

The Irish Catholic

GREEN GIANT

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Border bishop warns of fresh anxiety over 'no-deal' Brexit

Chai Brady

Border communities are fearful of a return to tensions in the region if Britain goes ahead with a threat to break a treaty agreeing a frictionless frontier, the country's newest bishop has warned.

Bishop of Kilmore Martin Hayes told *The Irish Catholic* he was aware that priests and parishioners in border parishes were nervous that a 'no-deal' Brexit could lead to a rise in tensions.

"There would be serious implications [of a 'no-deal' Brexit], north and south of the border," he said. "They [border parishioners and priests] just do not want to go back to the inconvenience of the past...or where you had customs checks on both sides of the border".

Guarantee

It comes after the British government confirmed that they are willing to break the treaty already agreed with the European Union which guarantees that there will be no hard border on the island of Ireland.

Bishop Hayes said: "There would also be a fear that tensions could rise again...people do not want to be returning to the past, they have enjoyed the relative peace of the last 20 years or so – and that would be shared by both the Catholic and Protestant communities along the border."

Bishop Hayes (60) also said he believes that vocations to the priesthood and the renewal of the Church will only happen when parishes

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No social distancing the Holy Spirit



Fr Gerry Comiskey confirms Shauna McLoughlin at St Mary's Church, Staghall, Co. Cavan as her sponsor Paula McDonagh looks on. This is the first time in his 40 years as a priest that Fr Comiskey has confirmed a group of young people, a job which is normally carried out by the bishop. The Confirmation was carried out under strict Covid-19 guidelines. Photo: Lorraine Teevan

DAVID QUINN

Mass has been relegated to a recreational activity

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SMART EATING

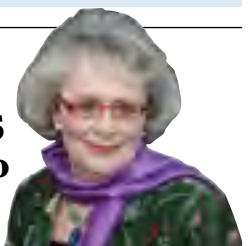
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MARY KENNY

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ENDING
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WHATEVER
IT TAKES



Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return next week

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*Names changed to protect identities.

Poor Mission Sunday could have ‘devastating effect’

Ruadhán Jones
World Missions Ireland (WMI) are appealing for donations to support the “life-giving work of missionaries” as Covid-19 threatens their main fund-raising event.
The annual World Mission Sunday (WMS) collection takes place around the world, but church closures and recessions could mean a significant reduction in donations, said Fr Michael O’Sullivan, national director of WMI.
“As an organisation we look after the poorest of the poor, whether it be in Africa, Asia or South America, so this is a very important time for us,” he told *The Irish Catholic*.
“Missionaries all over the world – seminaries, parishes,

dioceses – are depending very much on this support that comes from the Faithful in the pews,” he continued.
“Obviously it will have a devastating effect if we’re not able to support them in the way that we have been for many years.”
Funds
Last year, the World Mission Sunday appeal raised over €1.6 million and while WMI have pursued other means of raising funds, WMS remains their most important collection.
“In many of the mission countries, there’s great mission activity with many new parishes and many new ordinations – our support is essential to their basic running costs,” Fr Michael said.
In a statement from WMI, they explain that “in many poorer inaccessible parishes, it is missionaries who are on the front line; the implications in the months ahead will be devastating”.
“Covid-19 adds even more challenges for these women and men, many of whom are in war-torn countries; remote areas where political conflicts, violent protests, extreme poverty, malnutrition and diseases are rife.”
This year, WMS takes place on over the weekend of October 18. Its theme is ‘Together we can do more: blessed are the peacemakers’.
The collection goes towards the day-to-day costs of running churches, parishes and seminaries around the world.

Two thirds of Irish people in favour of overseas aid during pandemic
Staff reporter
The Irish association Dochás has revealed that in a recent survey of 1,000 adults in Ireland, two thirds responded positively to spending on overseas aid during the Covid-19 pandemic.
This new data comes as the pandemic rages on, with a recent estimate from the UN’s World Food programme saying that up to 270 million people will experience severe hunger this year, with a fear that up to 12,000 people per day could die of hunger by the end of 2020.
It is noted that this is potentially more deaths than Covid-19 could cause itself.

Anxiety over ‘no deal’ Brexit
» Continued from Page 1
prioritise youth ministry.
“Because of the fact that I have come from a youth faith movement and lay ministry, I am a great believer in promoting that...I am convinced that if we promote lay ministry, and involve young people, and give them a role [in the Church] then vocations will come out of that,” Bishop Hayes said.
“But, we need to allow young people to find their own feet,” he said, warning that a return to the past will not satisfy their spiritual hunger.
📖 See pages 15-20.

Assisted suicide disregards human dignity, says theologian

Jason Osborne
Assisted suicide and euthanasia have been described as “an assault on most vulnerable in our society” by leading theologian Prof. Eamonn Conway.
It comes on the heels of People Before Profit TD Gino Kenny’s launch of a Dying with Dignity Bill, which seeks to legalise assisted suicide. The bill is currently before the Dáil, with both the Labour Party and Sinn Féin pledging to support it.
Commenting on the issues of assisted suicide and euthanasia, Fr Conway said: “It’s a tragedy that people would believe that they find themselves in a situation where euthanasia or assisted suicide is their only option...it diminishes the dignity, both of them and of those who assist them.”
He insisted that “the argument will be about human autonomy, but human autonomy is illusional. If the Covid-19 crisis has taught us anything, it’s that we are not autonomous human beings, and we’re fundamentally interdependent”.
Fr Conway revealed that he comes at the issue not only as a theologian, but as a carer for

his elderly father.
“At a personal level, having cared for my father in my own home for the last two years, I have learned about the beauty and the dignity of old age and of human life as it becomes fragile. It is a real tragedy when we can’t find within us, as a society, the generosity and the decency to care for our most vulnerable.”

Bell rings for new exhibition



Pictured at the launch of ‘Glendalough: Power, Prayer and Pilgrimage’, the first new exhibition to open at the National Museum of Ireland since Covid-19, is Lynn Scarff, Director of the National Museum of Ireland with Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin looking at the bronze coated iron hand-bell, dated to the 8th/9th Century AD, found at a site near Glendalough and recently donated to the National Museum of Ireland by the Archbishop of Dublin on behalf of the diocese. The exhibition explores the history of one of Ireland’s best-known medieval monastic sites. The exhibition opened at the National Museum of Ireland on Kildare Street last week. Photo: Julien Behal Photography



Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return next week

One Covid-19 outbreak linked to churches since pandemic hit

Chai Brady

The Department of Health has confirmed that since the pandemic hit Ireland there has been just one outbreak in the Republic connected with a church, but the religious denomination was not specified.

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre "does not collect data on attendance at church or religious denomination for individual cases of Covid-19", according to a statement given to this paper.

The outbreak occurred between March 1 and September 14 and was linked to eight confirmed cases. For confidentiality reasons the location of the outbreak wasn't revealed.

An article signed by three infectious disease specialists, who are physician members of the Thomistic Institute Working Group on Infectious Disease Protocols for Sacraments and Pastoral Care in the US, which was published in *RealClearScience*, said

there had been no Covid-19 outbreaks linked to Catholic churches despite about one million public Masses taking place over a period of about four months.

The group was brought together at the behest of the US bishops to develop detailed guidance for how Catholic sacraments might be provided in the midst of the current pandemic, in accord with the current standards issued by the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control.

Guidelines

They stated: "The Good News: for Catholic churches following these guidelines, no outbreaks of Covid-19 have been linked to church attendance, even though we have examples...of asymptomatic, unknowingly infected individuals attending Mass and other parish functions.

"Their attendance could have led to an outbreak if appropriate precautions were not followed, yet in each case, we found no evidence

of viral transmission. We also reviewed recent public health and media reports regarding Covid-19 dissemination and found no reports of disease transmission, let alone outbreaks, in a Catholic church following such guidelines."

This comes as public

Masses, Confirmations and First Communions were cancelled in Dublin for three weeks after the Government's new guidelines were announced on Friday in response to cases of Covid-19 surging in the capital.

Archbishop Diarmuid Mar-

tin said the day after the Government's announcement: "I am seriously concerned that many people may be underestimating the seriousness of the situation in Co. Dublin and indeed now in other counties.

"The spread of the virus has reached serious levels

and constitutes a real risk of radically increased infection within the community.

"While there was no evidence of the virus being spread in worshipping communities, the measures in Dublin were appropriate at this time."

Bennett's green jersey win 'thrills' local parish

Ruadhán Jones

The community of Carrick-on-suir, Co. Tipperary, were "thrilled" as local Sam Bennett became the first Irishman to win a major jersey at the Tour de France since 1989.

The 29-year-old beat off a challenge from world champion Mads Pedersen to secure victory on the final stage of the Tour de France, having already claimed the best sprinter's green jersey earlier in the day.

Fr Jimmy Browne of St Nicholas Church, Carrick-on-suir, said the win gave the community "a complete lift in these difficult times".

Sam Bennett celebrates his green jersey success.



"Absolutely, it's a thrill to the community – everybody takes pride in something like that," he told *The Irish Catholic*, "especially when you're not able to go to matches and things like that, it was fantastic for people to be able to follow his progress."

Fr Browne officiated at Bennett's wedding last year and said he found him a hard-working, humble man.

"He wanted a church wedding and wanted everything about that to be dignified and correct," said Fr Browne. "You would not know that

he is Sam Bennett when you meet him, there's nothing about him at all to say, I'm a champion. A very, very humble chap."

Carrick-on-suir produced Ireland's last winner, Seán Kelly, and has a strong tradition in cycling, Fr Browne explained.

"Carrick of course has a great tradition of cycling and there's a fantastic cycling club here," he said.

"There's a man here who's over 80 and I saw him out on his bike yesterday and I was saying – he might not be as fast as Sam Bennett, but begorra his heart is every bit as big."

Overseas missionaries are in urgent crisis

In many poorer parishes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, it is missionaries who are on the front line.

These women and men already do so much. Walking hand-in-hand with marginalised communities, long before and long after any emergency. COVID-19 is adding even more challenges for missionaries, many of whom are in war-torn and remote communities where political conflicts, violent protests, extreme poverty, malnutrition and diseases are rife.

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New national president for Society of St Vincent de Paul

Ruadhán Jones

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) has announced the election of long-time member Rose McGowan as its new National President. Ms McGowan succeeds Kieran Stafford, whose three-year term ended on August 31.

From Dublin, Ms McGowan has been a member of the SVP from her schooldays, when she began visiting with the Society in North Inner City Dublin.

She is an experienced member of the SVP, having held many positions including National Vice-President, Trustee and Dublin Regional President.

Following her election, Ms McGowan said that the Covid-19 pandemic presents the most difficult challenge in the Society's 176-year history.

"Those who require our help can be assured that our volunteers and staff who have worked tirelessly over the past few months in difficult situations will continue to provide support as quickly as possible and with the empathy that has been a hallmark of the work of SVP," she said.

Covid-19 is 'dress rehearsal' for anti-Christ arrival

Chai Brady

An exorcist priest has said the coronavirus pandemic is a "dress rehearsal" before the coming of the anti-Christ, and that it's come as a result of human mistreatment of animals and nature.

Fr Pat Collins CM told *The Irish Catholic* the pandemic is a "tribulation" God has allowed to happen, which gives people an opportunity to change their lives and go back to Christ.

"I do believe that sometimes when a person develops an addiction or has a serious illness, they will think about their lives, they'll reassess their priorities, their values and all that," he said.

"I think that perhaps now is such an event. I think people are reassessing and I find many people are actually praying much more than they use to and taking their religious duties more seriously."

End times

He explained that he believes "all the little tribulations we go through are dress rehearsals for the end times. Where we're actually given a chance to turn our lives around". This is discussed in a book he published this year called *Holistic Healing: A Christian Approach*.

Fr Collins asks in his book whether people have to experience an even more devastating tribulation than Covid-19 "before they realise that the

current pandemic and its economic aftermath is a dress rehearsal for the advent of the Antichrist and the great tribulation (cf. Rev 7:14) which will precede the second coming of Jesus".

Although the current pandemic can't be directly linked to the Devil, he says he is at work in the background, with

the cause of the pandemic linked to humanity's mistreatment of animals and the natural world.

Disruption

"We gather that this pandemic has come from the animal world, and is part of that disruption in creation, and of course the fact that we're not

respecting the created world as Pope Francis has pointed out in *Laudato Si'*, it's kicking back on us, and that's the pandemic.

"I think as long as we keep abusing creation we're going to have more pandemics and maybe much worse ones than the present one."

See page 13.

A blessing behind closed doors



Fr Shane Costello is pictured after celebrating Mass for the Poor Clares Galway. Fr Costello, who is of the neighbouring Tuam Archdiocese was ordained in Knock Basilica on August 23.

Fr Flannery spurns Vatican plan that would have allowed return to ministry

Jason Osborne

A controversial Irish priest who has been in a dispute with the Vatican for several years over his views on priesthood and the Eucharist

has rejected a plan from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that would have restored him to public ministry.

Redemptorist Fr Tony Flannery has been forbidden to

exercise public ministry since 2012 after he was censured for saying that he no longer believed that "the priesthood as we currently have it in the Church originated with Jesus" or that he designated "a special group of his followers as priests".

Fr Flannery said he believes his priestly ministry has ended.

The priest revealed on his website that he had been asked by the Vatican in July to affirm Church teaching in a number of areas, including the inadmissibility of women for ordination, homosexuality, same-sex relationships and gender theory.

He said he refused.

According to documents published on Fr Flannery's website, the Vatican congregation responded that he "should not return to public ministry prior to submitting a signed statement regarding his positions on homosexuality, civil unions between persons of the same sex, and the admission of women to the priesthood".

Fr Flannery said he was "not surprised, but disappointed and saddened" by the Vatican's response. "In my view, it is a document that, both in tone and content, would be more at home in the 19th Century. I could not possibly sign those propositions," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Spanish triathlete gives up medal to rival who went wrong way

A Spanish athlete has been praised for his incredible sportsmanship after sacrificing third place at the the 2020 Santander Triathlon to give it to a competitor who took a wrong turn on the course.

British athlete James Teagle was in third place in last Saturday's race when he took a wrong turn just metres from the finish line.

Diego Méndrida overtook him but noticed the error and stopped in time to allow Mr Teagle to cross first, the pair shaking hands before completing the race.

"This is something my parents and my club taught me since I was a child. In my view it should be a normal thing to do," Mr Méndrida wrote on Instagram.

Homeless deaths on Dublin streets continue to soar

Homeless deaths have continued to climb rapidly in Dublin, with the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive (DRHE) reporting that eight more people died in August, bringing the total deaths on Dublin streets this year to 39.

This figure already exceeds the total death for 2018 and 2019, despite a quarter of the year remaining. 2018 saw 35 deaths, while 2019 saw 34.

Aontú leader Peadar Tóbin, whose party acquired the report from the DRHE, lambasted the Government for its neglect of the homeless.

"There is something deeply tragic in the fact that the week when the death rate appears to have peaked was the same week that the Government voted to give Junior Ministers a pay rise," he said.

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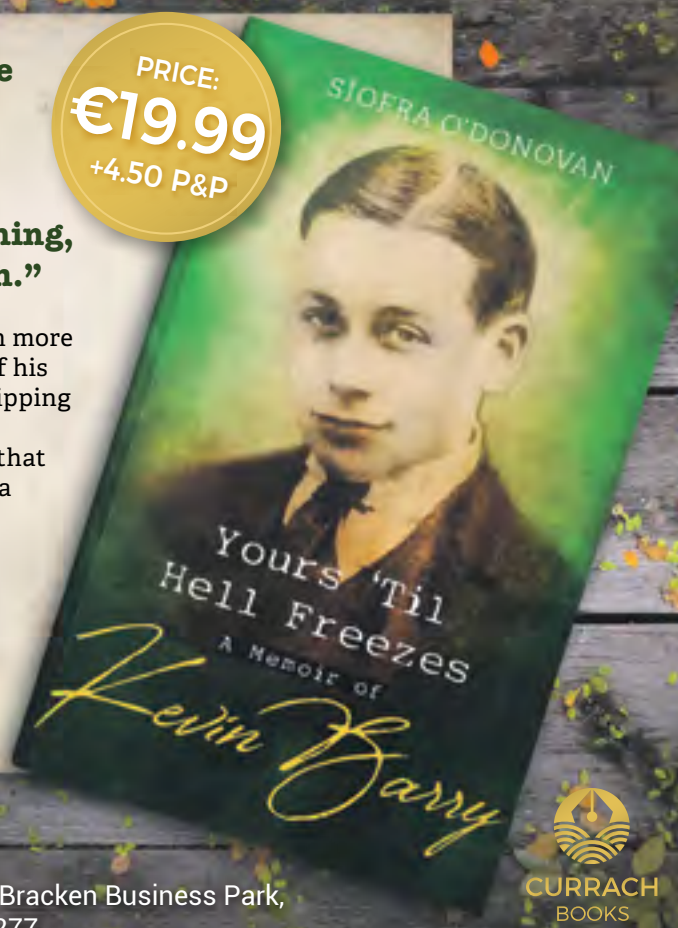
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**"Kevin Barry gave his young life
For the cause of liberty.
But a lad of eighteen summers,
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As he walked to death that morning,
He proudly held his head on high."**

For Siofra O'Donovan, Kevin Barry was much more than a song played in the local pub. As one of his few descendants, she grew up listening to gripping tales of espionage about her ancestor and cherished details about his life and heroism that are not only celebrated by her family but by a grateful nation.

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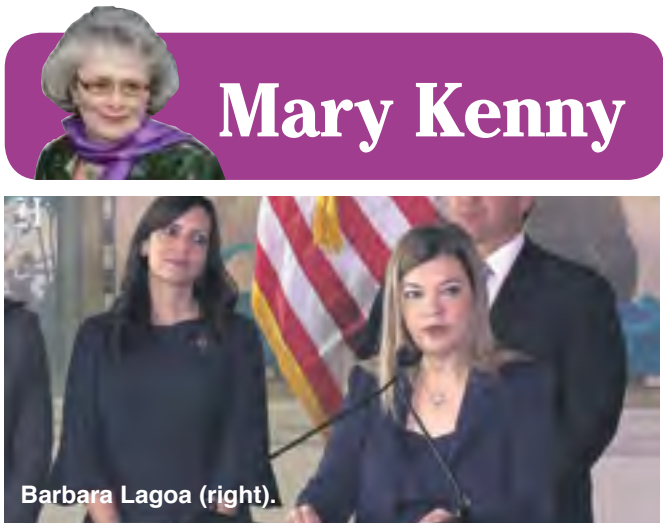
Issue of gender balance in the US Supreme Court is not so clear-cut

President Trump has said that, following the death of Ruth Bader Ginsberg, he intends to nominate another woman to be a Judge in the American Supreme Court. That's great!

There are two leading, clever women lawyers who are candidates. In an era when gender balance is upheld as an ideal, you might think that there would be tremendous female and feminist support for these two brilliant Portias – Amy Coney Barrett, aged 48 and Barbara Lagoa, aged 52.

Gender balance

Ah, but, as George Orwell warned in *Animal Farm*, in the ideology of equality, some are more equal than others! And being a very accomplished woman who is qualified to serve as a top judge doesn't count for



'gender balance' if you are the 'wrong' kind of clever and accomplished woman. Amy Coney Barrett,

professor of law at Notre Dame, is a committed Catholic, and a mother of seven – with five biological

● The Irish author Emma Donoghue – her novel *Room* was widely acclaimed and made into a movie – was asked by the *Financial Times*: “Do you believe in an afterlife?” She gave a positive, yet subtle reply: “I do, but I try never to talk about religion in interviews as it’s so hard to do without looking smug or creepy.” A self-effacing response, but also one that deflects the tone of mockery that can be aimed at celebrities who are people of faith.

children and two adopted from Haiti. She has been castigated by Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein just for being a Catholic – “the dogma lives loudly within you, and that is a concern”, said the senator about the law professor's views on human life.

“Ruth Bader Ginsberg had a cult following...especially since she upheld liberal abortion law”

Barbara Lagoa is a Cuban-American and the first Hispanic woman to be a US Circuit Judge. She is married to the lawyer Paul Huck, and the mother of three daughters.

She is also a practising Catholic, who says that her Faith has sustained her through the highs and lows of life.

She is one of President Trump's personal favourites, which, again, probably means that the feminist movement will not support this particular “gender balance”.

Ruth Bader Ginsberg had a cult following among feminists and progressives, especially since she upheld liberal abortion law. Yet she was good friends with her late colleague Justice Anthony Scalia, who was pro-life. He said she was “a very nice person – except for her views on the law!” A commendable example of respect for the person, even where the values differ.

All the same, it's worth bearing in mind that a candidate can be of the right gender, but that doesn't necessarily mean they will be favoured by those who demand 'gender balance'. It's not enough to be a woman.

You have to be the correct sort of woman.

