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ACN WEEK OF
WITNESS

FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS
25 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER



The Irish Catholic

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O'BRIEN**

Donald Trump is
the least religious
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Vatican urged to block nuns' hospital transfer

EXCLUSIVE
Michael Kelly

The Vatican has been urged to step in to block the transfer of land from a religious order to the State because abortions will be carried out in the new hospital.

Rome-based moral theologian Fr Kevin O'Reilly OP told *The Irish Catholic* this week that that Holy See has an obligation to block plans by the Religious Sisters of Charity to facilitate the building of a new National Maternity Hospital where the Government has said that abortions will take place.

Veto

Irishman Fr O'Reilly, who lectures in the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas, better known as the Angelicum, said the move should be vetoed by Rome.

"Thanks to the 36th Amendment of the Constitution, Ireland –

to its great shame – now boasts an extremely liberal abortion regime.

"It is in this context that the Religious Sisters of Charity issued their recent statement concerning the 'imminent' legal transfer of their shares in St Vincent's Healthcare Group".

However, Fr O'Reilly said that "in the wake of any future abortions, no one involved in executing the transfer to date can reasonably turn around and say that this eventuality was unforeseen.

"It is bewildering that those who have facilitated the process to date clearly do not possess any degree of moral foresight.

"One can only hope that the competent officials in the Vatican will act in accord with the Church's constant teaching and the dictates of right reason by forbidding this unconscionable act," he said.

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Insta-smiles for JP11 awards



Sinéad Harte and Meibh Collins of Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty at the Cork and Ross launch of the Pope John Paul II Awards. See Page 6.

IC goes red to honour modern martyrs

Claire Fitzpatrick

Eleven Christians are killed for their Faith every day, while thousands of others face relentless persecution for their belief in Christ. That's why *The Irish Catholic* is turning our iconic masthead red this week to highlight the coming 'Red Wednesday'.

The commemoration – November 27 this year – is a day organised by Aid to the Church in Need Ireland in which prayer vigils are held in parishes throughout the country. People are also encouraged to wear red to symbolise the blood being shed for the Faith.

According to Dr Michael Kinsella, Director of ACN Ireland, "at no other point in human history has the persecution of Christians – existentially and spiritually – ever been as bad".

The Week of Witness, held this year from November 25 to December 1, is an invitation to the Faithful in Ireland to rise in support of persecuted Christians around the world who are discriminated against, tortured and die for their Faith according to Dr Kinsella.

"It's not just about remembering the persecuted, it's about praying for the persecutors as well, because that's what Jesus calls us to do," he said.

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EXTREME POVERTY
WHATEVER
IT TAKES**

Scholastica Mbinya with her daughter Francisca. Kenya 2017. Photo: Peter Caton / Concern Worldwide.

CONCERN
worldwide



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Parishes have duty to speak up for persecuted Christians

For the first time in the 131 year history of this newspaper, the iconic masthead on the front page is red rather than the trademark blue.

A masthead is a newspaper's identity, and a decision to modify it is not made lightly or without just cause. The reason that it is red is to highlight next week's commemoration of 'Red Wednesday' – a day when Catholics are called to pray, reflect and show solidarity with the suffering Church.

Aid to the Church in Need Ireland estimates that more than 245 million Christians face extreme persecution for their Faith in our world today.

For too long we've been accustomed to seeing the persecution of Christians as a part of our Church's history. We think of the *circus maximus* of Rome or Mao's China, but persecution is more severe today than at any time during the Church's long history.

It is, without question, the greatest human rights issue of this generation – and yet, many politicians are silent on the precarious situation of Christians all over the globe.

Deafening

While Britain has joined some other EU countries in prioritising assistance to suffering Christians, the silence from the Irish Government is deafening. In an historically Christian



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

country where 82% of people say they profess the Christian Faith the apparent indifference from those in positions of leadership to the suffering of so many people is hard to explain.

Unless the world starts to take a strong line on religious freedom, Christians will disappear from large parts of the world including the very birthplace of the Faith – the Middle East. Already, Christians have been fleeing in large numbers and those who remain keep their heads down for fear of provoking ire.

“November 27 is a day when parish communities have a chance to reflect on suffering and highlight it”

All across the Muslim world, Christians face persecution and discrimination because of their Faith. Ireland's silence on the issue is shameful and shouldn't continue.

We cannot allow this indifference to infect the Church and Irish parishioners have a solemn duty in

prayer and solidarity to highlight the discrimination, persecution and martyrdom that is part of the life of Catholics in many parts of the world.

Red Wednesday – which this year falls on November 27 – is a day when people are asked to wear red to symbolise the blood of Christians that is shed because of their faith. It is also a day when parish communities have a chance to reflect on that suffering and highlight it.

First and foremost, as people of faith prayer is key. But, our Faith is empty unless it compels us to act. We must educate ourselves about the persecution, be unafraid to speak of it and encourage our politicians to be more vocal in condemning it and putting pressure on regimes hostile towards Christians.

A failure to speak up is a damning indictment and when historians come to write the history of the persecuted Christians of this generation, it will be the silence from countries such as Ireland that speaks the loudest.

Don't be complicit in that silence – don't let Red Wednesday pass you by.

Vatican urged to block hospital transfer

» Continued from Page 1

Minister for Health Simon Harris has confirmed that he would expect that every medical procedure that is legal in the State – including abortion – would happen in the new hospital.

Fr Vincent Twomey SVD has also urged the Vatican to stand firm. “The Holy See cannot give in to the bullying of this Government who have conned the public with their intentions and are trying to

blame the Church for their own mess of the health service,” he said.

However, Dublin-based priest Fr Gerry Kane thinks that the Church has no option but to allow the transfer to go ahead.

“If this were any other Western country, I would say that the land should not be alienated. However, in the context of Ireland, it is time.

“I think that the Church in Ireland has been doing the work of the State for far too

long...it is time for us to have stand-alone Catholic institutions, like Catholic hospitals, Catholic schools and Catholic third level institutions, alongside secular ones. Then people can choose”.

Canon law

Fr Kane – parish priest of Booterstown – added that he thinks that “a scenario like that will hurry us towards a place where we're dealing with Catholics who want to be Catholic rather than being

default providers for everyone”.

Under canon law, Irish religious bodies cannot sell or give away property worth over €3.5 million without permission from the Vatican. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life must vet all such disposals of assets, typically not approving of them without at least receiving confirmation from the local bishop – in this case, Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin.

In a statement, the Religious Sisters of Charity said that “the archbishop has approved and recommended our decision to the Vatican for formal sign off”.

The sisters said “we are confident of a positive outcome shortly”.

As *The Irish Catholic* went to press this week, a Vatican spokesman was unable to give further details on progress in Rome.

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‘Catholic Faith saved me during the recession’

Staff reporter

Hotelier and RTÉ television star Francis Brennan [pictured] has revealed that his profound Faith in God saved him as his life fell apart during the recession.

Speaking this week, Mr Brennan said: “I wanted to retire at 55 but my life fell apart because of the recession. I lost a lot of money, you would be a very happy person if you had the money I lost...as it happened, the Lord – who is my friend – gave me a new career at 54 and I sailed through the recession.”

Mr Brennan – who is a frequent volunteer at Lourdes and has been honoured by the Pope for his charitable work – also revealed that his Catholic Faith means he has no fear of dying.

“If I dropped dead this minute, I’ve had the most wonderful life. I have great Faith, and I believe in God – so I have no worries across the line.”

The Kerry-based hotelier has frequently spoken about how the recitation of the Rosary punctuates his day and that one of his most prized possessions is a pair of beads given to him by Pope St John Paul II.

ADVERTORIAL

Pope Francis: ‘What am I leaving behind?’

Pope stresses importance of reflecting on your ‘final farewell’



Photo: Jeffrey Bano / Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

Everyone would do well to reflect on their “final farewell” from earthly life said Pope Francis during a morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

“It will do us good,” he added.

“What am I leaving behind?”

When Pope Francis asked this at the Mass, many may have been wondering about the impact their own lives will have. Perhaps you are too. One thing you can leave behind is a life changing gift to your preferred charity in your

Will. This ensures your legacy lives on, while supporting the charity you care for and helping save lives long into the future.

And it’s clear many people do already generously give to causes close to their hearts. The Irish Catholic’s own research shows 97% of readers regularly donate to charity.

However, with so many different charities carrying out so much good work, choosing one to support is certainly not an easy decision to make.

“Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons,” – Pope Francis.

One charity fighting poverty is Ireland’s own Concern Worldwide. In fact they state their mission is to: End extreme poverty – whatever it takes.

Concern was founded in 1968 by John and Kay O’Loughlin-Kennedy – in response to the famine in the breakaway province of Biafra in Nigeria.

On Friday 6th September 1968 the MV Columcille

set sail from Dublin to Sao Tome – a Portuguese island off the coast of Nigeria. The 600 tonne ship was full of vital supplies of powdered food, medicines and other life saving items for the people suffering the horrific famine in Biafra. This single shipment was only the start of an aid mission which became 1 flight every day over the next 11 months.

Since then Concern has helped transform lives in 48 of the world’s poorest countries, including:

- Rwanda, 1994: Concern was one of the first Irish charities to respond to the Rwandan Genocide.
- Haiti, 2010: Within 1 year of the earthquake, Concern had helped over 1,000,000 people in the country.
- Syria, 2013 – present: Concern’s emergency programmes meet the urgent needs of the newly displaced and help those with longer term needs.
- Nepal, 2015: After the severe earthquake, Concern provided non food items, kits and material for makeshift accommodation, repaired 14,500 homes and helped almost 80,000 people.

As you can see, no matter what the crisis, Concern always helps those in the

most desperate need no matter how hard they are to reach. In 2018 alone they responded to 66 different emergencies. And helped an incredible 24.2 million people around the world.

Fiona from Co. Louth has left a gift for Concern in her Will. Here she explains why: “I have two children and if they were in need, I would hope that somebody, somewhere would reach out to help them. With my legacy, I will be that person for somebody’s loved ones – you could be too.”

If you join Fiona and leave a gift to Concern, your legacy can help end hunger, for good. And will help people like Nala*.



Nala before and a few months after receiving therapeutic food sachets.

Photo Before: Jennifer Nolan / Concern Worldwide. 2018 (April), Somalia. Photo After: Mohamed Abdiwahab / Concern Worldwide. 2018 (July), Somalia.

Nala lived with her mother and two brothers in a camp for displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia. Her mother was pregnant with Nala when she and her sons fled their village which was attacked. Even in the safety of the camp, Nala’s mother struggled to find food for herself and her children.

So Nala never gained weight properly.

At nine months old she was barely bigger than a newborn. Fortunately this was when the family came to a Concern supported nutrition centre. Nala was diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition and fading fast. She was immediately given therapeutic food sachets. As you can see after a few months of receiving help, Nala was thriving.

“Charity is at the heart of the Church, it is the reason for its action, the soul of its mission.” – Pope Francis

It’s people like you, leaving Concern a gift in their Will, who have helped save Nala.

To discover how a gift in your Will can help end hunger, please request your complimentary copy of ‘A World Without Hunger’ – Concern’s legacy booklet.

Inside you’ll read how others who were desperately in need have been helped by gifts left in the Wills of people just like you. The booklet also answers many of the common questions people have about leaving a gift in their Will. And explains how to start the process. Naturally, requesting your free booklet does not oblige you

to support Concern in any way or do anything else.

“I am proud to know that even when I am gone, by including Concern in my Will, my support will continue to help save lives.” – Colm O’Byrne, Co. Galway.

* Name changed for security reasons.



To get your free, no obligation copy, please contact Concern’s Legacy Manager, Siobhán O’Connor. Just call her on **01 417 8020** or send an email to **siobhan.oconnor@concern.net** or write to 52-55 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2

Pope Francis' statement on 'ecological sin' widely welcomed

Chai Brady

A move announced by Pope Francis that could see crimes against the environment made a sin have been widely welcomed, with some saying it may "resonate" with Catholics who might not have "awakened to the crisis".

Speaking to a group of lawyers last week, Pope Francis said that the Church is contemplating the introduction of "ecological sin" to the compendium of its teaching.

Bro. Anthony Keane OSB of Glenstal Abbey in Limerick told *The Irish Catholic* that "it is so serious a thing, that the sternest approach may well be good".

"I think it will find a resonance in our old theological training, we were all brought up on sin and damnation and punishment for sins and so on."

"This declaration of crimes against the environment being sinful will address things like that recent deal that Europe did with Mercosur to allow so many thousands of tons of beef – South American beef, Brazilian beef in particular – into Europe. That was a market signal to go and burn the jungle or the forest," he added.

Creation

Jane Mellett, *Laudato Si'* Officer of Church-charity Trócaire also welcomed the Pope's statement, saying that in the past the Faithful might have "viewed ecological work in terms of creation as an

optional extra".

She said: "He's being very clear that this is an urgent crisis and the Church is fully committed to playing her part and this is one of the next steps."

"He's really inviting everybody to examine their own personal relationship with creation, and he's using very strong language around it. Lives are at stake. When we damage the earth we damage people in future generations. I'm not surprised he made that statement to be honest, it's a spiritual issue, it's a resource issue."

However, social commentator Susan Phillips, a member of the Church of Ireland, was less convinced. She said that the issue of environmental protection is "very popular at the moment" and that "we don't have to make this our only issue, there's much more important things".

Francis was speaking to the 20th World Congress of the International Association of Penal Law, held in Rome from November 13-16, under the scope of 'Criminal Justice and Corporate Business'.

During his address he denounced the "ecocide" that corporations "are usually responsible for".

Describing the term 'ecocide', he said it's a "massive contamination of the air, of the land and water resources, large-scale destruction of flora and fauna, and any action capable of producing an ecological disaster or destroying an ecosystem".



Fr Seamus Enright (Redemptorists) congratulates 81-year-old Josephine Murray [inset] and Angela O'Mahony abseiling from Thomond Park to raise funds for the Children's Grief Centre and the Redemptorists Christmas Hamper Appeal. Photo: Seán Curtin/True Media



Charity defend highlighting contentious Kenya summit

Staff reporter

An Irish faith-based charity has defended highlighting an event on social media, shunned by the Holy See, which was connected with promoting abortion.

Misean Cara, who support missionary organisations, defended retweeting a post on Twitter from the Embassy of Ireland which highlighted a controversial summit in Kenya.

The tweet shows a picture

of the Minister for Children stating: "Minister Katherine Zappone leading Ireland's delegation at #NairobiSummit for #ICPD25, attends this morning's vibrant Opening Ceremony where global leaders commit to ensure universal sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls around the world #KeepThePromise."

The event was protested by the Church in Kenya and pro-life groups, with the country's Catholic Bishops' Conference saying it had a

"hidden agenda" with an intent to "corrupt our youth and enslave them to foreign ideologies".

The Governments of Denmark and Kenya, together with the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) organised the conference in Nairobi from November 12-14.

The Holy See stated the organisers' decision "to focus the conference on a few controversial and divisive issues that do not enjoy international consensus and that do not reflect accurately the broader population and development agenda outlined by the ICPD [International Conference on Population and Development], is regrettable".

A spokeswoman for Misean Cara stated: "Misean Cara is not going to make a comment on this issue. We're a missionary development organisation of 91 members and we fully support our members in missionary development work in education, health, livelihood and human rights."

"Our social media is managed by our staff in house, and we follow and retweet Irish embassies from time to time to show our support for overseas development assistance."

Huge support for keeping abortion as 'preeminent' concern

Staff reporter

More than eight out of ten readers of *The Irish Catholic* in a Facebook poll say they agree with US bishops that abortion should be a more important concern for Catholics than other moral issues.

At their recent plenary meeting, the bishops adopted a new text aimed at voters which said that the "threat of abortion" is the "preeminent priority" for the Church to work against there.

However, 69 bishops voted against the use of the word "preeminent" warning that abortion should be considered alongside other pressing issues such as climate change.

In the IC poll, 81% said they agreed with the use of the word preeminent while 19% said they disagreed.

Taoiseach backs Cavan priest

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has praised the moral leadership of a priest based on the border region after he denounced local criminals.

It comes as local businessman Seán Quinn revealed that he has written to the Vatican criticising Fr Oliver O'Reilly after a homily the priest gave criticising a violent attack on a local man.

In a statement Mr Varadkar said that Fr O'Reilly is offering "moral leadership in a difficult time" following the kidnapping and attack on Kevin Lunney.

Meanwhile, the Association of Catholic Priests reacted to the news that Fr O'Reilly had been reported to the Vatican. The group said in a statement "we admire his courage in speaking the truth in a very difficult situation".



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Who are you? You are yourself, not your ancestors

Here's a sad post-adoption story which emerged last week: a 60 year old man was informed by Tusla, the child and family agency, that the mother and father he believed were his birth parents were in truth his adoptive parents.

They had never revealed this – they are now dead – and he was stunned and distressed to discover the truth. He felt his whole identity was now put in question. “I am nobody,” he said.

The unnamed man, who has his own business, is one of 148 cases that Tusla is seeking to contact, who were illegally adopted between 1946 and 1969 via the St Patrick's Guild adoption society.

Many an adoption story – even under current ‘best practice’ – conceals a tangled and complex background, and the bare facts, as reported, seldom give us the full picture.



Mary Kenny

● I have a dear friend in the west of England, a devout Anglican, who is wrestling with her conscience over voting in the UK election. “Boris's morals are a disgrace,” she laments. “Every day, it seems, there are reports of some new popsie he's been cavorting with. He's shocking. Dreadful!” But, all said and done, she feels she will have to vote for him, because “he'll get things done”. In politics, pragmatism sometimes over-rides principles.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Sometimes fiction handles this situation with more insight: there are a couple of short stories in the current *Ireland's Own* annual which illuminate the emotional

difficulties so often involved. Social workers today think it best to approach adopted people and disclose the facts of their situation (and many adopted people

themselves search for the truth). But in the past, it was sometimes thought better to abide by the guidelines of the Book of Ecclesiastes: “In greater knowledge is greater sorrow.” Or, as the everyday motto had it: “Let sleeping dogs lie.”

“Social workers today think it best to approach adopted people and disclose the facts”

Concealing the truth about an infant's birth wasn't always done out of malice or cupidity. Sometimes, people sincerely believed it was for the best. (In Henrik Ibsen's classic play *The Wild Duck*, the revelation about a child's origin leads to a worse tragedy, and the play's message is that of Ecclesiastes.)

The 60-year-old adopted man is certainly presented with a devastating truth,

which is complicated by the fact that his adoptive parents bequeathed him a farm.

When adoption was being discussed in the Dáil in the 1940s, that fear was raised that ‘blood’ relations would be resentful if an adopted child inherited the land.

But if his adoptive parents made him their heir, they must have loved him. If they were good parents to him, perhaps he should be helped to focus on that.

The fashion for tracing ancestors has worsened the situation, it seems to me. Ancestor-worship is a primitive Chinese practice and it's daft: we are not our ancestors. To the question ‘who do you think you are?’, the answer is – you are yourself. Christianity and DNA both agree on that: each individual is utterly unique.

A desire for rooted identity is human and understandable. But love, attachment, good intentions and care in raising a child are greater values.

