

The Irish Catholic

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Archbishop warned Taoiseach of public anger over delay to Masses

EXCLUSIVE
Michael Kelly

The Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin warned the Government weeks ago that Catholics were increasingly unhappy and felt they were not being listened to about an earlier return to public Masses as churches re-opened in other parts of Europe, *The Irish Catholic* can exclusively reveal.

In a note to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar on May 7 obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, the archbishop referred to the fact that the Italian government had agreed for public Masses to begin after an agreement with Church leaders there.

"There is growing dissatisfaction in Catholic Church circles about postponing the generalised opening of churches until mid-July, without there having been an opportunity for the Church to present its position," the archbishop wrote.

Discussion

Dr Martin warned the Taoiseach the Government's stance was causing anger and that "much of the discussion is taking on a rather nasty anti-government tone".

He said that "this dissatisfaction is likely to grow now that an agreement has been made with the Italian government to permit opening [for Mass]."

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The faith behind the mask



A woman uses hand sanitiser in a sparsely populated Clonard Monastery in Belfast during the annual novena, which would normally attract thousands of people to West Belfast to pray. Photo: Mal McCann

Two-thirds report faith 'strengthened' during pandemic

Chai Brady

Over two-thirds of Irish people who took part in a major survey have said their personal faith has been strengthened during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In May, the research team at the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education at Dublin City University, in partnership with York St John University, launched a nationwide online survey called 'Coronavirus, Church & You'. Overall 1,377 adults responded.

Dr Bernadette Sweetman said: "The efforts of parishes across the country to maintain a sense of parish community and communal worship online should be admired. The findings suggest those efforts have been both appreciated and formative in faith."

See Page 4.

MARY KENNY

Is Pope Francis a man of the Green party? PAGE 5



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Files reveal archbishop's steady work for return to public Masses

Documents obtained by *The Irish Catholic* this week offer something of a glimpse behind the scenes on the relationship between the Church and the State since Covid-19 restrictions began back in March. Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin has been the key go-between on behalf of the hierarchy. His years in the Vatican's diplomatic service has given him an aplomb in presenting his point of view in a language and manner that speaks to bureaucrats and government officials.

Dr Martin emerges as a trusted voice in many of the discussions released under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. His contributions – particularly on the need to care for those bereaved during the crisis – show a keen sense of the long-term effects of the pandemic, particularly the loss of life.

Arrangements

At an online meeting with the Department of the Taoiseach on March 30 on funeral arrangements in the light of restrictions, for example, he insisted that families need guidelines so that they know what to expect when a loved one dies. He also pointed to the need to ensure consistency with the approach in the North.

At a subsequent meeting on April 14, the archbishop was also strong in what he described as the “harshness” of people seeing relatives brought to hospital or intensive care units and “then never seeing them again”.

This elicited a response from the Health Service Executive (HSE) confirming that when a patient was unlikely to



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin.

survive, every effort was made to ensure family could be present.

At the same meeting, the archbishop also voiced concerns about healthy residents in nursing homes living in loneliness and fear. Again, the HSE pledged to work on alleviating this.

On April 30, returning to the issue of funerals Dr Martin raised concerns with the Department of the Taoiseach about reports of commercial entities charging very high prices for filming or transmitting funeral Masses.

The documents reveal the archbishop's acute appreciation of the need to put health and public safety concerns at the top of the agenda. At the same time, it is clear that he had no reticence about pointing to other countries such as Germany and Italy where Masses had re-commenced in a safe and physically-distant way.

At a meeting on May 7 – the same day he sent a note to the Taoiseach about growing dissatisfactions among Catholics – the minutes record that the

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



archbishop “outlined that there is growing pressure to open churches [for public worship] earlier than indicated in the roadmap and pointed to moves in other countries, particularly Italy referring to recent guidelines issued there”.

“Parish planning, he noted, is ‘well underway’ and included many of the policies that were later adopted by the hierarchy”

It was later that afternoon that he wrote to the Taoiseach requesting a meeting between Church leaders and the Government to talk about an earlier re-opening for Mass. That meeting took place a week later and led to Government officials privately conceding that there could be more flexibility in terms of religious ceremonies.

At the same time, Dr Martin distributed to Government officials some observations he had made

on how the Church in other countries was operating in a safe fashion. This included the necessary physical distancing, as well as rigorous hygiene standards. Parish planning, he noted, is “well underway” and included many of the policies that were later adopted by the hierarchy.

At no point in any of the documents seen by *The Irish Catholic* was there talk of limiting the number of people at Mass to 50 as was eventually announced by the Taoiseach at the weekend. That announcement (shift?) led to a frank statement on Saturday morning where Dr Martin described the restriction as both “strange and disappointing” given how large many churches are.

Dr Martin has shown strong leadership on this issue and deserves much credit for calmly and resolutely putting the case to the State and being a voice for those most vulnerable in this pandemic for the return to public Masses as other parts of society began to open up.

Taoiseach warned of anger over delay

» Continued from Page 1

under clear conditions, next week”.

The archbishop urged the Taoiseach to meet with Church leaders to hear the concerns of Mass-goers and “to allow the Catholic Church to feel that its arguments have been respectfully listened to, rather than allow the question to move onto the airwaves in a non-productive way”.

Return

The following week, Archbishop Martin sent another email to officials in the Department of the Taoiseach outlining what Church leaders have done in other countries to provide for a safe return to public Masses. In this email, he pointed out that “for Catholics, attending Mass is important for spiritual and mental wellbeing”.

He also outlined how parish planning is well underway to ensure a safe return

to Mass.

Later that same day May 14, an online meeting took place including the Taoiseach and his officials, Dr Martin, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly of Cashel and Emly.

Appreciation

An internal government note on the meeting released to *The Irish Catholic* said that “the Church leaders expressed their appreciation to have an opportunity to share their thoughts on the re-opening of churches in time.”

“They detailed the work that is being done at all levels to develop a national Church plan for the safe re-opening of churches and emphasised it will play its part in applying public health measures to ensure the health and safety of all concerned,” the note said.

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Queue for confession 'into the streets'

Ruadhán Jones

St Saviour's Church in Dublin saw long queues for confession as preparation for public Masses continue, Fr Conor McDonough OP has told *The Irish Catholic*.

"The attendance has been really impressive, with the (socially distanced!) queue sometimes stretching well up the street," said Fr McDonough. "It's not just Penney's that's drawing the crowds, the Lord is drawing many to himself too."

Confessions continued throughout lockdown at St Saviour's, held in a makeshift confessional.

"We managed to find a way to hear confessions safely, transforming a porch with a large door onto the street into a confessional, with adequate separation between priest and penitent," said Fr McDonough.

"The only difficulty has been the loud noise of the Luas interrupting the sacrament!"

Fr McDonough continued, saying that Confession is "immensely important" both for practicing Catholics and those returning to the Church.

"If we've separated ourselves from the Body of Christ," said Fr McDonough,

"it's through confession that we're re-integrated, as living members of that Body, and in the Eucharist we celebrate and deepen that life-giving relationship."

"If, in our post-lockdown pastoral plans, we focus exclusively on the celebration of the Eucharist, we risk leaving out an important stage in this return."

"I'm thinking of the example of Blessed Charles de Foucauld, due to be canonised in the autumn," he continued.

"The effect of experiencing the mercy of Christ in confession and union with Christ in Communion was transformative – from that moment Charles wanted to give himself entirely for God."

Fr McDonough added that it was a joy to see the faces of his congregation and that everyone is excited for the return to Mass.

"We're all immensely excited for the return to celebrating the Eucharist together," he said. "No shop, of course, offers these people this great free gift... Christ in the Eucharist, containing in himself every pleasure."

"That's what has everyone so excited about getting back to Mass!"



Fr Eugene O'Neill and Paul McCusker from St Patrick's Soup Kitchen accept a cheque and food from Bev Patterson, prisoner development unit and Rachel Dinsmore, governor of activities at Hydebank raised by the staff and inmates of the facility. Photo: Mal McCann

Prisoners 'muck-in' and donate to Belfast soup kitchen

Chai Brady

Staff and inmates at Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison have given food and raised £500 for a soup kitchen in Belfast.

NI prison chaplain Fr Stephen McBrearty said St Patrick's Church on Donegall Street, where the soup kitchen is located, was a site that some of the young male offenders and female prisoners would have used "when they found themselves in

difficulty when on the streets".

"They wanted to give back and it really is wonderful," he said. The money was raised through a 'Fitness for Food' fundraiser to mark World Hunger Day. The young men and women competed in a variety of sports including cycling, skiing and running.

Residents

The residents, Fr McBrearty said, have also been baking for the NHS and sending flowers from their garden to

people who have been isolating during the coronavirus pandemic.

"All these sorts of initiatives really have given them all a magnificent purpose. They feel worthwhile. As I've always said to them, they're not ever the total sum of their actions, there's much more to them. All in all, it was a great project and I dare say it won't be the last," he said.

"It goes beyond sectarianism, creed and colour, everybody mucks in for everybody, it's very good. We're getting somewhere in these dark days."

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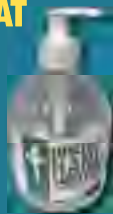
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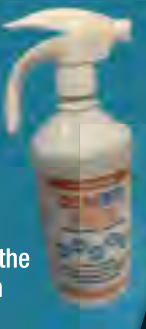
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Achonry consecration to go ahead on August 30

Staff reporter

The episcopal consecration of the new bishop of Achonry, which was postponed due to coronavirus restrictions, will now go ahead on August 30 a spokesman for the diocese has confirmed.

Bishop-elect Paul Dempsey will be ordained bishop in the Cathedral of the Annunciation and St Nathy in Ballaghaderreen.

Fr Dempsey, who has been serving as parish priest of Newbridge, Co. Kildare said "it is a source of joy for me to know that we now have a rescheduled date".

Patience

"I am grateful to Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, and to the priests, religious and faithful of the Diocese of Achonry for their patience and understanding as we have been dealing with the unprecedented consequences of Covid-19 in our country and in our world.

"I am especially grateful for the support of Father Dermot Meehan who has administered the diocese over these challenging weeks and months," he said.

Achonry has been vacant since December 2017 when Bishop Brendan Kelly was transferred to Galway Diocese.

Major survey reveals Faithful's response to virus pandemic

Chai Brady

During the height of the pandemic the majority of Irish Catholics have welcomed and engaged with online Church services, feel their faith has been strengthened and believe now there is a "great chance" to re-think the Church's future, according to new research.

The study was conducted by the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education at Dublin City University, in partnership with York St John University, and 1,377 adults responded.

The online survey 'Coronavirus, Church & You' was launched nationwide, including the North, with 70% of respondents aged 40-60.

It found that 65% accessed church services online and 61% said

the service felt the same as usual services.

Half of those surveyed had contact with clergy during lockdown, mainly by phone (38%) or online (36%).

The Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education, Dr Gareth Byrne, said: "It was very significant that clergy have found new ways of being in touch pastorally, not just for the celebration of Masses but also for keeping in contact with parishioners and responding to their needs."

