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Why the silence, Leo?

Taoiseach accused of ignoring Christian persecution

Chai Brady

With Easter Sunday seeing hundreds more Christians slaughtered, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar stands accused of silence in the midst of mounting Christian persecution around the globe.

Some 320 people were killed in Sri Lanka when suspected Islamists targeted churches and hotels on Easter Sunday.

Mr Varadkar, who is a prolific user of social media, never mentioned the attack on Twitter nor did he issue a statement condemning the attack.

In contrast, when a gunman attacked mosques in New Zealand in March Mr Varadkar issued a statement condemning the attack, phoned the Prime Minister of New Zealand to sympathise and expressed his solidarity with Ireland's Muslim community.

"It's frankly an outrage not just to our sense of identity as Christians, it's actually an affront to the victims of the bombings in Sri Lanka," according to Michael Kinsella, the National Director for Aid to the Church in Need Ireland.

"The national trend that we're witnessing is something that's part of a global trend, where there is a total aversion to acknowledging, let alone respecting, the fact that Christians are

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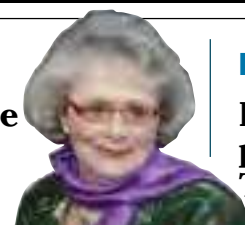
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When silence in the face of evil speaks the loudest

At many parishes across the world, Massgoers enthusiastically sang "Easter glory fills the sky" on Sunday morning. It was dark plumes of smoke that filled the skies above churches in Sri Lanka as parishioners gathered for the most important festival in the Christian calendar.

Occasions like Easter Sunday and Christmas Day are usually occasions of great joy, but they are increasingly a time of trepidation for believers in many parts of the world. Islamists and other militants who target Christians have become adept at choosing occasions when they will kill and maim the maximum number of people.

Last Easter, four people were shot dead in an attack targeting Christians in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta. The year before, bombings at two Coptic Orthodox churches in Egypt on Palm Sunday saw 45 people killed. A year before that, 75 people died and more than 300 were injured after bombs exploded in a park in a Christian neighbourhood of Lahore, Pakistan, as people celebrated following Easter Masses. Just a year earlier, Christian students were targeted at the University of Garissa, Kenya, was attacked on Holy Thursday; 148 people died.

Martyrdom

We are living through another era of martyrdom in the Church. The UK Foreign Office estimates that some 215 million Christians

face discrimination and violence this year because of their faith.

According to all measures, violence against Christians is rising dramatically. Last year, an average of 250 Christians were killed every month simply because of their faith.

While Britain has joined some other EU countries in prioritising assistance to suffering Christians, the silence from the Irish Government is deafening. In an historically Christian country where 82% of people say they profess the Christian Faith the apparent indifference from those in positions of leadership to the suffering of so many people is hard to explain.

It's bewildering that so many Irish politicians could muster up the empathy to rightly condemn the atrocious mosque attacks in New Zealand in March, but not manage even a whimper following Sunday's murderous attacks in Sri Lanka. At the time of the New Zealand massacre, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar addressed to the issue thus: "to our Muslim community in Ireland – all 70,000

Editor's Comment

Michael Kelly



of them – to all Muslim communities around the world, I think the most important thing is that we not be afraid. That we don't allow the terrorists to win by changing our lifestyle or changing the way we look at each other because of what was a terrible act."

"Ireland's silence on the issue is shameful and shouldn't continue"

Fine words of solidarity, concern and reassurance. But not a single word from Mr Varadkar about the attacks on Christians in Sri Lanka.

The Taoiseach and the Irish political establishment appear tone deaf to the sense of connectedness that binds Christians in Ireland with fellow believers around the world – particularly those who are suffering.

Unless the world starts to take a strong line on religious freedom, Christians will disappear from large parts of the world including the very birthplace of the Faith – the Middle East. Already, Christians have been fleeing in large

numbers and those who remain keep their heads down for fear of provoking ire.

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

While the plight of desperate Christians might not be as trendy as worthy causes like LGBT rights or the empowerment of women and girls, it's hard to think of a right more core than the right to worship as one sees fit.

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

Michael Kelly is author of a new book with Austen Ivereigh How to Defend the Faith – Without Raising Your Voice – it is available from Columba Books www.columbabooks.com



Antrim church paint attack seen as hate crime

A Co. Antrim church was attacked with white paint ahead of Mass on Easter Sunday. The vandalism of Sacred Heart Church in Ballyclare is being investigated by police as a hate crime.

"Any right minded person can see the pain

and anguish this would cause," said the PSNI in a Facebook post on Sunday.

A 26-year-old man was arrested on Monday morning on suspicion of criminal damage and was released on police bail later that night.

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Missionary maddened at TD's denial of hunger in Venezuela

Chai Brady

An Irish TD's downplaying of the humanitarian crisis and severe food shortage in Venezuela is "absolutely" false according to an Irish missionary.

Fr Tom Jordan MSC, who has spent over half a century ministering in the beleaguered nation, said the situation is deteriorating. Already over three million people have left Venezuela according to the UN, in what has been described as the worst crisis the country has faced.

"It's got worse, more people are getting out of it – those who can – and the electricity situation makes it worse. If your refrigerator goes in a

climate like that you have no food, it's wasted," said Fr Jordan.

"Then the escalation of prices to high heaven, and the income is virtually useless to buy food because the income hasn't increased worth a damn." He added there's little maintenance of the electricity supply leading to many outages which sometimes take over four hours to fix.

According to the *Sunday Times* Clare Daly TD said in a YouTube video that "even in these difficult days the poorest people get a box of basic food essentials every month".

She said although citizens have to register to receive the package there are no political strings attached, which Fr Jordan disputed.

"He [Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro] gives out a little food maybe once a month and only to the ones who recognise him as the boss," he said. "...For somebody like that to come back to Ireland and say there's no shortage in Venezuela, it's very irritating."

Instability

Ms Daly said in the Dáil that the election process in Venezuela is legitimate and the instability is mainly caused by US sanctions.

However, Fr Jordan told this paper the elections are consistently "rigged" allowing President Maduro to retain power. Currently the Venezuelan government haven't published statistics on pov-

erty and hunger for almost four years.

International humanitarian aid to Venezuela increased in 2018, after a shift in the government's discourse from entirely denying the humanitarian crisis to recognising an economic one.

In an assessment made by Human Rights Watch they "found a health system in

utter collapse with increased levels of maternal and infant mortality; the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles and diphtheria; and increases in numbers of infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis (TB)".

Venezuelan organisations and universities document high levels of food insecurity

and child malnutrition, and available data shows high hospital admissions of malnourished children. A Living Conditions Survey, Encovi, found that the average weight lost by Venezuelans in 2017 was 11kg.

Fr Jordan returned to Ireland a few months ago due to health issues. He ministered in Maracaibo and Caracas.

Looking to a future that is pro-life

Staff reporter

Dublin will play host to a major pro-life gathering next month to mark the anniversary of last year's referendum removing the right to life from the unborn.

'Ireland – the future is pro-life: fighting to restore a culture of life' will be held on Saturday, May 25 and will focus on how the pro-life community can reorganise and plan for the future.

Speakers will include Maria Steen from the Iona Institute, Niamh Uí Bhriain from the Life Institute and Emma O'Connell from Gianna

Care. On the political front, the meeting will also be organised by pro-life TD Carol Nolan and Senator Rónán Mullen.

The focus of the event – organised by *The Irish Catholic* and sponsored by Aid to the Church in Need – will be the future of how pro-life people can work to try and turn the tide on abortion.

The event will take place at the Alex Hotel in the city centre and limited tickets are still available at a price of just €30 for the day.

If you would like to attend, you can reserve a place by telephoning 01 687 4028, emailing events@irishcatholic.ie or by logging on to www.irishcatholic.com/shop



A young group participate in a men's retreat held in St Saviour's Dominican Priory over the Easter Triduum, which included a hike in Glendalough.

Notre-Dame rebuild funds shouldn't be diverted IC poll finds

Staff reporter

The majority of people would advocate that the money raised for Notre-Dame Cathedral be used to rebuild the iconic landmark and place of worship, rather than given to the poor.

Out of 500 people who voted on a social media survey conducted by this paper 80% said the donated funds should be used to restore the cathedral. The devastating fire that ripped through its roof and caused its spire to collapse occurred on April 15.

The question was: "Around €1 billion has already been raised for the reconstruction of Notre-Dame."

"Some have said instead of reconstruction, this should go to help the poor. Others argue that this is an inspirational gem of the Christian Faith that must be restored, whatever the cost. What do you think?"

After a huge response from many people, including prominent billionaires who pledged to donate to efforts at rebuilding, there were calls to divert funds to alleviate homelessness and assist

the poor.

One commenter said: "The Cathedral has been an inspiration for generations to give to those in need, spiritually and financially. May it do so again."

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Ireland in urgent need of fresh vocations, bishops warn

Colm Fitzpatrick

Bishops across Ireland have urged parishioners and clergy to draw young people to religious life in a hope of curbing ongoing priestly decline.

In a series of homilies for the annual Chrism Mass, prelates warned that the shortage of priests in the country will soon lead to "significant change" in dioceses and called for a renewed commitment to holy orders.

Speaking in Belfast's St Peter's Cathedral during the special ceremony, Down and Connor's Bishop Noel Treanor stressed the urgent need for more priests in the diocese, noting that within five to 10 years it will not be unusual to see individual priests responsible for groups of parishes.

"Evidently, we shall see significant change in the coming decade. For example,

funeral services and burials will be led by women and men, by fellow parishioners, with monthly Requiem Mass for those who have died during the previous weeks as is the case already in other countries," he said. Dr Treanor also issued a pastoral letter on priesthood, and announced that a special nine-day novena will be launched on May 2 to pray for an increase in vocations.

Echoing these comments, Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin said that in an Ireland where priesthood and religious life numbers are "dwindling", presenting such vocations as "fulfilling" is a challenge to all Catholics. He added that young people will not be drawn to religious life unless they see the impact it has on members of the Faith community.

"No young person will want to consider a vocation

to priesthood or to the religious life or, indeed, to marriage unless they see priests or sisters or married couples who are living happy lives in the Lord – in love with the heart of Jesus," the Primate of All-Ireland said.

Elphin's Bishop Kevin Doran also expressed concern about the decline of priests, and called on families to encourage and pray for young people to consider religious life.

"...We do have to ask ourselves seriously what we are doing in our parishes and in our families to encourage young people, in the first place to be disciples, but then to respond generously to the call to priesthood and religious life, even if that involves making sacrifices."

Putting the brake on sin



Fr Mícheál Mac Gréil hearing Confessions at Máméan (Connemara) during the Good Friday pilgrimage there. Photo: Anne-Marie McDonough

Political leafletting causes disquiet at Donegal friary

Chai Brady

Concerns have been raised after cars were leafletted on behalf of a politician while people were celebrating Easter Mass in a friary in Donegal.

Leaflets promoting Fine Gael's Michael McClafferty were distributed without permission at Ards Friary over the weekend.

The friary's Guardian, Bro. Richard Hendrick OFM Cap., said he was "surprised" that it had happened.

"We most certainly didn't [give permission].

There is an email going to Mr McClafferty's office now telling him that anybody who wants to leaflet cars on what is essentially private property needs to ask permission first. So no, we received nothing, either in writing or request form.

Litter

"The other thing that it does more than anything is if people don't use them or want them, they just throw them away and we're left with the litter. So it's an unfortunate fact."

Bro. Hendrick said he

would be contacting Mr McClafferty respectfully asking that "such a thing is not done in the future".

When this journalist contacted Mr McClafferty using the mobile number printed on his leaflet, he became angry and demanded to know who had contacted the paper regarding the incident.

He refused to offer clarification on whether he was aware of the leafletting at the friary and did not answer a further email before this paper went to print.

Obstacles to Church renewal must be overcome - bishop

Staff reporter

Priests must get used to a more inclusive style of ministry, where they work alongside parishioners, Bishop Brendan Leahy has said.

Speaking at the Diocese of Limerick's annual Chrism Mass, Bishop Leahy said Pope Francis' vision directly addresses the needs of the Irish Church.

"One of Pope Francis' goals is to establish the synodal Church, meaning a more all-hands-on-deck Church and that objective entirely fits the need we have in our Church here in Ireland," he said.

Unfamiliar

Acknowledging that changing in this way is not easy and entails moving into unfamiliar territory, he said it would entail new pastoral units and could entail new lay ministries.

"We are challenged to pursue an increasingly inclusive and egalitarian team style of ministry," Dr Leahy said, adding: "It's one thing to say we believe that yes, God has a plan whose name today is synodality. But at times we experience tension, stress, fear. We face many obstacles."

Despite this, he said, "it's not the falling that matters, but rather our ability to get up again and go on".

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Cork church windows explore past

Two vibrant stained-glass windows depicting a series of historical and cultural events over 700 years in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, have gone on display in the town's Church of the Immaculate Conception. The windows depict around 40 different scenes from the town's history – including the arrival of the Normans to the town, the Penal Laws, and the Great Famine.

No, Archbishop Martin, we're not prisoners of history but guardians of legacy

Every day, since April 15, the French media – as well as philosophers and commentators – have been reflecting on the question of how the inferno at Notre Dame is a reminder of how precious the cathedral is, and how it links France today with France's past and its Catholic culture.

Every king of France carried the title 'Christian Majesty' and despite the republican state's embrace of secularism, Notre Dame represents the deposit of the sacred in the thread of the nation's story. Notre Dame, wrote Nicolas Baverez in *Le Figaro*, is a place of pilgrimage for all Christians, and it also symbolises the very soul of France, bringing together all its past memories.

For the French, the past matters: history carries the nation's character and 'soul'. So, what an incongruous time, I thought, for Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, to express regret that in Ireland "the Church is imprisoned in its past...in a whole culture, and that culture doesn't respond any more to the realities".



Mary Kenny

Dr Martin told Patsy McGarry of the *Irish Times* that he is concerned about the "cultural warriors" in the Catholic Church who are "resistant to change... saying 'let's restore what we had before and let's be there, let's be aggressive and let's close our ranks'".

Change

As a person who has often welcomed change – sometimes leading from the front towards change – may I suggest that

constructive change and valuing the past are not necessarily in conflict with one another.

To understand best how to change and develop, I would say it is imperative to have a profound understanding of the past, even if – perhaps especially if – that past doesn't seem to correspond to today's 'realities'.

Many grave difficulties arise in the management of contemporary affairs because people have not sufficiently studied the deposit of history, in all societies

● Not all change is an unalloyed good, however. A new book on the influence of genes, *The Science of Fate*, by Cambridge science don Hannah Critchlow, claims that there is so much new knowledge about genetic inheritance that soon human embryos will be screened for character traits such as extroversion, agreeableness and openness to experience.

And what if the unborn, in the early stages of development, are found to carry genes which are considered to render their personalities less agreeable, attractive or emollient? The 'choice' will then surely be offered for such personalities to be 'screened out'.

That every individual is a worthy human life, and every human life worthy of being redeemed is a Christian idea we must defend, more ardently than ever, in the coming times.

You do have to change and adapt to social and technological development. I couldn't continue working as a writer if I were using a typewriter. But I also owe a debt of knowledge to the many reporters, commentators, thinkers and philosophers who have preceded me.

Culture

Whatever we do, we are building on what others have accomplished before us.

And what I have learned from thinkers from G.K. Chesterton to Hannah Arendt, from T.S. Eliot to Camille Paglia is that a culture does need a few "warriors" to defend it.

As the French have been saying since April 15, the past is ourselves: to go forward, we must own it, not rebuff it and to value the deposit of faith or tradition is not to be its prisoner.

Swede dreams

● All our politicians could learn from the example of Greta Thurnberg [pictured], the 16-year-old Swedish schoolgirl who is credited with starting a new ecological revolution in her campaign for Climate Change awareness.

A composed young lady who speaks calmly while urging children to take up the cause, she travels by train rather than plane.

Last weekend, she came from Stockholm to London by train (there may have been a boat involved, but not necessarily: train route would be across the Oresund Bridge to Denmark, from Copenhagen by Brussels by train and then to England via the Eurostar). Good for her!

She also speaks flawless English. Though a Swedish-speaking Englishman tells me that "English is very easy, very accessible, for Swedes". When the Nordics get together in a group, they speak "Swinglish" – a mesh of Swedish and English.

Thus do new languages emerge.



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Paris disaster 'wake-up call' for fate of Irish churches

Colm Fitzpatrick

Calls have been made for religious buildings across Ireland to be fire-proofed, amid fears that dilapidated churches could be easily prone to disaster.

Speaking in the aftermath of the huge fire which ravaged Notre-Dame's Cathedral earlier this month, Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said that he "worries" that churches in Ireland may meet a similar fate.

"We have many old churches here – there's a lot of wood in our churches. There are serious problems of fire risk. We constantly have the firefighters come and look at our churches," he said on RTÉ's *Today with Seán O'Rourke* last week, adding that the maintenance of these buildings is a "real challenge".

Following the fire, Labour leader Brendan Howlin also

called for an audit of Irish buildings in the Dáil and urged Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to ensure measures are taken to prevent incendiary disaster.

Tragedy

"In the light of the tragedy," the Wexford TD asked, "are there plans for an audit of our built heritage, including places such as Dublin Castle, Christ Church Cathedral, St Patrick's Cathedral and similar structures across the country, to ensure they are equipped with the latest in fire protection systems?"

"Are there detailed plans to respond to fires in such buildings?"

Mr Howlin added that the burning collapse of the French cathedral should be a "wake-up call" to government ministers about the future possibility of a similar event in Ireland.

Praise for French priest's 'act of faith' in Notre-Dame

Greg Daly

An Irish priest who retrieved the Blessed Sacrament from a burning convent has said a French priest gave a powerful testimony to his faith in the reality of Christ in the Eucharist by rescuing the Blessed Sacrament from Notre-Dame Cathedral last week.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr John Harris OP, who entered Drogheda's Siena Convent after a fire in 1994 which took the life of one Dominican nun, Sr Mary Agnes Madden, said Fr Jean-Marc Fournier's actions were "an act of Faith".

"I think it's our belief that it is not just a symbol, that this is the reality of the Lord. The Lord is truly present," he said, describing how when he arrived at the convent the nuns there stressed the importance of removing the Blessed Sacrament from the burnt oratory.

"It's not just a symbol, it's not just a pretense, it's actually the real presence of the Lord. And in the same way as you would go in to retrieve anybody else who's alive, it's

the Lord, and he's alive. Yes, it's a sacramental presence, but it's still real," he said.

Expressing the hope that Fr Fournier's actions could help show people the importance of the Blessed Sacrament, Fr Harris said by braving the burning cathedral the French priest had reminded people that Notre-Dame is not simply a priceless cultural treasure.

"It's first and foremost

a cathedral, it's the house of God, and it's the house of God because the Blessed Sacrament lives there," he said, emphasising that Notre-Dame is much more than a symbol of France.

"It's not just a historic building but it's a living building in the sense that it's a place of worship for the Catholic community and the Mass is celebrated there," he said. "Maybe we need to

realise that and for all of us Catholics to remind ourselves that what Fr Fournier did last week for the Blessed Sacrament is really telling us that this is really important."

Describing Fr Fournier's actions as "a great profession of his faith in the Real Presence", Fr Harris said: "If we have lost that, and if we have taken it for granted, then a moment like this can maybe call us all to think about it."

Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappé bears an image of Notre Dame on his jersey after the fire earlier this month which ravaged the French cathedral. The players wore the special kits in their Ligue 1 match against Monaco.



Mayo abbey set to be pilgrim hub

Staff reporter

A €3 million development at an 800-year-old abbey in Co. Mayo will serve as a hub for exploring the role of pilgrimages in Ireland and Europe's Christian identity, according to the local parish priest.

Fr Frank Fahey told *The Irish Catholic* that Mayo County Council's support for building an interpretative centre at Ballintubber Abbey will help visitors learn about pilgrimage through human history and about the inter-

action of science and religion. Visitors, he said, would be helped to learn about the major Irish and European pilgrim routes.

Stressing how Masses will continue to take place at the medieval abbey, he said: "The Abbey refuses to die. Even through the worst times, even for 250 years when there was no roof on it, the Masses continued to be celebrated in the sanctuary, so it was always a place where the Mass was celebrated and it is fully restored now for all the ceremonies."