Don't ‘go west’ – just ‘depart’

● There are more than 50 euphemisms current in the English language for death, according to the cancer charity Marie Curie. They include ‘kick the bucket’, ‘pop your clogs’ and ‘snuffed it’. The charity hopes to discourage these figures of speech, because they can avoid facing death. Yet some of them are quite engaging and even imaginative.

They include ‘pushing up the daisies’, ‘walking over the rainbow bridge’, ‘bought the farm’, ‘doing the final moonwalk’, ‘gone west’, ‘become a landowner’ and ‘hung up his boots’. Many of these date from World War I when death in the trenches became such a brutal experience for young men; small wonder they tried to cloak it in dark humour.

The most common current euphemism is ‘passed away’, which I personally dislike, though I know it is used, often, to be sensitive. I like ‘departing this world’ because that is what death is for a Christian.

It's an expression of the hope bestowed on us by the New Testament.

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Teen caught for 'disgraceful' vandalism of Dublin monastery

Chai Brady

A teenager is being processed by gardaí in connection with the vandalism of a church at a convent in Dublin, during which offensive slurs were allegedly levelled at the contemplative nuns that worship there.

There is still an open investigation into the serious incident which occurred at the Star of the Sea Carmelite monastery at Seapark Hill in Malahide.

It is believed a gang of

youths gained entry to the premises and vandalised the church with graffiti at about 1.15pm on November 11.

So far only one person is being processed through the State's juvenile referral programme, which aims to prevent young offenders from entering into the full criminal justice system.

The news was announced to parishioners by Co-PP Fr Jimmy McPartland during 10am Mass in St Anne's Church in Portmarnock, who said the sister's place of worship had been desecrated.

On the sister's website it states that "members of the local community are welcome to join the sisters for prayer", with a morning Mass held every day. However, it is believed the church was closed for a period after the incident.

Access

Fr Jimmy reportedly warned Massgoers that they wouldn't be able to access the chapel as freely from now on as it would need to be locked in future.

A Garda spokeswoman

told this paper: "Gardaí are investigating an incident of minor criminal damage that occurred at a Church in Seapark Hill, Malahide, Dublin on Monday November 11, 2019 at approximately 1.15pm. A youth male in his teens is being processed by way of the Juvenile Referral Programme."

They added that "investigations are ongoing", which may imply they are still looking for other perpetrators.

Speaking to *Dublin Live*, Local TD Darragh O'Brien described the incident as "disgraceful" and said it dem-

onstrated the need to reopen Malahide Garda Station on a 24/7 basis.

"Any vandalism is bad but on a group of elderly nuns is disgraceful. Unfortunately we've become used to burglaries and break-ins in the area, but this type of violation of a monastery – to desecrate a religious building – is shocking."

"The effect this has on a group of lovely women – most of whom are elderly – will disgust people in the area," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cork launches JPPII award

Cork and Ross has become the 24th diocese in Ireland to launch the Pope John Paul II awards for young people. The aim of the award is to offer a way for young people and parishes to connect in a structured way – engaging young people from age 16 upwards in service in their parish community, a social awareness project and in developing their faith.

As Director of Pastoral Planning and Development, Fr Charlie Kiely thanked all who came to the official launch and reminded people of the mutual benefits for parish and young people in engaging in this new initiative which has been in the plans of the diocese for some time now having sent out initial information to all parishes last April.

Trócaire unveils 'Gift of Love' programme

Award-winning garden designer Diarmuid Gavin has urged people to support Trócaire's Christmas 'Gifts of Love' range for 2019.

The TV broadcaster visited Scoil Aoife Community National School in Dublin's Citywest to assist students as they learned about Trócaire's new gift of 'Terrific Trees'.

The development agency's latest gift will help families and communities plant seeds native to their country in order to help protect trees and land for future generations, aiding soil nutrition and preventing landslides.

Peter McVerry Trust housing stock boost

The Peter McVerry Trust has announced it boosted its housing stock by 40% and turned the sod on a new social housing development of eight apartments at New Street South in Dublin 8 on Monday.

The charity published its annual report for last year, revealing it worked with 5,841 people in 2018 providing over 5,500 of those with shelter or housing.

The charity's CEO Pat Doyle said: "While we grew our residential units to almost 400 residential units across the country in 2018, we still need to secure significant increases in housing delivery this year and next to help those in

Down and Connor priest retires after 70 years



Fr Brendan McGee with his Bible.

Staff reporter

Belfast has marked the end of an era with the retirement of Fr Brendan McGee after 70 years of devoted service to the people of Down and Connor. Fr McGee – Dean of St Peter's Cathedral – offered his final Mass for the people in St Patrick's, Donegall Street on Thursday after 70 years ministering in the city.

Fr Eugene O'Neill, administrator of St Patrick's, described him as an "inspirational figure to all of us in the parish but also in the house among priests".

"He was a fountain of wisdom," he said.



Fr Eugene O'Neill Adm (left) with Fr Brendan McGee on his retirement at 70 years of service.

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Tipp cleric criticises State's suicide prevention provisions

Chai Brady

A Tipperary priest has criticised the "national problem" of the lack of mental health support during a visit to his county by the Minister for Mental Health this week.

Clonmel's Fr Michael Toomey is on the frontline when it comes to suicide, and said that since a meeting with the Department of Health in June he has dealt directly or indirectly with eight incidents.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* Fr Toomey said: "As a priest obviously I'm dealing

with this almost every day, I had one suicide again last week, you deal with the families, the schools, there's whole connections of people. There seems to be little to no support to dealing with mental health illnesses and issues."

He released a statement on Tuesday during the minister's visit to the county saying it was disappointing, "that he cannot make time to meet some of the fantastic staff, volunteers and people who work tirelessly across the county to get a first-hand sense of just how dire the lack of mental health support and lack of beds are here in the

county".

Minister Daly visited to announce Jigsaw would be coming to Thurles, a mental health service for young people aged 12-25. It was announced there would be outreach services to other Tipperary towns.

Fr Toomey said: "There is not one single crisis Mental Health Bed available in the County of Tipperary. This, despite the fact that Tipperary has the highest rate outside of Dublin, and recent figures show that Clonmel has been hit by suicide more *per capita* than the rest of the country outside of Dublin."

Merchants Quay Ireland:

Helping families this Christmas

Merchants Quay Ireland is there for men and women who have nowhere else to turn at Christmas. A hot meal. A helping hand. A place to bed down for the night.

But for many people Christmas is about family, and the families of Merchant's Quay clients are never far from their work. Within Riverbank, they pass on messages left for clients by their families. For clients in High Park and St. Francis Farm, we are looking at ways to increase the level of participation that family members can have in their loved one's recovery.

Another way Merchant Quay helps is the Family Support Group, providing support for people affected by a loved one's addiction. One evening a week, in a small room on the top floor of Merchants Quay Ireland, a dozen or so parents gather to talk for a few hours. Will Carroll is there to facilitate the conversation, gently steering the conversation and giving guidance. For those few hours, the conversation will hold a full chalice of shared emotions: sadness, anger, grief.

The group has been running for over 20 years, and Will has been leading it for around 10 of those. Addiction is widespread in Ireland, yet it is often confined, stigmatised, and so its impact on families remains hidden.

"There is not a family in Ireland who hasn't got a very close connection to someone in addiction", he says. "The families affected are totally silenced and lost. It destroys people".

From his years of experience, Will knows that when families have a loved one in addiction, it impacts on all aspects of their lives. Their children, their siblings are slowly lost to the addiction;



“There is not a family in Ireland who hasn't got a very close connection to someone in addiction. The families affected are totally silenced and lost. It destroys people.”

they grow distant and lose touch, resulting in a constant state of anxiety, especially for parents. There is always worry about where they are, how they are. Every shadow in the front door could be a Garda coming with dreaded news. Sleepless nights become the norm.

Coping with the chaos of addiction

"There's an almost overwhelming number of things to think about", says Will. "There's the emotional toll and mental well-being of the family. There could be grandparents left to look after the children of the person who is addicted. There could be a physical toll. And sadly, sometimes, we are referring families to bereavement counsellors."

John's son Philip is 21 and has been in addiction for several years. He says that, for the families, the addiction com-

pounds all the normal stresses and strains of family life.

"It's been very, very tough for me, but much harder on my wife. For me, it's worrying, I lose sleep over it, but I'm in work and that's a distraction. But it was much worse for my wife. Much, much worse. If she was in the house during the day, say on her own, she might be in a room tidying something up and then just something turns over which is related to Philip."

The distance becomes particularly hard at Christmas. For many families, the emotional weight of this joyous season is too much.

"Every year, the six o'clock news on RTE goes to the RDS and the meal for the homeless there", says Will. "Families are terrified that they might turn it on and see their son, their daughter, their husband at the table in the RDS. They're thinking 'we can't sit down



Recovery Service, High Park



Family Support Group

here at this table knowing that my child is out there'. So, it's guilt and shame that can stop them from celebrating Christmas in any manner."

But it sometimes happens too that at Christmas people in addiction will reach out to their families, and it can be the start of healing. John explains:

"Christmas is a family time. My son made contact after being out of touch for a few months, to see if he could come home. But we had his sisters there, his brother-in-law, and the rift was too great. It was too much of a risk to the rest of the family. We let him know this. I think that was a wake-up call for him. After that, he started working with Merchants Quay to get his addiction under control".

Lifeline to practical help

MQI's recovery services provide people with pathways out of chaotic drug use and support them in becoming drug free. Speak to clients who have come through addiction at one of Merchants Quay's reha-

“Families come into this group and are supported by other families. More important, they are being listened to and understood in a non-judgemental way.”

bilitation centres, and it's clear how much it means to have Christmas again. One client, who completed the 14-week programme at MQI's High Park residential rehabilitation centre, says that when he was in active addiction, Christmas was "grim"; but last year, his first in recovery, was different.

"I got to see my whole family, about twenty of us in the house. I was playing and singing songs and playing guitar and playing games. It was like what Christmas should be."

Still, the families whose loved ones are in addiction continue to carry the weight of it. Will works closely with them, through the family group, to provide support.

"Our goal is to try and help

the families and extended families of those in addiction to cope with the many problems it presents. Families come into this group and are supported by other families. More important, they are being listened to and understood in a non-judgemental way.

"My job is to help families find a way to cope. Acceptance is a huge part of it and compassion for yourself is a huge part of it. Like everything in Merchants Quay Ireland, it's about compassion."

Thank you too for your compassion, and for tender mercies big and small. May 2020 find you safe and warm.

Breda O'Brien

The View



It is remarkable how large a role faith still plays in American politics. There is not a single out-and-proud atheist among the very crowded field of Democratic hopefuls seeking nomination as the presidential candidate.

As a non-observant Jew, Bernie Sanders would have been considered perhaps the least religious but even he said somewhat testily during the 2016 campaign that he "would not be running for president of the United States if [he] did not have very strong religious and spiritual feelings".

All the others seem to have some religious affiliation, including Tulsi Gabbard, who is a practising Hindu. (Hindus are a true minority, making up less than 1% of the US population.)

Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana, has been in the news because, unusually for a Democrat, he has been very overt

Donald Trump is the least religious president ever – he has made politics uglier and more vindictive

about his religious beliefs. His father spent some time studying to be a Jesuit but left before taking any vows. Both Mr Buttigieg's mother and father taught at the Catholic university, Notre Dame, in South Bend.

Interest

Although baptised a Catholic, Mr Buttigieg did not grow up in a strongly religious household and when his own interest in faith grew, he chose an Episcopalian (what Irish people would call Anglican) church because as a gay man, he felt their views were more compatible with his.

Mr Buttigieg believes that "the left is rightly committed to a separation of Church and State...but we need to not be afraid to invoke arguments that are convincing on why Christian faith is going to point you in a progressive direction".

Some Christians are delighted that 'Mayor Pete', as he is known, is taking the fight to conservative Christians, particularly evangelicals, and challenging their identification with the Republican party. Others are shocked because even though he is invoking Christianity, like every other Democratic candidate, he

is absolutely pro-choice. He has even suggested that the Bible indicates that life begins at the first breath.

It remains to be seen if Mr Buttigieg's particular set of beliefs helps him with black voters, an important demographic for any Democratic candidate.

Although many older black voters do not like the fact that he is an openly gay man who is married, more of them are troubled by the fact that he is perceived to be somewhat tone-deaf to African American issues. Many of them dislike how he handled the dismissal of the first black police chief the city ever had when Mr Buttigieg first became mayor of South Bend.

(The police chief had illegally obtained recordings of fellow officers on the grounds that they were biased against racial minorities. Some people believed that Mr Buttigieg had in effect, fired the whistle-blower, while others say that by acting outside the law, the police chief, no matter what his motivation, left Mr Buttigieg with no choice.)

While Mr Buttigieg is the youngest candidate, he is most popular among older white voters who like the fact that he is an army veteran, an economic moderate by Democratic standards and openly religious.

“Is Mr Buttigieg right that Christianity points in a progressive direction?”

Ultimately, American voters should perhaps focus less on Mr Buttigieg's Christianity and more on how highly regarded he is by the powerful and influential in Silicon Valley.

He had friends in Harvard who were friends of Mark Zuckerberg, and Mr Buttigieg was among the first 300 students to sign up for the fledgling Facebook. Mr Zuckerberg



Mayor Pete Buttigieg.

personally suggested two data specialists whom Mr Buttigieg ended up employing for his campaign, which is entirely too close a relationship with the enormously powerful founder of Facebook.

Mr Buttigieg's form of religion is non-threatening to Silicon Valley. But is Mr Buttigieg right that Christianity points in a progressive direction? It depends on what you mean by progressive. There is nothing progressive about ending the lives of the youngest humans.

Mr Buttigieg may be making the same mistake that many supporters or Donald Trump have made. Too close an identification of the Gospel with any particular politician, political party or ideology does not serve Christianity well.

Conservative Christian voters were willing to hold their noses so as to keep out Hillary Clinton but that should not mean endorsing everything President Trump does while in office.

'Put not your faith in princes' is good advice. It would have been very good advice for Christian

supporters of President Trump. He is the least religious president ever. He has made politics uglier and more vindictive. He has carried out his promise to appoint pro-life Supreme Court judges but it remains to be seen what that will accomplish.

“Keeping Hillary Clinton out does not mean endorsing everything President Trump does while in office”

'Put not your faith in princes' is also be good advice for those who like Mr Buttigieg's version of Christianity. A faith which holds values indistinguishable from the current liberal worldview is not the faith of Jesus of Nazareth.

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Why don't RTÉ ask young people to strike to end homelessness?



It is fundamentally wrong to politicise children, writes **David Quinn**

The Dáil Chamber in Leinster House was handed over to children last week to discuss the issue of climate change. They were aged between 10 and 17 and it was part of RTÉ's climate week, intended to raise awareness of the effect humans are having on the planet.



Last week's youth parliament in Dáil Éireann.

RTÉ might as easily have organised a homelessness week, to draw more attention to that issue, and then call for schoolchildren to make submissions on how they would tackle the matter. It would be a

relatively simple thing then for their teachers to arrange for them to do this, directing their attention to the output of groups dedicated to tackling homelessness. Those same groups would then be asked to pick their favourite

submissions and invite their student authors to pretend they are Dáil deputies for the day in Leinster House. RTÉ would then give it lots of coverage.

But how right would it be to do this, and how right is it to set up so-called 'children's parliaments' or 'assemblies'? Are we not in fact politicising and sometimes radicalising children at younger and younger ages? Shouldn't they be left alone to enjoy their childhoods instead, which they have enough challenges as it is.

Politicising children has a long and unhappy pedigree. The Soviet Union did it, for instance. It established a communist youth movement called the Komsomol. This was aimed at young people aged 14-28. There was a version called the Pioneers for children aged 9-14, and then another one called Little Octobrists (named after the October revolution) for children even younger than that.

The purpose of these organisations was to ensure that young people had a thoroughly communist outlook on the world. Politics was not to be left until they became adults. They should be political as young as possible.

Examples

These are obviously extreme examples but they are only extreme because the State behind them was so extreme. But they should set us on guard about whether it is appropriate to politicise children at all.

What happens when we politicise children? One big problem is that they are used by adults for their own ends. As the process that led to the youth assembly on climate in

Leinster House shows, adults were operating behind the scenes all the way.

It was ultimately the idea of adults, the children drew on the policy ideas of adults, adults assessed the quality of their submissions and adults publicised it all.

But once the children were put out in front, we were told to admire their idealism and not criticise either the process, or their ideas, because to do so would be to pick on children, and only a terrible person would do that. This is, of course, a form of moral blackmail.

On its own, this is an excellent reason why children should not be put at the head of a political movement because it is a way of shutting down debate. You are precisely using their youth and vulnerability to do this end.

The adults who put the children out front should instead have the courage and honesty to own these ideas themselves and be prepared to robustly debate them with all-comers.

Imagine, for the sake of the argument, that in an alternative universe, instead of young climate activists aged 10-17 being put in charge of the Dáil chamber for the day it was young, pro-life activists. Do you think for one second that the media or the pro-choice movement would allow themselves to be morally blackmailed into silence on the grounds that it is unfair to criticise children?

“Believing in God and following Jesus is as beneficial to children as it is to adults”

No, instead a big spotlight would be put on the pro-life adults behind the children and they would be attacked for using children. It would be no good those pro-life adults saying children above all should be leading the movement because it is, after all, the very youngest children who are killed by abortion. That would be rightly condemned as another form of moral

blackmail.

Nor should religion ever use children in this way, let alone turn them into zealots. Children should not be put out front by the Churches in debates about the existence of God, or marriage and family or human sexuality not simply because they are too young to be able to debate these issues properly, but because it is the job of adults.

Controversy

But doesn't religion use children in this way anyway by the very act of bringing them up in a particular faith? Well, first of all there is a very big difference between raising them in the Faith and putting them out front where adults should be in big, controversial debates.

Secondly, children will be raised in some set of beliefs, no matter what. If they are not raised with religious beliefs, they will still pick up a worldview and a set of morals – good or bad – from somewhere. Furthermore, that worldview and those morals will come from adults, either their parents, or another set of adults, or both.

So, it would be ridiculous and unjust and totalitarian to forbid religion and religious parents from raising children in a given faith.

Third, religion is intended to be a source of comfort and support to a child. Believing in God and following Jesus is as beneficial to children as it is to adults. In fact, it would be very wrong for a Christian parent, believing this, not to raise their children as Christians.

The move to set up children's parliaments and to encourage children to take to the streets is a very bad one. If we are going to have 10 years old sitting the Dáil pretending to be politicians, then we might as well lower the voting age to 10 while we're at it. But we won't do that, because deep down we know that children need to grow up and mature first. We need to let them be children, in other words, and not pretend-adults.

“If children are not raised with religious beliefs, they will still pick up a worldview and a set of morals – good or bad – from somewhere”

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Syrian refugee families are facing a brutal winter in Lebanon this Christmas

In a tent in icy Northern Lebanon, grandmother-of-seven Ayda is desperately trying to keep herself warm. She shares her cramped plywood, cardboard and cloth-made home with her 25-year-old daughter Jinane and her seven grandchildren

Life is hard for them here. Ayda (57) suffers from constant head and back pain and all seven children have chest infections. She has been receiving assistance from humanitarian aid agency Concern Worldwide.