The vast majority of people felt it was good to see clergy broadcast services for their churches while 67% said they agreed that online worship is a great liturgical tool – 62% agreed social media is a great

pastoral tool and 53% agreed social media is a great evangelistic tool.

However, 85% disagreed that virtual contact was as good as meeting face to face.

Efforts

Dr Bernadette Sweetman of Mater Dei said: "The efforts of parishes across the country to maintain a sense of parish community and communal worship online should be admired. The findings of this survey suggest those efforts have been both appreciated and formative in faith. However, the physical gathering and worshipping in person together is largely irreplaceable."

Two-thirds of people said their faith has been strengthened during the pandemic and 46% said their

congregation coped well/very well, 92% indicated the faith of their congregation was either the same as or strengthened (38% said strengthened).

Regarding the future of the Church 63% agreed the lockdown is a great chance to re-think the Church's future. The forced closure of churches has focused the faithful on proper priorities according to 39% of respondents, while 29% disagreed.

Almost half of people said they didn't believe many people will lose faith without church buildings to gather for worship, 26% said they thought this would be the case. 72% agreed that the lockdown has helped the Church to move into the digital age.

What do you think?



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RTÉ hails iCatholic for 'high-quality' first-time live Mass broadcast



Fr Bill Kemmy of iCatholic.ie (front) and Bishop Denis Nulty pictured on Sunday in Rathangan, Co. Kildare.

Chai Brady

The Head of Religious Programming in RTÉ has hailed a new initiative which saw Mass broadcast live on the station for the first time without an outside broadcast crew.

For the first time last Tuesday and again on Sunday, iCatholic.ie delivered "high-quality", live Mass to RTÉ, which has traditionally been done by media production company Kairos.

Roger Childs told *The Irish Catholic*: "In recent times we've had web streamed content produced by churchservices.tv, which is webcams in churches around the country and that

has been very valuable to us during the pandemic crisis.

"The difference is it has been pre-recorded and not necessarily in broadcast quality but it is good enough for people who just want to be connected to Mass.

"iCatholic contacted me to say they thought it was possible to deliver broadcast quality, high-end quality live," he said.

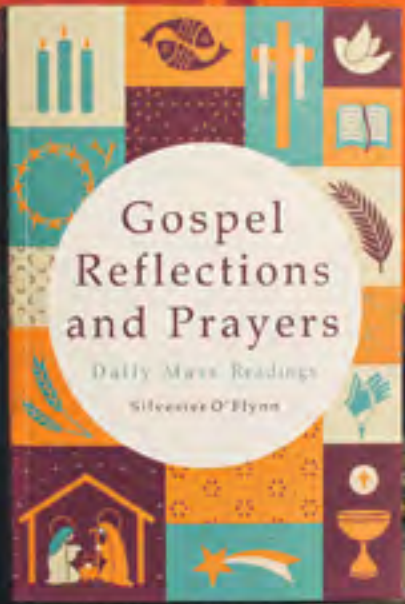
The Mass live-streamed on Sunday was celebrated by Bishop Denis Nulty of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin in Rathangan. Fr Bill Kemmy of iCatholic told *The Irish Catholic* that he was "delighted" that things went so well. He said he wanted to pay tribute to the fact

that Kairos has been delivering liturgies to such a high standard for so long "and now technology makes this more accessible for parishes around the country.

"I think part of the significance is it's us working in partnership with churches, using new technology, to deliver quality content to our shared users and audiences.

"We're both about public services in different ways, we've realised there's a Venn diagram over that set and we're working together to satisfy people," Mr Childs added.

iCatholic will once again live-stream Mass for broadcast on RTÉ on July 5.



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Is Pope a Green party man?

Does the Pope vote for a Green party? He clearly is supportive of the Green cause.

I was surprised to turn on BBC radio last Monday morning and hear, at the top of the news programme, not a politician talking about the state of the country, nor a reporter analysing the tragic killing in a Reading park, but a ten-minute address by Pope Francis who spoke about how we must re-make the world, with more environmental awareness, after the lockdown ends.

Francis spoke, as he always does, about compassion for the poor, and the need to take a new approach to the way we organise our world after the pandemic. “The pandemic caused us to reflect on the relationship between man and the environment,” he said.

Pollution

“The closures reduced pollution and allowed us to rediscover the beauty of so many places free of traffic and noise.”

Now, as activities resume, we



must all think more responsibly about caring for the planet, “our common home”. He said he backed calls for environmental action that have emerged throughout the globe.

Francis said we should consume less and be aware of how we affect the environment by the habits of obsessive consumption.

I always listen to the Pope’s

pastoral words but I also weigh up the implications of his message. He’s surely right in observing that the slowdown of traffic and frantic consumer activity have benefitted nature, and even awakened us to awareness of the beauty of birdsong, the cleanness of empty skies.

Yet there is a dilemma for reflective Christians. The birds

are singing and the skies are empty partly because the aviation industry has collapsed, at least temporarily – along with the jobs of thousands of airline workers.

“The Green question, on a philosophical level, is a moral question”

Our world has had too much emphasis on acquisition, but people in poor countries also need to trade, to sell their produce, to feed their families: that is a moral consideration too.

Our consumption can be their bread and butter.

The Green question, on a philosophical level, is a moral question, and Francis is much admired throughout the world for stressing it.

But we also have to seek a balance between responsibility for the planet and the jobs that depend on ordinary commercial activity, ethically pursued.



The Church was centuries ahead in opposing slavery

Slavery was legally abolished in the 19th Century in the western world after campaigns by conscientious Christians, but five centuries previously, it had been condemned by Pope Eugene IV, in his document *Sicut Dudum*, issued in January 1435.

Ronald Crane, of the Ordinariate on-line publication *The Portal*, has sent me a text from this document. Of the colonists who enslaved indigenous people in the Canary Islands, Eugene wrote: “They have deprived the natives of their property or turned it to their own use, and have subjected some of the inhabitants of said islands to perpetual slavery, sold them to other persons and committed other various illicit and evil deeds against them.”

Venetian

Pope Eugene (Gabriele Condulmaro, a Venetian who had previously been a monk) exhorted that all Christians desist from such deeds, that they restore the liberty of “all and each person of either sex” who have been made subject to slavery. “These people are to be totally and perpetually free and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of any money.”

He then issued an excommunication order for anyone who promoted the grave sin of slavery and failed to restore family and freedom back to the native people.

The principle still holds, wherever slavery is practiced.

Let Harry be happy, his way

I wonder if Prince Harry, sequestered in Los Angeles, ever suffers from bouts of home-sickness? Does he ever think ruefully of his family in England, or feel nostalgic about a polo-match, or a game of cricket, which will now be resuming?

Surely it is natural to everyone to have feelings of attachment to their native land?

Harry has chosen to be where his wife wants him to be, and perhaps that is admirably uxorious.

However, a new biography of Meghan Markle by the royal writer Lady Colin Campbell portrays Meghan as being the dominant partner in the relationship, as if Harry’s compliance hadn’t much chance against his wife’s strong personality.

Lady Colin says that Meghan was warmly welcomed at Windsor, but she never wanted to fit in with Harry’s family – admittedly, there were annoying protocol restrictions.


Yet similar relationships

can occur in any family. There are men who dominate their spouses even to the point of physical bullying or cruel abuse. And there are women who thoroughly dominate their husbands – I’ve known a few, even in my own family.

My mother thought her brothers were hopelessly submissive to their ‘domineering’ wives. Yet there’s no telling what the internal dynamics of a marriage may be, and if Harry is happy doing as his wife tells him – so be it!



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.



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New St Patrick's pilgrim way launched

Chai Brady

A new 'camino' style 22km pilgrim walk is being launched in Downpatrick by St Patrick Centre, the only permanent exhibition in the world dedicated to Ireland's patron saint.

New pilgrim guides, Martina Purdy, former BBC political correspondent, and former barrister, Elaine Kelly will lead pilgrims along St Patrick's Way, visiting seven locations, from July 1.

The pair, who were Adoration Sisters until their convent grew too small to complete their training, have scouted a path for pilgrims that is steeped in spirituality, history and beauty.

While practising safe social distancing, walkers on the way will hear about the legacy of St Patrick and visit sites such as his first church at Saul, established in 432AD.

Passport

Walkers will also be provided with a newly designed pilgrim passport, a high-viz jacket and a pilgrim lunch in The Barn, an inn offering hospitality in the heart of Patrick's Country. Phoenix Natural Gas have kindly agreed to sponsor the high-viz jackets which will include their branding and the St Patrick's Way logo.

According to Dr Tim Campbell, centre director, "Martina and Elaine will in turn guide pilgrims on the walk of their life – and are delighted to share their own spiritual journey in the steps of Patrick."

"We are also delighted to announce that BBC presenter Donna Traynor will join us and other pilgrims on July 4 to launch a second route in Newcastle through Tollymore Forest.

"These walks are totally inclusive and truly cross-community appealing to all faiths and none," he said.

Schools defy Primate on academic selection

Two Tyrone Catholic Grammar schools have said they will have entrance exams despite the Primate of All-Ireland calling for schools to abandon them this year due to the pandemic.

St Patrick's Academy in Dungannon and St Joseph's in nearby Donaghmore will use academic selection.

Archbishop Eamon Martin of the Archdiocese of Armagh, the diocese in which the two schools are located, wrote a letter to schools urging them not to go ahead with the tests for the 2021 academic year.

The Tyrone schools are the first in the Catholic sector to reaffirm their commitment to the assessments.

Irish bishops pull nearly 80 schools from broadband scheme

Ruadhán Jones

The Irish Bishops have withdrawn 78 schools from the first phase of the state's National Broadband Plan (NBP) over fears they could be sued, *The Irish Catholic* understands.

The schools, as well as other buildings such as libraries and GAA clubhouses, were to act as broadband connection points (BCPs), providing hubs of high-speed broadband for local communities.

The hubs were to be an interim measure while the infrastructure necessary for the NBP was put in place.

According to sources, issues with the BCPs quickly emerged as it became apparent that schools would be liable for any damages or injuries sustained on their premises.

It is understood that the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) identified the 78 schools and initially dealt with them directly.

However, the schools did not own the premises and liability would fall back on the patrons of the schools, which in the case of Catholic schools is the local bishop.

Insurance

As a result, *The Irish Catholic* understands, it was the bishop's responsibility to make sure that insurance was in place for the scheme.

The Irish bishops engaged with the DRCD in a series of meetings and it became clear that without a state indemnity, the scheme could not go forward.

A state indemnity would

Sealed with love



Helena Ward and Brian Darcy married in Portlaoise parish church in Co. Laois during the coronavirus pandemic. Msgr John Byrne PP was the celebrant.

guarantee that the state accepts the financial risks associated with the costs of claims. Without this, schools' insurers believed that there was a great risk that the cases could be taken against the schools involved in the scheme.

School insurers are already

concerned about the small number of cases taken against schools in their capacity as polling booths.

Fear

They fear that, given that community hubs would see increased use outside normal school hours, the incidence of

accidents and damages would increase dramatically.

The Catholic patronage schools, which have withdrawn from the scheme will still be provided with high-speed broadband for their own use rather than acting as a community internet access point.

