

The Irish Catholic

NO PLACE TO CALL HOME

Eight-page special on those working to end the crisis Pages 17-24



MARTIN MANSERGH

Some tender issues are settled..at least for now Page 7



HURLER OFF THE DITCH

Galway's Joe Canning opens up on a lived Faith Page 25



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Guns, drugs and killings need urgent Irish response – clergy

Chai Brady and Aron Hegarty

The spate of gang violence, brutal killings and spread of drugs and guns wracking Ireland has provoked condemnation from clergy across the country who are calling for more Garda funding and that illegal drug users “wake up” and stop enabling violence.

The burning of a man in Cork, dismemberment of a teenager in Drogheda, shootings in Dublin, Clare and Louth in 2020 alone were met with horror from local clergy.

Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh archdiocese, which includes some of Co. Louth, told *The Irish Catholic*: “Recent events have led to a level of anxiety amongst people, this is particularly true when violent incidents happen in a confined area, but we’ve seen the violence replicated in other places like Cork in recent weeks. People are worried that the Gardaí don’t have the resources to counteract the threat of gangland criminals.

“These violent incidents need to be a wake-up call for all of us as a society to realise that actions have consequences. People who are taking drugs on a social basis have to realise that what they are doing is fuelling this situation of violence,” he said.

The resources that need to be deployed are the same as those used to tackle gangland violence in Limerick, Bishop Router said, adding that it must be a “nationwide project”.

Chancellor of Limerick diocese, Fr Donough O’Malley, said his county’s problems needed “sufficient means and the judicial system to back them up” to tackle “totally illicit behaviour”. Fr O’Malley added the “greatest weapon that they have in all these situations is CAB”.

Brutality

In Drogheda, Fr Phillip Gaffney PP said the third drug-feud related killing in the area of Keane Mulready-Woods (17) “spread fear throughout the community that anybody could carry out such an act of brutality. This murder has really brought about an unparalleled level of revulsion throughout the country...”

“The drug wars are the result and the consequence of social drug taking all over Ireland really, you’re fuelling the whole thing and that’s why there’s so much money involved, making these drug barons rich. It’s only I suppose when something happens in your community and you’re directly affected by these things that you realise what the impact is,” he said.

» Continued on Page 2

Igniting their Faith at youth retreat



Some of the young Catholics celebrating their Faith at the Ignite retreat at University College Dublin (UCD) at the weekend. See Page 10. Photo: Seán Blackwell

MICHAEL KELLY

People are being thrown away like trash PAGE 2



MARY KENNY

At the end of the day, it’s really all about family PAGE 5



DAVID QUINN

Counting the cost of secular culture PAGE 12



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See pages 22-23 for more information



Inside this week

Family Faith

The opportunities for relationship

Page 33



Film

A compelling tale of bigotry in the Deep South

Page 35



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Inadequacy, hurt and reconciliation

Page 34



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Northern Correspondent: Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie

Multimedia Journalists: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

Colm Fitzpatrick, colm@irishcatholic.ie

Róise McGagh, roise@irishcatholic.ie

Aron Hegarty, aron@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Layout: Declan Moroney

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
9.30am–5.30pm

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

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Throwing away people like trash...that's Ireland today

Every generation blames the one before," so sang Mike and the Mechanics in the classic 1980s ballad 'The Living Years'.

There's more than a hint of truth about that in contemporary Ireland where the order of the day is out with the old and in with the new.

What is new and modern is generally taken to be unquestionably positive. What is from past generations is assumed to be old-fashioned and out of step.

Values that were widely-shared just a generation ago are dismissed as 'old hat' and progress – whatever that means – becomes the most cherished goal.

Anyone who pauses to ask questions about some of the directions that contemporary Ireland is taking is immediately silenced by being accused of wanting to drag us back to the 1950s.

Fear

Many of our politicians are crippled by the fear that they will be adjudged by some commentator or another to be not sufficiently modern. The constant mantra is that modern Ireland is a wonderfully compassionate place. In contrast to the values of previous generations, or so the narrative goes, we are the most tolerant we've ever been.

And yet, there are very real questions about contemporary Irish culture and the limits of tolerance.



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

In one 24-hour period last week, one homeless man in Dublin was scooped up while sleeping in his 'home' (a tent – process that in a wealthy country in 2020) and seriously injured after being dumped like he was a piece of rubbish.

The constant mantra is that modern Ireland is a wonderfully compassionate place. In contrast to the values of previous generations"

A short distance down the canal another homeless man who was sleeping rough froze to death. Just hours beforehand, bits and pieces of the body of a 17-year-old boy – a child, in other words – were found in a sack in a Dublin suburb.

Gardaí later reported that some more of the mortal remains of the same child were found in a burned-out car in another suburb of the capital.

That same evening, on the RTÉ News, there was a long report about a court case that day of a man who stands accused of murdering his mother-in-law. According to the prosecution, 15 different body parts of the woman's body were found at nine locations over an area of 30 km in the Dublin mountains.

Taking those stories – from just one 24-hour news cycle – it would be hard to find a more graphic description for what Pope Francis has often referred to as a "throwaway culture" where even human beings become disposable.

The Pope has in mind a broad canvas from the cynical exploitation of the earth's natural resources to an economy and financial system lacking in ethics. From the defenceless child in the womb, to the terminally-ill elderly person where life is not seen as gift, it becomes disposable.

"Men and women are sacrificed to the idols of money and consumption," the Pope said shortly after his election in 2013. "That

some homeless people freeze to death on the street, that is not news. On the other hand, a drop of 10 points in the stock markets of some cities is a tragedy. That is how people are thrown away. We, people, are thrown away, as if we were trash.

"Human life, the person are no longer felt to be primary values to be respected and protected, especially if they are poor or disabled, if they are not yet useful – like an unborn child – or are no longer useful – like an old person," the Pope said.

The Christian ethical vision is an integrated one that sees genuine compassion at the heart of any just society. We should be able to critique and denounce what was undoubtedly wrong in past generations in the sphere of both Church and State without becoming intoxicated with a misguided notion of progress and thus blind to the faults in our contemporary culture.

Urgent response needed

» Continued from Page 1

As far as Tipperary, Fr Michael Toomey based in Clonmel said that cocaine has become extremely easy for young people to obtain.

"A lot of people are now

budgeting for their debts – as well as their clothes and drink – they're also budgeting now for cocaine, and that doesn't shock me, that's just what I'm trying to tell people," he said.

"Cocaine is a very common and easily accessible

drug now for young people and I'm not trying to frighten, I'm just saying this is how it is because I'm dealing with young people. My biggest fear is unfortunately drug usage has increased, this violence is going to escalate it's going to start hitting more towns."

Cocaine can be easier for young people to obtain as they don't need ID like they do for alcohol Fr Toomey explained, saying there needs to be a bigger Garda presence on the streets of Clonmel.

Fr Pat McKinley based in Tallaght, Co. Dublin, said support services for addicts are "overloaded" with long waiting lists, causing people's health and circumstances to get worse. "The problem arises from the 'normalisation' of a drugs culture here in Ireland. Drug taking, like doing a line of coke, has become as normal as having a drink," he said.

He stressed that it wasn't just communities with deprived socio-economic backgrounds that are worse for illegal drug taking, as it has become "socially acceptable" across the country.

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Abortion rates decrease after Pope visits, study finds

Chai Brady

Abortion rates fall when the Pope visits an area, with the decrease persisting for over a year according to a new study.

Scientists led by a team from the University of Sussex found that people were taking more care not to get pregnant after a papal visit. While the number of abortions dropped, the birth rate remained the same.

When asked if he was surprised by the findings, one of the scientists from Queen's University in Belfast, Dr Egidio Farina said: "Yes, for two reasons we were. First, the drop in abortions is coming from a surprising behavioural change – women are being careful about getting pregnant. Second, the decrease in the number of abortions is not short-lived but persists for over a year after the visit of the Pope."

Influence

Even after the pope leaves the area, his influence remains as researchers found abortions plummeted by up to a fifth for as long as 14 months after a papal visit. The decrease is said to begin in the third month after a papal visit and if the Pope mentions abortion the reduction almost doubles.

"The decrease in abortions seems to be driven predominantly by a reduction in unintended pregnancies as women choose abstinence, increase their use of contraception or a combination of both, after a visit," Dr Farina said.

"Indeed, in broader terms, our research highlights the

Belfast set on 'Building a City of Grace' with a solid 4 Corners

Gary Lightbody of Snow Patrol.



Aron Hegarty

Gary Lightbody of Snow Patrol will be among the big names attending a cross-community arts festival in Belfast later this month.

Along with Bafta award-winning filmmaker and playwright Damian Gorman plus homeless campaigner Fr Peter McVerry, he will form part of the line-up for the 2020 inter-church 4 Corners Festival.

The Festival, now in its eighth year, will commence from January 31 until February 9 and its theme for this year is 'Building A City Of Grace'.

Co-founded by Catholic priest Fr Martin Magill and Presbyterian minister Rev. Steve Stockman, this year's event will see Fr McVerry

discussing his 45 years working with the homeless of Dublin's north inner city and founding a national housing and homeless charity.

Other features include former Church of Ireland Bishop of Connor Alan Abernethy returning to St Anthony's Catholic Church in east Belfast, the scene of one of the most horrifying moments of his life.

"Events like these are so important," said Probation Board chief executive Cheryl Lamont.

"The more we talk about it, and engage with wider society, the better we will know what is involved and how everyone can play a role in building – not only safer communities – but communities of grace."

importance of people's cultural background – and in our case a specific aspect of culture, i.e. religion – in shaping central choices like fertility or abortion."

Links

Researchers investigated the links between regional abortion rates at the time of 129 official visits made to 85 Italian provinces by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI between 1979 and 2012. It was published in the *Journal of Population Economics*.

It's unclear whether Pope Francis may have produced

the same affect in Ireland after his visit, which occurred in August 2018, just over three months before abortion became legal. Dr Farina said: "We cannot exclude this hypothesis a priori, since other studies have also documented how the visits of the Pope to other countries had an impact on the long-run behaviour of individuals."

"Nonetheless, unfortunately we do not have enough data to establish whether the visit of the Pope to Ireland in 2018 has produced an effect on the number of abortions in the following months."

Knock film to Premiere in Vatican



A scene from the movie *Hope*.

Staff reporter

A film documenting the 1879 Apparition at Knock, Co. Mayo will have its first screening in the Vatican next week.

The film titled *Hope*, which was written, produced and directed by Co Down native Campbell Miller, will be shown in the Film Vaticana on Monday, January 27.

Miller's feature recreates the August 21, 1879 apparition of the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St John the Evangelist, angels and the Lamb of God to local townspeople. Today it marks the site of Ireland's National Shrine of Our Lady of Knock.

The day prior to the premiere, Knock Shrine will be participating in the inaugural Mass to celebrate 'Word of God' Sunday in St Peter's Basilica.

"It is a great honour to have this event in the Vatican," said Mr Miller. "And it is a blessing that Knock Shrine will be such a focus of attention in Rome across a number of days."



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Fr Ray wary of last dance saloon

Aron Hegarty

Fr Ray Kelly survived the first elimination from RTÉ1's *Dancing with the Stars* at the weekend, despite posting the lowest score on the night.

His ch-cha-cha dance with Kilee Vincent to 'Save the Last Dance for Me' by Michael Buble, which featured a cameo from comedian Des Bishop, scored a six.

Of the judging panel, Brian Redmond gave him the lowest rating in the history of the show's Ireland edition at one out of a possible 10.

"I did feel it was a little harsh," said Fr Kelly of the judges' scoring cards.

"I thought I danced better than I did the previous week and I put more work into it, but that's the best I could do.

"I see it as an entertainment show and as an entertainer, I feel I bring that to it. They [the judging panel] see it as a dance show and will judge it by what they see."

However, Fr Kelly was spared being cut from the competition when he was the

first contestant announced as safe after getting enough public votes.

Love Island contestant Yewande Biala, along with her professional dance partner Stephen Vincent, later became the first celebrity to be eliminated from the series.

"I was in shock and emotional," said a relieved Fr Kelly when he heard he was through. "I am happy that some people enjoyed it and what I am doing, and really that's all that matters."

Next to go

The pressure will be on once again this weekend with commentators like Ryan Tubridy predicting on his morning show this week that the singing priest would be the next to go. While Fr Kelly admits he is worried about the next week, he vows to enjoy himself if it is to be his last dance on the show.

"I'm apprehensive but I can only do what I can do", he said. "I'll try my best, but the important thing is to be happy and enjoy myself."

Aontú calls on voters to think outside 'political cartel'

Staff reporter

Pro-life party Aontú has vowed to insist on legislation making pain relief for babies due to be aborted as mandatory.

Launching its manifesto this week the party – which is running 25 candidates and is confident of making gains – also said that it would prioritise the right of everyone to conscientious objection where abortion is concerned.

The manifesto also prioritises legislation obliging all possible treatment for babies that survive abortions and legislation that would prohibit abortion on the basis of disability and abortion on the basis of gender.

Speaking at the launch of the manifesto on Monday, party leader Peadar Tóibín called on voters to "think outside the political cartel".

Mr Tóibín said Aontú was running on a range of issues including housing, health, Irish unity, rural development and crime. He said Aontú is "a people-powered, grassroots" organisation that wants unity



Aontú hold a press conference on January 17, launching their manifesto for the upcoming General Election.

in a "deeply divided country".

To alleviate pressure on hospitals, the party wants 10% of the current health budget to be assigned to the development and delivery of primary care in communities. It also wants GPs incentivised to offer a wider range of services and midwife-led care to take pressure off maternity units.

On housing, the party says

a significant increase in the supply of housing is the key element for resolving the housing crisis.

National vote

Aontú – which was established just over a year ago – is confident of making a significant impact in this election with Mr Tóibín retaining his Meath West seat. The party

is also hoping that Cllr Sarah O'Reilly can take a seat in Cavan, Cllr Jim Codd in Wexford and Mary Sweeney in Donegal.

Crucially, it is hoping to surpass the 2% share of the national vote to ensure that the party can qualify for State funding which it is currently excluded from.

New US rector for Dublin Uni. Church

Staff reporter

The current rector of the Notre-Dame Centre for Faith and Reason in Dublin will be returning to the US, it has been announced, with his replacement "excited" to begin this summer.

Fr Bill Dailey CSC, who headed the famous University Church founded by St John

Henry at Stephen's Green, will return to the US to work on a book about Faith and reason – partially inspired by his work in Dublin – while beginning a new pastoral assignment.

The current director of residence life for recruitment, hiring and retention at the University of Notre Dame, Fr Gary Chamberland CSC has been named the new director.

Ordained a Holy Cross priest in 1998, Fr Chamberland holds a license in canon law from the Catholic University of America. His leadership experience includes oversight of Notre Dame's residence hall rectors and service as the pastoral resident for Morrissey Hall.

Fr Chamberland said: "I am excited to minister in the Archdiocese of Dublin and look forward to serving at St. John Newman's home church in Ireland. I hope that I can help people, especially young adults, deepen a sense of the sacred in their lives and encounter a Church with important and meaningful things to say about the pressing issues of our day."

New series launched for Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week 2020 will be celebrated from Sunday January 26-Sunday February 1 on the theme 'Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony with God's Creation'.

On each of the five school days of CSW2020 there will be an audio thought for the day available from www.catholicbishops.ie.

Kate Liffey, National Director for Catechetics with the bishops' conference, will voice each of the five audio pieces.

The audio 'Thought for the Day' pieces will be available from Monday, January 27.



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It's all about the family

The Harry-and-Meghan saga rumbles on, and one reason for the attention it is given is that people see it as a focus for dissecting family relationships.

Let's face it: we all have complications within our family constellation. There may be a problematic uncle who seems to have let the side down. There is possibly a grandmother or other matriarch who has the entitlement to lay down the law.

There may be alienated dads who sound off in public, along with voluble estranged siblings or half-siblings. There are very frequently issues of sibling rivalry, and uncertain



Mary Kenny

relations between sisters-in-law.

An elder brother may not always approve of the woman his kid brother marries, or may have counselled him not to rush into wedlock on short acquaintance.

Responsibilities

There is sometimes a son who seems to behave impeccably, facing responsibilities and doing his duty: and there's a son who seems not quite to have

grown out of the mixed-up adolescent phase of life.

There are fathers who may advise their offspring not to emigrate to, say, Canada, when there is a perfectly sensible job available for them in the family business at home. Not to mention the arguments that can arise about money, inheritance, and whether the bank of Dad picks up the bill for an offspring's choices.

There are family members who sometimes have to be bailed out after a failed

“We all have complications within our family constellation... there are very frequently issues of sibling rivalry”

business venture.

And there are deaths and bereavements from which more sensitive souls find it hard to recover – particularly the loss of a beloved mother when a boy is only 12.

The fascination lies in the structure of the family, with which most people can identify.

I've even heard it suggested that the apparent rift between William and Harry has prompted more focus on similar sibling relations, and whether that mixture of rivalry and early attachment is ever completely resolved.

The family is our crucible, our nest, our template for love and values. But...it's complicated!

Rebecca's Long shot

Rebecca Long-Bailey [pictured] is one of the contenders to succeed Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the British Labour Party, and considered the nearest to Mr Corbyn in politics and ideas, being of a strong left-wing persuasion.

She then blotted her copybook by saying she favoured restrictions on abortion practice, and queried the justice of aborting the disabled. It emerged that Becky was a Catholic – even admitting that she prays every day – and this unleashed some harsh comments.



Jess Phillips and Lisa Nandy, her political rivals, signed a letter got up by the wealthy abortion

provider, BPAS, calling Ms Long-Bailey's views “deeply offensive”.

Paul Mason, a noted Labour activist said: “I don't want Labour's policy on reproductive rights dictated by the Vatican.”

Back in 1960, when Jack Kennedy emerged as a candidate for Presidency of the United States, this was a repeated theme challenging his right to run – that JFK would be on the phone to the Vatican, taking orders from the Pope. As if! But the anti-Catholic bigotry was there, and, in connection with RL-B, it seems it still is.

January wasn't always such a 'blue' month, you know!

It's interesting that the month of January these days is widely regarded as a period of post-Christmas purging. People embark on

new diets and quit alcohol, sugar, or even fags, if they still have the smoking habit. The faddy vegan regime is embraced as 'Veganuary'.

In Ireland, in past times, January used to be known as a great month for dancing. Turn back the pages of that chronicler of social life, *The Irish Tatler and Sketch*, and peruse the plethora of 'dress dances' lined up for the season.

Old boys' and old girls' school organisations, banks and other commercial groups, trade unions, professional fellowships and other associations organised these 'dress dances' when young (and not so young) women were done up to the nines and the chaps

were kitted out in tuxedos and bow ties.

“January used to be known as a great month for dancing”

In the 1950s, supposedly a miserable decade, the 'strapless evening dress', with full skirts, was photographed on smiling young ladies who made jokes about the frock being held up by willpower alone. January was the month of partying,

That was because Ireland still followed, broadly, a Christian rhythm of the seasons (as some Continental European countries still do), and January was leading up to Mardi Gras. Lent was then the time for shiving and the dances ceased for those 40 days.

Today, January is the period of recovering from the excesses of Christmas, and the maxing-out of the credit card from the shopping fiesta of 'Black Friday'.

So, no more merrymaking in January!



Dress-dance ready: a Sybil Connolly design.



