in the Last Chance Saloon. Literally?

Problems

Fr Iggy identified what he saw as the Church's problems at length, but I'd like to have heard more about solutions and strategies, more about the green shoots, more about the many vibrant youth groups in the Church. If there was a priest shortage where were the vocation campaigns? If, as he suggested, it was hard to find anyone under 50 in the pews (exaggeration alert?) what would he suggest to draw young people in? Negativity is certainly not attractive.

The item was combined, I'm not sure why, with a contribution from Dr Brendan Kelly about research that showed, as Pat Kenny put it, that keeping the faith was good for mind and body. He spoke of a new study in the journal of the American Medical Association summarising around 370 studies and it confirmed that identifying as religious or spiritual is associated with better physical and mental health. He also said that research in

PICK OF THE WEEK

POPE FRANCIS IN CANADA

EWTN Sunday July 24, 6pm

Arrival - beginning the coverage of the visit of Pope Francis to Canada.

SANTIAGO - THE CAMINO WITHIN

EWTN Sunday July 24, 9pm

Following the spiritual journey of pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago, the ancient route to the burial place of the apostle James.

SAGAIRT NA SÍOCHÁNA

TG4 Wednesday July 27, 9.30pm

The remarkable roles played by Redemptorist priests in brokering the most important peace deals between republicans and British governments in the 20th Century.

Ireland had shown that identifying as religious consistently showed up as one of the predictors of happiness.

Happiness was certainly evident in **Songs of Praise** (BBC One, Sunday) in the segment about two Nigerian missionary priests ministering in Scotland. Fr James Anyaegbu and Fr Maximilian Nwoso, parish priests in Beaulieu, were described by one young parishioner as exuberant, proud of their Catholic faith and open about it. Fr James had started making TikTok videos to attract young people to the Church and these had gone viral.

Contribution

Another positive contribution to Church life is the Irish Church Music Summer School, held last weekend in

Maynooth. A beautiful song from there was featured on **Sunday Sequence** (BBC Radio Ulster, Sunday) - *Create in Me a Clean Heart*, by Marty Haugen. The show also featured a contribution from singer-songwriter Andy Flannagan of Christians in Politics. He spoke of leading the music at the recent prayer breakfast in Westminster, where, it seems, a talk by Rev. Les Isaac led to former Health Secretary Sajid Javid re-considering his position and eventually resigning from Boris Johnson's cabinet.

And look what that started!

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Film

Aubrey Malone



Unlikely mother and son bonding on Kerry roads

Like most road movies, *Joyride* (PG) involves a journey of the mind as well as the body.

Olivia Colman plays the most unlikely barrister you're ever going to see in a film. Charlie Reid is the most unlikely gynaecologist in training. Because he's only twelve.

As well as knowing more than Colman (who's just given birth) about children, he's also a lifestyle counsellor. And a relationship therapist.

Father

At the start of the film his scam-oriented father (Lochlann O'Mearáin) tries to pilfer some charity money that's been raised at an event for his dead wife. The money changes hands as often as the taxi that Reid steals



A scene from the 2022 film Joyride.

changes direction - or Colman changes her mind about whether she'll keep her baby or give it up for adoption and hares off to Lanzarote.

For the first part half hour she seems more a candidate for the Lanzarote trip but the idea of her going soft on the baby issue, as befits films of this ilk,

is always going to be a matter of when rather than if.

It's easy to see what Emer Reynolds, the director, is at. She's making a film about three unusual people - not exactly "mentalist", the most ubiquitous word in the script - who reach catharses in their various ways (i.e. through flashbacks, almost drowning, etc.)

Performances

If it bites off more than it can chew, that's only because it tries to be too many things to too many people. All the performances are good but poignance is always a bit beyond its reach. It doesn't jibe with the street-smartness of the characters or the expletive-strewn script.

The thing it succeeds best at is in portraying two people

who endeavour to be better than their parents. Within the film's skewed generational parameters, sometimes this isn't saying much.

Tommy Tiernan does a subdued cameo in it, which reminded me of the one he did in the recent TV show 'Conversations with Friends'. (I never thought I'd find myself using the words "subdued" and "Tommy Tiernan" in the one sentence.)

He was in *Derry Girls* as well, wasn't he? Such stints are godsend to help him keep his head above water after Covid axed his Vicar Street gigs, but aren't other stand-up comedians suffering too? Why don't they get the nod?

Patricia Highsmith is profiled in a documentary, *Loving Highsmith*, showing at the Irish Film Institute on Eustace Street, Dublin on July 24 as part of a Highsmith season. She's best known for *Carol*, *The Talented Mr Ripley* and *Strangers on a Train*.