Dioceses asks TDs to lobby '50-people' rule

Staff reporter

The Diocese of Kerry has appealed to TDs in the county to urge the Government to relax a rule that would permit as few as 50 people to attend Mass from June 29.

When the Government announced the accelerated roadmap there was no mention of the limit. However, at the weekend Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said that only 50 people would be permitted in a building – even if the church could comfortably hold 1,500 people.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin described the rule as "strange and disappointing".

Shane O'Donoghue, the property administrator with the Diocese of Kerry, and part of the team behind the diocese's guidelines regarding the resumption of public church services told Radio Kerry that he would be lobbying TDs for a change.

Garda Horkan's death a reminder of gardaí's bravery – Bishop Leahy

The passing of Garda Colm Horkan has been a tragic reminder of the heroism and bravery of an Garda Síochána as they work daily to make society safer for all, said Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick.

Speaking following a remembrance service outside Henry Street Garda station in Limerick, Bishop Leahy said an unmistakable sense of the selflessness of Gardaí permeated the solemn occasion.

Speaking after the ceremony, Bishop Leahy said: "It was a moving

experience. I was struck by the obvious thought of dread that must cross every Garda's mind: 'such a thing could happen to me in the course of my daily duty'.

"[T]here is an unwritten but real premise imprinted on their job description – be ready to give your life for others. No one has a greater love than that.

"[A]s Gardaí gathered in Limerick today, it made me recognise with renewed admiration and gratitude how these women and men are, just

like Colm Horkan, integral in our community."

Community

Bishop Leahy praised Garda Horkan as being "a man of community and of sport, a man of and for his people".

He concluded his statement, saying that he and the community were praying that Garda Horkan "is at peace and that his watch and protection will continue from above".

Would you like to see your parish photos published in *The Irish Catholic*?



If you're present at a celebration or event in your parish, why not take a photograph and email it to: chai@irishcatholic.ie

Photos in jpeg format are fine and please do tell us who is in the photo, the occasion and the parish.

Maria Steen

The View



Freedom to assemble peaceably and to protest peacefully are fundamental democratic rights

With all the media attention focusing on climate change targets and pension age, a less-discussed aspect of the recently agreed programme for government between Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and the Green Party is the commitment to legislate for exclusion zones around hospitals where abortions are now being performed.

This isn't exactly a new idea: Minister for Health, Simon Harris, had already stated that he was committed to bringing in exclusion zones – or no-go areas for pro-life people.

In January of this year, apparently oblivious to the irony of his statement, Harris promised to expand further the “vital” service of abortion in this country. Responding to reports of a pro-life vigil outside the National Maternity Hospital in Holles Street, the Minister, with narrowed eyes, said “how dare you?” to those taking part in the vigil.

Harris accused those at the vigil of intimidating and harassing women and their partners as well as staff. However, footage posted by a pro-abortion doctor in the hospital showed a group of people assembled peaceably outside the hospital, apparently praying, some carrying white crosses. There was no evidence that they were trying to intimidate or harass anyone, something that Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, has confirmed in relation to pro-life vigils generally.

Consultation

Branding the individuals “anti-democratic” and “wrong”, Harris said he was committed to legislating for exclusion zones. Fine Gael's prospective coalition partners seem to agree.

Last year the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, told the Dáil that, following consultation with the Attorney General, legislating for exclusion zones was legally problematic. Indeed, Harris himself said that it was not straightforward but hinted that they were looking to model the law on Britain's recent introduction of exclusion zones.

A pro-life gathering outside the National Maternity Hospital in Hollest Street, Dublin.



What does Irish law say about such matters? Well, the right to freely express one's opinion, to assemble peaceably and to form associations are rights that are considered so important in Irish law that they come under the heading ‘Fundamental Rights’ in the Irish Constitution.

A law that would impose exclusion zones would offend against all three of these rights. First, the right to freely express one's opinion means that even if a Government minister thinks you're ‘wrong’, you are entitled to express your wrong-headed ideas. You are even entitled by law to express your view that he might be the one who is wrong.

The rights to assemble peaceably and to protest peacefully are fundamental democratic rights, and not in any way ‘anti-democratic’, as wrongly described by the

Minister. The Government's extraordinary silence in relation to the recent Black Lives Matter protests in Dublin, despite the apparent contravention of public health advice in relation to large gatherings, suggests that our leaders will acknowledge the importance of the right to protest – provided it is the sort of protest to which they are sympathetic.

When it comes to pro-lifers, however, Harris and others of his persuasion will try to argue that their very presence outside a hospital is enough to offend against the rights of those entering the building. *Ergo*, they should be prevented from protesting in that area. After all, they say, the right to assemble is not an unlimited right.

But following that logic through, no one would ever be able to protest, because someone will always be

offended. The fundamental rights of those who had been keeping vigil outside clinics and hospitals around the country, to express the view that babies' lives matter too, would be trumped by the rights of the very people destroying those same children.

It would seem that the new Government will have to rely on the ‘morality’ clause in the Constitution”

The right to form associations is also fundamental to a democracy. It is the mark of a tyrannical regime that it prevents people from meeting and associating with other like-minded citizens. That is the way governments lose control: when citizens start

thinking for themselves and are buoyed up by each other's company into action.

The rights mentioned are indeed not unlimited; they are subject to considerations of public order and morality. Given that the Garda Commissioner has stated that there are no public order issues with the pro-life vigils, it would seem that the new Government will have to rely on the ‘morality’ clause in the Constitution.

How does a group of people gathered outside a clinic saying the rosary offend against public order or morality?”

The idea that public morality could demand that people should be prevented from peacefully praying outside buildings in which living babies are being dismembered is so grotesque that it is hard to believe it does not come from some dystopian fantasy. Yet this is the country in which we live.

Lastly, there is a specific provision, Article 44 of the Constitution, which says that the State shall respect and honour religion. Furthermore, freedom of conscience, and the free profession and practice of religion are, again subject to public order and morality, guaranteed to every citizen. How does a group of people gathered outside a clinic saying the rosary offend against public order or morality? And how does the idea of an exclusion zone that would prevent people from praying in certain places “respect and honour religion”?

The Constitution also states clearly that the State shall not impose any disabilities or make any discrimination on the grounds of religious profession. But unless the State were to impose a blanket ban on any kind of protest outside hospitals – in which case anyone protesting against the likes of the Cervical Check scandal or any other

health scandal would also be banned – pro-life Catholics praying outside hospitals would be targeted specifically. In other words, the State would be imposing a disability on Catholics or others wishing to pray outside these hospitals on the basis of their religion.

The attack on the fundamental rights of pro-life protesters is clear enough. Less obvious, perhaps, is the wrong exclusion zones would perpetrate against women contemplating abortion. The real idea is to insulate them from anything that might cause them to question their actions, or alert them to the fact that, were they to choose differently, there would be people waiting with open arms to help and support them.

Ultimately, exclusion zones are about excluding choice. When it comes to women who have decided, perhaps with hesitation, on abortion, their choice, once chosen, must not to be changed.

Their consent, once given, cannot be allowed to be revoked.

We hear a lot of talk from the likes of Minister Simon Harris about freedom of choice, but how can you have a free choice when you don't know all the options open to you? If you are poor and desperate and cannot see a way out, how is your choice truly free, if removing those obstacles would make you decide on another course of action?

As is always the case in law, fundamental rights are important only when the Government wants to deny them to you – when the majority is against you. The result of the referendum suggests that the wind is at the back of those pushing for exclusion zones. This makes it all the more important that, if the Government gets its way in legislation, the courts come to the defence of the pro-life minority. And to the defence of those women who, if they could see that someone cared, that someone was prepared to offer real help to them and their baby, that someone was praying for them and their baby, might choose life instead of death.

The rights to assemble peaceably and to protest peacefully are fundamental democratic rights, and not in any way ‘anti-democratic’, as wrongly described by the Minister”

Ireland should ‘leverage’ UN security council to help persecuted Christians

Chai Brady

Ireland’s recently won seat on the United Nations Security Council can be an opportunity to “leverage” the council to support persecuted Christians, according to Aid to the Church in Need Ireland (ACN).

Last week it was announced that Ireland secured enough votes, along with Norway, to win a two-year non-permanent seat.

Dr Michael Kinsella, Director of ACN, said: “It would be a wonderful gift of solidarity to the persecuted Christians and an acknowledgment of what they’re suffering under tyrannical regimes, to leverage the security council position for good.”

He said it was “an influential position” and comes with a degree of interna-

tional recognition. “I hope they highlight religious freedom worldwide as being something that’s a good thing to defend and a good thing to promote,” Dr Kinsella said.

Erosion

“I hope that they specifically highlight the persecution of Christians because persecution against Christians represents three things, it represents an erosion of human rights, an erosion of international stability and it represents an attack on freedom of speech and thought.

“All of which Ireland as a small democracy, now having a seat at the table of the security council, is meant to defend. Really there’s no other group of people on the planet that suffers as much as Christians.”

The security council has 15 members, five are permanent, the US, UK, France, Russia and China, and there are 10 non-permanent seats, filled on a rotating basis.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said the seat would be used to advance “peace and security, conflict resolution, reconciliation, climate action, sustainable development, and gender equality”.

Reservations

However, Dr Kinsella expressed deep reservations about whether Ireland would tackle Christian persecution with the newfound position.

He said most likely “any reference to persecuted Christians will be opaque and given within the context of wider religious freedoms”.

Pandemic has caused new poverties – Bishop McKeown

Ruadhán Jones

We are facing a period of new poverties as we come out of lockdown, of economics, of education and of hope, said Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry.

“In a society with huge gaps between the well-off and the poor, an economic downturn first strikes the weakest and those who were hanging on by their fingertips,” Dr McKeown said.

“If we structure our education system in such a way as to advantage the already advantaged, are we building a future based on community or on competition?”

“[T]here will be a poverty of hope for many people. Can we offer a way of looking at life which inspires our young people to

look forward rather than just anaesthetising them?”

Bishop McKeown believes we have much to learn from the last few months, with large numbers turning to prayer and others rediscovering the domestic church.

Apologetic

As churches reopen, the Church should not be apologetic for what Jesus teaches, we must offer a message of healing and hope.

“Many people are frightened and insecure,” said Dr McKeown. “They need to at least have the chance to hear a message of healing and hope. Today’s missionary training from Jesus tells us not to be afraid of criticism for speaking the uncomfortable truth unto power.”

Redemptorists are bowled over by Limerick novena response

Staff reporter

The famous Redemptorist novena in Limerick has reached an even bigger congregation than normal thanks to the wonders of technol-

ogy, Fr Gerry Moloney CSSR told *The Irish Catholic* this week.

The annual event would normally see the Redemptorist church in the city thronged with worshippers, but Covid-19 restric-

tions mean that the novena sessions are only online.

Fr Moloney said that it has been “difficult” to connect with people because of the absence of a congregation, but that there

has been a good buzz around the church since it is open for private prayer between sessions.

“A lot of people are coming in to light candles and to write petitions and pray – it’s not the same,

but it does create a good buzz”.

He said that the online presence “has definitely given us a congregation from all over the world that we wouldn’t have had before”.

Thank you, Ann!