Boris' broad Church indeed

It was a surprise to learn that Boris Johnson and his partner Carrie Symonds had their baby son Wilfred baptised at Westminster Cathedral in mid-September. The ceremony was described as “very beautiful” and it was carried out by Fr Daniel Humphreys.

It was known that Boris (who was born in New York) was baptised a Catholic, as his mother's choice, although he switched to the Church of England at Eton – and to be honest, has never been much of a churchgoer anyway. But it's something of a revelation that Carrie is a Catholic, and she, apparently chose Westminster Cathedral as the location for the christening.

Will Boris and Carrie now have a Catholic church wedding? Canonically, despite his two previous marriages, they are perfectly entitled to one.

Brutalist architecture doesn't age well



My Dublin dwelling is just opposite the campus of University College Dublin, and until last week, I never knew that it was set in beautiful parkland, with two lakes embellished by gliding swans, where the public may freely take walks. (And in current conditions, self-isolating in the wide open spaces.) So I explored it for the first time recently, and certainly, it is a stunning estate, comprising 300 acres in all, planted with so many lush trees, amidst green fields.

Ugly concrete

But the buildings! UCD was moved from Earlsfort Terrace to Belfield in 1964, and the architecture of the university reflects the 'brutalist' style of the 1960s, all done in ugly

concrete. (The architect was from Warsaw, at a time when Poland's capital, too, was adorned by the brutalist architectural style, much favoured by Stalin.)

Concrete in buildings wears badly: it becomes dull and tarnished, showing the stains of the weather. Compare, by contrast, the construction of Trinity College Dublin, built in 1592, using organic stone, instead of grim concrete. A handsome building which has survived over 400 years rather better than its competitor has survived 56.

Even the most stalwart defenders of the 1960s concede that it was a terrible era for architecture. So, alas for UCD's brutalism. Still, the woodland is lovely and the swans enchanting.

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Family still waiting for justice after 'tragic' misdiagnosis led to abortion

Ruadhán Jones

TD Peadar Tóibín has criticised the Government for "dragging its feet" over a "black-and-white" case of injustice after a child was aborted last year following a false diagnosis.

In March last year, a family was told that their unborn child had a fatal foetal abnormality by a member of staff at the National Maternity Hospital.

The baby was aborted, but following enquiries from the mother, it was revealed that a further genetic test showed the diagnosis was false.

Efforts

Speaking in the Dáil on 17 September, Dep. Tóibín accused the State of stymieing the efforts of the parents to achieve justice for their son.

"The hospital has not co-operated in an independent, fair investigation," he said. "The previous Taoiseach, Deputy Varadkar, stonewalled me on a number of occasions when I tried to raise this issue.

"It is incredible that...no efforts have yet been made

by the previous Minister for Health, the previous government or this Government to make sure that the family in question found justice."

According to Dep. Tóibín, the false diagnosis was given to the child's mother without fulfilling the necessary guidelines or adhering to the law. It is also alleged that medical professionals who were signing off on abortions have a commercial interest in the companies that

produced the fatally insufficient test.

Investigation

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, the Meath TD said the situation is "unbelievable".

"It's so obviously black and white, wrong on many levels, not least in the law of the land as it stands," he said. "What has to happen is a fully independent investigation. The people who carried out that wrong need to be held to account.

"It's also an issue of public health because there is nothing stopping this from happening again – indeed, it may have happened since and families may not have known about it," he added.



Peadar Tóibín TD.



Great to see you two again!

Oisín O'Connor and Millie Rose O'Callaghan, first cousins, are pictured on the day of their First Communion at Robinstown Church, Co. Meath. Their photos appeared previously in this paper for their baptisms.

Zooming towards evangelisation

A Zoom conference with well-known speakers has been organised for the month of October entitled 'Evangelising Irish Culture Today'.

It is being organised by 'The Hook of Faith'. In a letter about the event Wexford-based Fr Billy Swan said: "Pope Francis said that 'it is imperative to evangelise cultures in order to enculturate the Gospel. In countries of Catholic tradition, this means encouraging, fostering and reinforcing a richness which already exists'" (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 69).

"This initiative is a response to those directives and tries to shine the light of the Gospel on the most important areas of Irish cultural life including medicine, law, science, the media, politics, family, education, sport and diocese/parish."

Speakers include Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, Sen. Ronan Mullen, Fr Michael Drumm, Bairbre Cahill, Breda O'Brien, Fr Philip Mulryne OP, Seán O'Leary, Steve Warner, Patrick Treacy and Seán O'Leary.

Depaul sees success despite Covid challenge

Jason Osborne

Homeless charity Depaul has revealed that they've helped 256 people to leave direct provision centres since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. This figure involves 140 adults and 116 children, with 55 families included.

The charity worked exclusively with people who'd been granted legal status to remain in Ireland, across seven counties.

Depaul's CEO, David Carroll commented on the numbers, saying: "Given what the country is dealing with at the moment we are really happy to see such a big move on rate in terms of our work within direct provision. "This work plays a vital role in helping people move on from direct provision once they have been granted legal status to remain in Ireland."

He continued: "Since Covid-19 hit we have adapted our work practices enormously and I am proud to say we have still managed to provide vital support and help to help families and individuals move on from direct provision and to integrate into communities all across Ireland and to become part of Irish society."

As of August 2020, there were 5,465 people residing in 44 centres across the country. An added 1,408 people were staying in emergency accommodation.

By the end of July, 810 people were housed in accommodation centres with legal status to remain in Ireland.

Francis Mary – a patron saint for a pandemic

There's more trouble down the farm today. In last Sunday's Gospel it was grumbling over wages in the vineyard; this Sunday (Matthew 21:28-31), it's a father's confrontation with a son who said he would do the job but he didn't. Conversely, the other son stamped out in blunt refusal at first, but on second thoughts he did the job. If you are asked by God to go work on his farm you must be willing to muck in and let your hands get dirty.

Jesus originally addressed this parable to the Jewish chief priests and elders. Many of those leaders were Pharisees whose name means the separated ones. Their religion grew out of the fear of being contaminated by the sins of others. Self-preservation became their ideal. They offered no hope for the sinner.

But there are times when social distancing is the opposite to what is required. The harvest on the farm was ripe for picking. The mission of John the Baptist showed that there were many sinners who were ready to respond to anybody who would give them a second chance in life. John offered them water, washing, renewal, a clean

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



sheet and a new beginning.

Then as John promised, Jesus came with the Holy Spirit and fire. He announced good news for the poor. He reached out to the sick and the sinner, the downgraded and depressed, the marginals and the outcasts. The self-preserving Pharisees could not take this mixing with sinners, for you cannot put new wine into old wineskins. Jesus was a scandal in their eyes.

Call to action

To be a genuine follower of Jesus Christ, one is called to be missionary and apostolic: to work in his fields. Pope Francis warned: "There is always the risk that some moments of prayer can become an excuse for not offering one's life in mission; a privatised lifestyle can lead Christians to take refuge in some false forms of religion." This was the way of the son who said

'yes' but did nothing when it came to action. A privatised religion sets out to say your prayers and save your soul. Heavenly minded but no Earthly good. Don't get your hands dirty, don't let your comfortable schedule be upset.

A patron for today

The image of getting your hands dirty seems inappropriate for the direction I am taking in this reflection, but I want to focus on the people whose field takes them to the frontline of service during the current Covid-19 pandemic: medical service, nursing, teachers, bus drivers, shop assistants, etc.

A patron for these frontliners is St Francis Mary of Camporosso, an Italian Capuchin who lived in Genoa in the 19th Century. This reflection developed as we celebrated his feastday last Saturday.

Coming from a poor family he had little education because he had to mind sheep. In his early 20s he joined the Capuchin Franciscan Order. Appointed as a questor, his job was to beg money for the support of the friars and the care of the poor. He had a huge love for the poor.

Genoa is a major port and Francis Mary spent a lot of time in the docks at the service of the sailors. There were no mobile phones in those days but Francis Mary was gifted with an extraordinary telepathy enabling him to give these sailors accurate information about their families at home.

In 1866 a dreadful cholera took hold of Genoa. Like many others, he prayed for the city and served the sick in any way possible. He knew that praying through words is powerful but it is far more powerful when backed up with action.

He had a habit of making bargains with God, that he would make a certain sacrifice if God would grant some important request.

He took to heart the words of Jesus before his Passion that a person can have no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. Taking these words literally, he offered his life in exchange for the ending of the epidemic. He caught the disease and died two days later. The story goes that the epidemic began to diminish from that day on.

I see him as a patron during the current pandemic, inspiring us in three ways: to pray, to back up prayer with acts of kindness or self-denial and to offer up whatever we are suffering as a sharing in the cross of Christ. So, let us begin with prayer.

Prayer

Compassionate Lord Jesus, while on Earth you brought healing to many people. We humbly implore that you would lay your healing hand on all victims of the Covid-19 virus.

We ask you to protect all whose frontline service of the sick places them in a very vulnerable situation.

May we have the generosity of heart to move out of self-comfort to be available to others in their needs.

O God, the light of all wisdom and knowledge, we pray for the guidance of scientists and doctors who are searching for the appropriate vaccine to eradicate the Covid-19 virus.

① Extract from Silvester O'Flynn, Gospel Reflections and Prayers, Columba Books.

Young People Becoming the Driving Force of Faith in Families

When Joanne Cotter's 14-year old son Ronan came home and said he was going to a Catholic youth group, two things were immediately obvious to her. First, he was only going because they promised pizza. Second, NET Ministries who were running the local youth group were something new, as Joanne had never come across a Catholic youth group before.

Having met the NET team in his Co. Mayo school when they came to visit his religion class, Ronan says that when his friend invited him to go along he had no idea what to expect. "When I met them I didn't believe in God, faith wasn't something I was into at all. None of my friend group at the time believed either."

What he found at the youth group was a team of young people aged between 18 and 25, who had given a year of their lives to be missionaries in Ireland. Lilly from Florida, USA says that part of the reason she came to do NET Ireland was the influence of Sr Clare Crockett from Derry who was based in her home parish at the time. "I see the impact that faith has had in my own life, and I wanted to offer that to Irish young people as well."

Having enjoyed the youth group despite himself, Ronan continued to go every week, and eventually found himself at a *Surf Sand Son* retreat at the NET Training & Outreach Centre in Rosslough, Co. Donegal. He was glad of a week-end away: "I was having a hard time at school, I started getting bullied and I wasn't doing good. I got thinking about the NET team, because they were always happy. I wanted whatever they had."

Adoration

It was on the Saturday of the retreat during a time of Adoration, that the Ronan prayed the first real prayer of his life.

"I walked into the chapel, and sat there for a while. I knew that the white host was Jesus because the NET team had explained it to us. I didn't know what I was supposed to do, but I said 'God if you're real, show me.' I felt this warmth move through me, and a sudden burst of happiness. When I walked out again, everything was different, I had a completely different perspective on God. I knew that I wanted to live my faith properly and I asked the NET team how to go about it. They advised me on how to pray and answered all my questions."

Having seen him come back from the retreat and gone straight to another one the following weekend, Ronan's mother Joanne began to see a change in him.

"My mam was saying 'what has gotten into you with this faith stuff?' She could see things were different because I started helping her more around the house. After two surfing retreats, and her



Bishop Alan McGuckian, Archbishop Eamonn Martin and Bishop Emeritus Philip Boyce with the NET Missionaries and Staff, Thanksgiving Mass May 2019.

meeting the NET team she saw that I was happy and she was fine with it."

This change prompted Joanne to explore faith for herself. "I saw Ronan so broken and upset, he'd even been sent messages to kill himself. I wanted him to be around good people so when I saw that he was happier around NET I got on board 100% with it, for his sake. But it wasn't until the NET Thanksgiving Mass in Letterkenny that I really started to want it for myself."

“What we are finding is young people coming to faith, often from a non-faith background”

After a "life-changing" experience in Medjugorje, she began to say the Rosary every day.

"My faith is really important to me now. Anytime I'm upset or something's gone wrong I ask Our Lady to guide me."

"When I see a group of Ronan's friends sitting around my kitchen table talking about God, talking about respecting women, it gives me a great sense of peace. I don't have to worry about Ronan, he has friends now that he can depend on and trust."

Ronan says that he wants to give a year to NET when he leaves school. Martin Moran, NET's chaplain, says that NET will be delighted to have Ronan. "He's one of the most exceptional young men I have ever met. He's been the driving force of faith in the family."



Castlebar NET Team with youth and Fr Shane Sullivan. Ronan Whelan is in the middle

Martin says that family values are being submerged beneath the power of the culture. It's very difficult for good parents to even stand up in the current. It's heart-breaking stuff."

But, he says, NET Ministries is seeing signs of hope. "What we are finding is young people coming to faith, often from a non-faith background."

"NET works in one area – going to where young people are. But they need the support of faithful Catholics who want to share in that mission. The responsibility of bringing hope is for all of us, in whatever way we can help. In this current climate when the Irish Church is reeling in the aftermath of lockdown and many families are not returning to Mass, it is more necessary than ever that people would come and make the mission happen with us."

About NET Ministries:

Many faithful Catholics feel hopeless about their young people leaving the Church. NET Ministries is an all-Ireland youth ministry whose aim is to invite young and old to become missionaries changing lives forever by encouraging young

people to encounter Jesus and embrace the life of the Church.

If you would like to learn more about NET Ministries and enable missionaries like Lilly to transform the lives of people like Ronan and Joanne, speak to Connor on 0749190606 or visit their website at www.netministries.ie.



Surf Sand Son Retreat at NET Training and Outreach Centre Co. Donegal

“It was on the Saturday of the retreat during a time of Adoration, that the Ronan prayed the first real prayer of his life”

Breda O'Brien

The View



Learning to live amid ongoing lockdowns is a must for parishes

Like all other Catholics in Dublin last weekend, I was unable to attend Mass due to the level three restrictions designed to lower the numbers of Covid-19 cases. Although during the original lockdown I was very grateful to have live streamed liturgies, nothing replaces worshipping in a real-life community.

Still, it is amazing how quickly we adapt to new realities. For example, it felt slightly odd to be viewing a celebration of Mass without wearing a mask and even odder to be able to sing along with the hymns.

As a second-level teacher, I find it strange that I cannot attend Mass in a carefully spaced and supervised environment where everyone who is not from the same household sits two metres apart.

Yet I am expected on Monday to teach in a school where hundreds of teenagers sit a mere metre apart in classes, cheerfully mill together centimetres apart when moving classrooms, and often ignore social distancing completely once they leave school.

Currently, 15-24 year olds currently account for 22% of cases. It is not unreasonable to suggest that at least some of the transmission among 15-18 year olds is due to mixing in school.

Heroic effort

I find the inconsistency particularly strange given that most parishes with which I am familiar have made a heroic effort to implement the necessary Covid-19 restrictions. There is no evidence that outbreaks are happening as a result of church attendance.

It is sad but it is our reality for the next few weeks. Kildare, Offaly and Laois have already experienced this kind of mini-lockdown and it is likely to become a feature of our lives for the next year or more.

Already, there is evidence from the Iona Institute/Amarach research that some people are not going to return to Mass in churches. Even those who had the habit of going regularly rapidly develop the habit of not going. The Amarach poll shows that 4% of those who attended Mass before the crisis don't plan on returning, while 19% are unsure.

Those figures will only rise if increased restrictions happen on a regular basis.

What can churches do?



Children respecting social distancing in school...why isn't this good enough for churches in Dublin?

Luckily, many parishes are still in a position to stream services but I think more is needed. Some bishops made tremendous use of social media, for example, Archbishop Eamon Martin. *iCatholic* continues to do sterling work, not only preparing children for the sacraments but providing lively programming.

Parishes are going to have to get used to a hybrid ministry, where the online aspect of mission becomes more important.

Archbishop Alexander Sample [pictured right] of Portland, Oregon, has conducted Friday Chapel Chats from his personal chapel. He begins with the Angelus and follows with a short message which often includes commentary on current events in the light of the gospel. For example, on July 24, he discussed the violent demonstrations, rioting and looting in Portland. He avoids politicising



issues but also makes it clear both that being Catholic demands a commitment to justice and peace, and that prayer is central to our lives. His chapel chats are low budget but popular and could be emulated by many parishes.

There is also an opportunity to start virtual book and film clubs. A parish could decide, for example,

to get a group to watch *The Chosen* (which I wrote about recently in *The Irish Catholic*) and to have an online discussion afterwards. Money is tight in parishes but a subscription to *Word on Fire* is still good value and Bishop Barron's videos could be viewed and discussed in a similar way.

“Just as we found volunteers to steward and to clean, we will need volunteers to begin evangelising a rapidly secularising society”

At the same time, in very difficult circumstances, we need to keep parish life alive, too. We can no longer have the community-building cup of tea after Mass. Simple things like prayer boards, where people can pin their prayer

requests and know that there is a whole church community praying for them, can have a big impact. These can be both real-life bulletin boards and also have a virtual counterpart online.

In the long-term, we will need to ask people to help to rebuild. Just as we found volunteers to steward and to clean, we will need volunteers to begin evangelising a rapidly secularising society.

Practical problem

There is also a practical problem. Church collections both inside and outside the church have plummeted. Crosscare in Dublin, a really vital part of Catholic outreach, had their major church collection last weekend, just as the churches were closed again. The reduction in donations will have a devastating impact on their services.

Similarly, St Vincent de Paul and hundreds of other charities are losing out. Not to mention that priests, already often on wages lower than minimum wage, have also taken pay cuts. In the short term, this is one practical thing we can do – donate to these good causes.

“It is sad but it is our reality for the next few weeks. Kildare, Offaly and Laois have already experienced this kind of mini-lockdown and it is likely to become a feature of our lives for the next year or more”

It's been said that if your name is held in the hearts of others, you will never truly die.

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The Government has relegated Mass to a recreational activity



While fighting Covid-19 might save lives, it can also cost lives, livelihoods and future prospects, writes **David Quinn**

At the time of writing, Dublin appears to be the only place in the whole of Europe that does not permit public worship, including public Masses. Places with much higher infection rates than Dublin are permitting public worship, including the likes of Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam.

Those cities are permitting public worship not because they are careless about lives, but because they want their response to Covid-19 to be proportionate.

'Proportionate' is a word that hasn't been used enough in the debate about the virus. Anything we do to fight the infection has to take other goods in society into account.

What we have seen since the arrival of the virus in Ireland is missed cancer treatments, heart surgeries, a rise in domestic violence and probably soon we will see a rise in depressive illness, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide. That is in addition to the huge numbers of people seeing their economic prospects smashed and the children who have suffered big educational setbacks.

In other words, while fighting the virus might save lives, it can also cost lives, livelihoods and future prospects. This is why the response to it has to be balanced and proportionate.

Crucially, getting the balance right is not a scientific or medical decision. It is a political, communal and moral one which every one of us has the right to influence.

Capacity

Science can tell us about the disease, and about how to fight it, but it has no capacity whatsoever to tell us how much moral weight should be attached to fighting the virus and how much moral weight should be attached to all the other things I have just listed like missed cancer treatments and lost jobs.

Weight must even be attached to whether we are still allowed



go to the hairdresser or barber or a restaurant, a pub, a coffee shop, to buy clothes and, of course, to attend Mass.

The only contribution a scientist can make to this discussion is to inform us roughly how much risk each of these things involves.

In its new 'living with Covid' plan, the Government has outlined five levels of restrictions from few at level one to an almost complete lockdown again at level five.

Most of the country is currently at level two, but Dublin is currently at level three and a half.

Under level two you can still go to Mass, but under level three you cannot. However, at level three you can go to a restaurant, get your hair done, go to a pub that serves food and go shopping.

The experts advising the Government have obviously decided that going to your hairdresser is worth the risk at level three, but going to Mass is not. Is this justified? It is not.

To justify it, the Government and NPHET (currently led by Dr Ronan Glynn), would have to show that since we could return to Mass at the end of June, Mass attendance has been shown to be a risky

activity. In fact, since that time only one outbreak has occurred in any place of worship in the entire country (see page 3).

Why is that? It's because priests and laypeople alike have been doing a fantastic job keeping them safe.

An army of volunteers is keeping churches clean, ensuring everyone is wearing facemasks, that numbers attending are at the allowed limit and that people are maintaining a proper distance from each other.

“This only shows the low priority the Government attaches to public worship. It simply does not regard it as very important”

All this effort has borne fruit, so why stop public worship but allow recreational activities like going out to eat to continue?

In the US, an estimated one million public Masses have taken place nationwide since bans on public worship ended in almost all states and cities, and no outbreaks

have occurred in any church that has been following the safety guidelines. This is according to the 'Thomistic Institute Working Group on Infectious Disease Protocols for Sacraments & Pastoral Care'.

Admittedly, Dublin is now somewhere between levels three and four in its restrictions and therefore indoor dining has stopped again, but the fact remains that going to a restaurant is clearly a higher priority for the Government than going to Mass because the former is allowed under level 3 and the latter is not.

