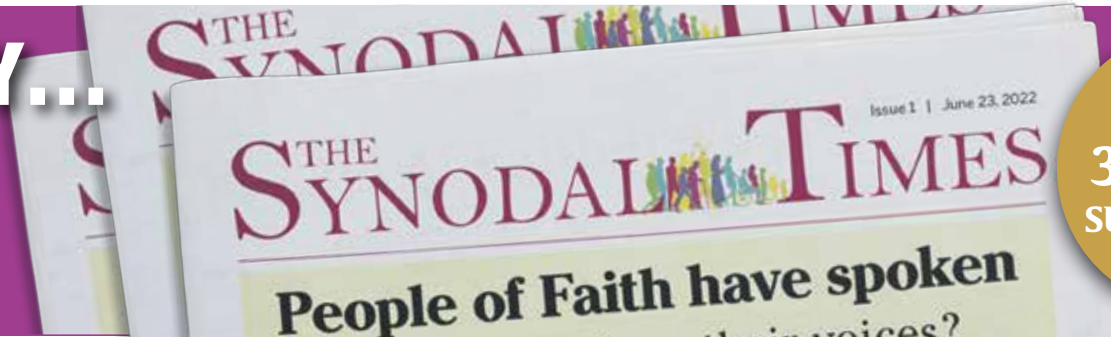


The Irish Catholic

**ACCOUNTABILITY...
WHAT THE
FAITHFUL SAID**



**FREE
32-PAGE
SUPPLEMENT**

Thursday, June 23, 2022

€2.50 (Stg £2.20)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

Synod lays down the challenge to invest in faith formation

Ruadhán Jones and Jason Osborne in Athlone

The need for an ambitious plan of adult faith formation has emerged as one of the key themes from the national pre-synodal gathering in Athlone. Church leaders described as “heartening” the appetite parishioners displayed to deepen their faith.

While a report will now be sent to Rome to form the Irish contribution to the Pope’s global consultation on Church reform, delegates in Athlone were adamant that many of the challenges can only be addressed locally.

Bishop Michael Router, one of the key players on the synod committee insisted to *The Irish Catholic* that helping parishioners deepen their faith “was one of the themes that was very strong throughout all of the [synthesis] submissions and was welcomed very warmly in the room there on Saturday.

“Adult faith formation in particular in this country is essential because it emerged for so many people when trying to respond to the synodal questions and questionnaires and the whole process of consultation that people found it hard to grasp some of the concepts and the language that we use as Church,” Bishop Router said.

The Irish Catholic understands that the bishops are keen that issues like this start to be addressed immediately and

» Continued on Page 2

‘Sweet Sacrament Divine...’



Children who participated in the Corpus Christi procession in Wexford at the weekend.

MARY KENNY

Why Michael D. is well-suited to his role

PAGE 5



RORY FITZGERALD

The summer holidays beckon

PAGE 31



NIAMH UÍ BHRIAIN

Resist calls to scrap abortion wait period

PAGE 7



Don't miss
THE SYNODALTIMES
in this week's paper

32 pages of news, analysis and commentary to break down what the synod is and what it means for the future of the Irish Church



Send us your thoughts and subscribe to the weekly newsletter by emailing editor@synodaltimes.com

Inside this week

Family and Lifestyle
Talking through disagreements as Catholics

Pages 29 & 31



TV&Radio

Joe Duffy under fire

Page 33



Fr Bernard Cotter

When priests are on the move Page 40



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Deputy Editor: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

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

Multimedia Journalists: Ruadhán Jones, ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Jason Osborne, jason@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €165. Airmail €250. Six months €85.

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,

Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford,

Dublin 18, D18 K277.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie

From pro-choice to abortion zero...

Voters in Colombia took to the polls at the weekend and in so doing elected that country's first left-wing president. Gustavo Petro, the former mayor of the capital Bogota, is also an ex-paramilitary.

His background as someone who took up arms against the government is attracting a lot of media attention internationally – perhaps less so in Ireland since this is something we've been familiar with in the North since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. And in the Republic, if the polls are to be believed, Sinn Féin – which once proudly described itself as the political wing of the Provisional IRA and consistently refuses to distance itself from that organisation – stands a very good chance of being involved in the formation of the next government.

Mr Petro was a member of the now disbanded M-19 movement in the 1980s. The rebel left-wing group was one of many guerrilla organisations that waged war against the state.

At the weekend, he hailed his success describing it as a "victory for God and for the people". Now, this somewhat set alarm bells ringing for me as I'm instinctively wary of politicians who see their political advancement as somehow part of God's will.

Mr Petro's majority is slim, winning just 50.4% of the popular vote. This is why Church leaders in the strife-torn nation have appealed for the politicians to "continue fighting for peace, reconciliation, and fraternity among all Colombians."

Mr Petro's stance on abortion is a fascinating one. He long described him-

self as pro-choice, but in recent months has taken to articulating his position as one that favours what he described as "abortion zero".

Stigma

He laments the social situation, stigma and lack of realistic opportunities that face women with crisis or unplanned pregnancies in Colombia. Mr Petro says he sees every abortion as a tragedy and has appealed to lawmakers and opinion-formers to work together to ensure that this is not a choice that women feel forced to make.

I was struck by a recent BBC report from the US state of Mississippi in the light of the landmark Roe -v- Wade decision on abortion. The journalist interviewed a number

Editor's Comment
Michael Kelly



of pro-choice activists who were fearful about abortion no longer being available in the state. We also heard from women who had previously had abortions in the state and expressed concern that they might have to travel to another state in the future.

What was common in the contributions from both the activists and women who had terminated their pregnancies was that abortion had to be available for people who could not afford to have a child. One of the women who had a number of children already said she was living in poverty and there was no way she could have coped with another mouth to feed.

One of the activists insisted that a lot of the women who

she sees seeking abortions are in a situation of dire poverty and therefore having the child for them would be impossible.

Striking

What was striking – at least in the clips that formed the report on the BBC – was that no-one articulated what to me is the elephant in the room: there is something fundamentally broken in a society where women are so poor or at risk of poverty that they cannot countenance having a child because they may not be able to feed that child.

It is a scandal of epic proportion that in wealthy countries like the United States and Ireland women feel that an abortion out of economic necessity is their only option.

Wherever one stands on the abortion issue, surely tackling the scourge of poverty or the societal constraints that limit mothers playing a full and active role in society is a goal we can all share.

When it gets to the point where multi-billion dollar corporations are willing to pay for abortions for staff but not health insurance, maternity leave and childcare there needs to be a fundamental recalibration.

Surely 'abortion zero' is a platform that everyone could get behind?

1 To join Friends of The Irish Catholic and support Catholic journalism, please phone the office on 01 6874094 for more information or to make a contribution.

Capuchin Day Care Centre

29 Bow Street, Dublin 7



Every day The Capuchin Day Care Centre provides **600 Meals** for people who are homeless and each week **1000 Food Parcels** for those on the poverty threshold.

Help Bro. Kevin continue providing this caring service.

Bro. Kevin or Therese 01 8720770
www.homeless.ie

Synod lays down the challenge to invest in faith formation

» Continued from Page 1

locally rather than expecting an answer from Rome. At the same time, the report to Rome will focus on so-called 'hot button' issues such as the place of LGBT and divorced people in the Church and female ordination.

Bishop Fintan Monahan said that the very strong message coming back to Church leaders was the need for the Church to have better outreach to help people grow in faith. "The whole reason we exist is to spread the Gospel and be a missionary Church.

"We have to free ourselves up to do that. This point was strongly made by one participant and there was a general level agreement," he said of the weekend gathering.

He underlined the fact that some of the youngest contributors to the gathering had emphasised that they had lapsed from the faith and returned due to faith formation.

"There was a strong emphasis on adult faith formation, also formation of young people and good catechetical programmes," he said.

Bishop Monahan said that "there was an acknowledgement of the challenges we face and the uphill battle, but there was a sense of joy and hope in tackling them.

"There was a lot of emphasis on a more inclusive Church reaching out to margins, which is at the heart of the model of a missionary Church," he said.

Dympna Kelly, a delegate from Derry, said she was heartened by taking part.

"I suppose it was the headline acts that we would expect to come up: women and married priests...a very big element would be around the involvement of the laity and making sure that the laity are properly formed so that they can take on the roles in order to fulfill the roles that [they] have as baptised Catholics," she said.

Mary Anne Collins from Cork,

one of the youngest delegates said the entire event was very upbeat. Young people, she said, are "really looking for authenticity and sincerity. When they do find the truth, they're really willing to embrace it and that that has been my experience: that young people aren't the ones shouting for change as such – although that would probably be what people expect.

"But in my experience, young people actually, when they study Church teaching, really want to embrace it and they can see the beauty in it," she said.

Challenge

Helena O'Shea – another young delegate – said that despite the challenge of attracting more younger people, she hoped that older parishioners would be inspired by the young people who are involved. "It's important for us that people know that there are young Catholics in Ireland and that there is a much larger group than I think anyone probably

realises and that they are really deeply convicted of the Faith and they have a love for Jesus and the Church and the future of the Church.

"They're concerned with the people who haven't received the Faith, people who are away from the Church and they want to invite them back in, so it's good to hear all the sharing from all the dioceses and where the other young people who aren't in the Church are so that we can actively reach out to them and share our faith with them," she said.

Michael Tierney, a young man from Waterford said he had been impressed by the frankness of conversations. "It's been great – we've just been chatting quite openly, sharing one-to-one with people sat beside us. There aren't too many other young people here today, but it's great to bear witness and bring up the topic of young people," he said saying this was the main theme in the synthesis of his own diocese.

"It's positive going forward,"

he said, "a lot of patterns have emerged from the day. Faith formation has been a big one – a lot of people have mentioned that.

Bishop Brendan Leaky said that he had been heartened by how articulate the younger delegates were.

"They weren't just here, they were articulate, they spoke, they gave witness to their faith.

"Some of them spoke about having drifted away from faith and coming back and rediscovering then, [realising] 'I really need to understand what is my faith and what does the Church actually say about things' and the importance of that and the importance of studying faith and living the faith in everyday life.

"That has been heartening to hear them saying it," he said.

Bishop Ruter said there was a realistic acceptance that faith formation is "something that the Church in Ireland has failed at over the years" with many people ending their religious formation when they left primary school.

1 See pages 14-15

Missionaries call on Nigeria to stop spread of Islamic fundamentalism

Ruadhán Jones

The Nigerian government must act to stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, as Christians live in a “climate of fear”, the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI) have said.

AMRI’s June 16 statement comes in the wake of the “atrocious” massacre of 40 Catholics June 5 by Islamic fundamentalists in St Francis’ Church in Ondo’s Catholic diocese, Nigeria.

The AMRI spokesperson said first hand reports show there “is a climate of fear for Christians in Nigeria, where increased violence and acts of terrorism are becoming everyday events.

“The government of Nigeria needs to act, to stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, and ensure a fairer representation of all ethnic groups in government offices and services,” he said.

Warning

He continued, warning that the government “needs to focus on poverty, which if not addressed, will continue to provide a recruiting ground for extremist groups”.

There are close connections between Ireland and Nigeria, he added, saying it is important to try to “understand what is

going on in this great African country and to work for peace and development of all”.

Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB, President of AMRI, offered their “deepest condolences to the grieving families of those killed in the massacre”.

AMRI described the attack as “unusual” in that it occurred in the normally peaceful south of Nigeria. They said the Nigerian government have linked the killings to the Islamic State West Africa Province group and connected to Fulani bandits, “signalling perhaps a new front for Islamic fundamentalists”.

Meanwhile, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Colm Brophy offered his condolences to the families affected by the “atrocious” attack.

“The Embassy of Ireland in Abuja, Nigeria, is monitoring developments in the investigation,” Minister Brophy said in response to a question from TD Carol Nolan.

“The deteriorating security situation has many complex and interwoven drivers provoking tensions within and between groups,” the minister continued, saying the violence is “a tragic consequence of these tensions, which can also have a sectarian dimension”.

‘Great joy’ for the Faithful as Corpus Christi processions return



Priests and parishioners of Navan parish process through the town, to mark the feast of Corpus Christi, June 19.

Staff reporter

There was a “sense of great joy” around the country, as the Faithful took part in Corpus Christi processions for the first time in three years.

Fr John Gerard Acton CC Galway Cathedral said the June 19 procession through the city “was a very positive celebration of public devotion. It has very deep roots in Ireland and beyond”.

There was “a sense of great joy at being able once again”

to hold the procession, the diocese said in a statement, which finished in the “idyllic” setting of the Poor Clare Monastery.

Meanwhile, Fr Tom Hayes PP Enniskeane, Co. Cork, said “people certainly loved being able to do it”.

“We had a bit of a social afterwards and we couldn’t close the centre for people wanting to stay on and chat,” he said.

He continued, saying that “Our parish council, it was

one of the projects they’ve been involved in for several years, and they go to a lot of trouble to involve the young people especially”.

There was briefly an air of confusion, as the processions are “a big hands-on role and because we hadn’t done it for three years. People weren’t sure always what they were doing and were nervous.”

But it all worked out in the end “and we very much enjoyed it”, Fr Hayes finished.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

The Rally for Life makes a welcome but **URGENT** return in person this year - and we need your help!

We must hold this government and this cruel abortion regime to account - and be a visible and courageous voice for Life. Roe v Wade is being overturned in the US. Let’s show that here in Ireland, Life will also win.

DONATE

Please call 01 8730465 to DONATE to cover the cost of the biggest pro-life event of the year.

- **POSTERS / BANNERS** available on the day
- **MASS WILL BE CELEBRATED** for those who wish to attend.
- **Assembly starts at 1pm; marching at 2pm, please note time!**



rallyforlife.net

All Ireland Rally for Life Dublin: 01 8730465 Belfast: 028 9027 8484

@Allirelandrallyforlife @therallyforlife @therallyforlife

2 JULY 2022

DUBLIN CITY CENTRE

CHOOSE LIFE

PRO-LIFE

THE RALLY FOR LIFE IS BACK!

Ireland’s annual national march for life

After two years of Covid lockdowns, the BIGGEST pro-life event of the year is back in-person. Save the date and join us to

Stand for life!

LOVE THEM & TUL

Depression doubles as young people given no chance to flourish, chaplain says

Jason Osborne

Rates of depression among young adults doubling during the pandemic is “not a surprising set of statistics” as young people didn’t have the chance to flourish, coordinator of pastoral care and chaplaincy at Technological University Dublin (TUD) Fr

Alan Hilliard has said.

Data published by the ESRI showed that as of December 2020, four-in-ten 22 year-old men and over half of 22 year-old women were classified as depressed. Two years previously, 22% of men and 31% of women were depressed.

“We’re called to flourish as human beings, and Covid wasn’t a time to flourish,” Fr

Hilliard said.

“People haven’t been living – the bedroom became the classroom. The purpose of college, especially for undergrads, is to help them to grow up and mature a bit and they missed that.”

While the switch to online media worked for pre-existing communities, those starting their college or school

lives essentially became “interconnected loners”, Fr Hilliard said.

“You’ve got to say, what are we trying to do with our students? Are we just giving out degrees or are we helping them to become more fulfilled human beings that tap into their potential?”

Fr Hilliard said that while there are many different

reasons for mental health difficulties, sometimes it’s necessary to “act our way out of this crisis”.

“I have some research done on the subject which suggests that there is a sense in which people can get stuck in a place and the word I’d use is from Francis of Assisi, that ‘Go out and preach the Good News, and if necessary, use words’”.

Spirituality helps people to “live life to the full”, Fr Hilliard said, adding that there’s “not much time given to spirituality” at the moment.

“For those who have a spirituality, be they Christian or Muslim, it actually is the strength they draw on which helps them transcend a lot of difficulties,” he said.

Baby loss centre opens in Dungarvan

Staff reporter

A support centre for parents whose babies were diagnosed with life-limiting conditions has opened in Grattan Square in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

Place of hope

Described as a “place of hope and comfort” for parents who’ve received the news that their child may not live long after birth, Every Life Counts spokeswoman Vicky Wall told *The Irish Catholic* newspaper

that it’s a “very needed, important service to offer”.

“The type of parents we look after, nobody ever wants to think about that. It’s a tough place to be, so it’s not something people enjoy talking about or even thinking about, really,” she said.

Ms Wall described the reception to the centre in Dungarvan as “really good” and said families Every Life Counts has helped in the past travelled for the opening.

“We had helped a family

in Scotland and they travelled over to cut the ribbon for us, and another family we helped from Kildare, they came down, they cut the ribbon and we had the bereavement midwife from the Coombe Hospital and the bereavement midwife from Waterford Hospital come to the opening as well.”

Support and comfort

Having lost her own baby in 2016, Ms Wall described it as a “very, very lonely place”, but said that the centre will be able to provide support and comfort to parents in similarly difficult situations.

NEWS IN BRIEF

FOCUS missionary cause opening ‘very encouraging’

The announcement that FOCUS missionary Michelle Duppong could be on the path to sainthood is very encouraging, an Irish missionary has said.

Bishop David Kagan announced June 17 that the diocese of Bismarck is opening the investigation process for the canonisation of Ms Duppong, who served with the campus missionary organisation FOCUS for five years before dying of cancer in 2015.

Alanna Bradley, who works as a FOCUS missionary in UCD, said the announcement is “very encouraging”.

“We’re all trying to be saints,” Ms Bradley said, adding that it is a “great joy and a great witness, that one of our missionaries is recognised as having heroic virtue.”

“It’s very encouraging, she was a very normal person.”

Cardinal Napier challenges ‘cancel culture’ of elderly life

South African Cardinal Wilfrid Napier encouraged grandparents to challenge the “cancel culture” of elderly ageism after disavowing the “evil” June 5 massacre in Nigeria, reported the Catholic News Service.

Speaking to grandparents from Ireland and around the world, the 81-year-old former archbishop encouraged grandparents to avoid “believ[ing] the nonsense that you are not useful as a unit of production”.

“We old people are not seen as useful; therefore, we can be canceled out,” Cardinal Napier said in the talk.

He said that grandparents should reinforce their equality as Christians under God to their grandchildren “so the younger generation should not feel intimidated by us”.

THE JOURNEY

SAINT PATRICK’S COUNTRY



July
25th - 29th
August
22nd - 26th

The Saint Patrick Centre

HIGHLIGHTS

- Stay in an Irish Monastic Retreat for five nights.
- All meals included.
- Complete three guided walks on Ireland’s Camino - Saint Patrick’s Way and a canoeing experience.
- Journey with our expert Guides who were Sisters of Adoration.
- Enjoy a private audience with Benedictine Monks who will chant praises and bless your journey.
- See the places where St Patrick started his mission in Ireland, the place of his transformation.
- Learn about Celtic Spirituality from local monks and the art of monastic meditation & journaling.
- Receive a Pilgrim’s Journal & Pilgrim’s Passport.
- All bedrooms en-suite.

Cost - £850 / €1,000
all inclusive of accommodation, transfers, meals and activities.

5 Days

4 Nights

NO Single Supplement

WWW.SAINTPATRICKCENTRE.COM
TEL: +44 (0) 28 4461 9000

Augustinian church partners with Drogheda Youthreach to assist the homeless



Liam Fitzpatrick

The Augustinian Church partnered with Drogheda Youthreach to assist the homeless, collecting over 50 coats and distributing them to community members in need.

Students in the program grappled with bringing national crises like drug addiction, mental health homophobia, and homelessness to the local level, learning how to create change in their smaller communities.

“We all have these big ideas, but let’s try to start locally,” Katie Donagh, a resource staff member at Drogheda Youthreach, said. “We all think ‘Oh, we need to change the world, but we can change the world by starting locally.’”

Ms Donagh, along with some students, delivered an announcement at an Augustinian church Mass, informing the community and encouraging them to donate.

“The Augustinian is a smaller church, really in the heart of the community...

They [the students] felt that it would be nice to put it there,” Ms Donagh said.

“We thought that people might be more respectful of it if it was located in a local church,” she said.

Drogheda Youthreach’s mission is “to nurture our students’ personal, social, and educational development in a supportive and respectful environment,” particularly for young people who have left traditional education.

Free coats are available to all inside the door of the Augustinian church.

Why Michael D. is so suited to being president...

Michael D. Higgins is a very popular president, and I think there's a special reason why he is well suited to the Irish temperament.

Many outsiders who have observed Ireland and the Irish have remarked that a feature of Irish life is a difference between what people say in the public sphere – and what people confide in the private context. There's even a corny old phrase which captures this form of cognitive dissonance: "Mind you, I've said nothing!" The speaker may have delivered himself or herself of a strong opinion which, on reflection, may cause trouble, so the coda of MYISN is added.

Light

However, I see this national trait in quite a benign light. It's partly based on the desire not to offend – Ireland is too small a society to allow for too much offence. You might find that the person you've complained about is your second cousin. This is why obituaries in Ireland are usually kinder and more indulgent than elsewhere – there are too many inter-



Mary Kenny

connections to publish a malicious story or a naughty anecdote. But what's said between the four walls might be something else!

“I think a lot of Irish people like to hear that critique in the public sphere, because they like to think of themselves as being vaguely left-wing”

Michael D. has always been a committed socialist, and in his speeches that political coloration is often obvious, notably in his esteem for Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez. His discourse recently about the failure of housing policies – widely applauded – also included some undisguised critiques of the capitalism, globalism and 'speculators' who operate the market system.

I think a lot of Irish people like to hear that critique in

the public sphere, because they like to think of themselves as being vaguely left-wing. Being on the left seems more caring, more virtuous, more altruistic than being on the right, which is often portrayed as repressive, authoritarian, and money-minded.

So, it's nice that Michael D. can represent this left-wing frame of mind, on behalf of the people, without having to (or being enabled to, by virtue of his restrictions of office) implement any actual policies.

Property rights

It's pleasant to identify with a cuddly left, but people are less keen on renouncing property rights, the entitlement to have two cars in the front drive, the overseas holidays made possible by cheap air travel and AirBnb, the fashion industry run on minimum-wage lines or the mobile phones and Fitbits which could only have emerged from the venture-capitalist Silicon Valley.

This is rather akin to the division between private



Oisín Lee and Sophie Hannon of St Brigid's Primary School in Kildare are pictured making St Brigid's crosses with President Michael D. Higgins. Photo: CNS

and public conversation. Public discourse is about an aspiration to seem a kind and caring person: private talk may more accurately reflect our ego-

driven, pride-based, envious and possibly grasping human selves.

People like President Higgins because he represents the higher

identity of virtuous aspiration, in opposition to the somewhat less lofty model of how we actually behave. Mind you, I've said nothing!