Ann Burns of Kingscourt parish in Cavan was acknowledged for her coordination of Church music at all Masses and services in the parish during the weeks of lockdown without choirs or congregation.

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The challenge of accepting that Christ has no body, but yours

Today’s Gospel, Matthew 10:37-42, is part of the instruction given by Jesus to his apostles as he prepared them to carry on his mission after his departure. He told his followers that it would be costly at times. Sometimes great personal sacrifices would have to be made.

One might be called to leave family comforts. He compared it to taking up your cross to follow him. He spoke of losing your life in order to find its real meaning and value. That means breaking out of the shell of self-centeredness. Pope Francis often warns of the temptation to have a privatised prayer life which is insensitive to the needs of others. So Heavenly-

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O’Flynn OFM Cap.



minded that one is no Earthly good!

We live in the computer age when people have become very me-centred. Programmes of self-development are very helpful but for many people this focus on self has done nothing to improve their awareness of others. Writing about forms of Indian meditation, one writer said that 5,000 years of

meditation did not plough a single field. For Mother Teresa of Calcutta her Christ-centred meditation was the source of her service to the poor.

For the past three months we have lived under restrictions designed to control the spread of Covid 19. It has been very difficult for many people. But there is something good in everything and much of the old culture of neighbourliness has been revived.

Some people really missed visiting their church and especially not being able to receive the Lord in Holy Communion. While nothing compares with the Blessed Eucharist, yet the Lord can be

received and welcomed in other ways. Although people may not realise it, they are communing with the Lord when they perform works of charity. “Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do unto me.” In today’s Gospel Jesus says: “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.”

Volunteers

Volunteers of all ages have stepped out with great generosity and creativity. Volunteers act out of goodness of heart. They do not seek a reward. But the less they seek, the greater the reward the Lord

has in store for them. Even a cup of cold water will get its reward. Give the cup of time to people... time to listen, to pay attention, to give thanks or affirmation. As Pope Francis put it: “I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world.” This is how St Teresa of Avila described the mission of every Christian: *Christ has no body now but yours: no hands, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks. Yours are the hands with which he blesses the world.*

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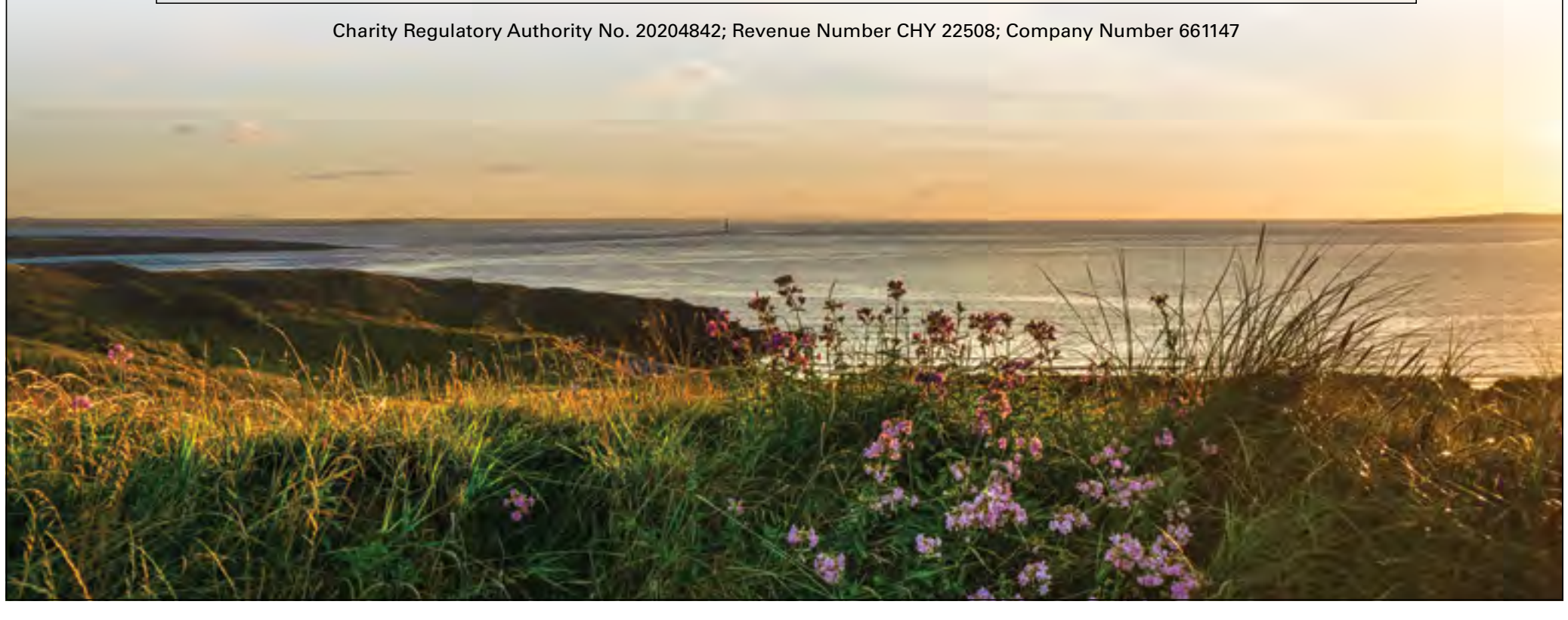
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Traditional Lough Derg pilgrimages off due to Covid-19

Chai Brady

While hopes had been high that pilgrims could return in late July, Fr La Flynn of Lough Derg has confirmed that the traditional three-day pilgrimage will not take place this summer.

It is the first time since 1828 that the pilgrimage has been suspended with organisers conceding that the nature of the pilgrimage involves close contact in sometimes confined spaces.

Prior Fr Flynn said that "we approached the question of re-opening for the three-day pilgrimage with our Lough Derg mission and values at the forefront of our consciousness. We considered these alongside the Covid-safe practices that we

would be required to implement to ensure pilgrim and staff safety.

"It is important to be clear about how we reached this decision, since we know that there are many pilgrims who will be disappointed with this news. Now when so many other aspects of life are moving, rather carefully, back towards what used to be normal, there will naturally be an expectation that the three-day pilgrimage could be possible.

Pilgrims

Some 5,000 people make the penitential pilgrimage each year during the period from June 1 until August 15.

Fr La thanked the "hundreds of pilgrims who have been in contact with us.

"Their support is carrying us through this difficult time," he said.

He also confirmed that the ancient pilgrimage site "is facing substantial financial pressure".

"The resources that sustain us annually come from the generous contributions of pilgrims. We are intending to open in a limited way on the lakeshore from July 6 and we are hoping that it may be possible to return to Station Island in the later part of the summer when we normally offer day retreats," Fr La said.

Lough Derg has announced plans to offer pilgrims the opportunity to 'do Lough Derg from wherever you are' in June. Further information on this can be found at www.loughderg.live

Ready for the off!



Emily and Lilyrose prepare for St Mary's Primary School Killyclogher in Tyrone's virtual sports day hosted by Core NI.

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Government's record on childcare will break providers – Aontú

Ruadhán Jones

Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín has criticised the "flagrant mistreatment of childcare providers" by Minister Katherine Zappone.

In a recent statement, TD Tóibín suggested that the actions of her department threatens the childcare sector as a whole.

"Minister Zappone pledged that in addition to the 70% wage subsidy, the Department for Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) would top up

the remaining 30%," said Mr Tóibín.

"However, there has been no calculations or figures provided to support the payments. Accordingly, payments were made that were either too much or too little."

Mr Tóibín said that providers were given funds to pay teachers, but were then told they owed the DCYA more than they had been paid.

"One teacher was told at 11pm this past Saturday that she owed the DCYA over €20,000.

"The Minister's Office has not been able to be contacted," Mr Tóibín continued. "Announcements are made late at night on the weekend - twice on bank holiday weekends.

"In the words of one childcare provider, their conduct has been nothing short of 'psychological abuse'."

Mr Tóibín concluded the statement, saying: "This government's record on childcare will have been to break many providers within the childcare sector."

NI pro-lifers urge Assembly to act to protect the unborn

Staff reporter

Pro-life campaigners in the North are urging the region's Assembly to restore protection for unborn children. It comes after MPs in Westminster voted to remove the last legal obstacle meaning that abortion will be allowed for any reason up to 12 weeks, and up to birth on specific grounds such as disability.

The regulations came into force on March 31, and earlier in June the Assembly passed a motion to register opposition to the new regulations.

The vote had no effect on the laws but the

DUP said it would send a message to Westminster that the regulations are not supported by Stormont.

Dawn McAvoy Both Lives Matter co-founder said that "words cannot express the disappointment we feel at the refusal of Westminster to respect devolution, the democratic process and the voices of the many people who live and work here.

"Our focus returns to the Northern Ireland Assembly and we urge them to restore the protections which Westminster has removed from our children and from women in Northern Ireland. To introduce care and support services, enabling women to choose life," she said.

Take new student sex survey with a big grain of salt



We need to teach young people that there is more to sex than just consent, writes **David Quinn**

A new survey was launched to plenty of publicity earlier this week. If it is at all accurate, no parent should let their children, especially their daughters, anywhere near university or any other third level institution because sexual harassment, abuse and outright rape is so common.

Fortunately, there is no reason to believe in its accuracy, although that is not the same as saying the sexual environment facing a lot of people today isn't very treacherous sometimes.

The survey has been produced by something called the 'Active Consent' unit at the National University of Ireland Galway, in conjunction with the students' union.

If the survey is to be believed, 29% of female students have had sex against their will, because they were incapacitated at the time, or had force or the threat of force used on them.

The headline figure for male students is 10%.

For students describing themselves as 'non-binary', the number is 28%. 'Non-binary' means the student identifies as neither male nor female.

Harassment

The study, called the 'Sexual Experiences Survey' (SES), also says that half of first year students reported being sexually harassed since beginning college, rising to 66% among third year students.

Harassment is defined in the survey as "sexist or sexual harassment, unwanted efforts to establish a sexual relationship, and harassment via electronic communication".

Whenever you see the findings of a survey reported you should immediately look to see how it was conducted. The surveys we can trust the most involve at least 1,000 people randomly chosen



across the population being studied and who are representative of that population in terms of age, sex, social class, etc.

“We wouldn't trust the result if they asked the question of a thousand people in a few pubs in Dublin city centre one night because...it wouldn't be a random sample”

The classic kind of survey we are all familiar with is the political opinion poll, that is, the poll which asks who you would vote for if an election were held today.

We wouldn't trust the result if they asked the question of a thousand people in a few pubs in Dublin city centre one night because while it might be a big enough number, it wouldn't be a random sample or representative of the broader population. It would be heavily skewed in favour of young people, and young people who go into pubs in Dublin city centre on a given night at that.

The SES survey at first glance had an impressively large number of people who took part and completed 80% or more of the online questionnaire. Just over 6,000 did so. That's far more than the usual 1,000 needed for a poll to be considered reliable.

But when you read the survey a bit more closely you discover that there are 180,000 third level

students in the country, meaning just 3.2% completed it.