Taoiseach accused of ignoring Christian persecution

» Continued from Page 1

the single most persecuted group on the planet," Mr Kinsella told *The Irish Catholic*.

Out of the country's 15 cabinet ministers only Justice Minister Charlie Flanagan posted a personal statements about the attacks. Mr Flanagan wrote: "Shocking & horrific attack targeting Christian Community in Sri Lanka. Thoughts & prayers with victims, survivors & loved ones of deceased."

Both Simon Harris and Simon Coveney retweeted a statement made by the Department of Foreign Affairs. None of the other ministers mentioned the attack.

Cabinet

In comparison eight members of cabinet condemned the Christchurch attacks on Twitter, which left 50 dead, sometimes in several posts.

Mr Varadkar described it as an "Islamophobic terror attack" and said he spoke to New Zealand's prime minister about "how we might work together to take on the root causes and enablers of such attacks".

Katherine Zappone and Heather Humphreys both

gave their "thoughts and prayers" to the victims and other ministers made reference or retweeted related material. All except Mr Flanagan were silent on the attacks in Sri Lanka.

'Appalling'

However, Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney issued a statement from his department describing the attack as "appalling".

The attacks are the latest wave of violence against Christians.

The UK Foreign Office estimates that some 215 million Christians face discrimination and violence because of their faith. Violence against Christians is rising dramatically, with an average of 250 killed every month – a doubling of last year's figure.

The so-called Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Sri Lanka attacks, but local militant Islamist group National Thowheed Jamath was initially accused. There are approximately 1.2 million Catholics in Sri Lanka representing around 6.1% of the total population.

See Page 10.

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We must resist all unjust, anti-family and anti-Catholic legislation

What has become of our country?

In the past century over 2 billion children have been killed in the womb through abortion. This is a sin that clamours to God for vengeance.

Ireland has recently become an accomplice in this monstrous sin.

Removing the constitutional protection of the unborn has given the Irish State the power to kill those whose lives it considers worthless. Will its blood lust, once aroused, be satiated with only the blood of the unborn? Not likely!

In order to tear down the 8th, it was necessary to whip up of a frenzy of anti-Catholicism and to persuade the public that it would be compassionate to remove this constitutional protection.

By abandoning the Divine and natural law on which Christian civilisation is founded, and which provide the necessary harmony for society to be largely self-regulating, we are left with only man-made laws which lack credibility and can only be implemented through brute force.

The attempt to press-gang doctors and other medical staff into the State's abortion industry is a clear portent of a totalitarian future.

Euthanasia and gender ideology are already being pushed with the same totalitarian spirit.

So how did we ever reach this point?

The Revolution that is destroying us

The truth is that we are approaching the climax of a long revolutionary process which has been attacking the Church and Christian civilisation like a subtle yet vicious cancer since the end of the Middle Ages. The process and its remedy are succinctly described in the book *Revolution and Counter-revolution* by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (order a copy using the coupon below).

This anti-Christian revolution systematically attacks Catholic nations in order to replace them with faithless secular and anti-religious states.

The milestones of this process were the Renaissance and the so-called Reformation; the French Revolution; Communism; and more recently the Cultural Revolution that erupted from the Sorbonne in Paris.

These were essential steps in a process that has its own internal logic and cohesion. Its driving force is pride and sensuality – paving the way for a society that is steered by the ideologies of egalitarianism and liberalism. It denies all inequalities among men, between species, and even between God and man. Its religion is pantheism. Its ultimate end is the eradication of God's image from His creation.

Understood like this, it

is possible to discern where this whole process is leading us.

It pains us to have to point out, but the more recent stages of this revolutionary process would not have been possible without a grave crisis having enveloped the Holy Catholic Church.

The disconcerting silence of a large proportion of the hierarchy and clergy in the face of the onslaught of the sexual revolution, same-sex "marriage", and now abortion, has scandalised the faithful. Some "committed Catholics" are unable to see that their support for abortion contradicts the teachings of the church as contained in the Catechism as well as in the 5th commandment.

In the face of this situation what path will we choose?

The path of the Revolution, that taken by all the communist countries in the past century and by the new Marxists of more recent times, will lead to persecution of the Church, and social and economic misery.

Egalitarian and environmentalist ideologies idealise poverty and misery – and will be the scourge of God on any people that fails to acknowledge the Moral Law.

Our Lady of Fatima warned that if mankind failed to amend its ways great chastisements, wars and persecutions of the Church would engulf the world, and that whole nations would be annihilated.

Obviously mankind has not amended its ways – but it is not too late to do so.

The Message of Fatima calls us to amendment of life and repentance; and to a crusade against the errors of our time. Our Lady promised the conversion of Russia, peace in

the world, and the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart – if we heed Her requests.

To attain these promises we need a national Crusade of Repentance!

Repentance doesn't only mean regretting past errors or not repeating them. It means doing the opposite of those errors. It means opposing them and trying to undo their effects.

Appeal for Leadership

We call on the clergy to lead this repentance by reaffirming the teachings of the Church, and by encouraging prayer, penance and resistance to the evils that the Revolution is pushing on Ireland.

We call on the hierarchy to evangelise the flock on the Church's teaching about the abominable crime of abortion; to publically reaffirm that any person who participates in an actual abortion is excommunicated *latae sententiae*; and to use the Canonical sanctions at its disposal to refuse Holy Communion to public sinners such as promoters of abortion.

We call on the laity to: participate in the prayer and penance of the Church; defend the Church in the public sphere; always vote in elections and referenda to support morally correct policies.

We call on natural leaders and people with influence at all levels of society to reverse the role that has so often been taken by our leaders in the past. We must resist the unjust, anti-family and anti-Catholic legislation that is being unleashed on our country.

It would be easy to become despondent in the face of the overwhelming task. But let

us remember that victory is assured by Our Lady of Fatima, and by the promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (St. Matt. 28:20)

All is not lost. Despite the overwhelming pro-abortion onslaught, more than 700,000 people voted to maintain the protection of the unborn. This is more than any one political party received in the last general election.

Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, in the book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, asserted:

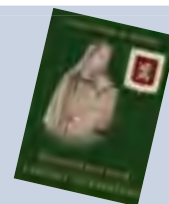
"When men resolve to cooperate with the grace of God, the marvels of history are worked: the conversion of the Roman Empire; the formation of the Middle Ages; the reconquest of Spain, starting from Covadonga; all the events that result from the great resurrections of soul of which peoples are also capable. These resurrections are invincible, because nothing can defeat a people that is virtuous and truly loves God."

So let us cooperate with the grace of God. Let us fight on with confidence in God's help and the ultimate victory of the Church. It is the enemies of God that need to fear the moment – that can't be too far away – when the Divine wrath avenges the victims of abortion.

Please respond below with your pledge to pray; to stand up for the truth; and to resist the evils being unleashed on our country and the Church.

And order your copy of the book: *Revolution and Counter-revolution*.

- ☐ Yes, I will pray the Rosary every day for the intention of this Crusade of Repentance;
- ☐ Yes, I will resist all unjust, anti-family and anti-Catholic legislation that is promoted in Ireland;
- ☐ Please send me information on activities of *Irish Society for Christian Civilisation*;
- ☐ Please send me a copy of *Revolution and Counter-revolution* (220 Pages) by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (€15 incl. P&P).



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Carrying the Cross across our divisions

Nuala O'Loan

The View



Easter for me is a time of great mystery. This Easter Week I find myself reflecting on all that we experienced doing those brief three days. Now we celebrate the Resurrection, but, for all of us, as we carry on through life's journey, the carrying of the cross continues and will continue, even as we experience the joy and peace of Easter, which resonates in my heart as I write this.

For the dying do not cease to die here on earth, the suffering do not cease to suffer, and, for the most part, the lonely, the marginalised and the weary do not cease in their struggle.

On Holy Thursday night, for young Lyra McKee, who four minutes earlier had tweeted of the "absolute madness" she was witnessing in the Creggan in Derry, death came without warning, savagely, as she was shot in the head by a terrorist gunman. For her partner, her family, her friends, the death of this feisty, clever, caring young woman must have brought unimaginable pain and desolation.

Consolation, please God, will come, but in this glorious Easter week the darkness and the sadness in their hearts must be almost tangible, even though I suspect they will laugh and smile too, as they remember so many incidents from her short but very full young life. A brave young soul made by God, loved by God, gone home to God.

Casualties

Her death coming as it did 21 years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement must make us all pause for thought.

Between March 2018 and February 2019 in Northern Ireland there were two security related deaths, 122 casualties of paramilitary shootings and assaults, 15 bombing incidents and 37 shooting incidents. Just as loyalist paramilitaries are still active, engaged in killing, extortion, and similar crime, so Republican terrorists are still trying to bomb, maim and kill. I have no doubt that the bullet which killed young Lyra McKee, as she stood near a police landrover, was meant for a police officer.

It takes great courage to come forward and pass information on after a terrorist murder like this.

That is what must happen though. The communities from which the people who killed Lyra McKee came must stand together and provide the information the police need to bring the killers to justice. I know that is very hard to do, but it can be done, it has been done before. There must be no exiling, no shunning, no attacking those who help to bring murderers to justice, rather a quiet acceptance of and gratitude for their courage.

“There are still far too many occasions when we do not stand together”

After the death of Lyra McKee, for the first time, I think, I saw clergymen of different denominations, politicians of all kinds and lots of ordinary people standing behind ACC Stephen Martin of the PSNI as he appealed for help and for information. This was no accident. It was the whole community, united in horror and grief standing together to say: "This was wrong. It should never happen again."

The problem we have here in the North is that, whilst our people stood together on that occasion, there are still far too many occasions when we do not stand together, when we do not see ourselves as one people, because we are still a community divided to such an extent by our historic experiences and fears.

There are those who work tirelessly for peace and reconciliation, and they are good people. Despite them, however, sectarianism still

dominates our lives. People talk freely of their unease if they find themselves in certain places at certain times, knowing that they may be attacked.

Flags are said to fly to celebrate – yet the appearance of paramilitary flags among the Union flags on one side, and the Tricolours on the other side, send a sinister message. Most people interpret it as meaning "you are not welcome here". Why else would those paramilitary flags fly? What other message can they be sending? We are still very much geographically divided.

We can be divided in our hearts too, not really seeing the other as one of us. True, many people have moved beyond overt sectarianism and there are many friendships and relationships across the divide.

Yet there can still rest deep within the psyche of both sides of our tiny little world in Northern Ireland, a deep rooted distrust of the other.

Trust grows from common experience: from simple things like grieving with each other when people die, rejoicing together when babies are born, celebrating life's little joys and happinesses together, from caring for each other and knowing each other as our true neighbour – in Christian terms, our brother or sister in Christ.

History tells us that it takes decades for the kind of distrust, which is the product of our Troubles, to be healed or at least to cease to divide. Peace agreements break down. I once heard, at a global peace conference in Norway, that the average

peace agreement lasts 15 years! There is plenty of evidence of that around the world.

Even when we think that ISIS, the IRA, or the UVF, for example, have been defeated, we know it is possible for one man or woman to do great evil in the name of one organisation or another.

On Easter Sunday morning we heard of the terrible slaughter in Sri Lanka where 290 died and over 400 were injured – the focus of these attacks were Catholics and other Christians and foreigners staying in big hotels. As I write this so many families are searching, trying to find out what happened to their loved ones. Many people alive in Northern Ireland today will know what that feels like.

Their deaths seem to have been caused by a small number of suicide bombers. We have seen that it takes very few people working in isolated cells to inflict grievous harm on so many.

This all seems such a long way from the joy of Easter, but the reality is that part of our work of carrying the cross must involve constant attempts to build trust across communities, countries and the world.

Consensus

Here in Northern Ireland we have had no government for 27 months. It is time that that our politicians, rather than refusing to go into government, do so on the basis that they will work together to reach consensus where there is consensus, and will accept that sometimes it is not possible to legislate in a particular area because the will of all the people, expressed democratically, does not endorse a particular law. Where that is the case, politicians must work in harmony to try and provide maximum benefit for all our people.

If they do not do so, they demonstrate and perpetuate the division between us.

For the families of Lyra McKee and of all those who have died through terrorism here and elsewhere, we can pray for peace. We must do more though. I think it is very simple: we must challenge ourselves and our "own" to ensure that in every act we seek to respect, to love and to cherish all those whom we encounter. It was for this that Christ died. This at least we can do.

How we buried our poor



The latest Tuam interim report invites a host of questions, writes **David Quinn**

The latest interim report by the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes was issued last week. This new report is concerned mainly with finding out what happened to the dead infants and children in the various institutions under investigation.

In some cases, it can say with certainty where the remains are buried because proper burial records were kept. In other cases, no such records were kept.

The spotlight once again returned to the home in Tuam, which closed 58 years ago, and to a lesser extent the one in Bessborough, Cork.

If you will cast your mind back to when this story first broke in 2014, headlines around the world read, “800 babies found in a septic tank”. It was established by the commission last year that this is not in fact true. The tank is empty.

But there are many bodies in a separate underground structure that may be a disused sewage system of some sort. It appears to have been used as a burial chamber from 1937 until 1961 when the Tuam home closed. What happened to bodies before then is unknown.

Responsible

The commission points out that neither the Bons Secour Sisters, who ran the home, nor Galway County Council, who were officially responsible for it, knew the answers.

The commission is clearly very frustrated that it still does not know for certain how the bodies of the dead infants and children were buried.

It thinks some people must know more. The very last paragraph of its



latest report says: “The commission considers that there must be people in Tuam and the surrounding area who know more about the burial arrangements and who did not come forward with the information.”

It is similarly frustrated about Bessborough. Hundreds of children died there over the decades but the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary who ran it does not know where the children are buried.

“We do not know for sure where the children from St Finbarr’s are buried either. Many of those children were transferred to the hospital”

The commission says it “finds this very difficult to comprehend as Bessborough was a mother and baby home for the duration of the period covered by the Commission (1922–1998) and the congregation was involved with it for all of this time”.

So, either the sisters are lying, or they genuinely don’t know.

The commission thinks the bodies are buried somewhere in the 200 acres of the original institution but cannot find where.

Almost 800 children died at Bessborough and another 522 born to unmarried mothers died in St Finbarr’s hospital. We do not know for sure where the children from

St Finbarr’s are buried either. Many of those children were transferred to the hospital from Cork County Home, which was not run by any religious congregation.

The Commission points out: “In the majority of cases, the burial of a child of a public patient was arranged by the administrators of Bessborough or Cork District Hospital/St Finbarr’s, most likely in conjunction with the health authorities who were paying for the mother and child.”

Certainty

The Commission thinks the children who died at St Finbarr’s are buried at Carr’s Hill cemetery, Cork.

In several cases the new report can say with total certainty or a high degree of certainty where the bodies are buried.

For example, the children who died in the Protestant-run Bethany Home are to be found in Mount Jerome Cemetery in Dublin.

The children who died in St Patrick’s on the Navan Road (formerly called Pelletstown) are buried in Glasnevin Cemetery.

In the case of Castlepollard, the commission says “it has no reason to doubt that the majority of children” who died there are in a burial ground in an old walled garden of the institution.

At Sean Ross, where over 1,000 children died between 1931 and 1969, there is “a designated child burial ground in the grounds of the institution”. A study of the site is currently underway.

Certain other aspects of the report are worth noting. For example, we read that in the Tuam home an

unspecified number of the children were from married parents who could not look after them for one reason or another. Some of those children will have died also. Were they taken away by their mothers and buried separately by them, or were they buried with the rest of the children, mostly likely in the underground chamber?

The report looks at how children in the general community were buried in the first half of the last century. It says it “had difficulty in finding solid evidence on the subject”.

This seems incredible. Surely there are social historians who know how children in general were buried in say, 1940, and what kind of burial records exist?

Buried informally

One priest told me that children who died before the age of seven (the age of reason) were often buried informally in those days because, if they were baptised, they were considered to have died in a state of grace and therefore did not need prayers said

for them. The commission can surely discover this, or perhaps someone with suitable expertise can make a submission of their own to the commission about the matter?

The commission should also look at how the poor in general were buried in those decades. Very many went into unmarked graves because they could afford nothing else.

The international context must also be examined. For example, in Britain, mother and baby homes operated until the 1970s and only a minority were run by the Catholic Church.

In the US to this day, bodies of the poor who no-one claims are still sometimes buried in huge unmarked graves. One in New York, called Hart Island, contains over one million bodies, many of them babies.

The commission says the final report will look at “the social and economic context of the times”. This will be vital to arriving at a proper understanding of what happened.

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Easter bombs show war on Christians is spreading



For too long the media has played down the most appalling attacks against believers, writes **James Bradshaw**

The bomb attacks which took place on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka have once again demonstrated the horrors which Christians are being subjected to the world over. Some 320 people were killed and another 500 were injured in the eight bomb blasts, three of which targeted churches.

Alarming, the carrying out of such large-scale atrocities in a country where Christians had appeared to be relatively safe could be a harbinger of more such attacks. Up until this week, Sri Lanka would not have been considered much of a battleground in what is increasingly referred to as a 'Global War on Christians'.

While the small Christian minority is dwarfed within a country that is 70% Buddhist and 13% Hindu, violence of this scale has not been experienced by them in recent times.

Bloodshed

Revulsion at the attacks was matched by bewilderment as to who could have carried them out. True, Sri Lanka's recent history has been blighted by bloodshed. The civil war between government and separatist Tamil Tiger rebels cost 100,000 lives between 1983 and 2009. Attacks on civilians were common, including suicide attacks.

The Sri Lankan government has identified the perpetrators of the attacks as a radical Islamic group who had received help from an inter-



The shoe of a victim is seen in front of St Anthony's Shrine in Colombo. Photo: CNS

national terrorist network.

The objectives of this attack are clear: to slaughter as many Christians and tourists as possible.

Given the pattern of previous attacks in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere, the architects of this atrocity seem to have

820+

The number of people killed or injured in eight bomb blasts in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday

conflated the two groups. This is also not surprising. In many of the countries where anti-Christian hatred is felt most keenly, followers of Christ are despised for their alleged disloyalty or 'foreignness' – even in places where Christianity has been present since Apostolic times or shortly thereafter.

Today's aggressors differ little in their thought processes from the Neros of old, with the same unhappy consequences for those living in

modern-day catacombs, and seeking nothing more than the right to believe.

That the Sri Lankan attacks took place on the day Christians celebrate the Lord's Resurrection and triumph over death will have been shocking to many. But it should not be. As the journalist – and author of *The Global War on Christians* – John L. Allen has noted, attacks on churches and church gatherings on feast days have been a hallmark of Islamic extremist groups in recent years, and Easter has been a favourite time to carry out atrocities.

On Easter Sunday in 2016, a Taliban-affiliated group carried out a suicide bombing in a park in Lahore, Pakistan where Christians had gathered together: 75 people were killed and more than 340 were injured. On Palm Sunday in 2017, twin suicide attacks in two Coptic Christian churches in Egypt claimed the lives of 45 innocent victims – the Coptic Pope Tawadros II was lucky to escape with his life.

Nor is the violence limited

to Easter time. On Christmas Day in 2011, the Islamic group Boko Haram carried out gun and bomb attacks at several Nigerian churches, killing more than 40 people.

Monstrous though this trend is, it only forms a part of the global war on Christians which constitutes one of the most consequential yet least reported upon stories of our time. It is estimated that more than 215 million Christians live in countries where Christianity is actively persecuted – this amounts to one in 12 of the world's Christians.

215m

The number of Christians living in countries where they are actively persecuted for their Faith

Although no religion is immune to persecution somewhere in the world, there can be no doubting that Christians suffer more than any other group. In fact, a 2012 report from Frankfurt-

based International Society of Human Rights, estimated that 80% of all acts of religious persecution are directed against Christians. This figure is especially jarring when we consider that only 33% of the world's population is Christian.

Christians are subjected to savage persecution – including assault, imprisonment, rape, forced conversion, torture and murder – around the world, from Saudi Arabia to North Korea, from Sudan to China, from Afghanistan to Eritrea, and the problem is getting worse.

In this century, we already face the near extirpation of Christianity in the ancient heartland of Iraq, while other Christian communities in the Middle East – including many who still speak the language of Christ – struggle to survive.