“A feature of Irish life is a difference between what people say in the public sphere – and what people confide in the private context”

Truthful teaching

It seems to me that Catholic social (and moral) teaching provides us with an excellent guide on how to approach the transgender issue. Respect all persons whatever their situation, identity, orientation, or disability: all are equal in the sight of God. But we also accept biological facts, ranging from recognis-

ing the unborn as a human life to affirming that 99.99% of human beings are either male or female. There are rare genetic conditions such as hermaphroditism, or intersex: the South African athlete Caster Semenya is thus. There are some people who feel they are in the wrong gender. But, biologically,

the common condition of humanity (and mammals) is the binary male/female.

Compassion and respect for individuals can accompany biological truth about our species, and I believe this emerges from Catholic teaching on the value of human life, whatever shape that life takes.

● Seán Day-Lewis was the eldest son of the Anglo-Irish poet Cecil Day Lewis – and elder half-brother of the screen actor Daniel Day-Lewis. Seán and I toiled together as TV critics in London's Fleet Street in the days when television programmes would be shown in advance to the media, in a darkened screening cinema in the early morning.

Seán was serious, sensitive and shy: he never quite got over the break-up of his parents' marriage, and told me he fantasised, as a boy, that his father would someday return to their family home.

He always felt this sense of being abandoned, although he never resented his more famous sibling, Daniel, son of his father's second marriage to the actress Jill Balcon. Seán married happily himself, and had a son and a daughter to whom he gave the Irish names of Keelin and Finian. After Brexit, like quite a few Brits with an Irish family heritage, he took out an Irish passport.

Seán died recently, aged 90. In his retiring years, he was received into the Catholic Church. *Ar dhéis Dé go raibh a hanam.*

AVAILABLE FOR PRE ORDER

MARY KENNY'S LATEST BOOK

The way we were

Catholic Ireland since 1922



“Mary Kenny provides the most balanced perspective on the Catholic Ireland of the past up to our own time of any writer I know.”

- Charles Lysaght
Author, Historian, Biographer

Price:
€19.99
+ €4.50P&P

At a time when the values of Catholic Ireland are so often viewed in a negative, even hostile light, Mary Kenny's approach is a balanced and measured recollection of Ireland over the past hundred years. By interweaving stories from personalities involved in social history and some of her own life experiences, she provides a complex portrait of Irish life making for a stimulating and enjoyable read.

Order Today 01 6874025 | www.columbabooks.com

Expected to ship in August.

108-year-old Máirín recalls pride at her cousin's role in 1932 Eucharistic Congress

Ruadhán Jones

While visiting the Irish Air Corps in Baldonnel, 108-year-old Máirín Hughes recalled her pride at her first cousin's role in escorting the papal ship for the 1932 Eucharistic congress.

Ms Hughes was 18 when her cousin Fionnbar O'Cathalain was one of the Air Corps pilots who flew in the flypast on the occasion of the Congress.

On the 90th anniversary of that day, she was able to touch one of the planes he piloted while visiting the Corps' museum.

"I remember it well. I was in the Phoenix Park and it was the first flypast by the Air Corps, and I was very proud, looking up and saying, 'My cousin is up there on the left wing'," Ms Hughes told *The Irish Independent*.

Historian and curator of the museum Corporal Michael J Whelan told Máirín that Fionnbar was in the first flying training courses in Baldonnel in 1926.

"This day 90 years ago all the dignitaries, including the representative of Pope Pius XI,

came to Dublin for the Eucharistic Congress, and six aircraft flew in cruciform shape escorting the papal ship from the Kish Lighthouse," he said.

Ms Hughes was shown Mr O'Cathalain's plane, an Avro 631 Cadet single prop bi-plane with an open cockpit.

"His grandmother used to say: 'what the devil was his mother doing to allow him join such a dangerous job'," she said.

Brigadier General Rory O'Connor, General Officer Commanding of the Irish Air Corps, presented Ms Hughes with a photograph of the flypast, with her cousin's plane visible in its left-wing position.

Ms Hughes was born in Belfast but grew up in Killarney after her family moved to Co. Kerry when she was young.

She can remember the Black and Tans patrolling Killarney, and recalls the Spanish Flu pandemic.

She attended UCC in the early 1930s, working in UCC's medical laboratory following her graduation with a science degree.



Ms Máirín Hughes visits the Irish Air Corps base in Baldonnel on the 90th anniversary of the Eucharistic congress, which she attended. Photo: Irish Air Corps Twitter.

"The Our Father is one of the most precious gifts Jesus left to us"

-Pope Francis



Bring the Our Father into your home with this beautiful hand carved cross from the Holy Land, which also includes earth from Bethlehem at the foot.

Price: **€35**
Including P&P!

LIMITED QUANTITIES AVAILABLE
ORDER YOURS TODAY

The Irish Catholic

01 6874024

The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277

Priest pays tribute to Tyrone GAA player who died in Spain

Chai Brady

A talented GAA player who died in Spain has been described as a man of "character and integrity" by his parish priest.

Damian Casey (29) from Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, died following an incident at a swimming pool in Alicante. He had been attending a wedding.

Fr Dean Kevin Donaghy PP of Dungannon told *The Irish Catholic* that as well as being an "outstanding sportsman" he was "a real gentleman in every way, who has always enhanced any company he was in and is very highly regarded by everyone who knew him: a great role model".

"The Casey family would have deep roots and strong links in the parish of Dungannon, he himself is very fondly remembered - speak-

ing to teachers and other staff in the Catholic schools in the parish," he said, adding: "He was never sent off in any of the many hurling games he played which is quite a mark of his character and his integrity as well."

A vigil took place at the club he played for, Eoghan Ruadh, on June 19. Hundreds of people attended and wore GAA jerseys in Mr Casey's honour, at his family's request.

The senior county player was described as one of the most talented players of his generation.

A statement read on behalf of Mr Casey's family said: "Our hearts are broken. Words cannot express how devastating the news of Damian's death has been.

"We thank everyone for the support we are receiving from the local community and across the country..."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Irish delegation attends tenth WMOF in Rome

An Irish delegation has travelled to Rome to attend the 10th World Meeting of Families which began Wednesday.

Families, along with Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin and Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty, travelled over to attend the event on the theme 'Family love: a vocation and a path to holiness'.

Ahead of his departure for Rome, Bishop Nulty said, "We are very much looking forward to being part of the tenth World Meeting of Families in the presence of Pope Francis and pilgrims from around the world. All of us remember with fondness those memorable days in Dublin four years ago".

In adoration the Lord directs us in a 'noisy world' - prelate

In a "busy consumerist culture" Eucharistic Adoration has a special appeal the Archbishop Emeritus of Tuam said during the pilgrimage of Eucharistic Adorers to Knock.

In his homily, June 18, Archbishop Michael Neary said: "In a noisy world there's a special attraction about being able to focus in peace and quiet on Jesus Christ in the Sacred Host."

Archbishop Neary said that in adoration the Lord has an opportunity to speak with us. "It's a two-way conversation. He doesn't have to compete with a myriad of voices clamoring to be heard. So often in adoration the Lord gently directs us to choose the right path," he said.

Service held for Belfast Troubles conversations

Staff reporter

Loved ones lost during the Troubles were remembered during the 'Courage to Lament' ecumenical service in Belfast on Tuesday, June 21.

Held in St Anne's Cathedral, the service was led by Christian Church leaders and two women whose lives have been impacted by the violence.

During the service, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland Eamon Martin prayed: "Some of us have lost loved ones because of our sectarian conflict. So many we know have been traumatised by violence or its threat. No one is untouched by the harmful divisions in our society."

The event was a collaboration between Corrymeela Community, the Wave Trauma Centre, Belfast Cathedral, Church leaders, Healing Through Remembering and more.

Consider leaving a gift to The Irish Catholic in your Will

Phone 01 6874028
info@irishcatholic.ie

The Irish Catholic

Niamh Uí Bhriain

The View



Resist calls to scrap three-day waiting period for abortion

In 2018, then Tánaiste Simon Coveney said that he was willing to support repeal of the 8th amendment and legalisation of abortion on demand to 12 weeks because he had been assured there would be “strict guidelines”, including a three-day waiting period for women to reflect on the decision before they underwent an abortion.

Minister Coveney said that he believed that those measures would lead “middle ground” voters – people who he said had a “traditionally pro-life” perspective – to support the referendum.

“The reasons they give for ending the period of reflection are frankly ridiculous”

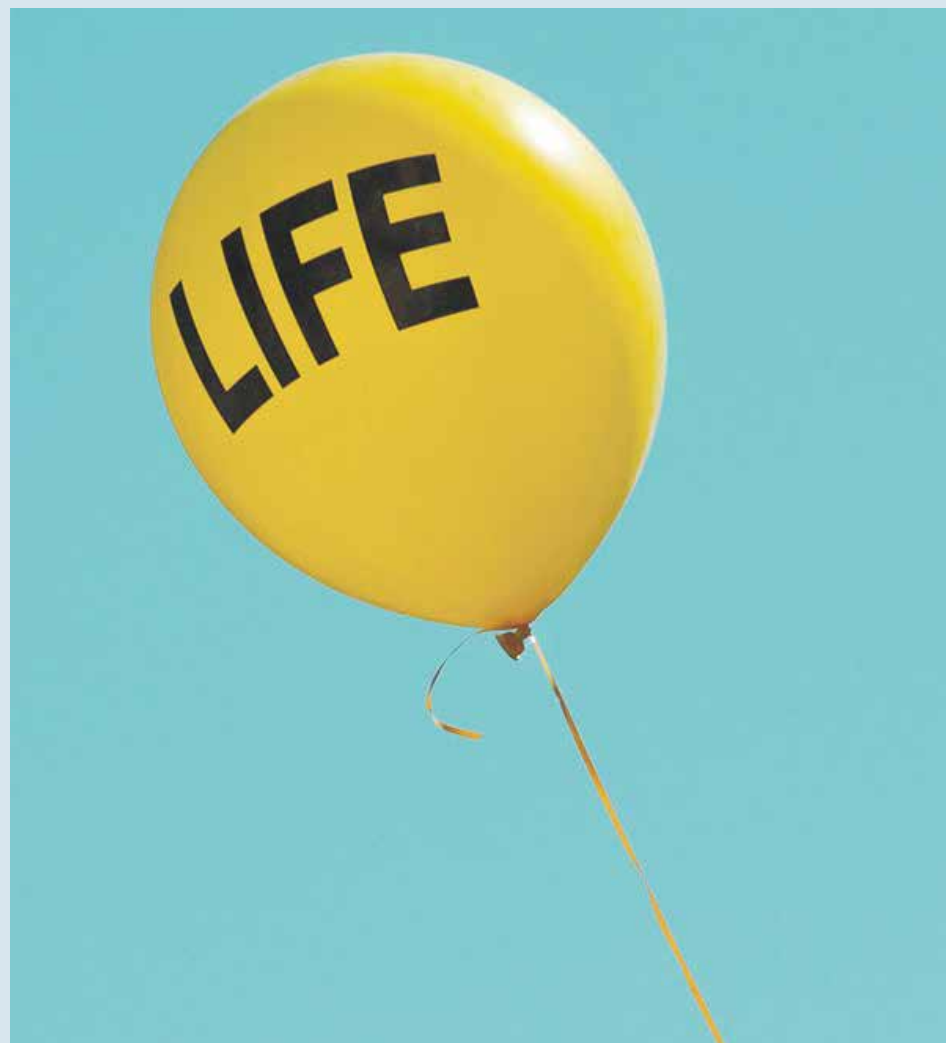
The waiting period was “very important”, he said, because the “magnitude of terminating a pregnancy was part of the decision making” when it came to abortion.

Minister Coveney’s u-turn on abortion, like that of Micheál Martin, was used by ‘Yes’ campaigners and their media allies to persuade reluctant voters, who were being told that the 8th was endangering women but who did not, polls showed, support an abortion model they believed was unrestricted.

Of course, an abortion regime with very few restrictions was what voters got once the 8th was gone – with some 21,000 abortion having taken place already according to junior Minister Mary Butler.

And now abortion campaigners, including the National Women’s Council, are pushing for the three-day waiting period to be scrapped, and their demands are getting the usual lavish media coverage while pro-life perspectives are censored and ignored.

The reasons they give for ending the period of reflection are frankly ridiculous. They claim that the three-day waiting period between the first and second abortion appointment means we “don’t trust women”. They say that it amounts to a “paternalistic” system where women are not



viewed as “competent decision-makers”.

And they conveniently ignore what we know to be true about the three-day wait period – that it seems to reduce the number of abortions taking place.

Pro-life

We know this because pro-life TDs like Carol Nolan and Peadar Tóibín have asked the pertinent questions of the Minister for Health which give us an insight into what is happening with abortion in Ireland. (The Department of Health’s annual report on abortion, in stark contrast, seems designed to keep the Irish people almost entirely in the dark on the issue).

So, figures released in response to a parliamentary question from Carol Nolan suggest that, in 2020 alone, almost 20% of women who attended GPs and clinics seeking an abortion subsequently changed their mind and did not go

ahead with the procedure. Ms Nolan asked the Minister for Health for information regarding “the number of initial consultations for the termination of pregnancy services that were provided by general practitioners, family planning clinics and women’s health clinics in 2020”. The HSE responded that “In 2020, there were 8,057 initial consultations for Termination of Pregnancy services”. Contrasting that information with data from the Department of Health which revealed that 6,577 abortions were carried out in 2020, Deputy Nolan said that it seemed more than 1400 women had changed their mind and did not go ahead with an abortion. That amounted to 18.4% – or almost one in 5 women – who did not proceed with an abortion after the initial consultation.

Similarly, in 2019, 7,536 initial consultations were

provided while 6,666 abortions took place, suggesting that some 870 women changed their mind during the three-day waiting period.

“It is telling that any outcome other than ending a baby’s life seems to be considered a negative by some abortion campaigners”

So it’s very likely that we could expect a rise in the number of abortions taking place if the waiting period was scrapped. And the obvious question is why on earth any reasonable person would want that?

The truth that abortion campaigners want to ignore – or suppress – is that most

people do not see abortion as a good thing. Most people, because most people have some compassion and some common decency, would prefer if less abortions, not more, took place.

Pregnancies

It would serve women better if these taxpayer-funded bodies recognised that women need support to continue with their pregnancies, and that having time to reflect on any decision can produce a different outcome. It is telling that any outcome other than ending a baby’s life seems to be considered a negative by some abortion campaigners.

That’s why it’s so important for pro-life people – and even those many reluctant ‘Yes’ voters – to contact their TDs and to remind them of the promises they made in the referendum. It should be emphasised that any changes to the law that would actually increase the number of abortions will be strongly resisted and has no popular support.

Already, the rise in the number of abortions taking place in Ireland is profoundly shocking, despite promises from Leo Varadkar and others that it would be rare. We cannot allow a small but vocal minority to make that situation even worse.

A time to renew your spirit

**Holy Land Pilgrimage
with John Pridmore
& Fr Frankie Mulgrew**



Land only from £2690

DEPARTS 22 SEPTEMBER 2022. 11 DAYS.

Two great spiritual leaders bring depth and dynamism to the Holy Land encounter as we walk the sacred paths of Jesus Christ. Catholic speaker, author and ex-gangster John Pridmore, and Fr Frankie Mulgrew share their passion and knowledge of the faith as we immerse ourselves in the Gospels. Optional Wonders of Jordan Extension.



harvestjourneys.com

harvest
journeys

Big turnout for Dublin book launch



Michael Kelly, James Bradshaw, Mary Kenny and Senator Ronán Mullen at the launch. Photos: John McElroy



Fr Gary Chamberland CSC.

Staff reporter

Would-be pilgrims to the Holy Land were among those who attended the launch of Michael Kelly's new book in the Newman University Church in Dublin.

Hosted by the Notre Dame Centre for Faith and Reason, which is based at the historic church, the launch explored themes connected with the book *An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to the Holy Land*.

Speaking at the launch Fr Gary Chamberland CSC, Director of the centre, praised the book and

described how whether one was contemplating a pilgrimage or not, it made the Gospel scenes and the places associated with the life of Christ come alive.

In his remarks, Mr Kelly – who has led many pilgrimages to the Holy Land – praised both Aid to the Church in Need Ireland for helping him focus on the struggling Christians in the Middle East and Niall and Fergus Glynn of Marian Pilgrimages for their help in preparing the text.

i An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to the Holy Land is available from www.columbabooks.com



Helen O'Toole, Grace Fay and Helen Cosgrave at the launch.



Michael Kinsella and Petra Conroy.



Peadar Laignleis and Dan Donnelly.



Paul and Loretta Kelly.



Fr John Hogan and Luke Scully.



Brendan Conroy with Maria Steen and her baby.

WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF JESUS IN...

THE HOLY LAND

1 – 9

OCTOBER 2022

AND

6 – 14

OCTOBER 2022

Visit Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and other sites in the Holy Land associated with Jesus.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

PRICE:
€1745
INCLUDING
TAXES AND TIPS



Fr Eamonn Conway
(1st trip)



Fr Emlyn McGinn
(2nd trip)

Eight-night pilgrimage in four-star hotels

- Luxury air-conditioned coach daily
- Breakfast and evening meal served each day
- Full religious programme organised by Marian Pilgrimages
- Services of Marian Pilgrimages representative and professional English-speaking guide 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 trip on Sea of Galilee
- Return taxi transfers to Mount Tabor

To reserve your place:

Call Dublin (01) 878 8159 or Belfast (028) 95680005 or email info@marian.ie



MARIAN PILGRIMAGES
RENEW OUR SPIRIT OF LOVE, FORGIVENESS & PEACE

The Irish Catholic

Marian Pilgrimages is a fully lic
bonded tour operator TO142 - A

Charities warn of 'humanitarian catastrophe' in Horn of Africa



An immediate scaling up of aid is now the only hope to avoid starvation for hundreds of thousands of people, writes **Liam Fitzpatrick**

Forty-eight seconds. In the time it takes to brew a cup of coffee, one person in the Horn of Africa is likely dying of hunger in one of the most severe humanitarian crises since famine struck the region a decade prior. As the CEO of Dochás, Ireland's powerful union of humanitarian aid and international development organisations, Jane-Ann McKenna and other non-profit leaders insisted that this pattern of ignorance of famine is

unacceptable, calling for "the immediate and radical mobilisation of aid" into the region. "Famine is an abomination," said Jim Clarken, CEO of Oxfam Ireland. "It's a failure of humanity. It's a failure of global politics. It should never happen. There's more than enough money and more than enough food in the world to feed everybody."

“The crisis in the Horn of Africa has only been exacerbated by the international impact of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine”

"This is the biggest crisis facing the world today, without a shadow of a doubt," Mr Clarken said.

On Tuesday, June 16, Dochás held a press conference at which representatives from Oxfam Ireland, Trócaire, Concern Worldwide, and GOAL pleaded to politicians in Dublin, urging them to take decisive action against acute, extreme weather-caused drought in the Horn of Africa. In a pre-budget submission,

members of Dochás called for the Irish Government to increase funding to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) program by €233 million.

"As a nation, we always stand tall and respond to the suffering of others in times of crisis," said Mary Van Lieshout, Deputy CEO and Head of External Affairs of GOAL. "We simply need to act."

The Horn

The Horn of Africa consists of Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, and some parts of Uganda. The area recently recorded its fourth consecutive failed rainy season, a climatic crisis that last occurred over 40 years ago.

The region has been battered by crisis after crisis, including a devastating locust infestation, rampant political turmoil, public health scares like Covid-19 and other disease outbreaks, and a famine in 2011 that claimed the lives of over a quarter-million people. When combined with the global impacts of the Russo-Ukrainian War and the progression of climate change, however, this drought and accompanying famine could prove to be far more deadly than anything prior.



Irish humanitarian organisations have joined forces to sound the alarm on the risk of widespread famine in the Horn of Africa at a briefing to Irish politicians in Dublin today (Tuesday 14th June).

"We saw this unfold in 2011... 250,000 people died then," Ms McKenna said. "We swore never again, and now we're back in that situation just over 10 years later."

Over 24 million people in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia currently face "severe levels of hunger and food insecurity" linked to drought conditions and extreme weather, according to a study from Oxfam International. Some 5.7 million children in the Horn of Africa are acutely malnourished—a figure greater than the entire population of Ireland.

Challenges in the region

Despite producing less than a tenth of a percent of global emissions, the Horn of Africa feels the effects of climate change more strongly than its neighbours to the north. Industrialised countries have created over 90% of historical emissions and 37% of current emissions, yet the Global South shoulders the consequences, the panellists said.

"The Global South is bearing the brunt of climate injustice and climate change," said Caoimhe de Barra, CEO of Trócaire. "More than 90% of the costs of climate breakdown are found in the South, and 98% of the deaths as a result of climate breakdown happen in the Global South."

Women and children in the Horn of Africa region face additional danger from the perils of the drought. They are 14 times more likely to die in a natural disaster, and drought conditions can create an increased risk of gender-based violence and "an inter-generational cycle of poverty," said Ms de Barra.

"In times of food shortages, mothers and girls reduce personal food consumption to provide for others," said Ms Van Lieshout. "They carry additional responsibility for sick family members and under-

take arduous journeys of personal risk to find water."

"Mothers in Somalia love their children no less than mothers in Ireland," Ms de Barra said, echoing former President Mary Robinson's adage that there is no dignity in watching your child die.

“This is the biggest crisis facing the world today, without a shadow of a doubt, Mr Clarken said”

The crisis in the Horn of Africa has only been exacerbated by the international impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The region imports over 90% of its wheat – a staple food source in the region – from Ukraine and Russia. Supply chain disruptions have sent the price of wheat soaring, creating an acute crisis that has drawn media attention and mobilised funding for relief efforts in Eastern Europe, while leaving regions like the Horn of Africa left behind.

Funding

Amina Abdulla, Regional Director of the Horn of Africa for Concern Worldwide, asked Irish politicians to take a more nuanced approach to international aid, encouraging them to provide relief to chronic crises in Africa as they would immediate ones in Europe.

"Advocacy efforts with donors and international partners at the country level have been overshadowed by global political agendas that have prioritised sudden crises," Ms Abdulla said. "But for many of us, it is not a case of either-or, but rather a case of widening the scope to address other crises."

"It's the sustained investment in the government-made social protection programs, as well as NGO safety nets, that have been effective in supporting resilience and staving

off the crisis up to this point," she said.

The frequency of climate change-related appeals to the United Nations for emergency funding has skyrocketed. According to research from Oxfam International, there has been an 819% increase in extreme weather-related funding appeals to the UN in the past 20 years, with Horn of Africa countries like Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan routinely having some of the most recurring appeals of any nation.