Obviously, an opinion poll involving a thousand people is only a tiny fraction of the general population, much lower than 3.2%. So, surely we can trust the findings of the Sexual Experiences Survey? Not so fast.

Motivation

When you send out a survey electronically to the whole student population and only 3.2% respond, it is not a random sample. In fact, it is self-selected. That is, the ones who most want to take part do so, and it is quite likely that the students most highly motivated to take part were the ones with a bad experience of college life.

The only way we could be reasonably sure of the findings

would be if we knew those taking part were genuinely representative of the student body at large.

In other words, what this survey really tells us is not that a huge number of students at third level have been sexually assaulted or harassed, but that there is a high number among the small percentage who responded to the survey.

It would be a disaster of monumental proportions if 29% of all female students in college were sexually assaulted at some point in their student life.

If the survey was genuinely representative of the student body as a whole, then it would mean that something like 26,000 of the current female population of our colleges have had sex against their will at some point, and about 9,000 of the male students. (This is based on the fact that there are 180,000 students enrolled at third level, split roughly 50-50 between the sexes).

“Consent is considered the only thing needed before having sex with someone you may have met only minutes ago”

This would be so bad, we would need either gardaí on campuses at all times to protect students, especially at social events, or else colleges would have to hire lots of private security. If the situation was as terrible as the survey indicates, then students would surely be quitting colleges in droves for their own protection.

In truth, there is no reason to believe it is anything like as bad as the survey indicates.

That said, if 29% of the small minority of female students who did take part in the study have had sex against their will – adding up to about 1,139 in all – that is still very alarming. (The breakdown of those who completed it is two-thirds female, one-third male.)

What's going on? One part of the answer is surely that we now live in a culture which has been relentlessly sold the message that every adult is potentially sexually available at any time to every other adult.

Consent is considered the only thing needed before having sex with someone you may have met only minutes ago.

Add alcohol into the mix and you have a recipe for disaster, even if not on the scale the survey indicates.

Consent alone is not enough. We need to teach people to reach much higher than this in their sexual relationships.

“When you send out a survey electronically to the whole student population and only 3.2% respond, it is not a random sample. In fact, it is self-selected”



Out&About

Cortober community bids farewell to much-loved Fr Martin



ROSCOMMON: The Cortober Youth Choir sang a hymn as parishioners from Croghan, Drumlion and Cortober paid their respects to former parish priest, Fr Martin Mulvaney in Cortober, Carrick-on-Shannon. Friends, GAA clubs, groups and schools lined the route as his remains proceeded to his native Sligo. Photo: Gerry Faughnan



LOUTH: Srs Dominika, Teresa and Cathy enjoy the library in the Monastery of St Catherine of Siena in Drogheda during the coronavirus pandemic.



ROSCOMMON: Mickey and Nora Lynch from Cortober wait to pay their respect to former parish priest, the late Fr Martin Mulvaney, before the hearse carrying his remains passed by in Cortober, Carrick-on-Shannon. Photo: Gerry Faughnan

IN SHORT

Nuns create new website to reach out during Covid-19

The Dominican nuns in the Monastery of St Catherine of Siena in Drogheda have announced the launch of their new website and online shop.

According to the nuns for some time they had thought they needed to freshen-up their website, as well as including an online shop. In late February they discovered website creation software that fitted the bill. By the end of February, they had decided

on the colour scheme and general layout but the pandemic caused by Covid-19 led to the process being interrupted.

By the end of March, however, when it had become clear that the Covid-19 crisis was not going to pass quickly, the creation of a new website became much more important.

Since a number of their sisters are elderly and vulnerable the community had to close the monastery and chapel to the public.

In a message sent to this paper, the nuns said: "This meant that people were no longer coming up to our chapel to pray or calling into the reception to order prayer enrolment cards or buy some of our cards, candles and

craftwork.

"In addition, we needed to close our retreat house – thus removing a significant source of our income. It now became vital to have the ability to accept donations, requests for prayer enrolment cards, and orders for cards, candles, etc. online as a replacement source of income. So we went back to work on the website."

It took over two months to complete as they had to get the effect/result they wanted for various items and kept discovering more photos were needed of the community and various shop products. According to the community, their 'IT sister', Sr Teresa Dunphy OP, "quite enjoyed working things

out, with some help from the Lord in the form of moments of inspiration (out of the blue) during her Adoration".

"After a few rather poor (and unusable) photos however she realised that she had better delegate the photo taking to another sister and she became a 'director' instead: 'I need a photo of a sister studying in the library...and one of someone taking a book off the shelves', 'that kitchen photo we have doesn't work, can you get another one?', 'we've no photos from the quilling class, can you take some?', etc. It's finally finished and we're very pleased with it."

Their website is www.dominicannuns.ie

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



DUBLIN: Mass online at Our Lady Mother of the Church in the Parish of Castleknock.



▲ DUBLIN: From left: Bailey O’Connell (9), siblings Katelin (8) and Brandon Collins (10), Katie O’Brien (11) and Matthew Egan (11) from St Agnes’ Community Centre for Music and the Arts, Crumlin with soprano Mairead Buicke preparing for their performance of ‘Ode to Joy’ on European Music Day which took place on Sunday. The nation was invited to join them in a large-scale tribute to frontline workers. Photo: Mark Stedman

▼ DUBLIN: Matthew Egan (11) and Bailey O’Connell (9) from St Agnes’ Community Centre for Music and the Arts, Crumlin are among the thousands of musicians and singers preparing for their performance of ‘Ode to Joy’ on European Music Day which took place over the weekend. Photo: Mark Stedman



TIPPERARY: Fr Michael Mullins celebrated Mass for his Golden Jubilee in St Molleran’s Church, Carrickbeg, Carrick-on-Suir and was presented with a Papal blessing.



CORK: Poor Clare Sisters, Sr Faustina and Sister Francis, avail of the quieter time of lockdown to spend time in the garden. They are pictured viewing their lettuce harvest.



DONEGAL: Diarmuid Ó Cathail from Letterkenny recently ran 100km over the course of a week raising €1265 for Trócaire. Diarmuid said: “I had seen Trócaire’s video about their work against Covid-19 in Somalia. We think things are bad here with Covid but the resources in Somalia are so much less plus the pandemic is layered upon problems with locusts, floods and malnutrition so I wanted to do something.” Donations can be made online at www.trocaire.org or by phone at 1850 408 408.

Events

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

Finding solace after spouse's death



Chai Brady speaks to a widow coping with grief and single parenthood

When a freak tornado took a woman's husband leaving her to raise her two young children by herself, faith, family and her writing helped her through the isolation and sorrow.

Ohio-born and bred, Shannon Savage told *The Irish Catholic* that despite the tragedy, she came to accept that God had a plan for her life.

"It's been a pretty incredible journey and I want people to know that when something happens in your life if you can find the patience and have time go by, it's crazy to be able to look back and see God's handprints on every part of your journey," Mrs Savage said.

"I just want so much for people to experience that faith like I did, because it's a very peaceful, peaceful feeling. It's a beautiful life.

“It was about 1.30am when a freak tornado came in the middle of the night and her husband Mark was killed”

"I feel like I have a more beautiful life now than I would have if Mark hadn't died, which is crazy to say but it's kind of how I feel because I've seen and felt God in a way that I never would have if he wouldn't have died and that's the ultimate peaceful feeling that you can have. That's what I hope for people."

Camping

It was in 2010 when Mrs Savage and her husband decided to go on a camping trip with their two boys, Zane (5) and Xavier (2), in the neighbouring US state of Pennsylvania. It was about 1.30am when a freak tornado came in the middle of the night

“I want people to know that when something happens in your life if you can find the patience and have time go by, it's crazy to be able to look back and see God's handprints on every part of your journey,”



Shannon Savage

and her husband Mark was killed underneath their full-sized camper van.

Mrs Savage says the period immediately after the disaster, which happened in June, was "really hard to describe" as she finds it difficult to remember that summer.

"I just was completely pretty much numb, but I do remember after the funeral and everything settled down, feeling very angry. I had a lot of anger, especially at God," she said.

"Why would a loving God allow this to happen? Why would He allow a man to be taken who had life in the palm of his hand, two little kids, why would he let that happen?" she asks.

"So I had a lot of questions about that. I also went through a lot of guilt, because why was he killed and not me? And I also would have a lot of 'what if' scenarios in my head, like, 'if we would have just done this, this wouldn't have happened', 'if this would have happened then he would still be alive'."

When asked what helped her through her faith struggle, Mrs Savage said she had a lot

of friends who each had a very strong faith. They were "a great source of comfort", she explains. Progressively her faith started to grow rather than diminish.

Scripture

"It just seemed that from the get go God just started showing me things. I was looking at scripture and things in a whole different way, whereas up until this point I always had faith but I was never real strong in it I guess, it was kind of like I put it on the back shelf," she says.

“She believes that God was calling her to learn more about Him and to learn about Mark's death from His perspective”

"I never really studied the Bible and looked at things for myself and then after Mark died of course I couldn't get enough of it and it was just like scripture all of sudden was kind of popping out at me and I would just go 'oh, that makes a lot of sense'."



Shannon and her husband Mark and two boys pictured before the tragic accident in 2010.

She believes that God was calling her to learn more about Him and to learn about Mark's death from His perspective. The second week after her husband's death she went back to church, and began writing down some of her "raw emotions", which she describes was an outlet.

Mrs Savage grew up in a rural environment and now lives just 20 minutes away from her childhood home, where her parents still live. She has 5 brothers and sisters.

"When I look back on my childhood, I had a good happy childhood, was raised in the church but never really understood what it meant to really have a Christ centred heart until I got a little bit older," she says.

“About three years after Mark’s death Mrs Savage decided to quit her teaching job which she had been doing for 15 years”

Describing her mother and father as “the most selfless people on the world”, Mrs Savage received a lot of support from them.

“It was just very difficult and I had to learn just to take things one day at a time, if I got ahead of myself I would drive myself crazy,” she says.

Quit

For this reason, about three years after Mark's death Mrs Savage decided to quit her teaching job which she had been doing for 15 years. “I just felt that I was running myself ragged I couldn't be there for the boys. That was a huge decision to hang up my teaching career to be home with them



Shannon and Mark on their wedding day.

which I think is to this day nothing I regret. It was one of the best decisions I made,” she says.

Part of her coping method with the sudden loss of her husband and becoming a single mother became “taking it day by day, giving up my job and just relying on support of those good friends and my parents”.

However, asking for help during that time for her was particu-

larly hard, whether it be from friends or family.

Deal

Mrs Savage explains: “I would say that for me it was very hard for me to ask for help or to tell somebody I was having a hard time because I felt like: ‘OK, God gave me this horrible situation and I’m going to deal with it all on my own because I have to show the world I’m strong and I’ve got this.

“In retrospect now, I think a lot of times a lot of people don’t know what to do and they don’t know if you need help, so I think something I would say is seek out those people that you do trust wholeheartedly and don’t be afraid to say ‘I’m having a really rough time, I’m having a really bad day I need help.’”

“Even though it’s one of the hardest things to do but I wish I could give my previous self that message 10 years ago, that it’s ok to ask for help from people that you trust the most and to completely immerse yourself in God’s Word because when you do that something pops out and he’ll give you these ‘ah ha’ moments and it helps you come to terms with what happened in your life.”