"I am very sick and am never comfortable in this home. I cannot be comfortable sleeping on the floor. I am never happy anymore. I have no hope for myself anymore," she said.

This is a far cry from Ayda's happy life in her homeland of Syria. She and her husband had a family of six daughters and three sons. Even as they grew up, got married and had children of their own, they would come together every Friday and she would cook their favourite foods. She says that these dinners are her happiest memory of her life before the war.

Then the war began.

Nightmare

"Our house was bombed and everything was destroyed. I heard my son's screams and I knew instantly that he had been killed. I went outside and saw that he had been hit on his head. I screamed his name so loudly that people could hear it throughout the neighbourhood. He was 35."

While Ayda's loss is every mother's worst nightmare, it was only the beginning of the heart-wrenching ordeal that was to come.

"Every morning, my husband used to visit his grave. He could not accept that he had died. Then, he too was killed during the bombings," she says through tears.

"They didn't tell me straight away as I was still so upset

about my son. I left the house and met a neighbour who told me that he had been killed. I fell to my knees and my neighbour had to revive me.

"I just prayed for help to bear the pain."

Since her husband's death, Ayda has lost another son to a bombing at the age of 28 and her youngest boy has been missing for several years. He was 18 when she last saw him. Not long after his death, Ayda left her home and made her way to Lebanon.

Tears stream from her eyes as she recounts her personal loss, but life continues around her – the tent is filled with the sounds of nearby families who live in similar unstable shelters and the cries of her young grandchildren who are cold and hungry.

Bitter winter

Lebanon is home to around 1.5 million Syrian refugees, who were forced to flee the conflict that has now ravaged their homeland for nine years. It is the biggest refugee crisis since World War II.

Despite living prosperous and peaceful lives in pre-conflict Syria, many of those are now living in conditions similar to Ayda and are desperately in need of humanitarian aid. To make matters even worse, those living in the mountains of Northern Lebanon are facing into a bitterly cold winter period.

Brutal winter storms are getting worse by the year. In January, one Syrian refugee died after Storm Norma hit the region, affecting around 22,000 refugees. Tents in more than



A makeshift shelter where Syrian refugees live in northern Lebanon. Photo: Gavin Douglas, Lebanon, 2019



Grandmother Ayda with her daughter Jinane and her children. Photo: Gavin Douglas, Lebanon, 2019

570 informal refugee settlements were either flooded or completely collapsed, leaving families without mattresses, blankets, food and clothing.

Concern's teams got to work fast, distributing shelter repair materials, hygiene kits and blankets as well as under-

taking emergency desludging of septic tanks. They supplied pipe materials to help drain freezing flood waters from family homes and repaired damage to vital infrastructure such as water supply pipes and latrines.

Concern has been on the

ground in Lebanon since the Syrian crisis began in 2013 – providing families like Ayda's with the daily necessities like blankets and mattresses that they will need to stay safe and warm. Now that temperatures are dropping, there are so many more people in urgent need of help.

Memories

For most of Ayda's young grandchildren Roua (10), Dalal (9), Maryam (8), twins Omar and Jawhar (5), Nafa (3) and Mahmoud (1), all they ever have known is the cold and cramped tent. Although very young at the time, Dalal can still fondly remember her old life in Syria.

"My house was beautiful and we used to have roses and red lamps. We lived on the second floor and I used to have a bed with a pillow in the shape of a heart. We used to have toys and a bicycle," she says.

She can also remember the day it all changed.

"I was eating and then a

bomb landed very near. It threw the plate from my hand and I ran to my mother."

She yearns for her old life back. Now, Dalal and her brothers and sisters are left without toys or anything to entertain them. They wander barefoot around the house clinging to the hems of their mother and grandmother.

You can help

Although the outlook is bleak for refugees like Ayda and her family, there is hope for a better life for them.

As Ireland's largest humanitarian organisation, Concern has been helping vulnerable people around the world survive for over 50 years. This is only possible due to the kindness of the Irish public, who are Concern's biggest donor.

A donation of €22 can provide a winter survival kit for a family in need. The kits include a mattress and two blankets to combat the bitter winter chill. Temperatures are expected to plummet in parts of Lebanon this winter. Without help, more refugees are at risk of dying in these treacherous conditions.

Although €22 may not seem like a lot of money, it has the ability to transform lives, according to Concern's Middle East Regional Director Brid Kennedy.

"A €22 donation will transform lives by protecting families, especially children and the elderly, from the cold and rain, preventing needless illness and deaths," she said.

"It will allow Syrians to live with a degree of dignity and comfort during this harsh winter."

Names have been changed in the above article for the safety and security of Concern's beneficiaries.



Conor McNally and Albert Thomas. Photos: John McElroy



Valerie Morris, Michele Warner and Katherine Dunn.



Isabel Cabezas and Anna Carney.

Pope's Phoenix Park gesture for survivors seen as 'beautiful'

Steve Warner, Anne Thompson (NBC), Fr William Dailey (Notre Dame Centre), Inés San Martín (Crux) and Michael Kelly (Managing Editor, *The Irish Catholic*).

“The handwritten note might’ve been rushed...but Pope Francis’ address in the Phoenix Park empathised with people suffering at the hands of the Catholic Church in Ireland, not only sexual abuse victims but in other facets”

Anne Thompson (NBC, left), Michael Kelly (Managing Editor, *The Irish Catholic*) and Inés San Martín (Crux) taking questions.

Claire Fitzpatrick

A prominent Catholic journalist praised Pope Francis’ visit to Ireland last year and how he dealt with the sex abuse scandals.

There was sharp criticism of some aspects of the Pope’s visit when it came to abuse, including the fact that organisers cast doubt on whether or not he would meet with survivors. Days before the trip, Dublin’s Archbishop Diarmuid Martin provoked controversy with advocacy groups when he said he was uncertain if Francis would have such a meeting.

In the end, the Pope met with survivors at the Apostolic Nunciature and addressed the issue by reading from a handwritten note during the Mass in the Phoenix Park.

Prompted by questions raised by *The Irish Catholic* Editor Michael Kelly, moderating a panel hosted by The Notre Dame Newman Centre for Faith and Reason, Argentinian journalist Inés San Martín of *Crux* gave a more positive portrait of the Pope’s approach. “The handwritten note might’ve been rushed,” she said, but Pope Francis’ address in the Phoenix Park was “beautiful”, as it “empathised with people suffering at the hands of the Catholic Church in Ireland”, not only sexual abuse victims but in other facets.

Controversies

Mr Kelly facilitated a lively discussion with San Martín and American journalist Anne Thompson of NBC. The reporters unpacked controversies that have engulfed the Church in recent years, particularly the abuse crisis and Pope Francis’ response, and how their faith and profession informed their considerations



Fr John Joe Spring and Matt Moran at the University Church.



Donal Coleman and Dr Patrick O’ Kelly.

of such issues.

Ms Thompson provided an American angle on popular opinion of Pope Francis, stating that Vatican’s failure to give an immediate response following the grand jury report of Church sexual abuse in Pennsylvania caused his “image as a shepherd to be lost”.

This is not to say that all positive reception of the Pope or enthusiasm for the future of the Catholic Church is lost among recent controversies. Ms Thompson emphasised the importance of *Laudato*

Si in making people pay attention and consider taking care of the planet as a “spiritual responsibility”.

Both Ms Thompson and Ms San Martín affirmed that being Catholic was a crucial part of their identity, and that their faith has honed their passion for journalism. Thompson asserted that balancing impartial reporting and a faith-led life is “not difficult at all”.

“My goal is to get as close to the truth as possible and the fact that I’m Catholic actually helps me,” she said.



Tony Groome, Tracy Yeung and Sheila Groome.



Ruadhan Jones, Shane Jenkins and David Conroy.



Anne Thompson, Inés San Martin, Emma Madigan, Michael Kelly and Fr William Dailey.



Anne Thompson chatting with Dr Patrick O'Kelly.



Laura Steiner and Mary Wheaton.

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TIME: 9.30am - 12.30pm



Introduction and Opening by Bishop Denis Brennan
‘Living Differently Because of our Faith’ with Dr Fainche Ryan, Director of the Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin.

Tea/Coffee
‘Me, a Missionary?’ with Fr Martin Pender. Fr Martin is a native of Wexford Town who has worked abroad for many years as a missionary in Stockholm, Sweden and South Africa. He is currently based in Ballymitty, Co. Wexford.

‘We have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint. It penetrates to the depths of our hearts, sustaining and ennobling us. It is a truth which is never out of date because it reaches that part of us which nothing else can reach. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love’.



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Great progress has been made, but we must be wary of fatigue setting in around child safeguarding, writes **Theresa Devlin**

The establishment of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the national board) was announced in December 2005, and it held its inaugural meeting in May 2006. It was created by the three sponsoring bodies, the Irish bishops' conference, the Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI) and the Irish Missionary Union (IMU) with the intention of developing a coordinated approach to child safeguarding across the Church in Ireland.

The national board developed a new and comprehensive guidance which it published in February 2009 under the title, *Safeguarding Children – Standards and guidance document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. In 2010, the conduct of audits of child safeguarding compliance by Church authorities with the 2009 standards was begun and this process took five years for the national board to complete. There are approximately 180 separate and canonically independent entities that together comprise the Catholic Church in Ireland, and all of these had to be reviewed. A written report was published on the national board's website on every review completed, and these can be accessed at www.safeguarding.ie

Methodology

As part of the methodology for these reviews, all cases of accused and suspected priests and religious that had not already been examined by one of the four inquiries established by the State were scrutinised and evaluated.

In February 2010, the Irish hierarchy were invited to Rome by Pope Benedict XVI to discuss with him and with senior curial cardinals the situation in the Catholic

The Church continues to face very real challenges in relation to keeping children safe

Pope Francis prays in front of a candle in memory of victims of sexual abuse as he visits St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Dublin.



Church in Ireland pertaining to clerical child sexual abuse.

A month later, Benedict XVI issued his *Pastoral Letter to the Catholics of Ireland*. In this document he Pope apologised to Irish victims of clerical child sexual abuse. He also addressed all members of the Irish Church and said: "With this Letter, I wish to exhort all of you, as God's people in Ireland, to reflect on the wounds inflicted on Christ's body, the sometimes painful remedies

needed to bind and heal them, and the need for unity, charity and mutual support in the long-term process of restoration and ecclesial renewal".

Pope Benedict announced his intention to hold "an Apostolic Visitation of certain dioceses in Ireland, as well as seminaries and religious congregations...the Visitation...is intended to assist the local Church on her path of renewal".

In 2011, the bishops

published their pastoral letter, 'Towards Healing and Renewal' to mark the anniversary of the Pope's letter; and in this, they made commitments to support the development of the two agencies, Towards Healing which offers practical supports, including counselling, to victims of clerical child abuse; and Towards Peace which provides spiritual supports for those adults who were abused as children by priests

and religious, and who as part of their recovery want to explore rebuilding their spirituality.

The national board has been very active since its foundation as an independent agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. In 2016, once accepted and adopted by the sponsoring bodies, it issued a one-Church document, *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, along with very detailed associated guidance.

The national board since its inception has encouraged the development of a dedicated structure of personnel to manage child safeguarding. The current structure provides great

clarity, not just in relation to process matters such as reporting allegations and creating safe environments, but also it identifies responsibilities. While clearly the Church authority (bishop or major superior) has overall responsibility for child safeguarding and reporting allegations of abuse, there is now in place a body of expertise in the role holders to support him or her in decision making.

Each Church body has a designated liaison person (DLP), usually a lay person, who is entirely responsible for case management. This role involves reporting allegations, putting in place safety plans for those accused of abuse, monitoring their behaviour and ensuring

“The national board since its inception has encouraged the development of a dedicated structure of personnel to manage child safeguarding”



Archbishop
Diarmuid Martin
with Pope
Francis.

that following criminal and civil authority action that penal processes are initiated.

Support people are offered to complainants to advocate for their needs for counselling and support and to provide a communication channel to the Church authority. Similarly advisors are offered to respondents (those accused of abuse). Each Church authority has access to an advisory panel to offer advice on all aspects of case management, but more recently many Church bodies have now disbanded these panels in favour of the National Case Management Committee – a dedicated committee of the national board.

The national board has also been providing advice and guidance to Church bodies on the management of cases of suspected child abuse by clerics and religious, and has strengthened its role in this area by developing the aforementioned case management committee to which bishops and provincials of religious orders can bring for advice

cases about which they are concerned.

The national board has developed and provided a wide range of training courses for Church child safeguarding personnel across the whole island, and has trained trainers who can deliver necessary courses at local diocesan, parish or religious order level. Specialist training, From the Head to the Heart, is being developed and delivered to seminarians in the national seminary in Maynooth, Redemptoris Mater seminary in Dundalk and the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, in line with one of the recommendations of the Apostolic Visitors who visited Ireland in 2011.

The national board has contributed to the development of theory and practice in child safeguarding through participation in the annual Anglophone Safeguarding Conference which has generally been held in Rome, co-hosting the 2019 event with the New Zealand Catholic Church; and through its own biennial national conferences, another of which will take

place in 2020. The staff in the national office in Maynooth has launched a series of GAP (Guidance, Advice and Practice) papers on various aspects of child safeguarding, three of which are now available on its website, with three more to be completed before the end of 2019.

“The national board has monitored the incidence of child abuse by priests and religious since April 2009”

The national board has also worked closely with Towards Healing, Towards Peace and with other councils and offices within the Church in Ireland, as well as with the statutory child protection agencies – police, and child and family services – in both jurisdictions in Ireland. This interagency work is in recognition of the realities that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility, while no one person or organisation can do all that is needed on their own.

Finally, the national board has monitored the incidence of child abuse by priests and religious since April 2009, and it has reported on its analysis of statistics and trends in its annual reports, all of which are available on the national board website.

It is important in decoding these figures to be aware that they mostly refer to retrospective allegations about abuse in the past, rather than indicating levels of current abuse. Looking annually at the notifications of allegations of abuse by clerics and religious reporting to the national board since 2009, it is not

possible to confidently discern a pattern:

(2009) **197**
(2010) **272**
(2011) **196**
(2012) **242**
(2013) **164**

(2014) **265**
(2015) **153**
(2016) **86**
(2017) **135**
(2018) **143**

However, significant events, such as the papal visit in 2018 and other major events have enabled those who have not yet come forward to disclose their abuse, to do so. The national board welcomes these opportunities which provide victims and survivors with the confidence to raise their concerns about abuse they have experienced in the Church.

Challenges

A lot has been achieved by the Catholic Church in Ireland in the area of Child Safeguarding since the publication of the Murphy Report ten years ago, and this is heartening. However, the Church continues to face very real challenges in relation to keeping children safe. Among these are:

- Making sure that the achievements made are consolidated, and that safeguarding fatigue and/or complacency is not allowed

to take root;

- Supporting the safeguarding component of Catholic Church ministries which attract children and young people to become involved in Church activities, with an aim of ensuring that children feel comfortable and safe;
- Keeping up to date with changing technology, and understanding how children and young people are vulnerable to abuse through social media.

In his encouraging address to the Irish bishops in August 2018, Pope Francis told them: “In Ireland, as elsewhere, the honesty and integrity with which the Church chooses to confront this painful chapter of her history can offer an example and a warning to society as a whole. Continue on this path.”

This particular journey does not end.

i Theresa Devlin is Chief Executive Officer of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.



Marie Collins
is pictured
at the World
Meeting of
Families in
Dublin.

A wonderful evening of festive songs and carols to start the Christmas season

Christmas Gala Concert

Sunday December 1st 2019 at 7.30pm
Mount Argus Church, Harold's Cross, Dublin

MC: Joe Duffy

With performances by:

- Soprano Margaret Keys
- Millicent Singers
- Vladimir Jablovkov
- Tenor Dominic McGorian
- Boy Soprano Davide Antochi
- Dublin Youth Choir
- Pianist Niall Kinsella

Admission FREE By Ticket
With suggested donation on night €10

To reserve tickets, please go to www.eventbrite.ie or email grainne.dunne@trocaire.org / Call : 01 5053269

Tickets also available at Mount Argus parish office

IN AID OF Trócaire

Out&About

Fun for all in Limerick



LIMERICK: Over 80 young people aged 16-18 gather in Limerick Diocesan Centre, St Munchin's, Corbally, for a night of games and prayer.



► **KILDARE:** Fr Paul Dempsey PP (Newbridge), Charlotte Vard (App Designer) and Bishop Denis Nulty at the launch of the Newbridge Parish App. It is part of the Parish's 'Green Agenda' where information that used to be photocopied for Sacramental Programmes can now be accessed online.

◀ **KILDARE:** Sr Margaret Callaghan OCD is awarded a M.Th. (Carmelite Studies) at the Pontifical University, Faculty of Theology, St Patrick's College, Maynooth. She is the first OCD sister to receive this award.



WATERFORD: The Cistercian monks of Mountmelleray Abbey welcome seminarians from St Patrick's College, Maynooth, for their November retreat.

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



CORK: Bishops Fintan Gavin and William Crean (re)commission 40 parish catechists for service in the dioceses of Cloyne and Cork and Ross – in the Cathedral of Ss Mary and Anne.



WATERFORD: Grace McCann stands with Emma Brady who also received the novice's habit this year.



WATERFORD: The Monastic Initiation of Grace McCann takes place in the presence of Abbess Mother Marie Fahy OCSO and the whole community of St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn. Clothed by Mother Marie in the Cistercian habit, this marks the beginning of Grace's two year novitiate period following postulancy.



CLARE: Sarah McCarthy, Bishop Fintan Monahan, Sr Essie Hayes, Kate Liffey, Fr Ger Jones, Joanne O'Brien, Luke O'Connor at Killaloe RE & chaplaincy Inservice in Shannon.

ARMAGH

An evening of Advent Meditation in music, prose, poetry and prayer will take place in The Market Place Theatre on Tuesday, December 10, at 7.30pm.

FERMANAGH

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

CLARE

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

Masses for the Holy Souls Mass will be offered every day in November for all those whose names are on the deceased list of Ennis Parish.

CORK

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

David Quinn of the Iona Institute will give a talk entitled 'What we owe to Christianity' on Monday, November 25, in the Munster Arms Hotel, Bandon, Co. Cork. Doors open at 7.30pm.

DERRY

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

St Maria Goretti Prayer Movement: Prayer for healing for victims of abuse and reparation for the Church. First Holy Hour of prayer in the Immaculate Conception Church, Trench Road Derry at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell, on the third Tuesday of every month.

DUBLIN

The annual ecumenical candle lit Walk of Light will take place on Sunday, November 24, starting from St Finian's Church, Adelaide Road, at 4pm travelling to the Church of Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners at 50 Lr. Rathmines Road arriving at 4.40pm. Journeying to Holy Trinity Church off upper Rathmines Road, arriving at 5.15pm.

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

Ewe Thina: We Walk God's Way. Join other young adults (20's & 30's) for reflective hikes around Dublin Area. Monthly event. Contact st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie

GALWAY

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

KERRY

Weekly Monday prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, from 8-9.30pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

KILDARE

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

KILKENNY

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

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

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

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

MAYO

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Church of St Joseph and the Immaculate Conception Bohola every Wednesday from 10am until 10pm.