Losses

Aon, an insurance company, estimates that global economic losses from weather damage reached almost €2.4 trillion between 2011 and 2020 in an unprecedented increase. The decade prior, losses were barely over €1.6 trillion.

"It's getting more expensive to do the same level of response," Ms McKenna said. "That's why we're calling for action now, you know, because the longer we allow this situation to continue, the more expensive it's actually going to become."

"Invest one euro now and you save three euros later," Ms de Barra said, encouraging politicians to invest now rather than waiting. "That actually goes right up to seven, a one-to-seven ratio."

Ultimately, the panellists presented a unified front, encouraging politicians to take immediate action in the region to fight acute hunger and provide immediate aid while also investing in sustainable, long-term plans to protect those impacted by climate change and famine in the Horn of Africa.

"Scaling up our collective action at the moment is their only hope," Ms Abdulla said. "Doing otherwise means imminent starvation and death for hundreds of thousands of children."

The Irish Catholic

FREE HOME DELIVERY

*geographical restrictions apply

Don't miss breaking news delivered directly to your home each week



WE LIVE IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES...

Stay up to date with analyses that represent your voice on the national stage.

Regular contributors provide commentary to hot button issues of the day.

Local voices highlight the ongoing work of parishes and communities throughout the country.

News Delivery brought to you by **THE IRISH TIMES**

For further details

Ph: 081 846 4465 | Email: info@newsdelivery.ie | www.newsdelivery.ie

New sister on Nun's Island

Ruadhán Jones

More than 8,000 people tuned in to witness the final profession of a new Poor Clare sister to the convent in Nun's Island, Galway.

The profession ceremony of former UCHG dermatology nurse Sr Clare Marie, was live-streamed, a first for the community which has had a presence in Galway for nearly 400 years.

'Touching', 'calming', 'not-in-your face', and 'heart-warming' were just some of the words used by viewers to describe the ceremony, which took place in the Galway monastery chapel, June 12.

"We are bowled over at the responses from the people who viewed the ceremony of Sr Clare Marie's profession" said the abbess, Sr Colette. "It seems to have touched people in a deep way.

"Her profession is the culmination of a journey which began in

2016 when she entered the monastery.

"She has seen for herself 'the difficulty and joy of a life completely dedicated to God', as it says in the profession ceremony, and yet still has the courage and conviction to make a life-long commitment to our way of life. We are overjoyed to welcome such a lovely person into our community."

While the vast majority of viewers were Irish, a significant number of viewers joined in from other countries as well, including India, Australia, Pakistan, Canada, Philippines, Italy, Nigeria, the UK and the US.

"I can't help thinking that St Clare may have intervened to ensure the prayerful and uplifting tone of the live stream" said Sr Colette.

She explained that St Clare was designated the patron saint of television based on an experience she had of being able to see and hear the celebration of Mass in a local Franciscan church when she was bed-bound in her own monastery.



Sr Clare Marie with the Poor Clare Community.



The solemn profession of Poor Clare Sr Clare Marie in the Galway monastery chapel, June 12.



Sr Clare Marie signs her vows on the altar.



Sr Clare Marie receives her profession ring as a sign of her new life as a fully professed Poor Clare sister.



Sr Clare Marie celebrates after the ceremony.



Sr Clare Marie with twin brother John, sisters Alicia and Sinead with her husband Martin and children Ryan and Charley.

Our Lady Crowned celebrates diamond jubilee



Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin visited the Church of Our Lady Crowned, June 12, to mark the 60th anniversary of its opening in 1962. He is pictured with (from left): Fr Colin Doocey PP Mahon, Archdeacon Kerry Murphy O'Connor, Bishop Fintan Gavin, Fr Charlie Kiely PP Upper Mayfield and Deacon David Lane, Mayfield and altar server Edward Sorenson. Photos: Brian Loughed



Bishop Gavin with Communion girls Cornelia Coughlan-McCarthy (left) and Grace Conroy.

Bishop Fintan Gavin visited Upper Mayfield parish, Cork, as it marked the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Church of Our Lady Crowned, June 11 and 12.

Bishop Gavin celebrated all three Masses, including the intentions of the parish community, all those who received the sacraments over the years, the benefactors both living, and deceased, the sick and the housebound and all those who have died there in the past 60 years.

At the beginning of each of the Masses a member of the Funeral Ministry Team lit a special candle in remembrance of

all who died in the parish in the past 60 years.

Bishop Fintan was joined at the Masses by Parish Priest Fr Charlie Kiely, Fr Kerry Murphy-O'Connor, Fr Colin Doocey, An tAth Tomás Ó Murchú, Fr Ben Hegarty and Deacon David Lane. Fr Kerry and An tAth Tomás were ordained 59 years ago, and Fr Colin was ordained 29 years ago in Our Lady Crowned.

To honour the 60 years a special commemorative booklet was written, and the weekend of celebrations ended with a parish picnic in the gardens of the church. In October the parish will travel to Lourdes on a weekend pilgrimage.



Bishop Gavin and Fr Charlie Kiely with members of the Crowley and Lotty families.



Miriam Lotty and her son TJ (12) in the Church of Our Lady Crowned, June 12.

Bishop Gavin with Alice (7) and Mia Fitzgerald (4).



Bishop Gavin pictured with the Walsh family from Mayfield.



Bishop Gavin is pictured with First Holy Communion girls (from left) Kenzie O'Callaghan, Marcelina Murkova and Kaci O'Callaghan.



Bishop Gavin is greeted by 88-year-old Paul Russell and his daughter Valerie from Ballyvolane.



Ann Marie Dennehy with her 20-month-old daughter Croia pictured during the Mass.



Bishop Gavin and Fr Charlie Kiely with members of the church choir.



Fr Kiely and Bishop Gavin greeting parishioners after Mass.



Pictured with Bishop Fintan Gavin and Fr Charlie Kiely are members of the Kiely family, dad Dan, Ivan, mum Laura, Charlotte and Sam.



Local parishioners greet Bishop Gavin and Fr Kiely.



Miriam Lotty from Mayfield with her seven-year-old daughter Emma.



Bishop Gavin and Fr Kiely are greeted by parishioners after Mass.



Former Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Joe Kavanagh with Bishop Gavin and Fr Kiely.

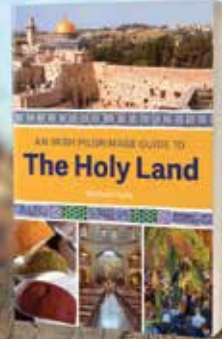


Bishop Gavin with Fr Kerry Murphy-O'Connor (left) and Fr Kiely.

ENHANCE YOUR APPRECIATION OF

The Holy Land

WITH THIS BEAUTIFUL GUIDEBOOK FROM
MICHAEL KELLY
EDITOR OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC



Price:
€16.99
+ €4.50
P&P

Whether you are planning a trip to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, or simply want to deepen your understanding of faith this guide is indispensable.

ORDER TODAY ☎ 01 6874025

WWW.COLUMBABOOKS.COM

Irish delegates enjoy ‘hopeful’ synodal assembly in Athlone

Jason Osborne and Ruadhán Jones

Faithful from across the 26 dioceses gathered in Athlone Saturday as the Church in Ireland convened for the national pre-synodal assembly.

The purpose of the meeting was to move towards developing the final national synthesis that represents the results of the listening and discernment of the Faithful during the first stage of the diocesan synodal process. The resulting national synthesis is to be the contribution of the Church in Ireland towards the universal synod.

“Following this, the group proceeded to the ancient monastic site at Clonmacnoise for a prayer service”

Discussions took place behind closed doors in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, between the 160 delegates from around Ireland, who represented religious congregations, Catholic groups and lay ecclesial associations, members of the clergy and members of the Synodal Pathway Steering Committee and task group.

Following this, the group proceeded to the ancient monastic site at Clonmacnoise for a prayer service.

A number of those in attendance spoke to *The Irish Catholic* about the private discussions, outlining the issues raised by those in attendance and the atmosphere among the assembled Faithful.

“It’s been very useful, it’s great to hear from other people. I suppose we’re learning that the same issues have arisen in lots of dioceses across the country, which is to be expected,” said Dympna Kelly of Derry diocese.

Ms Kelly said that the “headline acts” of female and married priests came up, but *The Irish Catholic* understands the topics of discussion varied depending on which group you were in. The involvement of the laity and “making sure that the laity are properly formed so that they can take on the roles in order to fulfil the roles that have as baptised Catholics,” were a

“big element,” she said.

Michael Tierney of Waterford and Lismore diocese said that there weren’t too many other young people there, but “it’s great to bear witness and bring up the topic of young people, which is actually foremost in our own report for Waterford and Lismore diocese.

“That was the biggest topic, was young people,” he said.

“It’s been great to share my own experience of that and to be a representative of that group and to debunk misconceptions around young people and how they see the Church and Church teaching.”

National leader for Youth 2000 Ireland Helena O’Shea said that “coming together to talk about the future of the Church for the good of the Church is always a good thing”.

“I think the positive thing about the process is that any time that you ask people, like actively ask people to reflect on their faith, to reflect on the Church, it’s a good thing. It’s an opportunity to grow, and so aside from outcomes or whatever, actually, the process of having conversations with people and asking them to reflect on their faith, it’s an opening for God to come into their lives and for them to reassess where they are with their faith and to go deeper.

“So just encouraging us to talk to people, encouraging the whole Church to actually say, ‘Where are you with your faith? That’s a positive thing’. Whatever about outcomes or concerns or anything else,” Ms O’Shea said.

Young people

Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick said he was “pleasantly surprised” to see the young people present on the day.

“They weren’t just here, they were articulate, they spoke, they gave witness to their faith. Some of them spoke about having drifted away from faith and coming back and rediscovering then, [realising] ‘I really need to understand what my faith is and what does the Church actually say about things’ and the importance of that and the importance of studying faith and living the Faith in every day life.

“That has been heartening to hear them saying it,” Bishop Leahy said.



Delegates taking part at the National Pre-Synodal Assembly on Saturday, June 18. Photos: John McElroy



Some of the delegates who took part in the Pre-Synodal Assembly at the prayer walk at the monastic site of Clonmacnoise at the conclusion of the National Pre-Synodal Assembly on Saturday.



Mark McConnellogue and Lizzie Rea.



Fr Eamonn Fitzgibbon (Task Group) and Sr Kathleen McGarvey OLA (AMRI).



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, at the prayer walk at the monastic site of Clonmacnoise at the conclusion of the National Pre-Synodal Assembly on Saturday.



Michael Tierney, Waterford and Lismore, and Peter Sands, Steering committee.



Archbishop Eamon Martin admires a high cross in Clonmacnoise on Saturday.



Michelle Uí Churráin (Raphoe) Sr Stephanie O'Brien (Ferns).



Permanent deacon Dermot McCarthy with the book of the Gospels as he leads a prayer walk at the monastic site of Clonmacnoise at the conclusion of the National Pre-Synodal Assembly on Saturday.

Derry diocese fans the flame of faith

Ruadhán Jones

Over 3,000 year seven and sixth class pupils who are to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in Derry diocese gathered to celebrate, June 9.

Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown was the principal celebrant at the annual 'Fan the Flame' Mass, which also marks the end of the student's time in primary/national school.

Bishop McKeown was joined by priests from across the diocese, including newly ordained Deacon Michael McCaul.

"It was a joy filled occasion and the young people left reminded, as St Paul said, to 'fan into flame' the gift that God has given them," a spokesperson for the diocese said.

"We wish all our young people God's blessing as they continue their journey and we thank all those who helped in any way and made the day so memorable for them."



Students from St Mary's PS Killyclogher and Our Lady of Lourdes NS.



Students from Broadbridge PS.



Family and friends of primary/national school students who attended the Fan the Flame Mass.



Deacon Michael McCaul embraces his sister Catherine McCaul from St Therese's Primary School, Lenamore at the Fan the Flame Mass.



Students from Broadbridge PS.



Students from St Columba's, Clady.



Bishop Donal McKeown, principal celebrant of the Fan the Flame Mass, gets a high five.



Students from Scoil Eoghan NS Merville.



The stands were packed with students, stewards, family and friends.

Sessiagh O'Neill NS, Ballybofey.



Banners displaying the key themes of the Fan the Flame Mass were paraded around the ground.



Knockavoe School and Resource Centre Strabane.

St Patrick's Girls' NS, Carndonagh.

A chaplain's confidential comradery among Irish soldiers



Irish people should be proud of their Defence Forces despite much of their work being behind the scenes, an army chaplain tells **Chai Brady**

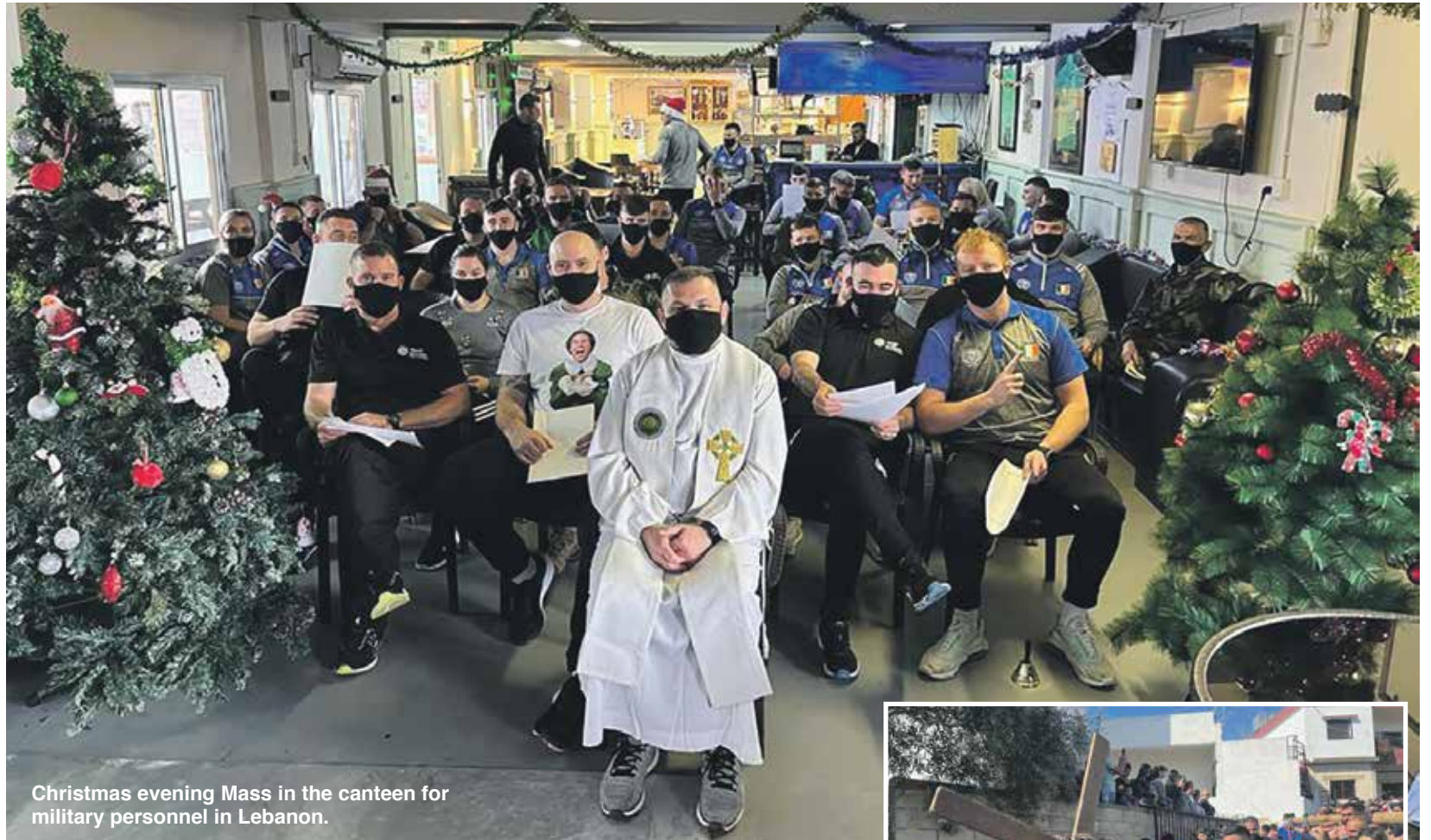
The work of Irish peacekeepers can often be forgotten and despite the shadow of Covid and all the subsequent restrictions, their foreign missions with the UN far from home were maintained. The long stints away, particularly during important celebrations of faith and family such as Christmas and Easter, can be difficult. Chaplains show their worth at these times more than ever; offering solace.

“It’s great to see how our uniform is respected here”

Fr Piotr Delimat CF, originally from Krakow, is an Irish Defence Forces chaplain who spoke to *The Irish Catholic* at the end of a six-month posting in Lebanon with the 119th Battalion as part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The battalion arrived in December when Covid restrictions were still in place which hampered their ability to visit parts of the country and mix with the local Catholic community, who are mainly Maronites. When they were lifted Fr Delimat took soldiers to several important sites relating to Christ’s life saying: “I was really amazed how they were touched by this place, by the spirituality of this place, by something bigger than they expected there.

“Also, Lebanon connects three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, it’s a mix of everything, it’s such an interesting country, it’s not huge, but interesting because of its relation-



Christmas evening Mass in the canteen for military personnel in Lebanon.

ship with different religions, cultures – it’s a good mix here,” he adds.

The Irish Defence Forces has had peacekeepers in Lebanon for about 40 years with Fr Delimat saying “it’s great to see how our uniform is respected here”.

“For them we are peacekeepers, we are bringing them hope for the future. It’s good to notice that Irish army personnel are well-appreciated – that’s my experience.”

The connection to the local community goes deeper, with soldiers being able to join the Faithful in Lebanon in their churches.

Fr Delimat explains: “I was delighted that around 4-5 times we had the chance to go to Maronite churches and I concelebrated Mass there. Soldiers were sitting together with the local community, it was absolutely beautiful that we were worshipping the same God in the same tradition, and that we are part of their community. That was actually one of the most beautiful moments.”

Christmas

For some people it’s an extremely difficult time celebrating Christmas overseas, Fr Delimat says, and while technology has offered a level of connectivity previously unheard of the distance from home is still acutely felt.

When the battalion arrived,

it was a “good time” for Christmas preparations because they had four weeks of advent.

“What I discovered here, one positive thing, is that we weren’t distracted by all this selling stuff and Christmas markets, we are just here, more focused on Christmas – like the way it was many years ago,” Fr Delimat says.

“We’re missing something at home, it is easy to be distracted by gifts, with presents, with Christmas trees, here the focus was on Christmas.”

“Generally, with Christmas in the parish, my own experience is that everything is so clean and well prepared”

Expecting a larger number of people to attend Christmas Mass the chaplain decided to hold it in the canteen as the chapel can only hold 30-40 people.

“It’s a place where soldiers go for a cup of coffee, a cup of tea, and actually that’s a place in my understanding where Jesus wants to be present – wherever people are meeting,” Fr Delimat says, adding: “So many soldiers wanted to be involved. So many personnel in the army don’t have a good voice – they were not really

good for singing – but it was really good fun and I said to the guys there is something unique about Christmas, generally Christmas is spending time with family or really close friends and actually here we are all friends, we are an army family.

“I think that was important for us, to bring that aspect of being connected as one army family – that the army is something bigger than normal workers. We are coming here for the mission and we are more than guys with weapons, we are bringing here the peace of Bethlehem in our presence here, we are here to help keep peace in this part of the world.

“Generally, with Christmas in the parish, my own experience is that everything is so clean and well prepared. I went for Christmas day to another post, where there were around 20-30 soldiers and the room was leaking, it wasn’t really the best place for a Mass but actually that really brought us a message that Jesus Christ is coming in a way we are not expecting. That was a very humbling experience.”

Holy Week

Fr Delimat admits he didn’t know how touching it would be to celebrate Holy Week in Lebanon among Irish soldiers and Polish peacekeepers who are also stationed there.

He says: “During Holy Week



Irish peacekeepers join the local community in the Way of the Cross on Good Friday in Debil, Lebanon.

“We feel homesick and actually that’s showed us that hope is very important in our life and it’s a very powerful hope we get from our faith especially in Easter time”

soldiers didn’t have a good reputation, actually they were staying at Jesus’ grave to make sure nobody robbed Jesus’ body.

“Because we’re here with Polish soldiers, Polish chaplains, we decided that for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday we would celebrate this Triduum together with the Polish – to show people we share one faith, the same message, the same tradition. I explained in English and Polish what was going on: I saw how much the soldiers were touched.

“The key point of our Holy Week was Good Friday, we organised stations of the cross to the base, with the cross, and I could see tears in soldiers’ eyes because actually when we are in the desert, on the mission, without our family, without

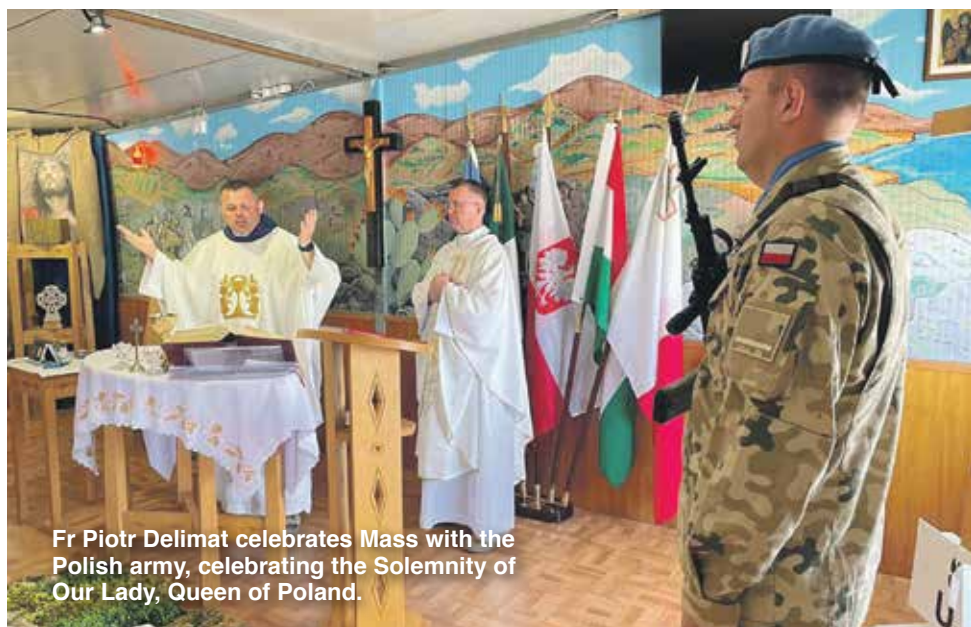
our own couch and slippers, we are here very exposed and start realising how powerful the message is of our faith.