I've just finished reading her recently-published diaries. They run to a staggering 1000 pages, providing an enigmatic insight into a woman who was, by her own admission, difficult and cantankerous. But she brought crime writing to a level significantly higher than anyone before her.

There's just one showing of the documentary at the IFI that day, at 4pm. A rare port-hole into the life of a fascinating lady.

Lord, teach us how to pray

If you want to know what to believe, study the creed. If you want to know how to behave, study the Sermon on the Mount. And if you want to know how to pray, contemplate the Our Father, today's Gospel (Luke 11:1-13).

The disciples were deeply impressed by the prayerfulness of Jesus. They were already familiar with the Psalms and many beautiful blessing prayers. But there was something special about the face of Jesus in prayer and they wanted to share in it. The lesson of Jesus is a golden moment when we get a peep into his mind and heart at prayer.

Notice how the first person singular, me or mine, never features in this prayer. It's always "our" and "us". This is rightly called the Lord's Prayer, and it is our privilege to share in it. The Liturgy reminds us that "we dare to say" this prayer.

Jesus addressed God as Father, something entirely new. In the Old Testament there are fourteen times when God is called Father, only in the sense of creator or protector of the nation, but never in the sense of a personal relationship. In the gospels Jesus speaks of "Father" more than one hundred and seventy times and each one of his twenty-one prayers addresses God as "Father". We dare to recite his prayer because under the new covenant, "he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name" (John 1:12). St Paul told the Christians in Rome, "You received the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out 'Abba, Father!'" (Rom 8:14).

There are two contrasting ways in our approach to God. God is mysterious, beyond our human understanding, transcendent and holy (apophatic prayer). But God is also very near, intimate, known and loved (kataphatic prayer). The Lord's Prayer achieves the perfect balance between the two. God is as distant as heaven, yet as near as the personal relationship of Father to children.

Sometimes our prayer starts from the thought of God's movements towards us: at other times we reach from our situation towards God. The first three petitions begin with God: God's name, God's kingdom, God's will. "By the first three petitions we are strengthened in faith, filled with hope and set aflame in charity" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2806).

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



Hallowed be thy name

We cannot add anything to the infinite glory of God. This is a petition that our faith will grow through the experience of God's glory and God's nearness. There is a phrase in Latin, "*nomen est omen*", meaning that a name calls up the presence and the power of the person. Every knee should bend at the name of Jesus.

Nothing shows up the shallowness of faith today as the careless use of the sacred names. Sadly, the Irish are top of this league. May our faith be enriched in a deep appreciation of God's sacred name.

Thy Kingdom come

This is a petition for hope, that great virtue that keeps us going when times are tough. As long as we can say "Come", there is someone we trust in. This is a beautiful prayer for the growth of the kingdom which Jesus founded: a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

That's a picture of the ideal world. But sadly, there is war in the Ukraine and other countries, famine in places, rank inequalities and injustice, and politics based on lies. We are sustained by hope as long as we continue to invite the coming of God's reign on earth.

Thy will be done

After rising up in praise of God's name, and then longing for the coming down of God's reign, now we focus inwards to our hearts, the centre of love. On the circumference of life we are engaged in many activities, in family, work, social contacts and so on.

Now we pray that the will of God will be at the centre of everything. May the Spirit of God enkindle within us the fire of God's love as the energy and direction of all we do.

Give us this day our daily bread

After the three God-petitions we have four us-petitions: for today, give us; for the past, forgive us; and for the future, lead us and deliver us. God already knows what we need ever before we pray. Then why bother petitioning?

God does not need our words but it's we who need them to make us humbly



The Lord's Prayer by James Tissot. Photo: Brooklyn Museum.

aware of our dependence on God. Since God already understands our needs, there is no need to be searching for the right words or numbered repetitions.

Bread has been called the staff of life. Our daily bread includes all our needs today. Actually, "daily" is not an exact translation of the original Greek word *epiousion*, super-essential. So, this petition includes not only our natural needs but also our supernatural needs, nourished by the Blessed Eucharist. Jesus called himself the living bread come down from heaven.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Having prayed for today's needs, we now turn to our past. We trust in God's mercy for our past sins. If we are grateful for God's forgiveness, we must be willing to forgive those who have hurt us in any way. As this is not easy, we

ask for the grace to heal our wounded memories.

The *Catechism* recommends handing it over to the Holy Spirit who "turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession." Instead of hating the other person, the Holy Spirit will enable us to pray for that person.

Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from the Evil One

Thinking of our future we ask the Father to lead from the pitfalls of temptation, just as the Good Shepherd leads us along the right path. Temptation is the work of the *diabolos*, whose very name means the one who leads astray. According to the gospel the devil is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning: anti-truth and anti-life as we can see rampant today.