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Church leaders call for more work for peace in Holy Land

Chai Brady

Irish bishops who have just returned from a fact-finding mission to the Holy Land say that have been inspired by the "enduring resilience" of the small Christian community there.

Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor and Bishop Alan McGuckian of Raphoe were part of an international delegation who travelled to the region to show solidarity with the Christians and support the peace process there.

Following the visit, the bishops issued a communique calling on both Israel and the Palestinians to work harder to try and make lasting peace and security.

"In Gaza, the political deci-

sions of all sides have resulted in the creation of an open-air prison, human rights abuses and a profound humanitarian crisis.

"We were welcomed by families whose focus is now day-to-day survival and whose aspirations have been reduced to bare essentials such as electricity and clean water," the bishops said.

Sides

They paid tribute to local Christians who work for justice, peace and mutual understanding. They said: "we are moved by the sacrifice of religious sisters, lay people and priests who are reaching out with respect to every side, in order to build a better future for all.

"They offer vital services, especially education, job opportunities and care for the most vulnerable people. We give thanks for their witness," they said.

"We encourage Christians in our own countries to pray for and support this mission. The increase in people making pilgrimages to the Holy Land is encouraging and we call for those who come to ensure they encounter the local communities," the communiqué added.

i The Irish Catholic organises regular *Christian Solidarity Pilgrimages to the Holy Land*. For further information please see Pages 8 and 9.



Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor greets members of the Christian community after Mass in Holy Family parish in Ramallah. Photo: Mazur

Parish priest cancels Sinn Féin meeting over abortion

Staff reporter

A Catholic priest in Co. Tyrone cancelled a political party's meeting at a church hall over their support for abortion.

Fr Eugene O'Neill snubbed a booking from pro-abortion party Sinn Féin to use St Patrick's Hall in Coalisland after being contacted by pro-life campaigners.

The parish hall had been booked for Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, who represents the area and lives in the neighbouring parish of

Clonee, to attend and address a public meeting on Thursday, January 16.

However, local priest Fr O'Neill was alerted by pro-life groups and intervened in order to prevent the gathering from taking place on church property.

Aware

Fr O'Neill, who was not previously aware of the meeting, said that the event was not endorsed or sanctioned by the Church.

"The parish is not legally permitted to use Church

property for any political activity whatsoever," said the Armagh native.

Bernadette Smyth of anti-abortion group Precious Life commended Fr O'Neill for taking immediate action.

"Fr Eugene has stood up for the faithful and strongly reaffirmed Church teaching," she said.

"We would like to thank him for taking a strong stand for life, Coalisland Parish for their firm pro-life stance and to everyone who raised initial concerns."

The Irish Catholic

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Michael Kelly, Chairman of the Board of Governors of Christ the King Primary School in Omagh, Co. Tyrone presents the 'Ann Kelly Memorial Cup' to the winning captain from St Mary's Primary School, Killyclogher. The football competition was organised between local schools in memory of Mr Kelly's late wife Ann who died last year. Photo: Pat McSorley

St Mary's University Twickenham Appoint New Vice-Chancellor

St Mary's University Twickenham have appointed former UCAS and QAA Chief Executive Anthony McClaran as their new Vice-Chancellor following an extensive international search.

Mr McClaran, who is joining the UK-based Catholic University from TEQSA, will succeed the outgoing Prof Francis Campbell and assume his position in April 2020.

Established in 1850, St Mary's recently achieved its highest position in all three UK-based university league tables and has been rated London's top university for student satisfaction.

Lost trust is a shame – Daniel

Aron Hegarty

Singer Daniel O'Donnell says he loves Mass but feels it's a "shame" the Catholic Church has lost the trust of many people in Ireland. The 58-year-old Donegal native, who recently released his new single 'Halfway To Paradise', insists that he is a man of Faith but prefers to stay private on matters regarding his religion.

"It's a different time and I can't answer for other people," said Mr O'Donnell of Catholicism in modern day Ireland during an interview this week. "I still go to Mass whenever I can and I get a lot out of it, but it's a difficult time.

"A lot has happened in the Church that has really had a huge effect on people. It's unbelievable I suppose some of the stuff that has been exposed.

"But from my point of view, I try to keep it for myself."

He added: "There's a lot of good people in the world, but we always hear about the bad things, not to justify anything that's been done.

"I know a lot of good people and a lot of good priests. It's such a shame that a certain amount had the trust of people and they lost that trust."

Martin Mansergh

The View



Appreciating the settlement of some tender issues...at least for now

We enter the first month of the year with a number of uncertainties settled, at least for now.

Brexit is happening at the end of the month, with doubt now centred on the short deadline of less than a year for negotiating a trade deal. The arrangements for maintaining the *status quo* on the border have to be seen to work, and the EU will have as strong an interest in that as Ireland and Britain.

If Britain proceeds with its intention to diverge from EU regulations and standards, presumably in the hope of gaining a competitive advantage, it will also entail opening up a bigger gap between Britain and Northern Ireland with political and economic effects that may or may not be benign. It will also complicate the Republic's trade across the Irish Sea.

Secondly, the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement have been restored. The escape from them turned out to be a mirage, both the DUP hold on the Conservative Party in government, and the prospect for Republicans that a catastrophic Brexit crash-out could precipitate a border poll. It would be politically wise not to let the Executive fall again. Governing means having to make hard and often unpopular choices, and not just the opportunity to advance cherished priorities. With power inescapably comes responsibilities.

Election

Thirdly, an election has been called in the Republic. While one after Easter would have been in longer daylight and more pleasant weather, there is something to be said for holding one before the next phase of Brexit negotiations gets properly underway. The timing, however, was dictated by the current arrangement sustaining the current government running out of road, due to insufficient numbers.

Nonetheless, a four-year run in the circumstances was quite an achievement for all concerned.



There is some complaint, including in this newspaper, that there is too much consensus, and that the voter does not have enough choice. This country, conscious that it is small and vulnerable, has faced two existential crises, the first arising from the crash, and the second arising from Brexit. Bigger countries may afford themselves the luxury of extreme partisan confrontation, but a unity on strategic approach may have been the best way for us to get through and limit the damage.

“Try as one might, it is not easy to disentangle the RIC from the Black and Tans...”

There has been a political conformity on socio-moral issues, today liberal, but for a long time conservative. However, it is the people who decide, not the political parties. It is true that their position does not reflect the proportion of voters who were against the changes proposed. Large parties do not like to find themselves on the wrong side of majority public opinion. It is true that many people do not feel properly represented in terms of their deeply held convictions and values at the present time.

It remains to be seen whether they will form a critical mass in terms of electoral representation and influence.

The position on these matters in Northern Ireland is peculiar. Perhaps as a result of frustration with the DUP's pivotal position of influence at Westminster, including the repeated

blocking of a Brexit deal negotiated with Brussels, the override button was pressed.

Same-sex marriage, about which on the whole most people opposed to it are less exercised, and the liberal abortion law in Britain were extended to Northern Ireland even though these were devolved matters and in the second case went further than any of the main parties were advocating and further than the recent legislation in the Republic. Presumably, the Assembly has the power to substitute legislation of its own, but there has not been a peep about it, nor is it mentioned in the agreement between the parties.

At the beginning of the year, prior to the General Election being called in the Republic, a storm blew up over the Minister for Justice's plan to hold a State commemoration in honour of the RIC and the DMP, with specific reference to those killed during the war of independence.

Without doubt, the proposal was made with the best of intentions, designed to be inclusive and generous. However, it put independent Ireland in a position where it would be honouring those that had tried to block it becoming independent, notwithstanding the overwhelming vote of the people in the December 1918 General Election.

Try as one might, it is not easy to disentangle the RIC from the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries sent in 1920 to reinforce them, and who adopted systematically extra-legal methods in a campaign of counter-terrorism that had political support from the top of the British Government.

It is regrettable that

any event in the decade of centenaries should have become embroiled in political controversy. It underlines the need for sensitivity, thorough preparation, and also careful choice of language.

“Bigger countries may afford themselves the luxury of extreme partisan confrontation”

It is a mistake to go out too far ahead of public opinion. Individual policemen played diverse

roles, and some are commemorated in certain contexts.

While the RIC was disbanded, in Northern Ireland it was transformed into the RUC. The Dublin Metropolitan Police was merged into An Garda Síochána in 1924. In the Garden of Remembrance in the grounds of Dublin Castle, dedicated to the memory of over 80 members of An Garda Síochána, who died violently in the course of duty, opened in 2010, there is a low-key feature that is dedicated to the memory of all deceased members of An Garda Síochána, the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary, but

implicitly over the entire period of their existence.

It is intended that at a conference to mark the centenary of An Garda Síochána in 2022 that some space will be given to the study of their predecessors.

One of the biggest differences was that in principle the gardáí were to be an unarmed police force, even if it has proved necessary to have some armed units.

In Northern Ireland, after bitter conflict, the creation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland was so designed as to achieve acceptance across the entire community.



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MAKE 2020 A YEAR TO GO TO THE HOLY LAND

Next September and October will see two groups of pilgrims depart on an unforgettable trip to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. In recent years, these trips have become an integral part of The Irish Catholic year with hundreds of pilgrims making the journey from every corner of Ireland to take part in a unique opportunity to visit the sites associated with the earthly life of Christ. The pilgrimage also helps the Bible come alive for people as they visit Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Here are some highlights of this year's itinerary:



The Sea of Galilee.

Day One: Ireland to the Holy Land

Depart Dublin Airport in the evening for an overnight flight direct to Tel Aviv on El Al.

Day Two: Nazareth

Upon arrival in Ben-Gurion Airport, pilgrims will be met by a Marian Pilgrimages representative and guide before boarding our tour coach to Nazareth. En route we will see stunning views of the sun rising over the Galilee region – site of much of the ministry of Jesus. After breakfast, check-in to the four-star Legacy Hotel for five nights with dinner and breakfast.

After time to rest and freshen up, we will walk the short distance to the nearby Basilica of the Annunciation to celebrate Mass. On the lower level of the basilica we see the remains of Mary's house and where the Archangel Gabriel visited her.

Adjacent to the basilica is St Joseph's Church, where we will visit the site of Joseph's workshop and the house of the Holy Family. A short walk from the basilica is Mary's Well here you have the opportunity to draw water from the same well as the Virgin Mary followed by free time in Nazareth before dinner at the hotel.

Day Three: Mount Tabor and Cana in Galilee

After breakfast, we have a short drive to Mount Tabor to ascend by taxi for Mass at the Church of the Transfiguration where Jesus is transfigured and speaks to Moses and Elijah. There is time to enjoy the view of the Valley of Armageddon and the Jezreel Valley – bread basket of the Holy Land.

After time for lunch we take the short coach journey to Cana in Galilee. Here we visit the Wedding Church, the site of the first miracle of Jesus. Couples on the pilgrimage can take part in the special ceremony to renew their wedding vows and there is also prayers and blessings for spouses at home and deceased husbands and wives. In the lower level of the church, we will see artifacts from the site before having an opportunity to taste and purchase some of the famous wine from this sacred site before returning to Nazareth for dinner in the hotel.

Optional Eucharistic Adoration at the Basilica of the Annunciation at 8.30pm.

Day Four: The Sea of Galilee

This morning we make our way to the Mount of Beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, Capernaum and Tabgha. Visit the site of the multiplication of the Loaves and Fish at Tabgha, and the Church of the Primacy of St Peter.

After lunch on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, continue to Capernaum and see the old synagogue and the excavations of St Peter's house before taking a boat trip on the lake, with relevant Bible readings. Before returning to the hotel we visit Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene, a prosperous fishing village at the time of Jesus.

Optional rosary at the Irish icon at the Basilica of the Annunciation at 8.30pm.

Day Five: Acre – the Crusader capital

We take the short coach ride to the coastal city of Akko, famed throughout history as the Crusader capital of the Holy Land. After Mass, we return to Nazareth for free time in the town of the Holy Family before dinner at the hotel.

Optional candlelit procession at the Basilica of the Annunciation at 8.30pm.

Day Six: Jericho and Bethany

We leave Nazareth and drive south along the Jordan Valley into Jericho. Here we can see the Mount of Temptation and the Sycamore tree of Zachaeus. Continue to the Dead Sea and enjoy a 'dip' near Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Drive by the Inn of the Good Samaritan, to Bethany to celebrate Mass at 16.00 and visit the Tomb of Lazarus. Continue to Qasr el Yahud, the baptismal site of Jesus on the River Jordan, here we can renew our baptismal vows.

After we drive to Bethlehem and check-in to the four-star Manger Square Hotel, located just a stone's throw from the Church of the Nativity for four nights, with breakfast and dinner.

Day Seven: Jerusalem

We drive to Jerusalem and enter the Old City to the Church of St Anne and nearby, see the Pool of Bethesda. Close by we begin the Via Dolorosa and follow the stations of the cross through the markets and narrow streets of the Old City to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the site of

Calvary where Jesus was crucified and His tomb. Here we will celebrate Mass at 11.00 and take some time to reflect at this sacred site. Enjoy some free time in Jerusalem for lunch before visiting the Western Wall.

We will then drive to Taybeh – a town where Jesus stayed before going to Jerusalem to endure the Passion. It is the last all-Christian town in the West Bank and here we will hear about efforts to keep the local Christian community vibrant, including local wine-making before returning to the hotel in Bethlehem for dinner.

Day Eight: Mount of Olives

Drive to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem where we take our group photo and enjoy the view of the Old City below. We make our way to the highest point on the Mount of Olives to the Ascension Dome. Continue to visit the Pater Noster Church, Dominus Flevit, the Church of the Assumption and grotto and the Garden of Gethsemane.

In the afternoon we celebrate Mass at 15.00 in the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu or 'cock's crow', where St Peter denied Jesus

three times and see the dungeon where Jesus was held the night of Holy Thursday. We walk around Mount Zion and visit the church of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Tomb of King David and the Room of the Last Supper. Return to the hotel for dinner.

Day Nine: Bethlehem

After breakfast we take the short walk to the Church of the Nativity and celebrate Mass. at 10.00. Here you can visit the birthplace of Jesus, and the Holy Manger as well as the chapels of St Joseph, St Jerome, the Holy Innocents and the Church of St Catherine.

Visit the Milk Grotto before lunch and meeting with members of the local Christian community in Bethlehem. Afterwards, we take the short drive to the Shepherds' Field and Ein Karem to the Church of the Visitation before returning to the hotel for dinner.

Day Ten: Emmaus

After breakfast at the hotel, we have some free time in Bethlehem before boarding the coach for the journey to Emmaus where we will have Mass and lunch before proceeding to the airport for the direct flight back to Dublin.

PRICING NOTES FOR THE PILGRIMAGE

The package on offer is all inclusive of the following:				
Travel and accommodation		Entrance fees included		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Flight from Dublin to Tel Aviv;● Transfer on arrival from Tel Aviv airport to the hotel in Nazareth with guide assistance;● Five nights in the four-star Legacy Hotel in Nazareth● Four nights in the four-star Manger Square Hotel in Bethlehem;● Breakfast and evening meal served each day at hotels;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Transfer to Tel Aviv airport for return flight;● Flight from Tel Aviv to Dublin;● Luxury air-conditioned coach throughout the itinerary;● Guiding audio system (earphones for listing to the guide).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● English-speaking guides throughout the pilgrimage;● Full day guided tour of Jerusalem including visits to the Western Wall, Dome of the Rock, Church of St Anne, Via Dolorosa, Holy Sepulchre and Shrine of the Book;● Complete programme of sightseeing and visits to sites of interest in the Holy Land;● Boat ride on Sea of Galilee;● Return taxi transfers to Mount Tabor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dominus Flevit;● Capernaum;● Mount of Beatitudes;● Muhrakha;● Qumran.	<p>passengers 95 years and over should secure private travel insurance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Price per person sharing twin/ double/treble rooms with private facilities. Passengers are entitled to check in one standard piece of luggage subject to airline's conditions. Single rooms are subject to availability at a supplement.● Taxes, charges and government levies are included.● Portorage at hotels are included in the package price.● All tips and gratuities everywhere are included.
	Tours and religious programme		Optional	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Full religious programme with a spiritual director including daily Mass;● Services of Marian Pilgrimages representative.			<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Travel insurance €25 for passengers up to 85 years. Please note that an additional insurance premium of €25 is charged for persons aged 86 to 94 years;	

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Igniting the Faith flame on campus

Chai Brady

About 130 people attended a Catholic retreat in UCD from January 16-18 where discussion ranged from community building to challenges people of faith face in college.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* co-ordinator of Ignite, Sarah Kate Moynihan, said the "response was insane, it went so well".

"It was a university event – all the Catholic chaplaincies came together, it was nice just to be with students for a couple of days. The reports back afterwards were 'please do it again next year', which we were delighted with so we will do it again next year," she said.

They had men and women sessions, a focus missionary spoke about struggles on campus and how to overcome them and there was discussion about Catholic culture on campus and keeping the Faith alive as well as building communities.

"The conference was good because people met others from their university they didn't even know so they had someone to go back with. The three pillars we explored were relationship, identity and mission, they were the three key overarching themes of the talks," Sarah added.



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Draining society of religion has a price we all have to pay



No-one can pretend that Ireland is not becoming a more dangerous place, writes **David Quinn**

The growing savagery of violence that is taking place between drug gangs here in Ireland has shocked a public already exposed to seemingly endless murderous incidents between rival gangs fighting turf wars and ordering revenge killings.

Ireland has a long history of political violence, but this has now been replaced by a new, and ever more depraved kind of gangster violence of the sort we thought belonged only in American police dramas or in the ghettos of New York, Los Angeles or the southside of Chicago.

Ireland did not seem like the sort of place where gangsterism of this kind could take root. Surely we were too small, too cohesive, and our sense of community was too strong? Didn't we still have a residual sense of decency, of basic right and wrong that would keep even the worst gang members from descending into total moral savagery? On all counts we were wrong.

Depraved

The murder and dismemberment of 17-year old gang-member, Keane Mulready-Woods, has prompted talk of 'narco-terrorism' of the sort associated with the most depraved drug gangs of Columbia and Mexico. Something wicked this way comes. No, it is here.

In the same week this happened, two truck-drivers on the northside of Dublin were shot and seriously injured, in another gang-related incident. And in Cork a young man was stabbed to death at a party. This had nothing at all to do with the gangs. This was only a sign that we are becoming more violent, like the horrible murder of a homeless man in an abandoned house in Cork over the Christmas period. He



The aftermath of another gangland shooting in Dublin.

was beheaded and had his limbs chopped off.

There was a time when that last murder alone would have dominated the news for weeks, as murders used to do, but it was quickly forgotten, and we moved on to the next murder.

Also over Christmas, footage turned up on social media of a huge brawl that broke out near the Red Cow roundabout on the outskirts of Dublin that required the intervention of 20 garda cars.

Over the new year, a running fist-fight was recorded on Harcourt Street in Dublin city centre involving dozens of young people.

Irish Rail are calling for improved security for its employees because violence at railway stations and on trains is on the increase. Armoured security men on the Luas are now a common sight.

No-one can pretend that Ireland is not becoming a more dangerous place. They can't possibly pretend that back in the 1950s it was merely that we were better at hiding things, like abuse in the home or in institutions. But the only kind of crime that people cover up is the type that makes

them look bad.