The Government would probably not want to admit this, but it is probably motivated by the fact that keeping restaurants open saves jobs while permitting public worship does not.

However, once again this only shows the low priority the Government attaches to public worship. It simply does not regard it as very important even though every other part of Europe, including far more secular countries than Ireland, clearly respect the rights of worshippers more than we do.

In a recent document from the

Vatican called 'Let us Return to the Eucharist with Joy!', Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Liturgy and Sacraments, addresses restrictions on public worship. He says that the Church should cooperate with the civil authorities for the sake of public health.

But he adds: "It is up to the prudent but firm action of the Bishops to ensure that the participation of the faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist is not reduced by public authorities to a 'gathering', and is not considered comparable or even subordinate to forms of recreational activities."

The level three restrictions show that this is exactly what the Government and NPHET have done. A recreational activity like dining out is permitted, but attending Mass is not.

The bishops must raise their voices. They should coordinate with other denominations and other faiths and insist that at a minimum the Government should move the ban on public worship into level four, not level three, and insist on hard evidence backing up such a ban, not hypothetical scenarios.

Anything else lets down the Faithful and relegates public worship to less than a recreational activity like going to a restaurant.

“Under level two you can still go to Mass, but under level three you cannot. However, at level three you can go to a restaurant, get your hair done, go to a pub that serves food and go shopping”

Pope Francis: Climate change 'causing immense hardship for the most vulnerable among us'



Extreme weather causing widespread droughts and floods, destroying crops and food supplies in world's most vulnerable countries.

The Pope expressed concern over the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather phenomena and the desertification of the soil. With climate change related hunger and malnutrition increasing, Pope Francis warned, "We have caused a climate emergency that gravely threatens nature and life itself, including our own."

The Pope made his comments as part of a written appeal for the 'World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation'.

Worldwide, droughts and floods have more than doubled since the early 1990's with Africa particularly badly affected.

An increase in droughts – combined with ongoing conflict and unemployment – means dry spells have an increasingly destructive impact on people living in already vulnerable communities. Such as those in Niger, Western Africa where 80% of the population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods.

This year droughts and floods have already caused a 12% drop in cereal production in Niger compared with the already poor yields of 2018/19. 2.7 million people are now projected to be in severe acute food insecurity – urgently needing food if they are to survive.

“Listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer most because of the unbalanced ecology.”

– Pope Francis

Since 1968 Irish charity Concern Worldwide has worked around the world helping alleviate hunger caused by natural or man-made disasters. Over this period climate change has become one of the key drivers of hunger.

In 2019 alone, Concern helped 28.6m people in 24 of the world's poorest

countries – including Niger.

Concern doesn't just provide emergency food to those affected by hunger. The charity continues to work alongside communities so they are able to feed themselves long into the future.

People's lives are transformed when they are equipped and empowered to do it for themselves. This is how real progress is made.

One of Concern's most vital funding sources – on which it absolutely depends – is gifts in the Wills of its supporters. These gifts ensure Concern will always be there for people in need of a helping hand.

What Concern's help looks like

In Niger life is a *constant* struggle for survival. A struggle which becomes almost impossible during the annual 'hunger gap'.

Causing untold suffering, the annual hunger gap is a desperate period. Food from the last harvest has run out and it will be months until more is available.

During this time, normal life grinds to a halt. Children leave education to help with agricultural chores at home. Adults travel anywhere they can to find work to earn even the smallest amount to support their families.

Every day becomes a terrifying battle to find food.

The hunger gap used to last 3 months, ending when the harvest was ready. But *climate change has made this terrible problem much worse*, with infrequent rainfall and rising temperatures drastically reducing crops.

As a result this torturous period now lasts 5 months from April to September, with people spending almost half their year struggling to stay alive.

And Covid-19 has further exacerbated an already dreadful situation. Restricted movement and border closures are impacting supplies to local markets, pushing prices up. Now even those who manage to work can't buy food because it's too expensive. Seeds for next season's crops are also being affected by these shortages. This means the pandemic's

deadly effects will be felt next year too.

Vulnerable families, who already have little to eat, are in grave danger.

But thanks to gifts in Wills, Concern is able to immediately support families in desperate need and equip them to support themselves long into the future.

For families affected by climate change in countries like Niger, one of the ways this is achieved is by providing communities with drought-resistant seeds, proven to yield more food ... the tools needed to farm their land ... and training to adopt climate-smart techniques. For example, crop rotation and composting to keep the soil in the best condition. And methods to capture and keep as much rain as possible.

Thanks to generous people leaving Concern a gift in their Wills, families can now grow their own food in their own vegetable gardens. The food they're growing now will feed them this year. **The knowledge and skills they gain will make sure they have enough food to eat every year from now on.**

Chawada Aboubacar is a mother of five. Thanks to her own hard work and support from Concern, she now has a thriving kitchen garden of her own. Her family own a small piece of land where they grow the grain, millet. When it runs out between harvests, it used to be a struggle to provide the food they needed to survive.

But Chawada now grows tomatoes, onions, cabbage and carrots in her kitchen garden. This garden will provide nutritious food for her family this year and for years to come. Keeping her children safe from hunger so they can thrive.

"We will start eating cabbage, carrot and lettuce in one month and then the onion in about six weeks. This garden helps me and my family. It makes me happy."

– Chawada Aboubacar
Having enough food prevents life threatening malnutrition, meaning Chawada and her children have the opportunity to live long and happy lives. What's more, any surplus food from

the kitchen garden can be sold, giving the family money to buy other nutritious food and essential items.

Best of all, a regular, dependable source of food means Chawada's children don't have to work on the

Your gift ensures your legacy lives on, supporting Concern to help people like Chawada and her family long into the future.

Many who do leave a gift in their Will have been so affected by the suffering of



With Concern worker Mounkaïla's help, Chawada can now grow food to help her family survive.

land and can go back to school. Getting the education essential for a brighter future for them.

By passing on the skills she has gained to her children, Chawada is ensuring they will be self-sufficient in the future; able to provide for both their own families and the wider community – helping to pull everyone out of poverty.

Be part of a world without hunger

“What would induce anyone ... only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was so urgent and necessary to do so?”

– Pope Francis

As you've just seen, gifts in Wills transform lives both immediately and long into the future.

Won't you help Concern fight poverty and hunger – to end it in some of the world's poorest communities – by leaving a life changing gift in your Will?

the world's poorest, most vulnerable families, they have chosen to make a lasting commitment: to be part of a world without hunger.

"I have two children and if they were in need, I would hope that somebody, somewhere would reach out to help them. With my legacy, I will be that person for somebody's loved ones – you could be too." – Fiona, Co. Louth

To discover more about how leaving a gift in your Will transforms and saves lives, please request your complimentary copy of 'Be Part of a World Without Hunger', Concern's legacy booklet.

Inside you'll see how legacies left by people like you are helping the world's poorest people. Both today and for years to come.

The booklet also answers many of the common questions people have about leaving a gift in their Will. And explains how to start the process.

Of course requesting your free booklet does not oblige you to leave a gift, or do anything else.

"Moments of kindness shine in the darkness and give so much comfort – that's the final gift I intend to leave to the world."

– James, Co. Wicklow

To receive your free, no obligation booklet – in complete confidence – please contact Concern's Legacy Manager, Siobhán O'Connor. Call **01 417 8020**, email **siobhan.oconnor@concern.net**, or visit **www.concern.net/bequest**



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**ENDING EXTREME POVERTY
WHATEVER IT TAKES**

New priest for Meath is ‘sign of hope’

Bishops Michael Smith (left) and Tom Deenihan with Fr Norman.



Fr Norman with Bishop Tom Deenihan; right, Fr Norman with Fr Derek Darby, Fr Kevin Heery, Mark Caffrey and Barry White.

Chai Brady

The first priest in more than two years was ordained for the Diocese of Meath over the weekend, with Bishop Tom Deenihan saying it is a “sign of hope...despite all the prophets of doom”.

Bishop Deenihan ordained Fr Norman Allred in the Cathedral of Christ the King in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath on September 20,

His ordination was previously arranged for June 21, but because of Covid-19 restrictions it was deferred. His family who reside in the US were unable to be present, but joined the ceremony via the parish livestream facility.

In his homily, Bishop Deenihan said: “An ordination is a sign of hope. It means that Christ is still calling men to the ministerial priesthood, it means that some of those who hear that call have the faith to respond to it and, for us priests, it means fellow workers, new colleagues – even if they are older than the bishop – and, to some extent, a validation of our work and proof, despite all the prophets of doom and our own efforts at times, that priesthood is still a valid and valued calling.

“For those in the parishes of this diocese, it means another priest who will work with and for the people in those parishes, who will celebrate the Sacraments with and for them and who will become a member of their faith community.

“In the years ahead, we will have parishes in this diocese where people will fear the loss of their resident priest. Norman’s ordination is welcome and good news for them in particular.”



Cathedral stewards and Fr Norman.



Chai Brady

A renowned priest exorcist has said the coronavirus is a “dress rehearsal” before “the great tribulation” and that God is giving people a chance to reassess their current situation and turn their lives around.

Fr Pat Collins CM, a Vincentian based in Blackrock in Dublin, has said that God did not send Covid-19 but that He has allowed it to happen and used past tribulations to bring people back to the Faith.

Last year he spoke at the Divine Mercy conference in the RDS, Co. Dublin. Fr Collins says: “I gave a prophetic talk about what I thought was coming down the line.

“Fr Collins believes many people haven’t faced up to how difficult the future will be”

“Part of it was saying that there were very clear messages coming through, reliable people, that a tribulation was on its way and it wouldn’t be brought on by God, it would be the result of human fallibility but God would use it for divine purposes and that it would be by way of a chastisement that it would challenge people and it would attempt to purify them.

“I do believe that sometimes when a person develops an addiction or has a serious illness, they will think about their lives, they’ll reassess their priorities, their values and all that. I think that perhaps now is such an event. I think people are reassessing and I find many people are actually praying much more than they used to and taking their religious duties more seriously.”

After the virus is brought under control, he says, “we’re going to be left with an enormous number of economic problems”. Fr Collins believes many people haven’t faced up to how difficult the future will be.

At the start of the pandemic he believes “people saw a common enemy”.

“My fear is there’s going to be a lot more social disruption in the coming period. I think we’re only entering the tunnel at the moment and we’ve a long way to go,” he warns.

Fr Collins mentions the Biblical story of the Tower of Siloam, of which Jesus speaks, about the collapse of a tower that kills 18 people, saying they were not all worse sinners than everyone else living in Jerusalem.

“Instead of talking about the ins and outs of suffering and why it

Covid-19 is ‘dress rehearsal’ for anti-Christ arrival



occurs, he just says look, those people were no more sinful than the normal, but beware that a greater tragedy overtake you.

“It’s obvious that he’s saying that the end times will be a huge catastrophe and you’re either going to be ready for it or you’re not going to be ready. I think that all the little tribulations we go through are dress rehearsals for the end times. Where we’re actually given a chance to turn our lives around.”

Fr Collins wrote about this in a book published this year entitled *Holistic Healing: A Christian Approach*. In it he says that if people fail to hear and respond to God’s voice in and through current events, even though the events will come to an end, “they will only be succeeded by even greater tribulations in the future”.

“God will continue to knock on the door of the hearts of those who are no longer mindful of the divine presence or purposes, in the hope that they will finally undergo a change of mind which

will lead them to accept that the truth is not a proposition but rather a person: the person of Jesus (Jn 14:6).”

He then asks whether people have to experience an even more devastating tribulation “before they realise that the current pandemic and its economic aftermath is a dress rehearsal for the advent of the Antichrist and the great tribulation (Rev 7:14) which will precede the second coming of Jesus”.

He continues saying that if people are anxious about what is happening in the world, they should be even more preoccupied by the second coming of Jesus, when all the living and the dead will have to stand before the judgement seat of God.

“Those who are in the state of grace will enter eternal glory and those who are not, will depart to a state of eternal alienation from God, from their true selves and from others. That will be the greatest catastrophe of all, one which we all need to guard against.”

The priest finishes the chapter by saying that as long as the pandemic continues, individuals and groups of believers can pray, not only for the conversion of sinners, but they can also witness to the Divine Mercy by praying with faith for the healing of people who are afflicted by coronavirus.

Fr Collins is the only well-known exorcist in Ireland and has spoken publicly on many occasions about the threat of the Devil, previously saying there has been a “tsunami of evil” in the country. Although the current pandemic can’t be directly linked to the Devil, he says, all distress in the world was not intended by God and was the result of the Fall. However, he says the Devil is at work in the background, with the cause of the pandemic linked to humanity’s mistreatment of animals and the natural world.

“We gather that this pandemic has come from the animal world, and is part of that disruption in creation, and of course the fact that we’re not respecting the

created world as Pope Francis has pointed out in *Laudato Si’*, it’s kicking back on us, and that’s the pandemic.

“I think as long as we keep abusing creation we’re going to have more pandemics and maybe much worse ones than the present one.”

Regarding the Devil he says that the “shadow of the evil one is in the background”.

“You can’t connect the evil one to what’s happening in a direct way but you can say in a more overall indirect way, that the shadow of the evil one is there decidedly. Death comes into the world and suffering comes into the world through the temptations of the Devil, even though we’re not trying to pin it on the Devil directly, we’d say ultimately, he’s the cause.

“People have to cooperate, but in a fallen world, people have cooperated with him.”

He adds: “In the parable of the prodigal son, when he experiences tribulation he comes to his senses and he decides to go home and I think in a way God is knocking at the door to many a heart through the present tribulations and will continue to do so and in a way he’s inviting people: Why don’t you come home? Some will respond and others will not.”

“Those who are in the state of grace will enter eternal glory and those who are not, will depart to a state of eternal alienation from God, from their true selves and from others”

Oblates bring Lourdes to Inchicore



Chai Brady

A virtual pilgrimage to Lourdes organised by the Oblates in Inchicore, Co. Dublin, started over the weekend and continued into this week.

Due to Covid-19 the pilgrimage was postponed for 2020. However, their virtual offering began on the evening of Saturday, September 19 and finished on Wednesday, it was based on the theme 'Bringing Lourdes Home'.

A statement from the order said: "For the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Lourdes is too important in its history to accept not being able to go to Lourdes, and so the decision was made; we would bring Lourdes to Inchicore and so was created a digital or virtual pilgrimage.

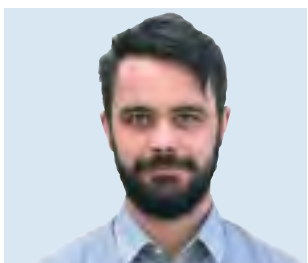
"Of course, the connection between the Oblates and Lourdes goes back a very long time, back, in fact to 1883, a mere 25 years after the apparitions to Bernadette, when the first organised pilgrimage to Lourdes was led by Fr William Ring OMI. And except for the war years, and now Covid-19, the Oblates have led a pilgrimage to Lourdes every year since. A long and great tradition."

While they said they "would have loved to have been together in person for these events", they maintained small groups in line with Covid-19 restrictions to ensure the safety of all.

A small number of people took part over the five days in person while others joined online in night prayers, mornings prayers, Mass, the Rosary, and the Way of the Cross.



Appreciating domestic Church despite coronavirus 'chaos'



Chai Brady

The new bishop of Kilmore diocese has said that despite the Church being "thrown into chaos" due to Covid-19 "we go forward into the unknown" trusting in Christ.

Bishop Martin Hayes was ordained on Sunday, September 20 at the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Felim in Cavan.

The Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh was the principal consecrator and Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo and Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly SMA were the co-consecrators for this ordination.

Speaking of the current pandemic and the challenges it continues to bring, Bishop Hayes said: "In truth we are all in a time of transition; our old order has not just been disturbed, we have been thrown into chaos, there is no going back to the old order and so we are in disorder. Yes, we are

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Archbishop Eamon Martin laying his hands on the bishop during the ceremony.



Bishop Martin Hayes in procession into the cathedral for the beginning of the ceremony.





Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Papal Nuncio to Ireland, laying his hands on the bishop during the ceremony.



Archbishop Eamon Martin presenting Bishop Martin Hayes with the pastoral staff during the ceremony.





Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly of Cashel and Emly with Marie Hayes, Miriam Hayes, Noreen Hayes and Barry Corbett.

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having conversations, discussions, formulating plans and roadmaps, changing them, rewriting them, floundering, coming up with new plans – we are realising that we are not totally in charge of our own destiny.

“The chaos brought about by Covid-19 has affected all our plans, my plans, yet I have been hearing a voice saying, ‘it will all work out!’

“There have been times that I asked, does that voice know what it is saying? Indeed, as I reflect upon how my life has changed in the past few months, I have asked myself do I know what is ahead? The answer is ‘No!’ Is it going to work out for me, for us? Yes. It is a process.

“We have been thrown into chaos, there is no going back to the old order and so we are in disorder”

He asked: “Where are we going? I am not sure. We are at a crossroads, a crossroads – we have been called to reflect upon life, our priorities and we have had to make decisions. We are awaiting and entering a time of reorder in our world, as the people of planet Earth – our common home, as referred to by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* and celebrated during September, the Church's annual ‘Month of Creation’. We go forward into the unknown, into this disorder or liminal space trusting in the Cross of Jesus Christ, the same Jesus Christ who has been with us from the beginning and who came among us to be with us, as one of us, in response to God's love for all of us.”

Bishop Hayes said he had received a “great welcome” in

Kilmore diocese and that he knew he was among a people of faith and friendship.

In his homily at the Mass, Archbishop Eamon Martin called for a ‘Family Rosary Crusade Against Covid-19’. He encourages Bishop Hayes to encourage the Faithful to pray, especially in the home.

Speaking of the importance of the domestic Church, which he described as “the Church of the sitting room and kitchen”, Archbishop Eamon said it has highlighted the vocation of parents as the primary teachers of faith and prayer in the home and family.

He said: “That is why I am calling for a ‘Family Rosary Crusade against Covid’ during the month of October. I would be grateful for your support in encouraging families here, and throughout Ireland, to pray the Rosary each day during October – or even one decade of the Rosary – for themselves, their loved ones and for all those whose health or livelihood is being seriously impacted by the coronavirus crisis.”

Archbishop Eamon said that one of Bishop Hayes tasks as bishop, both during the pandemic and in the future, “will be to build unity and to foster communion”.

“During the past six months we have seen the amazing power of social media to build connections and facilitate worship,” he said.

However, he warned that “sadly there are those who use social media to create, what Pope Francis has referred to, as ‘closed circuit’ which generate prejudice and fear, pulling and pushing others to extremes”.

“As bishop, you must discern wisely the will of God and build bridges – both online and offline. Be a reconciler, a healer and a peacemaker. Be like a skilled ‘pruner’ in the vineyard who can carefully cultivate new and healthy growth in the branches.”

“The chaos brought about by Covid-19 has affected all our plans, my plans, yet I have been hearing a voice saying, ‘it will all work out!’”



Brothers and sisters of the new bishop, Kieran Hayes, Donal Hayes, Agnes Hayes, Stella Corbett and John Hayes.



Barney Cully, Francis Keaney, Fr Ultan McGoochan and Gavin Brady.



Nieces and nephews of the new bishop, Nathan Hayes, Luke Hayes, Nina Hayes, Sean Hayes and Daniel Hayes.



We need to
celebrate young
people and
challenge them to
be the Church of
the future



The challenge for the Church is to move to authentic co-responsibility between priests and people the new Bishop of Kilmore Martin Hayes tells Michael Kelly

In his apostolic exhortation 'Christus vivet' published last year, Pope Francis spoke of the youthfulness of the Church and prayed: "Let us ask the Lord to free the Church from those who would make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at a standstill".

It's a model of the Church that the new Bishop of Kilmore Martin Hayes finds very appealing. His own vocation to the priesthood was nurtured by his involvement in youth ministry in Limerick in the late 1970s and he believes that prioritising work with young people is the key to the renewal of the Church in Ireland.

Bishop Hayes – who turns 61 next month – has spent the vast bulk of his priesthood at home in pastoral settings. Whether it is working in the area of marriage care or suicide prevention, the sort of pastoring emphasised by Pope Francis is where he has always felt at home.

“For Bishop Hayes, it’s not so much a return to where we were, but finding new ways to engage young people”

The Pope’s vision of a Church – priests, people and religious – together listening attentively to the voice of God and discerning the way forward is also well within his comfort zone. As a priest of the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, he was instrumental in a listening process there that brought together the joys and hopes, the worries and anxieties of parishioners in 21st Century Ireland.