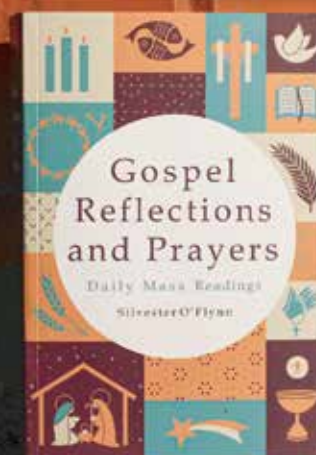
One final thought. It is not necessary to repeat the

entire prayer all the time. Just concentrate on one petition. St Catherine of Sienna rarely managed the complete prayer. When somebody asked St

Teresa of Avila how to become a contemplative, her advice was to spend an hour with the Lord's Prayer. "Lord, teach us to pray".

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The temptations of the good person

Many of us are familiar with an often-quoted line from T.S. Eliot: “The last temptation is the greatest treason; to do the right deed for the wrong reason.” This, he suggests, is the temptation of the good person. What’s the temptation?

In John’s Gospel, Jesus asks his listeners this question, “How can you believe who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from God?” What’s Jesus’ challenge here? This: We can do all the right things, be doggedly faithful, resist every kind of compromise, and even accept martyrdom – but why? To be respected? To be admired? To win approval? To win a permanent good name for ourselves?

Aren’t these good, noble enough reasons? They are.

“There was a holy man, a guru, renowned for his wisdom who lived near the top of a mountain”

However, as T.S. Eliot suggests in *Murder in the Cathedral*, a temptation can present itself as a grace, and that can be the case in terms of being virtuous. He illustrates this through the struggles of his main character, Thomas a Beckett. Beckett was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162 until he was murdered in his own Cathedral in 1170. As Eliot presents him, Beckett does all the right things. He is altruistic, radically faithful, resists



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

all compromise, and is ready to accept martyrdom. However, as Eliot highlights, these can be “the temptations of the good person”, and it can take some time (and a deeper maturity) to distinguish certain temptations from grace. Hence, Eliot coined these now-famous lines:

“Now is my way clear; now is the meaning plain:

Temptation shall not come in this kind again.

The last temptation is the greatest treason:

To do the right deed for the wrong reason. ...

For those who serve the greater cause

Make the cause serve them.”

Serve

Those who serve the greater cause can easily make the cause serve them, blind to their own motivation.

Don’t we all know it! Those of us who work in ministry, in

teaching, in administration, in the media, in the arts, and those of us who are habitual good Samaritans helping out everywhere, what ultimately drives our energy as we do all this good?

Motivation

Well, motivation is rarely simply straightforward. We are a complex, often tortured creatures of motivation. Here’s a little parable vis-à-vis motivation from the Sufi tradition that suggests that we don’t have a single motivation, but have multiple motivations. The parable runs this way.

There was a holy man, a guru, renowned for his wisdom who lived near the top of a mountain. One day three men showed up at his door, seeking counsel.

He questioned the first one: “Did you climb up this mountain to see me because I’m famous or because you truly are interested in gaining some wisdom?” The

man answered, “To be truthful, I came to see you because of your fame, though, of course, I’m also interested in receiving some counsel.” The guru dismissed him, “You aren’t yet ready to learn.”

He turned to the second man and asked him the same question, “What’s the real reason you climbed up this mountain to see me?” This man’s answer was different. “It’s not your fame that drew me here,” he said, “I’m not interested in that. I want to learn from you.” Surprisingly, the Guru also dismissed him, telling him that he was not yet ready to learn.

“T.S. Eliot suggests in *Murder in the Cathedral*, a temptation can present itself as a grace, and that can be the case in terms of being virtuous”

He turned to the third man, “Did you climb this mountain to see me because I’m famous or because you truly seek some counsel?” The man replied, “To be honest, it’s for both reasons, and

probably for a good number of other reasons that I am unaware of. I did want to see you because you are famous and I do really want to learn from you, and I am not even sure that either of them is the real reason I came to see you.”

“You’re ready to learn”, said the holy man.

Godness

T.S. Eliot presents his main character in *Murder in the Cathedral* as a man who does all the right things, is recognised for his goodness, but is someone who still has to examine himself as to his real motivation for doing what he does. What Eliot highlights is something which should give all of us who are trying to be good, virtuous, faithful persons, pause for reflection, scrutiny, and prayer. What’s our real motivation? How much is this about helping others and how much is about ourselves, about gaining respect, admiration, a good name – and having a good feeling about ourselves?