49th Annual Eucharistic All Night Vigil takes place on Saturday, December 7, in Knock Basilica. Chief Celebrant: Archbishop Okolo, with Fr Brendan Walsh, SAC, and Fr John Regan, SAC. Commencing at 10pm, with Confessions. Phone 094 93 8810.

MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday afternoon at 3pm in the parish centre; on the 2nd Monday of each month, the group meets on Mondays at 7.30pm for its Lay Apostle meeting.

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

ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

WEXFORD

Taizé prayer services every first & third Friday at 8pm in Good Counsel College Chapel, New Ross.

WICKLOW

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

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



World Report



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie

IN BRIEF

Belgian bishops criticise proposed abortion measures

● Belgium's Catholic bishops have criticised legislation to liberalise abortion by extending the right to 18 weeks' gestation with just 48 hours of obligatory reflection.

The bishops said the proposed measures would change the meaning of abortion by making it a "normal medical procedure" and that the changes had not been properly discussed.

"If the law suggests this is merely a normal intervention, there will be no justice for those involved. Why would they ask for advice or help, when their very questions risk not being taken seriously?" the statement said.

"It is incomprehensible how such an important and delicate matter can be dealt with so quickly, without any prior fundamental debate.

Spanish Jesuit appointed Vatican economy head

● Pope Francis tapped a Spanish Jesuit priest with a background in economics to head the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy. The Vatican announced that the Pope named Jesuit Fr Juan Antonio Guerrero, general counselor for the Society of Jesus, to lead the office, which had been headed by Australian Cardinal George Pell.

Cardinal Pell took a leave of absence in 2017 to return to Australia to face charges of sexually abusing minors. His five-year term as head of the secretariat expired in February, a few months after a jury found him guilty of the charges.

New Zealand to hold referendum on end of life 'choice' bill

● The New Zealand Parliament voted in favour of legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide last week, sending the bill to a referendum next year.

The End of Life Choice Bill was passed by a vote of 69-51.

It would allow terminally ill persons who have six months or less to live to be euthanised or to themselves take a lethal dose of

prescribed drugs, on the condition that two doctors agree the person is well-informed.

An earlier version of the bill would have allowed those with severe or incurable conditions to seek euthanasia or assisted as well.

It is supported by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of the New Zealand Labour Party.

Crypt flooded in Venice as water levels increase

● The crypt of St Mark's Basilica was completely flooded last week after Venice's water levels hit the highest level in more than 50 years. Local authorities have called for a state of emergency after one man died in the worst flooding in Venice in decades. The high water mark reached over six feet, the highest level since 1966.

The Patriarch of Venice Francesco Moraglia and the city's mayor, Luigi Brugnaro, inspected the damage at St Mark's Basilica together, the morning after the heavy rains subsided.

"St Mark's Basilica has suffered serious damage, as has the entire city and the islands," Venice mayor Brugnaro confirmed after the visit.

ISIS claim responsibility for murder of priest

● The Islamic State (ISIS) militant group last Monday claimed responsibility for the shooting of an Armenian Catholic priest and his father in northeastern Syria.

Fr Hovsep Bedoyan was the head of the Armenian Catholic community in the the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli, near the border with Turkey. He and his father, Abraham Bedoyan, were travelling south to the province of Deir Al-Zor when unidentified gunmen ambushed their vehicle.

Fati Sano, a deacon from the region, was also in the car, and was badly wounded and reported to be in critical condition.

The priest and his father were travelling to Deir ez-Zor to inspect an Armenian Catholic Church which had suffered damage in the Syrian civil war, according to International Christian Concern (ICC).

Archbishop Fulton Sheen to be beatified on December 21

Archbishop Fulton Sheen will be beatified on December 21, Bishop Daniel Jenky of Peoria announced late Monday.

He said the Vatican had just notified him of the beatification and he was announcing the news "with great joy and thanksgiving".

Plans for the beatification are already underway, the bishop said. The ceremony will be at 10am local time at the Cathedral of St Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria.

"This is the same cathedral where (Archbishop) Sheen was ordained a priest 100 years ago on September 20, 1919," said a Peoria diocesan news release. "It seems entirely fitting that the beatification will take place at the end of this 100-year anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood."

The cathedral also is the current resting place for the archbishop, who is entombed in a marble vault next to the altar where he was ordained.

Intercession

The diocese planned to release more information about the beatification over the next few days. News about the beatification and the life of Archbishop Sheen can be found at celebratesheen.com.



Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

In July, Bishop Jenky announced Pope Francis had approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Archbishop Sheen, leading the way to his beatification.

The miracle concerns the healing of James Fulton Engstrom of Washington, Illinois, who was considered stillborn when he was delivered during

a planned home birth on September 16, 2010.

His parents, Bonnie and Travis Engstrom, immediately invoked the prayers of Archbishop Sheen and encouraged others to seek his intercession after the baby was taken to OSF HealthCare St Francis Medical Centre in Peoria for emergency treatment.

Just as doctors were preparing to declare that he was dead, James Fulton's tiny heart started to beat at a normal rate for a healthy newborn. He had been without a pulse for 61 minutes.

Despite dire prognoses for his future, including that he would probably be blind and never walk, talk or be able to feed himself, the child has thrived. Now a healthy eight-year-old, he likes chicken nuggets, *Star Wars* and riding his bicycle.

Decree

The decree of the miracle came about a week after Archbishop Sheen's remains were transferred from New York to Peoria's cathedral.

"It is truly amazing how God continues to work miracles," Bishop Jenky said in the statement about the papal decree on the miracle.

Archbishop Sheen had been placed in a crypt below the main altar of St Patrick's Cathedral in New York after his death on December 9, 1979.

After protracted legal proceedings, his remains were brought to Peoria on June 27 at the request of his niece, Joan Sheen Cunningham, and now rest in a new marble tomb in the Peoria cathedral.

Don't settle for mediocrity and seek the truth, Francis tells students

Pope Francis has told students never to be afraid of their desire for truth and never settle for mediocrity.

He encouraged them to live with open hearts and minds, and not just stick with the predominant mindset in a world that believes diversity is conflict.

"May you feel a healthy ambition to add something original that also may be concrete and useful," he said, speaking to students and faculty of Rome's LUMSA University.

Reflecting on the role of a

university, Pope Francis referred to a talk Pope Benedict XVI had been scheduled to deliver in person at Rome's La Sapienza University in 2008 until student protests forced its cancellation: "The true origin of the university lies in the thirst for knowledge that is proper to man. The human being wants to know what everything around him is. He wants truth."

He asked the students to take part in collaborative projects and exchanges with other universities to come up

with innovative research guided by "that intellectual charity that does not discount the truth and that does not settle for mediocrity".

Earlier in the day, the Pope met with professors from the Sophia University Institute, founded by the Focolare Movement.

He reminded them that true wisdom is God's light shining upon all people, from all religions and all cultures. "That is why we are called – as you already do – to walk together with everyone, not against everyone."

Heated debate over Notre-Dame rebuilding project

Tensions are reportedly running high between French authorities overseeing the rebuilding of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, as they create plans to rebuild the church damaged by fire earlier this year.

Army General Jean-Louis Georgelin and the architect

on the project, Philippe Villeneuve, disagree over whether the cathedral's new spire should look modern or medieval, the BBC reports.

Georgelin, at a meeting of the French National Assembly's cultural affairs committee last week, reportedly told the architect that he should

"shut his mouth" over the spire's design, adding that a final decision on the spire would be settled on in 2021.

The roof of the 850-year-old cathedral caught fire on April 15, destroying the building's spire and most of the roof. The stone vaults survived mostly intact, as did

most of the cathedral's artwork and relics.

Villeneuve has said previously that the only way French President Emmanuel Macron's ambitious five-year restoration deadline can be met is if the spire is a replica of the one that burned, the BBC says.



ACN WEEK OF FOR PERSECUTED WITNESS CHRISTIANS

25 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN IRELAND

acnireland.org/witness

Introduction to the ACN Week of Witness and Red Wednesday

The ACN Week of Witness is an invitation to Christians across the island of Ireland to stand in solidarity with, and bear witness to the heroic example of, our persecuted brothers and sisters in faith across the world.

ACN Ireland, as a Pontifical Foundation, is part of the Church in a most profound way – to help our Church heal our world. Being present with and for the most vulnerable of God's people is vital to achieving this, no matter how perilous the environment. Through the Church's pastoral care, through the Holy Sacraments, through the heroic witness of Christians martyrs, God's Grace provides the Church – and the world – with the means of bringing the Light and Love of Christ to places and people where before there was only darkness and hate.

ACN is blessed to have Our Lady of Fatima as Patroness of our work for the suffering and persecuted

Church. Our Lady's prophetic messages of Fatima told of a Church that would suffer greatly in the future: and so it has come to pass that we now find a Church where violent hostility to Christian teaching, culture and even identity has been normalized, if not encouraged, by many governments, corporations and institutions.

The ACN Week of Witness will be held every year from 25 November to 1 December, with many important talks and exhibitions to be held throughout the island of Ireland on the theme of Christian persecution. During the ACN Week of Witness, ACN Ireland, with the gracious and prayerful assistance of dioceses and parishes throughout the country, will hold the Red Wednesday Prayer Vigil. Red Wednesday is an opportunity for the faithful to gather as a community of faithful and pray not only for persecuted Christians – but also for the persecutors of Christians.

'Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.'

Matthew 5:11

Red Wednesday - St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

Thus, throughout the ACN Week of Witness and Red Wednesday, you and your parish can be a vital witness to the beauty and dignity of Christian culture as well as a testament to the reality of the historic and current oppression and martyrdom of Christian peoples globally.

This year, Red of November will be held on 27 November. In support of your efforts to promote Red Wednesday, ACN Ireland will distribute, free of charge, a parish pack of resources to your participating parish priest.

Resources are also available the ACN Ireland website at www.acnireland.org/witness

You, through your help and sup-

port of ACN Ireland, can help make a world in which Christianity can thrive everywhere. In pursuit of this charism and mission, we at ACN Ireland are so grateful for your prayers and donations to help make this reality, by the Grace of God.

May God, through intercession of Our Blessed Mother, continue to bless and keep you all,

Yours in Christ,

Michael

Dr. Michael Kinsella,
National Director,
Aid to the Church in Need (Ireland)

Ways to Witness

During the Week of Witness, on Wednesday November 27, ACN Ireland will also hold our **ACN Red Wednesday** and we invite all Christians to gather as a community of worshippers to publicly affirm their thanks to God, their spiritual union with persecuted Christians and to pray for those who persecute the Church and Her faithful.

During the Week of Witness, you can – even in a small yet profound manner – bear personal witness to God's Love and Mercy for the persecuted Church by:

- **ILLUMINATING** your Church or school in red to show the world that the sacrifice and suffering of the persecuted and martyred Church is an ongoing reality.
- **WEARING** a red tie, scarf or scapular as a mark of the blood lost by Christians in defence of our Faith.

- **PRAYING** for the suffering and persecuted Church at the hours of the Angelus, 1200 and 1800 and during Holy Mass, asking your Parish Priest to consider giving his homily on the theme of persecution and martyrdom in the Church.
- **ATTENDING** a Red Wednesday Prayer Vigil.
- **BLESSING** oneself in public when having a meal, passing a graveyard or Church.
- **DONATING** to ACN Ireland to help in our work for persecuted Christians globally – your donations constitute a powerful corporal work of mercy and, when you order a Mass Card or Mass Offering through ACN Ireland, 100% of your offering goes directly to help support a priest provide pastoral care and ministry to the suffering Church.

“ACN's ‘Persecuted and Forgotten’ 2019 Report highlights the scale and ferocity of persecution against Christians internationally – and clearly documents why we need the Week of Witness.”



Michael

Dr. Michael Kinsella
ACN IRELAND, NATIONAL DIRECTOR

acnireland.org/witness



AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED'S WEEK OF WITNESS

ACN Red Wednesday

A Prayer Vigil for Persecuted Christians

During Red Wednesday we keep in our minds and hearts not only those who suffer persecution for their Christian faith but for those who persecute Christians also, that their minds and hearts will turn towards the Mercy and Love of Christ.

As a preparation for the Red Wednesday Prayer Vigil, perhaps your parish team could organize a Eucharistic Holy Hour (Matthew 26:40) – ever aware that our sufferings and sacrifice only have merit and meaning once united with the infinite Salvific suffering and sacrifice of Christ Himself.

For more information and parish resources on the ACN Week of Witness and Red Wednesday Prayer Service please visit

www.acnireland.org/witness

A suggested order for your Red Wednesday Prayer Vigil could be:

- A Opening Hymn of Praise
- B Welcome
- C A Red Wednesday Message from a witness from the suffering Church
- D Intercessions
- E Benediction
- F Tantum ergo or an appropriate Eucharistic Hymn
- G Final Hymn of Praise
- H Final Blessing

Intercessory Prayers for all Persecuted Christians

CELEBRANT: Turning to God in faith and trust, we pray for the needs of the Church and of the world.

Reader: Let us pray for the Universal Church, for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, our Archbishops, Bishops, Sisters and all those who serve the Church.

Lord in your mercy: R/Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for Aid to the Church in Need and its work with persecuted and other suffering Christians throughout the world, especially children who have been made refugees or left displaced by war.

Lord in your mercy: R/Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the faithful departed, remembering especially deceased friends and benefactors of Aid to the Church in Need and for those worldwide who have given their lives rather than abandon the Faith.

Lord in your mercy: R/Hear our prayer.

Special Petitions

A For those suffering because of their Christian faith, that the Holy Spirit may fortify them with the courage to remain strong in faith, as well as with the charity

to forgive their persecutors, we pray to the Lord.

**Lord in your mercy:
R/Hear our prayer.**

B For your faithful who suffer for your name's sake, that you would grant them a spirit of patience and charity, that they may be found true and faithful witnesses to the promises you have made, we pray to the Lord.

**Lord in your mercy:
R/Hear our prayer.**

C For those who suffer persecution for their faithful service to you, that they may rejoice to be united to the sacrifice of Christ your Son and may know that their names are written in heaven among the company of the elect, we pray to the Lord.

**Lord in your mercy:
R/Hear our prayer.**

D For those who follow your Son in bearing their cross, that they may, in every trial, glory in the name of Christian, we pray to the Lord.

**Lord in your mercy:
R/Hear our prayer.**

E For Christians in Iraq and Syria, that they may be granted courage, hope, and perseverance as they bear heroic witness to their faith in this time of persecution, we pray to the Lord.

**Lord in your mercy:
R/Hear our prayer.**

F For all our brothers and sisters fleeing persecution and war that they may find haven and protection, and that they may rebuild

their lives in dignity, we pray to the Lord.

**Lord in your mercy:
R/Hear our prayer.**

Petition for Christian Persecutors

For those who persecute Christians, that the light of God's truth and mercy may penetrate their hearts, and that they may come to recognize the common humanity of all peoples and cease committing acts of hatred, we pray to the Lord.

Lord in your mercy: R/Hear our prayer.

CELEBRANT: Lord our God, you have called us to follow you in faith: in faith we also make our prayers to you, trusting in your grace and your mercy. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

R/Amen.



Red Wednesday - Knock Shrine.

'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?'

Romans 8:35

Triumph of Faith - Eugene Thirion.



FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS 25 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER





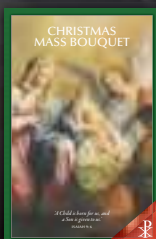
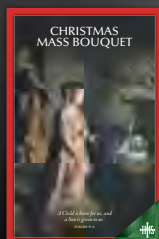
Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN IRELAND

A Happy & Holy Christmas to you & all of your families from ACN Ireland.

Blessings on all those who have
helped ACN in our mission to the
persecuted Church this year.

Order ACN Mass & Christmas Cards below:



ACN is Ireland's only
Pontifical Charity
dedicated to saving
persecuted Christians.

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Please indicate the
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<input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRIDUUM
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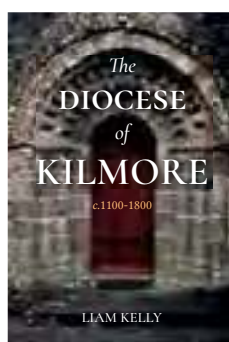
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The Diocese of Kilmore

Liam Kelly

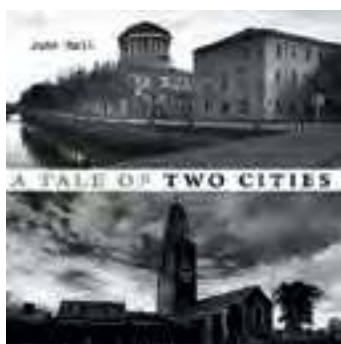


Having traced the development of the diocese for more than four hundred years from the twelfth-century Church reforms, this book outlines the impact of the Reformation and the subsequent arrival of Church of Ireland and Presbyterian newcomers into the diocese.

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Tale of Two Cities

John Hall

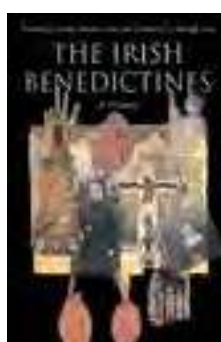


It's an old city rivalry that comes to life in photographer John Hall's book about Dublin and Cork. Experience the best each city has to offer including monuments to their local heroes and breath-taking shots from each of their beautiful rivers.

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The Irish Benedictines

Eds. Martin Browne OSB & Colmán O Clabaigh OSB



In the story of Irish monasticism, one chapter has been curiously neglected: the Irish Benedictine tradition. This volume seeks to redress this by providing a comprehensive survey of the ways in which Irish men and women have sought God by following the Rule of St Benedict.

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Ireland and Vatican II

Niall Coll (ed.)



The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) is widely regarded as the most important religious event of the twentieth century. In this work, the scope, impact and future implementation of this revolutionary council are explored with special reference to Ireland, north and south.

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Best Loved Poems from the South of Ireland

Gabriel Fitzmaurice



This wonderfully-illustrated anthology, filled with moving and accessible poems will delight the general reader as well as the poetry specialist. The entries sing of love and death, religion and spirituality, faith and doubt, of mothers, fathers and their children.

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The Celtic Spirit and Literature

Grace Clunie & Tess Maginess



Offering a lively and thoughtful introduction to the rich and complex world of Celtic Spirit, past and present, this book considers how the spirit can still operate in our lives, enabling us to be a welcoming people and respectful to the gift of nature.

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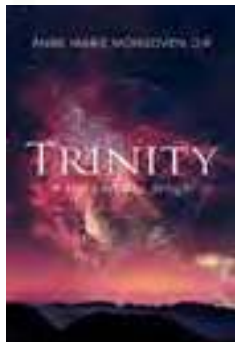
The Kilderry Files
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This fast-paced thriller with a rich cast of characters, set in the 1990's, brings us to the heart and paranoia of Wartime Ireland and the inner reaches of Catholic politics, a time filled with greed, betrayal and murder.