You can't cover-up violence on the streets. People will mainly report when their home is burgled or their car stolen. The drug-gangs specifically want us to know what they are doing, but even if they did what the IRA sometimes did, that is kill someone and bury the body in secret, we would still know when someone has gone missing and would suspect the worst, especially if they had crime connections.

“These days most schools are as successful at teaching religion as they are at imparting the Irish language, that is, not very successful at all”

We are also in the middle of a cocaine epidemic, and number coming forward for treatment is growing all the time. The drug gangs are both feeding the demand and adding to it. The problem is now found in every part of the country.

So no, let's not pretend things aren't getting worse. That is simply

“People can't possibly pretend that back in the 1950s it was merely that we were better at hiding things, like abuse in the home or in institutions”



head-in-the-sand stuff. But it wasn't supposed to be this way. RTE keep telling us that Irish society is becoming more tolerant and compassionate. To put it mildly, the picture is far more complicated than that.

In terms of gang violence, there is obviously a close relationship with poverty. Those who join the gangs, frequently when they are still children, are mostly from poor backgrounds.

On the other hand, we have always had poverty, but we have not always had drug gangs, and the violent gangs we had in the past did not resort to the sort of extreme violence now becoming commonplace.

We read about the typical profile of gang members in places like the United States and see that another factor which predicts whether they will become embroiled in crime or not is a broken home and the absence of a good male role-model, first and foremost a good father.

In the absence of such a person, the gangs can become a substitute 'father-figure', a way for boys to prove themselves, but also to develop the very worst traits of 'toxic masculinity'.

The decline of religion surely plays a part here. People have to obtain their moral formation from somewhere.

Christianity gave people a very strong sense of right and wrong, even if they didn't always act on it. A certain baseline morality existed. We knew about the example of Jesus. We knew the Ten

Commandments. We knew that judgement awaited at the end of our lives, and we would face our just deserts, whatever they may be.

Yes, we can teach people morality without religion and a lot of gang-members will have gone to Catholic schools. But these days most schools are as successful at teaching religion as they are at imparting the Irish language, that is, not very successful at all, because religion is frequently no longer practised at home, and lacks a strong place in the local community.

“Didn't we still have a residual sense of decency, of basic right and wrong?”

The fact is that for many people, consumerism and status have replaced religion as their guiding stars. This is one reason why the gangs can recruit teenage boys. They promise them both status and consumer items, like brand name jackets, runners, and so on.

Combatting the gangs requires good law enforcement. It requires providing good training and jobs as an alternative to gang membership. It also means ensuring that children receive proper moral formation.

Draining a society of religion has consequences. When we don't replace it adequately, then we will face the inevitable, and often dire effects.



Vote Aontú and keep pro-life politics alive

Repeal activists are treating this election as a chance to finish off pro-life politics – to save it, pro-lifers need to canvass and vote for Aontú, writes **Ben Conroy**

It's important for the pro-life movement to have a presence in political life. In this election, Aontú surviving as a political entity will help that project immensely, and its obliteration will set it back a generation. Given that pro-lifers have very few resources, the best way to use those resources (chiefly, votes, money, and volunteering time) in this particularly election is to use them to help Aontú.

This is true even if you're not generally an Aontú supporter and think that the future of pro-life politics lies mostly within the mainstream parties. Aontú holding or gaining seats, and reaching the 2% threshold needed to receive State funding, will help, not hurt pro-life politicians in all the parties. And Aontú's defeat would rightly be seen as a rejection of pro-life politics.

Why is this? Well, let's start with some polling from the last general election that shocked me. Very few people vote with abortion as their number one or even number two issue. It seems to be about 2% to 4%. That's pro-choicers and pro-lifers combined. There may have been a lot more 'no' voters to repeal, but most of them don't care that much about the issue.

Incentive

What's the upshot of that? The upshot is that most politicians in the mainstream parties, even pro-life ones, have every incentive not to actually do anything for the pro-life movement. There just aren't that many votes in it.

What can we do about that? Create leverage and make our votes count for more by having a party with a pro-life platform in Leinster House. Think about the Green Party's influence when compared to their relatively small vote share (never more than 5% in a general election). By having an actual party with environmental issues as a central plank, the green movement achieved far more politically than



'Risky stand': Aontú party leader Peadar Tóibín.

they would have just by having isolated TDs in other parties. And those isolated TDs, in turn, were incentivised by the existence of the Greens to take green issues seriously.

Similarly, the presence of a pro-life party in the Dáil will put pressure on the mainstream parties. Fianna Fáil, for instance, will actually have a party that is more pro-life than them in the Dáil. This will increase the leverage of pro-life TDs in both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. They will be able to say "look, pro-lifers do have somewhere else to go, we can't take their votes for granted". Thus, even if in the long run you want to devote your energy to supporting pro-lifers in the mainstream parties, that will be made easier, not harder, by the existence of a strong and competitive party with an actual pro-life platform.

In this election, the only such pro-life party with a chance at taking any seats is Aontú. That party doing well would be a huge shot in the arm for the pro-life movement. What's more, the nature of the Irish electoral funding system and party funding makes

supporting them this time around by far the best use of the votes of committed pro-lifers.

Here's why: in Irish elections, any party that gets more than 2% of the vote in the last general election receives State funding of over €200,000 a year. But below that a party gets nothing. Aontú has a strong grassroots operation with a lot of political veterans and good organisers involved.

“Very few people vote with abortion as their number one or even number two issue. It seems to be about 2% to 4%”

Getting that money would set them up for the future to be able to run more competitive candidates, do more national organising, and put more pressure on the mainstream parties in more constituencies in the long run, thus empowering the pro-life voices within those parties.

This funding is based only on shares of the national first-

preference vote. This, plus the nature of the Irish electoral system means that it will almost always be the right move to give that vote to an Aontú candidate, even if they have no hope of getting elected.

Let's say a pro-life Fine Gael candidate is in a fight for the last seat and the Aontú candidate isn't. If you vote 1 Aontú and 2 for the pro-life Fine Gaeler, that first preference will be counted towards Aontú's national vote total rather than Fine Gael's. One more vote for Fine Gael's national share won't advance the pro-life movement's goals at all – one more vote for Aontú gets it closer to that crucial 2% national threshold. And if the Aontú candidate is eliminated your vote will still transfer. On the other hand, splitting the pro-life first-preference vote between mainstream candidates, various tiny parties, and independents will likely stop any pro-life grouping from reaching the 2% threshold for funding.

I've made the case for the benefits of Aontú doing well. The other side of the coin to consider is what it will be like if they do badly. The major parties and

especially Sinn Féin will be going all out to prevent Peadar Tóibín being elected, just as they did with Lucinda Creighton.

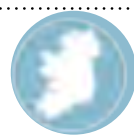
“We can create leverage and make our votes count for more by having a party with a pro-life platform in Leinster House”

Mr Tóibín took a risky and high-profile stand in favour of universal human rights. He was probably the single most prominent politician arguing against repeal.

If he were to lose his seat, or Aontú was to fail to reach 2% nationally, it will be seen as a rejection of pro-life politics in this country by the electorate.

Sometimes elections are complicated. And sometimes they are very simple. If you believe, as I do, that abortion is the most important human rights issue of our generation, then in this election there is every reason to vote, donate to, and canvass for Aontú.

“Peadar Tóibín took a risky and high-profile stand in favour of universal human rights. He was probably the single most prominent politician arguing against repeal”



Out&About

Limerick celebrates with Casey and Noah



LIMERICK: Pictured at the Baptism of Casey and Noah Emuze, held at St Michael's Church, Denmark St, is Fr Leo Mc Namara PP, teacher Timmy Ryan and Karen Ward Barry, along with the parents and godparents of the two boys who were baptised.



KERRY: Bishop Ray Browne visits students of Presentation Castleisland to officially launch Catholic Schools Week.



PERU: Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin meets with Apostolic Nuncio to Peru Nicola Girasoli (right). They spoke about the work of Irish missionaries in the Americas and the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland and Lima in 2018.

IN SHORT

Kildare festival celebrates St Brigid

'Brigid: Flame of Justice and Peace' is the overarching theme of the 28th Annual Feile Bride in Kildare Town which will celebrate the influence of St Brigid in Ireland.

The Feile commences on Friday, January 31 with the annual pilgrimage of quiet reflection, song and prayer at St Brigid's Well, which attracts people from near and far.

St Brigid's day brings many visitors, national and international, to Kildare town where they will have the opportunity to weave a St Brigid's C ross, participate in a workshop that revisits some of the traditions and customs associated with St Brigid, take a walking tour around Kildare's monastic city, treat themselves to a Legends of Kildare Virtual

Reality experience and much more. St Brigid's Treasure Trail also invites children to

explore some of the sites associated with St Brigid. The Feile has a week long programme of creative events which will cater for all ages. It will be a festival of music, dance, weaving, reflection, poetry, discussion and will also issue a challenge to create a more caring, just and peaceful world.

Events will be hosted by Solas Bhride Centre, The Heritage Centre, The Library and Kildare Education Centre.

The Feile Bride Concert on Friday, February 7 features Steve Cooney and Cormac Breatnach. The festival concludes on February 8 with the Afri Justice and Peace Conference which will creatively address issues concerning the future of planet earth. "We must rekindle the flame, revitalise our energies, re-wild whenever and wherever possible, and restore our awesome planet to its former glory," said Joe Murray of Afri.

For information on all events contact Solas Bhride Centre, Tully Road, Kildare Town, via info@solasbhride.ie or call 045522890.

Clogher book to aid clergy for special occasions

A Book of Blessings and Prayers for Special Occasions is the title of new book by Canon Patrick Marron PE, a Clogher priest and retired PP of Fintona. Canon Marron's book contains a wealth of resources for clergy, parishes, religious communities, prayer groups and families for a wide range of occasions and situations in life.

The book follows closely the liturgical seasons and the various Days of Prayer throughout the year, many of which have been added to the calendar in recent years. It also provides a selection of prayers for various needs and occasions – from the blessing of a sports field to the care of nature, from prayers for engaged couples to prayers for the celebration of a significant wedding

anniversary. There are prayers too for victims of psychological, physical or sexual abuse, for before and after surgery, for life and prayers for the blessing of a home. A sample service for the blessing of graves is also included.

Canon Marron says that this book fulfils a need for blessings for occasions that arise and that are not easily catered for, adding that "its contents will help all who use it to grow in praise of God".

Speaking about the publication, Clogher's Bishop Larry Duffy said that the work by Canon Marron will add to the resources available to priests and religious and to lay people across the diocese and further afield. He hopes that people will "find it uplifting and a reminder of God's continuing presence and providence".

The book is available from the Clogher Diocesan Office and can be made to order at 00353 (0)47 81019 or email communications@clogherdiocese.ie

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



▲ **DUBLIN:** Dr Con Casey, Associate Director of the Loyola Institute with conference speakers Frances Rowland, Fr Gerard Tanham, Emma Rothwell and Fr Gerard Condon at the Loyola Institute Conference on Religious Literacy in Trinity College.

◀ **DUBLIN:** Fr Gerry Kane of Booterstown speaks to Prof. J Owen Lewis in the parish pastoral centre after his keynote address about *Laudato Si'* and green house emissions.



WICKLOW: Members of the local Dominican Community gather to celebrate 150 years of Dominican presence in Wicklow town. (l-r) Srs Margaret Purcell, Jeanette Kiely, Marian O'Sullivan, Helen Mary Harmey, Julie Newman, Pauline McGrath and Colette Kane.

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.

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.

A Pro-Life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month (except December) at the Poor Clares Monastery, College Road, Cork 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, at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell, on the third Tuesday of every month.

DUBLIN

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

First Friday & first Saturday Devotions in The Morning Star Hostel, Dublin 7. Starts on Friday February 7 at 6pm with an All Night Eucharistic Vigil - Sacred Hearth Mass at 9pm and concludes with Immaculate Mass at 10am on Saturday 8, and every first Friday & Saturday.

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).

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the Assumption, Urlingford, every first and third Friday, from 2.30-5.30pm.

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.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Adult Formation Course Level 1 Part 1 offered at St Saviour's Dominican Church from February 28 - March 3, 2020. For more information email: limerick@op-tn.org.

LOUTH

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

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

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.

The next Latin Mass in the Extraordinary Form (Tridentine) will take place in the Parish Church Knock, on Sunday, February 9, at 5.30pm.

MEATH

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

Adoration in St Patrick's Church, Stamullen, after 10am Mass every Thursday until 5pm, 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.

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Drumboylan Church on the first Friday of every month from 9am - 11pm.

TIPPERARY

Our Lady of Lourdes Three Hour Vigil in the Pallottine Chapel in Thurles on Tuesday, February 11 from 7.30-10.30pm. Eucharistic Hour and Marian Hour conducted by Fr Conor Hayes PP Templemore. Concluding with Mass and Anointing of the Sick.

WATERFORD

The Waterford Medjugorje Healing Mass will take place on Wednesday, January 29, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel Mount Sion, Barrack St. Starting with Holy Rosary at 7.40pm. Holy Mass at 8pm, followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Celebrant is Bishop Phonsie Cullinan.

WEXFORD

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

WICKLOW

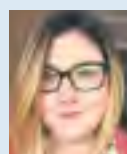
The Glencree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glencree on the first Saturday of the month.

Holy hour in St Patrick's church on Wednesday nights from 8-9pm with music and reflection, followed by Benediction.

Finding a spouse who will help you get to Heaven



Photos from last year's Youth 2000 Ball.



Establishing romantic relationships can be difficult for young Catholics in the 21st Century, writes **Amy Hurle McCann**

In his book *Love and Responsibility*, St Pope John Paul II writes of the challenges, cautioning against using people as a "means to an end". He emphasises that each person should be treated as "an object of love, not as an object for use."

In more recent times, this has come to be known as 'emotional virtue' - the 'right ordering' of our thoughts, actions, and desires, particularly in our relationships.

This attitude towards dating is inherently counter-cultural. We, as young Catholics, are called to be set apart. For if we believe that "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20), we cannot exist as we did before. We should not be striving to fit into a world where human life is disposable, and the watchword of the hour is 'pleasure'. Rather we must fix our eyes on Jesus and find our joy in him, for to do so will change our attitude towards those whom we are in relationship with.

It is important to find like-minded peers who understand and respect our desire to live for God.

Youth 2000 is a home for the growing number of young Catholics who want relationships that honour and respect the dignity



of the person, and who desire to 'run the race' of this life with a spouse whose goal is to help each other get to Heaven.

It is fitting, therefore, that Youth 2000 has an annual fundraising ball for the feast of St Valentine. This year's soiree is on Saturday, February 8 in Naas, Co. Kildare.

Distinct

The evening is distinct from the organisation's other retreats, with the aim of raising much-needed funds for the continuous work Youth 2000 does to engage and uplift the next generation of Catholics.

The ball is an evening of fun, food, dancing and fellowship. Most importantly, it is an evening anointed by the Holy Spirit, kicking off the festivities with

Mass. This year it is at 5pm in Ballycane Church, Naas. Beginning the evening in this way allows the 'right-ordering' the hearts and minds of those in attendance, encouraging them to seek God first.

After Mass, the Ball will be in the nearby Osprey Hotel, Naas. Tickets are €50 and can be purchased on Eventbrite. This is an over 18 event and ID will be required.

i For more information visit www.youth2000.ie. There are limited numbers, so don't miss out on this amazing night of fun and fellowship. If you would like to financially support the amazing work Youth 2000 please email development@youth2000.ie



**THIS ISN'T
NORMAL...**



—————The Irish Catholic —————
TACKLING HOMELESSNESS



The new year started out with the focus on Brexit, Trump and Iran but it's homelessness which keeps resurfacing closer to home, writes **Aron Hegarty**

Ireland is experiencing its worst homelessness crisis in living memory and the problem has become so widespread that it is now a regular feature in Irish political and current affairs. So much so that it even risks becoming a normal part of our discourse. But there is nothing normal about experiencing homelessness.

Even the announcement of a general election has done little to detract homelessness from the agenda with the issue of housing dominating the campaigning for February 8.

In January alone there was a protest march in the capital against homelessness, while the issue of a man who was left in a serious condition after his tent was removed when he was sleeping in it dominated day one of the 2020 general election campaign.

Heart-breaking stories such as that of a young woman dying in emergency accommodation and an elderly woman eating off a windowsill now appear on a daily basis in the media.

At the end of November 2019 – the latest date for which figures are available – there were officially 10,448 people homeless across Ireland, according to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Necessary steps

The Irish Catholic spoke to some of Ireland's leading charities – Focus Ireland, Cork Simon Community and Depaul – about what they are doing to try to alleviate the crisis, if they feel a new government will take further necessary steps to address the problem and what the future may hold for citizens who are, or at risk of, homelessness in this country.

"It is totally unacceptable," said Roughan MacNamara, Focus Ireland advocacy director, of the November's homelessness figures. "There has been over 10,000 people living homeless in Ireland over the past ten months and this number is going up. It is pretty shocking and worrying how systemic homelessness is becoming."

Of the national figure, Dublin was the region with the highest rate of homelessness at 4,509. Cork

Homelessness: despite the spin, the situation is getting worse



(437) with Kerry (155) made the South-West the second-highest at 592.

Paul Sheehan, Cork Simon Community's campaigns and communications manager, says the homeless crisis has worsened nationwide over the past 12 months.

"There is huge pressure on our services and there are now more people than ever residing in emergency accommodation," said Mr Sheehan.

"We (Cork Simon) have seen a month to month increase in the numbers living in emergency accommodation over the past three or four years.

"Our temporary mattresses are still being used on the floor of our day spaces and we are full to capacity every night of the week."

Almost 500 people became homeless in Ireland last year and MacNamara of Focus Ireland claims the crisis would be worse without the lifeline services and housing provisions of charity groups.

"We have over 80 services nationwide to support people and prevent homelessness," he said. "Focus Ireland works with over 15,500 people a year and have helped over 1,200 families in the past two years.

"There is good work being done, but the crisis is overtaking the success. For every family we help, another three go into or are at risk of going into homelessness."

Focus Ireland's strategy outlines a future where homelessness can be prevented and solved.

“We are not convinced that any government has got the determination to resolve the homeless crisis in this country”

Mr MacNamara says that the real solution to the crisis is in preventing homelessness in the first instance by ensuring people have help to stay in their home once they have found one.

"It is an awful crisis but there are people coming out of it which shows that homelessness can be ended," he said.

Cork Simon Community, founded in 1971, is among the leading charities in Ireland offering emergency services to men and women who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The charity provides day and

night services such as one-to-one support 24/7, soup runs at 7pm each day as well as emergency shelter, drop-in visiting support, employment and reintegration services.

Cork Simon's range of services include a dedicated Health and Outreach Team, an Employment and Training Facilitator, an Activities Co-Ordinator, a Youth Homeless Drug Prevention Project and aftercare programme.

It also provides housing and support services like high support housing and a housing first scheme, which comes under a housing-led approach to tackle homelessness.

Provisions

The aim of this approach is to help people find and keep their tenancies so once they are housed, they may focus on the factors which put – or threaten to put – them into homelessness.

Mr Sheehan though says the charity's provisions are stretched and that there needs to be a radical overhaul of the housing system in Ireland, adding that he does not believe any government will change that.

"The housing system in Ireland is not fit for purpose," he said. "We at Cork Simon are not convinced

that any government has got the determination to resolve the homeless crisis in this country.

"More and more people are becoming homeless and we do not see any change in that trend over the coming year because there is simply no housing in place.