This is a hard question and perhaps not even a fair one, but a necessary one which, if asked, can aid us in our quest for a deeper level of maturity. In the end, are we doing good things because of what it does for others or because of what it does for us?

As we stand somewhat naked and exposed before this question, we can take some consolation in the message contained in the Sufi parable. This side of eternity our motivations are pathologically complex and mixed.

“How can you believe who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from God?”

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Though our bodies may fail, love, faith and courage never do



Charlie Bird at Croagh Patrick.

Climb with Charlie,

by Charlie Bird
(Merrion Press, €17.99/£16.99)

Peter Costello

In 2021, veteran RTÉ journalist Charlie Bird made it known that he has motor neurone disease. He was charged up to make a positive response. He decided to organise a charity climb of Ireland's famous Holy Mountain, Croagh Patrick.

In its fulfilment, his simple plan grew into a national event. Though it was a difficult day for Charlie and others, it turned out well. Some €3 million was raised for charity.

This book is a photographic record of that unforgettable

day. It comes with forewords by Ryan Tubridy and Vicky Phelan. But the words are far outshone by the photos of the day, which display all the love and courage that surrounded the event, down to the last lingering action of lighting five candles for Charlie Bird's personal hopes, and by others too for their own personal challenges.

Living with Motor Neurone Disease, edited by Dr Marie Murray (Cork University Press, €14.95 / £12.99), recently reviewed in these pages, will prove of immense value to any one in any way affected by this conditional themselves or through family or friends. Nobody need be alone with MND.

Hopkins Summer School



34th International Hopkins Festival

July 22-28 2022

Newbridge College Theatre, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

The Gerard Manley Hopkins International Summer School, which has been called "a bright gem in the literary world", by Patrick Samway SJ, the American literary scholar and teacher, begins tomorrow (Friday July 22), and closes next week on 28.

The details of all the events can be found on-line and through the school's website, and can be visited on a selected basis. The Hopkins is the only summer school in Ireland which has a religious inspiration, but it always covers so much ground that, even

though the one goes for one topic, one comes away with great memories of several others. It is an event where new things can be learnt.

The lectures are supported by music and dramatic events, a full range of creativity is on show to be enjoyed and benefit from. It is also a people friendly celebration of poetry and faith, with the emphasis on celebration. I have never come away from previous season of the school with feeling better informed, and greatly inspired to explore further the extraordinary mind and art of G.M. Hopkins

This year it finally returns in full form after the lockdown years. Well worth attending if only for a day or two.

Hopes for a new Spring for the Church in Ireland



Professor Eamonn Conway presenting a copy of *The Synodal Pathway* to Pope Francis during a recent reception for Catholic educators at the Vatican.

The Synodal Pathway: When Rhetoric Meets Reality,

edited by Eamon Conway, Eugene Duffy and Mary McDaid

(Columba Books, €16.99/£14.99)

Fr Niall Coll

St John Henry Newman famously observed that "there has seldom been a Council without great confusion after it".

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was no exception. Hence the often fractious discourse between traditionalists and progressives concerning its meaning and implementation in the decades since.

Whatever the merits or otherwise of their respective arguments, the pontificate of Francis, now in its tenth year, is about inviting the Church into a new phase in the reception

of Vatican II. Even if Pope Francis did not participate in the Council, it is the backdrop to all he says.

The various emphases of his pontificate – a Church that is poor, a merciful Church, a missionary Church, etc – are attempts to encapsulate vital aspects of the Council's vision.

Pope Francis and Synodality

'Synodality' is the catch-all phrase that the pope uses to express Vatican II's comprehensive vision of the Church. While the Council itself did not use this precise term it has taken on a great resonance in his writings and preaching.

He speaks repeatedly of "a listening Church, a synodal Church" as he seeks to promote a more participatory and dialogical style of Church life universally. A synodal Church will therefore be mindful of the medieval maxim, "what affects all must be addressed by all".

Pope Francis has gone on to envisage a synodal Church as a kind of "inverted pyramid" in which "the top is located beneath the base". Consequently, those who exercise authority in the church are called 'ministers,' because, in the original meaning of the word, they are the least of all. "It is in serving the people of God that

each bishop becomes, for that portion of the flock entrusted to him, *vicarius Christi* . . ."

A synodal church is one that listens, it is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn – the faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome – all listening to each other, all listening to the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of truth", in order to know what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

The Synodal Pathway

On March 10, 2021, the Irish Catholic bishops conference announced a Synodal Pathway for the Catholic Church

“‘Synodality’ is the catch-all phrase that the pope uses to express Vatican II’s comprehensive vision of the Church”

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.

“Sr Nathalie Becquart critiques clerical power and argues for new structures in the Church to align synodality and collaborative ministry”

in Ireland in preparation for a National Synodal Assembly or Assemblies within the next five years.