“We feel homesick and actually that’s showed us that hope is very important in our life and it’s a very powerful hope we get from our faith especially in Easter time,” he adds.

Irish army

Fr Delimat says that Irish people don’t appreciate the importance of the role the Irish army plays in its overseas missions, especially in Lebanon. He adds that many Irish soldiers died in the country during their mission – 47 in total – and each month they go to a monument in a local village and hold a commemoration.

“Be proud of our Irish army if you are Irish. We are involved,



Fr Piotr Delimat celebrates Mass with the Polish army, celebrating the Solemnity of Our Lady, Queen of Poland.



Fr Piotr Delimat CF with local Maronite clergy in Ain Ebel chapel.



The Polish, Italian and Irish team of military chaplains in Lebanon Fr Włodzimierz Skoczen, Fr Marco Minin and Fr Piotr Delimat.

we are not living far away from the whole world, looking after our own business. No, the Irish should be very proud of the Defence Forces and what they're doing overseas," he implores.

"Because sometimes people ask what exactly is the army doing? They're not visible at all. But actually we're doing plenty of work which not visible but is very powerful. I think the chaplaincy is about keeping up morale and bringing Jesus Christ's message into their duties and into their work."

“When I was thinking about that, that’s exactly what chaplaincy staff are doing on the mission overseas”

Speaking further about an army chaplain's role, Fr Delimat says it is confidential and unique. He likens their work to what is currently happening in Ireland and around the world regarding the synodal process.

"We were talking a lot with my group here about the synod," he says, "They were talking about their experience in their parishes in Ireland. They would love to see the Church more involved in their

lives, more open and closer to them, something in which they can feel the presence.

"When I was thinking about that, that's exactly what chaplaincy staff are doing on the mission overseas. What I try to do – as much as possible – is to be part of their daily routine, going on patrols with them, visiting them during their duties, visiting them when they're at their post and talking to them.

"Sometimes the work can be difficult, very absorbing, like during the patrols, but sometimes work can be boring, like sitting at their post. It's a good place to have a one-to-one conversation, even about the weather, about how the trip is going, how they slept last night, something simple and actually that opens a new level of conversation.

"We're not bringing our own agenda. We're just meeting them where they are. It doesn't matter if they're practising, not practising, far away from Church or never even baptised, we are available for everyone."

Chaplain

Fr Delimat says the three things that are most important for an army chaplain is being visible, available and approachable.

He adds: "It's important they know padre is a friend,

he is one of the group and there's nothing embarrassing about going to a Mass or having a chat one-to-one with the chaplain."

“We’re quite confidential in our work so sometimes we’re ashamed nearly to say ‘yes, we are here and this is our work here and we are proud to be part’”

Having lived in Ireland for 15 years Fr Delimat admits that before he joined the army chaplaincy, he didn't know that it was "such a powerful ministry in the country".

"We're not as visible as chaplains who are working in the army for such a long time. We're quite confidential in our work so sometimes we're ashamed nearly to say 'yes, we are here and this is our work here and we are proud to be part of it'.

"We're not people who are ministering to them for a few days but we are actually coming here for the full six months, from the first day to the last day, we are spending all the time here with soldiers and are part of the group: I think that's quite unique."



Mass with Maronites in Abp Chapel where the Defence Forces marked Mother's Day.



Members of the Irish Defence Forces military staff take part in the Maronite's Sunday Mass in Lebanon.

Venerating the 'wonder-worker' in Wexford



The Conventual Franciscan Friary in Wexford saw a steady stream of people to honour St Anthony on his feastday June 13. The 13th Century friar is one of the most venerated saints in the Church and people brought lilies – long associated with the saint known as the 'wonder worker' during his life.



Out&About

A pathway to God



DUBLIN: A group of 27 men and women recently completed Pathways: Exploring Faith and Ministry, a two year one evening a week adult faith development course run by the Archdiocese of Dublin. They stand together after their recent graduation ceremony in DCU St Patrick's campus with Archbishop Dermot Farrell who presented the certificates, Sr Eileen Houlahan CHF Director of Pathways Programme, Fr Gareth Byrne, Vicar General and Moderator of the Diocesan Curia and Patricia Carroll Director of the Office for Ministry and Ministry. Photo: John McElroy.



DOWN: Seven new members of the Down and Connor School Cantorum at St Peter's Cathedral in Belfast are pictured with Fr Martin Graham Adm. and Mr James McConnell, cathedral director of music, after being admitted to the school, June 12.



CARLOW: The Communion class from Drumpea NS, who received First Holy Communion May 21 in St Laserians Church, Drumpea with Fr Pat Hughes PP and teachers.

INSHORT

Three Catholic schools to be given co-ed status

Three primary schools in Thurles Co. Tipperary are to become fully co-educational following a review conducted on behalf of the Patron, the Archbishop of the Diocese, Dr Kieran O'Reilly.

The change is to come into effect in the 2023/2024 school year.

The schools involved are Scoil Ailbhe, Scoil Angela and Presentation Primary. Scoil Ailbhe is to be granted full vertical

status meaning that the school will now enrol male and female students from junior infants to sixth class.

The next phase of the project will be a co-ordination of enrolment strategy between the primary schools in the area.

Initially an enrolment cap will be in place on the three effected schools during the transition.

This is designed to maintain stability in the teacher allocations. Each of the six primary schools in the parish has now been asked to provide details as to their enrolments to enable further detailed planning to take place.

Course shows how to become agent of change

A total of 65 people attended a Spiritan-run course entitled 'Mission Impossible? Becoming agents of change in today's world', which ran one evening a week for six weeks in May and June.

The course focused on the teachings of Pope Francis in helping people of faith to respond to the challenges we face today in the Church and in the world, and to promote the idea of missionary discipleship.

Each week had a presentation on a different theme before participants broke into small

groups to reflect on what they had heard. Then, after a break, there was feedback to a plenary session.

Held in Kimmage Manor parish hall, this was a joint venture between Spiritan Mission Ireland and the mission and ministry office of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

The themes explored were: everything in a missionary key, by Patricia Carroll; reaching out by Fr Brendan Carr CSSp; *Fratelli Tutti* by Amanda Dillon; What Scripture tells us about mission by Seán Goan; the ministry of catechist in the Church by Patricia Carroll; and accompanying people on the faith journey by Patricia Carroll and Seán Goan.



SCOTLAND: St Patrick's College Maynooth lecturer in philosophy Philip Gonzales, Amber Bowen (lecturer in philosophy, Redeemer University, Canada), Austin Kopack (PhD student, St Andrews, Scotland), Simon Oliver (professor of theology, Durham University), King-Ho Leung (senior research fellow, St Andrews, Scotland) are pictured hiking to Devil's Pulpit in Scotland. With the exception of the doctoral student all are part of the Widening Horizons in Philosophical Theology project run out of St Andrews and funded by the Templeton Religion Trust.



DUBLIN: The Loyola Institute in Trinity College Dublin held a colloquium on the idea of conscience, June 13. Pictured (front row, from left) are some of the speakers: Prof. Stefania Tutino, University of California (UCLA), Prof. Raphael Gallagher CSsR, Alphonsianum, Rome, Prof. Fáinche Ryan, TCD and Prof. Cornelius Casey CSsR, TCD; (back row) Fr Dan Baragry, Redemptorist provincial, Prof. Patrick Hannon, St Patrick's College, Maynooth and Prof. Desmond Ryan, TCD.



CLARE: Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan is pictured with silver jubilarian Fr Ignatius McCormack (centre right), principal of St Flannan's College, during a celebration of Fr McCormack's anniversary with other priests of the diocese.



WICKLOW: Fr Joseph Whelan is pictured with parishioners in Our Lady Queen of Peace, Bray, as he celebrates 30 years since his ordination.



KILDARE: Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty is pictured following the commission of funeral ministry teams in Naas parish, June 12.



CLARE: Mass celebrated recently at the Cliffs of Moher. Fr Martin Shanahan PP Inagh assisted by Fr Tom Ryan, Fr Joy from Ennis Cathedral and Deacon Leonard Cleary celebrated Mass and prayed for God's blessing on all who come to the Cliffs and for protection from the elements. Local Gardaí and the Doolin Coast Guard participated in the Mass.



CLARE: After Mass Deacon Leonard walked the Cliffs with the Blessed Sacrament as those gathered prayed together.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



ARMAGH: Fr Stefano Colleuri (centre) was ordained to the priesthood June 12 by Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin (left) in St Patrick's Cathedral. They are pictured outside the cathedral with Bishop Michael Ruter.



DUBLIN: Dublin diocese's Foundational Leadership Programme for young adults returned to in person meetings recently. They took part in a city pilgrim walk visiting seven churches, learning about the religious and social history in how faith continues to be expressed in modern times.



FRANCE: Friends Carmel, Mary and Marie, who were part of the Waterford and Lismore Pilgrimage to Lourdes June 8-13, are pictured during the pilgrimage.



DOWN: The youngest member of the congregation at Mass in St John's Parish, Falls Road, baby Emilee is pictured with her mother Marie-Thérèse Cullen.

ANTRIM

Eucharistic adoration takes place on Tuesdays from 8am to 7pm in St Anthony's Church, Craigy Hilly.

ARMAGH

Couples who celebrated their marriage in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tullysaran are invited to a specially dedicated Mass on Friday, June 24, at 7.30pm as the parish continues the celebrate the centenary of the church.

CAVAN

The blessing of the graves takes place Sunday, June 26, in Cullies at 1pm; July 3 in Killygarry at 9.30am; and August 7 in Butlersbridge 10.30am.

CLARE

On Friday June 24, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the Annual Global Rosary Relay for the Sanctification of Priests will take place. Bishop Fintan Monahan and Fr Joy will pray the mysteries of light of the Rosary from the Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul, Ennis, at 2.30pm.

CORK

The Ordination to the Priesthood of Ronan Sheehan will be celebrated in the Church of St John the Baptist Newcestown in the Parish of Murragh and Templemartin on Sunday, September 18 at 3pm.

DERRY

Fr Paul Farren will celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving at 7.30 pm on Wednesday, July 6 in St Eugene's Cathedral to mark the Silver Jubilee of his Ordination to Priesthood.

DONEGAL

The glorious mysteries of the Rosary will be prayed in St Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny, at 8.15pm, as part of the rosary relay for the sanctification of priests.

DUBLIN

Mass for the Order of Malta to mark the Solemnity of the Nativity of St John the Baptist takes place June 25 at 11am in St Mary's Church, Haddington Road.

Rally for Life 2022 takes place in Dublin on Saturday, July 2 at 2pm.

GALWAY

Galway Cathedral's annual series of international summer concerts, which have taken place online for the last two years, returns this July. Six concerts will take place on Thursday evenings at 8pm. The series finishes with a special platform concert featuring up-and-coming young musicians from the Galway area. Full details: recitals.galwaycathedral.ie

KERRY

The diocese of Kerry is recruiting for pilgrims to travel to Taizé this summer, young people between the ages of 18 and 30 years. The pilgrimage begins Sunday, June 26 and return on Sunday July 3. Cost of the pilgrimage is €600. For more information contact Tomás Kenny on 086 3683778 or tomaskenny@dioceseofkerry.ie

KILKENNY

Annual Mass will be celebrated in St Kieran's Cemetery on Hebron road at 7.30pm on Friday, June 24.

FERMANAGH

Blessing of the Graves at St Mary's Church, Magherarney after the Vigil Mass Saturday, June 25 and St Tierney's Church after the 10.30am.

LONGFORD

Cemetery Sunday in Longford will take place on June 26 at 1pm.

LOUTH

'A Prayer by Telephone' – The Sisters of Mercy, 34 Point Road, Dundalk welcome any person who may wish to request prayer, especially during these difficult times. All requests are confidential. Tel: 00353 429331602 9am–9pm daily.

MAYO

The next Latin Mass in the Extraordinary Form will be celebrated at Our Lady's Shrine Knock, on Sunday July 11, at 5.30pm

MONAGHAN

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje July 13 to July 20, led

by Fr Patrick McGinn, Monaghan and Marian Kane. Flying from Dublin to Mostar, 30 minutes from Medjugorje. Evening flight. €735 all-inclusive, Limited seats available. For more information and booking, contact 087 271 3260.

TYRONE

The annual healing and blessing service will take place on Thursday June 23, feast of St John the Baptist, at the Washingbay at 8pm. The sick, elderly and infirm will receive a healing anointment followed by a special blessing for caregivers. A cup of tea and chat will follow.

WATERFORD

Campa Mhuire Mhathair Catholic summer camps for primary school children take place in July. Music, action songs, arts and crafts, games, prayer and a whole lot of fun promised. Good News Faith Camp Tramore tales place July 4–7 in Glór na Mara NS. More info on www.tramoreparish.ie. St Declan's Summer Camp, Ardmore takes place July 18–21 in St Declan's NS. More info on <https://www.holyfamilymission.ie/campa-mhuire-mhathair/>

WESTMEATH

Prayer meeting in the Friary Church, Athlone every Monday night from 7.30 to 8.30.

WICKLOW

Cemetery Mass at Rathbran, Friday June 24 at 7.30pm.

WEXFORD

Ferns diocesan pilgrimage to Knock International Marian Shrine takes place July 3. Coaches from Ferns Diocese leave from Wexford Town Via Enniscorthy, departing Bride Street at 7am sharp. Pick up in Enniscorthy on Main Dublin Road outside Dunnes at approx. 7.20am. Pick up at Holy Trinity Church, Bunclody, approx. 7.45am. Breakfast and evening meal in the Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore. Cost is €60 per person, with discount for children. Contact details: Neil Foley 087 9740120, or Sean Kinsella at 053 912 3819

World Report

IN BRIEF

Italian bishops ease pandemic restrictions

● Italy's bishops updated their pandemic prevention guidelines, easing many restrictions as new cases of Covid-19 continue to decrease after large spikes in January and February and as the severity of the disease diminishes.

In a statement released June 15, the leadership of the Italian bishops' conference said that, since the Italian government has relaxed pandemic prevention measures as the summer period begins, they, too, were updating their "advice and suggestions" for churches in Italy.

Vaccination certificates had not been required to enter churches, but the conference said protocols such as wearing masks and sanitising hands were recommended and should continue to be observed, even though they are no longer mandatory.

Holy water fonts can be used again, and offertory processions can resume, the bishops said.

Nigerian Christians no longer view the US as a 'credible partner'

● More than a week after a massacre at a Catholic church in Nigeria on Pentecost, an advocate for persecuted Christians says that Nigerian Christians largely do not view the US government as a "credible partner" that will advocate on their behalf.

Stephen Rasche, an American lawyer who has worked and advocated extensively in persecuted Christian communities

in Iraq and Nigeria, said during a June 13 discussion with Kathryn Jean Lopez of the National Review Institute that Christians in Nigeria continue to joyfully and publicly live out their faith despite the many dangers they face.

"The whole country of Nigeria, and certainly the Christians, are just traumatised at this point," Mr Rasche said.

Franciscans in Germany elect openly gay priest as new superior

● The 300-member Franciscan province of St Elisabeth in Germany has elected as its new superior Fr Markus Fuhrmann, who a few weeks ago publicly came out as homosexual.

In an interview with *MK-Online*, the official news website of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, Fr Fuhrmann explained why he went public with his homosexuality.

"If I am gay myself, then I want to show that I can also be part of the Church in this ministry. That's important because it's not supposed to be like that in the Church. Unfortunately, there is too much institutional hypocrisy in our Church," he said.

Class action authorised against Canadian diocese

● A Canadian Superior Court judge authorised the filing of a class action suit related to sex abuse cases against the Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec.

Judge Chantal Corriveau authorised the class action against the diocese on behalf of "all persons, as well as their heirs and assigns, who were sexually assaulted by a member of the clergy, an employee or a volunteer, lay or religious, who was under his responsibility" or that of the bishops who directed him "during the period between Jan. 1, 1940, and the

judgment to be rendered."

One day later, June 10, eight victims had already signed up for the class action, according to lawyers from Arsenault Dufresne Wee Avocats.

All incidents took place in a rectory or a parish church under the jurisdiction of the diocese, and all of them occurred before 1975, more than 45 years ago.

Only one case involved the beadle or sexton involved, a job usually held by a layman, reported *Présence info*.

Nigeria massacre: Murdered Nigerians found suffering 'at foot of cross'

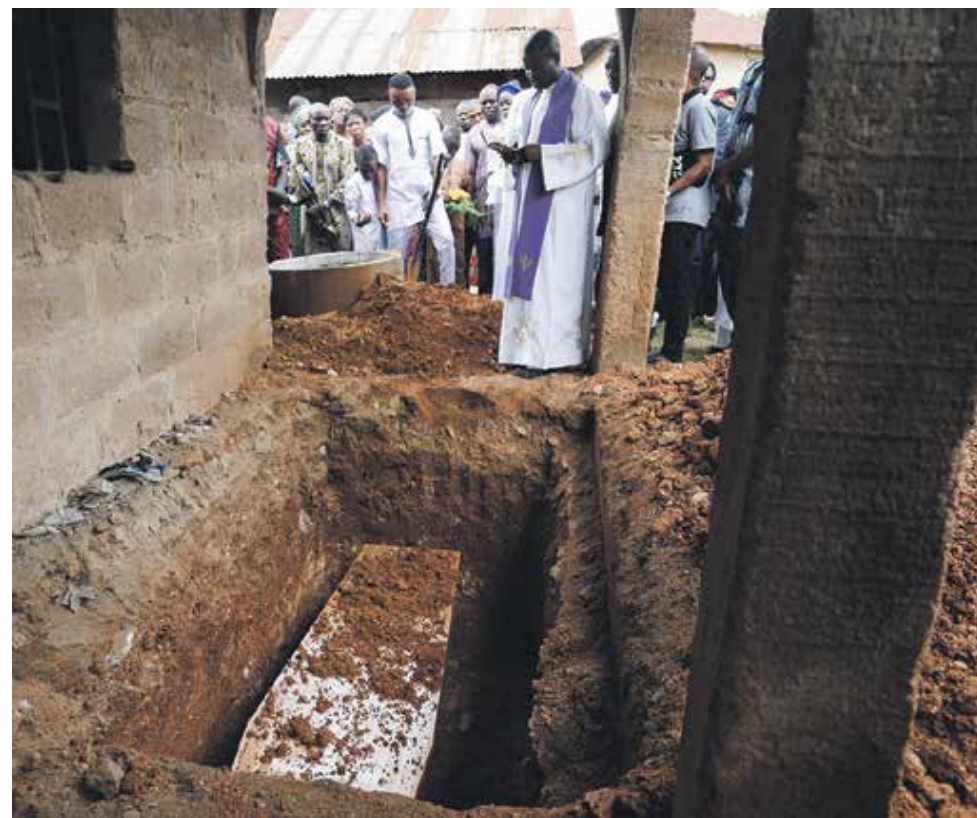
The Catholics attending Mass at St Francis Xavier Church on Pentecost did not know how much it would cost to participate in the suffering of Jesus, said Bishop Emmanuel Badejo of Oyo.

"How much do we understand when he says to us, 'The time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is doing a holy service to God,'" Bishop Badejo said, quoting from the Gospel of St John at the June 17 funeral Mass for many of the victims of the massacre at the church. "We had no idea perhaps till now what extreme form that could take."

Hundreds gathered for the funeral and burial of many of the victims – at least 50 were killed when gunmen spent 20-25 minutes in the church June 5. Among those at the Mass in the St Francis parish hall were Bishop Jude Arogundade of Ondo, the diocese in which Owo is located, as well as Ondo Gov. Arakunrin Akeredolu.

Bishop Badejo named some of those killed in the massacre: Bridget Ozulumba, 85; Chukwuemeka Emmanuel Njoku, 2; and Mathilda Ogungbade, 3.

"None of these did anything wrong, except that they came to worship God at the foot of the cross and altar on that day," said Bishop Badejo. "There, sudden death was inflicted upon them, and deep sorrow upon their dear ones left behind. These dear ones



A priest prays over a casket during a burial outside St Francis Xavier Church in Owo, Nigeria, June 17, 2022. Photo: CNS.

died, and many others met with trouble while at the foot of the cross."

"People of God, here before us lies Nigeria," the bishop said, noting that the dead were not alone.

"Lying down here with them are the joys and hopes and aspirations of their families and loved ones, of the Church of God, of the various communities from where they come, and indeed, of this country, Nigeria. The circum-

stances of their death are by all standards of sane humanity, most illogical, irrational and unacceptable. Even the ones who are maimed and wounded themselves, wherever they are, represent Nigeria with all her self-inflicted wounds, bruised, brutalised and violated."

"Our Christian faith, strong as it is, is thoroughly tested when we remember that the massacre we have just faced is not an isolated case in our

country, and that we see little ... to indicate that it might be the last. It has been a long, bloody list, always growing over the last 30-odd years," he said, reciting a litany of deaths beginning with riots in 1987 in northern Nigeria and ongoing kidnappings today.

As a group and individually, Nigerian bishops repeatedly have criticised government officials for doing nothing to stem the nation's increasing violence and insecurity.

Chaplains help Ukrainian soldiers cope with war

As Russia's war in Ukraine drags on and joint funerals are held for the soldiers who died, Catholic military chaplains say they still see faith, hope and humanity in the soldiers with whom they minister.

"It is a very special vocation to be a man of God among those who are called to defend, to protect; it's very challenging, but it's a great vocation to be a defender of humanity dressed in a military uniform, especially in times of war," said Jesuit Fr Andriy Zelinsky, coordinator of chaplains for the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

"The mission of military chaplains is to stay nearby," he told Catholic News Service in June. "A human being in a military uniform needs a shoulder to lean on, needs ears to be heard, needs the heart to be open to his or her fears, his or her uncertainties. The voice of the military chaplain in such a situation sounds like the words of Christ."

Lubomyr, a military instructor who gave only his first name, said the Ukrainian army is "not teaching our soldiers to be killing machines. We don't go there to kill because we want to or love to. No,"

the army is fighting because the Russians "came to our house. They threaten our women, our children. They capture our villages, our cities."

A veteran who fought Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014, Lubomyr said his country really was not prepared for the large-scale Russian war on his country. In fact, "if it weren't for volunteers and chaplains, to be honest, our soldiers would have been hungry at the beginning of the war, and they wouldn't have weapons".

UK government sanctions head of Russian Orthodox Church

The UK government announced June 16 that it is imposing sanctions on the head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office said in a June 16 statement that Patriarch Kirill of

Moscow and All Russia was being "sanctioned for his support and endorsement of Putin's war".