Call
After a childhood in Co. Tipperary, Bishop Hayes traces his own discernment of a call to the priesthood to his time in Limerick when he was studying engineering. Here he became involved with Muintearas Íosa, a youth faith initiative which underlines the importance of the three flames of fáilte (welcome), foghlaim

(learning) and guí (prayer). Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* this week, he recalls weekends away where young Catholics were able to reflect and pray on God’s plan for their life in a spirit of friendship and fun where sing-songs were at the heart of building relationships.

The group proved to be a formative experience for the young would-be engineer and it was while working in Dundalk that the idea of a vocation to the priesthood really crystallised for him. “Quite honestly, I thought I was going mad at first,” he admits.

But over time and prayer, his sense of God’s calling began to take greater shape. “I knew then it was a kind of an ache that I had to resolve – it was something I had to do,” he recalls.

Pope John Paul II had visited Ireland in the autumn of 1979, and his words had a profound impact on the young Martin and resonate to this day. “‘Something else is needed!’ He said in Galway,” Bishop Hayes says, “and I knew I had to do something else with my life”.

He entered St Patrick’s College, Thurles in 1983 to begin studying for the priesthood for his home diocese of Cashel and Emly.

“Pope John Paul II had visited Ireland in the autumn of 1979, and his words had a profound impact on the young Martin and resonate to this day”

He clearly enjoyed being back in his home town and the entire seminary experience. “We knocked the corners off each other there,” he says with a laugh.

As well as the academic formation in Thurles, he believes that was an experience of “learning how to relate well with people and with one another, growing together and coming to terms with what was involved in priesthood”.

After ordination in 1989, Fr Hayes was sent by Archbishop Dermot Clifford to study anthropology in Rome, returning to the teaching staff in Thurles just two years later.

When Fr Hayes was teaching aspirants to the priesthood in Thurles there were also seminaries in Belfast, Waterford, Carlow, Wexford and Maynooth. Overseas there were Irish seminaries in Belgium, Spain and – of course – the Pontifical Irish College in Rome. Today, only Maynooth remains and there is only a handful of seminarians there.

“Vocations to the priesthood is a huge challenge,” he admits. One of his first acts as Bishop of Kilmore will be to ordain Deacon Tim Small for the diocese next weekend. “That’s a great privilege,” he says.

Bishop Hayes is adamant that the Church cannot promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life in isolation without regard to the wider faith formation of young people.

“Because of the fact that I have come from a youth faith movement and lay ministry, I am a great believer in promoting that...I am



convinced that if we promote lay ministry, and involve young people, and give them a role [in the Church] then vocations will come out of that". Bishop Hayes goes on to list an impressive number of men who are now priests that were involved with Muintearas Íosa.

“The bishop is at pains to point out the positive aspects that have emerged for many families as a result of coronavirus restrictions”

I put it to Bishop Hayes that if the Church can get youth ministry right, the vocations will come from communities of faith. “That is my conviction,” he says. “But, we need to allow young people to find their own feet”.

Return

For Bishop Hayes, it's not so much a return to where we were, but finding new ways to engage young people. “I've been involved in a listening process in Cashel & Emly, and some of the talk there amongst the older generation was about getting young people 'back'. I get – and share – the sentiment, but you won't get young people 'back' to what they often perceive as old-fashioned.

“You need to acknowledge them as they are, and allow them to enjoy their youth and vitality and celebrate that with them”.

A major challenge for the contemporary Church is that there is a perception amongst some young people – often fostered by negatives voices – that what the Church has to say is old hat and for

another generation. “We need to challenge this where it is present,” Bishop Hayes believes, “but it's not something that is there across the board,” he insists both from his work in Cashel & Emly and early experience in Kilmore. “There are great young people involved, and they give you an energy and a vitality...we need to accept them as they are – and, of course, we need to challenge them and pray with them and acknowledge the Spirit within them, but we also need to allow them space because they are going to be the Church of the future”.

And Bishop Hayes sees plenty of green shoots in his new diocese. “The work in pastoral planning initiatives and listening that has gone on here in Kilmore has been remarkable...my predecessor [Bishop Leo O'Reilly] and his predecessor [Bishop Francis McKiernan] have put a lot of energy into the pastoral side,” Bishop Hayes believes.

At the same time, he admits to a certain amount of trepidation setting out in a new diocese in unfamiliar territory. “I suppose the way I look at it is that wherever we are ministering, we are ministering with people with the same needs and desires,” he says.

“Obviously, I don't know the geography of the area – but I have travelled around it, and met all the priests in the four deanery areas. That was very useful



because it helps me to situate where personalities are, and the geography of the diocese – that has been a very good start,” he says.

“I can certainly say that on the day of the announcement [of my appointment] in Cavan I got a great sense of the people, and a great sense of the welcome so I'm very much looking forward to meeting more people,” Bishop Hayes says.

Ordination

The episcopal ordination on Sunday in Cavan's impressive

Cathedral of Saints Patrick and Felim is a highpoint in the life of any diocese. It is only the fourth such consecration in the cathedral's history, but surely the most extraordinary given that just 50 people were present in the building that could comfortably seat 1,200.

Bishop Hayes is the second Irish bishop to begin his episcopal ministry under pandemic restriction. “It's strange,” he admits and disappointing for a lot of family members who were unable to travel. “But people are very

understanding of the time we are living in,” he says.

Unprecedented is a word that is over-used by journalists, but at a time when public Masses were suspended across the island of Ireland for over three months it seems the only word appropriate. And, the effects of the virus are felt right across society.

For most of his 31 years of priesthood, Bishop Hayes has worked in the area of both marriage preparation and the challenges facing married couples, giving him an insight into the challenges the pandemic will bring for relationships.

“Undoubtedly there are going to be strains placed upon marriages today in view of the fact – first of all – that couples may well be tied in economically and financially to a mortgage or whatever, but also the fact that people have been locked down together...it highlights the need for marriage preparation

“There is a perception amongst some young people – often fostered by negatives voices – that what the Church has to say is old hat and for another generation”

and the need for ongoing care of marriage,” Dr Hayes insists.

At the same time, the bishop is at pains to point out the positive aspects that have emerged for many families as a result of coronavirus restrictions. “I know from my own experience of my own extended family and friends that Covid-19 has brought some pluses as well: it has meant a better balanced life for many people... they realise that they don't have to commute to Dublin, and they have more time to be with families...so that's a good thing,” he says.

Formation

In his previous work in Cashel & Emly, Bishop Hayes spent a lot of time working on the ongoing formation of priests. He sees this as a “vital element” in caring for those in frontline ministry.

“I'm very conscious of the fact that the majority of people who are actively involved in the Church are women”

Whether it is priests, religious or laypeople engaged in pastoral work, Bishop Hayes says there is a need for a “deep listening” so that “people can reveal their humanity as distinct from their roles”.

“Because with fewer priests, fewer religious, there's a greater workload foisted upon them...and so they can get very busy and get very caught up in their role. But, we need to hear the still, small voice of the Lord that called them in the first place,” he says.

On the theme of listening, Dr Hayes was a key driver behind a process in his previous diocese that heard from parishioners about their future hopes for the Church. For the new bishop, listening is about eliminating the divide that can sometimes exist between priests and the people they minister to.

“We need to have a conversation. At the moment, there would be - as I see it - a considerable gap between priests and people...and the more listening we do, the more that gap is eliminated or dissolved,” he says.

Worries

He worries that with fewer priests there could be a danger of the priest again being seen to be on a pedestal. “People are busier, so they're leaving more to priests... but I see the priest as being in the circle with people, and the bishop being part of that same circle learning from one another”.

Some bishops have found the process of listening to be an uncomfortable experience. But Bishop Hayes says it was overwhelmingly positive. “I learned that people have great faith”.

“We can often think in modern Ireland today that the faith is gone, because practice rates are down. But we found that people really valued their faith and had a deep yearning for community.

“The other thing that was interesting was the whole area of liturgy: people were looking



for more involvement, and more participation in liturgies,” he says.

A theme that emerged time and again in the process was the place of women within the Church. “I'm very conscious of the fact that the majority of people who are actively involved in the Church are women, and there would be a real passion and desire among the women and the people that I was involved in to have a meaningful role [in the Church].

“Women would like to be involved in the decision-making, and in the governance of the

parish and of the diocese – that's something we have to address,” he insists.

Women

There's a tension, I put it to the new bishop, between the desire for the full participation of women in the Church and the fact that Church teaching is clear in following Christ's way and reserving the priesthood to men alone.

He agrees. “There is a tension there between what is allowable in the Church today with regard to ministry and where people

would like us to be”. However, he is clear that if there is a greater focus on co-responsibility within the Church then the issue of the difference between laypeople and the ordained changes. “I think if we concentrate upon having laypeople involved fully in parish councils, pastoral councils, diocesan councils – that helps people be involved in governance and then priesthood is less about power and governance and more about service”.

“You will always have priests involved in governance, but if you can decouple it from priesthood

so that governance is exercised collectively between priests and people that will lead to a healthier Church,” he believes.

Border

Kilmore, like Armagh, Derry and Clogher is a diocese divided by the border with parishes in both jurisdictions. Britain's decision to leave the European Union and the subsequent effects on that land border loom large in the diocese. It's something that Bishop Hayes is acutely aware of in his conversations with priests who minister in order parishes. “There would be serious implications [of a no-deal Brexit], north and south of the border.

“There is a greater focus on co-responsibility within the Church then the issue of the difference between laypeople and the ordained changes”

“They [border parishioners] just do not want to go back to the inconvenience of the past...or where you had customs checks on both sides of the border.

“I suppose there would also be a fear that tensions could rise again...People do not want to be returning to the past, they have enjoyed the relative peace of the last 20 years or so – and that would be shared by both the Catholic and Protestant communities along the border,” he says.

One thing is clear, whether north or south – Bishop Hayes is keen to hit the ground running. From our conversation, he is evidently a shepherd in the mode of Pope Francis – with the smell of the sheep.

“We can often think in modern Ireland today that the faith is gone, because practice rates are down. But we found that people really valued their faith and had a deep yearning for community”

Pope Francis considers renewing controversial China-Vatican deal



The report comes as criticisms of Disney bring Chinese cruelties to the fore again, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

Near the end of a long list of credits is an obscure, seemingly inconsequential thank-you from Disney to the "Publicity Department of the Chinese Communist Party's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region Committee".

Already alarm bells should be ringing. Xinjiang has been in the news frequently over the last few months as the region in which the cultural genocide of Uighur Muslims is taking place. Disney not only filmed in Xinjiang, but publicly thanked the body which, according to China expert Adrian Zenz, is in charge of propaganda for the region.

This department is responsible for justifying the systematic persecution of Uighur's in that region. This includes forcing people into slave labour, demanding that Uighurs host Han guests employed by the government to spy on them, and sterilizing Uighur women.

Understandably, many were outraged by Disney's choice not only to film there, but to thank those in charge of this persecution.

Systematic persecution

The Uighur Muslims are the most public example of China's policy of 'sinicising' ethnic minorities and systematically persecuting religions. The Uighurs have been an especial target of the Chinese Communist government since the inception of the state after the revolution of 1947.

They've never fully integrated because of their Muslim faith, and also because of their ethnic character and foundation.

They have a different culture, different aspirations and a different way of life from the Chinese government. This situation is, according to one source, utterly intolerable to the government.

Though the most public example, however, the Uighurs are not the only ones. Persecution of Christians has increased rapidly since 2018,

The Chinese national flag is pictured in front of a Catholic church in the village of Huangtugang; inset right, Cardinal Pietro Parolin. Photos: CNS



according to Irish charity for protecting the rights of Christians, Aid to a Church in Need (ACN). The intensification is the result of Regulations on Religious Affairs (2018) which limited many religious activities to registered sites and introduced further restrictions.

“This ‘provisional’ deal with China was intended to normalise – up to a point – relations between the two states”

In ACN's 2019 report on Christian persecution, they published a number of examples of China's systematic maltreatment and oppression of Christians. Christians have been arrested and detained without reason, Churches have been closed and, in some cases, destroyed, Crucifixes torn down from churches and Chinese flags hung instead – the list goes on.

While China has had a limited policy of religious freedom, these regulations are in part a response to the growing popularity of Christianity in China.

This is viewed as being a threat to Chinese hegemony and is being dealt with accordingly: "The government has orchestrated a campaign to 'sinicise' Christianity, to turn Christianity into a fully domesticated

religion that would do the bidding of the party," Lian Xi, a professor at Duke University in North Carolina who focuses on Christianity in modern China, told The Guardian in 2019.

China-Vatican agreement

Given the background of increased religious persecution, it was perhaps a surprise when Reuters reported that the Pope had renewed the controversial China-Vatican agreement of September 2018. The September 14 Reuters' report has not been confirmed officially by either side, but in an interview on September 16, Secretary of the Vatican State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said that he expected the deal to be renewed, so long as China were in agreement.

This 'provisional' deal with China was intended to normalise – up to a point – relations between the two states. The agreement focused on ecclesiastical issues of bishop appointments, seeking to unify the State bishops, previously not recognised by the Pope, and the underground bishops, not recognised by the state.

The deal has benefitted China already, gaining in international reputation at a moment when it is coming under increasing criticism on the international stage because of its crackdown in Hong Kong and its treatment of Uighurs.

On the Vatican's side, Cardinal

Parolin has staunchly defended the deal, arguing that it has opened up avenues for negotiation between the two states for the first time since the revolution in 1947.

"With China, our current interest is to normalise the life of the Church as much as possible, to ensure that the Church can live a normal life, which for the Catholic Church means also having relations with the Holy See and the Pope," Cardinal Parolin said in comments to journalists on September 14.

“The deal has made relations between the Vatican and Rome more complicated, not less...”

Privately, sources have been more circumspect, according to *America* magazine. "While it's not a good agreement, it's better than no agreement, and there's hope it can be improved," a Vatican source told them.

Criticisms

When it first came out, the agreement was immediately panned by critics and, as further revelations about the deal's content and persecution of Christians increases, these criticisms have not died down.

One of the strongest critics, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, the 88-year-old retired archbishop of Hong Kong,

said in an interview in February 2020 that the Vatican "lost everything and got nothing" from the deal. Cardinal Zen has said that the deal has "doomed [the underground Church] to disappear" and that even in the official Church, "the Faithful are more and more controlled".

Criticism isn't only from the with the Church. At a conference in Hong Kong in 2019, Sam Brownback, the US ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, said that: "Since this provisional deal was announced last year, the Chinese government's abuse of members of the Catholic community has continued. We see no signs that will change in the near future," he said.

Dr Michael Kinsella, National Director of ACN Ireland, told *The Irish Catholic* that the deal has made relations between the Vatican and Rome more complicated, not less, hamstringing the Church's ability to comment on situations such as the treatment of the Uighur Muslims.

"We talk a lot about how the Rhine flows into the Tiber," he said. "Nobody really talks at all about how the Yellow River now flows into the Tiber. That for me is one of the most dangerous aspects of all."

The exact contents of the agreement are still yet to be published – according to *America* magazine, the Chinese Government would only sign the agreement if it was not publicly published.



Out&About

Tour de Doon's youthful peloton



LIMERICK: Sixth Class pupils from Doon CBS pictured after their cycle around Doon.



OFFALY: On 'Safeguarding Sunday' in Kildare and Leighlin diocese Bishop Denis Nulty celebrated Mass in Edenderry on the theme of 'the place of young people in the heart of our diocese, our parishes, our Church'. He is pictured with three members of the Halligan family who served the Mass.

IN SHORT

Charity welcomes the six-month Government recovery plan

The Government's medium-term approach to Covid-19 has been welcomed by an Irish charity who advocate for long term plans for older people.

Alone, the organisation which supports older people, has welcomed the medium-term approach to Covid-19 as outlined by the Government last week.

The organisation welcomed the Winter Plan Budget, which is said to be designed alongside Sláintecare guideline plans; to ensure that the health service has the

capacity and resources needed to deal with what is forecast to be a particularly challenging few months.

Alone has stated it is looking forward to further detail on the €600m winter package in the coming weeks, which is set to cover health services up to next March.

The organisation was also pleased by the announcement of the proposed implementation of a national approach to increase mental health supports, as many older people are currently struggling with their mental health as a result of the sudden onset of Covid-19 and related health guidelines such as cocooning.

The charity said it is aware of the significant health impacts that loneliness can have on mental health, and have been



DUBLIN: Siofra Manning and Mia Conlon from Holy Child Killiney show their game 'The Real Game of Life' which was runner up in the post-primary category of Trócaire's Game Changers competition. Photo: Garry Walsh

working to support older people who are struggling with their mental health since March.

Seán Moynihan, CEO of Alone said: "We welcome the introduction of the Winter Plan Budget, as this is often a difficult time of year for older people all over Ireland. We are looking forward to further detail on the plan in the coming weeks and months, as we begin to prepare for the colder weather.

"We are also pleased to see that the Government will be supporting local wellbeing initiatives, as our organisation works with older people across the country on a local level, providing advice, assistance and support, particularly during these uncertain times."

He continued saying: "It is vitally

important for us now to try to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus, in order to safeguard vulnerable groups such as older people. This is particularly important in Dublin city and county, as this is where cases are at their highest. Please think of the older people in your life and make sensible decisions involving them in the coming weeks so that we can lower the number of cases."

Older people who need advice have been urged by the charity to contact them on 0818 222 024 from 8am-8pm, seven days a week. This is both if a person has concerns about their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of an older person they know.

i Further information can be found on www.alone.ie

Edited by Chai Brady
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Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



DUBLIN: A group of friends in the parish of the Immaculate Conception and St Killian celebrate their First Communion in Clondalkin.



DUBLIN: Children of the parish of the Immaculate Conception and St Killian in Clondalkin receive First Communion.



ANTRIM: Scoil an Droichid in Belfast celebrate pupils receiving their First Communion.



DUBLIN: Aoibheann is pictured beside a statue of Our Lady on the grounds of the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Killian in Clondalkin.



LIMERICK: Oliver Ryan and his family, parents Sarah and Barry and brother Tadgh (front left), after his First Communion in Castleconnell church.

Events

● In the current Covid-19 crisis, it is clear that most (and perhaps all) Church events, other than some Masses, are suspended. Consequently, we are withholding the popular Events Listing column until normal activities can resume in our parishes. However, please do email us if you know of any parish event planned and we will publish details.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Cologne cardinal warns German Church's Synodal Path could cause schism

● Cologne Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki warned that the Synodal Path reform project could lead to a "German national church. The worst outcome would be if the Synodal Path leads to a schism...with the universal Church," Cardinal Woelki told Germany's Catholic News Agency, KNA.

The Catholic Church in Germany launched the Synodal Path in 2019. Scheduled to run for two years, it is debating the issues of power, sexual morality, priestly existence, and the role of women in the Church. The aim is to restore trust lost in the clergy abuse scandal. But the cardinal urged participants to avoid creating "unfulfillable hopes" regarding the ordination of women priests. This would cause frustration, he told KNA, because the issue had been decided by St John Paul II.

Hope is dying in Syria, cardinal warns

● With no end of conflict and no path toward economic recovery in sight, the Syrian people are losing hope that any sense of peace and normalcy will return, said the apostolic nuncio to Syria.

"Unfortunately, what is dying in the hearts of many people, is hope," Cardinal Mario Zenari [pictured] told the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

"After 10 years of war, many – after no longer seeing economic recovery and reconstruction – are losing hope and this hurts a lot," he said. "Losing hope means truly losing something fundamental and essential for life. We must try to restore confidence, to give hope back to these poor people."

While hostilities in the country have dramatically decreased since the signing of a ceasefire in March and the Covid-19 pandemic, the cardinal said, the destruction wrought by the conflict continued to devastate the lives of countless men, women and children.



Knights of Holy Sepulchre give \$3.5 million in emergency aid to Holy Land

● As members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem around the world were experiencing their own Covid-19 lockdowns, they contributed some \$3.5 million to a special fund to support the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, especially its schools and charitable outreach.

"Despite the difficult conditions on a global

level, generosity was not lacking," said a statement from the order's Vatican headquarters.

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, grand master of the order, announced in May a special Covid-19 Humanitarian Support Fund because "the Holy Land, where the very economic lifeblood of thousands of families lies in religious pilgrimages and tourism, has been seriously affected".

Christian communicators can bring hope to world in crisis, Pope says

● It is important to have Christian media that provide quality coverage of the life of the Church and that are capable of forming people's consciences, Pope Francis has said.

Professional Christian communicators "must be heralds of hope and trust in the future. Because only when the future is welcomed as something positive and possible does the present become liveable, too," he said. The Pope made his remarks on September 18, in a private audience at the Vatican with staff members of *Tertio*, a Belgian weekly magazine specializing in Christian and Catholic perspectives.

The print and online publication was celebrating the 20th anniversary of its founding. "In the world we live in, information makes up an integral part of our daily life," he said.

'I will die with them and for them': Franciscan friar who survived Syrian War dies of Covid-19

When asked by his superior if he wanted to leave Aleppo during the Syrian Civil War, Fr Edward Tamer replied that he would remain with the people "to die with them and for them".