It is part of a wider global consultation process which Pope Francis has launched in preparation for the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Bishops dedicated to the theme, 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission' that is due to take place in Rome in October 2023. Already a process of widespread consultations has taken place over recent months in the parishes and dioceses of Ireland regarding the Synodal Pathway for the Irish Church.

The book under review here seeks to explore the meaning of synodality and its rich foundations within the Catholic tradition.

In the introduction, Fr Eamonn Conway explains that the volume brings together a range of writers, most of them Irish, to explore the meaning of synodality, to make a case for it in the life of the Church today and to counsel that if the process does not arrive at "the desired destination of sincere and meaningful Church reform" that it will leave the Church in an even worse situation than hitherto.

“Sr Nathalie Becquart critiques clerical power and argues for new structures in the Church to align synodality and collaborative ministry”

The book is divided into two parts: the first explores the foundations for synodality in the Catholic Church and the second speaks out of particular ecclesial contexts. In the opening chapter, Austen Ivereigh, a biographer of Pope Francis, offers an insightful analysis of the Pope's vision of a synodal church, one which seeks space for ecclesial discern-

ment of spirits prior to apostolic action.

Rafael Luciani and Serena Noceti, the former a close collaborator with the Latin American Bishops and the latter an Italian theologian, in their essay, shed light on the connection between synodality and the ongoing reception of the Second Vatican Council.

Sr Nathalie Becquart critiques clerical power and argues for new structures in the Church to align synodality and collaborative ministry. Dutch Jesuit Jos Moons offers an introduction to the process of discernment so essential to the notion of synodality and the Maynooth scholar Jessie Rodgers highlights the practice of communal discernment in the early church.

Fr Gerry O'Hanlon SJ, a long-time advocate of ecclesial renewal in Ireland, explores the *sensus fidei*, the sense of the faith, both in the individual and in the whole community, and the light it can throw upon contested issues most obviously with respect to Church teaching on sexuality and gender.

Parish renewal

The book's second section opens with Fr Eugene Duffy exploring synodality in the context of a diocese and reviewing various approaches to diocesan and parish renewal that have occurred in Ireland since Vatican II.

Fr Eamonn Fitzgibbon gives an account of the Limerick diocese's synodal process. Fr Bernd Hagenkord SJ and Fr Timothy Costelloe SDB respectively discuss the German Synodal Pathway and the Fifth Plenary Council of the Church in Australia. Janet Forbes, a pastoral worker in Armagh diocese, argues that a synodal church can learn from the fields of Leadership and Management about helping people in realising vision and mission.

Maureen Kelly, a co-ordinator of liturgy and spirituality in the Killaloe diocese, aware of the extent of the crisis of credibility that the Church in Ireland faces, argues that these issues cannot be faced by

local dioceses working in isolation.

In the final two chapters Baroness Nuala O'Loan and Patrick Treacy, both with extensive legal backgrounds, identify specific obstacles to accountability and thus to a genuine exercise of listening and synodality in the life of the Church.

Baroness O'Loan regrets the tardiness of many canonical processes and Treacy offers a *cri de coeur* for bishops to ensure that they comply with statutory requirements of company and charity law in the management of Church assets. This will require a better understanding and appreciation of the fiduciary obligations of all trustees, whether lay or clerical.

“Eugene Duffy is surely correct here when he laments the slow pace of ecclesial and pastoral reform in Ireland since the Council”

This book will be a most useful companion for those who wish to participate in the synodal process that is now underway across the country.

Each chapter provides discussion questions which parish and deanery groups might find useful in understanding synodality better and planning for the future. Eugene Duffy is surely correct here when he laments the slow pace of ecclesial and pastoral reform in Ireland since the Council.

Hopefully, the diocesan synods and assemblies planned for Ireland over the next few years will be the beginning of a process which will herald new life as the second wave of Vatican II reforms so close to Pope Francis' heart are encouraged to take firm root in our country.

Dr Niall Coll is Parish Priest of Donegal Town and Clar.

The World of Books

By the books editor

The heritage of altruism behind Pope Francis's thinking



Fr Pedro Arrupe - Sr Teresa of Kolkata is pictured in 1982 with Jesuit Fr Pedro Arrupe in Rome. Photo: CNS

Discover God Daily: Seven Life-Changing moments from the Journey of Saint Ignatius,

by Brendan McManus SJ and Jim Deeds
(Messenger Publications, €9.95/£8.95)

Pedro Arrupe: a heart larger than the World,
by Brian Grogan SJ
(Messenger Publications, €16.95/£18.95)

Anyone who wishes to understand the feelings and thoughts that inform and motivate Pope Francis's approach to the world and faith, needs always to keep in mind that he is a Jesuit. These two books, aimed at a wide general readership, will be of great value in this quest.