How has this happened? For too long, the international news media has systematically played down the most appalling abuses by acting as if each fresh massacre was an isolated incident, rather than part of a catastrophic global

campaign which is costing thousands of Christians their lives annually.

With noble exceptions, NGOs have failed to draw attention to the problem, one which Christian churches in the West have also been inexcusably lax in addressing. Western governments have also been culpable in turning a blind eye to the suffering inflicted on some of the world's most vulnerable people.

Thanks to the work of groups such as Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), progress is at last being made in making more people aware of what is happening. This is also starting to have effects in the political world.

“We already face the near extirpation of Christianity in the ancient heartland of Iraq, while other Christian communities in the Middle East struggle to survive”

The British Government has asked the Church of England's Bishop Philip Mountstephen to conduct an independent review into the global persecution of Christians while the US Government has gone even further by appointing an Ambassador for International Religious Freedom.

This is a start, but more needs to be done in this area, including by an Irish Government which continues to remain silent on the issue of Christian persecution.

Shamefully, that same silence has been exhibited by too many Irish Christians and has contrasted sharply with the anguished cries of their brothers and sisters in Christ. A global persecution requires a global solution, and it is time for every parish and every individual to stand up and bear witness to the suffering and persecution of Christians all over the world.

James Bradshaw is a writer and a volunteer with Aid to the Church in Need Ireland www.acnireland.org

“For too long, the international news media has systematically played down the most appalling abuses by acting as if each fresh massacre was an isolated incident, rather than part of a catastrophic global campaign which is costing thousands of Christians their lives annually”

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DUBLIN: Christians gather on Easter morning for the Sunrise ecumenical celebration with the parishes of Ballyroan, Rathfarnham and Whitechurch at Montpellier Hill.

Easter



CLARE: Fr Ger Fitzgerald celebrates Dawn Mass in Killaloe's St Flannan's College.



CLARE: The traditional blessing of Polish, Slovakian and Eastern European food on Holy Saturday in St Senan's, Shannon.



ARMAGH: Parishioners walk the Way of the Cross through Armagh on Good Friday.



celebrations



DUBLIN: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Archbishop Michael Jackson lead a silent procession through Dublin's streets from Christ Church Cathedral to the Pro Cathedral carrying a Taizé cross. Photo: John McElroy



DUBLIN: David, Eoin, John and Marion Flaherty of Star of the Sea parish take part in the annual 'Ecumenical Sunrise Celebration' on Easter Sunday in Sandymount, Co. Dublin. Photo: Joy Flaherty



CLARE: Parishioners gather for Dawn Mass in Killaloe's St Flannan's College celebrated by Bishop Fintan Monahan and Fr Ger Fitzgerald.



DUBLIN: Friars prepare to light the Paschal Candle at St Saviour's, Dominick Street.



DERRY: Young parishioners of the Three Patrons Parish in Derry stand outside St Joseph's Church at the beginning of Lent, urging people to pray, share and care.



DUBLIN: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin washing some of the congregation's feet during the Holy Thursday Mass in the Pro Cathedral Dublin. Photo: John McElroy



MEATH: Fr Declan Hurley introduces Bishop Tom Deenihan to Navan parishioners on Good Friday.



DUBLIN: Christians gather on Easter morning for the Sunrise ecumenical celebration with the parishes of Ballyroan, Rathfarnham and Whitechurch at Montpellier Hill.



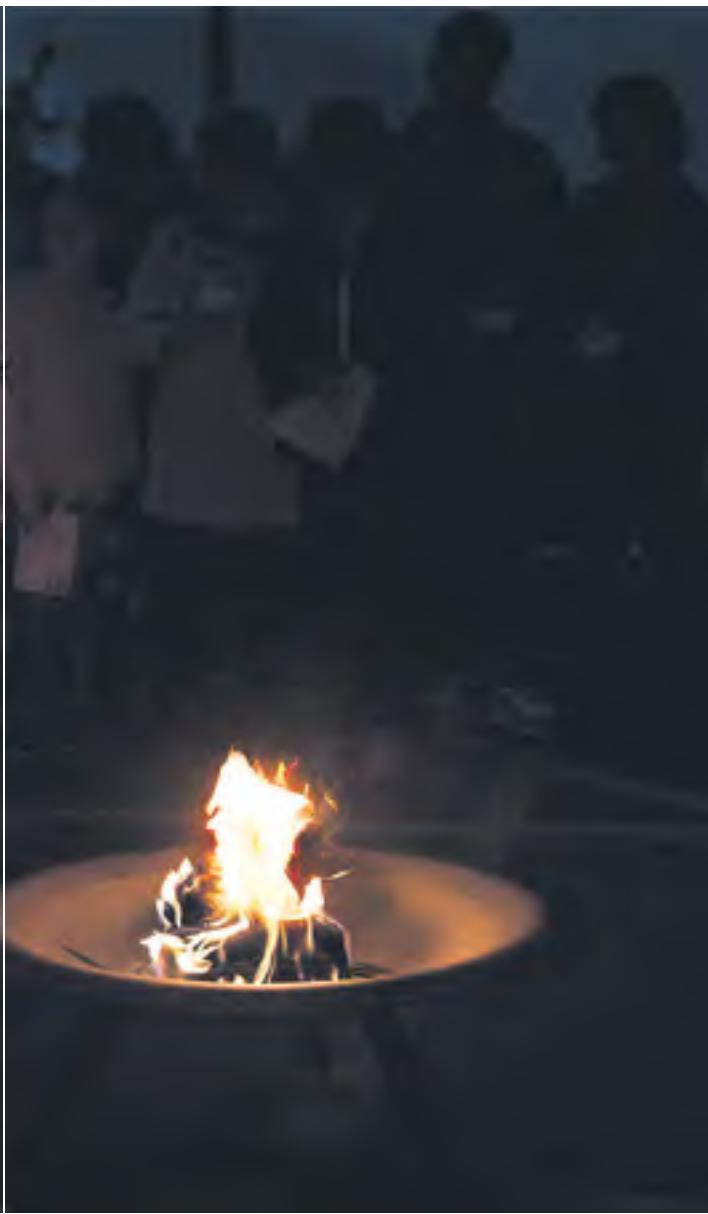
▲▼ **KILDARE:** Bishop Denis Nulty celebrates 11am Mass in Newbridge parish on Easter Sunday, meets with youth group Amadeus Youth, and greets Caelo Choir who were singing at the following Mass.



LAOIS: Over 1000 people attend the annual 6am Dawn Mass on the Heath in Portlaoise Parish, which was led by Msgr John Byrne PP.

Easter celebrations From Page 13





◀ **WICKLOW:** Fr Dónal Roche lighting the Paschal Candle at the start of the Easter Vigil mass at St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town. Photo: Susanna Braswell

▶ **LIMERICK:** The faithful gather for the ecumenical 'Way of the Cross' through the city and stations in St Saviour's Dominican parish.

▶ **WICKLOW:** Martin O'Reilly shoulders the cross on the annual Good Friday Ecumenical Walk of Witness of the Methodist, Anglican and Catholic parishioners in Wicklow Town. Photo: Susanna Braswell

▶ **MEATH:** Church of Ireland and Catholic Church congregations come together for an ecumenical 'Way of the Cross' procession through the village of Dunshaughlin. They met in St Seachnall's Church of Ireland for a short service under the guidance of Rev Eugene Griffin before taking to the street, with parishioners from both congregations taking a turn at shouldering the cross. A short reflection and prayers were held at St Patrick's Church with Fr Joe Clavin.

▶ **MEATH:** Canon John Clarke, Bishop Tom Deenihan, Joe Joyce, Fr Kevin Heery and Fr Declan Hurley leading the ecumenical Way of the Cross on Good Friday in Navan. Parishioners wore red in solidarity with Christians around the world who suffer regular persecution because of their faith and for those who are unable to gather in safety for Easter Ceremonies.





Derry students dazzle in Passion play



Colm Fitzpatrick

While the Passion narrative was recorded over 2,000 years ago in the Middle East, a group of Derry-based schools decided this month to offer their own interpretation of those few fateful days.

Students of St Joseph's Boys' Secondary School, St Columb's College and St Mary's College gathered in St Eugene's Cathedral to visually retell the story of Jesus' suffering and death.

Describing it as a "great success", the play's director and full-time volunteer of Derry's Catechetical Centre Mary Murphy, says the young people went beyond the port of call to make it a memorable evening.

"Now these are teenagers, there are so many calls on their time, most of them are lower sixth, they also have exams...I know exactly what they're up against, and I know it's even more stressful now, but they gave their time and they gave their talent, Ms Murphy said.

"Many of them who said they couldn't act their way



out of a paper bag ended up playing really good parts - they were amazing."

The purpose of the play was to share the Faith in a medium beyond just text, in the hope that the message

would resonate with the audience in a deeper and more emotive way.

"My idea is that at the end of it, they would feel they would have a deeper, richer knowledge of the Passion.



In a way I don't teach them just to act, we identify the feeling and we talk about it, the emotion in it, whether it's dread or love or hate or anger or whatever it is, and then they find they can act it out.

But basically, my motivation is that all these young people would feel and know more about the Passion and the death of Jesus," Ms Murphy explains.

With plenty of support

from parents and parishioners, Ms Murphy adds that she hopes it strengthens the pupils' Faith, and that it was an experience they never forget.

Out&About

Benemerenti medals presented in Kildare & Leighlin



◀ **KILDARE:** Kildare & Leighlin Bishop Denis Nulty presents Benemerenti Medals to six parishioners of Two-Mile-House Parish, Naas. Back, l-r: Fr John Dunphy, Matt Lawlor, Bernard Hennessy, Fr Tom Lalor, Fr Paddy Byrne. Middle, l-r: Mary Doyle, Msgr Brendan Byrne, Gerry Martin, Mgr John Byrne, Fr Liam Morgan, Michelle Ward. Julie Kavanagh, Fr Paul Dempsey. Front, l-r: Ursula Dunne, Dorel Picovici, Jean Roche, Bishop Denis Nulty, Clodagh Cummins, Fr David Vard, Sr Kate Cuskelly. Not in picture: Larry O'Loughlin.

▼ **CLARE:** Young people of the parish play some traditional tunes at the blessing and opening of Knockerra's school extension.

▶ **ANTRIM:** Fr Liam Blayney, a member of St Patrick's Missionary Society, marks his Golden Jubilee in the parish of Dunloy and Cloughmills. Over 300 people gathered for the celebration.



◀ **CLARE:** Killaloe's Bishop Fintan Monahan blesses Knockerra NS at the opening of the school extension, with Senan Keane, chairperson of Killimer Parish Pastoral Council and Helen Sheils, chairperson of the school.



▶ **CORK:** Kevin Cullinane, Cork Airport Head of Communications, Kathleen Walshe, Cork Airport Exhibition Manager, Fr John McCarthy, Cobh Parish Administrator and Johanna Keating, Centenary Promotions Marketing Executive at the official launch of St Colman's Cathedral Centenary Exhibition at Cork Airport.

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



CARLOW: The first meeting of the newly formed Diocesan Pastoral Council takes place in St Patrick's, Carlow College.



TIPPERARY: The parish of St Nicholas, Carrick-on-Suir, led by Fr Paul Waldron PP, join in prayer in solidarity with the people of Paris, following the fire that destroyed the Cathedral of Notre Dame.



KILKENNY: The newly formed Glenmore parish children's choir Guathana Álainn in St James' Church. (l-r) Sarah Mackey, Sinead Jones, Meave Dunphy, Caoimhe Barry. The choir leaders are Mary Mackey, Anne Dowling and Karen Jones.



WATERFORD: (l-r) Sr Patsy Butler, Deirdre Corcoran and Margaret Hughes of Ferrybank offer a helping hand at a Lenten coffee morning to raise funds for Trócaire in the parish centre.

IN SHORT

Centenary year for Cobh cathedral

For anyone who is travelling in or out of Cork Airport in the coming weeks, or simply collecting someone from the arrivals hall, the Centenary exhibition is not to be missed. It showcases Cobh, St Colman's Cathedral and important historic events with "stunning" photography.

Cork Airport has on average of 15,000 passengers travelling through the airport each day and expects this figure to reach 70,000 over Easter bank holiday weekend.

The cathedral is a Pugin Neo Gothic

architectural gem, dominating the skyline of Cobh town and Cork Harbour.

The construction of the cathedral took 47 years, dating from 1868-1915. "The gothic grandeur of the interior, the delicate carvings, breath-taking stained-glass windows, the beautiful arches and the mellow lighting combine to lift the human spirit," said organisers of the centenary.

The cathedral is steeped in history and has been part of some significant tragic events since the time of its construction: it was the last landmark many of the passengers aboard the Titanic would have seen and it held the funeral cortege for the Lusitania.

Notably, people emigrated from

Cobh since famine times and many of them would have celebrated their last Mass at St Colman's Cathedral, as was the case for many missionary nuns and priests.

The cathedral boasts a carillon of 49 bells, with a total weight of over 26 tons; it is the largest carillon in Ireland and Britain in terms of the number of bells. Installed in 1916, weekly recitals from this carillon can be heard from all over the town. The cathedral also houses a Telford and Telford Pipe Organ, often described as a national treasure.

With stonework, carvings and mosaics, there'll be plenty of events marking the cathedral's centenary year over the coming months.

ARMAGH

Lenten talks to take place in St Malachy's Church each Monday of Lent at 7.30pm.

CLARE

Youth 2000 prayer meeting every Friday at 7pm in the Poor Clare's Oratory, Ennis. Join other young adults for prayer and reflection followed by tea and chats in the Friary.

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

CORK

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

'Women of Faith – A Catholic conference for women', on May 25 from 9.30am-3.30pm at SMA Parish Centre, Wilton.

DERRY

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

DOWN

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 28: St Paul's Parish, Falls Road commences at 1.30pm with Exposition and Confessions, followed by Holy Rosary, the Divine Mercy chaplet and 3pm Holy Mass.

DUBLIN

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

Holy hour of Adoration for Healing at St Laurence O'Toole Church, Seville Place, every Tuesday evening during Lent at 8pm.

Mass to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Venerable Edel Quinn in St Saviour's Church, Dominick Street, Dublin 1 on May 11 at 6pm with Rosary prayer before Mass.

Divine Mercy Sunday on April 28 in Church of St Therese, Mount Merrion. Confessions begin at 2.30pm with Holy Mass at 3pm, followed by benediction and veneration.

FERMANAGH

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

GALWAY

Divine Mercy Sunday in Good Shepherd Parish, Churchtown on April 28. Holy Hour begins at 3pm.

Divine Mercy ceremonies in Emmanuel House, Clonfert on April 28 at 11am, led by Fr Eddie Stones and team. Please bring a packed lunch.

KILDARE

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

May Masses and devotions at the Shrine at Our Lady of Clonfert Church. Daily Mass (Monday to Saturday) at 8pm with guest preacher and Mass at 12pm each Friday. Sunday Mass at 10am and 7pm each week of May. Full programme available at Clonferdiocese.ie.

KILKENNY

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

Novena in honour of Our Lady of Fatima at Black Abbey. Daily at 10am and 7.30pm from May 5 – May 13 and 3pm on Sundays. Preacher: Fr Columba M Toman, OP. Each session will begin with a contemplative recitation of the Rosary, followed by the celebration Mass. Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available before and after each Novena session.

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

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

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

MEATH

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

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

ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday, 10-11am and Thursday, 8-10pm. Also at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

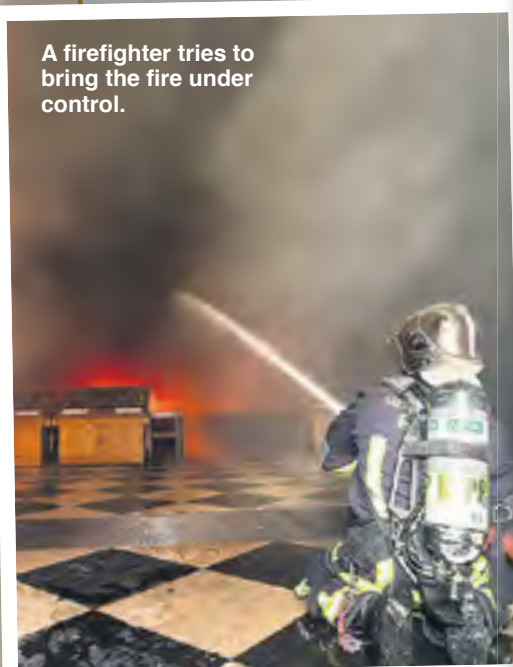
WICKLOW

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

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



Vines with blossoms frame the Notre Dame Cathedral before the blaze broke out.



A firefighter tries to bring the fire under control.



People in Paris attend a Good Friday Stations of the Cross procession near the gutted cathedral.



Citizens of Paris watch on in horror and pray as the flames destroyed the roof of the cathedral.

Notre Dame fire met with wave of Faith and emotion

Staff reporter

As plumes of smoke rose from the historic Cathedral of Notre-Dame, young Parisians dropped to their knees and clutched rosary beads.

Amidst the devastation of the fire, what was most noticeable from social media was the outpouring of faith and emotion that the blaze caused. People stopped in their tracks at impromptu vigils and sang Marian hymns and prayed rosaries. Many people were weeping, and there was obvious relief when it emerged that the façade of the building with the iconic towers had been saved.

As well as the firefighters who put their lives on the line, another hero emerging from the flames is Fire Brigade chaplain Fr Jean-Marc Fournier. He is credited with saving a reliquary containing the crown of

thorns and the Blessed Sacrament from the burning cathedral.

Church leaders joined government officials in saying they expect that Notre-Dame grandeur will be restored.

"Having marked the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are now experiencing our own passion, but we know that after it will come the resurrection. We believe in this and we will proclaim it by rebuilding this cathedral," Paris Archbishop Michel Aupetit said outside of the 850-year-old historic structure.

French President Emmanuel Macron praised the "extreme courage and great professionalism" of first responders who helped save the towers of the Gothic landmark.

More than one billion euro has already been raised to help with the reconstruction efforts.

IRELAND

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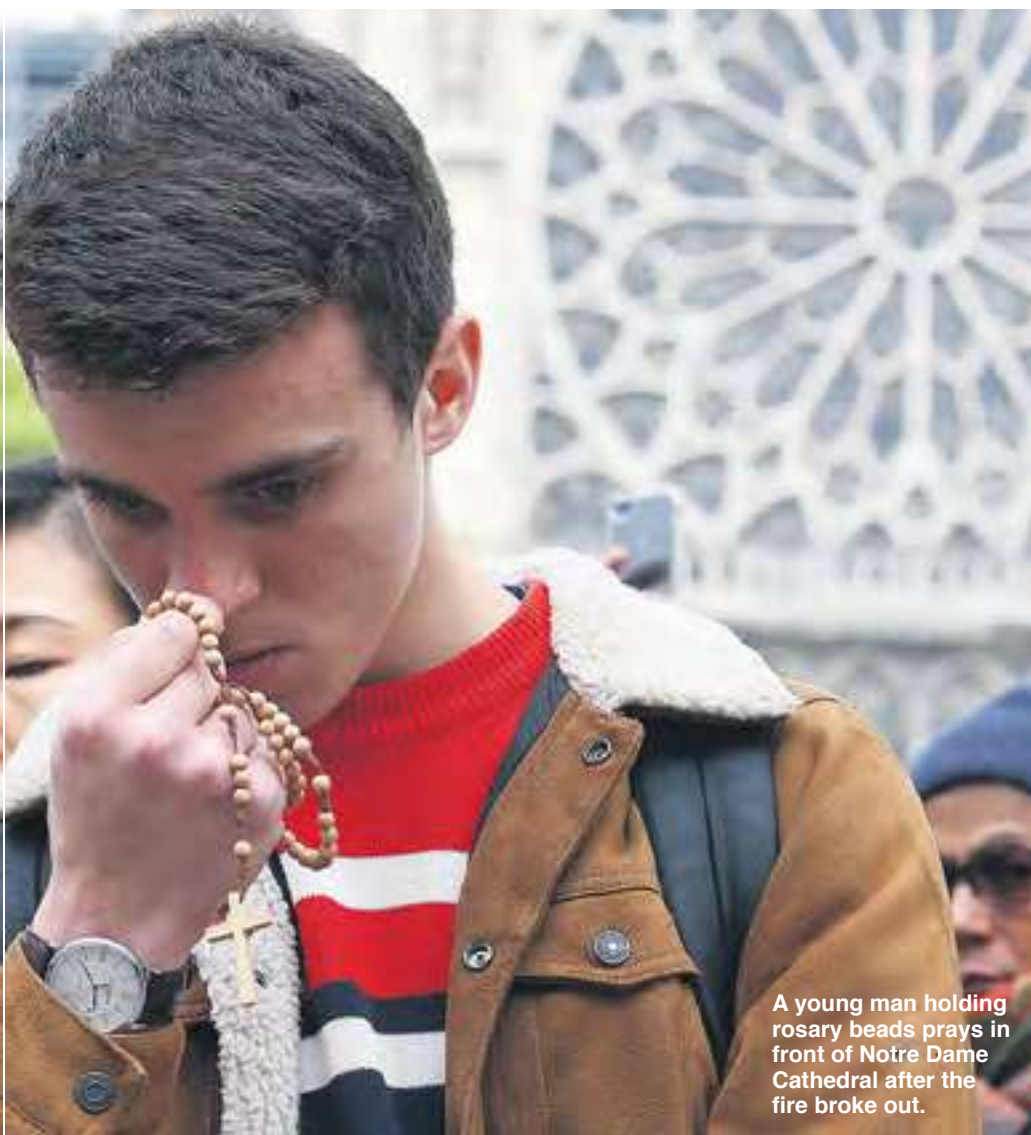
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A young man holding rosary beads prays in front of Notre Dame Cathedral after the fire broke out.