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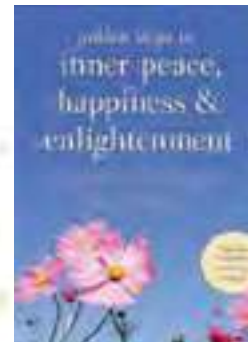
Trinity
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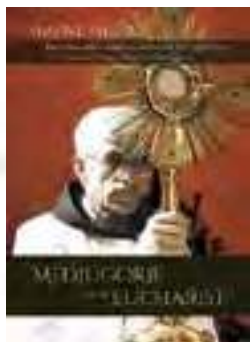
Golden Steps to Inner Peace
Mildred Ryan



Love, healing, wisdom and joy will transform your life and the lives of others. There are many steps to the journey of enlightenment and if you want to reach them in this lifetime, this book will help. Love is the central theme which helps guide your spiritual practice.

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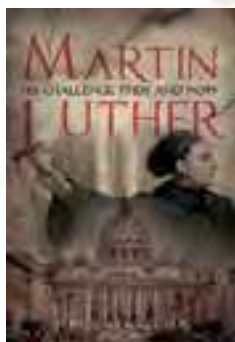
Medjugorje and the Eucharist
Wayne Weible



The incredible apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Medjugorje are intimately linked with the Holy Eucharist. Now, Wayne Weible dissects this connection and how it affects the faithful who come to Medjugorje in droves.

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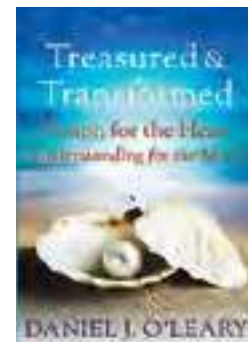
Martin Luther
P. Fintan Lyons O.S.B.



Over 500 years ago, a young professor in an obscure German University rocked the Church and changed Christianity forever. A study of the phenomenon of Martin Luther and his effects on society, Fintan Lyons' asks could there be any common ground between Luther and the Church now?

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Treasured and Transformed
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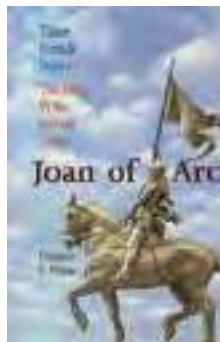
5 Years to Save the Irish Church
Various Authors



Combining some of the most prolific Catholic voices of our time, this book offers a game plan to revive the Irish Church and help it transition into a more honest and open community. Contributors include Sr Stan, Dr Mary McAleese and Fr Joe McDonald.

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Joan of Arc
Críostóir Ó Floinn



St Joan of Arc is one of the most dramatic saints in the litany today. Her strength and remarkable courage have led her to becoming known across the world. Through these pages, the reader can refresh their memory of her unbelievable journey.

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Therese of Lisieux
Críostóir Ó Floinn

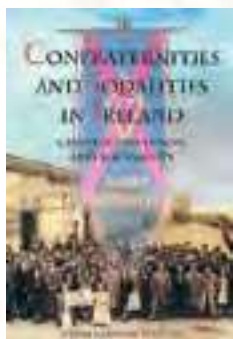


Written in very readable and simple language, the life of St Thérèse of Lisieux is laid out for all to read. Some of her life may be familiar, but there may be some surprises as well. Discover the account of her life and subsequent path to sainthood.

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Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland

Colm Lennon



Framed by surveys, these essays explore the role of the confraternities in the revival of the Catholic Church in the penal era, their place in the Catholic devotional upsurge in the nineteenth century, and the contribution of religious orders to their growth.

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Adventures of a Book Collector

Philip Murray



For Philip Murray, his hunt for first editions has taken him around the world and led to enduring friendships with poets and authors. Through his tales and anecdotes, you might learn something new about your favourite authors.

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Going Up the Holy Mountain

Gary Hastings



Learn how prayer and meditation can be used to move closer to God in the silence. Primarily about Croagh Patrick, or the Reek, in Co. Mayo this book discusses the origins of the pilgrimage and how you might use the climb as a spiritual resource.

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A Day at a Time

Mary Kenny



Join Mary Kenny as she progresses through the seasons, sharing her hilarious, thoughtful accounts of Ireland's culture, the misadventures of aging and the pursuit of happiness. Through her sharp wit and stunning prose, Kenny shares amazing tales sure to bring delight.

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Friend of the Poor

Rosaleen Crossan

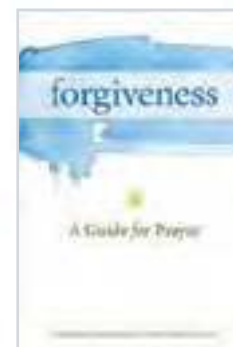


Explore the life and charism of Mary Aikenhead and discover how this nineteenth century woman's extraordinary faith in God and her total dedication to service of the poor has placed her firmly on the path towards Sainthood.

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Forgiveness

Jacqueline Bergan & Marie Schwan

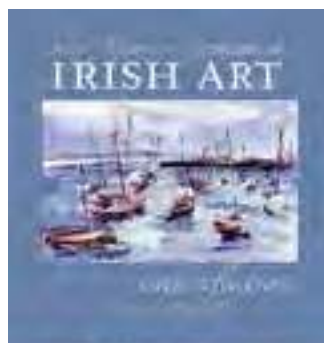


Since its original release in the late 1980s, the forgiveness book in the Take and Receive prayer-book series has been helping people re-imagine what it means to pray and see with new eyes God's presence and activity in their daily lives.

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Sr Maureen's Selection of Irish Art

Maureen McMahon OP



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Afterlife

Audrey Healy



In *Afterlife*, people of different ages, backgrounds and beliefs unite to share their experiences of after-death communication. Within its pages, there are stories from those who say their loved ones have been in contact and others who have had to deal with something sinister.

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Mother Teresa on Advent and Christmas

John Scally



Mother Teresa demonstrates how to make the right choices and possess a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, a touch that never hurts. Bring a bit of her wisdom and light to your Advent and Christmas.

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Greg Daly



Much of the literature regarding the 1916 Rising neglects the role the Church played in the movement. The Church and the Rising aims to bring this aspect back to the discussion by highlighting the rebels' Catholic faith, the Church's reaction to the Rising and the overall morality of revolution.

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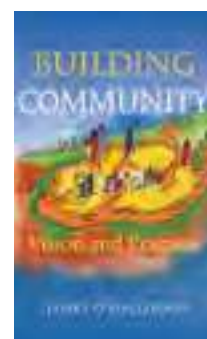


For the past five years, Pope Francis' compassion and humility have stolen the Catholic community's hearts. This documentary offers a "unique look at the unfolding story" of Pope Francis' effect on the Catholic Church.

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Building Community

James O'Halloran



Right now, the world is currently experiencing economic, political and indeed moral collapse. The underlying issue is cultural – we live in a selfish age and no solution is possible in that environment. The answer lies in community.

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The Joy of Love

Fr Eamonn Conway & Cathal Barry



After reading Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, it may be hard to fully comprehend the teachings. In this companion the realities, joys and struggles of family life are broken down with the ultimate goal of bringing God to the centre of the household.

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Praise Be to You

Fr Eamonn Conway & Cathal Barry

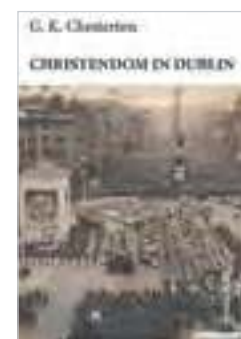


Pope Francis' revolutionary document on the environment, *Laudato Si*, put forth his thoughts on climate change, evolution and genetic modification. In this companion guide, the authors break down the encyclical in a simplified manner bringing the hot topics to the forefront.

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Christendom in Dublin

G.K. Chesterton



In this classic work, G.K. Chesterton institutes a thought provoking look on the evolution of the church, focusing on Christianity in 1930's Dublin. He speaks of not only what the Church was like during that time, but his hopes for its mission in the world.

was €6.99 **€3.49**

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Inés San Martín

Speaking to a group of lawyers last Friday, Pope Francis said that the Catholic Church is contemplating the introduction of “ecological sin” to the compendium of Church teaching.

“We have to introduce, we are thinking about it, in the catechism of the Catholic Church, the sin against ecology, the sin against our common home, because it’s a duty,” he said.

The Pope’s words came just weeks after the conclusion of a bishops’ summit on the Amazon focused on the environmental threat to the region.

Francis was speaking to the 20th world congress of the International Association of Penal Law, held in Rome from November 13-16, under the scope of ‘Criminal Justice and Corporate Business’.

He also said that the culture of waste, combined with other widespread phenomena in welfare societies, is showing the “serious tendency to degenerate into a culture of hatred”.

“It is no coincidence that in these times, emblems and actions typical of Nazism reappear, which, with its persecutions against Jews, gypsies and people of homosexual orientation, represents the negative model par excellence of a culture of waste and hatred,” Francis said.

He also said that upon hearing some speeches from certain governments, although he didn’t give any examples, he’s “reminded of Hitler’s speeches in 1934, in 1936, [heard] today”.

“We must be vigilant, both in the civil sphere and the ecclesial context, to avoid any possible compromise – which is assumed to be involuntary – with these degenerations,” he said.

Idolatry

During his remarks, Francis also criticised the “market idolatry” that makes individual people defenceless before the interests of the “divinised market” which has become the absolute ruler, with some economic sectors exercising more power than the state itself.

“The principle of profit maximisation, isolated from any other consideration, leads to a model of exclusion which violently attacks those who now suffer its social and economic costs, while future generations are condemned to pay the environmental costs,” Francis said.

“The first thing lawyers should ask themselves today is what they can do with their knowledge to counter this phenomenon, which puts democratic institutions and the development of humanity itself at risk,” he continued.

“In concrete terms, the present challenge for every criminal lawyer is to contain punitive irrationality,” which the Pope noted manifests

Pope considering adding ‘sin against ecology’ to Church’s catechism



A man in Cabo de Santo Agostinho, Brazil, shows a crab covered in oil, as he and others work to clean the site of an oil spill. Proposals made by small groups at the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon involve the Catholic Church’s role in helping indigenous communities confront issues such as ecology, violence and migration.



Pope Francis carries his pastoral staff as he leaves the concluding Mass of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon at the Vatican. Photos: CNS

itself in mass imprisonment, crowding and torture in prison facilities, abuses by the security forces, the criminalisation of social protest, the abuse of preventive detention and the repudiation of the most elementary penal and procedural guarantees.

The Pontiff also condemned the “scarce or absence of attention” that the crimes of the most powerful receive, “in particular

the macro-delinquency of corporations”, which he describes as “crimes against humanity” when these lead to hunger, poverty, forced migration and death due to preventable diseases, environmental disasters and the murder of indigenous peoples.

“Global financial capital is at the origin of serious crimes not only against property but also against people and the environment,”

Francis said, labelling it as “organised crime”. He said it is responsible for other things, such as the over-indebtedness of states and the plundering of the planet’s natural resources.

Harking back to the recently concluded Synod of Bishops on the Amazon, during which the bishops condemned the “sins against the environment”, Francis denounced the “ecocide” that corporations are

“usually responsible for”, urging lawyers to guarantee these crimes don’t go unpunished.

By ecocide, he said he meant the “massive contamination of the air, of the land and water resources, large-scale destruction of flora and fauna, and any action capable of producing an ecological disaster or destroying an ecosystem”.

“The Pope denounced the ‘ecocide’ that corporations are ‘usually responsible for’”

The loss or the destruction of ecosystems of a specific territory, Francis said, is a fifth category of crimes against peace, which should be recognised as such by the international community.

During his talk, Francis condemned the abuse of “preventive prison”, with a rise in the number of people being jailed without a criminal conviction, which in several countries even outnumber those serving judicial sentences; he said this violates the principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

He also denounced the “involuntary incentive to violence”, with countries justifying the crimes committed by agents of security forces by claiming these acts are legitimate means of fulfilling their duties.

The legal community, he said, is called to prevent this “punitive demagoguery” – often racist or aimed at marginalised groups – from descending into an incentive to violence or disproportionate use of force.

📍 Inés San Martín is Rome Bureau Chief of Cruxnow.com

“During his talk, Francis condemned the abuse of ‘preventive prison’, with a rise in the number of people being jailed without a criminal conviction, which in several countries even outnumber those serving judicial sentences”

Letters

Letter of the week

Mantras at odds with Church teaching

Dear Editor, I refer to criticism levelled at Bishop Phonsie Cullinan concerning yoga in Catholic schools. Catholic bishops as direct successors of the apostles have a duty of pastoral care by teaching and upholding the Catholicism which comes to us from the apostles themselves, commissioned by Jesus.

Regrettably, the laity has largely been left without timely guidance from Catholic clergy on yoga and other New Age practises, despite readily available Church guidelines.

Both Hinduism and Buddhism inform yoga, despite contrary claims. Originally employed as an ascetic ritual by both traditions it enabled people to undergo a series of reincarnations before achieving

Nirvana, a state of Enlightenment, without suffering, or desire: rather a sense of emptiness. In Buddhism, this is believed to happen when people are released from Samsara, a constant cycle of death and re-birth.

The 'om' Hindu syllable is used to induce a trance like state. This ostensibly leads to a higher spiritual awareness, union with the 'Inner Self', or the Supreme Self, ultimately with the Hindu god, Brahman.

Clearly, performing healthy exercises without religious or philosophical connotations does not conflict with Catholicism. However, mantras used in yoga indicate meditation and self realisation techniques at variance with Catholic teaching. In *A Call to Vigilance*,

Archbishop Carrera (1996) states that "the physical and spiritual connotations of yoga cannot be fully separated: therefore, their occultic meaning remains unchanged".

Clients are often unaware of side effects. This applies in particular to Kundalini yoga.

Notably, the 1989, Vatican document entitled *A Letter to... Bishops of the Catholic Church... Some Aspects of Meditation* cautions against exercises involving prayer and meditation which do not have the Trinitarian God at their heart.

Yours etc.,
Julie Walsh Power,
Ballinamona,
Co. Waterford.

What's the price for being pro-choice and Catholic?

Dear Editor, Great play is given these days to health statistics. Deaths due to smoking, cancer, heart disease and obesity are often quoted, but at near 56 million deaths annually, the worldwide loss of life from abortion exceeds deaths due to the aforementioned causes combined.

The Church has always proclaimed that abortion is murder but now we have the deplorable actions of nationalist politicians advocating intrinsically evil acts by failing to prevent the imposition of abortion in Northern Ireland.

This scandalous behaviour of politicians, who claim to be Catholics, while flouting the Church's teaching, arouses anger and frustration among the faithful.

Why do our bishops allow Catholic politicians who actively endorse and support a serious immoral act involving grave matter to receive Holy Communion?

Bishops have a solemn and sacred duty to make certain that those entrusted to their pastoral care are aware of the moral gravity and spiritual consequences of their actions and a serious obligation to protect other

parishioners from being misled by appearing to be tolerant of this behaviour of some Catholics in public life.

Bishops must attempt to speak with such people and, if they persist in their actions, then they should be told not to present themselves to receive Holy Communion.

The bishops should implement the Canon so that priests and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are authorised to withhold the sacrament

What we need are bishops who are unafraid to use the methods at their

disposal to protect the faith of believers.

If they teach by their example that a Catholic politician can vote and advocate for abortion and remain a Catholic in good standing, they should remove themselves and let other bishops lead who would be willing to correct such 'Catholic' politicians and deny them Holy Communion.

Yours etc.,
Noel Mullan,
Fivemiletown,
Co. Tyrone.

Flexibility on vexed issue needed

Dear Editor, Bishop Dermot Farrell has said that the vocations crisis is really a crisis of faith that will not be solved by making celibacy optional (IC 14/11/19)). But is it really a case of either or? Surely some flexibility regarding the rules of celibacy and perhaps even women deacons, might add to our parish ministry teams, in undertaking the important work of evangelisation.

The days of visiting schools to encourage teenagers to consider the priesthood and a lifelong commitment to celibacy are gone. But encouraging more older married men to consider ministry is still an option and there are no theological reasons preventing this, other than tradition. At this stage within the Irish Church, it is surely all hands on deck to ensure the radical and positive Gospel message gets heard, among the liberal din of individualism.

Yours etc.,
Frank Browne,
Templeogue, Dublin 16.



As described in an interview, is archbishop truly a 'great guy'?

Dear Editor, I was not aware until listening to Dr Peter Boylan on the Marion Finucane radio programme last Saturday that Archbishop Martin had approved the transfer of the St

Vincent's Hospital group from the sisters of charity into the hands of the state. How can this be? Surely he is aware that by this approval he is shaking hands with the devil? Is this why

Dr Boylan referred to him as a "great guy"?

Yours etc.,
Michael Sherry,
Co. Cavan.

facebook community

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

Would you support the ordination of female deacons in the Church?

Church discipline is not determined by majority vote. – **John Heneghan**

For those who support women deacons, there's other sects that accommodate your beliefs. – **Sione McDaid**

I am truly shocked at the result so far and negative comments also especially from women! What are we afraid of here?! It's long, long, long overdue in my opinion. People should wake up, the Church is dying on its feet, we need to embrace inclusiveness and allow women their talents and perspectives to breathe new life into our Church. I am sure there is a lot of support from within the priesthood also. – **Damien Dalton**

A female deacon is not a priest, they should be able to perform weddings, baptisms, etc. – **Barbara Ann McBurnie**

Christ is the groom, and the Church is the bride. Priests represent Christ. Just think about that great mystery for longer than five seconds, and say an emphatic 'no' to the ordination of women. – **Brewer Arnoult**

Married priests are not answer to 'crisis of faith' – bishop

We are going through this crisis of faith in all of Western Europe. The Church has been through this sort of period before and has still continued to exist. Maybe it is necessary that some buildings go, but the true faith will continue because it is guided by God. – **Chris Bolger**

Can we not continue to have priests from countries where vocations are flourishing come here? – **Flo Fahey**

Married priests may not be the answer to 'crisis of faith' but might be the answer to the shortage of priests. – **Brian Kennedy**

Why not woman priests? In the early church men and women worked together and it was Jesus that told us that we are all equal in the eyes of God. – **Annette Bolger**

Life has changed and the Church must change too. Life hasn't changed at all. The Church was once small then grew and then shrunk again over the course of centuries. The devil never has anything new on offer just old heresies and errors with new labels on them. – **Stephen McElligott**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



▲ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis embraces Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury, leader of the Anglican Communion, during a meeting in the Pope's Vatican residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

◀ **ITALY:** A person walks in the flooded St Mark's Square in Venice. The square is named after its church, the Basilica of St Mark. Photos: CNS



▲ **AUSTRALIA:** Sharnie Moren and her 18-month-old daughter Charlotte look on near Nana Glen, as thick smoke rises from bushfires.