Now, having survived the worst of the violence of the war, the Franciscan friar has died of Covid-19 at the age of 83 in the service of the poor whom he desired to give his life for.

Fr Tamer is one of two Franciscan priests in Syria to have died of the coronavirus within 10 days of each other in recent weeks. At least two other friars in Syria have also tested positive for the coronavirus.

Fr Firas Hejazin also died of Covid-19, at the age of 49. Originally from Jordan, he contracted the coronavirus while serving at the St Anthony Franciscan Monastery in Aleppo in August. He was then transferred to the Jordanian capital, Amman, where he died.

Fr Firas Lutfi, the Franciscan regional minister for Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, knew both priests personally. He told CNA that the two friars were remembered fondly by the people of Aleppo for their joy in serving others.



Sanitation workers disinfecting a building in Syria.

"The testimony that they lived is really great," Fr Lutfi said. "They came in hard times to share the suffering and the problematic and catastrophic situation in Aleppo."

Many projects

Fr Tamer was a Lebanese priest who spent the last 20 years of his life in Aleppo, including the entirety of the Syrian Civil War. He served in schools and translated theological texts into Arabic.

"Several times the superior asked him if he wanted to – because he was elderly – to go out of Syria," Fr Lutfi remem-

bered. He said that Fr Tamer's reply was always the same: "I am here for the people. I will die with them and for them."

"Fr Firas Hejazin was a young priest who came just one year ago. He was Jordanian and he was full of life, and had many projects and lots of energy," Fr Lutfi said.

"He decided to come to Syria, especially in Aleppo... knowing that there are difficulties," he said. "With his smile, with his simplicity, with his obedience as a friar, as a Franciscan of the Holy Land, he came and he wanted

to do the best, to offer the best testimony."

The two Franciscan priests were honoured in private funerals due to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak in Aleppo. There have been only 3,654 cases of Covid-19 documented in Syria, but the United Nations has said that cases in Syria have been under-reported for months and daily deaths have risen since July.

Previously, there had been five friars in Aleppo; with the deaths of Frs Tamer and Hejazin, there are currently only three.

Advocacy group hails Israel-Bahrain deal as 'positive step' for Middle East Christians

An advocacy group for Christians and other religious minorities living in the Middle East this week praised an agreement between Israel and Bahrain, which comes on the heels of a similar agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

"While there are many contentious issues left to be discussed in the Middle East Peace Process and many injustices that Christians in Bahrain, Israel and across the Middle East continue to face, today's peace agreement is a positive

step for Christians in the Middle East," Toufic Baaklini, president of In Defence of Christians, said when the deal was announced.

"Politics should not stand in the way of any Christian being able to visit the sites of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The foreign ministers of the UAE and Bahrain signed the deal to normalise relations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a ceremony at the White House on September 15.

Jeremy Barker, Director of the Religious Freedom Institute's Middle East Action Team, told CNA that agreements between governments are an important first step toward peace, but must be followed by concrete action.

"We hope the steps taken by these Gulf States will encourage others to follow suit in a way that promotes peace for everyone in the Middle East whether Muslim, Jewish, Christian, or otherwise," he said.

Spanish bishops denounce euthanasia bill

Euthanasia legislation is headed for the Spanish Senate and, if passed, would be a defeat for human dignity and would affirm a self-centred view of life that proposes death as a solution to one's problems, the Spanish bishops' conference said.

"To insist on 'the right to euthanasia' is typical of an individualistic and reductionist vision of the human being and of a freedom detached from responsibility," the conference's executive committee wrote in a statement released on September 14.

"On the one hand, the social dimension of the human being is denied, (by) saying 'My life is mine and only mine and I can take it away,' and, on the other hand, it is asked that someone else – that is, organised society – legitimise the decision," the

bishops wrote.

Spanish legislators are preparing for a final vote on the controversial law that would make Spain the fourth European country to legalize physician-assisted suicide after Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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O Lord, hear my prayer



A woman displaced from the destroyed Moria refugee camp prays in the parking lot of a supermarket on the Greek island of Lesbos. Photo: CNS

Congolese bishops back protection for doctor who works with rape victims

Congolese bishops are expressing solidarity with Denis Mukwege, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning gynecologist who has received death threats over his continued call for justice and accountability over war crimes.

The doctor – who shared the 2018 prize with victims of sexual violence in Congo – has been repairing women torn apart by rape in the east of the country.

The women and girls have been appearing at Panzi Hospital, which he founded in the eastern Congo city of Bukavu – with their bodies mutilated by armed men.

“The (Catholic) church is deeply concerned about his (Dr Mukwege) security because he is an ‘important tool’ and solution for women destroyed in sexual violation. Also, he is Nobel

prize winner,” Archbishop Marcel Utembi Tapa of Kisangani told CNS.

The archbishop said it was the will of the Congolese bishops that the doctor is protected and they had urged the government and UN to ensure his safety. He also expressed the Church’s concern over the sexual violence, saying the Church was helping to tackle the crisis.

Archbishop Utembi’s comments follow those of Bishop Sebastien Muyengo Mulombe of Uvira, who encouraged the doctor to continue to campaign for the protection of lives in the country.

Bishop Muyengo reassured the doctor that he was on the right track and, in the risks he was taking, he was acting as a Christian.

“Do not be afraid as long as you are fighting for such a just cause. This Nobel Prize that you have received ...honours us all...our pride, our joy around you,” Bishop Muyengo said in correspondence to Dr Mukwege in August, according to news reports.

The bishop urged the Congolese people not to remain silent in the face of the war, killings, rapes and violence, but to follow the example of the doctor.

UN Human rights chief Michelle Bachelet described Dr Mukwege as a true hero – determined, courageous and extremely effective.

“For years, he helped thousands of gravely injured and traumatized women when there was nobody else to take care of them,” said Ms Bachelet.

Second invalidly baptised priest baptised and re-ordained

In the second known instance in the United States, a man who believed himself to be a validly baptised Catholic and ordained priest had to “re-receive” all of his sacraments, including ordination, after discovering that his baptism was invalid.

Fr Zachary Boazman, a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, thought he was validly ordained in 2019.

But in August, the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a doctrinal note, reminding Catholics that baptisms are not valid if the minister of the baptism changed the words, or formula, of the baptism from “I baptise you” to “we baptise you.”

Fr Boazman, who was baptised in another diocese in 1992, reviewed a vide-

otape of his baptism after the announcement from the Vatican and discovered that the deacon ministering his baptism had used the invalid “we baptise you.”

Heartbreaking

Within days of Fr Boazman’s discovery, he was validly baptised Catholic and validly ordained as a priest.

“This has been a heart-

breaking experience for Fr Zak, but one that he handled with grace and patience,” Archbishop Paul Coakley said in a letter.

“I am certain this past week, as unsettling as it was, will further strengthen Father Zak’s resolve to serve God’s people and develop an even deeper appreciation for the gift of the priesthood.”

Vatican roundup

Pope prays for slain Italian priest remembered as a ‘martyr of charity’

● Pope Francis expressed his sorrow after the murder of an Italian priest who was remembered for his care and concern for migrants and refugees.

Before concluding his weekly general audience on September 16, the Pope led the Faithful in silent prayer for Father Roberto Malgesini, a priest from the Diocese of Como, who was killed on September 15.

According to *Avvenire*, the daily newspaper of the Italian bishops’ conference, Fr Malgesini, 51, was stabbed to death by a mentally ill homeless man he was helping.

Shortly after the priest’s body was found, Bishop Oscar Cantoni arrived at the scene and blessed the deceased priest’s body before it was taken by authorities. In a statement released later that day, Bishop Cantoni said Fr Malgesini was a “martyr of charity”.

Echoing Bishop Cantoni’s sentiments, the Pope said he was united “in sorrow and prayer with Fr Malgesini’s family and the community of Como”.

In a statement published on September 15, the Italian bishops’ conference offered its condolences to the Como diocese.

Holy See says no one must be left behind after the pandemic

● The Holy See, Archbishop Ivan Jurković said on Wednesday, recognises the profound impact that the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has had on society and on world economies and he urged UN member States to “leave no one behind” in the various responses they will give to the current emergency.

Archbishop Jurković, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva, was addressing the 45th session of the Human Rights

Council, focused on the Right to Development.

Referring to the concern expressed by the Rapporteur on the Right to Development for “the declining levels of assistance”, as well as preoccupation for “the trend of privatisation that in the context of public-private partnerships could turn social services into profit-generating opportunities”, Archbishop Jurković highlighted the importance of surveillance measures to prevent and address possible abuses in this area.

Vatican laments inclusion of ‘reproductive rights’ in UN resolution on coronavirus

● A Vatican representative has said that the inclusion of a reference to “reproductive rights” in a United Nations resolution on combating the coronavirus is “deeply concerning and divisive”. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia made the remark after the UN General Assembly in New York endorsed the resolution, entitled ‘Comprehensive and coordinated response to the Covid-19 pandemic’.

The resolution appealed to states “to take all measures necessary to ensure the right of women and girls to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights”.

Archbishop Caccia, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, said that “the Holy See considers it most unfortunate that the adopted resolution includes the deeply concerning and divisive reference to sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights...the Holy See reiterates that it considers the phrase ‘reproductive health’ as applying to a holistic concept of health, which embraces the person in the entirety of his or her personality, mind and body.”



Letter from Rome

By the numbers

Statistics illustrate progress in tribunal reform

Pope Francis addressing a meeting with members of the *Laudato Si'* Communities at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

Catholic bishops and diocesan tribunals are making steady progress in implementing Pope Francis' reforms to make the annulment process quicker, but it is taking longer to achieve the Pope's goal of making the process less expensive for couples.

The proof is in the *Statistical Yearbook of the Church*, a 512-page tome of tables and graphs compiled and published by the Central Statistics Office of the Church, which is part of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

Of course, the data cannot measure the success of Pope Francis' chief aim in reforming the process: to reaffirm the indissolubility of marriage while offering pastoral care, mercy, and a welcoming hand to people whose broken unions were defective from the beginning.

In his 2015 documents reforming the process – *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* (The Lord Jesus, the Gentle Judge) for the Latin-rite church and *Mitis et misericors Iesus* (The Meek and Merciful Jesus) for the Eastern Catholic churches – Pope Francis asked that “with due regard for the just compensation of tribunal employees”, the process would be free of charge to the petitioning couples.

The most recent *Statistical Yearbook*, reporting data as of December 31, 2018, said



Cindy Wooden

that of the 56,780 “cases for the declaration of nullity” handled globally, just over 32% were handled at no charge to the petitioners. In just over 20% of the cases, petitioners were asked to cover some of the costs, but in almost 48% of the cases, the petitioner paid in full.

The tribunals of some countries that handled fewer than 200 cases in 2018 dealt with all of them for free; those countries include Vietnam, Myanmar, Burundi, Kenya, Senegal and Zambia.

No cost

In the United States, where many dioceses began offering the process at no cost even before Pope Francis' election, the *Statistical Yearbook* said 62% of the cases handled in 2018 were done *gratis*. In Canada, almost 45% were done without fees; in Australia, 39% were free; but in Italy, only 15% were at no cost to the petitioners.

In Italy, before Pope Francis' reforms were announced, every diocese belonged to a regional tribunal, and the Italian

bishops' conference set the price for the process. While some dioceses have set up their own marriage tribunals now, a network of inter-diocesan tribunals still exists and the basic cost for a case there is €525 (about \$622). However, all the tribunals have forms online for requesting reductions based on need.

As for Pope Francis' other aims, Father Giorgio Giovanelli, a professor of canon law at Rome's Pontifical Lateran University and judicial vicar for the Diocese of Fano, said the cases clearly move more quickly now – a normal process may take a year to 18 months instead of “a few years”, he said.

But, even more, he said, “I've seen a reawakening of the desire of couples to live in full harmony with the church”.

“Just last week I was listening to a couple – two elderly people who had been married in the church to other people – who now say, ‘we want to be in full communion with the church. We know our current situation isn't right; we want to see what can be done.’”

“A few years ago, this would not have happened,” Fr Giovanelli said. “If nothing else, what Pope Francis has done has caused people to question, to seek information – he's raising consciences.”

Fr Vitalij Tokar, judicial vicar of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Ivano-Frankivsk, told Catholic News Service (CNS) he had seen something similar.

“The process is designed for very specific, very clear circumstances where ‘the nullity is obvious, known and easily verifiable’”

Immediately after the Pope's reforms were announced, he wrote, “our tribunals, especially in the big cities, faced an influx of people who asked that we examine their matrimonial positions as soon as possible because, they said, the Pope has changed the law in this direction”.

But many of the tribunals

did not have the personnel to respond so quickly, he wrote in an article in 2019.

Now, he told CNS: “The situation has calmed down, but the number of couples turning to the tribunals continues to grow, also because they know the process will not be so long. Little by little, the reform is yielding positive fruit.”

The shortest process envisioned by Pope Francis' reform is what his documents call the “Briefer Matrimonial Process before the Bishop,” which can be used “in those cases where the alleged nullity of marriage is supported by particularly clear arguments.”

Of the 56,780 marriage cases handled by dioceses around the world in 2018, only 2,073 of them, 3.6%, were handled with the brief process.

Fr Giovanelli said it makes sense that the number is so low; the process is designed for very specific, very clear circumstances where “the nullity is obvious, known and easily verifiable.”

A more significant reason for speedier resolutions of marriage cases is that

Pope Francis dropped the requirement that every declaration of nullity automatically be appealed. While one of the individuals involved and the “defender of the bond” – the church official who defends the validity of the marriage – still have a right to appeal, it is not obligatory.

According to the 2018 yearbook, the cases introduced at the tribunal of “second instance”, an appeals court, represented only about 3.3% of the cases concluded at the tribunal of “first instance” using the ordinary process.

Fr Giovanelli coordinates a new working group called Jurists for Pastoral Care, which brings together professors and practitioners of canon law to study, brainstorm and, especially, to serve as consultants to bishops and dioceses.

He said he hopes ongoing efforts to implement the Pope's reforms would lead to more investment in training canon lawyers, especially among laypeople; and would promote a tighter bond between legal precision and pastoral care.

“It is technical work,” he said, but it directly impacts the lives of Catholics, many of whom have “stories of suffering that has gone on for years”.

i Cindy Wooden is a correspondent for Cruxnow.com

“Just last week I was listening to a couple – two elderly people who had been married in the church to other people – who now say, ‘we want to be in full communion with the church. We know our current situation isn't right; we want to see what can be done’”

Trump's top envoy urges Vatican to challenge China on religious freedom



Elise Ann Allen

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has penned a new article for the religious journal *First Things*, arguing that the Vatican's agreement with China on the appointment of bishops has confused Catholics on the ground and urging the Holy See to be more vocal on China's violations of human rights.

"The Holy See has a unique capacity and duty to focus the world's attention on human rights violations, especially those perpetrated by totalitarian regimes like Beijing's," Mr Pompeo said in the article, published on September 18.

He noted how throughout the 20th Century the Catholic Church's "power of moral witness" played a role in ending communism throughout central and eastern Europe, and in challenging "autocratic and authoritarian" regimes in both Latin America and East Asia.

"That same power of moral witness should be deployed today with respect to the Chinese Communist Party," he said, noting that the Second Vatican Council and Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis have all upheld the position that religious freedom is "the first of civil rights".

"What the Church teaches the world about religious freedom and solidarity should now be forcefully and persistently conveyed by the Vatican in the face of the Chinese Communist Party's relentless efforts to bend all religious communities to the will of the party and its totalitarian programme," he said.

Abuses

Mr Pompeo made specific reference to the abuses to China's Uighur Muslim population, including forced sterilisations and abortions, and detention in 're-education' camps. He also pointed to abuses such as arbitrary detainment and house arrest for Catholic priests and laypeople, as well as the toppling of Christian churches.

He referenced the Vatican's 2018 provisional agreement with China on the appointment of bishops, the terms of which "have never been publicly disclosed", but which is believed to allow the Pope to make a final choice from a selection of candidates nominated by the Chinese government.

While the Holy See hoped the deal would improve the situation for Christians on the ground, Mr Pompeo said that two years later, "it's clear the Sino-Vatican agreement has not



“It's clear the Sino-Vatican agreement has not shielded Catholics from the party's depredations, to say nothing of the party's horrific treatment of Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong devotees and other religious believers”

shielded Catholics from the party's depredations, to say nothing of the party's horrific treatment of Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun

Gong devotees and other religious believers”.

As part of the 2018 deal, "the Vatican legitimised Chinese priests

and bishops whose loyalties remain unclear, confusing Chinese Catholics who had always trusted the Church", Mr Pompeo said, noting that many church-goers still avoid state-sanctioned places of worship because out of fear "they will suffer the same abuses that they witness other believers suffer at the hands of the Chinese authorities' increasingly aggressive atheism".

“History teaches us that totalitarian regimes can only survive in darkness and silence, their crimes and brutality unnoticed and unremarked”

The Vatican's agreement with China is set to expire at the end of this month. Top officials on both sides have indicated it is likely to be renewed.

Mr Pompeo is reportedly scheduled to travel to Italy and the Vatican at the end of the month. According to Italian news agency AGI, Mr Pompeo is set to make a September 30 stop in Rome, during which he is expected to meet Pope Francis and Italian authorities.

In his article, Mr Pompeo also pointed to the ongoing protests in Hong Kong over the new national security law imposed by Beijing which, among other things, bans what they define as acts of

"terrorism", "subversion" and foreign interference in internal affairs.

Under the guise of the new law, several prominent Catholics and democracy advocates have been arrested, including Martin Lee, considered to be the 'father of democracy' in Hong Kong, and Jimmy Lai, an outspoken media tycoon and democracy advocate.

"I know both men and can attest to their goodness and sincerity of heart," Mr Pompeo said, noting that many nations, including the US, have expressed 'revulsion' at China's "accelerating violations of human rights".

"History teaches us that totalitarian regimes can only survive in darkness and silence, their crimes and brutality unnoticed and unremarked," he said.

Should the Chinese Communist Party manage "to bring the Catholic Church and other religious communities to heel, regimes that disdain human rights will be emboldened", he said, "and the cost of resisting tyranny will rise for all brave religious believers who honour God above the autocrat of the day".

"I pray that, in dealing with the Chinese Communist Party, the Holy See and all who believe in the divine spark enlightening every human life will heed Jesus' words in the Gospel of John: 'The truth will set you free.'"

1 Elise Ann Allen is a reporter with Cruxnow.com



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Letters

Letter of the week

Abortion isn't the only issue in US election

Dear Editor, As someone Irish now living in the United States I feel the call to enter the debate over the US Presidential election that has been raised recently in your columns.

If indeed abortion was the only issue at stake in the election, a Catholic would have no option but to vote Republican and for President Donald Trump. A Catholic however has to be concerned for a raft of issues including climate change, refugees, the coronavirus pandemic and how to face this as a world issue with the World Health Organisation, the death penalty, the gun lobby, access to health care, race relations issues, international relations and

cooperation, the fate of undocumented migrants...to name but a few.

While we might wish to vote against abortion, are we also deciding in doing this that we should only help ourselves with any vaccine that is developed for prevention of coronavirus and leave the poor of the world to have little or no access to vaccine?

President Trump has withdrawn the US from the 170 countries who have pledged to share the vaccine globally with the World Health Organisation. He has also withdrawn from the Paris Accord on climate change. Can this be something we can vote for in conscience?

The Church indeed has the best answers to these questions and should lead the discussion on all the issues. In this light I was glad to see that strictly non-partisan materials to help guide the faithful have been produced by our local diocese.

Pope Francis said in 2013: "We have to find a new balance, otherwise even the moral edifice of the Church is likely to fall like a house of cards, losing the freshness and fragrance of the Gospel."

*Yours etc.,
Dr Cormac O'Duffy,
Moncks Corner,
South Carolina, USA.*

Teaching children about sex

Dear Editor, Maria Steen, in her article in discussing sexual morality [IC 17/09/2020], hit the nail on the head regarding the consensus regarding what is deemed permissible in today's 'compassionate' Ireland.

The dangers of pornography are only really discussed when it comes to children viewing it, when addiction to pornography among adults is a huge concern. There is no such thing as viewing pornography in a healthy way and the harms should not be whitewashed. Young men in particular are viewing content that is extremely degrading to women and expecting to re-enact this with girlfriends or people they have met just once.

Consent is not the only thing we should be teaching children, a 'one-night stand' isn't something we should be teaching is normal, and frivolous relationships based on sex and nothing else is not something we should teach is 'healthy' – at any age.

The best position for any person to be in when it comes to sexual activity is when they are in a loving relationship and they are married and devoted to each other, this is what must be instilled in youth today.