The announcement came after European Union member states failed to agree on whether Patriarch Kirill

should face sanctions after his name was proposed by the European Commission, the executive branch of the EU. Hungary reportedly objected to his inclusion.

The UK decision was welcomed by Andrii Yurash,

Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See.

Writing on Twitter, he said that the Russian Orthodox Church and its leaders had to pay the "same price as Putin for killing thousands and destroying Ukraine".



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

The body of Christ on the move



Catholic faithful dressed in traditional clothes take part in the annual Corpus Christi procession in Crostwitz, Germany, June 16. Photo: CNS

Peter's Pence donations stable in 2021, Vatican says

Donations to the annual Peter's Pence collection, which supports the work of the Roman Curia and funds the charitable activity of the Pope, held steady in 2021, but the total still was significantly lower than in 2018, the Vatican said.

Peter's Pence donations and income from investments totalled €46.9 million in 2021, while the expenses – grants and the money used to support the work of the Curia – totalled €65.3 million, drawing on funds set aside from previous years, said the annual report published June 16 by the Vatican.

The Vatican Secretariat for the Economy previously

reported Peter's Pence brought in €44 million in 2020. The collection had reached €74 million in 2018 before starting a decline.

Most of the income – more than 65% – is sent in by dioceses from the Peter's Pence collection held annually on or around the feast of Sts Peter and Paul, June 29. Contributions also come from foundations, private donors and religious orders.

Some €13 million – just under 30% of the money sent to the Vatican in 2021 – came from dioceses and individuals in the United States, the Vatican said. Italian dioceses and individuals provided just

over 11% of the donations, and those in Germany provided 5.2%. Rounding out the top five, dioceses and individuals in South Korea contributed 3.2% of the total, and those in France accounted for 2.7% of the collection.

As for the dispersal of funds, the Vatican said €55.5 million was used “to support the activities promoted by the Holy See in carrying out the Holy Father's apostolic mission,” including the work of the Roman Curia and the Vatican nunciatures, or embassies, around the world. The Peter's Pence contribution covered only 23% of those expenditures.

Close to €10 million went to

“projects of direct assistance to those most in need,” the Vatican said. Almost half of those funds went to what the Vatican classified as “social projects,” including, for example, a project in the Philippines to end the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children online.

About 32% of the funds were used to support “the evangelising presence of churches in need,” including building a dormitory for a seminary in Indonesia. And close to 20% was given to dioceses in need of help in building churches and other facilities, including the continuing construction of the cathedral of the Diocese of Moroto, Uganda.

White House condemns pro-abortion violence after ‘Jane’s Revenge’ threats

The words “Jane’s Revenge” have been a calling card in recent incidents of vandalism of pro-life pregnancy centres across the country, but now the name has popped up again at the bottom of a new “communique” that was released threatening “open season” on pro-life clinics.

The White House has condemned the threat June 15, according to *The Daily Wire*.

White House Assistant Press Secretary Alexandra LaManna told *The Daily Wire* that “Violence and destruction of property have no place in our country under

any circumstances, and the President denounces this”.

“We should all agree that actions like this are completely unacceptable regardless of our politics,” she said.

The statement threatening pro-life pregnancy centres was posted on abolitionmedia.noblogs.org and is dated June 14.

“You have seen that we are real, and that we are not merely pushing empty words. As we said: we are not one group but many,” the alleged Jane’s Revenge post says.

In the communique, “Jane’s Revenge” claims responsibility for attacks in “Madison WI, Ft. Collins CO, Reiserstown MA, Olympia WA, Des Moines IA, Lynwood WA, Washington DC, Ashville NC, Buffalo NY, Hollywood FL, Vancouver WA, Frederick MA, Denton TX, Gresham OR, Eugene OR, Portland OR,” and more.

It remains an open question if Jane’s Revenge is an organised group, or merely a call to action via copycat attacks on pro-life centres.



Cardinal-designate calls liturgical tensions a ‘tragedy’

● Cardinal-designate Arthur Roche, prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, described as a “tragedy” the tensions within the Latin rite of the Catholic Church over the way the Mass is celebrated.

In a wide-ranging interview broadcast June 16 by Vatican News, the cardinal-designate said the tensions are “partly” due to having had two versions of the Roman Missal – those from before and after the Second Vatican Council – in use in the Church at the same time.

“There’s never been a controversy about the liturgy in the way that we’re experiencing it today, partly because there has never before been two versions of the Roman Missal – the Roman Missal from 1962 and then the Roman Missal from 1970, which was produced with the full force of the Second Vatican Council behind it and promulgated by Pope St Paul VI,” Cardinal-designate Roche said.

“It’s a tragedy that there is this controversy today, the so-called ‘battles’ over liturgy,” he said, “because the Eucharist is, by its nature, the Sacrament that unites the entire Church.”

Vatican watchdog sees rise in suspicious activity reports

● The Vatican’s financial watchdog authority reported June 13 that it received 104 suspicious activity reports in 2021, an increase from the previous year.

In a 35-page annual report, released on June 13, the Supervisory and Financial Information Authority (ASIF) said that it submitted 21 reports to the Vatican’s Promoter of Justice (prosecutor), the highest number in the past five years.

The watchdog authority is responsible for financial intelligence, as well as combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It supervises the Institute for the Works of Religion (the IOR or “Vatican bank”).

In its report, it said: “With regard to financial intelligence activities, in

2021 ASIF’s Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) received 104 reports of suspicious activity, 98 of which from the obliged entity [IOR], 5 from Vatican authorities, and 1 from a non-profit organisation. No reports were received that were directly or indirectly linked to the financing of terrorism.

“ASIF submitted 21 reports to the Office of the Promoter of Justice, the highest number recorded in the last five years; of these, 3 were first reports and 18 were supplemental reports.”

ASIF reported last year that it received 89 suspicious activity reports in 2020, 16 of which it forwarded to the Promoter of Justice for possible prosecution.

In 2019, it received 95 reports, compared to 83 in 2018, and 150 in 2017.

US Jesuit named rector of Gregorian University in Rome

● Pope Francis has named a US Jesuit, Fr Mark Lewis, to be the next rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

Fr Lewis, 62, has taught Church history at the Jesuit-run university since 2017 and has served as academic vice rector since 2019. He will take up his new post September 1.

Born in Miami November 5, 1959, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1980 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1991.

He studied history at the Jesuits’ Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, earned a master’s degree in philosophy from St Louis University, a master’s of divinity and a master’s in historical theology from Regis College in Toronto and his doctorate in history from the University of Toronto.



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

Even before Pope Francis stages his latest consistory on August 27, inducting 20 new members into the Catholic Church's most exclusive club, the event has managed to make news – in this case, not so much for the new cardinals who'll be there, but the one erstwhile cardinal-designate who won't.

This past Thursday, the bishops' conference of Belgium announced that the 80-year-old former Bishop of Ghent, Lucas Van Looy, had obtained permission from Pope Francis to refuse his appointment as a cardinal, which the Pontiff had announced during his traditional Sunday Regina Caeli address on May 29.

The reason for the withdrawal is that Van Looy's record on the clerical abuse scandals has come under fire, and, inevitably, making him a cardinal therefore would be seen as insensitive and offensive to abuse survivors.

There are a handful of unanswered questions about the story, but the biggest take-away is this: Whether he meant to or not, Pope Francis has done a favour to the cardinals who will elect his successor, whenever that moment may come, by reminding them that whoever they choose must have a clean bill of health vis-à-vis the abuse scandals, or the next papacy will begin under a cloud that may never abate.

Van Looy himself, we should be clear, was never a serious candidate for the top job. For one thing, he was among the "honorary" picks by Pope Francis, meaning a cardinal already over the age of 80 and thus ineligible to take part in the next conclave.

“Van Looy is not the only cardinal-designate in this latest crop to have a debated past”

However, if even a relatively symbolic appointment can generate such a ferocious reaction, just think what the blowback would be if the honour were infinitely greater, i.e., the papacy itself.

To briefly recap the bill of indictment against Van Looy, who was appointed to Ghent in 2004 and resigned in 2019, he's accused of several failures on abuse cases.

In 2005, Van Looy reportedly paid \$25,000 to a victim of a Belgian priest named Fr Omer Verbeke but did not notify civil authorities of the fact that Fr Verbeke continued to run an orphanage in Rwanda until 2014, when the accusations against him became public.

In 2007, Van Looy assigned another unnamed Belgian priest who'd been found guilty of sexually assault-

Intentional or not, Pope offers valuable conclave tip on abuse baggage



A cardinal holds his biretta as Pope Francis celebrates Mass with new cardinals in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in this November 29, 2020 file photo. Photo CNS

“Whether he meant to or not, Pope Francis has done a favour to the cardinals who will elect his successor”

ing a minor in 1994 to a new parish. When the case was reported by local media in 2010 Van Looy defended the decision: “After much deliberation, we decided that we could give him another chance,” Van Looy said. “There were also no new allegations. He has made mistakes, but they are in the past.”

Not reported

In 2010, testifying before a Belgian parliamentary committee on sexual abuse, Van Looy acknowledged that he had not reported six complaints against priests to civil authorities, saying their cases seemed “less pressing” because they had all retired. It's not clear whether Van Looy forwarded those complaints to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as he was obliged to do under the terms of a 2001 *motu proprio* from Pope John Paul II.

In 2013, Van Looy, who's also a member of the Salesian religious order, was aware of a decision to allow another Belgian priest named Fr Luk Delft to accept an appointment in the Central African Republic with the global Catholic charity Caritas, despite the fact that Fr Delft had been convicted in Belgium the year before on two counts of child abuse and possessing child pornography. In

the CAR, Fr Delft was accused of two additional acts of abuse.

All this is on top of the fact that critics say Van Looy favoured two controversial groups within the Church in Belgium, *Het Werk* (“The Work”) and *Blauwe Zusters* (“Blue Sisters”), both of which have been accused of abuses of conscience and authority.

Presumably, none of this was why Francis chose to bestow a red hat on Van Looy, who was tapped by the Pope to a leadership role in Caritas in 2015 and was also named one of the Pope's personal delegates to a 2018 Synod of Bishops on Youth. Most likely, Francis wanted to offer a sort of “thank you” to Van Looy for those past services.

Still, the troubling part of the story is that everything noted above about Van Looy's record on the abuse crisis was available to anyone with access to Google; indeed, the Fr Delft story was given prominent coverage by CNN in 2019 under the headline, “The case of the predator priest.”

Van Looy is not the only cardinal-designate in this latest crop to have a debated past.

Bishop Oscar Cantoni of Como in northern Italy also has drawn criticism for his role in a pre-seminary sponsored by the Como diocese, previously located on Vatican grounds

until it was moved by Pope Francis, in which abuse allegedly occurred. Bishop Cantoni was summoned to testify before a Vatican tribunal in February 2021 in the case, among other things about his role in ordaining one of the alleged (but eventually acquitted) abusers to the priesthood.

“The 80-year-old former Bishop of Ghent, Lucas Van Looy, had obtained permission from Pope Francis to refuse his appointment as a cardinal”

The court found that while there was clearly a sexualised atmosphere in the pre-seminary, it wasn't proven the behaviour at issue constituted abuse. For his part, Bishop Cantoni conceded that he had received negative reports about the future priest between 2006 and 2012, but he described them merely as evidence of a “transitory homosexual tendency linked to adolescence”.

Francis obviously is aware of that episode, since the trial unfolded with his permission and inside the Vatican itself.

Naturally, one presumes Francis had information which led him to decide to make Van Looy and Bishop Cantoni cardinals, despite the question marks surrounding both men.

Reminder

However, the episode nevertheless offers a reminder that if a new cardinal's reputation can be damaged by association with those scandals, to the point where one of them actually feels compelled to back out, even though his intended position was almost entirely symbolic – well, as the Italians would say, *magari un papa!*

Imagine, in other words, if it were the new pope.

Of course, shortly after Francis was elected there was just such a brief-lived attempt to link him to a couple of mishandled abuse cases during his time in Argentina, but that effort fell apart when it became clear the offending priests weren't from Buenos Aires and were never under then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio's direct authority. Much like the similar attempt to sully the new Pope's record on Argentina's “Dirty War,” critical examination largely dispelled the early doubts.

Memo, therefore, to the 133 cardinal-electors who will be eligible to vote in the next election after August 27: You might want to be sure that any doubts about whomever you may be considering can be similarly resolved, because the last thing the Church probably needs is a Van Looy-esque scenario on an infinitely larger scale.

War and Vatican II – Pope shares insights



Cindy Wooden

Pope Francis gave the editors of 10 Jesuit magazines a glimpse into how he makes decisions, background on one of his more controversial comments about the war in Ukraine and insight into what he sees as the refusal of some bishops to accept the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

Meeting in May with the editors of the European magazines, the Pope responded to six questions about his concerns for the Catholic Church and the world. The magazines published a transcript of their conversation June 14.

Two weeks before meeting the editors, Pope Francis had created an uproar when an Italian newspaper quoted him as wondering if Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his war on Ukraine because he felt “NATO’s barking at Russia’s door”. Numerous news outlets concluded the Pope thought NATO was at least partly to blame for the war.

Pope Francis told the editors that the quote came from a head of state who visited “a couple of months before the war”.

Concerned

“He told me that he was very concerned about the way NATO was moving. I asked him why, and he said, ‘They are barking at the gates of Russia. They do not understand that the Russians are imperialists and will allow no foreign power to approach them.’ He concluded, ‘The situation could lead to war.’ This was his opinion,” the Pope said. “That head of state was able to read the signs of what was taking place.”

“I am simply against reducing complexity to the distinction between good guys and bad guys without reasoning about roots and interests, which are very complex”

To understand what is happening and to stop the war, he said, “we have to move away from the normal pattern of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ – Little Red Riding Hood was good and the wolf was the bad guy. Here there are no meta-physical good guys and bad guys, in an abstract sense. Something global is emerging, with elements that are very much intertwined.

“Someone may say to me at this point: So, you are pro-Putin! No, I am not,” the Pope said. “It would be simplistic and wrong to say such a thing. I am simply against reducing complexity to



Pope Francis meets with the editors of 10 European Jesuit magazines and Fr Arturo Sosa, superior general of the Jesuits, May 19, 2022, in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

the distinction between good guys and bad guys without reasoning about roots and interests, which are very complex. While we see the ferocity, the cruelty of Russian troops, we must not forget the real problems if we want them to be solved.”

Cruelty

Against that cruelty, he said, the world has witnessed “the heroism of the Ukrainian people”, but everyone must remember that “what is before our eyes is a situation of world war, global interests, arms sales and geopolitical appropriation, which is martyring a heroic people”.

Pope Francis added that while he and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, who supports Putin, cancelled a meeting in Lebanon planned for mid-June, he hopes to meet the patriarch at the World Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan September 14-15 and “speak a little with him as a pastor”.

A substantial portion of the Pope’s discussion with the Jesuit editors focused on signs of new life in the Catholic Church and signs of some people being stuck in the distant past.

“The council that some pastors remember best is that of Trent” in the 1500s, the Pope said, adding that he was not joking. “What I’m saying is not nonsense.”

“Restorationism has come to gag the (Second Vatican) Council,” he said. “The number of groups of ‘restorers’ – for example, in the United States there are many – is significant” and shows how the teaching and reform of Vatican II “has not yet been accepted”.

Struggles to accept the council and to live the Faith concretely, in new and creative ways, have been evident for decades, the Pope said, illustrating his point by talking about what he observed within the Society of Jesus in the 1970s when Jesuit Fr Pedro Arrupe was superior general.

Aggressive

“A Jesuit from the province of Loyola (in Spain) was particularly aggressive toward Fr Arrupe. He was sent to various places and even to Argentina, and always made trouble,” the Pope said. “He once said to me: ‘You are someone who understands nothing. But the real culprits are Fr Arrupe

and Fr (Jean-Yves) Calvez. The happiest day of my life will be when I see them hanging from the gallows in St Peter’s Square.”

“Why am I telling you this story?” the Pope continued. “To make you understand what the post-conciliar period was like. This is happening again, especially with the traditionalists. That is why it is important to save these figures who defended the council and fidelity to the Pope.”

But, the Pope said, not everything goes.

“To be able to discern, I am waiting until there is no pressure. The fact that there are different points of view is fine”

Jesuit Fr Stefan Kiechle, editor of the German *Stimmen der Zeit*, asked about the Pope’s view of Germany’s Synodal Path, which some critics have claimed would transform the Church into a Protestant denomination.

Pope Francis said he told Bishop Georg Bätzing, president

of the German bishops’ conference, “In Germany there is a very good Evangelical Church. We don’t need two”.

“The problem arises when the Synodal Path comes from the intellectual, theological elites, and is much influenced by external pressures,” the Pope said. However, he also acknowledged “there are some dioceses where the synodal way is being developed with the Faithful, with the people, slowly”.

Tensions

Fr Kiechle also asked about ongoing tensions over the handling of abuse cases and over finances in the Archdiocese of Cologne and regarding its head, Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki.

“When the situation was very turbulent, I asked the archbishop to go away for six months, so that things would calm down and I could see clearly. Because when the waters are rough you cannot see clearly,” the Pope said. When the cardinal returned to the archdiocese in early March, “I asked him to write a letter of resignation”, but left him in office while seeing how the situation evolves.

“What is happening is that there are a lot of pressure groups, and under pressure it is not possible to discern,” Pope Francis said. “To be able to discern, I am waiting until there is no pressure. The fact that there are different points of view is fine. The problem is when there is pressure. That does not help.”

“The Pope responded to six questions about his concerns for the Catholic Church and the world. The magazines published a transcript of their conversation June 14”

Letters

Letter of the week

Is the homophobia charge against the Church justified?

Dear Editor, So the Church needs to change with regard to its obvious discrimination towards LGBT people? This charge is levelled against the Church without any specificity about the nature of this discrimination. So is this charge of a 'homophobic' Church justified? Is it not Church teaching that the homosexual person should be accepted with

love and all forms of unjust discrimination should be avoided? Are homosexual people banned from Mass or the Sacrament of Penance? Of course not!

There is no church that seeks to know one's sexual preference upon entering their sacred building. The only thing a homosexual person is not granted by the Catholic Church is a sacramental

union. This is simply to do with the Church's theological understanding of matrimony and procreation. It is something not available to such couples. Some perspective would go a long way in this discussion.

*Yours etc.,
Aidan Ryle,
Tralee, Co. Kerry*

Verification needed to protect truth during war

Dear Editor, Regarding the beatification of the war time nuns murdered by Soviet soldiers during the liberation of Poland – long overdue I might add – the Archbishop of Wroclaw likened their ordeal to the present situation in Ukraine by Russian forces and their alleged raping of women and children.

Those reports of rape were made by the Ukrainian commissioner for human rights one Lyudmila Denisov, who has been recently dismissed by the Ukrainian parliament for inventing all these allegations of [mass] rape by the Russian forces.

Her excuse was she did it to get the West to supply even more weapons. Yet those false reports were widely circulated by the mass media and in the archbishop's case accepted as gospel truth. War and lies go hand in hand and without on the ground independent verification the truth is often manipulated by who ever controls the narrative.

*Yours etc.,
John-Patrick Bell
Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim*



Think outside the box to appreciate obligation to poor

Dear Editor, I have great respect for David Quinn but feel that a statement in his article [*The Irish Catholic* – June 2, 2022] is not consistent with Catholic social teaching; neither is it consistent with evangelical Christianity as opposed to the cultural Christianity that we all take for granted.

Mr Quinn said: "The Church does not oppose us acquiring goods, trying to improve our living standards, or even becoming rich, so long as we are not possessed, so to speak, by our possessions." This shows little concern for the 700 million who live in extreme poverty,

surviving on less than \$1.90 a day – or the 6 million children who die annually from malnutrition before their fifth birthday.

St Pope Paul VI said in *Popolorum Progressio*: "He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 Jn 3.17).

As St Ambrose put it: "You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich." No one may

appropriate surplus goods solely for his own private use when others lack the bare necessities of life.

The Gandhi principal says it all: If we are to love our neighbour as our self, we are required to "live simply [and share generously] so that other may simply live".

We rich of the western world need to radically think outside the box if we are to appreciate our Christian/humanitarian obligation to the poor.

*Yours etc.,
Maureen Reilly
Kenmare, Co. Kerry*

Anti-Irish bias and attitudes during the famine

Dear Editor, Thank you for Felix M. Larkin's review of William H. A. Williams's book: *Ireland's Great Famine* [*The Irish Catholic* – May 26, 2022].

I think Williams should have examined the ideology that underpinned the attitudes of the political class in London. Their anti-Irish bias considered the Irish as somehow less than human. Their favourite humorous magazine, *Punch*, clearly reflected this.

Their anti-Catholic attitude was also a factor. It was only 17 years

earlier, in 1828, that the House of Commons granted Catholic emancipation to the whole empire.

Political decisions, then and now, spring from the ideology prevailing among the people who form and influence any government.

Had famine conditions occurred in, say, Yorkshire or Cornwall, I am sure the government of the day would have acted quickly and effectively.

*Yours etc.,
Dermot Carthy
Clontarf, Dublin 3*

Placing just one nation's flag in the sanctuary

Dear Editor, There is a question in my mind about the placement of a flag or the colours of one country only, in the sanctuary or close to the altar.

If one thinks about it deeply, it channels thoughts, prayers and worship to that one cause.

We are a universal Church. Nigerian Catholics were slaughtered in a church on Pentecost

Sunday; Syrians are facing starvation; Tigray in North Ethiopia is in the grip of a war; Christians are dying for their Faith in many different countries of the world, but I have not heard a prayer recently for any of these situations.

And what of the Church's role in going after a lost sheep?