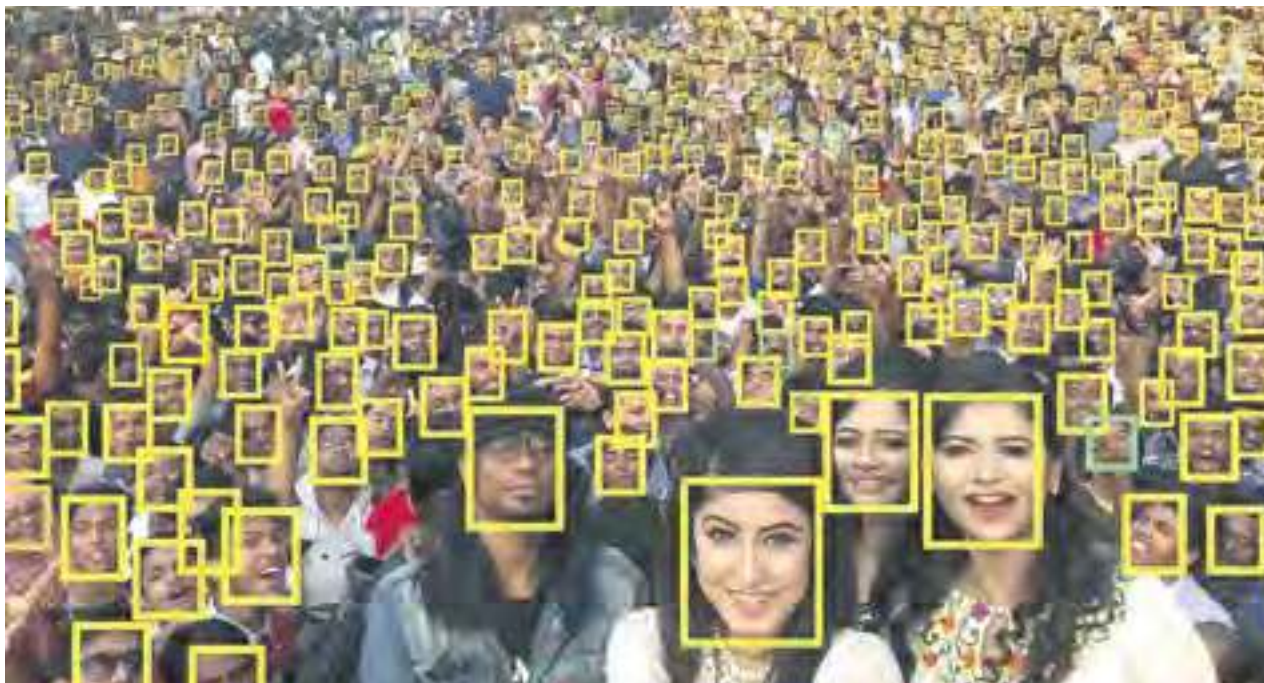
▲ **HOLY LAND:** Mourners in Gaza City carry the body of Palestinian Islamic Jihad field commander Bahaa Abu el-Atta during his funeral.



▲ **IRAQ:** Iraqi demonstrators carry a wounded man during ongoing anti-government protests in Baghdad.



▲ **THAILAND:** Sr Sukanya Sukchai shows newly made chasubles for Pope Francis at a Catholic preparatory school in Bangkok. The Pope will visit Thailand from November 20-23 to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment of the Apostolic Vicariate of Siam Mission, the first Catholic jurisdiction in what was to become Thailand.



Everywhere in Church circles today you hear a lament: our churches are emptying. We've lost our youth. This generation no longer knows or understands the classical theological language. We need to announce Jesus again, as if for the first time, but how? The church is becoming evermore marginalised.

That's the situation pretty much everywhere within the secularised world today. Why is this happening? Faith as a spent project? Secularity's adolescent grandiosity before the parent who gave it birth, Judeo-Christianity? The "buffered self" that Charles Taylor describes? Affluence? Or is the problem mainly with the churches themselves? Sexual abuse? Cover-up? Poor liturgies? Poor preaching? Churches too liberal? Churches too conservative?

I suspect it's some combination of all of these, but single out one issue here to highlight, affluence. Jesus told us that it's difficult (impossible, he says) for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. No doubt, that's a huge part of our present struggle.

Practice

We're good at being Christians when we're poor, less-educated, and on the margins of mainstream society. We've had centuries of practice at this. What we haven't had any practice at, and aren't any good at, is how to be Christians when we're affluent, sophisticated, and constitute the cultural mainstream.

So, I'm suggesting that what we need today is not so much a new pastoral approach as a new kind of saint, an individual man or woman who can model for us practically what it means to live out the Gospel in a context of affluence and secularity. Why this?

Saints for a new situation



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

One of the lessons of history is that often genuine religious renewal, the type that actually reshapes the religious imagination, does not come from think-tanks, conferences, and Church synods, but from graced individuals – saints, wild men and women who, like St Augustine, St Francis, St Clare, St Dominic, St Ignatius or other such religious figures can reshape our religious imagination. They show us that the new lies elsewhere, that what needs fixing in the church will not be mended simply by patching the old.

What's needed is a new religious and ecclesial imagination. Charles Taylor, in his highly-respected study of secularity, suggests that what we're undergoing today is not so much a crisis of faith as a crisis of imagination. No Christians before us have ever lived within this kind of world.

What will this new kind of saint, this new St Francis, look like? I honestly don't know. Neither, it seems, does anyone else.

We have no answer yet, at least not one that's been able to bear much fruit in the mainstream culture. That's

not surprising. The type of imagination that reshapes history isn't easily found. In the meantime we've come about as far as we can along the road that used to take us there, but which for many of our children no longer does.

Here's our quandary: we're better at knowing what to do once we get people into a church than we are at knowing how to get them there. Why? Our weakness, I believe, lies not in our theological imagination where we have rich theological and biblical insights aplenty. What we lack are saints on the ground, men and women who, in a passion and fidelity that's at once radically faithful to God and fiercely empathic to our secular world, can incarnate their faith into a way of living that can show us, practically, how we can be poor and humble disciples of Jesus even as we walk in an affluent and highly secularised world.

And such new persons will appear. We've been at this spot before in history and have always found our way forward. Every time the world believes it has buried Christ, the stone rolls back from the tomb; every time

the cultural ethos declares that the Churches are on an irrevocable downward slide, the Spirit intervenes and there's soon an about face; every time we despair, thinking that our age can no longer produce saints and prophets, some Augustine or Francis comes along and shows that our age, like times of old, can too produce its saints; and every time our imaginations run dry, as they have now, we find that our scriptures are still full of fresh insight.

We may lack imagination, but we don't lack hope.

“No Christians before us have ever lived within this kind of world”

Christ promised we will not be orphaned, and that promise is sure. God is still with us and our age will produce its own prophets and saints.

What's asked of us in the moment is biblical patience, to wait on God. Christianity may look tired, tried, and spent to a culture within which affluence and sophistication are its current gods, but hope is already beginning to show its face: as secularisation, with its affluence and sophistication, marches unswervingly forward we're already beginning to see a number of men and women who have found ways to become post-affluent and post-sophisticated.

These will be the new religious leaders who will teach us, and our children, how to live as Christians in this new situation.

QUESTIONS of faith

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



How did Judas Iscariot die?

Judas Iscariot is known as the apostle who betrayed Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane – an act which ultimately led to the crucifixion. Emeritus Pope Benedict explained in 2006 that the betrayal took place in two moments: “first of all in its planning phase, when Judas comes to an agreement with Jesus’ enemies for 30 pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14-16), and later in its execution with the kiss he gave the master in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:46-50)”.

However, on the surface the Bible seems to offer contradictory accounts about the death of Judas.

Most people hold the belief that Judas committed suicide by hanging. This account is outlined in Matthew 27 where upon realising he had betrayed “innocent blood”, Judas repents for his sin “and went and hanged himself”.

However, the book of Acts provides an alternative description of Judas’ demise: “Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 1:18).

This depiction seems at total odds with Judas hanging himself, so how can this discrepancy be explained?

Sequence

Scholars have offered plenty of suggestions. The most popular one for Christians is that there is no contradiction; the two biblical accounts need to be understood in a sequence. Judas hanged himself and the rope later snapped causing him to fall headlong and ripping open his body, or alternatively, he was left to decompose causing his organs to eventually fall out.

This is a neat theory which upholds the authority of the Bible. Some scholars

like Bart D. Ehrman don't buy this account – surely you would land on your legs immediately if the rope snapped, rather than head-first?

Others have suggested that Judas didn't actually hang himself; the words recorded in Matthew were just a general phrase meaning a dishonourable death. For example, Ahithophel, who was a trusted counsellor of King David, hanged himself after betraying him (2 Samuel 17:23). Perhaps this meant that both men died in dishonourable ways, or maybe the author of Matthew wanted to allude to Ahithophel's death by placing Judas at the centre of the hanging.

“Others have suggested that Judas didn't hang himself”

Another more esoteric theory is proposed by the early 2nd-Century writer Papias who wrote in the *Exposition of the Sayings of the Lord* that Judas was so impious that his flesh had blown out and eventually his “entrails were poured out”. Scholars are still in disagreement about how reliable a source Papias' writings are.

Just as historians are unsure about Judas' death, the Church is equally in the dark about his ultimate fate of whether he entered Heaven or Hell. Theologian Alan Shreck writes in *Basics of the Faith: A Catholic Catechism*: “The Catholic Church teaches that we cannot judge or determine whether any particular person has been condemned to hell, even Hitler or Judas Iscariot. The mercy of God is such that a person can repent even at the point of death and be saved.”

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

Family & Lifestyle

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A world at your feet



Do you remember how you had fun during your childhood? Is it radically different to how kids spend their leisure time today? When the older generation reflect on how they spent their youth, usually the images of hopscotch, conkers and tag pop into their mind. For the most part, these games are resigned to history along with one pertinent theme about them: playing outside.

Fewer young people are exploring the great outdoors compared to their older generational counterparts. According to a survey by the UK's National Trust, children today spend half the time their parents did playing outside. The research revealed that on average, children nowadays play outside for four



**Spending time
outdoors can make a
massive difference to
your life, writes
Colm Fitzpatrick**

hours a week, whereas parents scored 8.2 hours a week when they were kids. This statistic is a startling reminder that the world of leisure has shifted substantially in the last decade or so. No longer are kids congregating in the streets to play Red Rover or Blind Man's Bluff but are now focused intently on games you can play at home.

The main cause of this phenomenon is unequivocally due to the technological revolution that has completely reshaped how we interact with others and spend our lives. Leisure is mostly confined to computers and phone screens where we can live out simulations for hours on end. So pervasive and addictive online

gaming is today that the NHS has recently set up a centre for Internet and Gaming Disorders.

NHS chief executive Simon Stevens said: "Gaming disorder is defined by the World Health Organisation as a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour so severe that it takes "precedence over other life interests".

"Symptoms include impaired control over gaming, increased priority to gaming and continuation or escalation of gaming despite negative consequences – such as the impact on relationships, social life, studying and work life or spiralling financial costs."

It's not just gaming that is sucking up children's time, staring at screens in general

makes up large proportion of a young person's day. According to a study carried out by market research firm Childwise, children aged 5-16 spend an average of six and a half hours per day in front of a screen, with teenage boys totting up 8 hours daily.

Speaking about this issue, Muriel Bailey, Director for Family Support Services of Parenting NI, says that the issue now is that children "have so much access to online tools, social media, games, and it's a whole different type of world" compared to even a decade ago.

"Probably what parents are finding is that they need to work harder at getting children more interested in being outside whenever other things are

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Family News

AND EVENTS

WICKLOW CHRISTMAS MARKET

During December, Christmas markets are installed across the world and Ireland is no different to this practice. The Wicklow market which begins on November 23 and lasts three weeks will offer a selection of local artisan foods, decorations, gifts, workshops and even a visit from Santa himself! This year, there will also be a number of music and entertainment bookings to keep you amused along with a magical family funfair. Whether you're local or coming from Dublin City Centre or even further a-field, this promises to be an event worth going to, accessible by both car and public transport. Bus Eireann's 133 will drop you right outside the grounds, the train dropping you at Wicklow Town station 5 minutes away, and ample parking spaces within walking distance of The Abbey Grounds. This is a non-ticketed event.

HOT WEATHER LEAVES YOU BLUE

It's understandable to think that the cold weather contributes to experiencing negative mental health – but a new study has revealed that a hotter climate may be more responsible for psychological problems. The research carried out by US scientists and published in the *Journal of Health Economics* shows that cooler temperatures decrease the level of adverse mental health outcomes and that warmer temperatures increase negative health outcomes. The authors collated vast amounts of information about suicide rates, emergency department visits, and self-reported mental health statuses to reach their conclusions. They believe the phenomenon may be the result of increased sleep disturbances which occur more frequently in hot weather. "While it is possible that temperature independently affects both sleep and mental health in a similar manner, we argue that this is not likely to be the case as other research documents a strong link between poor sleep and measures of mental health that are unrelated to temperature."

SOGGY SOAP SOLUTION

With calls to be more conscious about our ecological impact, soap bars are now in back in vogue. Rather than showering or bathing with a bar, most people have opted for plastic bottles of shampoo and conditioner as advertised on television. But given that this kind of consumption can damage our planet, naturally-made bars are finding their place in homes again because they're much kinder to the environment. There is one problem with them: they get slippery, sticky and soggy. If you find one on a bathroom sink, you'll probably see a whole lot of soapy residue when you pick it up. A simple solution to this problem is to purchase or make your own soap stand. There are many on the market made of different materials, so have a look around to see what best fits your taste.



Analogies are dying, and proper debates with them

Analogy is a powerful aid to the truth-seeker. By comparing two relevantly similar situations, you can move from conclusions about one to conclusions about the other. Analogies can help expose inconsistencies: ('how would you react if these accusations were being made against Bill Clinton rather than Donald Trump?') or to help make a difficult or complex point more understandable. C.S. Lewis's BBC radio lectures that make up his book *Mere Christianity* are full of analogies, and he would have been a far worse apologist if he'd been somehow blocked from using them. Philosophers use analogies constantly, and we'd similarly suffer if deprived of them – as, I think, would discussions and arguments in society at large.

What's that you say? Blocked from using analogies? How would such a thing happen? Well, dear reader, I think that such a thing is already happening: not by some bizarre act of government censorship, but through a very stupid and increasingly widespread error. You find it on Twitter and Facebook, yes, but also in national newspapers and RTE. And by crippling our ability to use analogies, it's making it harder for any of us to have meaningful debates.

What is this error? I'm going to call it the Standard Analogy Mistake, or SAM for short. Whenever a person in SAM's evil grip sees an analogy that makes a point they don't like, they act as if the analogy-maker is comparing two situations in some respect other than the one that the analogy-maker intended. They then use this comparison to discredit the analogiser as offensive or stupid, thus avoiding having to engage with any of their actual points.



Everyday philosophy

Ben Conroy

Fatal Mistake

If that sounds very dry, let me make it more vivid, imagine with me a scene in the assembly in ancient Athens:

Socrates: "... and that is why I humbly submit that we should lower the speed limit for chariots in central Athens to one hundred and sixty stadions per hour."

Thrasymachus: "Hah! Socrates is at it again! Socrates, you timid fool: if you don't like speeding, simply don't speed! (CROWD ROARS) Nobody is forcing you to go quickly if it's too much for you!"

Socrates: "I am sure that I am a timid fool, Thrasymachus, but I have to ask if this line of reasoning would work in another situation."

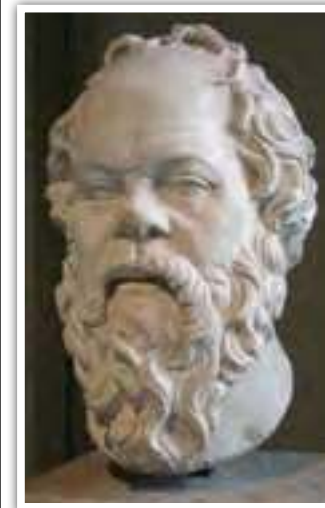
Thrasymachus: "Go on then." Socrates: "If you will humour me; what if I were to say to you 'Thrasymachus, if you don't like enslaving Greek citizens who are in no debt, simply do not enslave any yourself?' Would you think that sufficed as an argument against a ban on making free citizens into slaves?"

Narrator: It was here that Socrates made his fatal mistake.

Thrasymachus (roaring triumphantly): "Socrates, you imbecile! Are you really comparing the question of speed limits in Athens to enslaving citizens?" (Crowd roars again)

Socrates: "No, Thrasymachus, I was merely making a point about the structure of the argum..."

Thrasymachus (howling): "Absurd, Socrates! You blithering idiot! You absolute cretin! (Crowd goes wild) Imagine thinking that going a bit fast around a corner is as bad as making a free citizen a



vassal? You Buffoon!"

Crowd (in hysterics): "Down with Socrates! Down with Socrates!"

Poor old Socrates is trying to show that 'if you don't think x is good, just don't do x' is a very bad argument against banning x. He's using an analogy to demonstrate Thrasymachus' flawed reasoning: specifically,

he is trying to show that Thrasymachus is endorsing a principle which he himself would refuse to apply in many other situations. But Thrasymachus misreads Socrates, applying the Standard Analogy Mistake and acting like Socrates is comparing breaking the speed limit to slavery in terms of moral seriousness, rather than noting that both arguments rely on the same bad principle. The crowd, instead of noticing Thrasymachus's idiocy, are themselves gripped by SAM and cheer him on.

This happens constantly. A pro-choice speaker declares, "If you don't want an abortion, don't have one!" An argument as empty as Thrasymachus's. Ideally, we could quickly dispense with this sort of thing by saying "right, great argument, pal: so if you don't like slavery, don't own a slave, nobody's forcing you to" and get back to the real discussion. But if you try this, you'll inevitably hear something like this: "I think it's horribly offensive that you'd compare pregnant women in crisis to slaveowners". The texters, tweeters, and probably the host will all agree, and that's the end of the analogy. And thus, an argument that would be embarrassing from a first-year philosophy student becomes a standard trope in the national conversation.

If you want to avoid SAM, you have to either spend so long carefully qualifying your analogies that they lose most of their elegance and persuasive force; or you have to stop using them altogether. And that, dear reader, is how the analogy dies out.

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possibly seen as more attractive inside.”

It isn't fully clear what long-term effects our obsession with technology will have, but there is no doubt that it truncates outside social play. Instead of calling over to your friend's house to build a fort, why not make one online instead? This mentality has driven kids out of the playground and into the virtual ground.

Those unhappy about this change may be ridiculed for their old-fashioned views – perhaps we should all wholeheartedly embrace this new form of leisure and abandon any reservations we may be harbouring. The problem with this viewpoint is that it ignores the important benefits playing outside have on young people. There are positives to be garnered from having fun outdoors that can't be reproduced indoors:

- **Physical fitness** – By running around, jumping and lifting, children are unconsciously exercising. These forms of aerobic activity make you fitter and reduce the chances of developing obesity.
- **Cognitive agility** – Outside games allow you to be more creative; sticks can become wands and trees can be transformed into skyscrapers in an imaginary city. With endless possibilities to devise while you explore and learn about the environment around you, your mind will become more inventive and agile.
- **Friendly faces** – It's true that you can develop long-lasting friendships online; they are no lesser than ones created in person. However, by playing with other people who are physically with you, your interpersonal skills will improve and teach you the importance of physical contact with others.
- **Nurturing nature** – Nature has a lot to offer, it can make us feel less stressed and look at the world in a different way. If all our time is focused on a screen, then it will be hard to appreciate the joy of digging up soil or making paper boats to sail down a stream.

While the benefits of playing outside are obvious, stating them is not enough to convince most kids to get out of the house. Given how addictive technology has become, the prospect of playing 'Hide and Seek' may not sound very appealing. In this vein, it might be helpful to acclimatise your kids to the great outdoors by going on adventures and outings with them.