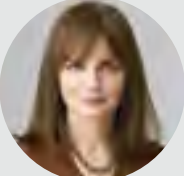


A reliquary containing what tradition holds is Jesus' crown of thorns was saved from the flames.




Treasures saved from the fire at the Cathedral are seen in a room in Paris' city hall.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:



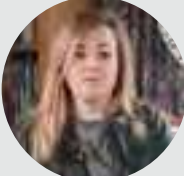
Maria Steen
(Iona Institute)



Niamh Uí Bhriain
(Life Institute)



MC, Wendy Grace
(Broadcast Journalist)



Emma O'Connell
(Gianna Care)



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After Notre Dame fire, Easter season offers new life to everyone



Images are important. They tell us stories. They explain things to us in ways that words sometimes can't. They also nudge us into reflecting more deeply about some of the great mysteries of life. Above all, images connect us all as human beings, regardless of where we are.

The past two weeks have been imbued with images. Among the most memorable were those on our television screens and phones, and in our newspapers, images of the destructive fire at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the sacred and symbolic heart of the great city of Paris.

As news of the fire spread, so too did the images of flames and smoke. The film clips of the cathedral's famous steeple succumbing to the flames went viral in minutes. As fire crews and other emergency services battled to save the structure of the building, people pondered on the meaning of it all: were we seeing end of over 800 years of heritage, a place of God, in the holiest of weeks?

Other images

But other images emerged too. These included the crowds of people, many of them young people, gathered in the streets along the River Seine, praying and singing the Ave Maria, praying for the cathedral named in her honour. The sound of those prayerful voices

What we saw on the streets of Paris was people giving witness to the power of hope over adversity, writes Bishop Larry Duffy



raised our minds upwards, to God. Those prayers were mixed with tears as the tragedy unfolded, but they also showed a determined commitment to restore the glory of Notre Dame.

“During this time, we Christians celebrate not just the resurrection of Christ in an historical way, but the resurrection as an ever-present reality”

And then, as news filtered through that the building and its famous towers had been saved, we began to see images of the interior of Notre Dame.

There before us was the Cross of Christ shining through 800 years of smouldering debris that lay all around. We even saw its glorious

reflection in the water that lay in the nave of the cathedral, after it had done its work of salvation for the building.

There was a lot of Easter in the story which those images put before us.

The message of Easter is about our salvation. It marks the generosity of God the Father who so loved the world that he gave his only Son who died for us so that we might live. It celebrates our liberation, our resurrection and new life. It celebrates God's perfect love for each of us. Yes, the Easter message offers new life to everyone.

Easter is the oldest and the greatest of the Christian feasts, surpassing even Christmas in terms of importance. It is so important that the season of Easter lasts for 50 days until Pentecost Sunday on June 9.

During this time, we Christians

celebrate not just the resurrection of Christ in an historical way, but the resurrection as an ever-present reality.

Christ is always present in the Church and, through its members, in the world. This mystery is the Good News for the whole world and, as such, we Christians are sent by Christ to proclaim it, to celebrate it in our liturgy and to be witnesses to it – even in adversity.

What we saw on the streets of Paris was people giving witness to the power of hope over adversity. The news they encountered on the streets was poignant, just like the experiences of the followers of Christ in Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago.

But like that first Easter Sunday there was hope, there was a sense of renewal. There was also resilience.

“What we saw on the streets of Paris was people giving witness to the power of hope over adversity. The news they encountered on the streets was poignant”

France has been a place of revolution and it has experienced the traumas of war many times. Notre Dame is a witness to all of that. France is a secular republic.

Yet the world saw images of people praying quite openly on the streets.

We heard and saw political leaders professing their commitment to the rebuilding of Notre Dame and business leaders promising huge donations towards that reconstruction.

Here, amidst all the poignancy of such a tragedy we saw hope overcoming fear.

We saw people of faith and people from a more secular perspective setting out before us a truly pluralist sense of hope for the future.

Easter message

The Easter message for us is an invitation to renew ourselves, to clear the debris out of our lives and allow the glory and mercy of God to shine through us.

May this Easter be a time for all of us, regardless of background, to reflect on how we might renew ourselves as individuals, as families, as communities and as a country.

In the words of the concluding prayer which the Church uses on the evening of Easter Sunday, may God grant that as we celebrate the feast of the resurrection we may be renewed by the Holy Spirit and rise again in the light of life. Alleluia!

i Dr Larry Duffy is Bishop of Clogher.

“The Easter message for us is an invitation to renew ourselves, to clear the debris out of our lives and allow the glory and mercy of God to shine through us”

YourParish App

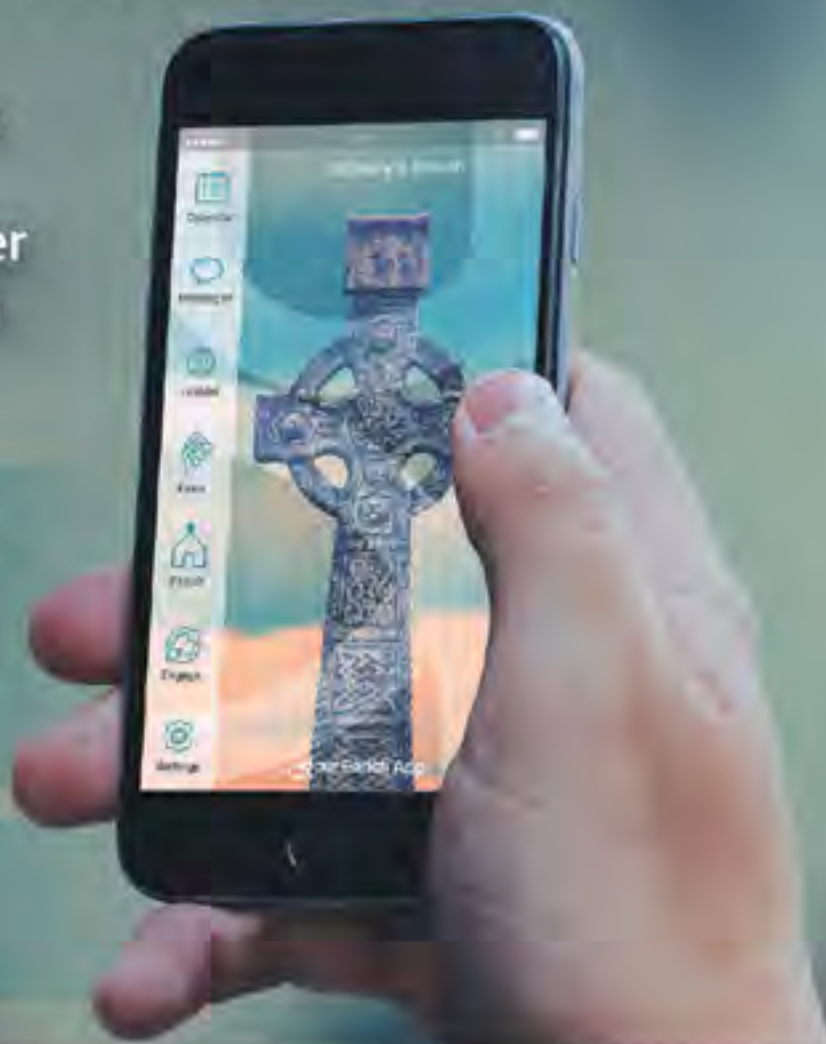
CATHOLIC. COMMUNITY. CONNECTED.

YourParish App is a premium Catholic app to stay connected with parishioners, wherever they are. It helps to build stronger Catholic communities, empowering you to reach your congregation and beyond.

"The app doesn't just allow for better communication from the parish, it allows parishioners to download a daily reflection and the Mass readings, to keep up to date with Church developments at national and international levels and make requests for prayers at times of need and volunteer for service directly." – Fr John Carroll, Barnstown, Co Wexford

"We are convinced that this could be of enormous benefit to the entire community"

– Shankill Parish



Calendar

Make sure parishioners get to Mass on time and are aware of the confession schedule with the calendar in YourParish. This portion of the app also has an events tab, so parishioners can go to one place to find out about choir practices, fundraisers, parish meetings and more.



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Revitalise parishioners' faith each and every day.

Homilies

Familiarise parishioners with the sacraments.

Readings

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Sacraments

Easily upload homilies for parishioners to reflect on.



Messages

Through YourParish it is now possible to send messages directly to the congregation, reaching those who you see every Sunday and members you may see less frequently. There is also space to announce births, marriages and funeral arrangements.



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World Report

IN BRIEF

Cause opened for Vermont bishop to become saint

● The 10th bishop of the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont, has opened a cause for canonisation for the first bishop of the state-wide diocese. Bishop Christopher Coyne made the official announcement at the Chrism Mass on April 16 at St Joseph Cathedral in Burlington.

"He was known to be a holy and simple man," he said of Bishop Louis deGoesbriand. "He died well loved by many."

Saying that a saint can come from anywhere, Bishop Coyne said it would "be nice to have our own local saint".

Msgr John McDermott, vicar general for the diocese, read the official request to open the cause of canonisation on behalf of the diocese, recognising Bishop deGoesbriand's heroic life of holiness and virtue.

Indian activists protest after Catholic man beaten to death

● Five days after a mob of Hindus beat to death a Catholic man for suspected cow slaughter in India's Jharkhand state, Christian and Muslim activists joined in New Delhi to protest about violence against minorities.

A mob attacked Prakash Lakra and three others earlier this month after suspecting them of slaughtering a cow in Jhurmu village in the eastern state's Gumla district. Lakra died from his injuries hours after the attack, Church sources said.

About 100 protesters gathered in front of the Jharkhand Bhawan building in New Delhi on April 15 to shout slogans against the state government run by the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Vietnamese faithful invigorated by first-ever Chrism Mass

● Thousands of Catholics in a mountainous Vietnamese province who attended the first-ever Chrism Mass to be held in their remote locality said it was a sign of God's love and has strengthened their faith.

More than 3,000 Catholics including many ethnic people attended the special Mass on April 16 outside Vinh Quang Church in Yen Bai province's Nghia Lo district.

The Mass was celebrated

outside the church because of the number of people in attendance.

Some 130 priests also attended the Chrism Mass. It was the first such Mass to be held in Nghia Lo deanery since local parishes were established 100 years ago.

"It was a completely new experience for me," Joseph Lam Van Hung (70) said, adding he had never seen as many priests celebrate a Mass like that before.

Philippine farmers selling livestock to survive, priest warns

● Farmers in the southern Philippine region of Soccsksargen have resorted to selling their farm animals to survive the impact of a drought that has reportedly ravaged about 15,000 hectares of farmland.

Fr Ariel Destora, director of the social action centre of Marbel Diocese, said the scorching heat brought about by the El Nino phenomenon that has hit the region in Mindanao this year had dried up grasslands.

El Nino is a climate cycle in the Pacific Ocean caused by warm water. The warm water pools, which causes droughts.

"Some farmers are being forced to sell their cows because they have nothing to eat," said Fr Destora, as he appealed for donations to help farmers and residents affected by the arid conditions.

Seoul archbishop stresses pro-life cause after new abortion laws

● The archbishop of Seoul has stressed the Church's pro-life doctrine after South Korea's Constitutional Court ruled that the country's current abortion ban is incompatible with the constitution.

The court this month called for a legislative change to partially allow termination in the early stage of pregnancy.

While some women's and medical organisations welcomed the decision as giving women the right to self-determination, Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung used his Easter message to express his concerns.

Thousands of new Catholic converts welcomed at Easter

Dioceses across the US welcomed thousands of people into the Catholic Church at Easter Vigil Masses on the evening of April 20. As the culmination of the Easter Triduum, the Vigil celebrates the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

While people can become Catholic at any time of the year, the Easter Vigil is a particularly appropriate moment for adult catechumens to be baptised and for already-baptised Christians to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church. Parishes welcome these new Catholics through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

Many of the dioceses across the nation have reported their numbers of people who intend to become Catholic on Saturday to. Based on the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) reports, more than 37,000 people were welcomed into the Church at Easter Vigil Masses.

Prior to beginning the RCIA process, an individual comes to some knowledge of Jesus, considers his or her relationship with Jesus and is usually



Pope Francis lights the paschal candle at the start of the Easter Vigil in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on April 20.

attracted in some way to the Catholic Church.

Then during the RCIA process, which typically lasts nine months or more, a person learns the teachings of the Catholic Church in a more formal way and discerns that he or she is ready to commit to living according to these beliefs. Thousands of people had already passed through this process and were ready to take this step on Saturday

past in parishes throughout the country.

Groups

Two distinct groups of people were initiated into the Catholic Church. Catechumens, who have never been baptised, received Baptism, Confirmation and first Communion at the Holy Saturday Easter Vigil. Candidates, who had already been baptised in another Christian tradition,

entered the Church through a profession of faith and reception of Confirmation and the Eucharist.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the largest in the US, welcomed 1,560 catechumens and 913 candidates; the Archdiocese of San Francisco welcomed 174 catechumens and 175 candidates; and the Diocese of San Diego welcomed 306 catechumens and 806 candidates.

Language must change on homosexuality, Cardinal Tobin urges

The Archbishop of Newark has said that the language used by the Catechism of the Catholic Church to describe homosexual acts is "very unfortunate", adding that he hopes the Catechism will use different language in its discussion of homosexuality.

"The Church, I think, is having its own conversation about what our faith has us do and say with people in relationships that are same-sex. What should be without debate is that we are called to welcome them," Cardinal Joseph Tobin said on April 17, during an interview with NBC's Anne Thompson on the *Today*

Show.

"But how can you welcome people that you call 'intrinsically disordered'?" Thompson asked.

"Well I don't call them 'intrinsically disordered'," Cardinal Tobin answered.

"But isn't that the Catechism of the Catholic Church?" Ms Thompson asked.

"That is," the cardinal said, adding "it's very unfortunate language. Let's hope that eventually that language is a little less hurtful."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered", a phrase it also uses to

describe other sexual acts taught by the Church to be immoral.

Disordered

The Catechism does not describe homosexual persons themselves as "intrinsically disordered," though it does say that homosexual inclination, along with other inclination toward sexual sin, is "objectively disordered".

Cardinal Tobin endorsed a 2017 book, *Building a Bridge*, by Fr James Martin SJ which has also called for the Church to amend the language with which it discusses homosexuality.

Rwanda's bishops apologise for call to release genocide convicts

Rwanda's Catholic bishops have apologised for urging the release of some prisoners convicted for roles in the 1994 genocide, saying they realised by the reaction that they had caused much hurt.

The statement followed criticism of a pastoral letter that called for the release of old and ill convicts serving

sentences for the mass killings.

"We wrote to Christians, encouraging them to continue promoting unity and reconciliation, while also seeking forgiveness," the bishops said in a Swahili-language statement in mid-April.

"This letter caused a lot of hurt, especially for what we

requested on behalf of the elderly and sickest who are still in prison for the crime of genocide. We are saddened it offended people - this was not what we intended."

The bishops said they especially regretted their appeal had caused anguish "at a great moment of mourning" and pledged the Catholic

Church would continue supporting genocide survivors and those safeguarding the memory of victims.

More than 800,000 people, mostly from Rwanda's Tutsi minority, were massacred from April to July 1994 with the connivance of the national army, police and Hutu tribal militias.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie

Christian communities slaughtered in Sri Lanka



Nuns, clergymen and police officials look over the scene after a bombing at St Sebastian Church in Negombo, Sri Lanka on April 21. More than 300 people were killed and hundreds more injured on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka when attackers unleashed an apparently coordinated series of bombings that simultaneously targeted Christian churches and luxury hotels. Photo: CNS

Man arrested after attempting to enter cathedral with flammables

A man who tried to walk through St Patrick's Cathedral in midtown Manhattan close to 8pm local time on April 17 had gas cans, lighter fluid and igniters and claimed he was just cutting through the cathedral to get to Madison Avenue where he had left his car, which he said had run out of gas.

The 37-year-old man from New Jersey, who was not identified, was apprehended by police "without incident".

This took place just two days after the horrific fire that devastated Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller of the New York Police Department in a statement to reporters said that the security staff at St Patrick's asked the man where

he was going and told him he couldn't "proceed into the cathedral carrying (those) things".

As the man turned around, "some gasoline apparently spill(ed) out onto the floor", Mr Miller said, which then prompted cathedral security to report the situation to officials from the counterterrorism bureau who were standing outside the cathedral, Mr Miller told reporters around midnight.

No damage

He said officers followed the man, caught up to him, and after questioning him about his reason for being at the cathedral, they arrested him. The suspect was known to police, Mr Miller said. There was no damage to the cathedral.

"His basic story was he was cutting through the cathedral to get to Madison Avenue. That his car had run out of gas," Mr Miller said. Police said the man had a minivan he parked on the Fifth Avenue outside the cathedral. "We took a look at the vehicle. It was not out of gas and at that point he was taken into custody."

Mr Miller told reporters the man's story was "inconsistent", and it was "hard to say exactly what his intentions were" in bringing flammables to the church.

"But the...circumstances of an individual walking into an iconic location like St Patrick's Cathedral carrying over four gallons of gasoline, two bottles of lighter fluid and lighters is something that we would have great concern over," he said.

Call for calm after Peruvian president suicide

The president of Peru's conference of bishops has called for calm after two-time former Peruvian President Alan Garcia died on April 17 after shooting himself in the head as authorities prepared to arrest him.

"A sad end for this person, who was also important, independently from political and financial situations," Archbishop Miguel Cabrejos

Vidarte of Trujillo said. "He was a political leader."

Noting that there were strong opinions about the former president, the archbishop urged "serenity, calm, and that these situations not occur again".

The Peruvian bishops' conference later issued a brief statement of sympathy to Mr Garcia's family, friends and colleagues, saying, "We call

on the mercy and tenderness of God the Father, who knows the depths of the human heart, to grant him the joy of his eternal presence."

Mr Garcia, 69, was accused of taking bribes from the Brazilian construction company Odebrecht during his second term of office, 2006-2011. His first term, 1985-1990, was marked by hyperinflation, economic chaos, and bru-

tal massacres by both leftist rebels and security forces.

When police arrived to arrest him, Mr Garcia asked to make a phone call, according to Interior Minister Carlos Moran. He went into a room, closed the door and shot himself with a gun he had in his home. He underwent emergency surgery at a nearby hospital but died several hours later.

Vatican roundup

Priests must be among the 'crowds' Pope urges clergy

Just as Jesus always sought to be with the people to serve, teach and heal them, so too must priests always be in the midst of God's people, "pouring ourselves out" for them, Pope Francis said.

Being with the people "is the most beautiful place" to be, he told priests during the Chrism Mass in St Peter's Basilica.

"We must not forget that our evangelical models are those people, the 'crowd' with its real faces, which the anointing of the Lord raises up and revives. They are the ones who complete and make real the anointing of the Spirit in ourselves; they are the ones whom we have been anointed to anoint," he said.