*Yours etc.,
Saoirse Grady,
Ballymun,
Co. Dublin.*

Much to be desired in Irish politicians

Dear Editor, Although I have some doubts about Mairead McGuinness due to her stance on abortion, she was certainly the best candidate to be the new EU commissioner [IC 10/09/2020]. It seems increasingly that Christians have to make do with politicians that leave much to be desired, particularly in Ireland.

It's a positive development though that Mairead has been chosen considering how she is Catholic, is knowledgeable about interreligious dialogue and has been outspoken about Christian persecution which is a plague in the modern world.

You won't hear many Irish politicians bringing up the horrific struggle of Christians in the Middle East and many other parts of the world in the Dáil – although there has been some to be fair – but the Government fails to recognise that Christians are the most persecuted in the world, instead favouring to talk about all religions rather than singling out one: despite the facts.

*Yours etc.,
Eamon Dempsey,
Waterford City,
Waterford.*

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.

Insurance rebates are great, but how much?

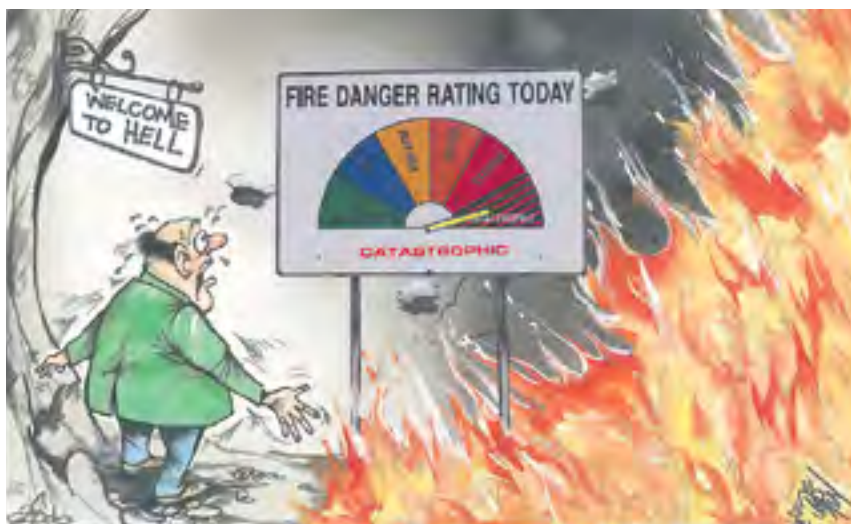
Dear Editor, The insurance company Allianz, which is the main insurance company for the Catholic Church in Ireland, did well to highlight that they will be refunding parishes, saying there will be a "premium rebate" [IC 10/09/2020]. Fair play to them of course, but I must point out that they are doing what they clearly should do when parishes have been paying for public liability insurance despite the fact that no members of the public – or very few in the churches that remained open for private prayer – were in their buildings for months. The risk at that time to the public was obviously very limited to zero.

Kudos to *The Irish Catholic* for publishing this story but what I would like to know, and it seems the insurance company in question has been rather fluffy about it, is just how much a parish will receive as a rebate. Obviously the rebates will vary depending on the size of the premium from parish to parish, but will it be 5%, 10% of the insurance

bill? I hope this wasn't just an empty gesture, and the size of the rebate will reflect the significant drop in risk, any amount of financial support parishes receive will no doubt be welcomed

with open arms in these difficult times.

*Yours etc.,
Damien O'Connor,
Clonmel,
Co. Tipperary.*



Our role in protecting the natural world

Dear Editor, The article entitled "We cannot be healthy if our planet isn't healthy" – Bishop Duffy' [IC 10/09/2020] in your paper was important in that it highlighted how the Church is trying to spread the message that humanity has a role in protecting and conserving the natural world.

There are many ways parish communities can

do their part in halting environmental decline and although it may not seem like much in the grand scheme of things, each person has a part to play and so does each parish and if enough people take action then it will make a difference.

Planting a native Irish tree and setting up a *Laudato Si'* reading group are both

measures parishes can take quite easily as Bishop Duffy suggests in his pastoral letter.

There are much more things individuals can do by just going back to basics, recycling and reusing, making sure no energy such as lights and heating are used needlessly and trying to make churches and parish centres greener – perhaps by

installing solar panels which the Irish Government give grants towards.

This isn't something we should put on the back burner as future generations will thank us for how we responded today – if we respond with gusto.

*Yours etc.,
Michael O'Reilly,
Dundalk,
Co. Louth.*

Online Mass a 'crutch' during uncertain times

Dear Editor, The new research that indicates 19% of Massgoers are unsure whether they will return to Mass after the pandemic on your front page [IC 17/09/2020] is deeply disturbing. Online Mass was but a crutch for those desperate to participate in some way while we were denied the Sacrament due to the restrictions placed on the public by Government – which I do not refute were necessary.

This was in no means a replacement for physical attendance at Mass, and receiving the Eucharist. People who do

not believe in Catholicism and know nothing about it – or are indifferent to it – will never understand how important it is for people to be physically present.

Risk is a part of our lives no matter what, we should not endanger our lives stupidly in meaningless pursuits but when the risk is minimal there should be no question when our Church calls us back for Mass that we should return – such as when the dispensation of the Sunday obligation is lifted.

Although staring at a screen may be easier and requires less effort,

particularly if there's a big family involved, it should be made clear in no uncertain terms the importance of attending Mass in person – there can be no half measures when it comes to saving souls.

The bishops, many of whom have been extremely cautious in these uncertain times, must be prepared to sound the call far and wide and not abandon Catholics to a lazy mediocrity.

*Yours etc.,
Daniel O'Sullivan,
Carrigaline, Co. Cork.*

Around the world



USA: A person in New York city looks toward a painting of US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in a storefront window. The respected judge died on September 18.



HOLY LAND: A Palestinian demonstrator uses a sling to hurl stones at Israeli troops in Kafr Qaddum, West Bank, during a protest against Jewish settlements and Arab nations normalising ties with Israel.



LEBANON: Participants of the Middle East Council of Churches executive committee meeting gather outside at Bkerke, the Maronite patriarchate north of Beirut. Cardinal Bechara Rai, Maronite patriarch, described the shrinking presence of Christians in the Middle East as a sinking ship to leaders of the Middle East Council of Churches.



GERMANY: Protesters join a demonstration in Berlin demanding the evacuation of overcrowded migrant camps and against the creation of a new camp on the Greek island of Lesbos.



USA: A family in Phoenix, Oregon, looks through the remnants of their home after a wildfire came through the area.



SYRIA: A man and woman are pictured walking through the rubble of destroyed buildings in Deraa.



Rest assured...God *is* happy

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam ultimately all believe in the same God. Interestingly, too, in the popular mind they also all tend to conceive of God in the same way, namely, as male, celibate and not being particularly happy.

Well, the gender of God is not something we can ever conceptualise. God is neither male or female, nor some androgynous mix of gender. So how can we conceptualize God's gender? We can't, pure and simple.

Classically we've spoken of God as male, even as we know that this isn't exactly true because we affirm, dogmatically, that God is ineffable, incapable of ever being captured in any concept. That also holds true for our notion of God as celibate, as not having a wife. How masculinity and femininity interrelate in God is also ineffable, incapable of being conceived of, but we know God is not simply a male celibate.

But what about that other popular notion, namely, that God is not particularly happy, especially with us?

Perfect truth

Here we have a clear answer: God is happy. How can God not be? If God is perfect oneness, perfect goodness, perfect truth, perfect beauty and perfect fullness in every way, how then can God not be perfect happiness? An



Fr Rolheiser

unhappy God would not be God for such a God would be lacking the power to make himself (pardon the pronoun) happy. Not a minor inadequacy for God. So a perfect God is also a perfectly happy God. But that's a metaphysical statement. We can still ask, is God happy emotionally and is God happy with us? Mustn't God frown at times and shake his head in disappointment at our behavior? Surely God can't be happy with a lot that goes on in our world. God can't be happy in the face of sin.

Well, just as in every other thing about God, there are things here we cannot comprehend. However, this much must be affirmed, both from what's deepest in revelation in our scriptures and from the testimony

of countless good people: God is happy! God is not habitually disappointed with us, frowning at our weaknesses, and sending the majority of us to hell.

Rather, God is like the loving parent of a little child, forever luring us forwards, delighting in our energy, wanting us to flourish, saddened when we act in ways that bring unhappiness to others and to ourselves, but understanding of weakness rather than angry and unhappy.

Julian of Norwich, the famed mystic, describes God this way: God sits in heaven, smiling, completely relaxed, his face looking like a marvellous symphony.

When I first read this passage some years ago, I was taken aback both by the concept of God as

smiling and by the image of God as relaxed. I had never thought of God as 'relaxed'. Surely with all that's happening in our world and surely with all the betrayals, large and small, in our lives, God must be tense, frustrated and anxious.

It's difficult but easier to picture God as smiling (at least sometimes), but it's exceedingly difficult to picture God as relaxed, as not being tense about all that's wrong with us and our world.

“We tend to have a healthier concept of God theoretically; but the heart is not so easy to bring inside. It's hard to feel inside myself that God is happy, happy with us, happy with me”

Here's my journey in grappling with that. I was wonderfully blessed in my religious background.

From my parents and family, through the parish community I grew up in, through the Ursuline nuns who taught me in school, you couldn't have ordered a more-ideal faith *milieu*. I experienced faith and religion being lived out in real life in a way that gave it credibility and made it attractive. My seminary training and theological studies strongly reinforced that.

But, all that time, underneath, there was a picture of a God who wasn't very happy and who smiled only when the occasion merited it, which wasn't very often. The consequence of that in my life was an anxious attempt always to measure up, to be good enough, to not make God unhappy, and to earn God's approval and affection.

Of course, we can never be good enough, never measure up, and so it's natural to believe that God is never really happy with us and never really happy at all.

In theory, we know better. We tend to have a healthier concept of God theoretically; but the heart is not so easy to bring inside. It's hard to feel inside myself that God is happy, happy with us, happy with me.

Consolation

It has taken me 70 years to realise, accept, take consolation in, and finally bathe in the fact that God is happy. I'm not sure what pulled all the triggers inside me that helped me make that shift, but the fact that God is happy comes to me now whenever I'm praying wholeheartedly, nakedly, and sincerely.

It's also what comes to me when I look at the saints in my life, those men and women whom I most look up to in faith, who reflect the face of God for me. They're happy, relaxed and not perpetually frowning in displeasure.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, September 24, 2020

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A son guided by his mother's hand

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Healthy lunches for back to school



It can be tempting to bow to our kids desire for a steady crisp and sweet supply, especially given the unusual back-to-school circumstances. Equally, it can be hard to imagine sending them off with a lunch box full of 'rabbit food', also known as salads. But the challenge of thinking of healthy and exciting school lunches is a worthwhile one.

Here are just a few simple, fast ideas for delicious lunches and how to get your child to eat them. There's a huge variety of choices out there, so it's good to remember the basics, which are

- Starchy foods like bread, rice, potatoes or pasta
- Protein foods like meat, fish, eggs or beans



Making lunch enjoyable and healthy is a worthwhile challenge writes Ruadhán Jones

- A dairy item, like cheese or yogurt
- Vegetables or salad and a portion of fruit

It's easy to forget, but fluids are an essential part of school lunches. In the end, water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children. Because of its natural sugar content, unsweetened fruit

juice should only be consumed with meals and ideally diluted (one part juice to ten parts water).

Try and bear these in mind when crafting the lunches and you won't ever go far wrong. Lunch makes up a third of our daily nutritional needs, so putting some thought and planning into them is important.

Get kids involved

It's surely the dream of many parents to have their child making their own lunch. It teaches them valuable life skills and also allows mums and dads a little extra breathing space in the mornings. However, children will quite happily eat their favourite food every day, so there has to be a bit of give and take.

While kids might be resistant to healthy lunches, which don't frequently include crisps, chocolates or sweets, getting them involved in planning and making can make a big difference. Equally, letting them pick out their own lunchbox, adding

stickers or designs if they're inclined, can help them become more interested in their lunches.

To get children to fully buy in will require forward thinking and patience. Children often need to see and taste new foods several times before accepting them, so try out new ideas at teatime or the weekend before to get them accustomed. If your child is a fussy eater, a bit of quid pro quo wouldn't go amiss – a healthy sandwich with a sweet snack say, or their favourite food but no sweets. Sometimes, however, no will simply have to mean no.

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Family News

AND EVENTS

LET YOURSELF LE-GO FOR HALLOWEEN

Let yourself Le-go with a themed Halloween Camp run by LEGO for children aged between 3 to 12 years in Arklow.

"Come to join the fun in our action-packed Halloween LEGO Camp, where kids can enjoy creating spooky LEGO designs, arts and crafts, baking, pottery, fun and games and much more! There will also be a spooky themed party on the last day."

The camp is offered by the Brickx Club Gorey as a "creative social club for children that will allow them to turn their imagination into reality, have fun whilst learning and make new friends along the way"!

The camp runs for two to four days, October 29 to November 1, and early booking is advised as spaces are limited. The costs are:

€50 Euro for a 4 Day Camp

€30 Euro for a 2 Day Camp

For further information, please contact Olive on 086 064 7911 or check out www.eventbrite.ie/e/lego-halloween-camp-arklow-tickets-51400950627?aff=ebdssbdestsearch.

CAMPAIGNERS FIGHT FOR RIGHT TO CYCLE

Cycling campaigners around Ireland are working hard to get children cycling to school, despite issues with cycling infrastructure and traffic congestion.

A national campaign "Get to school on your own fuel", ran the last two weeks in August and, with school back, cycling clubs are organising 'cycle buses' to encourage people to cycle again.

For example, the Galway Cycle Bus is in its third year and offers pick-up points to children along a defined school route in the Knocknacarra suburb of Galway city.

Allison Roberts of the Clonakilty Bicycle festival told The Irish Times that "The bicycle is faster than a car. And if you practise ahead of time, wear rain jackets, children can arrive at school energised and happy."

Campaigners point out, however, that cycle buses wouldn't be necessary if there was better cycling infrastructure and called for further investment into bike lanes and other amenities.

SIGNS OF LIFE ON VENUS?

Gas found in the clouds of Venus may be "a possible sign of life", scientists say. Venus' clouds appear to contain a smelly, toxic gas called phosphine that could be produced by bacteria, a new study suggests.

On Earth, phosphine is associated with life, with microbes living in the guts of animals like penguins, or in oxygen-poor environments such as swamps.

Examining the atmosphere in detail showed that the planet's clouds appear to contain up to 20 parts per billion of phosphine — enough that something must be actively producing it, the researchers said.

"We're not saying it's life," said astronomer Jane Greaves of Cardiff University in Wales.

"We're saying it's a possible sign of life."

Venus is a scorching hellscape with sulfuric acid rain and crushing atmospheric pressures, but it may have been more hospitable in the past.

Scientists have speculated whether certain areas may still host life, and phosphine may be the first sign.

Devastating effects of Covid-19



It's now nearly seven months since the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in Ireland and the start of an unprecedented journey of restrictions and lockdowns that has radically changed the way we live. While we avoided a surge that could have swamped our health service, the death toll stands at over 1700, many times more than the worst flu season.

With the number of new infections rising and a second wave already underway, there's a foreboding sense of what may come as we head into the winter. Despite this, we know so much more about the virus, what to do to contain it and how to approach treating it. We also know that 80% of cases are mild and even in older adults, the majority who contract it will survive. We've learned of the crucial importance of testing and isolating in nursing homes where over 50% of Covid-19 deaths occurred – lessons which place us in better stead this season.

“The impact on cancer services not least screening has also been huge”

We also can't simply look through the narrow lens of Covid-19 deaths in assessing the impact of the pandemic but rather encompass in a much broader way the effects on society at large – physical and mental health, social and economic and the cost not just now but that continues into the future. Indeed, it's hard not to disagree with the criticism that many of the public health recommendations came from a relatively small group of people within a limited niche with little

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



voice from experts in other areas.

The repercussions of Covid-19 have rippled into nearly every aspect of healthcare which was already under huge pressure. For the first time, the number of patients on the National Hospital waiting list surpassed 800,000. Hospital capacity remains about 80% reduced for infection control reasons.

The impact on cancer services, not least screening, has also been huge. For example, a suspension of Cervicalcheck for just over four months resulted in a build-up of 100,000 women to be seen before October. There was also an estimated 50-70% reduction in the number of breast diagnostic procedures and breast cancer diagnoses during Covid-19.

In fact, the Irish Cancer Society estimates that more than 450 cancers and 1600 pre-cancers are likely to have gone undetected due to the interruption in screening. A study published in the Lancet Oncology estimated an increase in cancer deaths (up to five years after diagnosis) in the UK due to the pandemic of about 10% for breast cancer, 15% for colorectal cancer and 5% for lung and oesophageal cancer.

The policy of cocooning for older adults resulted in many becoming physically

deconditioned impacting on their mobility and now presenting to geriatric services for physiotherapy. Worse, there are cases where some fell and fractured their hips and sustained other injuries. Earlier in the year, fear of presenting to hospital resulted in delays in the diagnosis and treatments of stroke and heart disease.

A recent Irish survey of 1,032 adults nationwide (aged 18 - 85) found that a third are experiencing serious mental health difficulties due to Covid-19 and 50% are feeling negative effects on mental wellbeing. In June, a report based on a survey of 200 psychiatrists also noted a major increase in referrals to



psychiatric clinics due to social isolation and reduced access to community based mental health services. Furthermore, charities such as Alone have also seen an increase in the numbers of older people contacting them about social isolation, loneliness and suicidal ideation.

And of course, the longer term implications to people's livelihoods as a result of the economic recession - unemployment peaked at

about 28% in April but some jobs may never be recovered and restoration of economic activity to pre-Covid-19 levels isn't expected until 2022. The economic costs for the government this year equate to €30 billion but this doesn't factor in lost opportunity costs and the overall impact on health.

The phenomenon of what's unofficially called 'long Covid' where patients have symptoms for more than two weeks and up to several months after infection is well reported. The true incidence isn't clear and in larger studies occurs in about 5-10%. Symptoms include fatigue, breathlessness, muscle aches, joint pain, memory loss, lack of concentration and depression and while it appears to be related to Covid-19 severity it's also been noted with milder illness.

On a positive note we know that steroids reduce death rates in Covid-19 by about 17% in patients on oxygen and by up to 36% in those assisted with ventilation, with benefits also in those treated more than seven days after symptom onset. The antiviral Remdesivir can also shorten time to recovery by about four days in those with Covid-19 pneumonia. Fears of a bad flu season also haven't been borne out in Australia, but do make sure to get your flu vaccine. Finally, we should have the results of phase three vaccine trials by the end of the year on which so much will hinge!

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

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Sandwiches and salads

One of the ways to get around your child's reluctance when it comes to healthy foods is to vary the contents. It doesn't always have to be a sandwich with some salad. A nice flask of soup, curry or even Swedish meatballs can be ideal for a winter's day. If it's a bit warmer, a pasta salad, or perhaps a chicken salad, can be equally filling and flavoursome.

But sandwiches are still a staple for a reason – they're simple to prepare and the fillings can be varied easily. Cheese, meat and some lettuce and tomato cover most of the bases. Ideally, the meat should be lean cuts like chicken breasts rather than processed meats like ham, but both are fine in moderation.

Ingredients can be changed depending on tastes, but cheese and pesto combined with peas or beans gives a dish full of starch, protein and dairy”

If you want to spice up the sandwich experience, there are plenty of ways to do it. You could change the bread, for instance – try using wholemeal or soda breads for a heartier meal, or change it up entirely by going for a wrap. One of my favourite recipes was tuna, cheese, sweetcorn and lettuce, quick to whip up and also providing me with my fish intake for the week.

Pasta salads are another good variation to have in the back pocket. This can be especially easy to do the day after a pasta dish – make extra pasta when cooking and separate it out before it makes it to the table. Ingredients can be changed depending on tastes, but cheese and pesto combined with peas or beans gives a dish full of starch, protein and dairy. Alternatively, you could add in chicken or ham chopped into chunks.

Hot foods are little trickier and aren't suitable for young children. However, if your child is old enough, they are filling feasts in a flask. A nice tomato or chicken

soup can be made in bulk, with bread and butter to accompany it. Equally, a lentil and veg curry is both hearty and nutritious.

Sweet swaps

We all like sweet things, but too much of a good thing quickly turns it into a bad thing. We used to get a treat every Friday, a little reward for getting through the week and something which we genuinely looked forward to. Equally, while too much sugar is not good, removing it entirely is also unproductive.

Finding healthy and enjoyable ways to include some sweetness is important, providing a variety for the tastebuds. Fruits, like strawberries, raspberries and so on, are succulent replacements, but not always well received. However, mixed with a little yoghurt and honey, it can be a different prospect.

A great sweet and reasonably healthy lunch time dessert is overnight oats. True, they take a bit more effort than simply mixing yoghurt and honey, but they must be made the night before which frees up time in the morning. The recipe below is quite basic and can easily be varied according to taste.