"Until there is adequate housing available, we are not going to see many people moving out of emergency accommodation in 2020," he warned.

Ahead of the forthcoming election, Mr Sheehan added: "I would ask any new government: 'What are you going to do to stop homelessness?' because anything that has been done to prevent homelessness to date has not worked and is not working.

"We urge that the government reviews its' current targets on tackling homelessness because they are not enough and will not be enough going forward."

Mr MacNamara also called on the next government to develop a family homelessness strategy and guarantee that no family will be homeless for more than six months.

"More social housing needs to be built," he said. "If not, the crisis is only going to get worse in the coming year. We at Focus



Ireland call on the government to improve policy on housing and homelessness.”

Another charity whose common mission is to end homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it, is Depaul.

The organisation believe homelessness has no place and have a vision of a helping to build society in which everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community.

Depaul was established by the Society of St Vincent de Paul in the Republic in 2002 and in the North in 2005. They are a separate, cross-border charity helping people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin is the charity's patron with the Fr Paschal Scallan CM of the

Vincentian Community among the prominent members on their board.

“Children are having issues with stress and depression because they are not protected or nurtured as they have no stability”

The charity works in five main areas of service provision: prevention, families and young people, high support accommodation, health and rehabilitation and housing.

Depaul manages a total of 29 services in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and has helped over 4,000 men, women

and children to date.

They offer 24/7 support, providing over 600 bed spaces each night. In addition to their 450 trained staff, they have more than 600 unpaid volunteers a year working to support families, single people and couples who are homeless.

Despite these efforts, Depaul CEO David Carroll claims that a lack of adequate housing is undoing the hard work done by charities handling homeless cases.

“The year 2019 has been a year of records in terms of those experiencing homelessness,” said Mr Carroll of the latest homeless statistics.

“The lack of housing supply is hindering people's ability to move on from homelessness. It is incredibly frustrating when you have helped people to a point, where they are ready to live independently, only to then find that they have nowhere to go.

He added: “We need to get a push on getting these numbers down and allowing people and families to get on with their lives.”

The number of homeless families in Ireland in November 2019 was officially recorded at 1,685 with 3,752 children living in emergency homeless provisions with their families.

Focus Ireland, established in 1985, believes that having a place to call home is a fundamental human right – a right recognised by the United Nations (Article 25 in

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

The charity's website describes homelessness as being wrong; in that it is a failure of society that creates victims out of ordinary people and deprives them of their potential.



More than 140 children in Dublin alone were born into families living homeless in 2019 and Mr MacNamara says that allowing homelessness to continue will undermine our society.

“It damages children and stunts their development,” he said. “Children are having issues with stress and depression because they are not protected or nurtured as they have no stability.

“They need a stable home which provides the fundamental basis for that to happen.”

Homelessness has a damaging effect on health and well-being; with people who are homeless likely to have health problems at rates of three to six times greater than the housed population.

In addition, the link between poor mental health and homelessness is well documented with people who are homeless more likely to have a higher prevalence of mental illness when compared to the general population.

Mr Sheehan also fears that the impact of homelessness will have lasting implications for our society and leave a harming blueprint for the next generation.

“The lack of housing supply is hindering people's ability to move on from homelessness”

“Our main concerns are the detrimental effect that homelessness is having on families; on their general health, wellness and the impact it will have on future generations.

“We are concerned about the growing number of children born into families living in emergency accommodation plus how it will stunt their development into adulthood.

“These children will grow up in homelessness and be deprived of secure housing, something we feel is a basic human need,” he said.

All are urging voters to keep the issue front and centre in the election campaign and demand answers rather than platitudes from those competing to lead the country.

It's my way of leaving Cork a better place.

Helping people who are homeless after I've passed on... that's my legacy to Cork, the city I love.

Join me by leaving a gift to Cork Simon in your Will.



For more information please call Leona on 021 4929 418 or email Leona@corksmon.ie

‘I told my kids one day things will change, you have to be patient...’

Sibusiso Lowrene's story

Sibusiso came to Ireland with her daughters Patricia (9) and Innocent (15) in February 2016. The threat of violence, civil unrest and the death of her Mother left Sibusiso and her young family vulnerable so she made the decision to search for a better life. Here, Sibusiso describes the challenges of living in Direct Provision, the pain of her young daughter needing her foot amputated and how homeless charity Depaul helped her to 'to feel free again'.

Upon arrival Sibusiso and her family's application for asylum was processed and they were sent to Baleskin in Dublin where those who have applied for asylum are sent before being placed in accommodation centres across the country.

"My first day in Baleskin, to be honest, I felt like I was in prison. When I was going to queue for food with my kids I'd want to hide. After two weeks I was transferred to another centre," Sibusiso said.

From there her family were placed in a Direct Provision centre in Athlone before ending up in the former holiday site Mosney, Co. Meath. "To be honest, Athlone was better than Baleskin. When I was in Mosney it was much, much better."

Fighting for food

Throughout her time in Direct Provision there is one theme that remained constant, as she explains, "In Athlone there was cookers in the house so you could buy something and cook on your own. In Baleskin and Mosney you had to queue for your food, you felt like you were always fighting for food."

Her young children found the adjustment to life in direct provision difficult: "My kids were telling me 'Mammy, let's go back'. This is painful. I told them you need to be patient, one day things will change. But they couldn't understand. Especially about eating and the set times. The times in-between when there was

nothing, these are kids and it was hard."

When they moved to Athlone Sibusiso's children were placed into school and she found that a relief, not only for her children but herself: "When they were in school, from my side, it was relief as I could go out and express myself."

While staying in Direct Provision the family were dealt a cruel blow when Sibusiso's youngest daughter Patricia was diagnosed with synovial sarcoma, a rare form of cancer, in her foot.

"I just want the best life for my kids...to go to school and have their own families..."

As a result, Patricia had to have her foot amputated and she now wears a prosthetic foot. "She's still grieving for her leg, sometimes she's angry. When we lived in Mosney a lot of kids would ask what happened to you and that made her not want to engage with other kids. But since we moved she goes outside and she plays in the garden with her dollies, she is happy. In school she talks to everyone and she is very active," Sibusiso said.

As a result of her daughter's medical condition Sibusiso took up a carers course and now works nights as a carer: "I did a course as I felt like I have to help the community. In terms of my daughter's situation I realised other people need help too."

In September 2019 Sibusiso received notice that she had been granted asylum in Ireland, that is where Depaul came in. "When I got my status I was already moved back to Baleskin. Because of my daughter's situation I had to move back there to be closer to the hospital so if they needed me I could be there quickly. Depaul were always coming in to Baleskin and I used to see them at reception and pass them."

"So I met with Depaul staff



About Depaul
Depaul is a cross border homeless charity which was established in 2002. Depaul manage 29 services in Northern Ireland and Ireland and in 2018 helped over 4,000 men, women and children. Visit ie.depaulcharity.org to find out more.

then and they said 'any help that you need, you are in the right place.' Depaul helped Sibusiso with a number of things including being put on the social housing list, applying for benefits for her children and help in sourcing accommodation.

After a string of viewings, she

received news that she had gotten a house, Sibusiso explains her emotions: "I jumped. The first thing I did is I called Depaul and said I found a house. I think the support they gave me, they showed me I can still do more than what I was expecting."

She goes on to explain how her daughter Patricia reacted to the news that they had found a new home: "When she found out we were moving she was very happy. She told me that from today our life is going to change. I asked her why and she said 'now, we are living in the community. I'm able to do everything other people do

and she's changing and starting to adopt to life outside".

When she talks about Depaul she is full of gratitude for the help and support they continue to provide her with.

"Their support showed they really cared for people living in Direct Provision. Even now when I'm living in my own home they are on the phone, checking in and asking me how am I getting on. Do you need any help?"

"I just want the best life for my kids. To go to school and have their own families and not to live the life that I live. I know that they are here (Ireland) and they are free."



"I met with Depaul staff then and they said 'any help that you need, you are in the right place'. Depaul helped Sibusiso with a number of things including being put on the social housing list, applying for benefits for her children and help in sourcing accommodation"



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DEPAUL

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**Help the homeless get warm & dry this winter —
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FOCUS Ireland

Helping families who have nowhere else to turn

Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy (Founder & Life President of Focus Ireland) reflects on the deepening homelessness crisis.

There are now over 10,400 people homeless and nearly 4,000 of them are children. I have never seen it this bad in all the years since I first founded Focus Ireland in 1985.

There has, thank God, been a very slight drop last year in the number of new families becoming homeless in Dublin. But the harsh reality is that there were nearly 1,700 families and nearly 4,000 children homeless this Christmas.

“What has happened to this country that many are prepared to accept that there are children living in these awful conditions?”

Think of it. This is not a war-zone. We are not experiencing some terrible usual event such as wild fire or earthquake or famine. We are among the most privileged nations on earth. Our economy, we hear, is grow-

ing. So how can there possibly be almost four thousand children now homeless and living in cramped hotel rooms or homeless hubs?

What has happened to this country that many are prepared to accept that there are children living in these awful conditions? They are living in hotel rooms so full of suitcases, schoolbags, laundry, utensils, take-away cartons, that they can hardly move, not to mind play.

Some of these families have only become homeless recently. They are people who have been proud to work hard and pay their way, and they were in their own homes up until they became homeless. But the cruelty of our market-driven housing system has finally caught up with them, and they find themselves suddenly homeless as they could no longer afford the rent or in many other cases the landlord was selling the property.

Others are facing into their second or even their third year in emergency accommodation. They are depressed and exhausted and desperate to give their children a normal life. And babies are now being born into homelessness. Just imagine trying to look after a new-born in a hotel room. Think of an older baby trying to learn to crawl in a cramped

space. Homelessness is hurting children the most and many are missing development milestones due to their living conditions.

“Focus Ireland is working to help families who have nowhere else to turn.”

I know that many people are working tirelessly to try to improve things. My own organisation, Focus Ireland, in partnership with Dublin Region Homeless Executive, is currently supporting nearly six hundred families who are homeless in Dublin.

Focus Ireland is working

to help families who have nowhere else to turn. I'm very happy to say that we are soon to open a special family centre in Dublin City Centre which will provide a lovely space for families to go during the day providing them with a place to feed their children, do washing, a space for children to play, and a space for children to go to after school where they can get help with homework.

The centre will also have specially trained Focus Ireland support staff to work with families to help them exit homelessness as quickly as possible. There will also be child support workers to work with children who are homeless. At present the family centre is totally dependent on voluntary contributions.

We, like many homelessness organisations, are flat out trying to ease the situation. But there is only so much we can do.

With the General Election to be held on February 8th, the next Government simply has to act and introduce long-term solutions to end this crisis once and for all. The housing and homelessness crisis is one of the biggest challenges facing our country and we need to be certain that the Government we elect has the right policies, skills and ambition to tackle it.

Commitments we need from our next Government

If taking effective action to tackle our housing and home-

less crisis is a priority for you, you will be starting to thinking about how you will use your vote. Below I outline several key proposals that Focus Ireland believes will help end this crisis and the commitments that we need from our next Government.

A Family Homelessness Strategy

We need the next Government to put in place a specific family homelessness strategy, alongside a cast-iron guarantee that no family or individual remains homeless for longer than six months.

• A Youth Homelessness Strategy

It is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to





“ We need to change how we think about housing. We need to think about housing as homes – the foundation on which we build our lives - and not just commodities to be traded for profit.”

access housing in the private rented sector due to the rising costs of rents, scarcity of properties available to rent and lack of references, and are a lot more likely to fall into what we call the 'hidden homeless', meaning that they may be sofa-surfing with friends or family, squatting or living in insecure accommodation. We need to stop allowing our young people to be forgotten and a strategy on youth housing and homelessness to be introduced.

● **Focus On Homes**

We need to build at least 35,000 new homes each year of the next Government's term in office to prevent the housing and homelessness crisis getting even worse. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has said 35,000 houses will have to be built every year to meet growing levels of demand, but

we are nowhere near those levels at the moment.

● **The Right to Housing**

Focus Ireland believes that a referendum to rebalance the right to private property with an explicit 'right to housing' is a crucial step in removing barriers to tackling our housing and homelessness crisis. We need to change how we think about housing. We need to think about housing as homes – the foundation on which we build our lives - and not just commodities to be traded for profit.

● **Housing Commission**

Focus Ireland is calling on all political parties need to "stop playing politics" on the issue of housing and commit to establishing a 'Commission on Housing' after the general election to help end the deepening housing and homelessness crisis. Such a Commission would create a

body to work out a consensus on the supply of affordable, secure housing.

What can you do?

And you, my readers who have stuck with me this far – you can make a difference by supporting the work of Focus Ireland. The people who are homeless and the many thousands more who are at risk really need your help.

Remember to ask any politician canvassing your support during this election campaign if they support putting in place the solutions Focus Ireland is calling for as I have outlined in this article.

I firmly believe that having a place to call home is a central foundation stone of any just society.

We must all work together to ensure that the next Government takes firm action to end the housing and homelessness crisis for all.

Continue to make a difference.

Support Focus Ireland in your will.

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.



**To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact
eve.kerton@focusireland.ie or phone 01 881 5917**

FOCUS
Ireland

Seeking shelter in a time of need is nothing new

David Carroll

Seeking shelter in a time of need is not a new phenomenon. Many of our own people sought a better life away from these shores as recently as the collapse of the Celtic Tiger. They have been accepted into other societies and are thriving in new environments but most importantly, they were given a chance.

People seeking shelter here in Ireland are hoping for the same thing. A better life for their children and loved ones. Free from persecution, with the freedom to express their identity and values. The freedom to work and to belong, to be part of something bigger.

Direct Provision, and the system by which we temporarily house those seeking asylum in Ireland, has been in existence since 2000. It was originally brought in as an emergency measure to meet the growing number of asylum applications from people who were fleeing persecution or war. It is estimated globally that there are over 100 million people experiencing homelessness and displacement around the world.

However, in recent years' capacity to help those seeking asylum has been stretched. This has resulted in young children and adults being placed into hotels and B&B's. It is true that our ability to help those in need is being tested but that does not mean we should stop helping or prioritise one person's needs over another.

That is why in 2019 Depaul took on the challenge of helping house those who have been granted the right to remain here in Ireland. Rather than turning away we faced the challenge straight on. With support from the Department of Justice Depaul began working across a number of regions in Ireland.

Vital support

Since our Cosan Nua or 'New Path' service began we have been providing in-reach support in counties Monaghan, Sligo, Meath, Dublin, Mayo, Galway and Louth. Throughout 2019 we provided vital support to 300 households. Offering care, guidance and advice to those who had been granted permission to remain here in Ireland.

It is with great pride that I am able to say through our Cosan Nua service we helped 168 adults and 160 children find suitable accommodation within communities across Ireland. In effect enabling families and individuals begin a new chapter in their lives.

The effects of this vital work are three-fold. One, it allows those with asylum status to begin integrating into communities and towns across Ireland. Two, it prevents homelessness among



David Carroll.



those who have the legal right to stay in Ireland and three, it frees up capacity within the direct provision system for new entrants, again preventing the need for hotels and B&B's to house those seeking asylum.

A constant theme we have witnessed throughout this vital work is that people living within Direct Provision want to be part of Irish society. They want to contribute and integrate within our communities. Their desire to

work towards a better life for their families and themselves is clearly evident from our engagement. It is a really positive thing to see.

As of November 2019 there were over 6,000 people living in 39 direct provision centres across Ireland.

Some 900 of those people currently have legal status to remain in Ireland. In addition, there were over 1,500 people residing in emergency accommodation. Amongst this group of people,

“Since our Cosan Nua or ‘New Path’ service began we have been providing in-reach support in counties Monaghan, Sligo, Meath, Dublin, Mayo, Galway and Louth”

the risk of homelessness is real. That is why I believe we should see homelessness for what it is, not what we interpret it to be. If we don't we risk excluding those seeking help.

Values

At Depaul we live our values every day when we work with those who are homeless or experiencing homelessness.

A key one of which is 'taking a wider role in civil society'. With our

Cosan Nua service we feel we are doing just that.

In the process we are attaining a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by those seeking asylum here in Ireland. Realising that although people's circumstance can be completely different, the devastating effects of homelessness remain the same regardless of background, ethnicity, colour, circumstance or situation.

● David Carroll is CEO of Depaul Ireland.

“As of November 2019 there were over 6,000 people living in 39 direct provision centres across Ireland. Some 900 of those people currently have legal status to remain in Ireland”

Galway's Joe Canning offers an insightful glimpse of a lived Faith, writes **John G. Dwyer**

Sports stars have a reputation for giving dull interviews. Generally, they are wary of providing hostages to fortune while seldom venturing meaningful insights beyond their own discipline. GAA players may be forgiven for this as they must live a life that is frenetically shoehorned between work, family and an all-consuming commitment to team endeavour, which allows little time for insightful reflection.

There are, however, exceptions: Philly McMahon of Dublin, Eamon McGee of Donegal, Donal Óg Cusack of Cork and to an extent Joe Canning of Galway. Always individualistic in his play, Canning invariably shows up in that part of the field where the action is – irrespective of the position allocated to him by his team manager. He has also stirred controversies off the field, most noticeably by suggesting that Kilkenny hurlers were “a bit cuter” at manipulating the referee; and that they “influenced” frees.

In many ways he is the perfect subject for a pilgrim path walk as his own sporting pilgrimage has been a long one. Bursting on the inter-county scene in 2008 like a shooting star, he had to wait until 2017 to taste all-Ireland success and become ‘Hurler of the Year’. Along the way there were many dark days created by a succession of injuries and his own admission of a nagging fear he would never claim the Liam McCarthy Cup.

Unique light

The first star to emerge from the new RTE series *All Walks of Life*, which featured Canning, is the outrageously beautiful Connemara countryside.

The programme was filmed when the unique light in the West of Ireland was at its most evocative and the delicately artful camera work captures this sublimely along with the stark beauty of the lonesome Connemara landscape. The initial show made a fine advertisement for the soothing effect of pilgrim walking and is likely to draw much additional footfall to Ireland's penitential trails.

Ascending the Maumeen Pilgrim Path with former president Mary McAleese, there are flashes of insight to Canning the man. Coming from what was clearly a religious background, he recalls the evening Rosary being said by the family which must have been quite uncommon even for 1990s Ireland.

Unusually perhaps for a young sportsman, he remains a regular

Massgoer who believes in an afterlife, the spiritual side to his own nature and the occasional need for prayer.

“He recalls the evening Rosary being said by the family which must have been quite uncommon even for 1990s Ireland”

He also takes comfort from the fact that he expects to meet loved ones again in an afterlife.

One of his most insightful con-

tributions is his belief in the value of “not being afraid to fail”; he now tells young people not to fear failure, but to learn from it. He has had much experience here and rightly puts to bed the oft quoted modern sporting mantra that does so much damage to young sports stars, namely, “failure is not an option”. Failure is, of course, not only an option in life it is also an unavoidable part of human existence.

There is also discussion of Canning's role as an ambassador for UNICEF. He comes across as feeling deeply for the suffering of those facing poverty and oppression but is not probed about what he has learned his many journeys about

the underlying causes of inequality.

This is not the only time when one longs for more probing questions from McAleese. Canning seems unusually insightful for a star sportsman, yet he is not always queried deeply. Undoubtedly a huge weight of expectation was placed on his young shoulders by the media and an expectant Galway hurling public that, at times, he has struggled to live up to. There is, after all, a litany of sports stars from George Best to Bjorn Borg and Kenny Egan who have buckled under the weight of early fame.