Ten years after Mark's death, Mrs Savage has produced a memoir, *My Walk in June*, which is written through the lens of a new widow and mother to her two young boys. The book, she says, would be particularly relevant for women, and men, who find themselves suddenly widowed with children.

“That’s the first audience that comes to mind is people who lose their spouse and having to navigate raising your kids,” she says.

However, she also wants to reach out to those who do not have

a Christian faith or have lapsed in their faith. There are also aspects of mental health issues she experienced as a result of the tragedy.

She says: “I definitely want people who don’t have faith to read it to, because hopefully it will help them come to faith, also people who struggle with anxiety and panic, because that what’s happened previously, just about a year and a half ago I got struck really badly, panic attacks almost a decade later. So there’s a whole mental health aspect in there too.”

“Ten years after Mark’s death, Mrs Savage has produced a memoir, My Walk in June, which is written through the lens of a new widow and mother to her two young boys”

Isolation, she says, is the perfect word to describe how she felt. Although Mrs Savage had a good support network of friends and family, as time goes by after an incident of the magnitude she experienced, people go back to their lived and daily routine and “you get kind of forgotten about”.

“I never feel like I quite fit in anywhere you know, it’s kind of like I’m not part of a couple so I don’t get invited to couple things with kids because it’s just me, it’s a very isolating spot to be,” she says. The coronavirus pandemic has led to more people becoming isolated due to social distancing concerns and the guidelines of governments across the world. At

the time of her husband's death there were no restrictions and Mrs Savage could have physical support from friends and family, but she reminds anyone in a difficult situation at this time that God is always there.

Scenario

She says: “To be in a situation where you lose your loved one with this kind of scenario, with Covid going on, that’s a great concern because I could have people over, I could have people around me, whereas now it’s kind of limited. That’s a huge concern,” she says, adding that “your constant support that is going to be there and never leave you is God.”

“I think that is even more important than asking humans for help because He is there. When something happens in your life whether it’s good or bad he is trying to grab your attention and he’s trying to teach you something. All you have to do is be open to wanting to hear him speak to you. And to do that you have to spend some quiet time praying and just being still and letting him talk to you. That’s more important than human help in my opinion.”

The reason Mrs Savage wrote the book *My Walk in June* is twofold, the first was that writing everything that happened in her life became part of her healing process. The second, more importantly, was to show people that although devastating things can happen in people’s lives, “God will take the worst thing that can happen to you and use it for good”.

“I wanted people to be able to see that my Christian faith is the foundation of who I am and I do attribute my faith in getting me through,” she says.



Shannon with her two boys Xavier and Zane.

We can't return to the usual routine



Elderly men, deemed vulnerable by public health officials, are now expected to roll up their sleeves and get back to maintaining essential services writes **Fr Paddy Byrne**

Since the start of Lockdown, I have celebrated 25 funerals. I pray for all families whose bereavement was so difficult because of the restrictions in place as a result of Covid-19. May they rest in peace.

It has been so difficult not to be able to celebrate Mass publicly. Whilst engagement with the online was a vehicle to communicate, nothing can compare to the personal encounter, that we now can return to after almost four months.

“It has been so difficult not to be able to celebrate Mass publicly. Whilst engagement with the online was a vehicle to communicate”

The research team at the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education at Dublin City University has been engaged in a research project regarding adult faith, which includes how adults coped whilst in lockdown. It showed a significant increase in engagement with the online world, seeking a forum to be nourished by faith. However, it also highlighted that the vast majority intend once public Mass returns to disengage from the webcam and return to the personal encounter of community in their local church.

Community is key to our local gathering. In our pathway ahead as Church we seriously need to reflect how present and relevant we are in the lives of our people. If not, we will quickly return to the familiar routine where in many parishes there was a clear disconnect between the Church and the local community.

As we return to celebrating public Mass, we need to do this sensibly and safely. I cannot police our local church, nor do I want to. And I trust in all our faith communities, we will hold fast to our individual and collective responsibility to ensure health and safety is thoroughly upheld. In a time

“It is this maintenance model of Church that unfortunately makes lockdown the dress rehearsal for a sizable proportion of parishes in all our dioceses”

of pandemic, the experience of worship will be different. Pope Francis, has named that those who are vulnerable and need to protect their



health should not in any way feel obliged to attend. Social distancing is fundamental to keeping us all safe. Our pews will be clearly marked to allow for this. Hand sanitising will be provided

really important to allow as many as possible to return to Mass. Many Liturgies continue to be available on the parish webcams.

I am also conscious of the kindness expressed to

men, deemed vulnerable by public health officials, are now expected to roll up their sleeves and get back to maintaining essential services.

It is this maintenance model of Church that unfortunately makes lockdown the dress rehearsal for a sizable proportion of parishes in all our dioceses. Whilst Church leaders, have given great detail regarding health and safety measures for reopening Churches, little if any honest discernment has been shared on this obvious reality. How can we breathe life and energy into parishes no longer served by clergy? How can we support Christian leadership in a real way so that lockdown is not a permanent reality?

Crisis and pandemic, despite heavy burden, can also offer opportunity and hope. In our pathway to recovery, we must be honest and real, especially as clergy in our responsible role to facilitate real action that will halt the mechanical maintenance of services and perhaps begin renewal and new life to our faith communities. I take comfort in the simple and profound promise: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with you”.

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The Irish Spirit

June 25th, 2020
Issue No. 7

Irish Pilgrimage

Discover the spiritual pathways here at home
with avid hillwalker John G. O'Dwyer.

INTERVIEW WITH

Bishop Fintan Monahan
*On Killone Abbey and
St John's Well*

FEATURE

Pilgrims and the
Black Death

*Dr Louise Nugent on journeys
during times of crisis.*

...and much more!

Ireland's Pilgrim Pathways

John G. O'Dwyer

In times of great uncertainty, we need reassuring anchors to cling to. Links with our ancestors who survived even greater travails become increasingly important and a walk along one of Ireland's pilgrim paths is the perfect way to reconnect in this way. Until recently, few modern-day pilgrims considered these sacred trails an alternate to the hugely popular Spanish Camino, so almost all Irish people travelled abroad in search of pilgrim walking. In recent years, this has begun to change. Attracted by their mystical resonance, ever increasing numbers of Irish people are now returning to take up the pilgrim baton and follow the sacred trails of our forefathers.

So, whatever your spiritual convictions, you are urged to get both feet working, as soon as possible, on one of the paths listed below. Remember, that if you live within 20km of a path you can do so from June 8, otherwise you must wait until July.

St Finbarr's Pilgrim Path, Co Cork

Authentic and well laid out pilgrim path that is justifiably referred to as the "Camino of Cork". It accurately recreates St Finbarr's journey from Drimoleague to Gougane Barra where the Saint founded a monastery and later went on to become Bishop of Cork. This pilgrim route offers a magnificent 2-day journey crossing 3 mountains and 4 valleys. Memorable views over Bantry Bay, the Cork coastline and a rich archaeological history are only overshadowed by the spectacular descent into Gougane Barra.

Description: Mountain route suitable for well-equipped pilgrims with good fitness levels, who are used to walking in a mountain environment.

Getting there: From Cork City take the N22 to Macroom and the R596 to Drimoleague.

Start: Top of the Rock, Drimoleague **Finish:** St Finbarr's Oratory, Gougane Barra

Distance: 37km **Time:** 2 days



Gougane Barra
Source: Wikimedia Commons



Glencolumbkille Church Photo: Sarah Murphy
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Turas Cholm Cille, Co Donegal

Genuinely unsanatised pilgrimage marked by pagan standing stones that were later Christianised and then adroitly knotted together to form the Stations of the Cross. To complete the full pilgrim circuit, it is necessary to obtain the services of a local guide. For information on obtaining a guide contact 074 9730248 or email: oideasgael@eircom.net. No guide is needed to follow the first part of the route to St Columbkille's Well.

Official guided pilgrim walk of the route takes place each year on the feast of St Columbkille, which is June 9.

Description: Low-level walking but trekking boots are essential as the terrain is rough underfoot in places and the route crosses marshland.

Getting there: From Donegal town, follow the N56 to Killybegs and the R263 to Glencolumbkille.

Start/Finish: The Protestant Church, Glencolumbkille

Distance: 9km **Time:** 3.5 hours (full route)



Upper lake, Glendalough, Wicklow Photo: Rob Hurson
Source: Wikimedia Commons

St Kevin’s Road, Co Wicklow

Offers a golden opportunity to weave your way along St. Kevin’s Road to Glendalough, while walking in the footsteps of our ancient ancestors and connecting with the awe-inspiring beauty of the Wicklow uplands.

Description: Moderately demanding trail following well maintained tracks and boardwalks with one hill leading up to the Wicklow Gap. After this, the route descends benignly to the finish at the ancient monastic site of Glendalough. Some areas are quite boggy, so be sure to wear boots and bring waterproofs. Generally, it presents no objective dangers or special navigational difficulties.

Getting there: Take the N81 from Dublin or the R411 from Naas through Ballymore Eustace to the small Wicklow village of Hollywood.

Start: Trailhead is located close by Hollywood Community Centre **Finish:** Glendalough

Distance: 30 km **Time:** 6 hours **Highest elevation:** Wicklow Gap, 460m

***Recommended Reading** *Glendalough: History, Monuments & Legends*

Kilcommon Pilgrim Loop, Co Tipperary

Ancient path meandering the slopes of a mythical mountain and offering a tangible connection to how the people of Slieve Felim have expressed the need for spirituality since pagan times. Provides an opportunity to follow pre-Christian trails on Mother Mountain, once used for journeys of homage to the goddess Eilbhe. Later, they were stoically footed as mass paths by generations of upland people journeying to the Mass Rock at Laghile. Ideal family walk requiring just moderate fitness.

Description: Easy route following well-maintained tracks with a total ascent of just 170m. It can, however, be wet in places around the Bilboa River so waterproof footwear is a definite advantage.

Getting there: From Thurles, take the R498 and the R503 (signposted Limerick). After 18km go right at a sign for Kilcommon and the village is 2kms further.

Start/finish: Kilcommon Community Centre.

Distance: 7km **Time:** 2.5 hours



St. Declan’s Way, Tipperary/Waterford

Imagine celebrating Ireland’s national holiday, not in March but in July. It could have happened for July 24 is the feast day for a saint who, most likely, preceded St Patrick as a Christian missionary in Ireland. St Declan is now set to reclaim his rightful inheritance with the re-opening of Ireland’s longest pilgrim path in his honour. The new trail links royal Cashel with monastic Ardmore while touching upon such jewels as Cahir Castle, Mount Melleray Abbey and deeply historic Lismore along the way.

Description: A long-distance walk suitable for well-equipped pilgrims who are used to walking long distances. It crosses the Knockmealdown Mountains, so walking boots and protective clothing are essential for this stage.

Start/finish: Rock of Cashel, Co Tipperary or Ardmore Monastic Site, Co Waterford.