The ingredients you'll need are:

- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 50g rolled porridge oats
- 2 tbsp natural yogurt
- 50g mixed berries
- drizzle of honey
- ½ tbsp nut butter

Making the oats requires two simple steps:

- 1– The night before serving, stir the cinnamon and 100ml water (or

milk) into your oats with a pinch of salt.

- 2– The next day, loosen with a little more water (or milk) if needed. Top with the yogurt, berries, a drizzle of honey and the nut butter.

What you get is effectively a no-cook porridge, though the oats retain their shape and texture. It only needs two hours to 'cook' in the fridge but leaving it overnight will give the best texture.

Making the most

Whatever you decide to make, try and make the most of what you have and what your child likes. Don't be afraid to use up dinner leftovers for the next day. It can make a quick and nutritious alternative to a sandwich. Many meal leftovers such as pasta, noodles and tortillas are just as good when eaten at room temperature, while others can be kept warm in thermal containers which often come with a spoon and fork attached.

This will help you make a list of lunch options that can be added to and changed over time”

Equally, it's important to take note of what your child is and isn't eating. While it will take a while for them to get used to a new food, seeing what's being left in the lunchbox will help you adapt your meal plans. It could be that they're tired of it; it could be that they don't like it.

Either way, minimising waste and ensuring they're getting the most out of their meals will mean less work for you. This will help you make a list of lunch options that can be added to and changed over time. Having a nice and healthy lunch makes a big difference to the day and with planning and patience, it can be done.



Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



There's nothing more terrifying than a clock. For we mortals, the mere passage of time is a memento mori like no other. Yet, in the end, we may hope that the lifting of the veil of this world reveals something vastly more beautiful.

The heartache which time causes in the parents of small children is that, with each passing year, some small innocence passes away too. There is always consolation in the growing capabilities of the child, and their enthusiasm for greater responsibilities and new adventures in life, or for learning new skills. Yet innocence is the one thing that cannot be learned, only lost. Nor can it ever be recovered.

The other day, I was visiting a beautiful garden with the older children. The lady at the ticket desk kindly asked if the kids would like a kids' map, so they could follow the fairy trail, and find all the fairy doors. I gave them an enquiring look, but my daughter frowned and said, rather sharply, "no dad, that's only for little kids!" I understood, of course; but my heart also sank at the knowledge that our walk around the garden would be less magical than before, when every rustling leaf would send their hearts soaring with mysterious possibilities.

I often advise my kids not to try to grow up too fast, but to enjoy just being kids. Perhaps living in the countryside can help kids to stay innocent for longer. City kids tend to be more streetwise. They sometimes pick up knowledge beyond their years, or an air of cynicism, much earlier in life. When I ask other parents in our rural area why they chose to raise their kids in the countryside, they regularly say things like, "they'll stay children for longer here".

That may well be true, although there are downsides to country life too. The older kids would love to be able to go out their door and just hang out with friends, but distance makes that impossible out in the sticks.

The idea that we parents are protecting innocence is an illusion, we are merely providing palliative care for it. Our purpose is to give innocence a comfortable and timely death. Indeed, an essential part of preparing children for life is helping them to understand its dangers, which involves

depriving them of innocence. Sadly, kids need to be told about stranger danger, and the dangers of getting flattened by a car, but these things can be done in ways that are age-appropriate.

To alleviate their curiosity, we have explained to the older kids that one reason



we lock the doors at night is because of the relatively rare possibility of burglars. For now, however, we can let them think of burglars as the silly characters seen in the Home Alone movies. We can still inculcate a generally positive view of humanity and life. Yet, in the end, they will come to know of the evil in the world, and that there are baddies who are far from cartoonish.

As the clock ticks inexorably down on innocence, the only defence left is the beautiful memories we can create, of happiness, nature and love during their time of innocence. Memories survive time's ravages, living on, ever fragile – a fragment of time caught in the mind of the one who remembers.

When I look through the photographs of the children's childhoods, I can feel some satisfaction that we have accomplished something important as parents. Even as their memories fade, there is a lasting visual legacy. High definition proof of their happy innocence, and all the fun and joy of a childhood spent suffused in the love of friends and family. Let that love stay with them, and keep them strong, so they may go happily out into a world that grows stranger by the day.

A son guided by his mother's hand

Personal Profile



Jason Osborne

Fr Jaimie Twohig's faith has been guided by both his earthly and heavenly mothers from its genesis, and it has coloured his very perception.

"Ever since I've been ordained, and throughout my studies as well, it's just a thing that I constantly have to learn, that we're just really vessels of his love," he tells *The Irish Catholic*.

Learning the same lesson that Mary did 2000 years ago, it's fitting that Fr Twohig's faith was born out of a place closely associated with her; a faith fostered and coaxed out of him by his mother here on earth.

“My impression was that if you were into your Faith, you didn't have a lot else going on”

"My mother was the only one, really, that kept the flame of faith going. I knew she always had some faith. She would go on retreats here and there, but she was pretty much the only one."

Experiencing a "pretty average faith, in that it wasn't a big part of my life until my teenage years," Fr Twohig's mother provided him the opportunity to glimpse heavenly love for the first time.

"Until my mother went to Medjugorje in 2004, and then when she came back, I could see there was a real difference in her. She was really talking about Medjugorje a lot, and I could see there was a new



peace about her. So she asked me to go the following year," he says.

"I had a great experience out there. There were two things. I just had a real, strong experience of Our Lady's personal love for me. I knew that she loved me as a mother. Then, the other experience I had was of the group, actually, themselves. My impression was that if you were into your Faith, you didn't have a lot else going on. It means your life must

be a bit boring, but what I found was that the people were great fun, and we had a great laugh. And they prayed really devoutly," he remembers.

Whereas before Medjugorje he had no problem with arriving 10 minutes late to Mass, he started leaving home early enough to say a rosary on the way there and one on the way back from the church, upon his return to Ireland, "which is something I don't think I'd even do now," he laughs.

His understanding of the Faith renewed, he quietly lived his life until God made him aware that he had something greater in mind for him.

"I had three years between the ages of 18 to 21, which was when I joined the seminary, and in that time I was doing all of the things that an 18 year old would do. Like going out to pubs, nightclubs, and things like that, but all the time there was just this internal call, and my faith was growing at the same time."

“His understanding of the Faith renewed, he quietly lived his life until God made him aware that he had something greater in mind for him”

Attending a couple of vocations weekends, he settled on the Palotines; a decision accompanied by a "great sense of peace...this was home."

Settled now in Shankill, south Dublin, Fr Twohig's return to genuine faith guides his ministry. Seeing the same lukewarmness in others that he saw in himself, he describes it as the biggest challenge he faces.

"It's the biggest challenge. Someone who's on fire with their faith, great. You can leave it at that. Even people who are openly hostile to the Faith; they're sometimes nearly further along the line, whereas those in the middle who have just always gone to Mass but have never let it penetrate... that's the most challenging," he admits, "and kick-starting that side of faith is difficult. And maybe not even people who go to Mass, there's people who don't go to Mass but don't see it as a problem anymore. The attitude that God loves me, so it doesn't matter what kind of life I live."

Having experienced the temptations of the easy life himself, Fr Twohig is at pains to communicate the real essence of the Catholic Faith: "It's so drilled into us, and I mean, of course God loves us but it's nearly become...the more you say it, it could nearly lose its meaning. It's the love of the cross. It's self-giving love."

A line of great importance that he's identified is, "It's not our ability, it's our availability," and he employs this attitude as he tends to those both inclined away from God and towards him. Making yourself available is an action that brings heaven with it, he tries to help people see.

Fortunately, however, he's not limited to this kind of exhortation. A stalwart of the Youth 2000 circles, Fr Twohig encounters plenty of people keeping lit the flame of Faith, particularly young people. Encouraging them along the path is often an invisible task, but one that yields much fruit.

"It's always the individual moments," he says, as he speaks of the rewards of his vocation, "...when someone comes closer to God. Maybe sometimes, they might let you know through a letter or maybe it was something that you said. It's how God is working through us."

"For myself, most of the time not having a clue, sometimes you go and you give a sermon and you think, 'Ah, it was only an OK sermon,' and then you find out it really affected someone," he says.

"If I could sum it up, it's whenever the Lord shows you how he has worked through you to bring someone closer to him. We don't see it all of the time, but sometimes he allows us to see it."

Living Laudato Si'

Jane Mellet



Hearing the cry of the earth

During the month of September, Christians around the world are celebrating the Season of Creation, a season in the liturgical calendar where we are invited to reflect, pray and take action for our common home. It was heartening to see Bishop Larry Duffy (of Clogher Diocese) issue a special pastoral letter for the Season of Creation this year. In this letter he urged people to listen to the call of Pope Francis' in *Laudato Si'*, to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

He reminded Catholics that if our planet is not healthy, then we cannot be healthy. Calling on people to examine lifestyles, Bishop Duffy noted that the environmental crisis is also a social one: "We must integrate questions of social justice into debates on the environment. Questions such as human rights abuses, religious intolerance, discrimination, racism, the attacks on the life of the unborn... these are all part of what Pope Francis calls 'the throw-away culture' underpinning our neglect of creation and the creator."

A startling report from the UN last week declared that we have lost 68% of wildlife in the

past 50 years as human activity pushes ecosystems to the brink. The report was compiled by 134 experts from around the world and found that nature is being destroyed by humans on a scale never seen before, from the rainforests of central America to the pollution of our rivers and oceans. These are shocking statistics. The Season of Creation urges us to listen to the cry of the earth, to become painfully aware of what is happening, to pray for our common home and for those who are the decision makers, who can affect change.

In *Laudato Si'* we are reminded that 'all is not lost', that we are capable of taking a new path. Bishop Duffy, in his pastoral letter, also encourages people stating "hope is found in action". Giving some practical examples of action, he invites parish communities to plant a native Irish tree on church grounds and to look at way of saving biodiversity locally. Bishop Duffy also asks parishes to set up a Care for Creation group to mark this special anniversary year of *Laudato Si'*. We are heading into an unusual winter season and it is a very opportune time to consider

what will happen in our churches as we move forward. Can we consider how to create areas for biodiversity on church grounds? Now is the time to start planning for this and there is an excellent guide available called the Faith Community Pollinator Plan, which supports farmers, councils, schools, churches, everyone to do their bit.

The Season of Creation ends on October 4, the feast day of the patron saint of ecology, St Francis of Assisi. St Francis loved nature and saw God in all of it. So as families, communities and parishes, how can we mark this feast day this year? Some parishes organise a blessing of animals or include the theme of care for creation in their Sunday liturgies. Lots of liturgical resources can be found on www.catholicbishops.ie for this purpose.

May this Season of Creation not end on October 4 but rather be a springboard into a new way of caring more deeply for our common home.

"Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life." (LS, 207)

Jane Mellett is the *Laudato Si'* officer with Trócaire.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



An unquiet documentary with a punch

Sometimes I shy away from worthy programmes because I'm not in the mood or I think they'll be too sad or grim. Fortunately I resisted that temptation on Wednesday of last week.

Unquiet Graves (RTÉ One) was indeed sad and grim, but it was also inspiring story about the thirst for justice.

It told the disturbing story of the Glenanne killers – a loyalist murder gang operating in South Armagh in the 1970's, responsible for around 120 sectarian murders. There was much evidence of collusion involving elements in the security forces, often providing anything but security for the Catholic population.

Sometimes even policemen officially on duty were involved in some of the murders.

Strangely these loyalist paramilitaries didn't go after the IRA, but rather innocent civilians. There were stories of whole families attacked as they relaxed at home, communities targeted as their local pubs were shot up or blown up, or both, a mother killed as she put her children to bed, the unborn children killed before they got a chance to be born.

Extremists

Atrocities by Republican paramilitaries were not forgotten (e.g. the awful Kingsmill massacre of Protestant



A scene from *Unquiet Graves* (RTÉ One). Photo: © RTÉ/ a film by Seán Murray

textile workers) but it wasn't the focus of this particular documentary. In a planned revenge for Kingsmill, there was the shocking story of a plot to kill teachers and pupils at a Catholic primary school – even that was too extreme for some extremists.

Some stories were familiar – the Miami Showband massacre, for example. Others, like the targeting of whole families less so, but the grief was the same.

Unbelievably the surviving victims and relatives are still waiting for justice and truth. Over the years the authorities up north have seemed reluctant and unwilling to carry through any investigations to their appropriate conclusion for fear, presumably, of what

would be revealed – some contributors suspected the conspiracy of silence went quite high up the chain of authority.

Two priests, the late Fr Dennis Faul and Fr Raymond Murray, were doing far better detective work, linking these murders to one particular gang. Even the Irish Government seemed hesitant to pursue the investigations, despite the murders spilling over into the South with the Dublin and Monaghan bombs.

I don't normally like dramatic re-enactments, but the few acted out here helped to capture the fear and dread of being stopped at a dodgy checkpoint, or of being pulled over on a dark country road.

Stephen Rea was the ideal

narrator, and towards the end an evocative animation accompanied one of Seamus Heaney's poems – written about a cousin of his who was murdered. The final roll call of victims was a fitting tribute and packed quite a punch.

Restrictions

In other sorry matters, the further restrictions announced for Dublin due to Covid-19 meant that religious services had to go online for three weeks. David Quinn, of this parish and the Iona Institute, wasn't convinced that the evidence justified such restrictions. On **The Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) last Friday he reminded us that in France, a much more secular state, the courts had struck down similar measures as they interfered with the right to public worship.

He obviously felt for the thousands of volunteers



Pat Kenny (Newstalk).

PICK OF THE WEEK

Mass

RTÉ One, Sunday, September 27, 11am

Fr Alan Hilliard celebrates Mass on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2020. Music is by the Divine Mercy Family Choir.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

RTÉ One, Sunday, September 27, 10.30pm

Joe Duffy meets developer and entrepreneur Harry Crosbie in an empty Vicar Street to talk about how a life filled with stars and business highs and lows has shaped his own philosophy and values.

DRIVETIME

RTÉ Radio 1, Monday, September 28, 4.30pm

Sarah McInerney and Cormac Ó hEadhra take over at *Drivetime* bringing you all the latest news from around the country and beyond.

keeping the churches safe, and pointed out that there were no known clusters associated with religious services. He thought Church leaders seemed to be passively accepting the new restrictions. Pat Kenny countered that there would inevitably be mixing after such services.

One Church leader did speak out – on **This Week** (RTÉ Radio 1, Sunday) Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was more in civic responsibility mode than pursuing any special pleading. Like Mr Quinn he was conscious of the 'huge efforts' being made in parishes to keep congregations safe. He thought sacraments were too special to be rushed, and that it was important for parents to be present, not just watching online.

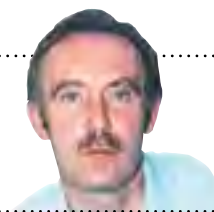
Finally, I'm not impressed

with RTÉ's self-congratulatory ad about how good RTÉ News is, though it's visually striking with various wild characters bearing down on an innocent web surfer. The message is useful – it's hard to know what's true online with so much deception and rage. We are assured that RTÉ News provides trust, integrity and the truth! Of course 'the truth matters', and admittedly it's a lot better than Fox News or CNN, but surely we should exercise our critical faculties on all news sources, seek our information from a wide variety of them and then come to our own opinions?

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

Film

Aubrey Malone



New releases make their way tenderly into a whole new world

New cinema releases are thin on the ground these days. A few brave souls are still calling "action" instead of "cut" as they seek to revive a form of entertainment that, like so many others these days, seems dangerously close to being on life support.

Chemical Hearts chronicles the teenage romance of two high school students. Henry (Austin Abrams) and Grace (Lili Reinhart) share the editorship of the school newspaper. Grace walks with a limp she sustained after a car accident.

All goes well between them until Henry discovers she isn't just carrying a physical handicap but a psychological one as well. They're connected, but I won't tell you how. Her entrapment in



Gal Gadot stars as Wonder Woman in the latest installment of the franchise.

it threatens their relationship.

Wonder Woman 1984 has the dashing Diana Prince

(Gal Gadot) trying to save the planet. In the original she lost her sweetheart. Now she's

reunited with him. She strives to protect her fellow man – and woman – and impress her mother, Hippolyta (Connie Nielson), into the bargain as she does her daredevil stuff.

Her main adversaries are Kristen Wiig as a supervillain called The Cheetah and Pedro Pascal as the equally venal Max Lord.

Refreshing

A White, White Day investigates the depth to which grief can go. An off-duty police chief (Ingvar Sigurdsson) mourns the loss of his wife in a car accident in a remote part of Iceland. His grief turns to rage when he begins to suspect a man he plays football with might have been having an affair with her.

It's always refreshing to

see Danny de Vito popping up in something (especially since he recently revealed his Irish roots) even if it's only aurally. Streaming on Disney+ is *The One and Only Ivan*, a fantasy about a gorilla that tries to piece together the convoluted jigsaw of his past with the help of an elephant as they try to escape from captivity. It's based on the children's novel of the same name and also has the voices of Helen Mirren and Angelina Jolie.

The New Mutants is another escape story. It has five young mutants being held in a facility against their will. Be warned – this sci-fi feature is much more horrific than the Disney release.

Also treading a thin line between science fiction and horror is *Deep Blue Sea 3*. It's

the story of a marine biologist and her team taking on three genetically enhanced bull sharks. They're much more lethal than they look. Cue splashy histrionics.

Bill and Ted Face the Music joins the list of even wackier-than-usual Keanu Reeves flicks. It's the third and final instalment of the *Bill and Ted* series. Phew. This time Keanu is a time-travelling rock singer in search of a hit. Whatever this irritating series didn't have once, it still doesn't. All yours.

Correction

The mail address of Golden Era Classics, the online movie sales company I mentioned a fortnight ago, doesn't have a hyphen in it, as stated. It is: goldeneraclassics@gmail.com



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Living our lives to the whole

Holistic Healing: A Christian Approach
by Pat Collins CM
(Columba Press, €16.99)

Peter Costello

This book is only partly about healing. As with all medical matters health in mind, body and spirit begins not in curing but preventing. Living a whole life in a healthy way is the essence of the matter. And, Fr Collins [pictured below] suggests, that must mean living life to the whole in the light of Christ.

The healing hand of Jesus, so often spoken of in the Gospels, is not only for the broken leg, but for the shattered mind. All too often the leg is easier to deal with – they say 80% of bodily ills will ‘cure themselves’ in time. The damaged child, the exhausted father, the anxious mother need other kinds of treatment to mend, or better still, never get that way.

This book is no mere ‘self-realisation’ manual. It is deeply rooted in the author’s own experiences, indeed in the whole nature of his vocation as he sees it. He wants to share in whatever way he can those experiences of the power of healing. The book is imbued from the start by the desire to recover the charismatic spirit of the early Church which the more institutionalised, even more worldly Church has lost.

Wholeness

What is said in the later chapters about healing and about bringing spiritual depth and wholeness to individual lives is rooted for Fr Collins in those early experiences of the Apostles and disciples, which is there for all to read about in the Gospels, the Acts and in the writings of the some of the Greek and Latin Fathers.

Through all of this there is a very ecumenical feeling, a hope that Christian experience and outlook may become more unified, with more understanding between individuals. But

he is also aware of all the difficulties, personal, social, institutional, political, even “scientific”, that stand in the way.

He alludes to the experience of Emil Zola when on his visit Lourdes he could not bring himself to accept what he had witnessed with his own eyes, the girl Marie Lemarchand he encountered had been cured of lupus. That kind of immovable scepticism affects many other areas of life too.

Acceptance and understanding can lead to great changes everywhere.

Fr Collins does not burden his text with footnotes, but he provides a list of his own relevant writings over the years, as well as books by many others which will enable his readers to learn

more, to deepen their knowledge and ultimately involve themselves in the healing mission of Christianity.

“There will be those who find it hard to accept all he says; ‘faith-healing’ has been given a very bad name in the press over the years”

Given these troubled, fretful and contagious times we live in, this book deserves a wide readership to help promote understanding. There will be those who find it hard to accept all he says; ‘faith-healing’ has been given a very bad name in the press over the years. But the way to overcome fears of the unknown is to increase one’s knowledge and experiences, and Fr Collins’ deeply felt, moving and insightful book will certainly help many to do that.

But before leaving this topic I am reminded of a framed motto that hung for many years on the surgery wall of a relative who was a local doctor: “Lord, please help me to remember that it is you who does the healing, not me.”



More ‘Bolshevik than Burkean’: the ‘new right’ and its threat to democracy

Twilight of Democracy: the failure of politics and the parting of friends

by Anne Applebaum
(Allen Lane, £16.99)

Felix M. Larkin

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western-style liberal democracy was in the ascendant as never before. During the previous two centuries, it had triumphed over monarchs and emperors, over American secessionists, over fascism and now over communism.