*Yours etc.,
Judith Leonard
Raheny, Dublin*

facebook community

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

Dublin synod sees calls for women priests

Said the boomers who for 40 years did a good job destroying the Church in Ireland. Without a doubt the same filled this survey. Let's let the Church of boomers pass away so we can restore the truth faith. – **Guillaume Rouy**

Let's start by praying for vocations to the priesthood. Parents to pray for their sons and daughters to follow their vocation including priesthood or religious life. Let's stop looking at alternatives. Our young people need to hear God's voice in this busy world. To help them hear that call and say yes to serve the Lord! – **Connor Duncan**

No please. Listen to needs of your priests and make life easier for them. Then you will get vocations. – **Deirdre Quinn**

I follow exclusively the synodal process for the universal Church in line with the teaching of the Church and the Holy Father Pope Francis! Is it not enough that the Catholic Church in Germany is already transferring into a Protestant one? I suffer as a believer by these heresies and ideologies. Stop hurting God our father through these deep sins. The Catholic Church is timeless and we don't need to follow the mainstream. The devil is trying us, don't u recognise this? I am from Germany and I beg you turn back to God and away from heresies and ideologies! I can only pray. – **Bella Sp**

Yes, there is no reason why a woman can not be a priest. The canon law says the ordination of women is null and void, but no explanation whatsoever. Remember in the olden days machismo was practiced in the Jewish culture. The first prayer of a Jewish man "Thanks be to God, I am a man". Jesus had female disciples like Mary Magdalene. Many women in the Bible are not even mentioned by name, just because they were women. The woman who suffered from haemorrhage for 12 years, the Syrophenician woman, the woman Elijah visited etc. I concur with the German bishops, yes, women can be priests too. – **Kim Terry**

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

Protecting threatened Catholic ethos in south

Dear Editor, 'Schools express worry over UN sex-ed imposition' [*The Irish Catholic* – June 9, 2022] is how Jason Osborne's news item reveals the Catholic Schools Trustees' Council of Northern Ireland has expressed concerns at the threat to the ethos of Catholic schools in that jurisdiction. Thanks to northern bishops for this clear stance.

Catholic schools in the Republic face a similar threat from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's proposed compulsory RSE/SPHE curriculum. For reasons best known to Minister Foley parent representation from the 340 school membership of Catholic Secondary Schools Parents Association has been excluded from that body. Does anybody know what our bishops' Catholic Education Partnership is doing to protect Catholic ethos?

*Yours etc.,
Alan Whelan, Vice President CSSPA
Killarney, Co Kerry*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

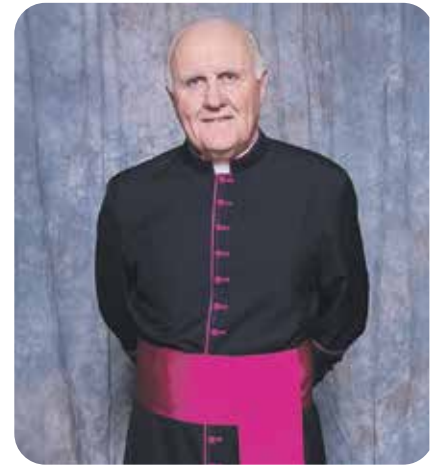
Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 23, 2022

Personal Profile

50 years of service during radical change

Page 32



Talking through disagreement as Catholics

I'm not sure if it's always been like this, but discussions today about many, many topics – be it religion, politics, or otherwise – are more often fraught, tense and highly-strung than not. In my experience, conversations about these subjects held in person and virtually, perhaps especially virtually, devolve into mud-slinging competitions in which people try to smear or tarnish their opponent, rather than convincingly argue their own point of view.

The added difficulty is that as Catholics, we're often obliged to participate in those conversations that are most likely to grow hot. The Church, the existence of God and Catholic positions on social



Insult and bitterness are all the rage in modern discussions about the deep topics, but as Catholics we must model a different way, writes Jason Osborne

issues such as being pro-life or against same-sex marriage are those most likely to boil over and explode into ugly conflict in an increasingly secular world. Advocating for God, the Church and its various social positions in the public square, therefore, is going to get you called many names and likely put you square in the firing line. It can be all too tempting to be

defensive about your views, or to go on the offensive against the other person rather than their views, when the same is being done by your opponent. This is the path taken by most who engage in any sort of societal conversation today, but as Catholics we cannot afford to, as much as we might like to.

As Jesus said, "If you were of the world, the world would love

its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19). However, he exhorted us "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:43-44).

These two principles guide my engagement with those I disagree with both on- and off-line. Jesus advised us to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16), so it would be foolish not to acknowledge that the court of public opinion is often going to be set against us. At the same time, though, we cannot allow ourselves

to be radicalised and set against the world as viciously as it's sometimes set against us.

Today we're going to have a look at some of the rules of thumb to adhere to when engaging in debate with those we might vehemently disagree with. These are the points I try to keep at the forefront of my mind as I speak with those proving a little difficult and I think they've served me well so far. Take from that what you will!

Know your topic

Whether it's the existence of God you're debating with an atheist, the Church's stance on the hot topics of the day such as gay marriage,

» Continued on Page 31

Family News



AND EVENTS

NASA TO RECRUIT SCIENTISTS FOR UFO HUNT

NASA is officially joining the hunt for UFOs. The US space agency has announced a new study that will recruit leading scientists to examine unidentified aerial phenomena – a subject that has long fascinated the public and recently gained high-level attention from Congress in the US.

The project will begin early autumn and will last around nine months, focusing on identifying available data, how to gather more data in future, and how NASA can analyse the findings to try to develop scientific understanding.

“Over the decades, NASA has answered the call to tackle some of the most perplexing mysteries we know of, and this is no different,” Daniel Evans, the NASA scientist responsible for coordinating the study, told reporters.

While NASA probes and rovers scour the solar system for the fossils of ancient microbes, and its astronomers look for so-called “techno-signatures” on distant planets for signs of intelligent civilisations, this is the first time the agency will investigate unexplained phenomena in Earth’s skies.

ICONIC HONG KONG FLOATING RESTAURANT TOWED AWAY

Hong Kong’s Jumbo Floating Restaurant, an iconic but ageing tourist attraction that featured in multiple Cantonese and Hollywood films, was towed out of the city after years of revitalisation efforts went nowhere.

The buoyant behemoth, which at 76 metres long could house 2,300 diners, set out shortly before noon from the southern Hong Kong Island typhoon shelter where it has sat for nearly half a century.

Designed like a Chinese imperial palace and once considered a must-see landmark, the restaurant drew visitors from Queen Elizabeth II to Tom Cruise, and featured in several films – including Steven Soderbergh’s ‘Contagion’, about a deadly global pandemic.

The lavish restaurant’s operators cited the Covid-19 pandemic as the reason for finally closing its doors in March 2020, after around a decade of financial woes.

ANCIENT DNA SOLVES MYSTERY OVER BLACK DEATH ORIGIN

Ancient DNA from bubonic plague victims buried in cemeteries on the old Silk Road trade route in central Asia has helped solve an enduring mystery, pinpointing an area in northern Kyrgyzstan as the launching point for the Black Death that killed tens of millions of people in the mid-14th century.

Researchers said they retrieved ancient DNA traces of the Yersinia pestis plague bacterium from the teeth of three women buried in a medieval Nestorian Christian community in the Chu Valley near Lake Issyk Kul in the foothills of the Tian Shan mountains who perished in 1338-1339.

The earliest deaths documented elsewhere in the pandemic were in 1346.

Reconstructing the pathogen’s genome showed that this strain not only gave rise to the one that caused the Black Death that ravaged Europe, Asia, the Middle East and north Africa but also to most plague strains existing today.

Cases, causes and symptoms of monkeypox



One of the newest viruses to hit our shores (Monkeypox) arrived to Ireland this May and to date has infected about one dozen people. First recognised in 1958 when two outbreaks of a pox-like disease affected monkeys kept for research, the virus has remained endemic to Africa. In fact, the first human case was only recorded in 1970 in the Congo. Contrary to what its name suggests, the virus is usually carried by rodent species and indeed the WHO is planning to rename it.

“Symptoms typically occur 6-13 days after catching the virus and manifest initially with a high fever followed by swollen glands, headaches and fatigue”

To date more than 1,600 people have been infected worldwide, but what makes this outbreak different is that most have no history of travel to Africa. All of the cases reported so far have been due to the milder West African type which results in a self limiting illness in the vast majority of cases. However, there is potential for severe disease in children and in those with weak immune systems. Fortunately, close contact is required to pass it on and so the risk of community spread is very low.

Symptoms typically occur 6-13 days after catching the virus and manifest initially with a high fever followed by swollen glands, headaches and fatigue. About 1-3 days later, an itchy rash emerges on the

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



face, palms of hand and soles of feet and sometimes other areas, which develops into blisters and then dry scabs. From about this stage up until the rash is healed people are infective. Transmission though from droplets from coughing close up is possible and some patients develop only a rash with no constitutional symptoms. Fortunately, without close contact spread doesn’t occur and as a DNA virus it has a very low rate of mutating. There’s also a vaccine that’s 85% effective at preventing disease so this is one virus that’s probably not going to cause too much trouble!

Covid

On the other hand, Covid shows no signs of going away! While the number of cases recently has risen in hospital, it’s estimated that up to half are co-incident and with no change in ICU admissions. The virus does continue to mutate though with new sublineages (BA.4 and BA.5) now accounting for over 40% of cases due to their greater transmissibility and capacity to evade immunity from prior infection or vaccination. However, there is no evidence that they result in any more severe illness compared to previous Omicron types. The recent cases of people who have picked up two infections in this year alone though are a reminder

of the implications of waning antibody levels. Indeed, a study published last week found that infection with omicron did not provide good immunity from future re-infections. With rising cases, the Department of Health has also advised on wearing face masks on public transport.

Currently, a second booster vaccine is advised for anyone aged 65+ and also those 12 or older with a weak immune system, to be given at least four months after their first booster. It seems inevitable that there will be a rise in Covid cases over the coming months, though provided patients at higher risk are vaccinated the number with severe disease should be kept low. However, there is always the possibility of a new strain emerging that



might be more pathogenic and evade current vaccine induced immunity. While this seems relatively unlikely, the WHO has cautioned on this possibility, particularly in light of inadequate vaccine access in parts of the world.

It’s also important to get the influenza vaccine in a few months time. Interestingly, studies suggest that the flu jab might reduce the risk of developing severe Covid. The latest research of more than 30,000 health-care workers identified a 90% reduced risk of severe disease though the study included participants in 2020 prior to Covid vaccination.

However, other studies have found similar results which might be due to a strengthening of broad antiviral defenses.

“A recent study published in *The Lancet* of Covid patients in the UK admitted to hospital, found that those with co-existent influenza were four times more likely to require ventilation and twice as likely to die”

Co-infection with Covid and influenza is also quite possible but fortunately very uncommon. But that’s in part due to low levels of flu circulating during the pandemic due to restrictions. Synchronous infection with both viruses has been dubbed ‘Flurona’ and is associated with more severe respiratory disease. A recent study published in *The Lancet* of Covid patients in the UK admitted to hospital, found that those with co-existent influenza were four times more likely to require ventilation and twice as likely to die.

Finally, some patients are also unpredictably affected by more severe Covid that is likely due to differences in immune response determined by genetics. This may be quite complex with a study published last week suggesting that more than 1,000 genes may play a role in immune cells that contribute to the risk of developing severe disease.

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

» Continued from Page 31



abortion, transgenderism or abortion, or even the way the Church conducts itself, you need to know what you're talking about.

Telling someone they're wrong and you're right and that if they disagree with you, they're on the side of evil, without offering any compelling evidence or reason is lazy and uncharitable on your part and deeply unhelpful to them. None of us are in possession of perfect knowledge here on earth, and those with more have it by the grace of God and have a duty to share it.

“Your arguments will be much, much more compelling for it”

As Catholics, we've been blessed with the fullness of truth in Jesus Christ, which is administered to us by his Church. The right attitude is not to selfishly horde this truth for yourself, but to figure out how best to share it with others – how best to become truly missionary as Pope Francis might say.

Read up on the topics you're debating others about, study how your opponents engage with the topic and seek to address their key concerns. If you're going to debate the existence of God, it's a good idea to read a little bit of philosophy and theology – the Church has a wonderful heritage here, fully available in very accessible books today for any and all. If you're going to discuss abortion, say, or euthanasia, watch some YouTube videos from prominent apologists for these positions and take notes. Your arguments will be much, much more compelling for it.

Don't be overly defensive

As mentioned above, you're going to take a lot of flak for advocating for Catholic truth in the world today. While it's only human to be stung by this, we cannot allow it to make us defensive or hostile to “the world”. Those who disagree with us are children of the same God, and we have as much a duty to love them as we do to our fellow Catholics who agree with

us on many key issues.

“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” Jesus said. So we're at our most charitable when we listen and respond graciously and patiently to those who call us names and attack us rather than our arguments. I'm not saying I'm capable of this yet, but that I acknowledge that this is the better path.

Be humble

Sometimes you'll be stumped with speaking with a clever atheist or promoter of abortion – and that's ok. Our world has a fondness for rapid answers, but there's nothing wrong with taking a genuine pause to find the answer to a question. In fact, I've found it an attractive quality in others when they admit to what they don't know and come back to me later. It speaks of a deep, quiet conviction in the truth of what they believe, and of a profound humility on their part.

Remember your past

Very few of us these days are cradle to grave Catholics – and if we are we're very lucky. When dealing with those



coming from very different places, such as a college student who's never stepped foot into a church or with someone of a different faith, remember that you weren't always as lucky to hold to the Faith as you do now.

“It was largely by engaging with patient, sensible voices that I came around to a better way of seeing things”

I reverted powerfully to the Faith as my college years drew to a close, and before that, I held many of the positions I now disagree with. I didn't believe God existed, I voted yes in the same-sex marriage referendum and while I didn't think too much about it, I was tentatively pro-choice when it came to the “hard cases”.

Remembering where I come from helps me to be that bit gentler when dealing with those I disagree powerfully with. I once held positions I find incomprehensible now, and I had no problem sharing them loudly and proudly. It was largely by engaging with patient, sensible voices that I came around to a better way of seeing things.

Prayer

I often quote prayer as being a good solution to our problems, and I do so again here. I'm trying to get into the habit of remembering those I disagree with throughout the day as I pray my rosary, in the hope that something I said will take root in them with God's help.

Speaking to God in prayer about the difficulties of engaging with others is a must for Catholics, as he will help you to see them as he does slowly but surely. While it's not something that offers instant gratification and vindication, it is an essential element of Christian mission in the world today.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



The summer came upon us stealthily. It was, at first, cloaked in wintry weather – at a time when I was too busy to notice that it was June. Then, all of a sudden, a strong sun brought warmth, and the world suddenly seemed garlanded in lush vegetation and flowers.

The leaves in the trees are no longer the translucent light green of spring. They now form a mature, dark green canopy, which creates another deep and sheltered woodland world beneath it.

The kids are winding down at school. There is little learning going on, but mostly games and gatherings. My son even had his graduation from primary school, which was a happy occasion where the kids shared memories of their time at school. They even got a scroll and they signed each other's memory books, writing little messages to each other.

Of course, all such occasions involve cake and I discovered my younger daughter sitting hidden on a stairwell with a plate piled unlawfully high. Amid the festivities, there was time to think back. It seems like yesterday that he was a small lad braving his first day in school. Those eight years have flown by too quickly, yet he seems ready for the big step into secondary school.

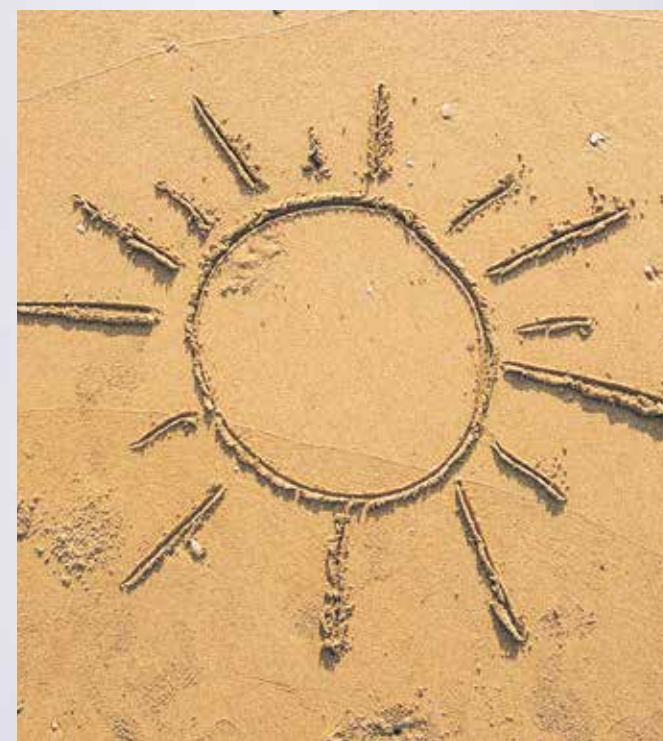
But first, the summer holidays beckon. We've a sort of clan

gathering arranged on the west coast of France, where no fewer than six households of our extended family will meet. It's our first overseas holiday since 2019, thanks to Covid. The kids are already practising their few words of French and we're all looking forward to that sense of being somewhere different. The sights, smells and sounds of another country will be all the more intoxicating to the children, for having been in Ireland for three years solid now.

Ahead of the France trip there's been the usual panicked passport applications and plenty work to get done on the car, and – as ever – work deadlines to meet. My old boat is back on the water too, and I've been down to check it, stock it up for summer and to make some repairs. For now, summer is all about work and preparation!

Soon, however, we'll be able to unwind and to slip into summer's easier pace, once the school holidays are upon us. As soon as we roll aboard the ferry, summer will begin in earnest, as our everyday lives are literally left in our wake.

The past few years of holidaying in Ireland have been great in many ways. Yet after three years on the island of Ireland, the sense of perspective that travel abroad brings will be welcome. After a hectic few months, we'll soon find ourselves some ease amid the warmth of summer.



50 years of service during radical change

Personal Profile



Liam Fitzpatrick

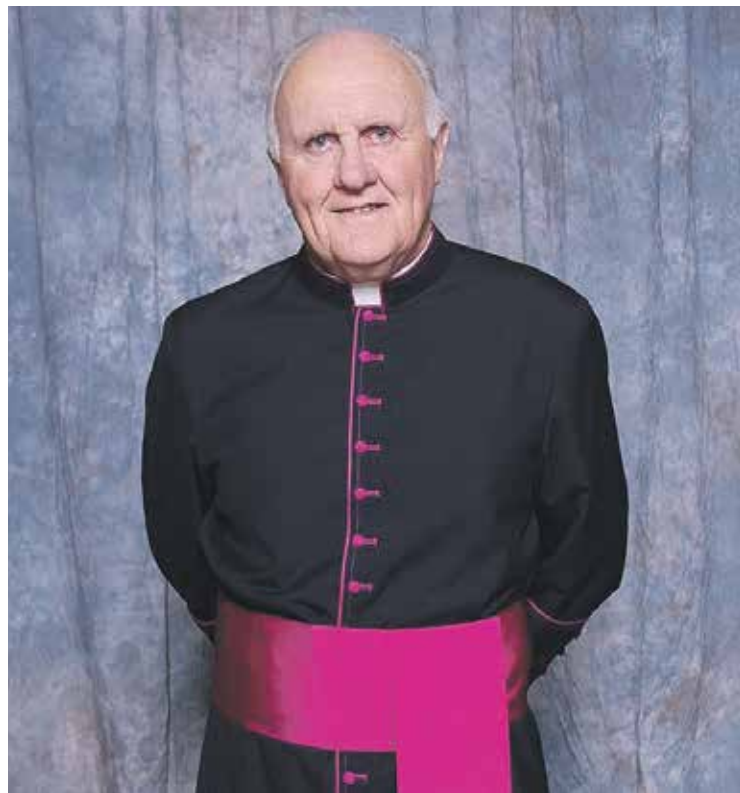
50 years ago, the world was a radically different place. U2 hadn't been formed yet, push-button phones revolutionised communication, and Star Wars wouldn't come out for another five years.

There has been one constant, however – Fr Jerry McSweeney's priesthood. Navigating his own relationship with God and living through a time of unprecedented social change, Fr McSweeney remarked that the challenges he faced shaped him, both spiritually and personally.

“A native of Rossmore, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, Fr McSweeney attributed his early devotion to his family”

“All those events along the way solidified myself and my faith,” he said.

Fr McSweeney celebrated his 50-year anniversary as a priest on June 17, 2022, after a half-decade of service to the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in West Virginia. He shared some of the wisdom he's gained over the years with *The Irish Catholic*.



Growing Up

A native of Rossmore, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, Fr McSweeney attributed his early devotion to his family. He still has a prayer card from his father and other prayer books passed down across generations, and he recalled the pride he felt when his brothers served his first Mass with him back in 1972.

Being surrounded by believers who truly cared about those around them strengthened his resolve in the power of the Faith, Fr McSweeney said.

“My brothers and sisters, they were all very full of faith and love for the Lord and for the Church,” he said. “And for people.”

Fr McSweeney came back to Rossmore to celebrate his 25th anniversary, calling it “a faith-filled, prosperous community” with great

priests he looked up to as a young boy and continued to respect as a man.

“All the priests along the way, they all were great priests of God, full of faith and love for the Lord,” he said.

“The environment here in the village of Rossmore and the community is very strong, very positive, and very much one of love for the Lord and God's children,” he said.

Fr McSweeney was confirmed at 14, then educated at the National School in Rossmore. After developing primary tuberculosis, he stayed with his uncle when he was 16, living a farmer's lifestyle for five years.

“My uncle had the green thumb, all the way up to rhododendrons and palm trees in the front of the house...” Fr McSweeney joked.

Along his journey, he was introduced to Fr Robert E. Lee of Galway, originally from the United States. Out-

side the gates to his uncle's home, Fr Lee offered Fr McSweeney a chance he would forever be grateful to receive – the opportunity to preach in the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia.

“55 counties in West Virginia. Coal, steel, timber... the economy was good back in that time, back in 1964,” Fr McSweeney said, reminiscing.

He's been working in West Virginia since then.

West Virginia

A mountainous state within the Appalachian region of the USA, West Virginia has seen economic hardships few other states have experienced.

“West Virginia is one of the poorest states in the United States. The coal industry has gone way, way down... but they are believers.”

Currently, the state has a GDP of €69.6 billion, the tenth-lowest in the United States. The county of Dublin alone has a GDP well over €70 billion, despite having a half-million fewer people.

Additionally, West Virginia has a comparatively small Catholic population. Despite being the seventh-most religious state in the Union according to a Pew Research survey and sporting a Christian population of over 78% according to research from West Virginia University, only 8% self-identify as Catholic. Some 23% of the population of the broader United States self-identify as Catholic.

Nevertheless, Fr McSweeney feels fulfilled to have spent the last half-decade in the Mountain State, ministering to whoever will listen and surrounded by believers of all different denominations.

“A lot of West Virginians are not Catholic,” Fr McSweeney said. “But they are believers, you know, they're Methodists, they're Presbyterians, they're Pentecostal Holiness and all that, but they are believers.”

“I love the people there, and I love ministering to the people. That makes

all the difference in the world because they are children of God...” he said.

After 50 years of dedicated service to the Church, who could blame Fr McSweeney for taking a well-deserved rest period? Interestingly enough, Fr McSweeney himself would.