A great way to for kids to appreciate the beauty of nature is by going camping. By disconnecting yourself from the world of wires and websites, by focusing on building fires and toasting marshmallows, the wilderness might seem like a more interesting place than they previously realised. It's in this environment that young people can learn about the flora and fauna of Ireland's landscape. The games played at home might seem less alluring after a weekend away climbing trees and sleeping under the stars. Going camping isn't just for the kids either; parents should also abide by the digital detox and soak up some nature.

Camping is a truly immersive experience but you can't head out to the middle of nowhere and set up a tent every weekend – life usually gets in the way of those kinds of



adventures. Given that's the case, try doing simple outdoor activities with your kids like walking twice a week, visiting a local park or going for a bike ride. If you spend a large proportion of your time outside, your kids will probably emulate that behaviour. Along with these outings, you can also visit national parks and zoos as well as teach your kids gardening.

“Older kids might be more interested in fishing, flying a kite on the beach or learning different games that you played as a child.”

Muriel Bailey of Parenting NI advises that you do activities that are age-appropriate – if your children are very young then take them to the park, point out different types of trees or have a look at the different animals in the countryside.

Older kids might be more interested in fishing, flying a kite on the beach or learning different games that you played as a child.

There's no denying the virtual world has taken grip of children's leisure time and as technology continues to advance, remaining in the house with a controller will become more enticing. The gaming world should not be denigrated – there are immense benefits from playing on computers and other devices. However, this should not replace exploring the outdoors and playing physical games with other kids. Muriel says that indoor activities mustn't be “discredited”, but that there has to be a “happy medium” between the two. A fine balance needs to be broached where children can play with both the control stick and the wooden one you find a garden.

For more information about the importance of playing outside, see: <https://www.parentingni.org/>

Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



I am currently organising an event for my mother – or I should say in memory of my mother. Next year it will be fifty years since she died and I believe that it is important to mark that. It seems to me that the best way to do that is to gather her family, back on the sacred ground where she grew up. So, at the end of June we will have a Mass in the local parish which she walked to regularly with her sisters, brother and parents. There will be music at that Mass, not because my mother came from a family that was musical but because I believe we need to celebrate my mother's life and so we need good liturgy. This is not a sombre anniversary Mass but as I've said, a celebration of life, my mother and all those others within this extended family who have made us who we are.

Word has gone out to the cousins. Plenty of notice has been given so that holiday plans could perhaps wait a few days. Aunts and uncles have been informed, particularly my uncle Joe who lives in the home place and has agreed to have a marquee set up in his garden to accommodate the forty or fifty people we expect. There will be some food from a local caterer but really it will be a little like the Gospel story of the loaves and fishes. The cousins will be asked to bring something to share – a salad here, a dessert there – so that ultimately all will be well fed.

I can think of no better way to remember my mother than this gathering. My mother was a quiet woman but I think she would delight in the chat and the craic, the cousins catching up, her own siblings in the midst of it, the next generation probably chasing each other – and the dog – round the tables. It is also about the sense of place. Kiltobanks is a sacred place for me because it is where our roots are. It was where the cousins met up in the summer – coming from the corners of Ireland. It is where relation-

ships were forged that have lasted down the years.

For me there was also something special about Kiltobanks and Roscommon in the seventies – it was a safe place. We were coming from Strabane in the early years of the Troubles. I remember being mesmerised that in Kiltobanks we could be out late



at night, in the dark. We could go into town and not be worried. At the time there was an increasing military presence in Strabane, with barriers manned by soldiers performing security checks before they would let a car into the middle of the town for fear it was another car bomb. So even though as a young child I wouldn't have had the words to express it, Kiltobanks was an oasis of peace.

It was also the place where my beloved Granny lived. Being my mother's mother, my Granny held a very special place in my heart and when I was with her, I felt closer to my mother and that wee bit less lonely. My Granny also influenced my growing faith in a quiet but profound way. God was such a clear and obvious reality to her and consequently to me.

At that Mass in Lisacul we will gather, strengthening and rebuilding relationships, we will listen to the Word of God, we will meet around one table to be nourished by the bread of life. From there we will go to a marquee in my Uncle Joe's garden and there those same vital elements of liturgy will be echoed – we will gather, reconnect, listen, share and remember.

Creating a Church open to change

Personal Profile



The African Church can teach us more about Ireland than we think, Colm Fitzpatrick learns

With over 30 years of missionary experience in Ghana, a Kerry-based priest believes the Irish Church can learn a lot from its African counterpart.

The second eldest of eight children, Fr Patsy Lynch who serves as parish priest of Ballinskelligs (Prior), began his vocational life in 1974 after he was ordained an SMA Father (Society of African Missions). The Catholic missionary organisation is motivated to give witness to the Christian message chiefly among Africans and peoples of African origins.

"I was appointed to Ghana where I worked for 31 years. It seems like a long time, as you know time flies. It was very challenging and very rewarding to work in Ghana," Fr Patsy says, adding that it's one of the few sub-Saharan countries that's stable and is even used as a model for other similar places to emulate.

While 50 years ago Ghana was in dire need of missionaries, Fr Patsy explains that during his time there the Christian population became much stronger, making his work more-or-less unneeded. Indeed, around 71% of the country is now Christian, three million of

which are Catholic.

"I could see the whole situation changing from being dependent on missionaries to becoming self-sufficient, and you know the goal of a missionary is to make himself redundant."

"...I said our job here is done and we moved on to another pastoral situation and then left the indigenous to take over."

This realisation prompted him, after plenty of reflection and prayer, to return to Ireland in 2005 where he worked for his society. However, a life cut off from parishioners didn't "satisfy" him and so Fr Patsy was appointed to Kerry's St Brendan's parish – the same place he was ordained over three decades prior.

His decision to become a priest was strongly influenced by the

religious who frequented the primary schools to speak about vocations. Pupils were asked to write a letter if they were interested in religious life, and while he initially got cold feet, Fr Patsy explains that when his headmaster suggested "without even looking" at him that he should think about the letter, he chose to write it. After secondary school he decided that the priesthood was the best choice for him and he never looked back.

He was one of five people ordained in St Brendan's church that day in 1974; an event which he vividly remembers given that the parish priest had "a massive heart attack during the offertory procession. He was carried out and after the service was over, we were

informed that he had passed away".

Having been a priest for 45 years, most of which was spent in Ghana, Fr Patsy believes that Irish laity can learn from their Christian brothers and sisters in Africa. In particular, the biggest difference between the two is that those abroad are "way more active", he says.

"We are gradually being compelled because of the scarcity of priests for the lay people to become more and more involved and I find it very difficult...it's very challenging," Fr Patsy continues.

"I just don't seem to understand – some people are very good – but we're not getting the level of involvement and commitment that I would like to see."

His quandary cannot be ignored; Ireland has seen a sharp decline

in clergy in the last three decades and if traditional structures and practices are not refined or completely changed to take this into consideration, then the Church will no longer be effective in its evangelical mission. For Fr Patsy, lay people are instrumental in the future well-being of the Church and a Ghanaian model is perhaps a good starting point to see what this route could look like.

"[In Ghana] each of those churches had their own community, they saw the priest maybe once every three months, but they had their community, there was morning prayer, there was evening prayer, they visited the sick, funerals were organised, fundraising was organised," he says, adding that that same type of involvement is not present in Ireland.

Stressing that the Church is the 'People of God', Fr Patsy notes that we are still living in an era where the "priest does everything" but that the Church would thrive with more help from lay people who have incredible gifts to offer.

"We have such talented and gifted people, some of them are retired civil servants, they have a wealth of experience and the Church would benefit enormously to tap into that and get them to take ownership."

While Fr Patsy isn't tending to his parishioners and encouraging more lay people to get involved in Church life, he's snapping photos of "beautiful scenery" like landscapes and wildlife. Explaining that photography derives from the Greek 'drawing with light', Fr Patsy says he's been repeatedly told he has "the eye" for the craft. It's certainly true that a picture can speak a thousand words, but that doesn't mean his advice for the Irish Church isn't worth listening to.



Love Notes

Wendy Grace

Reviving date nights without babysitters

Both myself and my husband used to be really good at getting out on a 'date night' but, since we have had our first baby, she isn't ready to be babysat and I feel at this point we wouldn't be able to leave her for a few hours, but lack of time out is having an impact on our relationship.

I think many couples with young children will identify with this issue. In so many other columns I advise a weekly date night for the overall health and wellbeing of your relationship with your spouse.

During this stage when you have a newborn, my advice is to change your mind set as to what a 'date night' needs to entail. It doesn't have to involve babysitters and taxis and fine dining. A date night, in essence, is a chance for you and your spouse to chat, to laugh and to

connect, this doesn't always need a babysitter.

Pick a night in the week that you will get a stress free, no-fuss dinner, perhaps a 'dine in' ready meal that needs no preparation or cleaning, set the table with your best crockery, open your favourite bottle of wine and light some candles, you bring the restaurant to your home. You will be amazed at how taking these steps will make you feel you're a million miles away from the baby you just put to sleep. It's really important that you make a special effort on this night and ensure that you do it at least once a week, and remember the dishes can wait until the morning! It needs to be in your calendar the same way it would be if you were leaving the house for dinner, otherwise, it just won't happen. Then you need to take other steps.

You know all those offers of help from friends and family? Take them! So you can't give your children to a babysitter just yet, take up that offer of help by going to a family or friend's house

during the day and simply going for a coffee or for lunch for an hour somewhere close by while they watch the baby, that way if you are needed you are just around the corner but you will still get to enjoy some 'baby free' time together.

You need to be creative in your thinking, you could go for lunch with one another in a shopping centre and ask a friend or family member to just walk the baby while you eat. Different scenarios will work for different people, maybe you have friends with a small baby. Can you help each other out? You could take their baby for an hour while they grab a coffee and then they do the same for you upon their return? Really it's all about thinking outside the box and deciding that getting some alone time together, be it for a walk, a coffee or an extra special meal at home is very important and you will do what it takes to make it happen. Ultimately looking after your relationship and being strong together as a couple will help you to be good parents and care for your new baby so you should make a plan today on how it can be made the priority that it deserves to be.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Softness shines through harshness of Flats

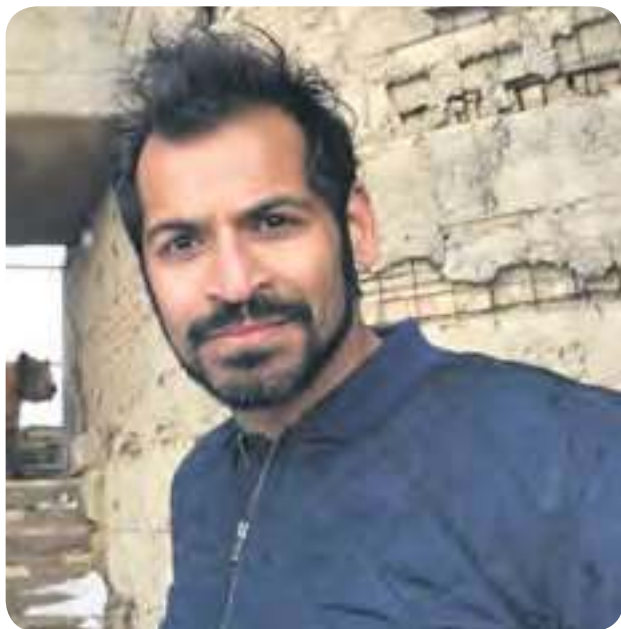
We can get very parochial, and not in a good, value-your-parish kind of way. More and more I find this about so many aspects of Irish media, and public life in general. We think our issues are of global significance, sometimes a laughable hubris in the eyes of the universe.

These thoughts were prompted by last Friday's **Unreported World** (Channel 4). Subtitled 'Schools Under Siege', it looked at gang wars in the Capetown Flats area in South Africa and how a local school gets caught in the crossfire between the warring drug gangs - the principal showed us the bullet holes in the school building.

Primary school children behind the school fence were chanting for peace, but the real fear was that many of these same children would get drawn into the gangs, and before they got much older.

The statistics were horrifying - 47 people murdered over the weekend the film crew visited, 1,000 children murdered in the last five years, a six-year old girl killed in crossfire soon after the crew left.

It's part of the style of the programme that the reporter, in this case Adnan Sarwar, is central to the story, and perhaps too much so. Supportive and empathic, he focused on a young boy Mariezaan,



Channel 4 reporter Adnan Sarwar.

cheerful in school, but getting caught up in the violence - he had already started a junior gang and carried a scissors for self-defence, his father used heroin and hung out with gang members, his mother was a former drug addict.

Softness

Yet his inherent softness was painfully obvious in an insightful interview when he was in tears talking about his mother and their close bond - he wanted to get her to a better place and that bond kept him from getting more deeply involved with the gangs.

His simple words hit home

- "I can change everything of me but not my family...every night we pray...I can't handle all the stuff at home". Though I'd like to have seen the school situation getting more attention, it was a hugely thought provoking episode, and should give us all perspective on the things we complain about at home.

That same day, **RTÉ News** had extensive coverage of the Youth Assembly on Climate Change in Leinster House. These children could discuss the things that bothered them without the danger of being shot in crossfire. They are privileged, though I don't

mean that in a bad sense - nowadays it seems as if one must apologise for being so. How idealistic and articulate they were was impressive, though I think there is a danger of climate alarmism and hysteria that will not ultimately serve their cause.

And I was struck by the irony of these children having discussions in the same chamber where their very right to be born was legislated away so recently.

Some of a conservative leaning can be very dismissive of young climate change activists, and yes there are valid concerns, but would such critics be complaining if there was a mass movement of children campaigning and school-striking to regain their right to be born?

I suspect such critics would cheer, but also reckon that the powers-that-be would then revert to talking about 'exclusion zones' and 'the integrity of the school year'.

Speaking of integrity, I was impressed by religious affairs journalists Anne Thompson and Inés San Martín who were interviewed by Michael Comyn last Friday on **The Leap of Faith** (RTÉ Radio 1). These American journalists have covered all matters Catholic in the last few years, Thompson for **NBC** and San Martín for **CruxNow**.



Anne Thompson (NBC).

PICK OF THE WEEK

NEW! POPE FRANCIS IN THAILAND & JAPAN

EWTN, Saturday (night), November 23, 1.15 am, also Sunday, November 24, 11am

Message on Nuclear Weapons: Live from the Atomic Bomb Hypocenter Park in Nagasaki, Japan. Start of extensive EWTN coverage of the visit.

SCHOOLS ON THE FRONTLINE

BBC1 NI, Monday, November 24, pm, BBC 2 NI, Thursday, November 28, 11.15pm

Through powerful and revealing interviews, these are the stories of pupils and teachers whose lives were forever changed by the violence in Northern Ireland.

A PROFILE IN COURAGE: FR JOHN F HARVEY, OSFS

EWTN, Thursday (night), November 28, 3am

The story of Fr John F. Harvey, the founding director of 'Courage', a ministry to persons with same-sex attraction.

that good news always pops up!

She acknowledged the good will in the Vatican media section but said they really needed a bigger team. Thompson also thought the Vatican needed to be quicker with their responses - in relation to the devastating Pennsylvania Report on clerical child abuse she found responses slow - nowadays, she said, people don't want to wait, the world expects and is used to prompt responses.

I get the point, but reflection is needed too - they'd want to get it somewhere between knee-jerk and slow!

The truth doesn't always mean bad news - she said

that good news always pops up!

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I get the point, but reflection is needed too - they'd want to get it somewhere between knee-jerk and slow!

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
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Pat O'Kelly

Music

Free-flowing musicians meet the standard...and then some

Time was when RTÉ ran its own 'Musician of the Future' competition. However, the scene changed with the station deciding to discontinue its involvement. This disappointed many not least Jane Carty who had a long-term commitment to the competition and other RTÉ ventures advancing the careers of young musicians. Undaunted, Ms Carty decided 'Musician of the Future' was too valuable a project to become a distant memory.

Her enthusiasm, and that of a few like-minded supporters, found favour with the Irish Freemasons who have been the staunch backbone of the competition for the past ten years with, not surprisingly, quite an input from the



Jane Carty.

indefatigable Jane Carty.

Now titled 'The Irish Freemasons' Musician of the Year',

the competition is somewhat different in that their respective colleges select those taking part. Last month 12 young artists came to the fore.

Chaired by Jane Carty, the international jury included members from home and abroad with one - Maighread McCrann, concertmaster of Austrian Radio's Symphony Orchestra based in Vienna - having a foot in both camps. After semi-finals, the jury whittled the original dozen down to four and these presented a finale recital in the Freemasons' Hall in Dublin's Molesworth Street. This will be broadcast later by RTÉ Lyric FM.

Those participating were saxophonist Robert Finegan from Dublin's Technical Uni-

versity; violinist Molly O'Shea representing Cork's School of Music and oboist Ben Gaynor with pianist Órán Halligan waving the RIAM banner.

As with many a competition, I rarely agree with juries' decisions, but never mind. I was particularly taken by Robert Finegan's expressive and virtuosic playing in John Buckley's balletic solo sax *Arabesque* while works by Paul Creston and Jules Demersseman were no less engagingly interpreted. Still, for him the jury decided on the €1,250 fourth prize.

First prize

The €5,000 first prize went to Órán Halligan, admittedly a brilliant young pianist with astonishing technique who,

besides Liszt's *Two Legends*, made Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara's *2nd Sonata*, dating from 1970, the main trust of his quasi-religious programme. Subtitled *The Fire Sermon*, the extravagantly percussive piece seemed, at times, not all that far removed from Bartók.

Molly O'Shea chose off-the-beaten-track pieces by Szymanowski, Shostakovich and Weinberg. Her dig into the classics unearthed Mozart's *K 261 Adagio*, which she played with grace and elegance. Molly was the recipient of the €3,000 second prize.

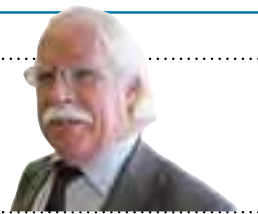
All that left Ben Gaynor with the €1,500 third prize. He made Mozart's *K 314 Oboe Concerto* the principal feature of his recital. I found his tone a

little dry but maybe the Hall's acoustic had something to do with that. Yet Mozart's slow movement had him delicately assured and he also conveyed the jovial elements in Gabriel Grovlez' *Allegro*.

● Away from Molesworth Street, Cork pianist Kevin Jansson has received this year's €15,000 RDS bursary to enable him to study at New York's Julliard School, while another Corkonian - cellist Michael Murphy - took the €5,000 first prize in the [Fr] 'Frank Maher Classical Music Award'. Top Security chairman, Emmet O'Rafferty, presents the prize annually in memory of his revered music teacher at Castleknock College.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



‘Christmas is coming...’ – books



Dipping into Advent: Reflections for Advent & Christmas
by Alan Hilliard
(Messenger Publications, €9.95)

Sacred Space: Advent & Christmas 2019-2020
by The Irish Jesuits
(Messenger Publications, €4.95)

Candles in the Night: The Advent Experience
by Anna Burke
(Veritas, €7.99/£7.00)

Peter Costello

Whatever about family feasting, fun and commercial excess, Christmas for Christians of all traditions around the world is a special time of the year, no matter whether it is celebrated in December or January according to the local ecclesiastical calendar.