The Galway man did survive, but what were his coping strategies during the barren 11 years when he

was forced to watch from the sideline as many lesser players cruised to regular all-Ireland glory? While professional sport stars tend to live in an insulated, wealth comforted bubble, GAA players must make a living in the community. How did Canning feel about immediately facing Galway's unforgiving supporters after one of his many painful defeats?

“One of his most insightful contributions is his belief in the value of ‘not being afraid to fail’”

As a businessman he must totally commit to serving his customers while at the same time juggling the competing demands of playing for club and county. Does he see this as a challenge or a source of stress?

Some opportunities for a more insightful conversation were undoubtedly lost from *All Walks of Life*. Nevertheless, the programme made compelling viewing. McAleese will, perhaps, be more securely within her comfort zone when walking, next week, with Cindy Joyce, who grew up on a halting site but went on to become the first member of the travelling community to gain a PhD. A show not to be missed.

John G. O'Dwyer is an experienced mountaineer and hill walker. His recent book *Wild Stories* from the Irish Uplands is available from Currach Books. See also Page 35.



Joe Canning. Photo: Stephen McCarthy/Sportsfile



Joe Canning with the presenter of *All Walks of Life*, Mary McAleese.

World Report

IN BRIEF

Scottish bishop investigated over plagiarism allegations

● The Pontifical Gregorian University has said it will review the doctoral dissertation of Scotland's Bishop Stephen Robson, which is alleged to contain several acts of plagiarism.

The institution's "academic authorities have decided to proceed to a careful review of the dissertation in question, in accordance with what is established in the University's Ethical Norms", the university said in a January 17 statement.

"The Pontifical Gregorian University considers plagiarism a very serious infringement of university ethics since the 'attribution to itself of the intellectual property of the text or content of a work of others, in any part of it, is a lack of justice and truth'," the statement added, quoting from the university's plagiarism policy.

US health secretary: 'No international right to abortion'

● There is no international right to abortion, the US health secretary told officials from more than 30 countries in Washington, DC.

"There is no international human right to abortion. On the other hand, there is an international human right to life," Alex Azar, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, stated in remarks first reported by the Washington Times.

Azar addressed representatives from more than 30 other countries at the Blair House in Washington, DC, last Thursday. Other US and international officials addressed the audience, including Kellyanne Conway, counsellor to President Trump, Hungary's Minister of State for Family and Youth Affairs Katalin Novák, and the Deputy Chief of Mission Minister-Counselor Fernando Pimentel of Brazil.

Chilean protestors dump tear gas canisters during new archbishop Mass

● During the installation Mass of Celestino Aós as the new archbishop of Santiago, Chile, a small number of protestors opened backpacks near the front of the church and dumped tear gas canisters on the floor.

An Instagram post by portadasoñada, which describes itself as "an independent and self-managed media outlet" included a video of the incident, which it said was intended to "denounce in

the face the highest Catholic authority in the country for his silence and complicity with the government".

The United Nations has warned of evidence of numerous human rights violations committed by police and military personnel in Chile since October. These include excessive and unnecessary use of force, sometimes resulting in injury or death, as well as torture, rape, and arbitrary detention.

First appointment of a woman to key position in Secretariat of State

● Pope Francis has named Dr Francesca Di Giovanni as undersecretary for multilateral affairs in the Vatican Secretariat of State, marking the first time that a woman has been appointed to a managerial position in the secretariat.

Di Giovanni, 66, was appointed undersecretary for the Section in Relations in States. She has worked as an official in the department for more than 25 years, with specialties including humanitarian law, communications, migrants and refugees, and the status of women, according to Vatican Media.

She will now work with Msgr Miroslaw Wachowski, who also serves as undersecretary for the Section in Relations in States, but focuses on bilateral affairs.

French bishops remove parents' sex on baptismal forms

● The French Catholic bishops' conference permanent council has approved a recommendation to remove references to the sex of parents on baptismal registry forms.

"The increasingly complex situation of families in France makes it extremely difficult to draft Catholic acts, especially regarding baptism," Bishop Joseph de Metz-Noblat of Langres, president of the French bishops' conference Council for Canonical Questions, wrote in a letter dated December 13, 2018.

Kidnapped Nigerian seminarian released, three remain in captivity

A Nigerian seminarian who was abducted this month was freed by his kidnappers after 10 days in captivity. Three seminarians kidnapped with him remain in captivity.

The freed seminarian, who has not yet been identified, is being treated at a Catholic hospital in Kaduna, Nigeria. The extent of his injuries is unclear, but he is being treated in the hospital's intensive care unit.

"From the time of the abduction, this seminarian was stubborn to the abductors; he could hold on anything he could find, resisting the kidnapping," a source close to Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Kaduna told *ACI Africa*. "The seminarian was beaten up badly resulting in some fractures of his body parts, yet they took him still," the source said of the January 8 kidnapping.

The seminarian, still suffering injuries from his abduction, was dumped by kidnappers on Saturday on the side of Nigeria's Kaduna-Abuja highway. He was taken to the hospital after being found by passing motorists.

The seminarian might have been freed and dumped



The four kidnapped seminarians, one of whom has been freed.

along the road "because the abductors felt the boy could not survive in their hands," a source said.

The abducted seminarians were first year philosophy students at Good Shepherd Seminary.

Guns

The students, Pius Kanwai, 19; Peter Umenukor, 23; Stephen Amos, 23; and Michael Nnadi, 18, were abducted on the night of January 8 in a 30-minute operation that saw the kidnappers, dressed in military uniform and armed with guns, force their way onto the Catholic seminary campus, which is home to 268 seminarians.

Since January 11, the abductors have been making contact with family members of the seminarians to discuss ransoms for their release, a source in Nigeria told *ACI Africa*.

According to a Sunday news report, Archbishop Matthew Man'oso Ndagoso of Kaduna has cautioned against speculation about the abductors' demand for ransom for the safe release of the seminarians.

"We have streamlined discussion with the kidnappers, it is only one person that is communicating with them, we can't disclose any discussion with them," Archbishop Man'oso told local media.

Good Shepherd Seminary is located just off the Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria Express Way. According to *AFP*, the area is "notorious for criminal gangs kidnapping travelers for ransom".

The news agency said that schoolgirls and staff from a boarding school also located near the highway were kidnapped in October, and were later released.

Kidnappings of Christians in Nigeria have multiplied in recent months, a situation that has prompted Church leaders to express serious concern about the security of their members and to call on the government to prioritize the security of its citizens.

More Dutch churches set to close, Catholic newspaper warns

A Dutch Catholic newspaper warned churches will continue to close in the Netherlands, where half of all Catholic parishes have already been dissolved amid plummeting church participation.

"It's never good to panic, but there are grave concerns about the way things are going here," said Peter Doorakkers, an editor at the *Katholiek Nieuwsblad* weekly.

"It's been hoped people would draw the obvious conclusion – that if you want your church to stay open, you don't just need to support it financially, you also have to attend it more. But if you look at the numbers

at Mass now and average ages, it's obvious more churches will close in the near future."

The newspaper said the Catholic population of the Netherlands had fallen by a fifth in 15 years, with just 5% of the country's 3.7 million registered Catholics still attending Mass, while 55% of parishes had closed.

Research

However, it said research suggested Dutch society had not yet reached "peak secularisation" and warned that, with up to 80% of Church funds devoted to maintaining buildings, the

"biggest wave of church closures" was still to come.

Katholiek Nieuwsblad said in an editorial it had hoped to show the disappearance of Catholic parishes had "far-reaching consequences" for local communities, but conceded that many former parish functions had instead been "effortlessly and silently taken over" by other social organisations. While some closures had been painful, most village communities had "recovered surprisingly quickly".

However, its findings had "touched an open nerve", prompting extensive responses from readers, the newspaper said.

Chinese clergy evicted from parishes over 'fire safety'

Chinese officials have evicted members of the clergy, including a bishop, from their homes and are closing Catholic parishes in the Diocese of Fujian.

While the officials cited "fire safety standards" as the reason for the evictions, all the clergy and churches affected have refused to join

the Communist-controlled Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association.

The CPCA, the state-run Catholic Church, entered into an agreement with the Vatican in 2018, regularising the status of its bishops. While the terms of the agreement have not been released, it has widely been reported that it

gives the Communist party effective veto power over future episcopal appointments.

Deal

The deal was intended to regularise the status of the so-called underground Church in China, which had always been in communion with

Rome, despite decades of persecution by the Communist government. While the Vatican has said that underground clergy are not obliged to join the CPCA, government authorities have escalated policies and enforcement actions aimed at bringing all religious practice under Communist control.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie

Stars and gripes



Gun rights advocates and militia members attend a rally in Richmond, Virginia. Thousands of gun-rights activists, some making deliberate displays of their military-style rifles, crowded the streets surrounding Virginia's Capitol building to protest plans by the state's Democratic leadership to pass gun-control legislation. Photo: CNS

Bolsonaro comes under fire after launching nationalist project

Brazil's government has drawn criticism after launching a project that aims to revamp the country's arts scene, with a focus on nationalism and religion. The project is part of the far-right administration's answer to what it sees as decades of leftist hegemony in the cultural sphere – from art to education and family.

Though cash-strapped, the government of President Jair Bolsonaro will spend \$4.9 million (€4.4m) to foment the production of literature, theatre, opera, music and other arts. It was announced by Bolsonaro, Education Minister Abraham Weintraub and culture secretary Roberto Alvim from a library of the official presidential residence in a live Facebook video.

Alvim, the driving force behind the

initiative, is a born-again Christian who found renewed faith while recovering from cancer. He delivered a separate message about the initiative using a phrase local paper *O Globo* compared to a speech by Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels; Alvim said on Facebook last Wednesday that it was merely a "rhetorical coincidence". The president of Brazil's lower house said on Twitter the video went beyond the pale, and that Bolsonaro should remove Alvim from his position immediately.

Funding

While the amount to be spent is a drop in the bucket compared to other arts funding, the project jibes with the government's efforts to overturn what Bolsonaro calls "cultural Marxism"

that some of his ministers say is undermining society's morals. The leftist Workers' Party governed Brazil for 13 years until 2016.

"When culture becomes sick, the people become sick, too," Alvim said in the video beside Bolsonaro. "Brazilian culture was deliberately sickened during the recent decades. Culture is the basis of the homeland."

More than 57 million people – 55% of the voters in 2018's election – embraced Bolsonaro's anti-leftist campaign, in which he promised to fight corruption, violence and leftist ideology with the same energy. The government will stimulate film projects that focus on Brazil's independence and historical figures, and be aligned with conservative values, Alvim said.

Christians most in danger in North Korea – report

Christian persecution around the world is a growing problem, says a new report from an agency that documents abuses against Christians across the globe.

Worldwide, the report states, 260 million Christians are facing persecution. This marks a 6% increase from the previous year.

The annual report from *Open Doors*, released on January 15, ranked North Korea

first on its list of 50 most dangerous countries in which to be Christian, the 18th straight year that the country has received that designation.

There are an estimated 300,000 Christians amidst the total population of 25.4 million in North Korea. *Open Doors* reports that if North Korean Christians are discovered, the government will deport them to labour camps as political criminals or even

kill them on the spot.

Meeting other Christians to worship is nearly impossible unless it is done in complete secrecy.

Persecuted

Following North Korea on the World Watch List Top 10 are Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, Iran and India.

"Christians remain one of the most persecuted reli-

gious groups in the world. While persecution of Christians takes many forms, it is defined as any hostility experienced as a result of identification with Christ.

"Christians throughout the world continue to risk imprisonment, loss of home and assets, torture, rape, and even death as a result of their faith," *Open Doors* said in a release accompanying the report.

Vatican roundup

Official Sunday of the Word icon unveiled at Vatican

● An icon of the encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus was chosen as the official logo for the worldwide celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God.

The colourful logo is based on an icon written by the late-Benedictine Sr Marie-Paul Farran, a member of the Our Lady of Calvary Congregation, who lived and worked at its monastery on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

The logo was presented to the press at a Vatican news conference last week, ahead of the newly established Sunday of the Word of God, which is being celebrated on January 26 this year. Pope Francis has asked that the third Sunday in Ordinary Time each year be observed as a special day devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God.

The logo shows the resurrected Christ holding in his left hand a scroll, which is "the sacred Scripture that found its fulfilment in his person", Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation, told reporters.

By his side are two disciples: Clopas and his wife, Mary. They both fix their gaze on Christ while Clopas holds a stick to indicate a pilgrimage.

Pope visit to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and East Timor possible

● A visit from Pope Francis to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and East Timor may happen in September, according to an Indonesian Muslim leader who met with the Pope this week.

Sheikh Yahya Cholil Staquf leads the 50 million member Nahdlatul Ulama movement, which calls for a reformed "humanitarian Islam" and has developed a theological framework for Islam that rejects the concepts of caliphate, Sharia law, and "kafir" (infidels).

Staquf met with the Pope last week, while in Rome for a meeting of the

Abrahamic Faiths Initiative, which gathers Christians, Muslim and Jewish leaders to discuss the promotion of peace and fraternity.

After that meeting, Staquf reported that the Pope said he plans to visit Indonesia, East Timor, and New Guinea in September. The Vatican has not yet confirmed such a trip.

Indonesia is home to the largest population of Muslims in the world. The country's 229 million Muslims make up more than 12% of the global Muslim population. Nearly all of Indonesia's Muslims are Sunni.

Cardinal Sarah meets with Benedict to iron out alleged book controversy

● Cardinal Robert Sarah has met with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to discuss the controversy following around their recently-published book *From the Depths of Our Hearts*, and insisted that there is no ill feeling between the two.

The book, presented as a co-authored work by the two, is subtitled 'Priesthood, Celibacy, and the Crisis of the Catholic Church'. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's contributions have been the subject of controversy since the book was announced on last Sunday, and conflicting statements on the extent of Benedict's involvement in the project have been released over the last month.

Cardinal Sarah issued a series of statements via Twitter last Friday, saying that his meeting with the former Pope went well. "Because of the incessant, nauseating and deceptive controversies that have never stopped since the beginning of the week, concerning the book *From the Depths of Our Hearts*, I met Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI this evening," said Sarah.

The tweets were published in French and signed 'RS'. "With Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, we have seen how there is no misunderstanding between us," said Sarah. "I came out very happy, full of peace and courage from this beautiful interview."



Letter from Rome



Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, is pictured with pilgrims during Pope Francis' general audience in St Peter's Square at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

Sarah's last hurrah? 2020 could see Vatican shakeups

At the beginning of last week, the insider Catholic universe imploded when news broke that retired Pope Benedict XVI and Guinean Cardinal Robert Sarah had co-authored a new book defending priestly celibacy just as Pope Francis is considering an exception to the rule proposed during the Amazon synod.

In the fierce and polemical debate that ensued, the role of a Pope emeritus was questioned while Catholicism's conservative and progressive camps exchanged arguments over Benedict XVI's intentions with the book, titled *From the Depths of Our Hearts: Priesthood, Celibacy and the Crisis of the Catholic Church*, which hit the shelves on January 15 in France.

The saga culminated with Archbishop Georg Ganswein, personal secretary for Benedict XVI, making a call to the Ignatius publishing house requesting that Benedict's name be removed as co-author, and that it also be removed from the introduction and conclusion of the book, which Ignatius refused to do.

Bizarre episode

Though unprecedented is perhaps the wrong word to describe the bizarre episode, it was certainly odd, as Sarah, an active sitting cardinal who heads the Vatican's liturgy office, took to social media



Elise Harris

to defend his credibility, issuing several statements and publishing correspondence between himself and Benedict – things that heads of Vatican departments don't typically do.

However, this week's episode could well have been Sarah's "last hurrah", as the Guinean cardinal is set to turn 75 in June, meaning he will be required to submit his resignation after having reached the formal age of retirement for bishops and cardinals.

Sarah is just one of many possible shakeups that could take place around the Vatican this year as Francis's reform of the Roman Curia unfolds, with several major department heads already 75 or older, who have yet to step down.

Heavy-hitters such as Spanish Cardinal Luis Ladaria, head of the Vatican's doctrine office, and Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet of the Vatican's office for bishops will both turn 76, yet both are widely seen as having Pope Francis' backing, so he might keep their resignation letters sitting on his desk, and not accept them just yet.

Other noteworthy officials who are already over 75 include: Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, 76, who heads the Vatican office for Eastern Churches; Cardinal Beniamino Stella, 78, who heads the Vatican office for clergy; Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, 76, in charge of the Vatican's education office; and Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, 77, president of the Vatican's Council for Culture.

The heads of two of the Vatican's tribunals are also both over 75 and could be replaced. These are Fr Pio Vito Pinto, 78, who is dean of the Roman Rota, and Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, 75, who heads the Apostolic Penitentiary. These tribunals deal with cases related to marriage annulments and issues dealing with the "internal forum" respectively.

Francis has also placed a strong emphasis on the role of laity in his reform

Cardinal Giuseppe Bertollo, head of the Governate of Vatican City, will turn 78 this year, meaning that in theory, nearly half of Francis' current staff could be shown the door on the basis of age alone.

However, another factor in the Vatican's 2020 appointments is Francis' reform of the Roman Curia, which will culminate this year with the publication of a new apostolic

constitution *Predicate Evangelium*, meaning 'Preach the Gospel'.

The document, which will outline the role and structure of the Roman Curia, will likely be published sometime this spring and is expected to see the merger of several Vatican offices, meaning one can expect a fair number of new appointments for both the old and the new.

In the category of things to come, a new mega-department for evangelisation is expected, which would merge two existing curial offices: the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, also called Propaganda Fidei; and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation.

Most observers predict that Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, who was recently named head of Propaganda Fidei, will be tapped to head the department, meaning Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the current head of the Vatican's office for the new evangelisation, could either be reshuffled or out of a job at 69.

A new office for 'charitable services', which will answer directly to the Pope and which would absorb what is currently known as the Office of the Papal Almoner, headed by Polish Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, is also a rumoured change. Given the confidence Francis has placed in Krajewski, who got a red hat from the Pope in 2018, the Polish prelate

is a frontrunner candidate to preside over the new office.

Another possible change coming down the pike is the merger of the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for Culture into another new mega-department for "education and culture", meaning that either Versaldi or Ravasi, or both, could finally see their retirement should Francis choose to bring in new leadership.

It is also possible that the Congregation for Bishops and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, headed by Archbishop Filippo Iannone, could be merged with other departments holding similar competencies, leaving questions as to who would lead these offices should that happen. However, all this is yet to be seen.

Should these offices merge with another, Ouellet and Iannone could also see themselves in different roles, with a possible retirement for Ouellet, though it is unlikely that Iannone, 63, would be completely gone from the scene.

Figures likely to stay put in the shakeup are those who have already been appointed to positions as part of Francis' reform, such as American Cardinal Kevin Farrell of the office for Laity, Family and Life, and Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson of the Vatican office for Integral Human Development.

Migrants

However, earlier this year Francis gave Canadian Jesuit Michael Czerny a red hat. For now Czerny is acting as undersecretary for Turkson's department, overseeing a section for migrants and refugees that reports directly to the Pope; given that it is extremely rare to have one cardinal serving beneath another in the same department, it's possible that Czerny could be shuffled to another position, or that his office could get an elevated status.