After retiring from parish work at St. Michael's in Wheeling back in 2016, Fr McSweeney still wanted to be involved with the Church however he could. Now, he does supply work, journeying from church to church and providing assistance to priests who need his help.

“I go all around the state for priests who are indisposed or sick, who are ailing, and I travel all over the state which is about the size of Ireland,” he said. “And I enjoy that. I enjoy that very much.”

Regularly covering distances from Waterford to Sligo and Cork to Dublin would take a toll on anybody, but Fr McSweeney finds the strength to continue his travels, however arduous they may be, by relying on the guidance, fortitude, and example of sanctity set by his favourite saint – the “Little Flower of Jesus,” Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

“I make a perpetual novena to her,” Fr McSweeney said. “You know, she's the most powerful saint of modern times.”

Looking Forward

Fr McSweeney, ever a man of devotion, truly believes that the Catholic Church is in a position to be stronger than ever in the future. With an unyielding sense of faith as large as the mountains he preached in and as tough as the people he preached to, Fr McSweeney, a glimmer of hope breaking through his unwaveringly calm voice, spoke about his faith in the future of the Catholic Church.

“I believe wholeheartedly that there will be new springtime in the Church in Ireland, and in the world,” he said.

Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Living Laudato Si'

Jane Mellett



Embracing the joy of Christ in all of creation

In 2021 Pope Francis launched the *Laudato Si'* Goals as an effort to encourage all sectors of Church to try to achieve ecological sustainability by 2030. It is an enormous task but one which we are invited to embrace, to help heal our relationship with our common home and with each other. We have been exploring these goals over the past few months and this month *Laudato Si'* Goal 6 encourages us towards ecological spirituality. While all of the goals are important, in my opinion this particular goal is the one out of which all the others flow.

Pope Francis said in September 2020 that “Contemplation is the antidote against the misuse of our common home”. In *Laudato Si'* he notes that at the heart of the ecological crisis is a deep spiritual crisis and so, when we are wondering where to begin, we begin here, rekindling a connection, a sense of awe and wonder for God's creation. Ecological spirituality recovers a religious vision of

God's creation and encourages greater contact with the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy, and gratitude. Through this experience we can come to know God more deeply.

We are invited into a real movement of the heart where we can begin to see the fingerprints of God in the forests, in a wildflower, in a blade of grass, in the depth of life beneath the seas. Cultivating a deep, nourishing ecological spirituality and sharing this beautiful treasure others is one of the first steps on this journey as we are invited to fall in love again with the earth. Out of this experience can come a deeper desire to care and heal our common home.

To be followers of Jesus, to love our neighbour, involves embracing the joy of Christ in all of creation and walking more gently on this earth, to be guardians and protectors of God's handiwork. Once we rekindle a sense of wonder for creation, not only does this experience deepen our faith and give us a deep

sense of interconnection, but it is good for us, spiritually, physically, mentally. Spending time in nature brings healing to our lives, keeps us grounded, connected. We look out at the world again with a sense of wonder.

Under *Laudato Si'* Goal 6 on ecological spirituality, actions include promoting creation-centred liturgical celebrations, such as marking the Season of Creation, *Laudato Si'* Week, Earth Day, World Biodiversity Day; developing ecological catechesis, retreats, and formation programmes; regularly praying outdoors and creating spaces in our parishes and communities for contemplation in nature; exploring ways to promote peace in creation in dialogue with other faiths. Go to www.laudatosiactionplatform.org to find out more.

“The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.” (*Laudato Si'*, 84).

Jane Mellett is the *Laudato Si'* Officer with Trócaire

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Seeking to shut down debate is hardly a liberal inclination

Conflicts between Church and State can cause a lot of grief to both, but can also help to clarify principles.

These themes were explored in the rather unusual film *Servants* (Film Four, Tuesday). Set in a Czechoslovakian seminary during communist times, in 1980, it told the story of young seminarians resisting the imposition of state power and trying to protect the integrity of the Gospel message. Unfortunately, some of the college authorities were inclined to compromise to keep the state from closing the institution, which led to investigations, informing on colleagues and even one priest being blackmailed to break the seal of Confession. The title conveys the idea of service – to Church or state – and the efforts to maintain that balance.

Grim

Filmed in black and white it was a bleak, grim affair with a claustrophobic visual style. It wasn't what we'd normally regard as entertainment, with an episodic approach, some confusing flashbacks and a largely static cinematography. Yet there were some striking visuals – the large group of seminarians on a spiral staircase, a courtyard football game filmed from above, a truckload of



Broadcaster Joe Duffy has been under fire.

confiscated typewriters, two giant torch-carrying fists in stone butted against each other as seminarians play snowballs, a deliberately demeaning medical examination of one seminarian, the disposal of a priest's body under an illuminated railway bridge at night.

I felt it was weakest on character, not helped by the sparse narrative. I'd like to have understood more about why these young men were training for the priesthood

and how they became so courageous and conscientious. The older men were more easily understood – the tired and conflicted priests in charge, collaborating for survival, and the tired and diseased state security man unhappy in his surveillance work but carrying it out routinely, almost robotically.

Familiar

In more familiar entertainment territory the latest season of *Young Sheldon*

(RTÉ One, Fridays, E4, Sundays) has taken a somewhat darker turn, hence, I suspect, the later time slot. The family is under pressure – George, the father, isn't doing so well at his school team coaching work, a story line that came to a head in last Friday night's episode. For a while he was enjoying the company (just that) of the divorced woman next door who is quite interested in him. Mary, the very religious mother, is fraying a bit at the edges too, and has been enjoying the company of a trendy young pastor at her church – they even have some guilty cigarettes together! Despite the crises there have been some really funny and touching moments.

A prominent plot line in recent episodes has been the 17-year old son Georgie getting a girl pregnant – and she's in her late 20's! She's Catholic and her parents want nothing more to do with her – believable but it does feed a lazy stereotype. Georgie's parents are shocked but eventually react with acceptance and some generosity. Mary sees marriage as the desirable option and wants the baby to be brought up in their family's Baptist faith! George isn't so sure and all reactions are coloured by the fact that Mary was pregnant when he married her.

PICK OF THE WEEK

JOAN OF ARC

BBC Two Saturday June 25, 11am and BBC Four Thursday 10.40pm

(1948) Ingrid Bergman. Biopic of the young French saint.

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE

BBC One Sunday June 26, 10.30am

The week's big stories and the ethical questions of the day.

MASS

RTÉ One Sunday June 26, 11am

Mass celebrated by Fr Tom Lalor of Tinryland parish in Co. Carlow, with a choir directed by Mary Amand O'Brien.

Things get quite serious when folks at Mary's church get all judgemental and attendance at her Bible studies group dries up. She admits that she might have been one of the judgemental ones if it wasn't her son that was involved. Last Friday's episode on RTÉ was the last of the season and was one of the weaker episodes, involving some silly clowning about Sheldon's first pimple, with celebrity magicians Penn and Teller playing the pimple and the pus in fantasy sequences. Yuk!

Gender

Back in the real world, when I was writing last week about the foray of Liveline (RTÉ Radio One) into gender identity issues, I didn't quite expect the fallout that followed. RTÉ News itself reported that Dublin Pride was immediately ending

its media partnership with RTÉ in protest over the gender discussions. Double whammy! I hadn't heard of this arrangement, thought it inappropriate, and therefore saw the severing as good news for media neutrality. Secondly, I thought it showed an amazing censoriousness in a group that would probably regard itself as liberal. Seeking to shut down debate is hardly a liberal inclination, and it was good to hear on Wednesday's News that RTÉ was defending the practice of free discussion, regarding it as "central to RTÉ's prescribed purpose".

Still, some questions have been begged and not answered.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
@boreganmedia

Film

Aubrey Malone



The king is dead, long live the king

It's amazing to think we're still seeing biopics of Elvis Presley, like Baz Luhrmann's 3-hour audio-visual extravaganza, *Elvis* (PG), nearly half a century after the rock 'n' roll icon "left the building". What would the man himself have thought? When he went into the army, he thought his career was over. He thought so again after a decade of the (mostly atrocious) 'beach and babe' movies he made in the 60s.

He reinvented himself as a leather-clad Adonis in Las Vegas but the stress of performing – often two concerts a day – took its toll. Weighed down under rhinestone, the King became a Burger King. In time he morphed into the first Elvis impersonator,

stumbling around the stages of Vegas in gaudy jumpsuits as he struggled to remember the words of the songs that made him famous.

When he died at 42, twelve different substances were found in his body. None of them were illegal but he took so many prescription tablets during his lifetime as to be classified a drug addict.

He was practically broke when he checked out but today his Graceland estate is richer than ever. Dying, as someone said, was a good career move for him.

Performance

Austin Butler gives a powerhouse performance as the former truck driver but his



Austin Butler is Elvis in Baz Luhrmann's new film.

appearance isn't as close to Elvis as Ben Portsmouth. Portsmouth captivated me when I saw him in the *Olympia* a few years ago. I thought I was looking at the real Elvis.

Butler is a good soundalike too, though some of the later tracks are over-dubbed by Elvis himself.

His movements are to die for. Elvis made karate balletic. That's replicated here.

Narrator

Tom Hanks is the Faustian narrator of the piece. That's Elvis' creepy manager 'Colonel' Tom Parker, the former carnival barker largely responsible for his demise. Parker didn't know a crochet from a hatchet. Elvis was only a dollar sign to him. After he died, he said: "This changes nothing."

I saw the truth of that when I visited Graceland in 1980. It was buzzing.

Olivia DeJonge is Priscilla, the wife Elvis never got over after she left him. Helen Thomson is the mother he adored. It was she who assured him he was doing nothing wrong when his hip-swivelling antics were seen as a threat to public

morality. (He had to be filmed from the waist up).

Luhrmann has already given us *Moulin Rouge* and *La La Land*. His lavish hand is at work again here. Limned with his customary virtuosity, the film is another high wattage production that provides proof, if proof were needed, that the world is still "all shook up" with Elvismania.

Tupelo's favourite son is still 'The King' – though he never liked that term being applied to him. "There's only one king," he said, "the Lord." His love of gospel music had its origins in the negro spiritual songs he heard in the First Assembly of God church with his parents as a boy.

Avoiding a shallow religiosity...

Mass this Sunday puts aside the purple vestments of Lent and the white vestments of Eastertide as we return to the green of Ordinary Time. We take up from where we left off before Lent with Luke's Gospel as our guiding light for the rest of the year. There is an old tradition that, besides being a physician, Luke was also a painter. Certainly, he could paint pictures in his words. We have a good example in today's Mass (Luke 9:51-62). "As the time drew near for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely took the road for Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him." Try to visualise the light in his eyes, the determination in his voice and the clear commitment he was announcing.

“Self-indulgence sees freedom as the right to do whatever I want to do rather than the strength to do what I ought to do”

Jerusalem was more than a geographical city. It was regarded as the city of God, a place of pilgrimage. On the day of the Lord's resurrection, two of the followers of Jesus turned their backs on Jerusalem which indicated that they were going in the wrong direction. In today's secularised world many have lost sight of the ultimate meaning and direction of life. They now lack a moral compass to offer proper direction. Freedom to choose has become an untouchable slogan. But is freedom properly understood? St Paul, in today's second reading, warns us to be careful about liberty lest it provide an opening to self-indulgence. Self-indulgence sees freedom as the right to do whatever I want to do rather than the strength to do what I ought to do. There is a huge difference between what I want to do and what I ought to do. Self-indulgence forgets about responsibilities. Paul tells us, "Serve one another in works of love since the whole of the law is summarised in a single command: love your neighbour as yourself."

St John Paul II wrote

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



about how resolute we ought to be in our Christian commitment: "Since baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalistic ethic and a shallow religiosity." It is worthwhile pondering on the three compromises he mentions.

A life of mediocrity... being lukewarm and half-hearted in our relationship with God.

A minimalistic ethic... satisfied to scrape into heaven by the bare minimum.

A shallow religiosity... being curious about spiritual matters without making a commitment to any creed, code of behaviour or cult (form of worship).

In the Book of Revelation, the people of Laodicea are sternly warned: "I know about your activities: how you are neither hot nor cold. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither hot nor cold, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth."

There was nothing half-hearted or lukewarm about the journey of Jesus towards Jerusalem. If we are sincere about following him, we have to cut out compromises, excuses and low standards. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind: and your neighbour as yourself."

Fanatical

It's important to be committed, but it is dangerous to be fanatical. The journey of the apostolic band brought them into enemy territory in Samaria where they received a hostile reception. The brothers, James and John, whose nickname was Boanerges, the Sons of Thunder, asked Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?" Who did they think they were? They did not ask Jesus to call down the fire but they felt that they had the power to do it. Jesus of course rebuked them because this fanatical idea was not part of the kingdom of mercy that he was establishing. Fire from

heaven there would be: not fires of violence and vengeance but tongues of fire enkindling divine love in the hearts of the faithful. Pope Francis encourages us to pray for Spirit-filled evangelists to renew the face of the world.

As they travel towards Jerusalem, three individuals step momentarily into the story like characters in a play flitting briefly across the stage. One man says he wants to become a follower. Jesus tests his resolve. "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Christian pilgrims are a future-people who know that here we have no lasting city but one that is to come.

The second man is invited by Jesus to follow him, but he is not ready. He wants to postpone until his father is dead and buried. The load of family duties can be discharged by others who have not received the powerful energy of a missionary vocation. Missionaries of all times, from Abraham down to our own time, have bravely ventured forth from family and homeland for the sake of the Good News.

“In times past the idea of a pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem was a popular way of understanding the Christian life”

With the third man Jesus stresses the need for single-minded concentration on the calling. "Once the hand is laid on the plough no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of heaven." In the primitive agriculture of the time, one hand was used for steering the unruly oxen while the other hand had to hold steady the structure of the plough. It demanded concentration and coordination of muscle and eye to achieve a straight furrow. A distracted life and sloppy performance would not be a worthy response to God's call. The story of the prophet Elisha in today's first reading is an example. Leaving his life as a ploughman, he slew his ploughing oxen for a feast and used the wood of the plough for the fire. There



St Luke the Evangelist is depicted in this window from Worcester Cathedral in England. Photo: CNS

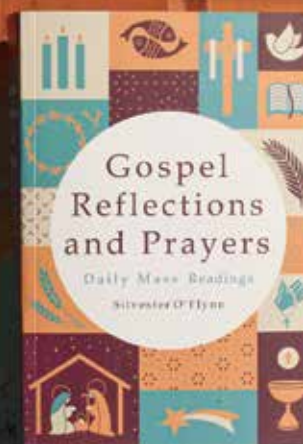
would be no going back. His commitment was for the future.

Heavenly Jerusalem

In times past, the idea of a pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem was a popular way of understanding the Christian life. The pilgrim would walk or take a boat until his funds were exhausted. He would halt for a while to earn some more, then pack his bag and resume the journey, his eyes resolutely towards Jerusalem. As a young novice many years ago, I came across the pilgrim's prayer of Blessed Henry Suso, and I've never forgotten it: "O Jesus, I am nothing, I have nothing, I desire nothing but to be with you in Jerusalem."

More of Fr Silvester's Gospel Reflections

ARE AVAILABLE



ORDER Gospel Reflections and Prayers TODAY

€19.99 +€4.50 P&P

columba BOOKS

Phone 01 6874096 | Visit www.columbabooks.com

Suicide and our misunderstandings



Margaret Atwood once wrote that sometimes a thing needs to be said, and said, and said again, until it doesn't need to be said anymore. That's why I write a column annually on suicide, mostly saying the same things over and over again. The hope is that, like a note put into a bottle and floated out to sea, my little message might find someone needing consolation after losing a loved one to suicide.

What needs to be said, and said again, about suicide? Four things.

“There are different kinds of heart attacks, strokes, cancers, breakdowns of the immune system, and fatal accidents”

First, that it's a disease and perhaps the most misunderstood of all diseases. We tend to think that if a death is self-inflicted, it is voluntary in a way that death through physical illness or accident is not. For most suicides, this isn't true. A person who dies by suicide dies, as does the victim of a terminal illness or fatal accident, not by his or her own choice. When people die from heart attacks, strokes, cancer, AIDS, and accidents, they die against their will. The same is true for suicide, except that in the case of suicide the breakdown is emotional rather than physical – an emotional



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

stroke, an emotional cancer, a breakdown of the emotional immune system, an emotional fatality.

This is not an analogy. There are different kinds of heart attacks, strokes, cancers, breakdowns of the immune system, and fatal accidents. However, they all have the same effect; they all take someone out of this life against his or her own will. No one who dies through suicide actually wants to die. He or she only wants to end a pain that can no longer be endured, akin to someone jumping to his death out of a burning building because his clothes are on fire.

Second, we should not worry unduly about the eternal salvation of a suicide victim, believing (as we used to) that suicide is the ultimate act of despair and something God will not forgive. God is infinitely more understanding than we are and God's hands are infinitely

safer and gentler than our own. Imagine a loving mother having just given birth, welcoming her child onto her breast for the first time. That, I believe, is the best image we have to picture how a suicide victim (most often an overly sensitive soul) is received into the next life. God is infinitely understanding, loving, and gentle. We need not worry about the fate of anyone, no matter the cause of death, who exits this world honest, oversensitive, gentle, over-wrought, and emotionally crushed. God has a special love for the broken and the crushed.

Pain

Knowing all of this however, doesn't necessarily take away our pain (and anger) at losing someone to suicide; but faith and understanding aren't meant to take our pain away but rather to give us hope, vision, and support as we walk within our pain.

Third, we should not torture ourselves with second-guessing when we lose a loved one to suicide: “What might I have done? Where did I let this person down? If only I had been there? What if...?” It can be natural to be haunted with the thought, “if only I'd been there at the right time.” Rarely would this have made a difference. Indeed, most of the time, we weren't there for the exact reason that the person who fell victim to this disease did not want us to be there. He or she picked the moment, the spot, and the means precisely so that we wouldn't be there. Perhaps it's more accurate to say that suicide is a disease that picks its victim precisely in such a way so as to exclude others and their attentiveness. This is not an excuse for insensitivity, especially towards those suffering from dangerous depression, but it should be a healthy check against false guilt and fruitless second-guessing.

We're human beings, not God. People die of illness and accidents all the time and sometimes all the love and attentiveness in the world cannot prevent a loved one from dying. Love, for all its power,

is sometimes powerless before a terminal illness.

Fourth, when we lose a loved one to suicide, one of our tasks is to work at redeeming that person's memory, namely, to put that person's life into a perspective wherein his or her memory is not forever tainted because it is viewed through the prism of suicide.

“Most of all, we must trust God, God's goodness, God's understanding, God's power to descend into hell, and God's power to make all things right, even death by suicide”

A proper human and faith response to suicide should not be horror, fear for the victim's eternal salvation, guilty second-guessing about how we failed this person, and a hushed, guarded tone forever afterwards when we speak of him or her. Suicide is indeed a horrible way to die, but we must understand it (at least in most cases) as a sickness, a disease, an illness, a tragic breakdown within the emotional immune system. Most of all, we must trust God, God's goodness, God's understanding, God's power to descend into hell, and God's power to make all things right, even death by suicide.

“The hope is that, like a note put into a bottle and floated out to sea, my little message might find someone needing consolation after losing a loved one to suicide”

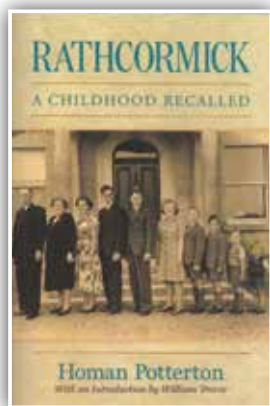


BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief



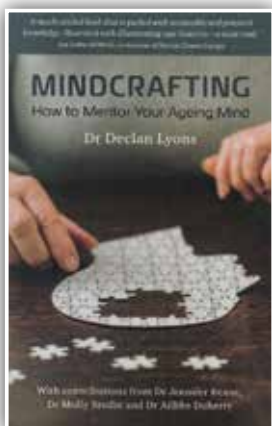
Rathcormick: A Childhood Recalled, by Homan Potterton, with an Introduction by William Trevor
(Merrion Press, €12.95/£12.99)

This is a very welcome republication of a book first issued over two decades ago by another publisher. It was then hailed by William Trevor as “a wholly delightful memoir of lace-curtain Protestants in 1950s rural Ireland”.

Theirs was a life not so different from those lived by their Catholic rural neighbours, but this book does not sit well with the “misery memoirs” which have now become a regular genre of Irish literature.

Potterton, as his later career showed, was a lively, inquiring and congenial character as an art curator. Here he reveals his roots, not in a house filled with high culture, but with normal people living ordinary lives. His later life took a strange course, but his account of it (published more recently) was greatly enjoyable, especially a brilliant chapter on Charles Haughey, who had aspirations to be “the Squire” that Potterton was not.

When Rathcormick came out Potterton received many letters from Catholic readers who told him that when children they were told that Protestants were different, but now from his pages they saw that really they were not as they had been painted. This new edition suggests Rathcormick has settled down to be an Irish classic.



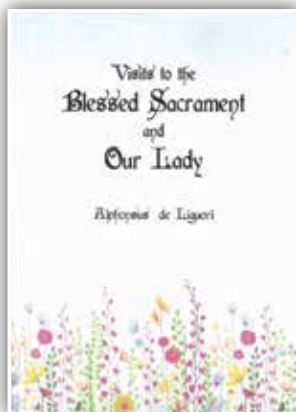
Mindcrafting: How to Mentor Your Ageing Mind
by Dr Declan Lyons and others
(Beehive, €19.99)

This is a very positive book. The later years certainly have their problems, but then so does every time of life from infancy through middle age. The really great change for many people is that when they leave the very structured world of work, they find they have nothing to do but sit and watch television.

Homan Potterton (above) was plagued by people when he retired at the age of 42, asking him what would he do without “the job” and “the pension”? He had lots to do he found, lots to live for. His gung-ho attitude is one which everyone should adopt.

It is not a matter of living out the rest of your sentence, like some doing “life” in prison. It is really a matter getting down to doing what you really wanted to do when you were 12: catch a prize fish, paint a picture, write a book. The world is filled with new opportunities should be the attitude. Just “do your own thing”. But when there are those inevitable “problems” this book will certainly help to manoeuvre round them. It will comfort many, many people.

But on the whole staying active and involved in things is the answer. For instance, spending time with grandchildren (without their parents, of course) will certainly lead to an active time.



Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady

by Alphonsus de Liguori
(privately published, Redemptorist Community, Limerick, €6 plus postage)

St Alphonsus (1696-1787) was, I suspect, far more familiar to earlier generations than he is today – you never seem to hear of a child being given his name.