Distance: 115km **Time:** 5 to 7 days



Ardmore St. Declan’s Stone Photo: Andreas F. Borchert
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Cosán na Naomh, Co Kerry

Isolated by mountain and ocean, the weather-sculpted lands beyond Dingle carry an inescapable feeling of regressing in time. This is particularly true of the ancient Cosán na Naomh penitential route that winds through ancient fields and fuchsia rich lanes from the pilgrims landing place at Ventry beach to Mount Brandon.

Description: Path is at relatively low level but there are some challenging underfoot conditions and one steep ascent and descent, so walkers need to be well equipped and shod. Walking poles useful for the descent. Very fit walkers can complete the full pilgrim journey to Mount Brandon summit by setting off reasonably early.

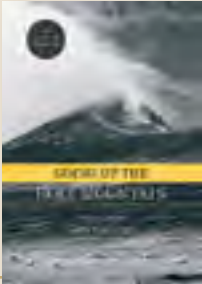
Start: Cosán na Naomh trailhead, Ventry Beach **Finish:** Ballybrack carpark

Getting there: Follow the R559 west from Dingle and swing left for Ventry beach carpark.

Distance: 18km **Time:** 5 hours or 8.5 hours, if including Mount Brandon



Glendalough: History, Monuments & Legends
by George McClafferty
PRICE: €9.99



Going Up The Holy Mountain
by Gary Hastings
PRICE: €14.99

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Cnoc na dTobar, Co Kerry

Cnoc na dTobar has been a sacred pilgrim site since prehistoric and medieval times and was the location of ancient mountain assemblies, especially the festival of Lughnasa, where harvest was celebrated on the mountain's summit. Route follows 14 Stations of the Cross built in 1885 by Canon Brosnan, parish priest of Cahersiveen. Summit views are magnificent. They offer the Kerry Mountains, Dingle Bay, the West Cork hills and the Skellig islands. From the summit, walkers can either retrace their steps or continue along the mountain ridge by following an ancient mass path to Kells.

Description: High level walk to a mountain summit requiring warm clothes, good comfortable walking shoes, a packed lunch and plenty of drinks. Walkers participate at own risk and remember navigation skills may be required in mist.

Getting there: Turn off the N70/Ring of Kerry road, to cross the bridge in Cahersiveen. Take the first right and second left. Pass St Fursey's Well. Park at the car park on the right where parking costs €3.00.

Distance: 5 km **Time:** 4.5 hours or 6h Ascent: 650m



Tochar Phadraig, Co Mayo

Tochar Phadraig is the genuine pilgrim article and long pre-dates the Spanish Camino. It was originally a prehistoric druidical pathway with many resonances still surviving from its pagan past. Christianised by St Patrick, it remains stubbornly untamed and much as it was for medieval pilgrims. Among those who have walked it is former President of Ireland Mary McAleese who afterwards wrote as follows; "Thank you for making our visit to Ballintubber Abbey a very special experience. Walking the Tochar was every bit as wonderful and prayerful as the Camino".

Description: The path is at relatively low level, but here are some challenging underfoot conditions so walkers need good footwear and adequate protective clothing. The final ascent over the shoulder of Croagh Patrick can prove tiring after a long day.

Getting there: Ballintubber Abbey, located off the N84, 14km from Castlebar.

Distance: 34 km **Registration fee:** €10 (payable to Ballintubber Abbey)

Start: Ballintubber Abbey **Finish:** Murrisk car park

Information: 094-9030934 | Web: www.ballintubberabbey.ie

**Recommended Reading
Going Up The Holy Mountain*



Sli Mór, Co Offaly

Initially cycling may seem an oddly incongruous mode of conveyance for a pilgrim path. but pilgrimage traditionally involves all non-mechanised transport and cyclists are commonly encountered on Europe's penitential trails, along with an assortment of mules, horses and donkeys. So, in the case of the ancient Slí Mór, participants have a choice of either walking or cycling to Clonmacnoise which was followed by many scholars and pilgrims from Europe seeking enlightenment.

Description: The route follows much of the great Esker Riada ridge on quiet roads that afford absorbing views. It contains little to challenge even the most casual cyclist or walker.

Start: Ballycumber, Co Offaly which lies on the R436 between Clara and Ferbane

Distance: 24.5km **Time:** 1.5 hour leisurely cycle or a 5 hour walk

Boyne Valley Camino, Co Louth

Pilgrimage has been defined as a mindful journey to a place of spiritual significance and Mellifont Abbey, is certainly of profound significance. Founded in 1142, as the first Irish Cistercian Abbey, its coming heralded the demise of the long-established Celtic Church as the Cistercian Order spread nationwide. Now the ancient pilgrim route linking Mellifont with the medieval port of Drogheda has been revived.

Description: Trail follows the River Boyne before making its way through the serene woodlands of the Townley Estate and then meandering quiet lanes to Mellifont. A separate return route gives a total walk of over 25km. This now counts towards completing the Spanish Camino when following the traditional Irish pilgrim route from the port of A Coruna to Santiago.

Note: Since the walk is not yet fully waymarked, you will need the detailed map that is available for download from: caminosociety.com

Start/finish: St Peter's Church, West Street, Drogheda

Distance: 26km (to Mellifont and back) **Time:** 6 hours



St Peter's Church Nave 1, Drogheda
Source: Wikimedia Commons



Slemish, Co Antrim

Initially the Slemish pilgrim path leads upwards at a sympathetic angle. Soon however, the smooth grasslands are behind and you will find yourself scrambling skywards over disobliging basalt. The advantage of a steep gradient is that height comes rapidly to gain a magnificent 360-degree view. It includes the great sweep of the Antrim plateau and beyond Ireland’s most evocative coastline you will see the gleam of the ancient Sea of Moyle. All you need is a small stretch of the imagination and pre-Christian farmers are once again tending their flocks in the valleys below.

Croagh Patrick seems, however, to have cornered the market as St Patrick’s devotional mountain, for there is nothing to represent the strong links between this striking eminence and Ireland’s national apostle.

Description: A short and enthralling route, but be warned; the going is quite steep in places and slippery where wet. It requires the skills of easy grade scrambling to overcome some of the difficulties on ascent and descent while the path is ill defined in places. Boots should be worn and walking poles could be of help on the descent.

Getting there: From the Ballymena bypass take the A42 to Broughshane; Slemish is well signposted from Broughshane.

Distance: About 2km (Ascent: 200m) **Time:** Allow a little over an hour of walking time to complete both ascent and descent.



Maumeen chapel
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Maumeen Pilgrim Path, Co Galway

St Patrick is reputed to have come this way in the 5th century and immediately created a strong pilgrim tradition by blessing Connemara from where he stood at the head of the pass. Maumeen has ever since remained an important pilgrim site. There are all the usual incidentals of pilgrimage; an oratory, an outdoor altar, a rocky cleft where St Patrick reputedly slept, a statue of the saint and Stations of the Cross.

Getting there: From Galway take the N59 for Clifden. Beyond Maam go right following the Slí Chonamara for about 3km to Maumeen carpark, which is located on the right-hand side of the road.

Description: Unchallenging outing on well-defined tracks and quiet back roads. For the full traverse of Maumeen (ascending the west side and descending to the east) it is best to leave a second car at Keanes Pub, Maum Bridge. If you wish to shorten your walk you can also leave a car in a small carpark above Cur, near the end of the northeast track from Maumeen.

Distance: 9km **Time:** About 3.5 hours for the full walk.

Lough Derg, Co Donegal

Timeless pilgrim route far removed from roads, houses and other signs of modern day living that still has many echoes of its early Christian past reaching back to the time of St Patrick. Route follows the concluding stage of one of Europe’s great medieval paths that led to Lough Derg. It concludes at a cross marking the disembarkation point for the Augustinian Friary that once existed on Saints island, Lough Derg.

Description: Easy trail following pilgrim path way markers on well-maintained forest tracks with nothing that could really be referred as a hill along the way. No special clothing other than normal outdoor wear required.

Getting there: From Pettigoe village, which lies on the Fermanagh/Donnegal border, follow the R233. This leads directly to the pilgrimage start point at Station Island Pier.

Start/finish: Station Island Pier

Distance: 12km (return) **Time:** 3 hours



The Irish Pilgrim Passport

Why not mark down the coming summer to begin completing the Irish Pilgrim Passport? The passport requires that participants walk 5 Irish pilgrim paths with a total distance of 125km and produce evidence of completing each, in order to receive a pilgrim stamp, which is available locally. When fully stamped, the passport is forwarded to Ballintubber Abbey to obtain the Teastas (completion certificate) similar to the Compostela for the Spanish Camino. The paths

that must be completed are: St Kevin’s Way, Cnoc na dTobar, Cosán na Naomh, Tóchar Phádraig, and St Finbarr’s Pilgrim Path. Further information on where to obtain a passport is available from pilgrimpath.ie.

If you would like the camaraderie of walking a pilgrim path as part of a group, booking is now open for the two-day walk along the St Finbarr’s Pilgrim Path which takes place on August 22/23, 2020. Further information from pilgrimpath.ie



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“Wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking”

Photos taken from the annual St John's midsummer Mass in 2019 at Killone Abbey and St John's Well. The event is unable to take place this year due to Covid restrictions.

By Lorna Siggins

“Wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking” is an oft-quoted observation by late Spanish poet Antonio Machado. It's one that might resonate with “quiet pilgrims”, as in the growing numbers of people in recent years who have sought solace in landscape as interest in organised religion has waned.

Sea routes have a similar appeal, as British writer Robert Macfarlane has noted in his best-selling book, *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot*. Although he believed the words ‘pilgrim’ and ‘pilgrimage’ had become “tainted with a tiresome piety”, Macfarlane said he had met many “inspiring and modest improvisers” on his travels.

He wrote of the couple he had encountered along the moor paths on the Scottish isle of Lewis, and the man “sailing his sea roads through storm and sunshine”. There were the three folk singers who sold all their possessions and took to the paths of England, sleeping in woods and earning food by performing the music they acquired along the way...

Had the same three singers taken to walking the Irish Atlantic coast, they might have been fortunate enough to experience the rich birdsong symphonies in the woods around Co Clare's Killone Abbey.

They might have marvelled at the fortune of Augustinian nuns who passed their cloistered lives there in a verdant valley, overlooking a tranquil lake bordered by fissured limestone. And they might have made a wish, or said a prayer, or both at the well named after “Eoghan” of Cill Eoghan, as in St John the Baptist and purported to have a cure for ailments of the eye.

The Abbey

Killone Abbey, which is a national monument, was one of only three existing cloistered nunneries in Ireland, according to Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan, who knows it well. On a recent walk there, he spoke of how the land was donated by the king of Munster, Donal Mór

O'Brien around 1189 - around about the same time as the Augustinian Clare Abbey several miles away.

“The nuns lived in cloister but were involved in pastoral work, and their counterparts were in Clare Abbey and on Canon island on the Shannon estuary”, Bishop Monahan explained.

The abbey was suppressed in 1584, after several attempts at closure, and was in ruins by 1617, but had some interesting associations during its brief time as a nunnery. The death of its abbess, Slaney – a sister of king of Thomond Donnchadh O'Brien – was recorded in the Annals of Inishfallen in 1259.