Francis used his homily to reflect on how Jesus related to people, especially the huge crowds that pressed in on him and approached him with their problems, but also were eager to hear his voice and follow him.

The Lord always stood in the middle of the crowd "like a shepherd among his flock," the Pope said, and those who gathered around him were in some way transformed by him.

Women 'crucified' by human traffickers, warns missionary nun

Countless women and girls are being "crucified" by human traffickers, who trick them into slave labour or prostitution, and by those who seek out their services and exploit them, said the missionary nun who wrote the meditations for Pope Francis' Way of the Cross service.

Victims of human trafficking are people whom "we have crucified and, today, in 2019, we continue to have people crucified for our use, our purposes, our well-being", Consolata Sr Eugenia Bonetti told reporters at a Vatican news conference on April 17.

She said she hoped the April 19 event at Rome's Colosseum, where "so

much suffering in the past" took place, would give witness to "so much suffering in the present, the suffering of these women, these minors, who are faceless, nameless, hopeless, who are just used and thrown away".

She wanted the Pope's Good Friday ceremony, which meditates on Christ's passion and suffering, to help people recognise "today's passion" suffered by so many young people.

The prayers and meditations she wrote come from what she has witnessed and learned from the thousands of women and young girls she has helped over the past two decades, Sr Bonetti said.

Vatican firefighter says St Peter's less at risk than Notre Dame

After the devastating fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris April 15, Romans and tourists could not help looking at St Peter's Basilica and wondering, "what if?"

But Maj. Paolo De Angelis, head of the Vatican fire department, has said that the structural differences between Notre Dame and the basilica and, especially, the differences in the materials used, make a catastrophic fire at St Peter's less likely.

While the attic of Notre Dame was known as "the forest" because of the lattice of oak beams supporting the roof, in St Peter's, he said on April 16, most of the supports are in stone or masonry. The few wood beams, he said, are covered in a fire-resistant varnish and are constantly monitored by an ultramodern fire alarm system.

One area of particular concern is the Apostolic Palace, which houses the papal apartments that Pope Francis does not use, but also the papal library and formal meeting rooms and part of the Vatican Museums. According to the "Attività della Santa Sede", a volume containing the annual reports of every Vatican office, the firefighters inspect the building's large attic in person every afternoon.



Letter from Rome

Pilgrims say bare marble of 'Holy Stairs' brings them closer to Christ



People climb the restored Holy Stairs after their unveiling at the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs in Rome on April 11. Photos: CNS

For pilgrims flocking to Rome's famed Scala Santa last week as they commemorate Jesus' crucifixion and death and ultimately his Resurrection, the opportunity to climb the famed relic on bare marble for the first time in 300 years is something many said has brought them closer to God.

Giuliana Saginario said: "When the stairs start, you feel pain and you are afraid that you won't make it to the top. Then you unexpectedly think, this is nothing compared to what our Lord suffered. So, little by little, as you climb, you stop feeling the pain [and] you are no longer afraid."

Rome's famed Scala Santa, known in English as the 'Holy Stairs', one of the city's most treasured relics, were unveiled on April 11 following nearly a year of restoration.

Tradition holds that the stairs are those that once led to the praetorium of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem and were brought to Rome by St Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, after Christianity was declared to be the empire's primary religion in the Edict of Milan in 313.

Throughout the centuries they have been climbed by millions of pilgrims, who traditionally climb the stairs on their knees.

For the first time in 300 years pilgrims are able to climb the Holy Staircase on the original marble Jesus himself is believed to have



Elise Harris

walked on the way to his trial before Pontius Pilate. The marble will be exposed for 60 days, from April 11 until the June 9 feast of Pentecost, before the new wooden frames protecting them will be restored.

Pasquale Capobianco, who climbed the stairs with Saginario, said that going up without the wooden frames was a reminder to him that Jesus is "the cornerstone" awaited by the people, so "it's right that they are stone and that each one of us, with a little extra suffering, sees the reality in the era that Jesus climbed them".

"To give yourself on these stairs like (Jesus) did makes you human," Capobianco said, but added that "it's also painful, because the stairs aren't easy to climb on your knees, and you see the many sacrifices that people have made even until today and the hope that they place in the stairs. We hope that the Lord welcomed our prayer, we need it so much".

* * * * *

George Moser, a 21-year-old student from Austria, said that for

him, "when you recognise that (the stairs) could be the stairs that Jesus went on to Pilate, it's impressive. I was here a few years ago, so I know them", he said, but with the bare marble it "now is more impressive, you can really feel the scene from 2,000 years ago".

Similarly, a Polish pilgrim named Jaroslaw said that he has climbed the Scala Santa before, but came back to climb the bare marble.

As he made his way to the top, "I thought about the time when Christ was going up these stairs 2,000 years ago and it was very terrible because Christ knew that he would probably be crucified, but the most important thing was to fulfil the will of our God the Father".

"During this time on the stairs, I thought about what I have to do in my life to fulfil what the Father God expects from me."

For Graziella and Fabio Delnero, who live in Rome and climb the stairs on their knees every year, the opportunity to climb the stairs on the marble is "exciting", but they were deterred by the large crowds and line stretching to the end of the piazza where the chapel housing the stairs is located.

"By faith we know they are the stairs Jesus walked, so without the wooden cover it's even closer to the presence of Jesus," Fabio said, adding that while he was disappointed they weren't able to climb the stairs on Holy Thursday, they plan to come back when there

are fewer people "and climb them on our knees like always".

In comments to journalists, Passionist Fr Francesco Guerra, who is rector of the chapel housing the stairs, said the number of people who have come to climb the stairs this year "is much more" than expected, and has already exceeded the numbers who came for Holy Week during the Jubilee of Mercy in 2015.

"I thought about the time when Christ was going up these stairs 2,000 years ago"

"These lines were normal on Fridays in Lent during Holy Week, but now I think it's more extraordinary" because the original marble is exposed, he said.

Fr Guerra noted how most pilgrims climb the stairs slowly, which he said breaks the rhythm of a fast-paced society.

"I admire these people a lot for their patience and for the ability they have to be silent inside and to pray," he said, pointing to the long line of pilgrims waiting to enter the chapel.

"The fact of climbing the stairs on the marble directly, which tradition tells us Jesus climbed going to Pontius Pilate, means in a way to feel closer to him. It's not

that the wooden frames block this, but people know that this is an extraordinary moment," he said.

For journalist Olivier Bonnel, who's from France and who works in the French section of the Vatican's communications department, while he speaks to pilgrims about their experiences at the major holy sites in Rome this week, there is another historic religious icon in the back of his mind: the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

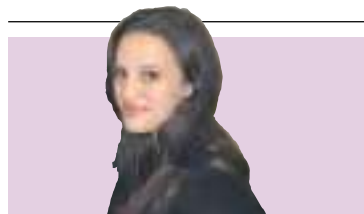
The cathedral is "a gothic treasure, a spiritual and patrimonial treasure", Bonnel said, recalling the many visits to Notre Dame he made throughout his life.

"I've always been touched by this beauty and this statue of Mary next to Jesus on the altar, which fortunately was not touched by the fire and the collapse of the ceiling," he said, adding that for him, this is a sign "that despite the damage, the cathedral was 'protected' by the Virgin".

"In France, we are a very secular country, but fortunately these debates don't matter anymore," he said, explaining that while he is sure polemics will return, "right now in these last few days, we've seen that all people understood this cathedral is part of us, even for non-believers".

📍 Elise Harris is Senior Correspondent at Cruxnow.com

Experts confident that Cathedral of Notre Dame will rise again



Claire Giangravè

Even as Holy Week unfolded, historians and experts in monument restoration weighed in on the implications and repercussions of the blaze that nearly destroyed the iconic Notre Dame cathedral in Paris on last week. Regardless of the time, money and resources needed to bring the church back to its splendour, they all shared confidence that Notre Dame will rise again and that the Holy Week fire of 2019 will only be a blip in its more than 800-year story.

According to French art historian and guide Pawel Clapak, the fact that the cathedral is still standing with its treasures largely preserved is nothing short of a miracle. As he watched the fire that engulfed Notre Dame on Monday his first thoughts were for the safety of the multiple artworks and relics inside.

"The organ, one of the most famous in the world, survived," he said. "Nobody expected this."

It will take approximately two years to restore, clean and tune the 8,000 pipes of the famous organ, which is among the many items that constitute the 'soul' of Notre Dame. About 95% of the art in the cathedral was saved, including its revered relics.

But some things are gone forever. The roof, which was created more than 800 years ago, was made with millenary trees that the Parisians searched for all over the country and brought to the cathedral, which was set to become the purest example of gothic style and a benchmark for architecture for the next 400 years.

Unfortunately, that very ancient wood and the 250 tons of lead over it ended up feeding Monday's fire.

"Even if we wanted to make it the same, we don't have trees like this," Clapak said. "And if we had trees like this, we would not cut them anymore."

Technology

Modern technology will have to be used to recreate the roof of the cathedral, he added, but even though it might look the same from the outside, it will never be the same on the inside. But Clapak said that losing the roof and the overhead spire were a fair price to pay to save the interior.

"When you see the roof dying, it's like watching a celebrity you know from TV die," he said. "When we talk about the towers, about the interior, about the stained-glass windows, about the organ, it's like losing a member of the family."

But Notre Dame is not out of



Notre Dame Cathedral ablaze and, left, a glimpse inside the scorched building.

danger yet, according to the art historian.

The collapse of the roof has altered the delicate balance that allows the massively large structure to stretch toward the sky. Medieval architects devised flying buttresses on the outside of the building that like giant arms help the thin walls, with its large glass windows, support the heavy roof.

"There is a chance that if the vault falls down or it's too weak the walls might cave in toward the inside," Clapak said. "In the worst scenario, which I doubt will happen, the vault and walls could collapse, and the flying buttresses would be left circling the ruins."

“Everyone knows that when you have a real historical monument like that you can't be too much in a hurry”

Uncertainty regarding the short-term solidity of the cathedral, he added, may also delay restoration efforts, especially given the damage that the fall of the almost 300-foot-tall spire did to the vault. "Nothing is controlling the balance of weight anymore," the art historian said. "There is a danger that the vault collapses at any time."

During the Notre Dame fire, French President Emmanuel Macron spoke to the people of Paris and the world with the promise to "rebuild it together" in five years' time.

But Clapak was less confident. "I would say, after the renovation of Reims Cathedral, at least 10 years," he said, referring to another French cathedral, which endured extensive damage during the First World War and is still

undergoing restorations that began in 1919.

The complexity and secrets of the gothic architecture as well as the ingenuity of the medieval architects will make the reconstruction of Notre Dame a challenge for modern-day engineers.

"Without having all tools at the time, they made something so amazing, so complicated and so technologically and technically advanced that it's not easy for us to rebuild," he said.

French technologies and *savoir-faire* represent impressive resources, according to Louis Manaranche, French contemporary historian, who nonetheless said it may be challenging for Macron to keep his promise.

"Everyone is expecting a short time to rebuild the cathedral, but in the meantime, everyone knows that when you have a real historical monument like that you can't be too much in a hurry," he said. "You have to do it properly and respect its history."

"I'm sure the French population will accept waiting years and years and maybe decades if in the end we have a real beautiful cathedral with a real soul," he added.

Manaranche also chimed into the debate that is beginning to bubble in Paris about whether the restoration should be faithful to the original or allow for modern solutions, as was the case for the now-famous glass triangle at the entrance of the Louvre Museum.

"I can't say that at one time in the history of the cathedral, Parisians or kings or bishops decided to do something modern in the old structure," he said. "Even if it's innovative, we can find other places to do interesting

architecture. Maybe not the cathedral, I think it would be disrespectful for such an old lady."

Another debate regarding restorations for Notre Dame percolated in Paris at the beginning of the 1800s, with one side advocating for its restoration and the other for its dismantling.

Among those advocating for its survival was Napoleon Bonaparte, who had crowned himself emperor in the presence of Pope Pius VII in 1804 underneath its gothic vault. A proposal had already been signed for its destruction, but Napoleon overturned it despite lacking the funds for the restoration.

Shortly after, in 1831, Victor Hugo's famous novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* detailed the decay of the cathedral after 600 years of neglect.

"The hunchback never existed," Clapak said, "but nevertheless, he saved the cathedral."

Having read the book, Parisians ran to the cathedral to offer donations for its restoration, which would eventually be taken up by two architects, Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, for the next 30 years.

“Through the flames, Paris was blessed with a miracle when the core of Notre Dame was spared”

The input of donations by lay people and organisations has been and continued to be essential for the survival of Notre Dame. Only two days after the blaze, over a billion euro were donated to restore the cathedral.

All monuments in Paris that were built before 1901 belong to the French government or municipalities, which are tasked with their preservation. Given the massive amount of historic buildings in the country this represents a challenge.

For this reason, "it's critical that lay people participate in this process," said Brian Smith, Director of the American Friends for the

Preservation of Saint Germain des Prés Church foundation in a phone interview with *Crux*.

"I think that this event raised awareness about the fact that churches and other buildings require upkeep," he added, and "they have to be fixed or otherwise they will collapse".

Smith leads a foundation that is committed to the restoration of the oldest church in Paris, built in 543 AD, and has extensive experience with the unexpected costs and complexities that restoring an old church can entail.

"Only when you see something as devastating as this fire you realise that something that you take for granted could disappear overnight," he said, adding that the blaze of Notre Dame has "awakened the world to this reality".

According to firefighters at the scene, if they had intervened on the cathedral 50 minutes later, there was a high probability that the entire building would have collapsed. Its famous halo-shaped windows would have fallen under the weight of the lead, forever changing the Parisian landscape.

"The cathedral was always a story teller," Clapak said, referring to the reliefs covering the entrance that represent important moments of the life of the Virgin Mary and the Final Judgement.

"Without all this, I wouldn't see the purpose of rebuilding the cathedral as it was. Because whatever would be constructed it would have no soul," he added. "It's about all of its rich history and the story represented there."

Through the flames, Paris was blessed with a miracle when the core of Notre Dame was spared. Once the restorations are over, whenever that may be, the cathedral that converted kings, made emperors and celebrated the end of world wars will have yet another story to tell.

📍 Claire Giangravè is Faith and Culture Correspondent at Cruxnow.com

Letters

Letter of the week

Catholic charities must remain Catholic

Dear Editor, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's reminder that the Society of St Vincent de Paul should not neglect its identity is a vitally important one and something more of our charities would do well to heed. Pope Francis, after all, in his very first Mass as Pope cautioned us against becoming simply a "compassionate NGO".

It's worth recalling, after all, that Amnesty International was founded by the Catholic convert Peter Benenson on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, with the Quaker Eric Baker and our own Seán McBride joining him. The Church was long a strong ally of the organisation as it campaigned for freedom of conscience

and human rights all over the world. Now, though, no Catholic with an informed conscience could stand by the organisation as it campaigns to deny all rights to the most vulnerable human beings of all. The corruption of the best, as they say, is the worst.

Amnesty's fall shows how inspirational organisations founded on Catholic values can be hollowed out by lobbyists and those who see the charity sector as a career path. The danger, of course, is that more explicitly Catholic organisations might forget their distinctly Catholic identity, and simply become generic NGOs.

When we look at the Irish charity landscape, we see more than

anything the mark of the Church: Trócaire, Focus Ireland, Merchant's Quay Ireland, Peter McVerry Trust, Crosscare, Cuan Mhuire, Social Justice Ireland, Ruhama, Threshold, the Order of Malta, L'Arche, the Capuchin Day Centre, the Jesuit Refugee Service, Misean Cara, Aid to the Church in Need.

The list goes on and on, and every single one of these is called to maintain its Catholic identity. We'd do well to remember this.

*Yours etc.,
Deirdre O'Brien,
Tallaght, Dublin 24.*

Logical reasons for Lourdes' financial uplift

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny is correct that the financial situation of the sanctuaries of Lourdes has improved and is back into positive figures. However, the reason she gives is incorrect. With the new Chapel of Light on the opposite bank of the river from the Grotto, there is a renewed focus on candles. However, the candles within the domain are not and never have been for sale.

Instead, an offering is suggested (and it is not €2.50), and people are free

to give what they can afford. While there has been an increased income from candle offerings, it is a small part of the overall financial improvement. Further, it is more than an exaggeration to suggest that "the sale of candles remains a key aspect of Lourdes's economy..."

There were two key changes that took effect in 2018 and made the difference. First was a substantial reduction in costs that delivered savings in the order of €2m. Second,

and very significantly, an increase in the "participation fee" or daily per-pilgrim offering expected of organised pilgrimages.

Up to 2017 the expectation was an average contribution of €3.90 per pilgrim per pilgrimage. As of 2018, this changed.

Also referred to as the "shrine tax", in 2018 this was raised to €2.00 per pilgrim per day and extended to small pilgrim groups. This rises to €2.50 per pilgrim per day in 2019 and in 2020, it is

scheduled to rise again, this time to €3.00 per pilgrim per day.

With the majority of the Irish diocesan and religious pilgrimages being five days, in 2019 this will mean a charge of €12.50 per pilgrim per pilgrimage.

In 2018, the participation fee delivered an increase of almost €1.2m.

*Yours etc.,
T. Gerard Bennett,
Bunbrosna,
Co. Westmeath.*

More heartbreak ahead

Dear Editor, In the upcoming referendum we will be asked to facilitate more liberal divorce laws. We will also be asked to pave the way for the recognition of divorces granted abroad.

We already have in our country too many victims of shattered households. Those of us who are involved with homeless services, youth support or societies like St Vincent de Paul,

are all too aware of the heart ache and confusion caused by divorce and the fragmentation of families.

Every marriage worthy of the name has to try to withstand the storms of life; it is more than just a fair-weather relationship. More liberal divorce laws would definitely bring more broken hearts!

*Yours etc.,
Eamon Fitzpatrick,
Strandhill Road, Sligo.*

So much for freedom, minister

Dear Editor, When abortion was introduced in 2018, the Minister for Health gave firm assurances that conscientious objectors would be respected. Despite this, advertisements for medical posts now specify duties which include "elective termination of pregnancy services...as part of their practice plan".

Also, generous financial incentives are now given to co-operating GPs.

Furthermore, the names of participants will not be published – another measure to ensure our highly regarded medical

professionals as well as ancillary personnel and indispensable cleaning staff comply.

With regard to conscience, "the supremacy of authority of conscience" was affirmed by that renowned figure Blessed John Henry Newman who further attested to "the duty of obeying our conscience at all hazards".

In addition to all this, the Minister for Health has proposed that a security zone be set up around all abortion clinics to prevent members of the public from making a peaceful protest at what

they regard as a further degradation of this nation which formerly held such an honoured position in the eyes of the world.

A strange irony that a government which so recently and spectacularly celebrated the freedom of this country from external domination should now be denying its own people the supreme right of freedom of conscience and the universal and basic human right of peaceful protest.

Discredited regimes come to mind!

*Yours etc.,
Gertrude M. Searson,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.*

Somebody's profiting

Dear Editor, One hundred days into our new 'progressive' abortion-on-demand regime, we now have 1,000 aborted dead. As predicted, as in Britain, 98% of these killed by abortions here, were healthy but unwanted. So much for abortions being "rare" and "safe"? The same anti-Eighth campaigners who gave us this vicious attack on our unborn, now want your vote. Electoral and political change is needed, if more Irish lives are to be saved from the "repeal" abortion death regime, which our taxes now fund. Who is making the abortion profits from mothers and their dead children? And how much?

*Yours etc.,
Oliver Maher,
Harold's Cross, Dublin 6.*



facebook community

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

Wave of attacks upon Christians in Sri Lanka

And the rest of the world turns their backs. You are all in my prayers. – **Ed Connolly**

We were outraged at the attack on mosques in Christchurch and rightly so, where is the same outrage on attack on Christians in Shrilanka. – **Mary Cosgrove**

Draw young people to religious life, bishops urge

We need authentic catechesis so that young people will know the Church as Christ's Church and not somewhere that people touch in on for the different rituals and then disappear. The message is not the radical message of Jesus to take up the cross and follow him not the world or whatever spirit is moving at any particular time. – **Eileen Glynn**

You have to reach out to the young people and show them that people within the Church can be trusted and be truthful with them. I wish you all the best as it's very sad indeed. – **Myra Grennan**

Should money raised to restore Notre Dame be given to the poor instead?