Francis has also placed a strong emphasis on the role of laity in his reform, insisting on multiple occasions that a layperson can preside over a dicastery, and that their leadership is particularly encouraged in fields of family and life, the promotion of peace and justice, the economy and care of creation.

Though he has already named several laypeople, including women, to top Vatican posts, Francis last Wednesday took another concrete step in this direction, naming Italian laywoman and lawyer Francesca Di Giovanni as undersecretary of the Vatican Secretariat of State's section for multilateral affairs, making her the first woman to hold a managerial position in the department.

Should things continue along this trajectory, many other similar appointments could be made this year as the Pope's curial reform rolls out.

It could be a busy 2020 for the Pope.

Elise Harris is senior correspondent with Cruxnow.com

Germany's synodal assembly closer to rebuilding Church's credibility

Catholic leaders in Germany have compiled responses from lay Catholics in areas related to who holds power in the Church, sexual morals, the role of priests and the place of women in church offices in preparation for an upcoming synodal assembly to debate Church reforms.

More than 940 suggestions and questions had been submitted by early January in advance of the January 30-February 1 assembly in Frankfurt, reported KNA, the German Catholic news agency.

The synodal assembly is one segment of the synodal path, which the German bishops agreed to stage at their annual meeting last March.

The synodal assembly will include 230 members. It is the highest decision-making body of the synodal path, an effort by the bishops' conference and lay Central Committee of German Catholics to restore trust following a September 2018 Church-commissioned report that detailed thousands of cases of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy over six decades.

Comments will continue to be accepted through January 23 at the website of the German bishops' conference.

The bishops and the lay group are collaborating in planning the synodal assembly. During a September plenary meeting, the bishops approved statutes to guide discussions at the assembly.

The bishops' conference and the committee each will send 69 members to the assembly. Decisions of the assembly must be passed by a double two-thirds majority: two-thirds of all participants as well as two-thirds of all members present from the bishops' conference.

German church officials say the synodal assembly is not meant to be a synod in the classic sense.

Reform process

In describing the synodal path, KNA reported that the inclusion of the term synodal in the name of the reform process reflects that the dialogue, initially limited to two years, is more than a nonbinding conversation.

As with a synod, each respective local bishop will determine whether the decisions reached will be implemented.

Several high-ranking Church leaders have weighed in on the upcoming assembly.

Bishop Franz Jung of Würzburg called for greater patience in the debates on Church reform.

The synodal path to discuss reforms was "initially, first and foremost, about the Church in German forming an opinion", Bishop Jung told a new year's reception in Würzburg. "It is still unclear what decision-making scope will be granted to individual local churches and how much regional diversity Catholic unity can take."



A cross is displayed during a meeting of the Central Committee of German Catholics in Bonn. Photo: CNS

KNA reported he said it also was unclear if there could be different speeds on the path to a renewed church.

The synodal path will be judged by the extent to which divergent views will be allowed to be heard, Bishop Jung explained. It is important "that one endeavours to lead the discussion objectively and above all to preserve the inner unity as far as possible", he said. "It's an enthralling task."

However, several German church leaders, including Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki of Cologne and Bishop Rudolf Voderholzer of Regensburg, have voiced scepticism of the synodal path.

They have maintained that any decisions within the Church should be left to the bishops alone. In addition, they have

said the synodal path should not be interpreted as a "quasi-parliamentary vote on faith".

Other observers have said the most controversial issues confronting the Church cannot be decided in Germany and can only be addressed within the Vatican on behalf of the worldwide Church.

Increasing the role of women in the Church is one of the core issues to be debated

Elsewhere, Bishop Franz-Josef Overbeck of Essen called on the German Church to embrace the synodal path of reform discussions as a chance to make a fresh start

and to become "smaller and more humble".

KNA reported that in a statement read at all parishes of the diocese in early January, the bishop called for the Church to allow "differentiated, multi-layered answers and refrain from raising itself above other people in a know-all and arrogant manner".

Bishop Overbeck called on the Church to discuss the issue of power within its institutions, adding that more controls needed to be imposed.

He also said the Church must address celibacy, which placed a heavy burden on many priests.

Issues of sexual morality and partnership needed to be reassessed, and many people found it unacceptable that women were kept out of the most important

positions of the Church, the bishop added.

Earlier, in a new year's homily, Bishop Overbeck described gender justice as an "issue of the century" and urged the Church to address it.

However, KNA reported in mid-January the bishop said he did not want to raise false expectations regarding the ordination of women in the upcoming discussions.

"But I also belong to those bishops who do not want to slam the door shut in that regard", he told a meeting of 400 priests and laypeople from through the Essen Diocese.

Declaration

Increasing the role of women in the Church is one of the core issues to be debated in the synodal assembly. Church officials have repeatedly pointed out, however, that St John Paul II declared in 1994 that the Church had "no authority whatsoever" to ordain women as priests.

A statement on the bishops' conference website said the "dissatisfaction of many believers" was the starting point for the synodal path, which would be the first national consultation since a 1971-75 synod at Würzburg on implementing reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

It added the issues of priestly celibacy and the ordination of women could only be "addressed and clarified" by the whole Catholic Church.

i Additional reporting by CNS.



Each respective local bishop will determine whether the decisions reached will be implemented

Bishop Franz-Josef Overbeck of Essen, Germany, has called on the German Church to embrace the synodal path of reform discussions as a chance to make a fresh start and to become smaller and more humble.

Letters

Letter of the week

It's time to break political stranglehold

Dear Editor, It was refreshing to read your comment piece (IC 16/1/20) about the need to set aside old-fashioned political loyalties in the context of next month's general election.

Far too many people with deeply-held religious beliefs are willing to leave them at the door when they go to the polling booth. Both the main parties – Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil – have given short shrift to people of faith in recent years.

Our votes are increasingly taken for granted and our views looked down on as if they were something from another generation. They are not,

universal values like the inalienable right to life hold whether political parties agree or not – that is why we call them universal.

Aontú offers the only real pro-life alternative for people who continue to value the right to life and prioritise the unborn.

Peadar Tóibín deserves huge credit for the stance he has taken and when we eventually overturn this unjust law permitting the targeting of the unborn he will be recalled as a true hero of conscience who stood up for his principles.

I have never voted for any party other than one of the dominant

mainstream parties. Your reflections have convinced me that the time is now right to set aside that and embrace change and vote for the change that I want to see in society.

On February 8, I will be voting for Aontú and hoping to break the stranglehold on Irish politics that leads to a situation where one in three voters are substantially unrepresented in the Dáil.

*Yours etc.,
Pauline Jones,
Drogheda,
Co. Louth.*

Fatima provides proof for God's existence

Dear Editor, Fr Rolheiser's very interesting article 'Proofs for the Existence of God' (IC 09/01/20) will hopefully help some of those who in growing numbers in recent times have rejected God, and query his existence.

In Fatima there is also proof of the existence of God in what is often referred to as the Miracle of the Sun. On October 13, 1917, around 70,000 people saw what looked like the sun rotating madly. Soon afterwards they saw what looked like the Sun "dancing" in the sky.

Finally they saw what looked like the sun leaving its place in the firmament, falling close to the earth and then turning back to its normal position.

Understandably scientific studies have been virtually unanimous in concluding that these scenes did not actually happen. There is scientific evidence that very unusual meteorological conditions could have caused the extraordinary spectacles.

However, science has to accept the fact that three children predicted 92 days

in advance that at midday on October 13, 1917, people would see something miraculous.

The proof of the prediction is not based on any evidence provided by the Church but by the evidence unintentionally provided by the anti-clerical newspapers. In reporting on what was supposed to be happening in Fatima a number of journals could not resist the temptation to poke fun at what they perceived as the crazy forecasting of the exact time and place of a miracle.

Portugal's leading daily *O*

Seculo warned its readers, sarcastically, to be sure to be there at mid-day by the sun, so as not to miss the "miracle".

Fatima does indeed provide proof of the existence of God because the prediction of the exact time and place of the great spectacle in the sky is wholly beyond the powers of natural reason.

*Yours etc.,
Lauri Duffy,
Howth,
Dublin 13.*

Consider your vote

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny's excellent article 'Reaction to the Eighth will be viewed differently 40 years hence' (IC 09/01/20) is to be commended for outlining the reasons why people will come to regret the legalisation of abortion in Ireland, but hopefully we don't have to wait 40 years to bring about change.

Irrespective of how you voted in the referendum if the thought of thousands (the exact number to date has not been revealed nor will it before the election) of unborn babies being legally killed annually, troubles you, quite simply you can do something about that this year. Don't vote for any TD who voted for the Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018. Instead vote for the pro-life candidates in your constituency and change will come about.

*Yours etc.,
Ann Kehoe,
Fingal, Dublin 15.*



A heart-felt 'thank you' from all at Trócaire

Dear Editor, I would like to thank your readers for their ongoing generosity in support of Trócaire, the overseas development agency of the Bishops' Conference. Donations to Trócaire save and change millions of lives in the world's poorest countries. From families fleeing war in South Sudan and Syria, to farmers trying to grow crops in the face of droughts in Kenya and Malawi, your readers' support is a lifeline to many.

That support was evident once

more over the Christmas period. I wish to reassure your readers that all of Trócaire's work is inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, which is its mandate. It is firm and faithful in its commitment to the values and teaching of the Church.

I was asked recently whether Trócaire funded abortions in Africa and was happy to put this person's mind at rest by assuring them that Trócaire does not fund, support or promote abortion in any of its work.

As an agency working on the frontlines to deliver support to the world's most vulnerable people, Trócaire is the embodiment of our Church's mission.

With so much need currently in our world, this mission has never been more deserving of support.

*Yours etc.,
Bishop William Crean,
Chair of Trócaire,
Cloyne.*

Medjugorje pilgrimages prove we have some magnificent leaders in our Church

Dear Editor, You recently published an article (IC 09/01/20) about Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe being one of the first Irish bishops to lead a pilgrimage to Medjugorje. Fair play to him! I am so grateful for his leadership, and for Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly who will lead a pilgrimage later this year. We truly have some incredible apostles at the helm.

However, I'd like to also acknowledge the efforts of Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore, who was the first Irish bishop to lead such a pilgrimage. Last August, with the help of Fr Patrick Cahill of Holy Family Mission, Bishop Phonsie led 40-plus Catholic young adults to Medjugorje, the week after the Vatican said it was okay for bishops to lead pilgrimages. I was there, and it was a profound week of peace, prayer and community.

Thank you Bishop Phonsie for your bravery in continually leading the Catholic faithful with such steadfastness, in the face of such mockery. You are a truly an apostle of Christ and the Catholic youth of Ireland respect you enormously.

*Yours etc.,
Clodagh Gallagher,
Dungarvan,
Co. Waterford.*

'Showbands' attack on the Church is a sour note

Dear Editor, In a week which we have already seen the Irish media intimidate a Catholic speaker from entering the country we also see the derogatory merry-go-round continue.

In a show about the showbands scene in the 1960s in Ireland, the producers did their utmost best to portray the Catholic Church as the evil menace to a fun and freedom seeking society. Not only that, its current advertising pulls no punches in describing the country at the time as "priest-ridden".

It's a negative adjective which is only used for things such as debt, insects or disease.

And so the attack on what is now just a remnant Church continues unabated.

*Yours etc.,
Mark Quinn,
Maynooth,
Co. Kildare.*

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



▲ **HAITI:** A man in Port-Au-Prince poses for a photo inside the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption. Ten years earlier, the island nation was struck by an earthquake that killed an estimated 220,000 people, injured more than 300,000 and left 1.5 million homeless.

◀ **KENYA:** Peter Maganjo and Isaac Ndung'u, farmers in Kirinyaga County look at a young locust swarm. Ndung'u said his children had alerted him to the locusts, which had settled on his fence. Photos: CNS



▲ **AUSTRALIA:** In recognition of the communities affected by fires across Australia, projections are seen on the sails of the Sydney Opera House.



▲ **HOLY LAND:** A member of the Holy Land Coordination greets a child during a visit to the Daughters of Charity house in the Gaza Strip.



▲ **USA:** First responders look over the scene of a crash in Vero Beach, Florida. Grace Rett, a sophomore at the Jesuit-run College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, was killed in the accident while travelling in the van with other members of the rowing team.



▲ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis and Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi of Congo meet at the Vatican. They discussed the impact of the Ebola virus and the contributions of the Church to the development of democracy in the country.

Family & Lifestyle

Family News

AND EVENTS

STARTING ON A HIGH NOTE

Marking their silver jubilee, the 25th Festival of Youth Orchestras will see young musicians from across Ireland gather in the National Concert Hall next month. Presented by the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras, the festival is the annual celebration of youth orchestras in Ireland, and their members, with a diverse variety of music played by young people, for young people, from the standard classical repertoire to music from the movies, pop tunes arranged for orchestra, Irish traditional, and new music by Irish composers.

The 25th Festival will feature classics such as Ravel's *Boléro*, Greig's *In the Hall of the Mountain Kings*, two movements of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No 6 'Pathétique'* and the lively *Lord of the Dance* by Ronan Hardiman, along with performances of music from *The Avengers* and pop classics.

It takes place on Saturday, February 8, in the National Concert Hall at 3pm and 8pm.

SMOKING INTO DEPRESSION

It's widely known how corrosive smoking cigarettes can be for your physical health, but a new study argues that smoking may also lead to depression.

Appearing in the journal *PLOS ONE*, the research carried out by lead author Prof Hagai Levine and team found that tobacco consumption negatively impacted mental health.

The new study included data from two cross-sectional studies that gathered information from two Serbian universities: the University of Belgrade and the University of Pristina. The former has around 90,000 students, and the latter has around 8,000.

Of this total, 2,138 students enrolled in the study which found that having a higher BDI (Beck Depression Inventory) was associated with smoking and that those students who smoked were two to three times more likely to contract clinical depression than those who had never smoked.

While it's not proven that smoking leads to depression, the study shows there is a strong link between the two.

A HELPING HAND

Many of us can be clumsy in the kitchen and this temperament isn't very helpful around sharp objects like graters and knives. All it takes is one slip when chopping vegetables to leave you with a diced finger or worse. The danger of cutting yourself only increases as you get older so it's worthwhile investing in a pair of cut resistant gloves. If you're making complex dishes like fish or chopping hard foods, these ingenious mittens will come in handy. It's impossible to cut yourself while wearing them and they are completely safe in a food environment. Your dexterity isn't limited when dicing and given how comfortable they are, you'll feel much more relaxed as you prepare some of your signature dishes. When you're finished using them, simply pop the gloves in the washing machine and they'll be back in use in no time. Bon appetite!



How polluted is your home?



'Is the air in your home affecting your health?,' asks Róise McGagh

'Go out and get a bit of fresh air', we were told, by parents, teachers and friends. Whether we are feeling under the weather mentally or physically. But what is so bad about the indoors? It is a recent enough biome in terms of ecology but one we have relied on heavily for the last couple of thousand years.

"You might recognise the term 'Building Sickness', often associated with symptoms like irritation of the ears, nose and throat, itching, mental fatigue, drowsiness and headaches."

Irish people spend approximately 90% of their time indoors, this adds up to almost 22 hours a day, either at home, in school or at work.

You might recognise the term 'Building Sickness', often associated with symptoms like irritation of the ears, nose and throat, itching, mental fatigue, drowsiness and headaches. 'Sick building syndrome' (SBS) is actually a legitimate illness. It's a combination of ailments associated with

a person's place of work or living space. The causes tend to be related to poor indoor air quality.

It might be heard as a complaint associated with some recently constructed lecture halls and offices. Certain chemical air pollutants, such as formaldehyde and phthalates, have been associated with an increased risk of asthma, allergies and pulmonary infections. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are a major type of indoor pollutant (of which formaldehydes fall under) with a lower limit boiling point range of 50-100°C and an upper limit of 240-260°C according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

These VOCs can be emitted from building



materials: flooring, composite wood products and adhesives into indoor air. Semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) with an even higher boiling point range, can be emitted from several sources in the average home, in particular from flooring adhesives. Indoors, SVOCs can be present as gas, airborne particles and house dust. So even in your home you could be exposed to these types of compounds by both inhaling air and house dust.

Luckily a lot of manufacturers have developed low-solvent, low-VOC-emitting alternatives to be used instead. However, this does explain why some buildings from the 1980s might leave you with a lasting headache.

Furniture can also release VOCs and SVOCs which is why some new couches might have a chemical smell and require some 'airing out'.

Doing this for a few days can let these chemicals dissipate instead of bringing them into your home as well as get rid of the smell.

Unfortunately, building products are not the only thing that can impact the quality of air inside a person's home or office. According to Leona Donaghy, PHD Researcher in Belfast's Ulster University, mould can majorly affect a person's health if it is present in the home. "Mould can trigger chronic illnesses like asthma in children or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)," Leona says she has recently lost someone close to herself to COPD.

Things like drying your clothes indoors can increase the level of moisture in the house by up to 30%, and cooking or showering without a working extractor fan can continue to raise these levels.

It can be difficult to keep a home mould free. In a cold



house it can be even more difficult to keep things dry as the air can hold so little moisture. Especially when living on a budget that means the whole house can not be heated efficiently, which is the case for many people who rent in a pricey market.

“A lot of heavy cleaning materials, solvents or paints are also either harmful to the environment or packaged in a way that is”

The mistake that a lot of people make is to use strong chemical mould removers or bleach to clear any developing patches. Bleach especially -

Sodium Hypochlorite, is a well-known trigger for respiratory diseases that is toxic for aquatic life, it can cause severe skin burns, eye damage and can contain things like chloroform and chlorine.

These kinds of solutions often become airborne, because of it evaporating itself, a spray bottle or mixing it with hot water. And unless your home is very well ventilated and you wear a mask while cleaning, it is likely that you are breathing in some very harmful chemicals.

Leona says there is no need to go to these extremes at all. Indeed, for any kind of cleaning it is possible to create your own solutions that have less volatile ingredients and are likely to be easier on your pocket. Vinegar or tea tree oil can naturally kill mould - if you spray it straight on, leave for a few hours and then scrub it away (you do

not even have to rinse the tea tree).

“Temperatures over 60°C also kill a lot of bacteria” she says. So it can be as easy as a boiling kettle and soap for most clean ups, and a 60°C wash will kill mould on towels too. Baking soda is another one and citrus extract. Both are great for removing tough stain and effectively kill mould; it will come back of course, but if you try to keep your home dry and stay on top of it with a spray and scrub, it can become very manageable. Not to mention how much better it is for your health.

“Women seem to be slightly worse affected by indoor air quality due to the use of things like spray deodorant, perfumes, hairspray and nail varnish.”

A lot of heavy cleaning materials, solvents or paints are also either harmful to the environment or packaged in a way that is. “These are volatile organic chemicals”, says Leona highlighting that just because a product contains a natural element, does not mean it is safe, as concentrations of some organic chemicals mixed with others can become toxic. Any product that can damage a person or the environment should be appropriately labelled, and it is up to us to keep an eye out.

Women seem to be slightly worse affected by indoor air quality due to the use of things like spray deodorant, perfumes, hairspray and nail varnish.



These things might not be initially bad for our health but Leona tells us that “there are different things like limonene that is in a lot of cosmetics and ethanol. They are called terpenes and when they get into the air they create formaldehyde as a secondary product.”

The European Environment Agency (EEA) estimated in 2013 that that in the region of 1,600 premature deaths could be attributed to fine particulate matter (very fine airborne pollutants) and other air pollutants in Ireland.