In this pamphlet, Seán Cannon CSsR and Raphael Gallagher CSsR, provide a new translation of the long-loved text, which provides a different tone more suited to the modern reader, presented in an attractive, clear, easy to follow text, which still provides prayers for the everyday.

A little book like this should not be ignored. It provides an occasion and matter for a half hour of repose. These days all too many churches shut their doors in the day outside of services, but in the cities at least, many are also open. They are the quietest place to find moments of restfulness in an atmosphere of peace and calm.

To fill out every one's day, a period of repose, no matter what form it takes, is quite essential. Our ancestors always found such moments – you can't spend the whole day hunting and gathering, or (as today) working overtime on your keyboard.

Take time out. Leave the office and stay away from it; a lunch hour should be an hour, and in churches there exist other persons to speak to than those you work or play with. They are persons who will not disappear from your life, Christians believe, but will always be there.

(Copies are €6 plus postage, and are available from the Redemptorist Community, Mount St Alphonsus, Limerick V94 F867, email: msa@redemptorists.ie, tel. 061 315099, 9am-5pm only.)

A new chronicle of Christian Ireland finds a hopeful note to end on



The Rise and Fall of Christian Ireland
by Crawford Gribben
(Oxford University Press, £25.00/€29.00)

Thomas Morrissey SJ

The author has produced a readable and impressive work of scholarship and organisation, which endeavours to trace the rise and fall of religion in Ireland from 8,000BC to the present day. The advent and progress of Christianity is presented in its ups and downs throughout history, including the emergence of various forms of Protestantism, periods of religious enthusiasm and of indifference, on to the current massive decline in Christian belief and practise.

Dr Gribben's chronicle of the ever-changing scene is clearly the work of many years and, as his references testify, of an enormous

amount of reading. His own area of special interest, it would appear from his published work, is the history of Protestantism in Ireland, with, perhaps, special emphasis on Presbyterianism.

This is suggested by the amount of attention given in the book to various aspects of Presbyterianism in his treatment of the 17th century in Ireland. The informed reader may also be surprised at his mild presentation of Cromwell's campaign in Ireland; and how, in the 18th century penal laws, their religious motivation seems to give way to economic aims. This is not to take away from the author's overall sensitive and balanced treatment of a vast amount of material, some of which still simmers close to the surface.

Cultural shift

In modern times, he follows the cultural shift of attitude and

adherence towards traditional Church teaching and morality that emerged in the 1960s and proved the beginning of the widespread, on-going movement away from traditional religion and morality.

“The book is thought-provoking and rich in personalities and comment, which encourages the reader to return to the text”

A movement hastened in the Catholic Church by the publication of the sexual failings of so many clergy and by the bishops putting institutional reputation before empathy for its wounded people. The last 20 pages of this impressive book, which he terms ‘The Conclusion’, looks at the

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.



After a disastrous fire at Christmas 2009, Longford Catholic cathedral was wonderfully revived, perhaps an augury for Christianity in Ireland as a whole.

Christian Churches today in Ireland and the prospects for the future. A return to the wide, former practice of the Christian religion seems unlikely. "Christian Ireland is dead". Priests and bishops have lost status and former trust. Leadership has to come, if it comes, from the laity.

Dr Gribben, nevertheless, finishes on a more hopeful note. In 410 AD prospects looked very bleak when the Visigoths sacked Rome and brought an end to Christian civilisation.

The fall of Rome, however, did not mean the end of Christianity. It adapted to meet the needs of a new, chaotic world. Irish monks played their part in a European Christian revival.

Crisis

The Church has always lurched from one crisis to another. "The dramatic collapse of the older religious structures which shaped the experience of Irish Christianity, and sudden movements in political and cultural norms, have created opportunities for new kinds of religious expres-

sion," and for "new Patricks" to "shape the rise of a new Christian Ireland".

The book is thought-provoking and rich in personalities and comment, which encourages the reader to return to the text, but, unfortunately, there is no index to facilitate the reader's wish to do so.

The lack of an index makes a book hard to use, even for the small matter of confirming a reference. But such a lack is surprising in a book from an international publisher as distinguished as OUP.

Ireland's Sarajevo: The Assassination of Sir Henry Wilson



The scene of the crime, with the bullet scarred front door, and the two culprits under arrest. The assassination as depicted by the Illustrated News.

Great Hatred: The Assassination of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson MP

by Ronan McGreevy
(Faber, £16.99/€19.99)

Felix Larkin

Sir Henry Wilson, Ulster Unionist MP at Westminster and former Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), was shot dead by two English-born Irish Republicans – Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan – outside his home in London on June 22, 1922, exactly a century ago yesterday.

The assassins were almost immediately apprehended, and later convicted of his murder and executed. Their bodies were reinterred in Deansgrange cemetery in Dublin in 1967, though without much fanfare. Like the Invincibles who killed Lord Frederick Cavendish, Wilson's assassins have never been admitted to the pantheon of Irish patriotic martyrs. The assassination is the subject of this fascinating new book by *The Irish Times* journalist Ronan McGreevy.

Soldier

Wilson, a scion of a minor Anglo-Irish landed family with Ulster forebears, was born in Co. Longford in 1864. He was a professional soldier for all but the last four months of his adult life. His military career was largely as a staff officer, though he saw action in Burma in the mid-1880s and later in the Boer War. Sidelined in the early years of WWI, he emerged as a key figure in the war effort after Lloyd George became prime minister in late 1916. He was appointed CIGS, the top job in the British army, in February 1918. McGreevy records that he "was one of the four men who won the war, according to many of his contemporaries" – the others being Lloyd George, the French President Clemenceau and Marshal Foch of France (with whom Wilson, a lifelong Francophile, had a close personal and working relationship).

Wilson was, however, a

rabid unionist – who despised Irish nationalism and did not hide his contempt for Asquith and the Liberal government because of their efforts to introduce Home Rule for Ireland in the years before the outbreak of WWI. He openly sympathised with the Ulster resistance to Home Rule, and surreptitiously connived in the so-called Curragh Mutiny in 1914 – when officers based in the Curragh indicated that they would refuse to coerce Ulster into the Home Rule settlement. He should have been appointed CIGS later in 1914, but Asquith blocked his promotion because of his involvement in the Curragh incident. Asquith described him as "the poisonous tho' clever ruffian Wilson". He would later fall out with Lloyd George over the negotiations leading to the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921. "We do not speak to murderers," he told Lloyd George.

Three days after Wilson retired as CIGS in February 1922, he was elected unopposed as Unionist MP for North Down. From his election until his death four months later, he was a firm – and, in speech, an aggressive – defender of the new Northern Ireland government in its efforts to establish its writ over the disaffected nationalist minority within its jurisdiction. In March 1922 he was formally appointed military advisor to the Northern Ireland government. He thus became identified with the harsh security measures introduced by the Northern Ireland government and with the sectarian violence directed against the Catholic population in Belfast and elsewhere in Northern Ireland. He did, in fact, recommend in private a more moderate and less sectarian approach to the security problem, but his public pronouncements were far from moderate. As McGreevy points out, "nobody was more to blame for the perception of Wilson in nationalist Ireland than Wilson himself".

McGreevy's controversial conclusion in this study is that

Wilson's killing was most likely ordered by Michael Collins in 1922 – that is, after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty that brought the War of Independence to an end. He did not, however, have the authority of the Provisional Government – of which he was chairman – for this or for his support of other republican efforts to undermine Northern Ireland at its birth. He was rather acting as president of the secretive Supreme Council of Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). The assassins, Dunne and O'Sullivan, were IRB men. Both had served in the British army, and had been wounded, in the First World War. They were accordingly accustomed to the discipline of military service, and McGreevy has no difficulty in dismissing on this basis the idea that they acted on their own accord – the view of most previous authors who have studied the assassination, notably Rex Taylor and Keith Jeffery.

Statesman

McGreevy comments that "the statesman Collins found it hard to shake off the secret-society leader Collins".

The British government, however, believed – "on no evidence other than an educated hunch", to quote McGreevy – that the militant anti-Treaty republicans who had rejected the authority of the Provisional Government and were occupying the Four Courts building in Dublin were responsible for Wilson's assassination.

They insisted that the Provisional Government should take action against them, or else the British themselves would intervene. So began the Irish Civil War. Civil war would probably have happened in any event in Ireland in 1922, but the assassination of Henry Wilson was the spark that ignited the conflict.

McGreevy alludes to the crime as "Ireland's Sarajevo", drawing a parallel with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the outbreak of the First World War.

“The dramatic collapse of the older religious structures which shaped the experience of Irish Christianity”

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

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 cian.dikker@focusireland.ie or phone 01 881 5962

FOCUS
Ireland

Remembering
MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS

Samples / Information
KENNEDY PRINTERS
BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND
Tel. 027 50102
www.kennedyprinters.ie
email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

We will pass on the flame of faith.

For over 130 years, *The Irish Catholic* has been a voice of hope and inspiration for Catholics in Ireland. Help us pass on the flame of faith by remembering us in your Will.

Phone 01 6874028
info@irishcatholic.ie
The Irish Catholic

Support Irish Missionaries



'NET helped me make my faith SO much stronger than it's ever been, and it's really helped me improve as a man of God.' – **Michael (19), Dublin**

Please help support young NET missionaries like Michael to minister to the youth of Ireland.

Phone 074 919 0606 to make a donation today.

GOAL

Please remember GOAL in your Will

45 years on we continue to deliver lifesaving support to the most vulnerable people in our world. Leaving a gift in your Will is priceless.

Contact Courtenay on 01 2809779 or via email at cpollard@goal.ie

Registered Charity No. 20010980; CHY 6271

CONCERN
worldwide



A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER

A gift in your Will is an act of kindness that has the power to help end hunger and extreme poverty for generations to come.

Your legacy could help families overcome the life-threatening challenges caused by climate change and the devastating effects of poverty and hunger, by providing the tools needed to support themselves long into the future.

Your compassion today could change the future.

For more information, please request your free copy of Concern's legacy guide. Contact Siobhán on 01 417 8020, email siobhan.oconnor@concern.net or visit www.concern.net/legacy – finding out more does not, of course, oblige you to leave a gift.

Concern Worldwide, a company limited by guarantee, Registered Company Number: 39647, Registered Revenue Number: CHY 5745, Registered Charity Number: 20009090, Registered in Ireland, Registered address is 52-55 Lower Camden St, Dublin 2
Image: Roge Wavio (29) of Kalacha, Marsabit, Kenya holds produce she has grown with support from Concern. Photographer: Jennifer Nolan / Concern Worldwide

Operation Smile

Charity Regulatory Authority No. 20054588 Revenue Number: CHY 15661

By remembering Operation Smile in your Will, you are leaving the gift of a lasting smile for a child born with a cleft condition.

Operation Smile envisions a future where health and dignity are championed through safe surgery. Get in touch with Kristen Bell, Legacy & Fundraising Manager, on 01 667 6659 or kristen@operationsmile.ie or visit operationsmile.ie/LastingSmile

Classifieds:
01 687 4094

The Irish Catholic
PREPAID CLASSIFIED AD COUPON

STATE UNDER WHICH HEADING YOUR AD IS TO APPEAR: _____

Minimum charge of €24.60 (inc. VAT) for 5 lines (25 words). Extra lines €4.92 each.

No. of insertions: _____ weeks
Miracle Prayer €40

Please print your advertisement in the coupon, placing ONE word in each space. Below, please print your name and address. Do you require a Box Number? YES NO (Please tick ✓) Box Number €6 extra.

1					
2					
3					€24.60
4					
5					
6					€29.52
7					€34.44

Name and contact detail form **MUST** be filled out

Name

Address

.....

Landline Mobile

I enclose Cheque/PO: €.....I wish to pay by Visa Mastercard Laser
My Visa/Mastercard/Lasercard number is: _____

Expiry Date:Signature

The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277. **Phone: 01 687 4094**

Leisure time

The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Anna Sadlier at anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie or call 01 679 3188



www.hospicefoundation.ie



Your heart for the homeless



Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering

Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email emma.murphy@mqi.ie

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork. Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

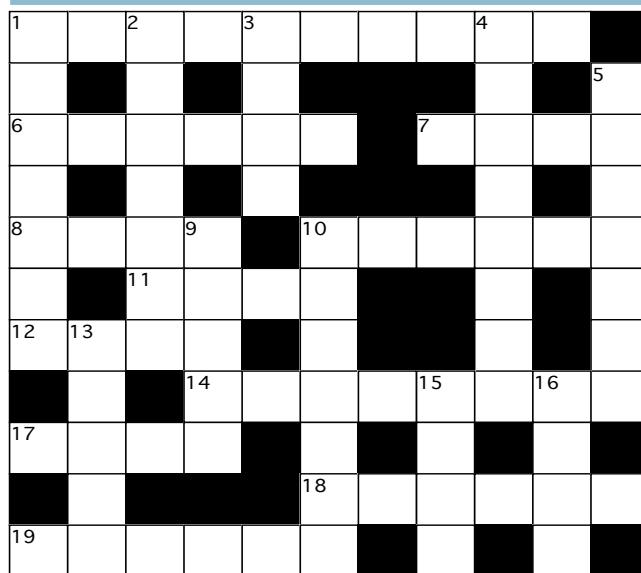
Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Children's 438



Across

- 1 Huge island near Africa or a film about animals escaping from a New York zoo (10)
- 6 Type of laugh (6)
- 7 Use a spoon (4)
- 8 Use it to get creases out of clothes (4)
- 9 You might pick them in an orchard (6)
- 11 You use them when rowing a boat (4)
- 12 Soapy bubbles (4)
- 14 Three babies born together (8)
- 17 There are thirty-one days in this summer month (4)
- 18 Baby (6)
- 19 The number of players on a soccer team (6)

begins "One for sorrow, two for joy" (7)

- 2 Feed it to a pet that barks (3,4)
- 3 Sport played with drivers and putters (4)
- 4 Gazelle and springbok are types of this deer-like creature (8)
- 5 A painter uses them (7)
- 9 Definitely not nice (5)
- 10 Painkilling tablet (7)
- 13 Regular, normal (5)
- 15 The opposite side to right (4)

Down

- 1 A rhyme about these birds

- 16 Very small (4)

SOLUTIONS, JUNE 16

GORDIUS NO. 563

Across – 1 Cub 3 Heavenwards 8 Lustre 9 Long jump 10 Blush 11 Sweat 13 Fined 15 Tuscany 16 Panache 20 Limit 21 Gates 23 Wharf 24 Mea culpa 25 Sequin 26 Make friends 27 Tee

Down – 1 Celebrating 2 Biscuits 3 Harsh 4 Volcano 5 Wages 6 Routed 7 Sap 12 Take offence 13 Final 14 Draft 17 Catapult 18 Imitate 19 Attack 22 Snuff 23 Weeps 24 Mum

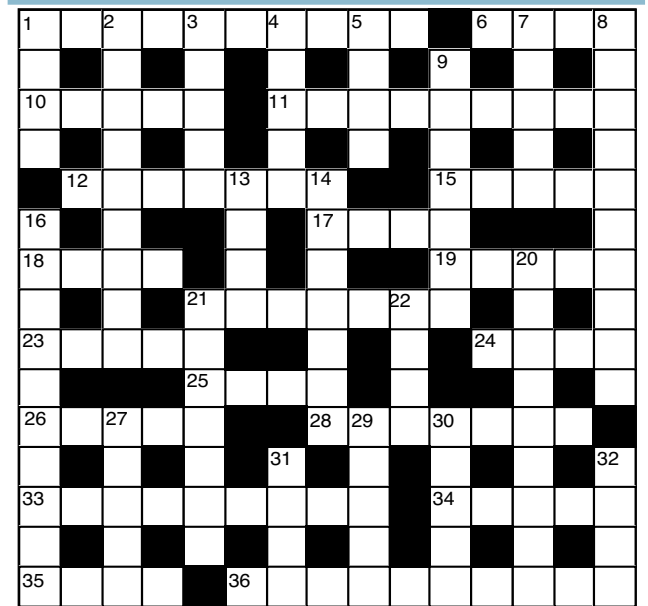
CHILDREN'S No. 437

Across – 1 Cut the grass 6 Leap year 8 Earl 9 Eats 10 Babysit 11 Tara 14 Starling 17 Wash 18 Enormous 19 Imps

Down – 1 Collect 2 Tractor 3 Hay 4 Rarely 5 Scorpion 7 Escalator 12 Alarm 13 Ashes 15 Limp 16 Gash

Crossword

Gordius 564



Across

- 1 Office communication (10)
- 6 Vegetable often described as 'curly' (4)
- 10 Stiff, inflexible (5)
- 11 Omits or excludes (6,3)
- 12 Tramp (7)
- 15 Fish that breaks the amber (5)
- 17 Trundle (4)
- 18 Use it to roast meat or bake bread (4)
- 19 Forcibly remove (5)
- 21 Academic division in a university (7)
- 23 Significantly overweight (5)
- 24 Append your name to an omen (4)
- 25 Wherein wheat is ground into flour (4)
- 26 Punctuation mark (5)
- 28 Where an earring is often attached (7)
- 33 Principal church of a diocese (9)
- 34 Furze or whin (5)
- 35 Merit (4)
- 36 Laughing uncontrollably - after the application of sutures? (2,8)

4 Synthetic material (5)

- 5 American State most associated with the Mormon religion (4)
- 7 Lacking in company (5)
- 8 Guessing, gauging approximately (10)
- 9 Stadium where the English soccer team usually plays its home games (7)
- 13 & 27d From the Latin, the school one once attended (4,5)
- 14 Difficulty, bother (7)
- 16 Powered two-wheeled vehicle (10)
- 20 Location of the Scottish Parliament (9)
- 21 Girls and women, for example (7)
- 22 Layer, echelon (4)
- 27 See 13 down
- 29 Apportion (5)
- 30 This lamp's not heavy (5)
- 31 Mischievous smile (4)
- 32 Vegetables which grow in pods (4)

Sudoku Corner

438

Easy

3		7				1		2
	4						3	
		9	1		3	5		
	5	2		9		6	8	
9				4				7
	6	8		3		4	9	
		6	8		5	3		
	3						1	
8		1				7		5

Hard

2							8	6
3	9		6				7	
		6			3	1		
		9	4		1		3	
				9				
	1		5		2	4		
		8	3			2		
	4				9		5	3
1	6							7

Last week's Easy 437

4	9	2	3	8	6	7	5	1
7	6	1	2	9	5	8	3	4
3	5	8	4	1	7	9	2	6
9	3	7	5	4	2	6	1	8
2	8	6	7	3	1	5	4	9
1	4	5	9	6	8	3	7	2
5	1	4	8	7	9	2	6	3
6	7	9	1	2	3	4	8	5
8	2	3	6	5	4	1	9	7

Last week's Hard 437

3	2	8	1	6	5	9	7	4
6	1	4	7	9	8	2	5	3
7	5	9	3	2	4	6	8	1
5	6	2	9	4	7	3	1	8
4	3	1	5	8	6	7	2	9
9	8	7	2	3	1	5	4	6
8	7	5	6	1	3	4	9	2
1	9	6	4	7	2	8	3	5
2	4	3	8	5	9	1	6	7

Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



New appointment an enormous shock for parishioners

I'M ON THE MOVE. After a ten-year sojourn in Newcestown and Farnivane, I'll be calling in the movers shortly. Objection is futile at this stage: how fortunate was I to spend ten years here.

I am not the only Cork and Ross priest to be moved this year. Some think that almost all will have to accept new appointments.

We have had a quiet spell, moves-wise, what with the retirement of one bishop and a new bishop being ordained and then getting used to us, and of course Covid but the quiet period has come to an end.

The shock of moving, for me, is nothing to the bemusement of the people of the parish. They have been told they will no longer have a resident priest. And even though I have been hinting at that possibility for years, and citing reasons why it might happen, the news has still come as an enormous shock.

Ordinary parish

The trouble is that this is no ordinary parish. A recent pastoral council compiled a list of parish vocations, and discovered that practically every townland in the parish had produced a priest, a brother or a nun; some have produced several. The book was depicted in a scroll of honour,



displayed in both churches, lest we forget our contribution to the universal Church.

And not only has Newcestown supplied priests and nuns a-plenty; how many rural parishes can claim the founder of a missionary movement among its natives? We can. Eddie Galvin from Newcestown founded the Maynooth Mission to China (Columbans) with John Blowick, and he is forever commemorated in our 1971 parish school, the only one in the diocese (we think) named after a bishop!

And vocation is not a thing of the past in the parish. We're proud that our native son, Ronan Sheehan, is to be ordained for Cork and Ross this year. We had just heard that he is to be ordained here, our first such event, when the news of the withdrawal of the resident priest was

made known. So we've had a bitter-sweet few weeks; it was an unhappy coincidence.

Fate

The fate of the parish's priest was revealed at a conference of west Cork parishes in early June, at which four lay people from each place attended with their priest. This Sunday-afternoon event was

more of a presentation than a consultation, with the withdrawal of their resident priest from four other parishes announced also (Rossmore, Aughadown, Caheragh and Kilmichael), each presented as a 'fait accompli'.

Some in our parish grumble that the bishop had not come personally to tell the people of this enormous change, to comfort and console. Others saw how hard that might be for him, whose bottom line would be that because priests are lacking, some have to do without – including us, this time round. And our suggestion during the conference that we might hang onto the diocese's latest ordinand attracted laughter, and sympathy – but no change of plan. New assignments are expected in July: watch this space!

'There you are, boy, safely home'

Daniel Coholan, the bishop of Cork from 1916 to 1954, was affectionately known as 'Danny Boy' in his diocese. Before dying aged 94, he carried the monstrance one last time in the Eucharistic procession, all around the city and back up to the cathedral. And depositing this weighty object on the altar, it is reported that he said (in the best Cork accent), "there you are, boy, safely home".

This was the same bishop who, on his deathbed, heard of the passing of his Church of Ireland counterpart – and remarked: "Now he knows who is the real bishop of Cork!"

Big push on the western front

Historians tell us of the 'Big Push' to end the First World War. This movement, part of Haig's offensive to end that interminable conflict, made its mark in West Cork.

In 1917, the year of the Big Push, Cork had a new bishop, Daniel Coholan; he had taken over from the 77-year-old Thomas O'Callaghan the previous year. Like all new bishops, he sought to make his mark. His first range of clerical changes were apparently extensive. The local paper's headline, 'Big Push on the Western Front' (referring to the WWI) was quickly adopted to describe Bishop Coholan's first sortie also!



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU

Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

- €..... HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU
- €..... UKRAINE APPEAL
- €..... WELLS AND CLEAN WATER
- €..... MASS OFFERINGS (Please state no. of Masses _____)
- €..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

To donate online go to www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address