It is a time of the year when a sense of solidarity in the message of the Gospels, should pervade not only the world of faith and family, but the whole world of humanity.

Here are some books for Advent which will help set



the special spirit of the season for many people.

These three booklets are intended for those in a hurry – and who isn't these days? They fit easily into pocket, brief-case or bag, and provide a sort of spiritual snack, perhaps to go with the hastily grabbed coffee on-the-go.

Of these the one by Alan

Hilliard is certainly the more engaging. His lucky dip approach brings up not only snippets of his own family life, and adult experiences, but a great many other things.

How surprising, for instance, to find one of his reflections devoted to that almost forgotten writer, one so well known to older gen-

erations, 'Fr John O'Brien', the author of *Around the Boree Log* (1921), sentimental verses drawn from the lives of Irish Catholics out in Australia in the early decades of the last century.

Ancestors

We still have our people 'down under', though for

Shamrocks in the 'melting pot'

The Tribe: The Inside Story of Irish Power and Influence in US Politics

by Caitríona Perry
(Gill Books, €22.99/
£19.99)

Felix M. Larkin

It is often said that the US is a "melting pot", a fusion of nationalities and ethnicities – but that is true only to some extent. Many Americans, even those whose ancestors came over on the Mayflower, retain a strong sense of their non-American antecedents.

This helps define their social and cultural identity, and their politics. Irish-Americans are no different in this respect from other hyphenated Americans, though they have been better organised and therefore more powerful politically than most of the others – especially in the major urban areas of the north-east and mid-western states, where they tended to settle upon arrival in America.

Are they still a force to be reckoned with in US politics? That is the question Caitríona Perry seeks to address in this book, and



she was well placed to do it as RTE's former Washington correspondent – and highly acclaimed in that role.

The book is based largely on interviews with a wide range of Irish-American politicians – including Congressman Brian Boyle, now the only member of the US Congress with an Irish-born parent, and Mick Mulvaney, former congressman and President

Trump's Acting Chief of Staff.

“The book is based largely on interviews with Irish-American politicians”

The current Irish ambassador in Washington, Dan Mulhall, and his

predecessor, Anne Anderson, have also been interviewed by Perry and their insights on Irish power and influence in the US today are of particular interest.

There is much – too much – direct reporting of these interviews, and this results in a somewhat disjointed and repetitive book.

However, the message that is conveyed is crystal clear: “Irish-America as a cohesive

political voting bloc is dead and gone”.

While Irish-Americans have rallied around certain candidates in the past – notably, presidents Kennedy, Reagan and Clinton – it is generally agreed that this could not now be repeated. Irish-America is every bit as divided on political matters as the rest of the US. Drawing a positive conclusion from that, Perry

points out that this “is a sign of a mature and assimilated population”.

The most obvious sign of the new political divisions within the ranks of Irish-Americans is that they no longer vote solidly for the Democratic Party. Thus, many of them supported Trump against Hillary Clinton in 2016 despite the overwhelming support her husband received from the



Caitríona Perry at work in USA for RTE; left, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar presenting US President Donald Trump with the traditional bowl of St Patrick's day shamrocks in Washington.

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.

for Advent *An Ireland that's becoming increasingly for the birds*

many of them it is a very different life they are seeking to that their ancestors knew there. This may be an Advent book, of a sort, but it is one which many readers will find gives pleasure and insight all year round.

“They fit easily into pocket, brief-case or bag, and provide a sort of spiritual snack”

The book has indeed a year round purpose, as Hilliard mentions in the beginning. Talking about the deep and rapid changes that have taken place he remarks that “we are moving away as a society from a faith supported by hierarchy and structure” – this has left many people in the lurch. “The reflections in this book challenge you to dip into the real spirit of the season. You may like some and not others, and this may change from day to day.”

This is certainly a little book to buy, and also readers might add to his earlier book,

Dipping into Lent (Messenger Publications, €7.95).

Perhaps by now readers of this paper do not need much reminding about the pleasures and benefits to be derived from the Jesuit website *Sacred Space*. This booklet is what you might call a pocket spin-off and provides the familiar, though still popular resource of a Scripture reading, reflections on them and a special weekly topic, this is more directly focused on the coming season in all its aspects.

Sr Anna O'Brien provides some 20 short chapters, not so much keyed to daily reading, as to a very varied set of daily reflections all built up around the idea of Advent, beginning with waiting and preparing, and ending with the coming of Emmanuel.

Contrasting with the other two books, but in a way enhances what they also set out to do: to prepare for the coming of the infant Jesus and the essential meaning of Christmas, which has to be love, peace and reconciliation between person and person, individual and God.

Ireland Through Birds: Journeys in search of a wild nation

by Conor W. O'Brien
(Merrion Press, €16.95)

Christopher Moriarty

Like many, perhaps the majority of, birdwatchers, Conor W. O'Brien became addicted to the hobby in childhood. He shares his joy in encounters with birds and the wild environment in general in this remarkable book.

Taking 12 spectacular species, he pursues each one in a different location. The chosen spots range from remote islands, through Dublin's Phoenix Park to the sacred valley of Glendalough and a few other varieties of mainland habitats. The result is a *pot-pourri* of descriptions of the 12 birds and of the country he walks through in their pursuit together with a scattering of folklore and local history.

There are many items of great interest which serve, above all else, to demonstrate the success of conservationists, both amateur and professional, in preserving substantial examples of just about every major type of habitat that existed in Ireland prior to the 20th Century.

Good work

This good work has succeeded in maintaining the survival in our country of all of the species which were present in its earliest years. While a very small number are 'endangered' and receiving special attention, a much more significant development has been the increase in numbers of many once scarce species and the arrival



Bird-haunted Glendalough, only one of many finer natural resources.

to stay of a number previously either unknown on our island or once present and hunted to extinction.

“Taking 12 spectacular species, the author pursues each one in a different location”

One of the most impressive of the author's 12 birds is the goosander and the place where he goes to see it, Glendalough, is justly famed far and wide for a great deal more than its avifauna.

An exceptionally handsome, colourfully marked white drake with fish-eating habits far removed from those of most of the hundreds of other duck species, it was virtually unknown in Ireland until the second half of the 20th Century.

Then a number of pairs arrived and settled to breed. Their arrival presented the wildlife authorities with a problem. At about the same time, one of the rarest, most beautiful and most treas-

ured of Ireland's native furry beasts, the pine marten was also enjoying resurgence.

Pine martens eat the eggs and young of goosander if they can. So steps, apparently successful, to accommodate both have been taken and are described in relationship to Glendalough.

O'Brien recounts, for the same valley, some legends of St Kevin relating to his care for wild birds and animals. However embellished and unlikely the old tales may be, they point to a concern for nature by one of the leading minds of his time and this suggests that such considerations may have widely been accepted.

They certainly show that the concept of care for the environment has a long, if interrupted, history in Ireland.

If the author embarks on another book it must be earnestly hoped that he finds a

good copy editor and that he will avoid brief and simplistic 'explanations' of the behaviour of the birds that he describes and their scarcity or abundance.

He is far from being the only writer on birds who seem to be unaware that the meaningful study of their behaviour is so complex and time-consuming that very few species have ever been satisfactorily covered. It is relatively easy to describe what a species does – almost impossible to explain why and attempted explanations by and large serve to irritate rather than enlighten.

Readers, whatever their knowledge of birds and the environment, will be irritated by the occasions of questionable adjectives, frequent misspellings and a somewhat cavalier order of paragraphs.

Despite this, it's a book which many devotees of the outdoor world will enjoy.

Irish-American community in 1992 and 1996.

This reflects the growing affluence of Irish-Americans, but issues such as gay marriage and abortion have also caused many Irish-Americans to abandon their long association with the Democrats. On these issues – and also on issues such as partition and support for violent republicanism – Irish-America is more traditional in its views than the majority of the Irish at home in Ireland.

Differences

The differences between Irish-America and the homeland are perhaps not fully appreciated on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, and it is good to be reminded by Perry that “there is a difference between Ireland as it is and Irish-America's perception of it” and that “Irish-America is not Ireland; it is, at best, a distant relative”.

These differences and the collapse of the Irish-American voting bloc have not, however, compromised what Perry calls the “soft power, a quiet influence,”

that Irish-America and, by extension, the island of Ireland continue to enjoy in America.

This is plainly in evidence each year on St Patrick's Day, an occasion for high-profile festivities throughout the US and some serious networking between senior Irish and US political figures in Washington – including the much-hyped presentation of a bowl of shamrock to the President at the White House.

No other group of hyphenated Americans and the representatives of the country from whence they came get such access to the elite of American politics – and, as Anne Anderson points out in her interview recorded in this book, “there is a spillover from St Patrick's Day that lasts year-round, and that is why that access is so precious”.

It underpins a relationship between Ireland and the US that is characterised by Perry as one “that lies in the background, unsullied by partisanship, greater than the leaders of the day in both counties”.

Fr. Con Buckley

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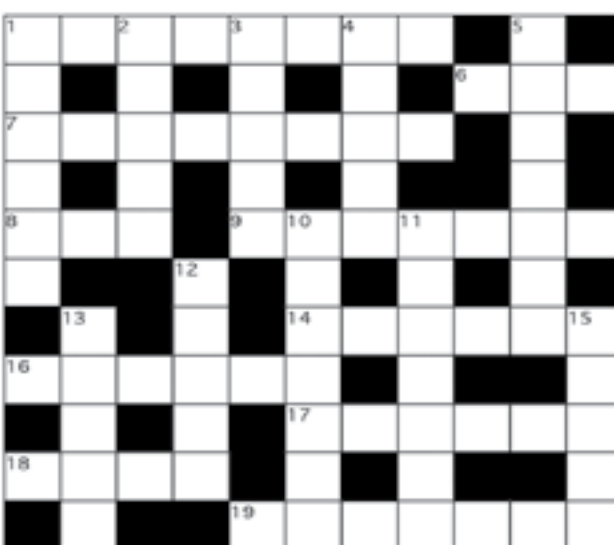
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Crossword Junior

Gordius 309



ACROSS

- 1 In rugby kick the ball over it for a drop goal, penalty or conversion (8)
- 6 A half-dozen (3)
- 7 What is spoken in a particular country (8)
- 8 Finish (3)
- 9 Sea fish (7)
- 14 Part of garment in which you may put money, a hankie or other things (6)
- 16 You might travel by gondola in this city of canals (6)
- 17 Write this down to show how to cook or bake something (6)
- 18 Costing nothing (4)
- 19 Pals (7)
- 1 Baby cows (6)
- 2 Possessed (5)
- 3 This direction is opposite to North (5)
- 4 The feeling of being furious (5)
- 5 It happens when there's absolutely no sound (7)
- 10 He rules over an empire (7)
- 11 Use the bottle bank, perhaps (7)
- 12 How much you must pay to buy something (5)
- 13 Goldilocks met three of them (5)
- 15 Oaks or sycamores, perhaps (5)

SOLUTIONS, NOVEMBER 14

GORDIUS No. 429

Across – 1 Bob 3 Lightweight 8 Runway 9 Pleasant 11 Trend 13 Moses 15 Bows out 16 Deposit 20 Honey 21 Hovel 23 Plump 24 Renovate 25 Colder 26 Wherewithal 27 Red

Down – 1 Burning bush 2 Bungalow 3 Lease 4 Hapless 5 Exact 6 Graven image 7 Tit 12 Distempered 13 Mouth 14 Seedy 17 Shoulder 18 Inspect 19 Avenue 22 Levee 23 Prowl 24 Row

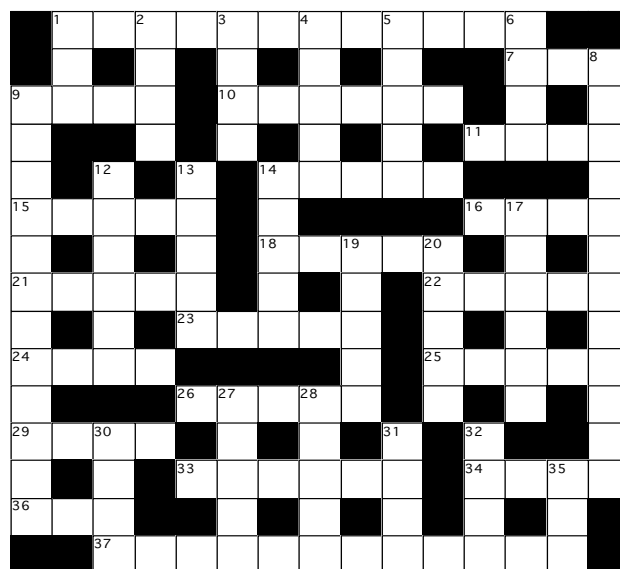
CHILDREN'S No. 308

Across – 1 Back door 6 Sea 7 Orchard 8 Equal 10 Liar 11 Vixen 12 Trap 14 Egg 16 And 18 Raisin 21 Tomato 22 See 23 Neat

Down – 1 Blog 2 Cock 3 Dealing 4 Order 5 Pail 6 Squares 9 Lion 10 Lee 13 Pan 15 Great 16 Aims 17 Date 19 Iron 20 Idea

Crossword

Gordius 430



ACROSS

- 1 How could a beekeeper suit a culprit? (12)
- 7 Strike occurring during Whit Sunday (3)
- 9 Travelled by air (4)
- 10 What may look decorative are not, perhaps (6)
- 11 Bet made before cards are dealt (4)
- 14 Group of lions (5)
- 15 Auctioneer's hammer (5)
- 16 & 18 Enjoyment with this has its ups and downs! (4,5)
- 21 Period of rule (5)
- 22 A huge nautical cry (5)
- 23 A cardinal in part of the ship will assume a position of prayer (5)
- 24 The flower of pink wine? (4)
- 25 The God of Islam (5)
- 26 Order toast for the creature (5)
- 29 They're edible? That's crazy! (4)
- 33 Our ape has moved to one of Jupiter's moons (6)
- 34 Avian enclosure (4)
- 36 Total (3)
- 37 'The Rib I Split' could become the title of a Noel Coward play (6,6)
- 3 Unearthly vehicles cause of the confusion of us (4)
- 4 Pavarotti was such a singer (5)
- 5 How one judged Edward, the artist (5)
- 6 Slender (4)
- 8 This parable may have a woolly subject, but there's nothing woolly about its message! (3,4,5)
- 9 These provide digital proof of one's identity! (12)
- 12 How one makes use of spilt saliva (6)
- 13 The board goes for what's between Plot J and Scheme L! (5)
- 14 Cowboy group enlisted to help a sheriff in pursuit of criminals (5)
- 17 One would love to clear out a place of divine revelation (6)
- 19 Cove, bay (5)
- 20 Paddle this craft up and down (5)
- 27 Confidence or faith in someone (5)
- 28 Lacking in company (5)
- 30 Where to bury Thomas B (4)
- 31 Note, a snake can cause a shocking reaction (4)
- 32 Mark on the skin from an old wound (4)
- 35 Ring the Financial Times? Frequently! (3)

DOWN

- 1 Cobblers use it to break the law (3)
- 2 American State, capital Des Moines (4)

Sudoku Corner

309

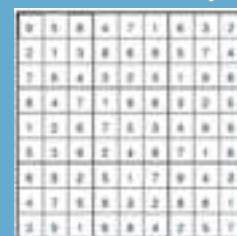
Easy



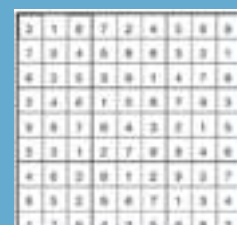
Hard



Last week's Easy 308



Last week's Hard 308



Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



A simple suggestion: let us look after one another well

NOVEMBER IS ALMOST done. During the month we remembered in many ways and on many days, those gone before us. There is something very healing about that – remembering, naming, holding on to what remains of those we knew and loved.

The old song talked about year after year, the numbers getting fewer, but it is the opposite story here – year after year, the numbers increase as we recall family and friends who have died. I remember an old man saying once that the hardest thing about growing to be very old, was seeing all his friends die. I had never thought of it like that before.

During the month even, countless more names were added to our list of people to be remembered and, for me among them, a friend who worked for me well over 20 years ago when I was based in her parish.

She came to work in my home as 'housekeeper' but she was, in no way, a "go on, go on, go on, go on..." Mrs Doyle type! She was young, full of fun and became to me and an elderly priest who shared the house with me, a great friend with a heart of gold.

Though I had moved on from



the parish, we kept in contact and I was happy to number her among my friends. I celebrated her Funeral Mass in mid-November. May she rest in peace.

At the Mass I spoke of her to a congregation that knew her as well and better than I. The church was packed, and I was happy to see that. It brought home the reality of the many people her life had touched and was, as at all funerals, a comfort to her family.

We are good around times like these and I always hope that whatever we lose of our identity or Faith, we will never lose that ability to be with people when they are grieving a loved one. It is among our finer characteristics and one we should cling to with both hands, lest we'd ever let go. To let go, would be a loss that I firmly believe we would never regain.

The following day, I had the chance to speak with some priests

from a diocese who were away for a few days to reflect on their own ministry and the journey their diocese is discerning. It was lovely to be asked to share a little with them and to be a small part of that gathering. I was asked to speak a little about the identity of the priest in our present culture.

I told them about the funeral the day before and of my last meeting with my friend. She was in the hospice and when I went to her room, her husband and some of her family were there. Without anything being said, they all left the room and left the two of us alone.

Identity

We chatted for a while and then I said I'd like to celebrate the Sacrament of The Sick with her. She said "Yes". When I finished with a blessing, she said "Amen" and then added words I'd never heard her use to me before: "Thanks Father." I never expected her to call me that but, at that moment, she saw me for what I was, a priest ministering to her and, I believe, a friend. I said that is our identity – to be priest when needed and to be friends too. I am convinced that is what

people expect and deserve. I am convinced it is to that reality we are called.

Another hospital moment came to mind and I shared that with the priests as well. Again, I was visiting a parishioner who was dying and, as I walked towards her bed, I noticed a woman with her. I did not know the woman, nor she me. I discovered it was her sister and my parishioner introduced me to her with these words: "This is the man who looks after us."

Again, the words surprised me but, on my way home in the car, I was comforted by them. Surely that is part of the priest's identity too – one who looks after his people. It's an honour that maybe sometimes we could easily overlook.

Some of you reading these lines might, like me, be priests and most of you reading are not. Either way, for as long as we live, and until such time we depend on others to remember us, maybe we do well to look after one another.

November is about saying thanks to those gone before. Maybe December and the other months are about saying thanks to those still here.

Thanks!

Christ the King

It's the end of the Church year and we go out on a high. Remembering Christ as King, we remember too, the boy who was lost at 12, the miracle worker at Cana, the one who called others to help, the man who sat beside a well and asked for a cup of water, the one who fed and healed, the one who walked among us and the one who suffered, died and rose again.

He may be King but earthly life saw him far removed from palaces and power. A King nonetheless. "Come, let us worship."

A thought.

Don't say "I can't". Say "I will try" and some day you will say "I did".



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"Do not fear. If you are faithful in pleasing Jesus in little things, He will be obliged to help you in the greater things."

- St Therese

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Remember the Holy Souls in November. We will be pleased to send your Mass intentions to missionaries. By helping poor priests in this way you are aiding the work of the Church in mission lands.

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