Leona said she would not want to make anyone too anxious about the quality of air in their homes as she is quite hyperconscious herself due to her in-depth studies. Taking a few steps to keep your home clear and aired out of the most common pollutants can help improve the risk.

It is a slightly more difficult task at work. Leona says air conditioners sometimes filter out pollutants and keep the air clean “but if the filter isn’t changed regularly it could be recycling pollutants into the air”, some cheaper air conditioning systems do not even have a filter. Checking in to see what kind of system your building has for air filtration as well as cracking a window during the day might help relieve some building sickness if you feel it.

The worst possible pollutant in an office is smoke, so as long as the smoking area is not close to doors or windows it should be okay.

Going out for a bit of fresh air every once in a while, also is not a bad option, and we know now that it definitely benefits us more than staying inside.

Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



I was walking through the carpark into the supermarket when she waved at me and said hello. Well actually it was more like “ello” which is fair enough as she was only about 18 months old, sitting in the trolley while her mum packed bags of groceries into the boot of the car. “Ello” she called again with a giggle and so I stopped and had a chat with her and her mum. Walking away a few minutes later, smiling and feeling delighted with the encounter, I reflected on the power of a small child to draw us into relationship. I do not generally stop and talk to people I don’t know in car parks but how could I resist that little, laughing, beautiful girl? And it feels good, to connect, to engage. It certainly brightened my day.

I know it already feels now like Christmas was months ago. We have moved on into the month of January, wary of what tail-slaps of winter weather these coming weeks could hit us with. I was happy enough to put the decorations back in the attic and reel the eating habits back in, but how do we take the core message with us? That message really is simply one of God in relationship. How infinitely wise of God to approach us as a child; small, vulnerable, beautiful. Like that beautiful little girl in the carpark showed me, a child has an ability to invite us into a relationship. And it is in and through our relationships that we will continue to encounter the presence of God.

I recently read an extract of a book by Joe Hammond – *A short history of falling: Everything I Observed About Love Whilst Dying*. The author writes about his experience of living and gradually dying with Motor Neurone Disease. He talks about getting to a point where he is utterly immobile. He can no longer join his wife and two little sons in the rough and tumble of everyday life. And so he sits and observes what he calls ‘the shape of love’. He sees love being given form in the interactions between his wife and children. There is a touch, a smile, a synchronicity of movement, shared laughter which transform the idea of love into something which can be touched, felt, observed and delighted in.

I don’t know if faith was something important in Joe

Hammond’s life but from what I read, he seems to be expressing the Incarnation very well, noticing, naming and celebrating love made real, given form and flesh in relationship. Christmas may feel like history but we are called anew into relationship every single day. Moreover, we are invited to be aware of the presence of



God in those relationships. God as the energy of connection, of presence, of self-gift.

Now I’m under no illusions, relationships aren’t always the easiest place to find the presence of God. Our four were so excited to get home for Christmas. We were all delighted to be together again. And in those days over Christmas there was so much laughter in our house, a really strong, tangible sense of love and the importance of family. The glow lasted barely a week. Then the narkiness, the sharp comments, the inevitable disputes about who was doing the dishes kicked back in. Normal service had been resumed!

That’s the reality of our everyday lives. Every relationship brings its challenges and has its moments. My desire – and maybe yours too – is to notice the moments when love goodness and generosity take form and flesh in the people around me.

We were back in that shop again yesterday, unloading one of those wheely baskets at the check-out when the man behind us said, “come here outa that” and lifted the basket up level with the conveyor belt, so that we could unload it more easily. We are surrounded by simple, acts of kindness where the goodness of humanity shines through. Incarnation is not packed away with the Christmas decorations. It surrounds us in the ordinary everyday.



Even with the best intentions, even with no malice inside us, even when we are faithful, we sometimes cannot not hurt each other. Our human situation is simply too complex at times for us not to wound each other.

Here's an example: Soren Kierkegaard, who spent his whole life trying to be scrupulously faithful to what God was calling him to, once hurt a woman very deeply. As a young man, he had fallen in love with a woman, Regine, who, in return, loved him deeply.

But as their marriage date approached, Kierkegaard was beset with an internal crisis, one both psychological and moral, within which he discerned that their marriage would, long term, be the cause for deep unhappiness for both of them and he called off the engagement.

That decision hurt Regine, deeply and permanently. She never forgave him and he, for his part, was haunted for the rest of his life by the fact that he had hurt her so badly.

Initially, he wrote her a number of letters trying to explain his decision and apologising for hurting her, hoping for her understanding and forgiveness.

Eventually, he gave up, even as he wrote page after page in his private journals second-guessing himself, castigating himself and then, conversely, trying to justify himself again and again in his decision not to marry her.

Explanations

Nearly ten years after that fateful decision, with Regine now married to someone else, he spent weeks trying to draft the right letter to her – asking for forgiveness, offering new explanations for his actions and begging for another chance to talk with her.

He struggled to find the

Inadequacy, hurt and reconciliation



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

right words, something that might bring about an understanding. He finally settled on this letter:

"Cruel I was, that is true. Why? Indeed, you do not know that.

"Silent I have been, that is certain. Only God knows what I have suffered – may God grant that I do not, even now, speak too soon after all!

"Marry I could not. Even if you were still free, I could not.

"However, you have loved me, as I have you. I owe you much – and now you are married. All right, I offer you for the second time what I can and dare and ought to offer you: reconciliation.

"I do this in writing in order not to surprise or overwhelm you. Perhaps my personality did once have too strong an effect; that must not happen again. But for the sake of God in heaven, please give serious consideration to whether you dare become involved in this, and if so, whether you prefer to speak with me at once or would rather exchange some letters first.

"If the answer is 'No' – would you then please remember for the sake of a better world that I took this step as well.

"In any case, as in the beginning so until now, sincerely and completely – devotedly, your S.K." (Clare Carlisle, *The Heart*

of a Philosopher, Penguin Book, c2019, p. 215)

Answer

Well, the answer was 'no'. He had enclosed his letter in another letter which he sent to her husband, asking him to decide whether or not to give it to his wife. It was returned unopened, accompanied by an angry note, his offer of reconciliation was bitterly rejected.

What's the moral here? Simply this: we hurt each other; sometimes through selfishness, sometimes through carelessness, sometimes through infidelity, sometimes through cruel intention, but sometimes too when there is no selfishness, no carelessness, no betrayal, no cruelty of intention – but only the cruelty of circumstance, inadequacy, and human limit.

“Regine never forgave him and he, for his part, was haunted for the rest of his life by the fact that he had hurt her so badly”

We sometimes hurt each other as deeply through being faithful as through being unfaithful, albeit in a different way. But

irrespective of whether there's moral fault, betrayal, or an intended cruelty, there's still deep hurt, sometimes so deep that, this side of eternity, no healing will take place.

Would that it be otherwise. Would that Kierkegaard could have explained himself so fully that Regine would have understood and forgiven him, would that each of us could explain ourselves so fully that we would be always understood and forgiven, and would that all of our lives could end like a warm-hearted movie where, before the closing credits, everything is understood and reconciled.

Criminal

But that's not the way it always ends; indeed, that's not even the way it ended for Jesus.

He died being looked at as a criminal, as a religious blasphemer, as someone who had done wrong. His offer of reconciliation was also returned unopened, accompanied by a bitter note.

I once visited a young man who was dying of cancer at age 56. Already bedridden and in hospice care, but with his mind still clear, he shared this: "I am dying with this consolation: if I have an enemy in this world, I don't know who it is. I can't think of a single person that I need to be reconciled with."

Few of us are that lucky. Most of us are still looking at some envelopes that have been returned unopened.

QUESTIONS of faith

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



Who was the second Pope?

All Catholics know that the first Pope was St Peter, but after his martyrdom, who succeeded him?

While we're not entirely sure who followed on from Peter, according to Church tradition, St Linus was the second bishop of Rome who reigned some time between 67-80AD.

Multiple sources attest to this, the most notable of which is the book *Adversus haereses* (Against Heresies) written by the Greek bishop Irenaeus in the 2nd Century. It reads: "After the Holy Apostles (Peter and Paul) had founded and set the Church in order (in Rome) they gave over the exercise of the episcopal office to Linus. The same Linus is mentioned by St Paul in his Epistle to Timothy. His successor was Anacletus."

According to this text, the Linus that is mentioned in 2 Tim 4:21 is the same man who later took on the pontificate after Peter. It's not clear how historically accurate this claim is – maybe it developed from oral tradition or perhaps Irenaeus was referencing an ancient, reliable source.

If this was the only mention of Linus to go by, we'd be rightly sceptical of his claim to the pontificate. However, people like Jerome (born 347AD), Eusebius (born 260AD) and John Chrysostom (born 349AD) all assert that Linus succeeded Peter – so there's probably some credence to it.

Speculation

There's not much known about St Linus. The *Liber Pontificalis* (Book of Popes) states that he was born in Tuscany and that his father's name was Herculanius. There is speculation that his mother was called Claudia but a separate tradition

associates this name with his sister.

Linus is probably most well-known for issuing a decree "in conformity with the ordinance of St Peter" that women should have their heads covered in Church. However, scholar JP Kirsch writes that this decree which is recorded in the *Liber* is undoubtedly apocryphal, and "arbitrarily attributed to the first successor of the Apostle in Rome".

The same book also mentions Linus' death – he was allegedly martyred and buried in the Vatican beside St Peter. It is possible that the earliest Roman bishops were laid alongside St Peter at the foot of Vatican Hill after their death, but there's no known liturgical tradition to prove this.

“If this was the only mention of Linus to go by, we'd be rightly sceptical of his claim to the pontificate”

The Roman martyrology – the official martyrology of the Church – does not refer to Linus as a martyr. It simply states: "At Rome, commemoration of St Linus, Pope, who, according to Irenaeus, was the person to whom the blessed Apostles entrusted the episcopal care of the Church founded in the City, and whom blessed Paul the Apostle mentions as associated with him."

The feast of St Linus is celebrated on September 23, which is also the date of his death recorded in the *Liber Pontificalis*.

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

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Deep thoughts silence the clash of the ash

I'm not a great fan of attaching celebrities to programmes, but I can understand that they will boost ratings, and high ratings help ensure that a show can thrive.

Former President Mary McAleese has been attached to many RTÉ programmes, the latest being **All Walks of Life** (RTÉ1) which started last Friday. It's a simple concept – she walks and talks with other celebrities along traditional pilgrim paths. The walking provided a fluid movement that gave the show an edge over static studio interviews and facilitated reflection.

Mrs McAleese was more low key than usual and the show was all the better for it.

Her guest was Galway hurler Joe Canning and he came across as a pleasant, reflective guy, with a modest approach to his successes. I particularly enjoyed hearing of his work for UNICEF in Syria – pictures showing him teaching hurling to children in war torn regions were quite striking.

There was plenty of footage of his hurling successes, his thoughts on the ups and downs involved and a conviction on his part that we can all learn from our failures. He felt honoured to be able to play for his county in front of 80,000 people in Croke Park, so he wasn't about to start complaining about times he had lost.



Galway hurler Joe Canning featured in RTÉ's *All Walks of Life* with presenter Mary McAleese.

With regards to Faith, he had grown up in a strongly Catholic household, didn't get to Mass some weekends, though he felt "bothered" about missing it sometimes due to match activities (a common story I'd suspect among young people). He wasn't 'overly religious' but still used holy water leaving the house though he wondered if this was superstition.

The location of this walk was the Mám Éan pilgrimage route in Connemara, a path that was significant also in pre-Christian times. They met some interesting characters along the way, including local priest Fr Francis Mitchell who said a prayer with them and

it was good to see Fr Micheál Mac Gréil, who had revived interest in the pilgrimage 40 years ago. Perhaps somewhat lacking in depth, it was a leisurely, enjoyable programme.

Important

Not so enjoyable, but hugely important for our times, was **Fatal Flaws: Legalising Assisted Death** on EWTN, on Wednesday of last week. Film maker Kevin Dunn was clearly against euthanasia, but the film was measured and he presented it in an amiable and non-confrontational way, with several euthanasia advocates getting their say and being courteously

challenged.

The focus was on Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands where euthanasia has gained a strong foothold and is quite extreme and repressive, with conscience rights of doctors under threat, especially when euthanasia becomes a right rather than just a freedom.

Some of the many significant moments in the programme were interviews with euthanasia advocates who themselves felt that it was going too far, that grounds for euthanasia were being broadened far too widely. In fact, it was one of those who referenced the "slippery slope" – the pattern was that euthanasia was first introduced for the terminally ill who were in severe pain, but was gradually being extended to include those who feared future pain, those with psychiatric problems, children, newborns and those who were merely tired



Kevin Dunn.

PICK OF THE WEEK

LIFE AND SOUL

RTÉ1, Saturday, January 25, 2.20pm

Repeat of episode 3. Personal stories, prayers and contemporary Christian music.

WALK FOR LIFE WEST COAST

EWTN, Saturday, January 25, 7.30pm

Live coverage of San Francisco's largest pro-life event, including speeches and interviews with pro-life leaders and walk participants.

WHERE GOD WEEPS

EWTN, Saturday (night), January 25, 2am

Mark Riedemann interviews Sr Bridget Tighe, General Director of Caritas Jerusalem, about the conditions within the Gaza strip.

of life (talk about permanent solution to a temporary problem!)

There was a significant discussion of how pro-euthanasia advocates try to manipulate language in order to hide the ugliness of what's going on – euthanasia euphemisms. One doctor was spot on: "All social engineering is preceded by verbal engineering."

There were upsetting personal stories of euthanasia being pushed on the vulnerable by doctors, elderly people being made to feel like burdens, near misses where people were nearly killed but were protected by strong willed and alert relatives. Most troubling of all was Dunn's interview with a cheerful articulate young woman in the Netherlands who was seeking death. They

hit it off and maintained contact afterwards through Skype, so it all the more shocking when she finally got herself euthanised.

Dunn was interviewed on **EWTN Live** later that night and he told of how it broke his heart when he heard that tragic news – obviously it still haunted him. The interview was the perfect companion piece to the film as we got to know Dunn a lot more. The original film wasn't coming from a particularly religious perspective but we got glimpses of a man of faith who was an advocate of hope.

You can see the film at fatalflawsfilm.com and at [Vimeo.com](https://www.vimeo.com)

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
[@boreganmedia](https://www.boreganmedia.com)

Film

Aubrey Malone



A compelling tale of racist bigotry in the Deep South

Just Mercy (12A)

In 1987, an innocent African American man called Walter McMillan (Jamie Foxx) was sentenced to death for the murder of an 18-year-old girl in Alabama. He was convicted on nothing more than the false evidence of criminal Ralph Myers (Tim Blake Nelson) who was offered a commutation of his sentence for furnishing trumped-up details relating to McMillan's complicity in the murder.

McMillan was sent to death row even before his trial. No people of colour were allowed on the jury. His case was representative of many others that took place around

this time. As an after-note to this very impressive film informs us, one in nine black people executed in the States is later found to be innocent.

Rookie civil rights defence attorney Bryan Stevenson (Michael B. Jordan) takes up McMillan's case. In the process he falls prey to the same humiliation and harassment that caused McMillan to be convicted. I won't reveal the final verdict is as that would spoil it for you.

Notwithstanding the film's noble intentions, it has the faults of many issue-driven works. The characters are standard issue – Stevenson the crusader, McMillan the victim, etc. The villains are also mainly cardboard. And Brie Larson, who was so good



in Cretton's earlier *Short Term 12*, is totally wasted as Stevenson's assistant.

Where it wins out is in the passion with which director/co-screenwriter Destin Daniel Cretton imbues his scenarios. Also there are individual traits

in the secondary characters, like the twitchy demeanour of Myers, a man more confused than evil as a result of a dysfunctional past, or the quiet panic of a very gentle death row inmate, Herbert Richardson (Rob Morgan).

His crime was committed as a result of the post traumatic stress disorder he underwent after a spell in Vietnam.

Advice

Richardson's callous execution galvanises Stevenson to secure a re-trial for McMillan. This is the most harrowing scene in the film but also, paradoxically, the most moving one. McMillan's advice to Richardson to breathe deeply before he's electrocuted seems to give him peace. So does the inspirational music he asks to be played at the execution, and even the ritualistic rattling of tin cans on the cell bars of his fellow inmates, with whom he's formed strong bonds.

The film isn't wildly original in theme or tone,

as I say, but it's a cautionary reminder of how deeply entrenched racism is within many Southern states like Alabama and Delaware, reaching from the police force to the legal profession and even the judiciary. Neither does Cretton ever let go of his grip on our emotions and he never becomes saccharine or preachy.

When all is said and done, it's important to remember that whatever Stevenson achieved, and he achieved a lot, this systemic corruption is ongoing and unlikely to be solved any day soon no matter how many idealists pummel away at a mindset that is in so many respects rotten to the core.

Very good
★★★★



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Celebrating an Irish master philosophy

Ciphers of Transcendence: Essays in Philosophy of Religion in Honour of Patrick Masterson ed. Fran O'Rourke (Irish Academic Press, €35)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This is a well-deserved Festschrift. Patrick Masterson was a loyal and valued staff member of University College Dublin for 30 years. Beginning in 1963 he was an assistant lecturer in the philosophy department and in 1980 he was appointed Dean of the faculty. He served as college registrar and was president from 1986 to 1993. Subsequently he was principal of the European University Institute in Florence from 1994 to 2002.

Aided by his meticulous research into and reflection on the most profound issues and themes in metaphysics, he published *Atheism and Alienation*, *The Philosophical Sources of Contemporary Atheism* in 1972, *The Sense of Creation – Experience and the God Beyond* in 2008 and *Apprehending God: Between*

Phenomenology and Theology in 2013.

A collaborative work with Séamus Heaney – *Articulations: poetry, philosophy and the shaping of culture* – appeared in 2008.

In retirement he wrote an entertaining novel which highlighted the idiosyncrasies of some well-known academics. It generated much amusement, as it featured cameos by some of his former colleagues.

Fran O'Rourke, emeritus professor of philosophy at UCD, deserves the credit for originating and ensuring the appearance of this splendid Festschrift.

He successfully encouraged a number of Masterson's former students, colleagues and peers to provide essays in their areas of special interest and expertise which reflect Masterson's focus on the 'transcendent'.

Important issues

The essays range across areas of the philosophy of religion and ethics and the history of philosophy in the classical, medieval and modern periods. In so doing they also

highlight important issues in contemporary philosophy of religion, metaphysics and ethics.

As O'Rourke notes, the collection is enhanced by the inclusion of an essay by leading contemporary thinker Alasdair MacIntyre and a poem from Séamus Heaney that evokes across the silence of solitude the tender presence of transcendence.

The input from a Thomistic perspective is provided by two former staff members of UCD: Denys Turner and Desmond Connell. Turner writes about two illustrious students of Albert the Great: Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart.

Apart from both having been Dominicans both were charged with having held heretical theological opinions.

By virtue of their differing temperaments, while Aquinas' writing style was terse and lucid that of Eckhart was rhetorical. Thus, the former was essentially a teacher, the latter a preacher. Turner points out neither drew attention to themselves but to the mystery of the God beyond all speech.



Patrick Masterson, from a painting by Derek Hill in UCD.