We were all confident back then that, to quote Lincoln, speaking extemporaneously during the Civil War, on the battle field of Gettysburg, “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth”.

We are not so confident today, and this book attempts to analyse how and why democracy is under challenge everywhere from the ‘new right’ – even in the US and in Britain, two polities with strong democratic traditions.

Historian

The author, Anne Applebaum, is an American journalist and historian who has also worked in Britain and is married to a former centre-right Minister for Foreign Affairs in



Poland. She too would identify as centre-right in politics. Her conservatism is, however, that of Edmund Burke – which she defines as a “small c conservatism that is suspicious of rapid change in all its forms”.

“Applebaum suggests that there is no single explanation – no ‘grand theory or a universal solution’w – for the rise of the ‘new right’”

But conservatism has now been hijacked by the ‘new right’ – and Applebaum argues that its gurus “want to overthrow, bypass or undermine existing institutions, to destroy what exists”.

They are, she says, “more

Bolshevik than Burkean”.

She has watched the ‘new right’ take over in Poland and Hungary, and observed the rise of the ‘new right’ in France and Spain, and she writes eloquently about those movements as well as about the advent of Trump and Johnson.

And she writes with the benefit of past friendship with some of the politicians who have made the transition from centre-right to ‘new right’. Such is the passion – the intolerance – of the ‘new right’ that many of those friendships were sundered when Applebaum failed to embrace the new orthodoxy.

While politicians of the ‘new right’ in their various guises throughout Europe and in America operate perforce within the democratic system, they show scant respect for its conventions and rules – including freedom of speech and freedom

of the press. They therefore represent, in Applebaum’s view, an existential threat to democracy. With the benefit of hindsight, our optimism about the democratic future post-1989 was naïve.

Conditions

Applebaum suggests that there is no single explanation – no “grand theory or a universal solution” – for the rise of the ‘new right’. It is, however, not without precedent. She reminds us in what is perhaps the starkest passage in her book: “Given the right conditions, any society can turn against democracy. Indeed, if history is anything to go by, all of our societies eventually will.”

The particular conditions that have now created opportunities for the ‘new right’ include, most obviously, immigration and the after-effects of the banking and economic crisis of 2008 and the following years.

Other factors identified by Applebaum are nostalgia for an idealised past, the culture of meritocracy that demoralises those who fail to make the grade (for example, in educational achievement), spurious conspiracy theories, a disregard for knowledge and expertise, and the contentious and polarised nature of political discourse in the media – especially the social media.

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.



Author Anne Applebaum.

There is also the simple appeal of authoritarianism to, in Applebaum's words, "people who cannot tolerate complexity...[or who are] suspicious of people with different ideas".

What distinguishes the 'new right' from far-left movements is that, while both aim 'to destroy what

exists', the 'new right' ideologues – unlike those on the far left – have no clear vision of what would replace the present order of society. Their impulses are fundamentally negative: against immigration, against socially liberal measures, against the European Union. The last of these is particularly bizarre since

the European Union was the noble creation of centre-right Christian Democrats with a shared commitment to the preservation of peace and democratic values in Europe in the aftermath of World War II.

Such manifestations of positive conservatism are alien to the 'new right'.

A right regal account of 'The Kingdom'

Kerry: History & Society
edited by Maurice J. Bric, introduction by Joe Lee, epilogue by Tommy O'Connor
(Geography Publications, €60.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This tremendous volume is the latest in the well established series of County Histories which the publishers have been producing for at least two decades. They are a sort of Irish version of the British 'Victoria County Histories'; though unlike that British series it will see completion.

Here then is a collection of insightful essays on the history of Co. Kerry. Topics discussed range from pre-history to 'Party organisations, political engagements and electioneering in Kerry, 1927-1966'.

The book contains some surprises. Despite the popular belief that the Celts were the early inhabitants of the country, from his extensive research Archaeologist William O'Brien claims that the Iron Age group on the continent, known as the *Keltoi* never came to Ireland.

A number of the essays concentrate on the land of Kerry and its use. There is an account of how land tenure in medieval Kerry was shaped by successive approaches to agriculture.

A chapter on the Manor of Castle Island describes how the Anglo-Normans administered the county and the manner in which they divided the land. John Knightly traces the evolution of the demesne at Kilcoleman Abbey at Milltown from 1730 to 1830.

* * * * *

Toby Barnard describes coal-mining, copper-mining and linen manufacture enterprises in the county in the 18th-Century, all of them ending in failure.

In a thoroughly researched essay Kieran Foley endorses the claim in 1852 of the Killarney Poor Law Guardians that they had "given adequate famine relief to the poor and had protected the pockets of the ratepayers".

One of the most valuable essays is on the assisted emigration from the Lansdowne estate at Kenmare during the Great Famine and the glimpse it provides on the new life those emigrants carved out for themselves and their children in America.

There are some interesting essays on religion. Elva Johnston lists the saints associated with Kerry. Outstanding among them was St Brendan. Known both as Brendan the Navigator, or Brendan of Clonfert, he founded a monastery at Ardfert in Kerry and at Clonfert in Galway.

His status as a celebrity was sealed with the appearance of *Navigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis* at the end of the 8th-Century. Seemingly, he sailed to places in northern Europe. It is even possible that he touched ground in the Faroe Islands and Iceland.

“This fine study of Co. Kerry has no fewer than 29 essays”

However, notwithstanding Tim Severin's heroics and remarkable voyage across the North Atlantic, there is no archaeological evidence that he made landfall in North America, though it can be argued on the basis of the evidence in the *Navigatio* that the author or authors of that text were familiar in detail with the north-western Atlantic Ocean, and its volcanoes, sea fogs, huge marine animals and the icebergs that descend the Davis Straits to the coast of Newfoundland.

In his essay Maurice Bric celebrates the achievements of the Liberator especially his successful leadership of the campaign for Catholic Emancipation. Oliver Rafferty leaves one in no doubt about the national and international stature of Bishop David Moriarty.

A somewhat dysfunctional relationship has existed between Ireland and her sister island over the centuries.

This is the sub-text in



Donnacha Seán Lucey's 'Nationalism and the land question in Kerry 1872-92'. The dysfunctional relationship was never more toxic than in the period from 1916 to 1922.

The atmosphere of that period is captured in Gavin Foster's account of the War of Independence and the Civil War in Kerry. He records the significant incidents in the struggle between the crown forces and those of Sinn Féin. Curiously, he overlooks the most crucial event, namely the police mutiny in Listowel. This led to widespread resignations from the Royal Irish Constabulary, their replacement by the Black and Tans and, as a result of their brutality and misconduct, the crown forces losing the support of the majority of the Irish people and thus not being able to pacify the nation.

This fine study of Co. Kerry has no fewer than 29 essays, each comprehensive with regard to their content and exuding profound scholarship.

It would be churlish to conclude without saluting Maurice Bric and Willie Nolan. Maurice has exhibited every editorial skill in seeing this magnificent thesaurus of information on Kerry through the printing presses.

The founder of Geography Publications, Willie from 1985 onwards has been supervising the publication of these county histories, of which this is the 28th volume. In so doing he has won for himself a unique place in the ranks of Irish historiographers.

Reflections for a time of plague

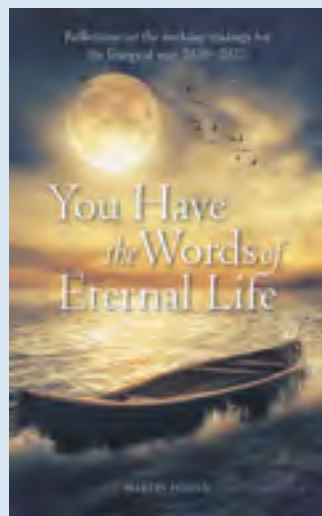
You Have the Words of Eternal Life

by Martin Hogan

(Messenger Publications, €14.95/£13.95)

In these daily reflections for the liturgical year to come, Martin Hogan, who worked as a co-parish priest on the North side of Dublin, provides reflections on the Gospels of the day that arise directly out of the life and needs of the people he is there to help. In a way what he says supplements the insights of Fr Collins (see facing page) for he sees the Christ that is to be encountered in the words of scripture as having 'a real presence', analogous to that of the Eucharist.

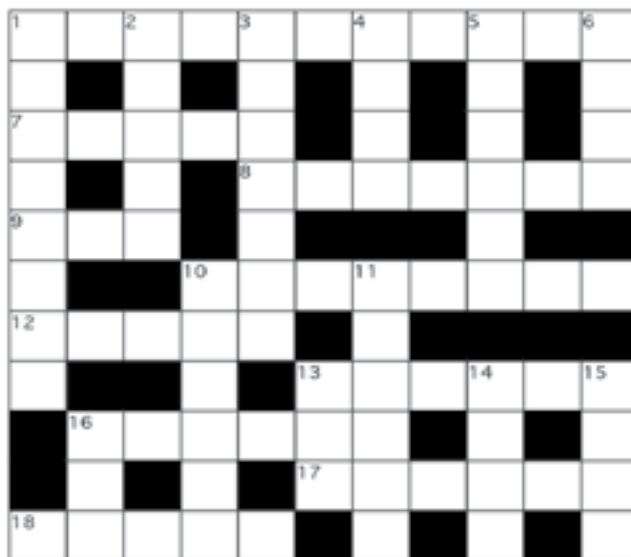
This presents another aspect of the healing power of the divine word, which makes these daily readings in themselves a form of holistic healing. The book may be a great help to many to interiorise, to accept and to deal with what is going on around them. And to serve as a reminder that the sayings of Jesus are a gift for all times, and all nations, and all situations. **P.C.**



Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 351



Across

- 1 A married couple celebrates this every year (11)
 7 Place in a desert where there's water (5)
 8 Get better (7)
 9 Something to play with (3)
 10 Cook oatmeal to have this for breakfast (8)
 12 Mistake (5)
 13 A design on the skin (6)
 16 Oranges and lemons are types of _____ fruit (6)
 17 Type of hat, or a player who throws the ball in cricket (6)
 18 Goldilocks met three of them (5)

Down

- 1 Jesus' twelve special friends (8)
 2 Definitely not nice (5)
 3 Someone who comes to call (7)
 4 Slope at a door to make it easier to get in (4)
 5 Out of the country (6)
 6 Wooden harness put on a pair of oxen (4)
 10 The surname of wizard Harry (6)
 11 Why you do something (6)
 13 Rub-a-dub-dub, three men in a ____ (3)
 14 Story (4)
 15 Shrek is this type of monster (4)
 16 Snooker stick (3)

SOLUTIONS, SEPTEMBER 17

Across – 1 Synagogues 6 Alto 10 Luger 11 A decade of the rosary
 12 Attends 15 Munch 17 Hera 18 Nile 19 Swarm 21 Jaywalk
 23 Umbra 24 Parr 25 Near 26 Sunni 28 Stanzas 34 Micah
 35 Rise 36 Bannisters

Down – 1 Salt 2 Night club 3 Gorse 4 Grand Inquisitor 5 Even 7
 Lie-in 8 Off the mark 9 Gas mask 13 Nora 14 Showers
 20 Avalanche 21 Janitor 22 Lava 27 Needs 29 Try on 30 Name
 31 Java 32 Ohms

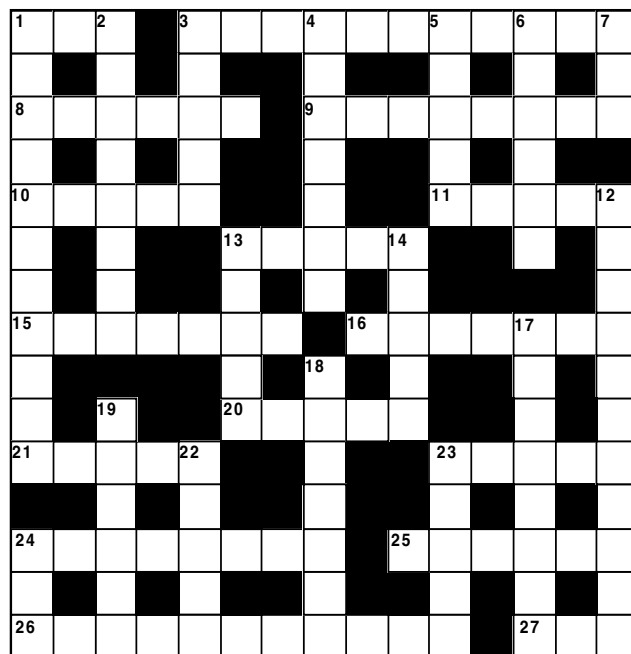
CHILDREN'S No. 350

Across – 1 Clothesline 7 Useless 8 Total 9 Age 10 Ideas 11 Rats
 14 Sat 16 Aladdin 19 Athens 20 Saddle

Down – 1 Counties 2 Obedient 3 Hyenas 4 Sister 5 Imitated
 6 Early 12 Class 13 Gnome 15 Acts 17 Dead 18 Hen

Crossword

Gordius 474



Across

- 1 Block of writing-paper (3)
 3 & 17d Opposes the wheat or the barley, perhaps? That's hard to accept (4,7,3,5)
 8 The symbol of the virtue of hope (6)
 9 & 24d Was this Chinese 2 down some kind of maniac (or ham)? (8,3)
 10 The kingdom of the true thousand (5)
 11 Encounters (5)
 13 Restrict part of the Muslim itinerary (5)
 15 Adoration (7)
 16 Superman's planet or a noble gas (7)
 20 She sang the 'Skyfall' theme with some mad elegance (5)
 21 Criminal offence involving deception (5)
 23 A principled consumer, for example, in transport (5)
 24 Divine interventions that gave backing to Smokey Robinson? (8)
 25 One skipping school (6)
 26 The ability of a know-it-all can throw up nice incomes (11)
 27 A sharp bite (3)

Down

- 1 I rip a flower asunder for the coyote (7,4)
 2 Ruler with absolute authority (8)
 3 Despondency (5)
 4 Yield, fail to resist (7)
 5 In mathematics, it's given as correct, needing no proof (5)
 6 & 7 Political address witnessed following anaesthetists one to nine? (6,3)
 12 Does only the uppermost part of this toy gyrate? (8,3)
 13 Russian space dog taken in by Nikolai Karpov (5)
 14 & 22d A traditional set of ornaments will score nil, again and again (5,5)
 17 See 3 across
 18 Estate (7)
 19 A much-used urban shortcut will make the traitor flee (3,3)
 22 See 14 down
 23 Writer Jules could be seen in a tavern, every day (5)
 24 See 9 across



Your heart for the homeless



Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

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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

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MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
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When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

Trócaire

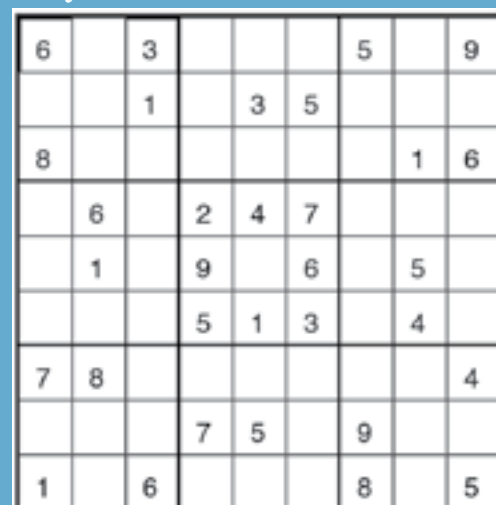
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

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.

Sudoku Corner

351

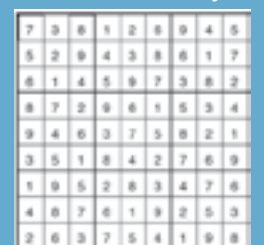
Easy



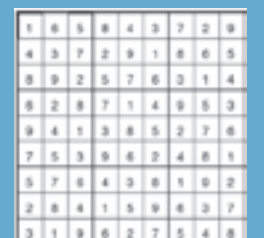
Hard



Last week's Easy 350



Last week's Hard 350



An unfailing love that fills all the people of Faith

HE KNELT, HAVING just received his First Holy Communion. For how long did he kneel? I am not sure, but I imagine the teacher told the boys and girls that they should kneel when they returned to their seats, having said “Amen” to the Body of Christ.

When he felt an appropriate length of time had been spent on his knees in prayer, he sat up, leaned towards his mother, and whispered: “I’m not as full as I thought I’d be.”

I imagine his mother smiled, maybe not fully sure how to respond, but she shared the story with me afterwards. That was close on 30 years ago. I wonder where the boy is now. I hope the man in him remembers that day and, even more so, I hope that the Lord has filled his life with many blessings.

Origins

It is easy to see where that feeling of being ‘filled’ had its origins. For months, the boy heard about receiving the ‘Body of Christ’ and we know bodies to be heavy. The boy imagined this body overpowering him, filling him to a point where there was room for no more. He had not fully grasped



the thinness of the wafer, the ease with which Christ wishes to enter our lives in his ever-gentle way. Christ, far from wanting to weigh us down, wants to liberate us, energise us, accompany us, strengthen us...nourish us.

The Eucharist remains central to our Faith journey. In the current and ongoing reality that is Covid-19, we are asked to approach and receive the Eucharist in a specified way, namely in the hand. For a considerable number of people this is the norm but for others it is a new ask.

The ‘Amen’ remains the key word, the reception of the gift our fullest calling. If the protection, health and wellbeing of the Body of Christ – the members of his Church, the whole of humanity

are in somehow helped through sharing God’s greatest gift, hand to hand, I believe it to be a choice we make.

“We draw with the stronger hand, the Eucharist to ourselves that we be truly ‘filled’”

I heard a meaningful explanation one time around the reception of Holy Communion in the hand. It spoke of receiving our King through the gesture of preparing a ‘throne’ with our hand, a throne of welcome and reverence.

Quite often, if right-handed, we place our left hand on top of

the right hand or vice versa. The symbolism of this was linked with receiving Christ into what might be considered our weaker hand and asking his blessing on our weakness – that we be strengthened. Then, from that weakness, freshly blessed by God’s presence, we draw with the stronger hand, the Eucharist to ourselves that we be truly ‘filled’ with his presence. I like this explanation.

This weekend, in my own parish, I will celebrate First Holy Communion with 17 children. Our celebration will be in a setting I could never have imagined, with just the children and their parents present.

There will be no readings, little music and no real involvement by the children in prayers, procession or reflection.

There will not be any party or cake in the local community centre but the essential will remain. I will stand before each one of the 17 and say those precious and sacred words: “The Body of Christ.” Each will receive the Host and take it to the soul as, one by one, they answer: “Amen!”

May they be as full as he wants and needs them to be.

Launching into the deep

“My vision, my hope, my dream for the Diocese of Achonry, is that we, the people, priests, religious and bishop, listen to that call of Christ in a renewed way today. Let’s not be prisoners of mediocrity, but agents of hope, going out into the deep, the uncharted waters with, as Pope Francis put it, ‘The Joy of the Gospel’!

“Let us not be held back by the voices that say ‘we have always done it this way’. The disciples would still be sitting at the shoreline with empty nets if they listened to that voice!”

– Bishop Paul Dempsey, Bishop of Achonry on the day of his Episcopal Ordination





Patients in the waiting room of the Spiritan Health Care Centre, Borana, Ethiopia, whom you can help by funding medicines and other supplies.

PLEASE HELP THE LITTLE WAY TO PROVIDE MEDICINE FOR CLINICS IN DEPRIVED AREAS

The Little Way Association has been asked to help support a clinic in Ethiopia. Fr Kenneth Iwunna CSSp of the Spiritan Health Care Centre, Borana, writes: “When the religious sisters who were running our clinic had to leave in 2015, our bishop agreed to pay the staff’s salaries. However, I am asking your kind supporters to provide funds for the medicine and supplies that we need to keep the clinic functional.” The centre helps the Dhadim people, who are poor farmers. They suffer from Aids, tuberculosis and other diseases. Fr Iwunna adds: “Most of them cannot afford to pay for their hospital bills, so many times, we give them free medical treatment and those who can afford to pay, they pay little. The clinic is the only one in this vicinity.”

The covid crisis is making matters worse for people in already-deprived areas, so projects like the Spiritan Health Care Centre need our help more than ever.

Your kind gift will be gratefully received and forwarded without deduction to provide urgently needed medicines for clinics in deprived areas.

Every penny or cent of your gift goes to missionaries without deduction.



The Little Way Association

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:

€..... **MEDICINES FOR CLINICS IN DEPRIVED AREAS**

€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**

€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state number _____)

€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss) _____ (Block letters please)

Address _____

IC/09/24



LITTLE WAY THERESIAN CENTRE WALSINGHAM

Promoting the message of St Thérèse, praying for the missions and offering accommodation to pilgrims wishing to spend a few days in private prayer at England’s national shrine to Our Lady.

For reservations please call:
(0044) 1328 820 222

Email:
contact@littlewayassociation.com

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.