The Cathedral has been an inspiration for generations to give to those in need, spiritually and financially. May it do so again. – **Karen Doud Fox**

The Catholic Church is the most charitable institution in the world but it has always sponsored great works of art, music, literature and architecture because beauty preaches the Gospel too. There was someone in the Gospels who also complained about wasting a precious oil worth a years wages that could have been given to the poor on Our Lord Jesus and his name was Judas Iscariot. If we truly cared about the poor, we would all work towards building a more generous society. Many billionaires have given towards much less worthy causes. Rebuilding the cathedral is a worthy cause because it's a meeting place with Our Lord, a taste of Heaven on earth and it's free for all. – **Trina Abuan**

The cathedral does need to be rebuilt, and the fire was clearly a terrible shock for the French, regardless of whether Catholic or not, but there is a valid point that if billionaires can come up with money so quickly, they can do so for other causes. – **Declan McSweeney**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



▲ **USA:** A woman lights a votive candle at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City on April 16. Cathedrals in the US count on state-of-the-art fire prevention, detection and suppression techniques to prevent the devastation witnessed at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

◀ **SPAIN:** Men place a large image of the crucified Christ on a throne in a church in Malaga, after Spanish Legionnaires carried it during a Holy Week procession. Photos: CNS



PERU: People react as the coffin holding the body of former Peruvian President Alan Garcia arrives at the APRA party headquarters, a day after he died of a gunshot wound believed to be self-inflicted.



ITALY: Pope Francis washes, then kisses, the foot of an inmate during a Holy Thursday celebration at Velletri Correctional Facility, 36 miles south of Rome.



USA: Worshippers lay palm branches down before a procession following Palm Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Mission, Texas. Over 1,000 parishioners participated in the procession to the historic La Lomita chapel, located on the US-Mexico border. The proposed border wall would cut through the chapel's property.



BRAZIL: Catholics attend the Procession of the Torches during Holy Week in Goias Velho.



Ascending, descending, and just keeping steady



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

Where should we be casting our eyes? Upward, downward, or just on the road that we're walking?

Well there are different kinds of spiritualities: Spiritualities of the Ascent, Spiritualities of the Descent, and Spiritualities of Maintenance, and each is important.

Spiritualities of the Ascent are spiritualities that invite us to strive always for what's higher, for what's more noble, for what stretches us and takes us (figuratively) upward beyond the humdrum moral and spiritual ruts within which we habitually find ourselves.

They tell us that we can be more, that we can transcend the ordinary and break through the old ceilings that have up to now constituted our horizon.

They tell us that if we stretch ourselves enough we will be able to walk on water, be great saints, be enflamed with the Spirit, and experience already now the deep joys of God's Kingdom. These spiritualities tell us that sanctity lies in the ascent and that we should be habitually stretching ourselves towards higher goals.

Counterpart

These spiritualities have a secular counterpart and that counterpart is what we often hear from academic commencement speakers who are forever challenging those graduating to dream big dreams, to reach for the stars.

There's a lot to be said for this kind of an invitation. Much of Gospels are exactly that kind of a challenge: keep your eyes trained upward; think with your big mind; feel with your big heart; imagine yourself as God's child and mirror

that greatness; let Jesus' teachings stretch you; let Jesus' spirit fill you; let high ideals enlarge you.

But the Gospels also invite us to a Spirituality of the Descent. They tell us to make friends with the desert, the cross, with ashes, with self-renunciation, with humiliation, with our shadow, and with death itself. They tell us that we grow not just by moving upward but also by descending downward.

We grow too by letting the desert work us over, by renouncing cherished dreams to accept the cross, by letting the humiliations that befall us deepen our character, by having the courage to face our own deep chaos, and by making peace with our own mortality.

“Sometimes, many times, the more urgent task is simply to stay healthy, sane and buoyant”

These spiritualities tell us that sometimes our task, spiritual and psychological, is not to raise our eyes to the heavens, but to look down upon the earth, to sit in the ashes of loneliness and humiliation, to stare down at the restless desert inside us, and to make peace with our human limits and our mortality.

There aren't a lot of secular counterparts to

this spirituality (though you do see this in what's best in psychology and anthropology). The challenge of the descent is not one you will often hear from a commencement speaker.

But there is still another genre of spiritualities, a very important kind, namely, Spiritualities of Maintenance. These spiritualities invite us to proper self-care, to factor in that the journey of discipleship is a marathon, not a sprint, and so to take heed of our limits.

We aren't all spiritual athletes and tiredness, depression, loneliness and fragile health, mental or physical, can, if we are not careful with ourselves, break us. These spiritualities invite us to be cautious about both an over-enthusiastic ascent and a naive descent.

They tell us that dullness, boredom, and ennui will meet us along the road and so we should have a glass of wine when needed and let our weariness dictate that on a given night it might be healthier for us spiritually to watch a mindless sitcom or a sports event than to spend that time watching a religious program.

They also tell us to respect the fact that, given our mental fragility at times, there are descents that we should stay away from. They don't deny that we need to push ourselves to new heights and that we need to have the courage, at times, to face the chaos and desert

inside us; but they caution that we must also always take into account what we can handle at a given time in our lives and what we can't handle just then.

Good spiritualities don't put you on a universal conveyor-belt, the same road for everyone, but take into account what you need to do to maintain your energy and sanity on a marathon journey.

“We should be habitually stretching ourselves towards higher goals”

Spiritualities of Maintenance have a secular counterpart and we can learn things here from our culture's stress on maintaining one's physical health through proper exercise, proper diet, and proper health habits.

Sometimes in our culture this becomes one-sided and obsessive, but it is still something for spiritualities to learn from, namely, that the task in life isn't just to grow and to courageously face your shadow and mortality.

Sometimes, many times, the more urgent task is simply to stay healthy, sane and buoyant.

Different spiritualities stress one or the other of these: the ascent, the descent, or (less commonly) maintenance, but a good spirituality will stress all three: train your eyes upward, don't forget to look downward, and keep your feet planted firmly on the ground.

QUESTIONS of faith

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



Is the great Easter miracle true?

Easter is a very special time in the liturgical calendar, in fact, out of all the events Catholics celebrate, Resurrection Sunday is undoubtedly the most important. This is because on this day, Christians remember that after three days of death following his crucifixion, the Son of God rose from the dead fulfilling God's promise that love prevails over sin.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the fulcrum of the Faith, and without it, Christianity would cease to be. Indeed, St Paul notes in his letter to the Corinthians that if Christ has not been raised, then our faith is in vain.

These strong words remind us that at the very heart of our religion is a miracle, which so shook up the world that nothing has been the same since. But how rational is it to believe that the Resurrection miracle is actually true? Are there good grounds in thinking that the Gospel story is rooted firmly in history?

In answering this question, it's firstly important to point out that the existence of miracles presupposes the existence of God. In other words, if God exists, then it follows that miracles can exist too. So, once one accepts that there are logical and good reasons to believe in God, as Catholics do, then it's also logical and reasonable to believe that miracles can occur.

Argument

While this argument makes the case that miracles are feasible, it doesn't do much in telling us whether the miracle of Jesus being raised from the dead actually happened – but rather just gives us a general insight into the possibility of miracles.

There aren't any good theological reasons to think that the Resurrection story is fabricated – if God can

create the world out of nothing, then raising a man from the dead is a walk in the park.

For the most part, common objections to the Resurrection are based on the idea that the Gospels aren't reliable and that they don't record actual historical events.

The problem with this argument is that most historians agree that: (1) Jesus was buried in a tomb; (2) on the Sunday after his crucifixion, his tomb was found empty by a group of female followers; (3) individuals and groups reported seeing the risen Jesus at different points; (4) the disciples came to believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

“It's important to point out that the existence of miracles presupposes the existence of God”

There is no doubt that these events occurred, and were responsible for the emergence of Christianity. Alongside these historical truths, the fact that people were praying in Jesus' name within a few years after his Resurrection and were becoming martyrs for the Faith, shows that it's reasonable to believe in the miracle.

Many scholars have tried to argue that these four facts can be explained away in a wholly naturalistic way – that is, without mention of God. Some have suggested that grave robbers stole Jesus' body, that there was a mass hallucination, or even that the story was elaborate lie. However, no compelling, atheistic explanation of what happened on those three days has ever been offered.

For Catholics, the answer is obvious: Jesus truly rose from the dead.

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

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 25, 2019

Personal Profile

Search for reason amid grief leads to higher calling

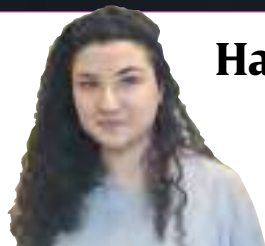
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Let the games begin

When most people turn on their gaming console, they are looking for an hour or two of fun on the weekends. Now, some of the best players the gaming world has to offer are finding ways to turn a hobby into a career. While many parents see video games as a dead end hobby, there are those in Ireland that earn their living playing professionally.

In 2012, Ireland's first professional competitive eSports team, Emerald eSports, was born (eSports being the modern name for competitive video gaming). The professional gaming team, made up of 15 players as well as three streamers and five managers, carries the flag for



Hannah Harn discusses the pitfalls and potential of Ireland's video game industry

Irish eSports and is continually growing.

There are organisations dedicated to encouraging social engagement through esports, such as Irish Collegiate ESports, the official representative body for esports competition for all third level students in Ireland. Video games, streams and competitions have become a worldwide phenomenon.

While the first video game

tournaments were held in the 1980s, the industries of competitive gaming and video game development have only grown.

However, casual as well as career gamers may also be at risk of developing the newly introduced gaming disorder. In September of 2018, the World Health Organisation inducted gaming disorder in the 11th Revision of the International

Classification of Diseases, defining it as a pattern of gaming behaviour, specifically video-gaming, characterised by increased prioritisation of gaming and impaired control over gaming habits to the point that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, despite negative consequences.

Patterns

A diagnosis of gaming disorder requires behaviour patterns severe enough to significantly impair personal, social, and familial relationships as well as their educational and occupational performance. According to WHO, studies suggest that gaming disorder

affects only a small proportion of people who game regularly.

Dr Gerry McCarney, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist and Chair of the College Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, has seen an increase in referrals in regard to gaming addiction over the last year. "We've had three referrals this year, which is definitely an increase," he said. "I think the awareness increase will make people more likely to ask for help."

According to Dr McCarney, career gamers and casual players alike are at risk if they allow their playing to consume their whole lives.

"If someone is particularly

» Continued on Page 33

Family News

AND EVENTS

Treasure trove of family fun

"An old legend says there is a treasure hidden in Rathbeggan Adventure Park waiting to be found..." organisers of a Meath-based treasure hunt say. "We are excited to announce a Masters of Calm Treasure Hunt family fun day, filled with family games and a chance to win two family tickets to MOC Summer Festival 2019 and more."

The event will take place on Sunday May 12 from 12-4pm at Rathbeggan Lakes Adventure Park, Rathbeggan, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath.

It is said to be an engaging adventure, where families can spend their time playing games and travel through the adventure park to collect clues which must be solved in order to collect the following clue to find a hidden treasure, which guarantees a fun experience for everyone involved.

Food: Picnic (pack your own) with a marquee area booked to facilitate around 40 people, also hot food is available to buy from Rathbeggan Adventure Park kitchen. Price: €5, book tickets in advance through Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/family-treasure-hunt-mastersofcalmi-tickets-60423547457?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

BE A CHAMP, GO TO CAMP: Kids Guide Dublin has announced the Fourth Annual Kids Guide Summer Camp Fair in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. The event is free and the entire family can go and discover great summer camps available for kids in the South County Dublin metro area and beyond. Organisers say: "Join us for a great day for parents and kids alike, and discover some new, tried, and children's activities and services to delight your kids this summer and year-round! You're sure to find something just right for each of your kids."

It's recommended that tickets are pre-booked, as last year's event sold out. Pre-register with your email at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/kids-guide-summer-camp-fair-2019-dun-laoghaire-dublin-tickets-5733892260?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>, or on their Facebook event page.

It takes place on Sunday, May 12 from 10.30am-4.30pm at the Royal Marine Hotel, Marine Road, Dun Laoghaire. Camps are for children aged 4-14.

Teaching teens to banish terrible treats

Teens need a junk food intervention. Now new research provides some ideas on how to do it.

Feeding young people facts about how some food companies manipulate them into eating unhealthy and addictive processed foods and sugary drinks could make them less likely to buy them, a study from the University Of Chicago Booth School Of Business published in the *Nature Human Behaviour* journal found.

Part of the research separated 536 teenagers aged 13-14 at a Texas middle school into two groups between 2014 and 2016. The first group read a fact-based exposé-style article on big food companies. It framed them as manipulative marketers trying to lure in young people to buy their junk food and get them hooked. The second group read about the benefits of healthy eating.

The students who read about food companies targeting them chose fewer junk food snacks and picked water instead of soda the next day, the study found.

Living the Easter message all year long

At the Easter Vigil Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh some years ago Archbishop Eamon Martin recalled how St John Paul II loved to quote St Augustine: "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and Alleluia is our song."

As a child, a lot of my focus on Easter Sunday was on Easter eggs, chocolate and all the Easter treats my mother spent hours preparing. My childish joy was in the feast after the famine although my parents made sure that there was a firm focus on the spiritual too and there wasn't an Easter where we didn't sit down as a family and watch a film on the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

One year we watched the entire mini-series *Jesus of Nazareth*, a beautiful portrayal of the life of Christ which begins before the Nativity and extends to the Resurrection bringing to life the various episodes as recounted in the Gospels.

Holy Week, the last week of Lent, used to have quite an aura of sombreness about it with a huge emphasis on the Easter Triduum which extends from the evening of Holy Thursday to the evening of Easter Sunday. Easter egg hunts or Good Friday parties weren't in vogue when I was a child. Most Catholics attended the Holy Week ceremonies and there'd be standing room only in the local churches and long queues for Confession.

Exciting words

On Easter Sunday we celebrate the joy of knowing that Jesus conquered sin and death. "He is not here, for he has risen" have to be the most exciting words in the Gospel of St Matthew.

It's tempting to think of Easter joy as something solely

A parent's perspective



Maria Byrne

for Easter Sunday; we'll feast on fine food, eat our Easter eggs and attend our Easter parades but by Easter Monday, we'll have moved onto something new. How can we continue to maintain that sense of joy, not only at Easter, but throughout the whole year?

When Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI addressed an enthusiastic crowd at Castel Gandolfo in Italy in 2007, he jokingly addressed the noisy, happy pilgrims, who had gathered after Easter, smilingly telling them "that one day" for Easter "was not enough for so much joy", instructing them that the liturgy doesn't just set aside one day for such a great mystery and celebration, but dedicates 50 days, the whole Easter period up to Pentecost.

"We can encourage our children to learn about Jesus through reading the Gospels, daily family prayer and being open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit"

There are lots of things we can do within our own families, our 'domestic churches', to keep the joy of Easter going all year round. One day recently I felt like I'd "got out of the wrong side of the bed". Discussing

my low mood with my sister, she suggested popping over to the next town where there's a beautiful adoration chapel attached to the parish church.

Mother Teresa once said that "the fruit of silence is prayer" and taking time out from the constant noise and activity of life to spend time with God is, in the words of St Irenaeus, "the medicine of immortality". Don't just go alone; bring your children with you and they'll benefit from this "expression of love" as it's described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

There's a very fleeting joy that's attached to material things. New cars and clothes, fancy phones and foreign travel



provide some passing pleasure but a really lasting Easter joy can only come from a closer relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. In 2017, Pope Francis asked Catholics gathered for Mass in the Vatican: "Is Jesus at the centre of my life?" To answer this, he suggested three things: to get to know Jesus, to worship him and to follow him.

We can encourage our children to learn about Jesus through reading the Gospels, daily family prayer and being open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Buy a good Bible and read a little every day; make sure each child has a prayer book suitable for their age and encourage them to use it.

The Mass is the centre of Catholic life where we are

united to the risen Jesus. Bringing your children to Mass more often – or even daily if possible – will bear great fruits in their lives.

"However dark the horizon of humanity may seem, today we celebrate the radiant triumph of Easter joy"

In *Tools for Building a Domestic Church*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops suggests praying the family Rosary, having a crucifix in a prominent place in our homes and developing family traditions based on the liturgical seasons of the year. They also talk about getting actively involved in parish life and leading children by example, talking often about the presence of God in the joys and sorrows of life.

Being Easter people means that we actively follow Christ. All our days, our actions and decisions must be centred on God's will and God's plan for us.

In his Easter message delivered on April 20, 2003, Pope St John Paul II talked about Jesus calming the storm that had terrified his apostles reassuring us that "if he is with us, why should we fear?"

"However dark the horizon of humanity may seem, today we celebrate the radiant triumph of Easter joy. If a contrary wind slows the march of peoples, if the sea of history is tossed by storms, let no one yield to dismay and lack of trust! Christ is risen; Christ is alive in our midst..."

How can we be anything but joyful if we listen to this message of love?

» Continued from Page 31



interested in it, they're more likely to engage in it, by virtue of the fact that they're more likely to play games," says Dr McCarney. "There are lots of people who play games and are interested in games who don't become addicted. Having a balance is important.

"Try to get to know what their kids are doing, what kinds of games they're playing," Dr. McCarney advises. "Make sure they're taking breaks." Some signs of gaming addiction parents and friends should look for are decreasing social engagement, extended time playing, skipping meals, and skipping sleep to play.

"If they're taking a break to engage with their friends and with their families it is not a problem," he said. "Where it becomes a problem is when they begin to pull away from people. They stop going to engage with their friends, they play for much longer periods of time than expected, they stop eating meals with families, or they skip them altogether."

While gaming can be fun, Dr McCarney says that moderation is key. "It's important to note that this technology can be beneficial," he says. "There are lots of positive things about the internet and this immediate access to information and interaction. Games are fun but it's like anything, it should be in moderation."

Galway-based game developer Brenda Romero has seen much of the evolution of modern gaming in Ireland.

“What is someone at a piano doing? Practicing. Why? To get better. It's the same sort of stuff”

"The best eSports players get the job, and they're playing eight hours a day, just like a professional athlete," Ms Romero says. "You wonder what could they be training for, but think of a musician. What is someone at a piano doing? Practicing. Why? To get better. It's the same sort of stuff."

ESports teams have fan bases, video channels, joint social media, and often even live together. Many of them have corporate sponsors to support their training and branding

efforts. For all intents and purposes, the eSports industry has become as commercialised as more traditional sports. Some betting sites offer betting on eSports matches.

"While they're doing that and they're practicing, they need to be making money, finding some way to support themselves," says Romero, "and that money comes about as the result of sponsorship, odds are."

Sponsorship

While Ireland's current eSports team is an all-Irish team, many teams in other major cities and countries have pulled players from around the world. "I would hope it stays an Irish team," Romero said, "But it's a question of sponsorship."

Ireland has been heavily involved in the video game industry since just after its inception, but what sets the country apart in the game industry is not its long history – it is the broad experiences of Irish players that all come together over the same platforms.

"The only thing that feels different, to me, is the types of games," says Ms Romero. "When I talk with young prospective game makers in educational programmes, the variety of experiences people discuss here tend to be different than the variety of experiences I hear from students in America."

In the short-term, Romero does not necessarily foresee any major shifts away from growth in the gaming and eSports industry, and Ireland's long involvement in the video game industry adds to its ongoing development as a core spot for technology development.

However, as the industry itself sees continued commercial branding and social engagement from players of all ages and skill levels, Ireland will need support to keep up with competitors.

“In the short term, Romero does not necessarily foresee any major shifts away from growth in the gaming and eSports industry”

"The industry has grown a lot here, but it tends to be overshadowed by big tech because, in European headquarters with major technology firms, their revenue outshines the revenue of the games," said Romero.

"We need funding that's on par with our neighbours, because if somebody is making a decision about where they want to develop their game, why would they come here if they could go to the North of Ireland or the UK or France where they can find the talent and have more favourable tax breaks?"

Romero feels that Ireland's 'moment' in the gaming industry is still ahead. "We have everything here in Ireland from the hardcore toolmakers at Havok to companies like [Dublin-based video game developer] Sinteractive. We have Seán Murray, Terry Kavanagh and Colin Markham, all really successful developers. I still feel like our moment is coming. It's an incredibly vibrant industry here."



Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



My son sat in the front seat next to me as we drove westward. The silence was deafening as we drove through the rolling hills of southern England. The reason things were so quiet was that we boys were on solo mission to bring a busload of our stuff from the Isle of Wight back to Ireland.

In place of my wife and three daughters, the bus was rammed full of trinkets, old chairs, lamps, fossils, bedding and books. We even had a lawnmower in there somewhere. The roof was also stacked high. We must have looked like a mobile curiosity shop as we rolled along, our eclectic assortment of accoutrements visible through the windows.

I have become a great believer in avoiding motorways. The smaller roads are far more interesting, and you actually encounter the places that you are passing through. That morning we had driven slowly past the loose horses of the New Forest, through ancient glades of giant oaks, through villages of thatched cottages, and past old manor houses and meandering rivers. We had glimpsed kestrels, army tanks and deer. None of this would have been seen from the motorway.

We had a ferry to catch the following afternoon, but we had plenty time to tour at our leisure. I had decided to spend the night in St David's, an ancient place of pilgrimage in the wilds of south west Wales. In the Middle Ages, it was said that three pilgrimages to St David's were worth two to Canterbury, and one to Rome. I had always felt drawn to it, but never had been.

Endless hours

The best thing about the trip was the chance to just spend time alone with my boy. Our busy lives were on hold for a few days and we suddenly had endless hours to chat uninterrupted. We veered briefly back on to the motorway as we crossed the dramatic Severn bridge into Wales.

Wales is a country that continues to fascinate me, ever since I fell in love with

it during a motorcycle trip a few years back. The story of our Fitzgerald surname tells that our ancestors lived there in the Middle Ages, Gerald having married Nesta, a Welsh princess. Such tales sparked my boy's imagination about the ancient place we were journeying through.

The Welsh mountains were covered with unseasonal snow, much to my boy's excitement. We again shunned the motorway and drove up into Brecon Beacons, and along wild roads until at last we sighted the Irish Sea. The water seemed to connect

us to home, as we strolled along a beach.

Then, we pilgrims arrived in deep, atmospheric St David's, where the cathedral [pictured] and its ruins spoke of ancient days.

We walked down quiet streets and into the cathedral's embrace. We lit candles for those we loved. We even paid our respects at the tomb of our distant medieval uncle, Gerald of Wales – or uncle Gerry, as I call him. The pubs were full of kindly Welsh banter and good food. Sean had reveled in "boys club" all day, and the incredible lack of screeching. But before we went to sleep that night he admitted: "I miss those noisy girls." I did too.

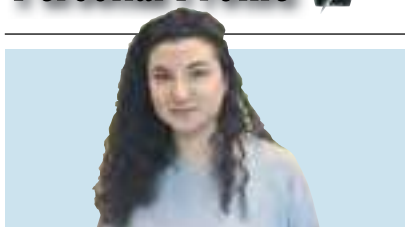
Strong bond

The next day the ferry took us to Ireland, where we continued west towards Cork, talking, joking and listening to music. Every moment of this time together deepened our already strong bond, subtly but surely. The new object of our pilgrimage was my parents' house, and the waiting arms of my mother, just recently out of hospital.

After a warm fireside evening in the home place, and the safe sleep that is only possible in your childhood home, we unpacked the bus the next day, making room for the female contingent of our family who were arriving by air. At the airport, the kids ran to each other and embraced excitedly. Driving home from the airport with the full complement aboard, the familiar high-volume babble had returned with a vengeance. I said, "I missed you noisy girls."

Search for reason amid grief leads to higher calling

Personal Profile



Hannah Harn

Fr Seán Hyland lost his two children in the 1970s. In 2008, he lost his wife. Now, he has found renewal through the priesthood and is using his own experiences to help others on their paths through grief.

"Having lost two kids earlier in life, Liz got me through it," said Fr Seán. "She was my rock, my energy, my optimism." Her unshakable faith became the example that he strove to live by.

"I was ready to join Liz on her faith journey through life, and she was the example," he said. "She carried me."

As Fr Seán and his wife continued their lives, he began to pour his energy into his career. "I channeled my energy, my anger into pretty aggressive career goals," he said. "And I did quite well." Fr Seán became the Director of Manufacturing with Hewlett-Packard and went on to have a successful career.

Seeking to more closely join his wife in her faith and life continued to be Fr Seán's guide in his spirituality. "With Liz as my example, my spiritual life, especially the acceptance of God's will as an essential part of my journey through life, progressively developed," he said.

God's voice

"I began to realise how frequently and easily we can blot out God's voice in our lives. Grasping and accepting this was an essential part of my joining Liz on her faith-filled journey."

After they both retired, Fr



Fr Seán Hyland with family at the launch of his book *Whisperings of my Soul* in Portarlington GAA Centre. Front: P.J. Hyland, Fr. Seán and May Mellows. Back: Joyce Hyland, Kay Gibbs and Caroline Mellows.

Seán continued "doing all that [they] wanted to do, seeing God, travelling", then Liz fell ill. It had been nearly 30 years since the loss of their children.

"When Liz got cancer, at this stage I believed my children were with Jesus, and I was trying to do what I could to make sure I got there. When Liz got sick I simply cried, Jesus, give me the strength to take care of Liz the way she's taken care of me. She was my rock."

"When Liz died, my one prayer was, Jesus, let me know that Liz and my children are well with you. And I was given explicit messages from Heaven. Given those, it became so explicit, it was like night and day for me."

In response to these messages,

Fr Seán found himself guided to the priesthood. "I said, Jesus, whatever you want me to do, I'll try to do it. And the message came back just as clear to be a priest."

"I didn't join because I thought I would like being a priest," he said. "Many men join after hearing the call or hearing the bells, but I didn't join because of any of that. If it had been digging ditches, I would have done that. As I learned more about it, it turned out the vocation of the priest suits me tremendously. But I certainly didn't know that going into it."

In 2014, Fr Seán was ordained after going through a four-year study programme in Rome specifically created for mature men. "They give you credit for life

experience," he said.

Fr Seán has found his work with his ministry to be rewarding. "It's amazing," he said. "It's a privilege. There isn't anything I do that's big, small, or little. It's just a privilege."

“As I learned more about it, it turned out that the vocation of the priest suits me tremendously”

His search for answers after his wife's death also led him to share his own experiences in his book, *Whisperings of my Soul*.

"I tried to reason my way through the apparent chaos that surrounded me, by trying to discover if there was order, reason

or intelligence behind the origin and operation of the universe," he said. He began reading and studying science, philosophy, religions, physics, and cosmology, leaving no stone unturned.

"The combination of the results of my searching and Liz's daily example of a faith-filled life eventually brought me to the unquestionable reality of the existence of a creative intelligence behind the origin and operation of the universe. And without the slightest doubt that this is the Divine Intelligence revealed in the Bible."

Fr Seán self-published *Whisperings of my Soul* late in 2018, and often includes his own experiences in his homilies, which he has found to genuinely help those looking for signs of their loved ones.

"During my fourth year down in Carlow, I was giving a Divine Mercy Mass and gave one or two little messages from my background as a homily," Fr Seán said. "And an older woman came in on Monday morning threw her arms around me and burst out crying. She'd been widowed for over a year and had felt her husband come and sit at the foot of the bed a couple of months before, but her children had told her not to talk like that."

"For a priest to say that it was okay to believe...that was all she needed."

Since publishing his book, Fr Seán has had many people, often recently bereaved, come to see him from across the country. "They know I don't have a solution, but I can at least let them know how real the promises we have in the Bible are," he said.

"My prayer of desperation was answered by the most awesome and beautiful consolations of faith that any soul on this earth could ask for," he said.

Fr Seán has felt immense gratitude for his experience and his ministry and hopes his own experiences will help others on their paths to healing.

"I want people to know how close they are and how they will comfort anyone who asks for help."



Green Fingers

Paul Gargan

Your garden likes to show off when May arrives!

"The world's favourite season is spring. All things seem possible in May." – Edwin Way Teale

In May your garden starts to show what it's really all about. Shrubs are a riot of colour. The new leaves on trees are almost see through when back lit by the sun and the colour so vivid. New life awakens.

With all the new growth and the soil damp, slugs and snails can become a problem. They love the tender new shoot of plants. If the new shoots are eaten now it can set the plant back or may ruin the look of the plant for the rest of the year.

If you can control and reduce the slug and snail populations now, it may save work later in the year. Put down beer traps (small containers filled with beer) and check them every few days. When necessary tip the contents onto your compost heap and refill. In a damp shaded spot of the garden you can trap the ones that escape the beer. For snails, leave a flower pot upside down with space for them to get inside, and for slugs use something that won't heat up (e.g. a piece of board) also slightly raised at

one end. They will go inside during the day to wait for nightfall. All you have to do is go around with a container half full of water and lots of salt. Tip them into it and leave for a day or two. If you go out early in the morning or late evening you can also collect them on the move.

Controversy

Summer bedding has been on sale everywhere you look for weeks now. Unless you have a frost-free glasshouse or conservatory you must resist the temptation. It's still too early to put them outside. Temperatures of 3C or below will kill annual summer bedding plants. If you can keep them above this in bright sunlight, then by all means plant up your hanging basket tubs, containers and window boxes.

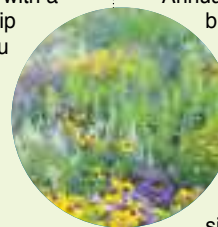
Always use new potting compost. Put some in the bottom of the container and using one of your plants measure how much is needed, the finished top of the planting should be 3cm/ 1in below the rim. This is to allow for watering. Plant the container so it is full. The rootball of the plants should be almost touching. The more you put in, the quicker they

will fill out and the better they will look all summer.

Annual summer bedding will flower until first frosts but don't put them out until the threat of frost has passed, usually June.

You don't have to go the traditional route of summer bedding for baskets, tubs, containers and window boxes. This is where people with no gardens can do their bit to help our endangered pollinators. If you have a balcony window sill or just door step, you can plant a herb and flower container. Borage and Nasturtium are both edible flowers. They will provide masses of flowers all summer.

Herbs such as marjoram, oregano, prostrate rosemary, purple sage and any variegated mint will all do well in containers. Train the nasturtium to grow up the chain of hanging baskets as well as hang down and you will have an amazing display all summer, providing both you and pollinators with food. Look after all baskets and containers the same way. Make sure they don't dry out, check daily. Hanging baskets will dry out very quickly in the sun and wind.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Tragic events make for a memorable Easter

You'd expect religious matters to figure more prominently in the media in Holy Week, and so they did, but I never reckoned on a major fire in Notre Dame Cathedral and the massacre at churches in Sri Lanka.

It was blanket coverage of Notre Dame on the Monday night and through Tuesday, but as interest waned somewhat on the main news channels I turned to **France 24 News** as my TV news outlet of choice. I found the atmosphere rather sombre and solemn as some newsreaders seemed almost in mourning. There was no blurring of the fact that this was a sacred place, but it was also described as a place of art, culture, peace, reconciliation and unity.

There were lots of interesting historical details, e.g. how de Gaulle celebrated there as soon as the defeated Nazis left the city at the end of World War II, and how his funeral was held there in 1970. There was a segment on other French cathedral fires (e.g. Nantes) over the years and the grainy black and white footage was remarkably similar to the high definition colour pictures from the Monday night.

In the review of the newspapers they started with the Catholic newspaper *La Croix*, with its headline '*Le Coeur en Cendres*', and they



French firefighters inspect the Notre Dame Cathedral after Monday's devastating blaze.

even included the headline from *The Scotsman* – '*La Tragédie de Notre Dame*'.

Despite the disaster there were many positives – the fact that there was no loss of life, how so many artefacts had been saved, the cheering on of the firefighters and that heartening footage of people, very many of them young adults, praying and singing hymns near the cathedral.

The dramatic image of the falling spire contrasted with the crucifix that survived inside, shining gold in a shaft of light. In a broader sense the much vaunted secular

nature of the French state got to re-examine itself and consider its Christian heritage.

On Sky News that night, on **Press Preview** there was positive coverage of the efforts of Fr Fournier, chaplain to the fire fighters, to save sacred items from the cathedral and it was noted that previously he had also put himself at personal risk to tend to victims of the Bataclan massacre. On BBC News' **The Papers** that golden cross on the front pages was highlighted.

Notre Dame got a mention on last Friday's **The**

Leap of Faith (RTÉ Radio 1), an enjoyable Easter special that explored how artists, musicians and writers have engaged with the Easter story. Notre Dame was described as touching all the bases with its art work, architecture, the music played on its organ and it's appearance in Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Modern

Other shows also marked Holy Week in an appropriate way. Fern Britton's *Holy Land Journey* was yet another pilgrimage type programme from BBC. Maybe there was too much of the celebrity presenter, but it was an absorbing look at modern Jerusalem.

Britton was chirpy from the start but became quite emotional when she visited the sites where Jesus walked. She described herself as "a struggling Christian" and had



Fern Britton.

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTÉ1, Sunday, April 28, 11am

Fr Peter O'Connor celebrates Mass in the RTÉ studios with the choir and congregation of the Church of the Holy Name, Beechwood Avenue, Ranelagh, Dublin.

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC1, Sunday, April 28

After the fire in Notre Dame, Josie d'Arby reveals how York Minister had to be rebuilt after a fire 35 years ago.

CATHOLIC IRELAND

EWTN, Monday, April 29, 2.30pm; Friday, May 3, 10 pm

A look at the history of Ballintubber Abbey in County Mayo, Ireland, the only church in Ireland founded by an Irish king that is still in daily use today.

her Bible as her "guide book for life". She had a reflective moment on the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane before seeing where recent research suggests the trial of Jesus took place.

She found herself "transported back in time", though there were contemporary constructs as well – she wasn't impressed with the ugly security wall at the site of Bethany. For those who haven't been to the holy sites it was a welcome introduction to the grave of Lazarus, the Via Dolorosa, the rock of Calvary and the site of Jesus' tomb.

Pilgrimage: Road to Rome

(BBC2), reviewed here a few weeks ago, ended last Friday night with the celebrities meeting Pope Francis, and that was a touching and emotional

moment. The celebrities were quite moved, some to tears, even some of those who were non-believers. Pope Francis pointed out to them that life is a journey, a human pilgrimage, whether you're a person of faith or not. He asked the believers to pray for him and those without faith to wish him a good journey so he wouldn't let anyone down.

He expressed similar sentiments during the **Urbi et Orbi** ceremony (RTÉ1, BBC1 and EWTN, Sunday) and was visibly distressed by that morning's tragic news from Sri Lanka, a story that made for grim Easter Sunday viewing.

boregan@hotmail.com,
boreganmedia.com



Pat O'Kelly

Music

Performances no less excellent despite being novelties

Three recent events engage an element of novelty. Two involve the RTÉ NSO at the NCH with the third, at nearby St Finian's Lutheran Church, as part of a Music Network nationwide tour.

On their seven-venue stop, German cellist Raphaela Gromes and pianist Julian Riem choose a programme with a strong Italian flavour that displays their exemplary talents.

They begin with a mainly lively *Serenata* by Busoni that sets the trend of much that follows. Giuseppe Martucci's Sonata of 1884 is solid and vigorous with influences of Brahms and Mendelssohn, particularly in its invigorating Scherzo. The visiting artists enter into the spirit



Raphaela Gromes.

of the music with unbridled panache.

There are brilliant excursions into Rossini and oth-

ers paying homage to him but the premiere of Kevin Volans' commissioned *Cello: Piano 2* stands aloof. Hopping piano *staccatos* separate and accompany biting cello *pizzicatos*. But there are periods of elegant *legato* as well and the piece seems to capture the imagination of musicians and audience alike. I love it.

It may seem odd to find Tchaikovsky in the novelty category but performances of his *7th Symphony* are rare. He began sketching it in the early 1890s giving it the title, *Life*. He felt the first movement should be "all upsurge and confidence; the second love; the third disappointment and the Finale death".

However, abandoning his sketches, he massaged some

of them into his single movement *3rd Piano Concerto*. Painstakingly, Soviet musicologist Semen Bogatirev reconstructed the symphony, which was played for the first time in Moscow in 1957.

Grandeur

Certainly UK conductor Thomas Kemp and the NSO make the most of it, taking it also to Galway and Waterford. Much of the opening recalls the grandeur of Tchaikovsky's ballets and the ball scenes in *Yevgeny Onegin*.

The 2nd movement is elegiac, the 3rd moderately effervescent but with dark undertones related to *Swan Lake*'s sorcerer Rothbart and the *Sleeping Beauty*'s malevolent Carabosse. The ebullient

finale is energetic. However, while worth doing occasionally, I cannot see the piece sweeping Tchaikovsky's other symphonies under the carpet.

The *pièce de résistance* comes with Swedish conductor Patrik Ringborg directing a thrilling concert performance of Erich Korngold's opera *Die tote Stadt* (The Dead City). Dating from 1920, when the composer was 24, Korngold's orchestration is wildly extravagant where, besides a full symphonic complement, there is piano, harmonium, organ and humble mandolin. The end result almost surpasses the opulence of Mahler and Richard Strauss.

Set in Bruges, grieving widower Paul erects a shrine to his late wife Marie in their

house. Enter Marietta, one of a troupe, in whom Paul sees Marie's reincarnation. Suffering hallucinations, he believes he strangles Marietta with a lock of Marie's hair. Returning to reality, Paul discovers Marietta is alive but decides to leave her and Bruges – *The Dead City*.

Soprano Celine Byrne and US tenor Charles Workman excel themselves in Korngold's luscious score. Ms Byrne's Marietta/Marie is positively radiant with Mr Workman's Paul no less expressively dramatic. Baritone Ben McAteer, doubling friend Frank and associate Fritz, brings his own musical insight to this tremendous performance.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Finding 'room to live' in the Irish Free State

Protestant and Irish: The minority's search for place in independent Ireland
ed. Ian d'Alton and Ida Milne
(Cork University Press, €49.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This collection of essays provides a comprehensive account of Irish Protestants – their attitudes, the decisions they took and their role in public life – after the Irish Free State was established in 1922.

Following the revolutionary years from 1916 to 1922 Protestants were angry, disillusioned and fearful. They were angry at having been abandoned by Britain, they were disillusioned at the manner of their betrayal by their co-religionists in Ulster and they were fearful how they would be treated in the new, independent and overwhelmingly Catholic State.

They were a disparate group, consisting of landlords, land agents and large farmers ('ranchers'), middle-class professionals and business people and a working-class, and there were further differences within those categories.

Because of the various land



Ireland's joint Christian heritage: The Catholic and Church of Ireland Archbishops of Armagh, Richard Clarke and Eamon Martin, at a service in St Patrick's Col cathedral in Armagh.

acts landlordism was a spent force by the early 20th Century. The influence of landlords was further diminished by the advent of the new State. This, however, did not dissuade them from searching for a place in independent Ireland.

Dominant

George O'Callaghan-Westropp (1864–1944) and others attempted to ensure that in the guise of the Irish Farmers' Union and the Farmers Party they would retain much of their former economically and politically dominant position in the country.

However, the project failed as the Irish Farmers' Union was depicted as "a party of landlords and ranchers which

could never be depended on to defend the interests of small farmers".

Another landlord, Robert Malachy Burke (1907–98), was more successful in carving out a place in the new State. He represented Labour in the Seanad and headed the polls at local elections. Then there was Edward Richards-Orpen (1884–1967). He was a cardinal figure in the politics of Cumann na nGaedheal, the Centre Party and eventually Fine Gael. And as a public commentator, researcher and writer he made a significant contribution to life in the new State.

In 'The life and death of Protestant Businesses in the Independent Ireland'

Frank Barry illustrates how until the middle of the last century Protestants had a monopoly of the senior positions in banking, auditing firms and the law. Until that time also Protestant family firms conducted most of the business in the cities and provincial towns.

However, by 1973 long-established Protestant businesses had merged with Catholic firms, merit-based promotion was becoming the norm, and the Protestant contribution to the commercial life of the State continued on more equitable terms.

Hugh Maguire discusses Protestants who had little difficulty in coming to terms with the new

administration. These were Protestants who supported the Sinn Féin movement, some of whom were active in the Easter Rising, war of independence or both.