While Connell's area of main interest was the philosophy of Nicolas

Malebranche, he was first and foremost a committed Thomist. He emphasises

that the metaphysics of Aquinas was the first original philosophy of the Christian

A Church in opposition

From the Underground Church to Freedom

by Tomáš Halík
(Notre Dame Press, \$US35.00 / £39.50)

Frank Litton

The 1950s were grim in Czechoslovakia. The promise of liberation had not delivered. The state acquiesced in a foreign-based orthodoxy which it imposed with brutality. Censorship stifled thought.

It was into this Communist dominated world that Tomas Halík was born, in Prague, in 1948. Halík, priest, philosopher, and theologian played a distinguished role as Czechoslovakia emerged from tyranny. His writings attract a wide readership. He was awarded the Romano Guardini award "for outstanding merit in interpreting contemporary society" in 2010 and the Templeton Prize for his contribution to religious dialogue in 2014.

He has been compared to Thomas Merton for the skill he shows in reading the signs of

the time in the perspective of the Gospels. His memoir accounts for the experiences which shaped his thought.

His parents came from well-to-do families. His father was a librarian, a safe berth for an intellectual, far from the front line, where he quietly built up an archive of the work of Karl Capek, the famous author, now a *persona non grata* with the regime.

Intellectuals

This dissidence and the circle of intellectuals it attracted made it unlikely that the young Tomas would collaborate with the *status quo*. What was unlikely and what shocked his parents was his conversion to Catholicism. Moreover, he answered a vocation to the priesthood.



The Church just about survived the Communist regime. Starved of resources, it was tightly controlled and supervised. Halík chose to join the underground church.

Tutored by priests who had been imprisoned and tortured, he was ordained in secret. A worker priest, he trained in psychology and therapy and worked in a business school while building

up the clandestine church and assisting in efforts to revitalise the Faith.

It is one thing to live in interesting times, quite another to write interestingly about them. Halík achieves this. He tells of the thaw in the 1960s and his opportunity to study in Wales. Then the Russian tanks rolled in; spring turned to winter. He decided to return to Prague

forgoing the chance to remain in the UK.

He joined the resistance working with Václav Havel and his allies. He was a significant player in the Velvet Revolution in 1989, helping guide the Church through the transition to freedom. Brought for a time to the Vatican, he was an adviser to St. John Paul, whose sense of humour he notes.

“This dissidence and the circle of intellectuals it attracted made it unlikely that Tomas would collaborate with the *status quo*”

Halík enjoyed the exhilaration of the liberation. He studied in both Rome and Poland, winning the doctorates that qualified him to teach both philosophy and theology.

Then he came up against what we too readily forget, the damage done by years of oppression. Those

who live in fear demand security even when the cause of fear departs. Their imaginations curbed by repression are slow to widen.

Halík was wounded by the opposition he encountered, in some quarters, to his efforts to renovate Catholic education. His Faith was shaken. His reflections on this “dark night of the soul” are particularly interesting and add depth to the book.

In Communist regimes the all too visible hand of the party brooks no opposition. In neo-liberal regimes the invisible hand of the market holds sway. It both, it is a case of everyone for themselves.

It is not surprising, then, that Václav Havel's vision of a politics rooted in mutual respect and regard for the common good was displaced by neo-liberalism with its politics as the play of power.

Depressing certainly, but not for Halík, a cause of despair. Read this account of the ‘Church in the world’ to learn where he finds grounds for hope.

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.

of religious



era. It drew from a wide variety of sources mainly Aristotelian, mastered them and emerged as a genuine unity of thought experiencing a new and deeper penetration of the question of being.

“The collection is enhanced by the inclusion of an essay by leading contemporary thinker Alasdair MacIntyre and a poem from Séamus” Heaney

In his contribution the ebullient Brendan Purcell crosses swords with self-declared celebrity atheists. Dermot Moran's 'Edith Stein's Philosophical Conversions: From Husserl to Aquinas and Newman' is a *tour de force* and one wishes to see it as a stand-alone publication so as to be more generally accessible.

Sadly it contains an item of unbelievable horror. In response to a pastoral letter condemning Nazi anti-Semitism by the Dutch Catholic bishops which was read in all churches on July 26, 1942 the German authorities spitefully ordered the arrest of all non-Aryan Catholics. With

her sister Rosa, also a Catholic convert, Edith, the eminent philosopher and then the Carmelite Sister Benedicta, was arrested. They were shipped to Auschwitz in a cattle truck where they arrived on August 7 and two days later were sent to the gas chamber.

In a valedictory piece, Masterson provides a veritable apologia pro vita sua, which involved a life-time of reflection and discussion on how the road to the reality and existence of the 'transcendent' can be travelled through metaphysics, phenomenology (human consciousness) or theology.

Behind the scenes of the Parnell split: a woman's version

The Diary of Elizabeth Dillon: A Gateway to the Otherness of the Past edited with an introduction by Brendan O'Cathaoir (Currach Books, €34.99)

Frank Callanan

This delightful book is considerable editorial feat. The diaries of Elizabeth Dillon are copious running to 38 journals, and have been rendered down by the editor without any loss of relevant political or social content.

The editing, and annotations, reflect consummate skill and mastery of the materials of the journals, by the late Brendan O'Cathaoir, who sadly died very shortly after the book's publication.

Elizabeth Dillon (1865-1907) was the wife of John Dillon, a leading member of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP). Dillon was a fiery radical nationalist in his youth, and a supporter of Charles Stewart Parnell until the Parnell split of 1890-91, when he took the anti-Parnellite side.

He did so in part in the hope that he could rein in Timothy Michael Healy, who seized the initiative created by the absence from Ireland of Dillon and William O'Brien who had broken bail, until they submitted to arrest and incarceration in February 1891, to stamp the opposition to Parnell in Ireland with his own ferocity.

After Parnell's death there ensued a grim war of attrition between Dillon and Healy on the anti-Parnellite side in which Dillon eventually prevailed but at a high price.

General election

The IPP was re-united in 1900 under the chairmanship of John Redmond. On Redmond's death Dillon became leader of the Irish party as it faced into the rout (at least in terms of seats) of the general election of December 1918 in which he lost his Mayo East seat to Eamon de Valera.

There is a certain irony in writing a review of the diary of Elizabeth Dillon for *The Irish Catholic*, which throughout the 1890s was a journalistic vehicle for T. M. Healy who detested John Dillon. I myself wrote a biography of Healy which could not be considered overly-sympathetic.

O'Cathaoir makes the



Editor of *The Diary of Elizabeth Dillon*, Brendan O'Cathaoir, and left, the book's cover.

of the age, her English liberal heritage, and the Irish nationalist aspirations of the Home Rule movement". She combined daily attendance at Mass with philanthropic activities and dallied in the House of Commons.

She met Dillon in October 1886, when she was 21 years old: "Well, he is the first person who has awed me." Their romance was slow of inception, but they married on November 4, 1895. Theirs was an exceptionally happy and fruitful marriage, but it was cut short by her early death at 42 on May 14, 1907, leaving Dillon disconsolate.

The political perceptions and judgements set down in the diary for the period of her relations with Dillon almost invariably track his. Part of the historical interest of her account of her husband's political life lies in the portrayal of Dillon's selflessness, a negation of Healy's view of Dillon as a figure of morose ambition. Her views were frequently exorbitantly if unsurprisingly bourgeois, notably in her dismissal of the poets W. B. Yeats and Lionel Johnson.

Historically, however, such insights are one of the merits of the diary of Elizabeth Dillon as splendidly edited by Brendan O'Cathaoir.

1 Frank Callanan SC is the author of *Tim Healy* (Cork University Press, 1996).

“The political perceptions and judgements set down in the diary for the period of her relations with Dillon almost invariably track his”



Tomas Halik with Vaclav Havel.

Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie

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Comfort me in all my difficulties through the great favour thou didst enjoy when Our Saviour lodged in thy house.
I beseech thee to have definite pity in regard to the favour I ask [mention favour].
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I ask thee St Martha to overcome the dragon which thou didst cast at thy feet.
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Closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday 31st January 2020**

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— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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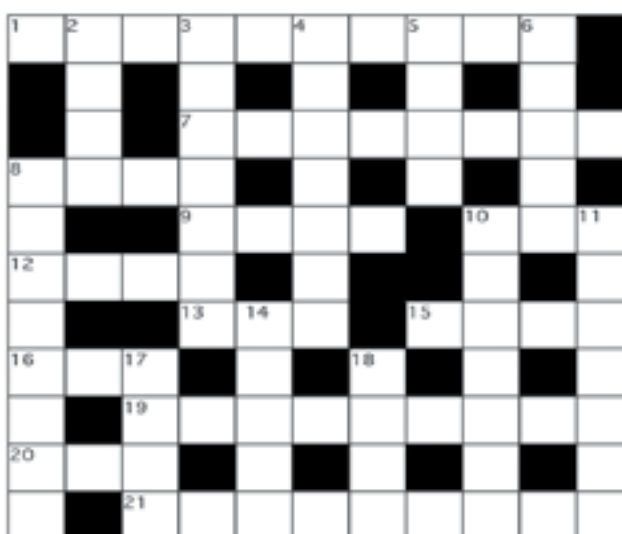
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Crossword Junior

Gordius 316



ACROSS

- 1 The ground moves when this happens (10)
- 7 All the galaxies - everything, in fact (8)
- 8 It's just below your mouth (4)
- 9 'The grand old ____ of York, he had 10,000 men' (4)
- 10 Ancient (3)
- 12 Matthew, Mark, ____ and John wrote the four gospels (4)
- 13 A beam of sunlight (3)
- 15 In science, a tiny particle of something (4)
- 16 Crazy (3)
- 19 Meaning to do something (9)
- 20 Employ something (3)
- 21 "That CD is too badly

_____ to play" (9)

DOWN

- 2 This has a curved shape (4)
- 3 You often hear this after you see lightning (7)
- 4 Speedily (7)
- 5 It's usually the last word of a prayer (4)
- 6 Artist's stand (5)
- 8 Christopher _____ was a famous explorer (8)
- 10 The world's largest bird (7)
- 11 Caused harm to (7)
- 14 Not before (5)
- 17 Comes to the end of one's life (4)
- 18 Make something with needles and wool (4)

SOLUTIONS, JANUARY 16

GORDIUS No. 438

Across – 1 Ole 3 Charlemagne 8 Ice cap 9 Pullover 10 Idiom
11 North Africa 13 Shelf 15 Paradox 16 Corinth 20 Knead
21 Lifer 23 Farsi 24 Glimpsed 25 Bottle 26 Translation 27 Cos

Down – 1 Opinion poll 2 Eyeliner 3 Charm 4 Raphael 5 Melon
6 Govern 7 Err 12 His Holiness 13 Shook 14 Fiord 17 Neurotic
18 Peridot 22 Ropes 23 Flown 24 Get

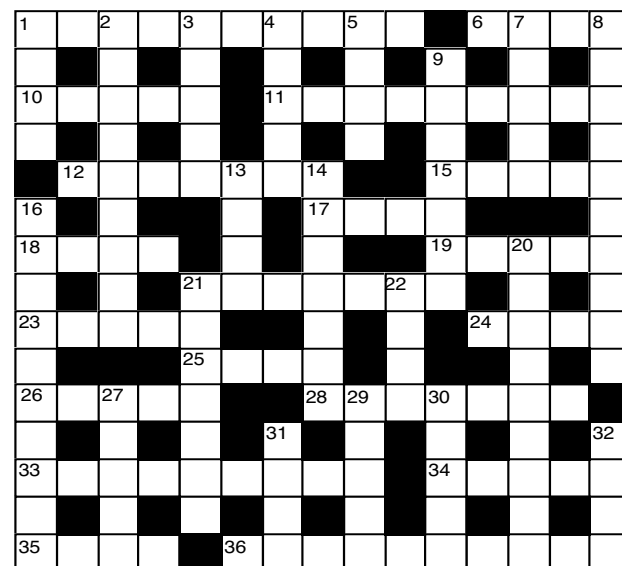
CHILDREN'S No. 315

Across – 1 Matchbox 6 Bat 7 Glove 8 Listens 12 Cost
14 Handsome 16 Nice 18 Casino 21 Screen 22 Thinks

Down – 1 Magician 2 Tools 3 Heel 4 Owls 5 Barn 9 Innocent
10 Tests 11 Sue 13 Thieves 15 Men 17 Itch 19 Iron 20 Oats

Crossword

Gordius 439



ACROSS

- 1 Italian ham can derail optic tours (10)
- 6 The wets returned for something to eat (4)
- 10 Conned (5)
- 11 Being anything but outgoing, one has the rivet torn asunder (9)
- 12 A bishop's crook (7)
- 15 The first pope initially prayed extensively, then entered Rome (5)
- 17 This tool for shaping wood might daze one (4)
- 18 Circular plaything (4)
- 19 Humble (5)
- 21 Ants try to reorganise to become despots (7)
- 23 Navigate the bullock (5)
- 24 Desist (4)
- 25 Lady - perhaps Russian - breaks out of gaol (4)
- 26 Do remarkably well (5)
- 28 Place of orderly female inhabitants (7)
- 33 Thus, get yonder for ecstasy (9)
- 34 Make cloth on a loom (5)
- 35 The Greek goddess (naturally) is killing everyone at first (4)
- 36 How to use standby clothes for going to Mass (6,4)

DOWN

- 1 Natural pea containers (4)

- 2 Deliberately pours open like this (2,7)
- 3 Spanish port makes part of Majorca dizzy (5)
- 4 Bring together (5)
- 5 Bishop Desmond's ballet dress? (4)
- 7 Nice surprise provided by the Mad 'Atter (5)
- 8 What? Men pry into the make-up of the naiad? (5,5)
- 9 The writings of the evangelists (7)
- 13 Game to decapitate the insubstantial (1,3)
- 14 Adam ran around for the Islamic month of fasting (7)
- 16 Fr Brown's creator gives a Cheshire city added weight (10)
- 20 Regatta we disrupted, causing Nixon's downfall (9)
- 21 Shout 'Love', right? Get up to the the gurney! (7)
- 22 At that time, one could get an article to the North (4)
- 27 Traditional office worker (5)
- 29 Overturn part of a group endeavour (5)
- 30 Right to leave a Scandinavian country? Certainly not! (2,3)
- 31 Initially take over feeding urchins oriental food (4)
- 32 Camping equipment (4)

Sudoku Corner

316

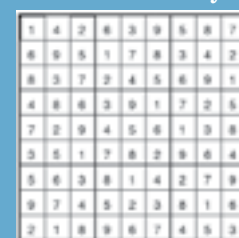
Easy



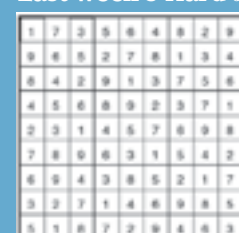
Hard



Last week's Easy 315



Last week's Hard 315



Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



Not every Sunday Mass is suitable for funeral prayers

A QUESTION THAT arises for priests (outside of cities) concerns Sunday funerals. In particular, priests wonder if it is fair to transform a scheduled Sunday Mass into what becomes in effect a funeral Mass, with burial afterwards, often in the adjoining churchyard or a nearby cemetery. Ireland may well be the only country in the world in which such an issue arises, because of our national interest in (or obsession with?) funerals.

It's possible to make a case for, or against, Sunday funerals. Here is the case 'against': people who come to the regular Sunday mass are annoyed enough already. They are the backbone of every parish, they come to Mass Sunday after Sunday, with no necessity of what some might call 'gimmicks' to entice them.

'Big day'

The First Communion/Confirmation preparatory Masses already drive them mad. On those special-Mass Sundays, there isn't a car-parking space to be had within a mile of the church, and Mass is lengthened so that every child gets to participate. And what really annoys the regulars is that these



children, so much highlighted at those liturgies (as they see it) rarely put in any appearance once the sacramental 'big day' is over.

The other part of the case against Sunday funerals is more practical. In the past, churches

had many Masses on Sundays, so if a funeral was added to the last Mass, everyone who wanted a 'faster' Mass could find it. Nowadays, however, other options are fewer. That's the case against a funeral at Sunday Mass.

“Decisions regarding Sunday funerals should be made on a case-by-case basis”

A case can be made 'for' Sunday funerals as well, partly because a church should have a welcome for everyone. If all God's children are to be welcomed, even those on the edge, then there need to be special Masses, even on the Lord's day. Children's celebrations and other themed masses fit under that umbrella, as do Sunday baptisms during Mass – and funerals also.

● I have only celebrated one Sunday funeral in my years in Newcestown. I learned from it that Sunday funerals only work if the Sunday Mass remains intact, with Sunday vestments, readings by the regular Ministers of the Word and Sunday homily – though with perhaps a few mementos presented to introduce the deceased to regular Mass-goers.

Sunday Mass ends as usual, and it's only when the priest re-emerges from the sacristy to lead the prayers that the eulogy occurs (when only those who have come specifically for the funeral remain). The Liturgy of Farewell and procession to the grave then occur.

In the parish where I minister, people who bring a child to be baptised are given the option of one particular Saturday afternoon every month, when they may share their baptism with a few other families – or 'any Sunday Mass'. And some people choose the latter option, making for a celebration that goes down well with the broader parish (especially when it doesn't occur too often).

People who would rarely get the invitation to a christening get to witness that beautiful sacrament when it is celebrated during Sunday Mass. And, so the logic goes, if we have christenings during Sunday Masses, why can we not have funerals too?

The practical case for Sunday funerals is made too, often by the Parish Finance Committee, who delight in a full church (and a larger collection). These realistic individuals are usually supporters of children's Masses also, for similar reasons.

They would agree though that decisions regarding Sunday funerals should be made on a case-by-case basis, in recognition that not every Sunday Mass would be suitable for the addition of funeral prayers – though some may be.

Prepare in advance

● What are christenings during Sunday Mass like? Christenings 'break into' the regular Mass thrice. At the start, the parents are questioned and the child welcomed.

The Gloria and readings follow. After the homily, everyone renews baptismal promises, then there's the baptism, chrismation, white garment and candle. Bidding prayers follow, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Blessing of the parents precede the final blessing. (During a call to the couple's home the evening before, the Oil of Catechumens is used; water is blessed in advance also).

Baptism doesn't lengthen the Mass once the homily is shortened, and no one objects to that!



Holy Spirit Sisters need water harvesting system for village school

In a remote area of India, close to the border with Myanmar, the Holy Spirit Sisters run a village school for children unable to travel to the parish centre, which is 33 kilometres distance away. At present the school has 220 pupils, most of whom come from deprived families, living by subsistence farming and struggling to make ends meet. The only source of water in the village is rain water and a nearby stream, as the land is not suitable for a well, or bore-hole. The Holy Cross Fathers, who are in charge of the parish, have appealed to The Little Way Association for financial help to install a rain water harvesting system for the Sisters and their village school.



"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself as it were at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and the very least trifle is precious in His sight."

- St Therese

You can help repair a mission chapel

The Little Way Association has a long history of providing humble places of worship for far-flung parishes in mission countries. Nature can take its toll on these simple buildings, and we receive requests from priests for help with repairs.

We humbly ask that you allocate some of your kind giving to our chapels fund. By ensuring that these small but dignified churches are in good repair, you help to make possible the offering of Holy Mass in needy Catholic communities.

The missionaries and people overseas who benefit from your generosity invariably promise to pray for their benefactors' intentions.

Can you help The Little Way Association make a big difference in the daily lives of the Holy Spirit Sisters and the children they teach?

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