Spirituality

Discover God Daily is a little handbook, a sort of *vade mecum* of Ignatian spirituality, making it available to all in straightforward terms. This is an example of active spirituality – which for many seems a vague and difficult term in these days of hectic bewilderment.

But as the authors point out it took the battle-hardened Ignatius some 15 years before he found the way he was to take. So don't expect anything in life to change overnight.

This book is the Ignatian tradition in action, or rather at work. When Teilhard de Chardin referred to the "slow work of God", I always feel he had in mind the changes in geology

(which was his metier), which are indeed creepingly slow, but nevertheless laid the foundation for the physical world as we know it.

Brian Grogan's book takes a different, but still very relevant approach. He has great experience is bringing over to his audiences what are often difficult concepts, but sometime stunningly simple, as in his expression: "Love of God which does not issue in justice for others is a farce..."

One of the most influential experiences for Pedro Arrupe were his efforts to cope with the aftermath of the use of atom bombs by the United States to bring the world war in Asia to a swift

close. Lives were certainly saved, but others went on dying of radiation for decades after. It was a moral landmark of the 20th century, one now little talked about (allowing Putin to hint at the use of "tactical nuclear weapons").

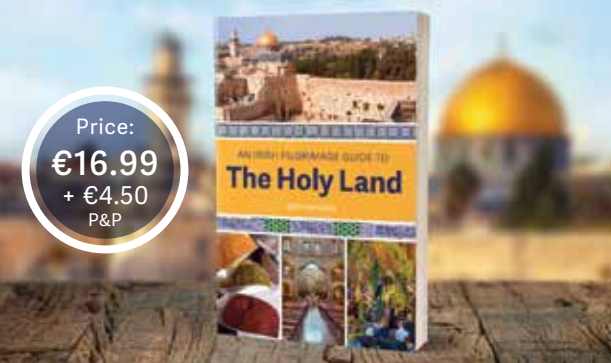
Touchstone of faith

These experiences shaped Arrupe's ideas of what people should do in their lives: this is all explained by Fr Grogan, but needs to be better acted on by us all. Compassion was the touchstone of faith. But this is merely to rephrase what is said in page after page, scene after scene, parable after parable in all the Gospels.

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Image: Roge Wavio (29) of Kalacha, Marsabit, Kenya holds produce she has grown with support from

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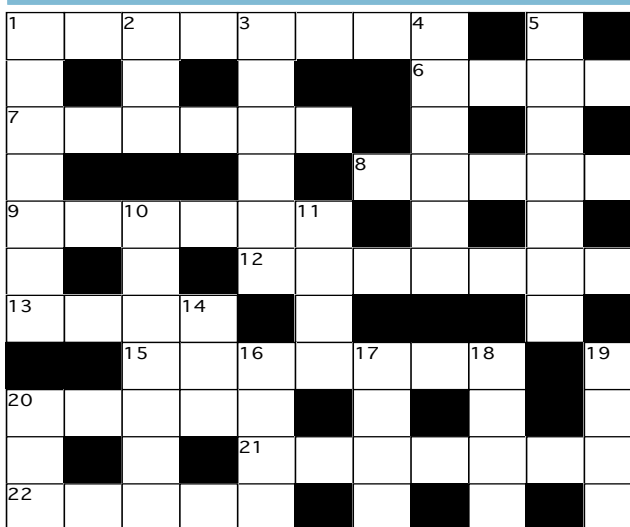
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One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 442



Across

- 1 In the fairy tale, she let down her long hair so the prince could climb into the tower (8)
- 6 Test (4)
- 7 Some people breed this bird for racing (6)
- 8 Once more (5)
- 9 Delightful (6)
- 12 In a keen way (7)
- 13 You may sprinkle it on your food (4)
- 15 Yellow meadow flower (7)
- 20 Dish (5)
- 21 You may use its leaves in a salad (7)
- 22 He met the Billy Goats Gruff (5)