Maguire provides a valuable list of them – 66 men and 33 women. The best known of the women was Constance Markiewicz who was a member of the first Dáil Éireann and served as its minister for Labour.

“Protestants evinced no interest in Gaelic games which were wrapped in the green flag of nationalism”

Protestants supported and played rugby, soccer, tennis and hockey. These games were introduced to Ireland by the crown forces and were promoted officially as part of an acculturation process.

Not surprisingly, Protestants evinced no interest in Gaelic games which were wrapped in the green flag of nationalism and were organised and played on Sunday which by

religious conviction they considered should be spent in a radically different way. But, as Ida Milne points out in her delightful essay, they always joined in celebrating the success of local sporting heroes.

Felix Larkin in a beautifully illustrated essay looks at how cartoonists featured Protestants and their cherished institutions. He highlights the art of Charles E. Kelly and *Dublin Opinion* which was without a hint of malevolence. Caleb Wood Richardson examines the use of humour by Patrick Campbell as a form of a self-deprecatory Protestant and Anglo-Irish defensive mechanism.

Prompted by a natural instinct for self-preservation, while Protestants resided next to their Catholic neighbours, they lived separately from them. As Ian d'Alton noted, they chose to be a self-contained community within the national polity. In so doing they successfully retained their distinctive values and traditions.

Whether they or their Catholic neighbours will succeed in retaining their joint Christian heritage in the face of the drive to secularisation by the present political elite remains to be seen.

Rome through artists' eyes on show at the National Gallery

The voyage of Italy: 200 years of travel guides

National Gallery of Ireland
16 March – 15 September 2019
Room 11 | Admission free

The National Gallery is currently showing selected items from the Sir Denis Mahon collection of guides and travel books about Italy.

Naturally these were bought by the donor for the artistic information they contained for his own research, but they were in fact the actual guides carried by those making the Grand Tour, which in the 18th century was so much a part of many a young aristocrat's education in taste.

The guides on show feature images of Rome and St Peters. A visit to St Peters was *de rigueur*, even for

the most reformed Northern mind.

These, of course, are engravings. But perhaps particularly they give a greater sense of the historical reality than photographs do today, except for some of the earliest. (The photographs before 1870 reveal a city sadly in decay, the capital of a disheartened state under siege from a modernising world.)

The collection is being catalogued at the moment, but is, of course, available to anyone wishing to consult them.

But for those interested in Rome the present exhibition will give a give impression of the Vatican between the Renaissance and the Risorgimento. **PC**



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.

The Liffey flows out of the past into the future



The River Liffey: History and Heritage by Christopher Moriarty (Collins Press, €21.99)

Peter Costello

Dubliners seem to take the Liffey much for granted. It has been flowing, Christopher Moriarty tell us in this very detailed account of the river and its course, for some ten millennia.

It seems to have failed only once. In 1452, the old annals record, the Liffey was entirely dry for a distance of two miles. (This must have been a time of strange events, as the next year the archbishop of Dublin was kidnapped by pirates.)

"Any river, great or small," the author explains, "offers sufficient material of interest to fill many books. In a global context, the Liffey, at not much more than 100 km in length and less than 10,000 years old, is puny and infantile. But it is one of the rivers of a capital city, it has contributed in no small way to the development of a civilisation. Many people have written about aspects of the Liffey, none more distinguished than James Joyce, who uses it as an allegory of human life itself."

Moriarty opens his book with an account of the river as it appears in early legend, medieval lore and

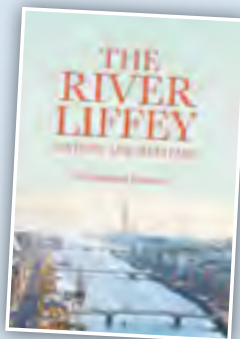
modern literature, including Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

The river rises in the mountains that hem in the city to the south, flows west and then east through the uplands, the lakelands of Blessington, and the open farming land of Kildare to flow down to Dublin city through its suburbs, its crowded centre and through the port and docks, out into the bay. He concludes with a long walk down to the South Wall from where he was able to look back at the mountains to the south whence flowed the waters at his feet.

Future

Here he tells that in winter the teal that feed along the Shelly Banks (that is to Dubliners – the Ordnance Survey thinks they are named after the poet), breed beside the Liffey head. The Liffey is a world where the beginning links determinedly with the end, or rather the future.

Moriarty is a naturalist and an expert in fish, so naturally enough in his book, nature and animal life play a large part. But as the river descends it becomes more and more tangled in human history. There is



not an epoch which has not left its mark on the river.

The calm pastoral landscapes invoked in much of the book give way to his account of the startling changes that have overtaken

the city-side river since the 1970s. His text is filled with maps and images of the past, but the cover – an aerial view of the port opening out into the bay – suggests that a different future is in the making.

The scenes here have been completely transformed since the author and I from different places first saw them as boys. Now the tumbling 18th Century houses and the public buildings of the 19th Century have given way to glass fronted high rises and new bridges that carry ever-denser traffic over the flowing water of the Liffey.

Reading this book, a delightful amalgam of human and natural history, by a writer with a fluent and entertaining style, the reader will be fascinated by the glimpses he gets of what was, and what is.

All too often we think of the Liffey side of Dublin

as a Norse creation. The first Dubliners were much earlier. In 2005 during the preliminary archaeological work before the new buildings at Spencer Dock, Melanie McQuade recovered the remains of fish traps which were carbon dated to around 6000 BC – evidence of some of the earliest Liffey-siders. But what is coming may be just as extraordinary.

The Liffey has contributed in no small way to the development of a civilisation"

A plan now on display in the foyer of the City Council offices shows what is planned for the future. The futuristic scheme for the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock envisages small sailing boats racing on the lower stretch of the river at the Conference Centre.

There was such a plan for the Thames back in the 1950s. That involved making the river non-tidal and never came about. Such a scheme would be easier to put in place in Dublin, so perhaps one for the Liffey will be undertaken, presaging an exciting and very different future for an ancient river.

Mainly About Books

By the books editor

Words that easily confuse us

The other day I was reading a publisher's announcement of a new book about 1916 (yes, another one, too late in the day we would have thought, with the centenary of the first Dáil upon us). In the article I came upon on a striking error.

The author, writing about the aftermath of the Rising, remarked that: "The attitude of the general public, many of whom had been disinterested, dispirited and even hostile to the rising up to now, changed quickly to admiration, and the actions of the insurgents came to be seen by many as heroic."

The comment is a sound enough description of the aftermath. Except that the people, especially of Dublin, were *uninterested*, not *disinterested*.

Uninterested means they had no interest in the Rising. Disinterested means something entirely different.

It means to act in a matter without self-interest. To donate a large sum of money to a charity, without wishing for any return for one's self, that is to be disinterested.

This is an astonishingly common error, imported of course from the US. The confusion arises from such words as disinclined, not to be inclined to do something. People hearing this think that, on that model, disinterested must mean not interested. But, as I say, it means no such thing.

Writers, in so far as they are professional people, should have an exemplary care for the meaning, context and history of words. A writer cannot rely just on what they learnt at school or university.

Informality

In these times of informality there is less care taken, it seems, to get words right. Ultimately it seems people don't think it matters. Everyone says it, so people will know what I am trying to say.

No, they won't.

In this case the word is not just wrong, it is also leading to the extinction of the impulse towards altruism. It is obliterating a mental concept and a moral imperative. And that does matter.

Errors in speech and in writing are easy to understand. It is easy for children, for instance, to confuse principle and principal. This is like other sound alike words: discrete/discreet, advice/advise, allowed/aloud. They will sort this out in time; just as children learn to distinguish the different meanings of bark, and pen, and so on.

The style of writing used in emails and text messages is often abbreviated and homonymous. But slack use of language does not do on more formal occasions.

Take the preparation of a CV, an abbreviated form for *curriculum vitae*. These often present personnel officers, or rather 'human resource managers', as they are called these days, with problems.

CEOs often complain that young people seem to give little or no thought to what they are putting down. "Ah, he will sort it out, she will know what I want to say." They won't of course. And that is why you won't get the job.

CEO's often recommend that applicants run a spell checker over their texts. But this can be tricky advice.

Unless one specially selects English or Irish English, one may end up using US spellings. This form of English dominates Google Spellchecker. It can manage straightforward words, but Irish place names seem to defeat it as do many words names and titles imported from other languages.

The assumption in Silicon Valley is that every one must read, write and think in US English, which includes all those billions of Indians and Chinese people...

As this writer is slightly dyslexic, spelling is often not his thing. When I was a small boy my father reassured me. The problem, he said, was that really intelligent people learnt to read early. They quickly learnt to see only the "outside" of a word, not its "inside". They know what it means, but don't often focus on the letters that make it up. Hence of course the letters get jumbled.

His maxim was that bad spelling was a sign of intelligence. It is a thought that that still comforts me.

But this is not the same as confusing uninterested with disinterested. That kind of cultural rot should be stopped now.



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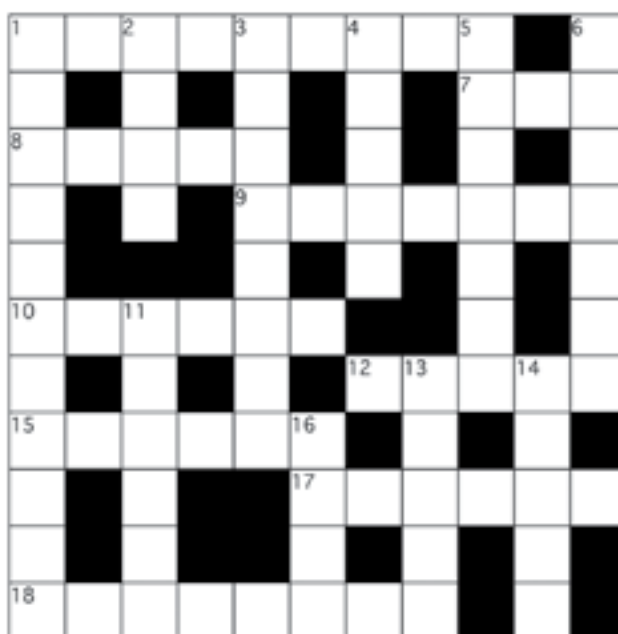


IrishCathNews

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 279



ACROSS

- 1 This cartoon rabbit says 'What's up, Doc?' (4,5)
 7 You listen with this (3)
 8 Not as old, more recent (5)
 9 These nice lines on your face appear when you smile (7)
 10 Book that comes out once a year (6)
 12 Correct (5)
 15 Package (6)
 17 Dodges, stays away from (6)
 18 Sports shoes (8)

DOWN

- 1 Popular dessert with a yellow fruit (6,5)
 2 A dress (4)

- 3 You might keep a budgie in this (8)
 4 There is a famous supermodel called _____ Campbell (5)
 5 Shouting (7)
 6 Gift (7)
 11 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' is part of the Chronicles of _____ (6)
 13 Gets the creases out of clothes (5)
 14 You might see it growing at the edge of a field or garden (5)
 16 Lough Neagh or Loch Ness, perhaps (4)

SOLUTIONS, APRIL 18

GORDIUS No.399

Across – 1 Cob 3 Battle dress 8 Collar 9 Punchbag 10 Lewis 11 Fry-up 13 Faith, hope and charity 20 Sinus 21. Laugh 23 Study 24 Carousel 25 Recipe 26 Downtrodden 27 SAE

Down – 1 Cockleshell 2 Bullwhip 3 Brays 4 Topsoil 5 Decaf 6 Embryo 7 Sag 12 Polystyrene 13 Funds 14 Hahas 17 Injuries 18 Gnarled 19 Furrow 22 Haunt 23 Stern 24 Cad

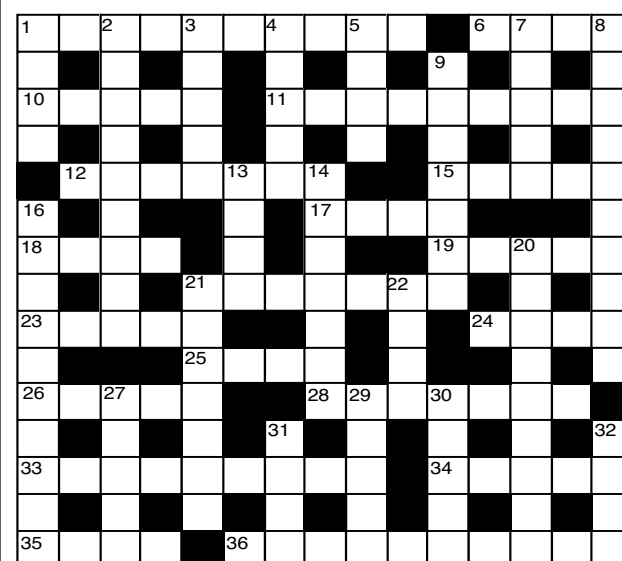
CHILDREN'S No.278

Across – 1 Crutches 6 Box 7 Melon 8 Adults 10 Row 11 Irishman 13 Voting 15 Actors 16 Scream 17 Eraser

Down – 1 Camera 2 Ugly Sisters 3 Canadian 4 Enough 5 Poison 9 Tractors 12 Miser 13 Vest 14 Game

Crossword

Gordius 400



ACROSS

- 1 The plaster met with destruction - this can be illuminating to the public! (6,4)
 6 Line of stitching on a garment (4)
 10, 11a & 33a Might one find Gorgon Eighteen a standard for these mythical combatants? (5,6,3,3,6)
 11 See 10 across
 12 & 19a Shakespeare play that's well into its second week of performances? (7,5)
 15 Attack where the film stars work (5)
 17 An official language of Pakistan (4)
 18 Just a little part of the patriot army (4)
 19 See 12 across
 21 Showed annoyance when Brother lazed about (7)
 23 Mistake (5)
 24 It was Bismarck's name, whichever way you view him (4)
 25 American lake - part of a series (4)
 26 Distorted, out of kilter (5)
 28 Does beer in this form give one unwanted wind? (7)
 33 See 10 across
 34 Fit out with an eastern joke (5)
 35 Trundle a bakery product (4)

- 36 One who is growing into adulthood (10)

DOWN

- 1 Part of the window made from southern wood (4)
 2 A cloud's liquid gift to us (9)
 3 Praise a bit of Essex tolerance (5)
 4 Lamp that is not heavy (5)
 5 Disposition (4)
 7 Tests one's former sweetheart with a manuscript (5)
 8 A character found in conflict resolution, musing (10)
 9 Make a dog run about where no ship wants to be (7)
 13 & 14 How to score twenty times? Now, that's a puzzle! (4,7)
 16 Write in awe about the sommelier (4,6)
 20 Entrance one with this dwelling! (9)
 21 Where beer is produced (7)
 22 Some Suez radicals have a book of the Old Testament (4)
 27 The toll of a bell (5)
 29 Learn about what concerns the kidneys (5)
 30 Junkies are sure upset with a cardinal! (5)
 31 Grew older (4)
 32 Notice the southern utensil (4)

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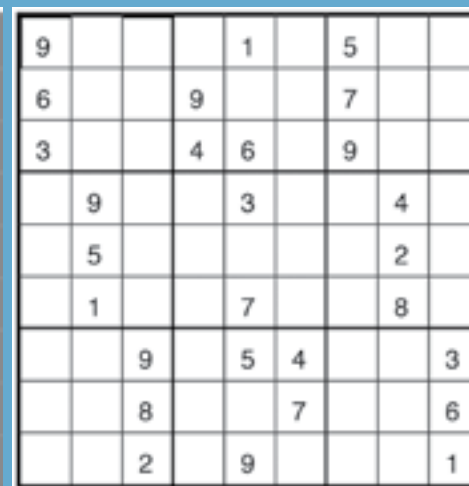
Sudoku Corner

279

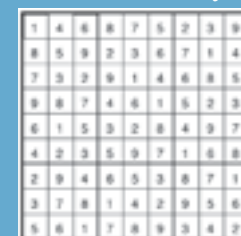
Easy



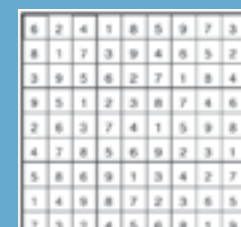
Hard



Last week's Easy 278



Last week's Hard 278



Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



From the mouths of the innocent comes wisdom

I CAN HEAR IT NOW! A question in a table quiz, 50 years from now: "Which animal is associated with both the first horse since Red Rum to win back to back Grand Nationals and the greatest comeback in golfing history on two consecutive weekends during April 2019?"

As I watched Tiger Woods' extraordinary victory on Palm Sunday I couldn't help but detect some mixture of a modern version of the Messiah triumphantly entering the Jerusalem of golf, the return of the Prodigal Son to the Father's House and more than a whiff of resurrection about it all!

The crowds were chanting, "Tiger! Tiger!"...the only thing that was missing was the waving of palms but then I have discovered there is only one palm tree on the Augusta course and it is way back on the fourth green.

Evidence

Moments and evidence of resurrection appear in the most unusual circumstances and in places we may least expect to find them. The challenge for us is to be able to recognise them. We may need to roll back the stones of scepticism or even prejudice so



that we can see with Easter eyes.

I would like to share with you a moment of resurrection from my

own experience.

For a number of years I worked as a Diocesan Advisor for Primary Schools. This involved me making annual visits to each of the 90 schools in our diocese. On one such visit I was in a classroom with a group of 10-year-old children.

Programme

Before I arrived, their teacher had invited a local potter to work with the children. One of the reasons she invited the potter was because in their new religion programme there was a whole section on the image of God as a potter as described in the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

My visit would normally involve a conversation with the children around some of the material they had covered in the religion programme. Seeing the freshly made pieces of pottery

SHORT TERM LET!

One of Joseph of Arimathea's friends said to him: "That was such a beautiful, costly, hand-hewn tomb you bought. Why did you give it to that preacher Jesus to be interred in?"

"Oh" said Joseph, "he only needed it for the weekend."

around the room the section on God as the potter seemed a good place to start.

The teacher had cautioned me that she had five children from the Traveller community in her class and they did not come to school very often. The implication was that I should not expect them to join in the conversation.

“God has made us and sometimes, like the pottery we can shatter”

Anyway, I began by asking the children if they thought the potter was a good image for God. Of course, the first child with his hand up was one of the traveller children. I looked at the teacher and she at me and I decided to chance asking the child what did he think.

He said, with great enthusiasm that he thought it was a great idea and he proceeded to tell me why: "It's like this, father; when a potter starts off to make something he has a lump of clay. He might be going to make a cup but then sometimes it all comes out wrong and he has to start again and make something new. It's like that with us. God has made us and sometimes, like the pottery we can shatter and fall to pieces and only God can put us back together again!"

Wow! I looked at the teacher again and she was dumbfounded. This little child from the Traveller community had such an insight into the nature and compassion of God. The visit to that school was a moment of resurrection and it has sustained me through many difficult days since.

● AN EASTER PRAYER...

Lord, roll away the stone from broken empty lives, from greed, from hate, from lies, from hearts trapped within, the darkest night of nights, for all who live without life. Let me run to the tomb before the sun's rise. Let my heart know surprise to see before these eyes, the folded cloths, the shroud of suffering replaced by translucent beauty. Give me the joy of Magdalene, the first from history to reveal the mystery of your resurrection...

— From Liam Lawton's *The Hope Prayer*



HELP TRAIN A YOUNG MAN FOR THE MISSIONARY PRIESTHOOD

YOUR EASTERTIDE GIFT TO OUR RISEN SAVIOUR



Each year THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION receives numerous requests from Religious Orders in mission lands for help to train their seminarians.

It costs approximately €100 a month (€1,200 a year) to feed, clothe and educate a student for the priesthood

The great majority of young men who come forward to offer their lives to God, and His people, come from poor families. Their parents do not have the means to support them financially. The cost of educating and maintaining seminarians is often a heavy burden on the Religious Orders. It costs approximately €100 a month (€1,200 a year) to feed, clothe and educate a student for the priesthood. We appeal wholeheartedly, this Eastertide, to all readers to help train and support a candidate for the priesthood.

Any donation you can send will be most gratefully received, and will be sent without deduction, to help to train a young man for the priesthood.



MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest's maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth.

We like to send a missionary a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass.

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.

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:

€..... **TRAINING FOR THE PRIESTHOOD**

€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**

€..... **HOLY MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state number)

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

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Address

To donate online go to
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DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.