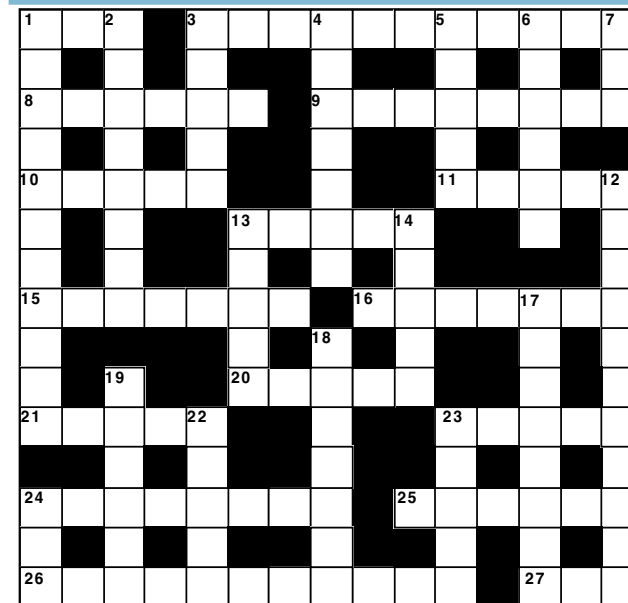
Down

- 1 Tiny waves you make when you throw a pebble into a lake (7)

- 2 Use it to put a garment on the clothesline (3)
- 3 You might have chicken _____ soup (6)
- 4 'We're the champions - we finished top of the _____' (6)
- 5 Popular flavour of ice-cream (7)
- 10 Lava comes out when this erupts (7)
- 11 Barks the way a small dog does (4)
- 14 People sometimes call an infant a Tiny _____ (3)
- 16 You can get water from this (4)
- 17 Not in time (4)
- 18 You _____ milk from a jug (4)
- 19 Mix black and white to get this colour (4)
- 20 Creature you take care of (3)

Crossword

Gordius 568



Across

- 1 Oxygen, for example (3)
- 3 Orca (6,5)
- 8 Grown-ups (6)
- 9 Eager and accommodating in rewriting big lingo (8)
- 10 Polar direction (5)
- 11 Chucked (5)
- 13 Type of tree (5)
- 15 Tropical disease (7)
- 16 Cartoon drawings often depict a frog on this piece of floating foliage (4,3)
- 20 Tale (5)
- 21 Chaos, mayhem (5)
- 23 Jet (5)
- 24 Oriental religion based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (8)
- 25 Group of six (6)
- 26 England's tie seen differently? Unravel this! (11)
- 27 Automobile (3)

Down

- 1 Variety of apple (6,5)
- 2 Creature that lives in a drey (8)
- 3 Two-masted sailing boat (5)
- 4 & 22d Canadian singer-

Across

- songwriter who wrote 'Hallelujah' (7,5)
- 5 Joint near the hand (5)
- 6 Bird enclosure (6)
- 7 Reg is upset at this amount of work (3)
- 12 Jacket that should keep the breeze out (11)
- 13 Dens (5)
- 14 Hirsute (5)
- 17 Overly-particular, demanding excessive exactitude (8)
- 18 Wise Biblical king (7)
- 19 Dodges (6)
- 22 See 4 down
- 23 Segment (5)
- 24 Cot or divan, for example (3)

SOLUTIONS, JULY 14

GORDIUS NO. 567

Across — 1 And 3 Sargasso Sea 8 Robert Bruce 9 Imminent 10 Manly 11 Tapas 13 Aesop 15 Israeli 16 Adamant 20 Wanda 21 Squid 23 Brown 24 Pinotage 25 Buried 26 Provocative 27 Hay

Down — 1 Acrimonious 2 Debonair 3 Sorry 4 Glimpse 5 Saint Swithin's Day 6 Sherpa 7 Aft 13 Allow 14 Padua 17 Admonish 18 Entreat 19 Quando 22 Ditto 24 Pop

CHILDREN'S No. 441

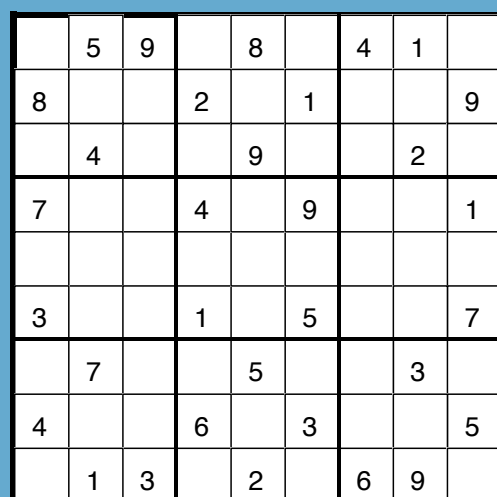
Across — 1 Comedian 6 Edam 7 Either 9 Answer 10 Reef 12 Rehearsal 15 List 17 Oxygen 19 Bakers 20 Editor

Down — 1 Cheerful 2 Mother 3 Dye 4 News 5 Camera 8 Racehorse 11 Feather 13 Ray 14 Longer 16 Ivan 18 Goat

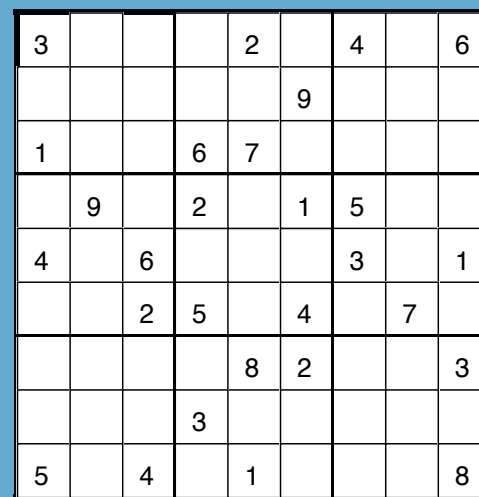
Sudoku Corner

442

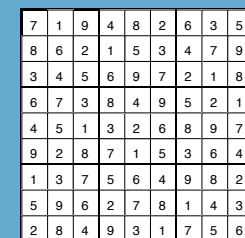
Easy



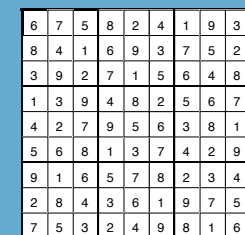
Hard



Last week's Easy 441



Last week's Hard 441



Chastened but refreshed after Covid bout

IT WAS BOUND to happen. After over two years scrupulously taking every precaution to avoid infection, it caught me out: Covid visited me. And it took me over. It happened on a Saturday, the worst day for a priest in a one-priest parish. I woke with all the symptoms. An antigen test duly showed two strong lines. There was no room for doubt. Then came the scramble to find someone, anyone, to say Mass on the Sunday, not to deprive parishioners of their Eucharist.

Lucky
I was lucky to have an obliging neighbour who said one Mass in the parish church in place of the usual two; fortunate also to have the means of getting the word out, by Facebook and parish text – with numerous people telling everyone they knew (the parish is filled with such missionaries!). Those two parish Masses had originally been 'booked' for people who had died, so the offer was made to families to combine both intentions in the one Mass. Those whose family member had died a few years ago very generously stood back however, and insisted the one Mass be offered



for people facing the first anniversary of a much-loved young husband and father: a good example of Christianity in action. After that, my symptoms completely filled the next week: sniffles, sneezes, headache, sinus, hoarseness, and absence of energy. I self-isolated in my house and garden for seven days: eating, praying, reading, sleeping, sweating – and working on a jigsaw. Meanwhile the parish opened its heart to me, and at my back door appeared all sorts of treats, stimulation for mind and body. And people visited,

waving from cars, encouraging me, keeping my spirit upbeat.

Needs
Some texted to check my physical needs were covered (i.e. food). Then some texted a second time, to be sure. My natural response would be to say: "I'm ok, loads of food in the freezer etc", but some persisted, and I was grateful they did. The most practical text came from a parishioner sending a message from a shop, telling me she was buying stuff for me no matter how I protested, so I'd better specify what I actually needed! Another visited a high-quality store and seemed to have emptied its shelves into a shopping bag, buying the sorts of luxury food items I might

view but never purchase; those treats really sustained me. Home-cooked meals and soup appeared, daily newspapers, paracetamol, plenty fruit and vegetables, even ice cream and chocolates. I could not get over the kindness of friends, from the parish and beyond. I decided to follow the HSE advice to the letter. The seven days of self-isolation were followed by three days avoiding vulnerable people, and crowds, which meant a second Sunday for which masses had to be covered. On my three final Covid days, a negative test resulted each day, so finally after 10 days, I re-inserted myself into the community, chastened but refreshed, but above all touched to the heart by the kindness of everyone.

Kings go forth to battle...
Reading the Breviary, priests come across lots of scripture. Each year, we read this seasonal line: "In the spring of the year, kings go forth into battle..." (2 Sam 11:1)
It always hits me. What is it about springtime that causes war? The sap rising? The effect of hibernation? What?
In my head an alternative line forms, to describe this time of year:
"In the summer of the year, when bishops make the changes, priests spend their lives ringing each other and asking "Any news?"
It'll hardly make it into the scriptures, but it contains a seasonal truth too!

There's great wisdom there
My first PP, Denis O'Connor (RIP) told a story of his last day as a curate in a Cork city parish. Into the sacristy came a woman bemoaning the fact that he was leaving, praising him to the heavens.
But then she added: "If you ever get the chance to come back us, please – Don't!" Her explanation offered wisdom for any priest who is tempted to take a second appointment in the same parish: "Because you'll think we'll be the same, and we won't. And we'll think you'll be the same, and you won't either."
There's great wisdom there.





PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU

Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

WELLS NEEDED

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