The nunnery was valued at “two marks” in 1302 Papal taxation records, and the last will and testament of another abbess, Renalda O'Brien, is listed in the Ormond Deeds. Its last known abbess was Lady Honora O'Brien, who had pursued a religious calling at Killone when young, but then eloped with Sir Roger O'Shaughnessy.

The couple had children before the Pope gave dispensation for their marriage. When Killone Abbey was dissolved, it was granted to Honora's father, the first Earl of Thomond Murrough O'Brien who died in 1551.

“Since that time it has been a place of pilgrimage for local people, and people have asked to be buried here too as you can see from the graveyard,” Bishop Monahan said, pointing to the ornate Late Romanesque east window in the remains of the church.

The National Monuments Service also lists some other interesting features in the complex. These include an intramural (within the building walls) stair to the church's parapet incorporated within the east window, and a decorative stone quoin in the shape of a woman's head and arms, which appears to support the church, on the external south-east corner.

The Well

It is a short walk down from the nunnery to the lakeshore where St John's Well is found. The original altar is “topped” with several “cursing stones”, which kept a count of the pilgrims' rounds made at the well. As the National Monuments Service states, these



rounds are associated with a pilgrim route to Ennis town. An inscription notes that the altar was last repaired by an Ennis merchant, Anthony Roche, in 1731.

The well is location for annual outdoor mass on June 23rd, the eve of the feast of St John at Killone's holy well, which Bishop Monahan has celebrated on two occasions since his appointment to Killaloe.

“We would have several hundred people in here at the Pattern,” he recalled, surveying the natural sanctuary created by the centuries old woodland and moss-coated stone walls.

“We would seat the older people here near the altar; then the younger families behind and around the sides, and the musicians just over here near the well.”

“This year, it has had to be very different – with a recorded Mass streamed online. No doubt there will still be people visiting, but St John's feast comes just before the opening of churches again for religious worship on June 29th.”

This year will also be remembered for the prolonged drought, which has left the well at Killone completely dry.

“I tend to visit it regularly, right throughout the year as it is an accessible bike ride from Ennis, and I love to go there to commune with nature and soak up the ancient ecclesiastical atmosphere and the prayerfulness that echoes in the walls of stone and down in the well area,” Bishop Monahan said.

Killone is one of several locations featured in a series of videos which Bishop Monahan has made in recent weeks during the Covid-19 pandemic – focusing on places in and around Ennis, while travelling limits were in place.

He provided his own narrative, and posted them on YouTube and Vimeo.

“It was just an idea that I stumbled on during the time of lockdown. Most of the ones I have done are very local, but the diocese is full of ancient religious sites and I intend to get round to a lot more as the travel restrictions are gradually lifted,”he said.

As late writer Elizabeth Healy observed , each holy well has its own “station” or features and prescribed ritual which involves taking a sup of water or pouring a little over a wound. During research for her book, In Search of Holy Wells (Wolfhound Press, 2001) in the late 1990s, she noted how extensive water’s sacred significance still is at the beginning of the third millennium.

“ All the great civilisations of the world have arisen where there is water. Wars are still fought for control of water. Small wonder then that it is not only our bodies that respond to its power, but also our imaginations and even our souls...”she wrote.

Sacred Waters

Water cults have been “universal throughout time” and the great sacred rivers of the Nile and Ganges have rituals “associated with the whole life cycle of the peoples who live along their pathways”, she wrote - noting that traditional water rites can be found in every culture, ranging from rain-making to healing and fertility and “down to such simple practises as bathing our faces in the dew of May mornings”.

Healy traced some 3,000 holy wells recorded in Ireland, with at least 40 in the “waterless” limestone landscape of the Burren, and 163 placenames with the word “tobar” or versions of same in the Irish Townlands Index.

Not all wells are dedicated to saints, with pin wells, rag wells, healing wells and wells with particular healing qualities named after pagan deities.

“By assimilating such cultic places, the new Christian churches helped to preserve them into our own time,”Healy wrote. She indexed and matched the wells with their reputed cures – beginning alphabetically with aching limbs and arthritis, catered for by the Ogulla well nearTulsk in Co Roscommon, named after Oigh-Ghiolla, a 6th century saint.

The recent pandemic may have aroused more interest in holy wells and sacred places, but many around the island are falling into disrepair, according to Burren walking guide and author Tony Kirby.

“I feel that, generally speaking, the holy well sites have been in freefall since the 1800s,”said Kirby, who is researching a new book on the subject.

“However, there are two locations on the Burren where there has been renewed interest and an increase in visitors – St Colman MacDuagh’s hermitage among mature ash and hazel woodland at the base of Eagle’s rock, where St Colman lived in the sixth century, and Teampall Chronáin near the village of Carron,”he said.

“There is also a holy well dedicated to St Colman MacDuagh near Kinvara, Co Galway, where visitors have increased, but this may be due to the Wild Atlantic Way,”Kirby noted.

Another location, St Brigid’s Well in Liscannor, Co Clare, has become increasingly popular, and is very well tended by the Considine family who live nearby.

“It has an extraordinary number of offerings, and this could be partly due to its proximity to the Cliffs of Moher, and members of the Travelling community also feel far more at ease visiting locations like this,”he says.

Dr Máire MacNeill had described the Liscannor well as “one of the three most strongly lasting survivals of Lughnasa”, the festival marking the beginning of the harvest season – the other two being the Croagh Patrick pilgrimage in Mayo and the Puck Fair in Kerry.



Trees form an integral part of holy well rituals. Rag trees, where pieces of clothing represent an illness requiring a cure were tied, are often close by. Kirby likes the phrase “culturally modified trees” to describe their significance. Not only are they bedecked in pieces of clothing, but many of these rag trees bear strings, ribbons, rosaries and medals.

Tara

Latterly, hawthorns or “wishing trees” on the Hill of Tara in Co Meath, have become the focus of “love objects”. This has prompted the Tara Skryne Preservation Group to appeal to visitors to stop “suffocating” them with objects. Coins have even been hammered into the bark, causing fungal disease.

As Healy noted, certain trees were sacred to the Celts, with oak, holly, hazel and whitethorn being the most sacred. The oldest Gaelic alphabet is based on associations with trees, including birch, rowan and ash, she wrote.

Jesuit priest, sociologist and writer Fr Micheál MacGréil is responsible for reviving one particular pilgrim ritual which attracts hundreds every year – Máméan. Like this year’s Croagh Patrick pilgrimage, it has been officially postponed by the Tuam archdiocese due to Covid-19.

Máméan -Irish for “the pass of the birds” - was also associated with the Lughnasa festivals. It is said to have been visited by St Patrick during his travels, and it is marked by a holy well, St Patrick’s Bed, a cleft in the rock and stone circles representing the Stations of the Cross. Its mass rock was used during the time of the Penal Laws.

Faction fights and poitín are said to have been main reasons for abandonment of the annual pilgrimage by the church at the end of the 19th century.

Bishop Monahan, who formerly served in the Tuam archdiocese, has climbed Máméan “hundreds of times”, along with Croagh Patrick, and has participated in the annual pilgrimage to MacDara’s island, where a mass is celebrated at the oratory in mid-July.

“I also love Canon island in the Shannon estuary, Holy island in Lough Derg and Scatterly island off Kilrush,”he said.

This year, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, Fr La is offering a “virtual” retreat to Donegal’s Lough Derg from June 27th to 29th, by clicking on the “three day pilgrimage” option on its website.

Bishop Monahan recalled the observations of a film-maker, quoted by Fr MacGréil, in relation to pilgrimage sites in Ireland. His impression was that “Lough Derg was the most penitential, Croagh Patrick was the most physical, but Máméan was the most spiritual...”

“Dawn masses, pilgrim walks, holy wells, sacred mountains and the celebration of Pattern days have a very important role in attracting a certain type of person who might otherwise have little interest in matters religious,”Bishop Monahan said.

“There is something special about the mix of the sacred and the beauty of nature,” he says, and for some it is a much easier “encounter with God”.

Bishop Monahan’s YouTube video on Killone Abbey and St John’s Well can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwAcC3EOw0>

“As late writer Elizabeth Healy observed , each holy well has its own “station” or features and prescribed ritual which involves taking a sup of water or pouring a little over a wound”



Pilgrimage to St Mullins during the Black Death

Remains of the Medieval millrace at St Mullen's, Co. Carlow. Photo: Louise Nugent



By
Louise Nugent

Throughout the medieval period many people made pilgrimage in times of crisis such as personal illness, outbreaks of disease and natural disasters like drought. The Black Death was one of the biggest crisis to be faced by people during the fourteenth century in Ireland.

The Annals of Ireland written between 1333-1349 by John Clyn, a Franciscan friar of Kilkenny, contains a chilling first hand account of the Black Death as it raged through Ireland.

The text also records a very rare account of pilgrimage to the ecclesiastical site of St Mullins whose ruins are now at the centre of a picturesque village of the same name in Co. Carlow.

The ecclesiastical site of St Mullins traces its history back to the seventh century, when St Moling founded a monastery on the banks of the river Barrow. Following the saint's death his monastery went on to become one of the most important pilgrim sites in Leinster.

In the year 1348 John Clyn recorded great numbers of pilgrims arriving at St Mullins. The pilgrims were drawn here because of St Moling's reputation for healing and miracles. They hoped that by praying to the saint in the presence of his relics they might be protected from the plague.

This year, and chiefly in the months of September and October, great numbers of bishops and prelates, ecclesiastical and religious, peers and others, and in general people of both sexes, flocked together by troops to the pilgrimage and wading of the water at Tigh Moling [St Mullins] so that many thousands might be seen there together for many days; some came out of devotion, but the greater part for fear of the pestilence which raged at that time with great violence...." (Williams 2007, 246).

The pilgrims made their prayers at St Moling's holy well and millrace located just outside the main monastic enclosure. The twelfth Latin Life of St Moling, recalls how the saint single handedly dug the mill race over seven years and then consecrated '...by walking through it against the flood...'. The pilgrims hoped that by washing or 'wading' in the waters of the millrace and the holy well they would be protected from the plague. We do not know how the pilgrims fared in the coming months how many died or survived.

The plague spread rapidly after its arrival to Ireland. In June of 1349 Clyn wrote that the pestilence was so contagious that those who 'touched the dead or the sick were immediately affected themselves and died'. Shortly after writing the description below Clyn contracted the disease and died.

Many died of boils, abscesses and pustules which erupted on the legs and in the armpits. Others died in frenzy, brought on by an affliction of the head, or vomiting blood. This



St Moling's Well, Co. Carlow. Photo: Louise Nugent

amazing year was outside the usual order of things, exceptional in quite contradictory ways – abundantly fertile and yet at the same time sickly and deadly... It was very rare for just one person to die in a house, usually, husband, wife, children and servants all went the same way, the way of death... (Williams 2007, 250).

St Moling's holy well along with the medieval millrace can still be seen in the modern landscape at St Mullins. St Moling's

holy well is still a focus of modern pilgrimage on the second Sunday of July. If anyone wants to find out more about the medieval pilgrimage at St Mullins check out my new book *Journeys of Faith. Stories of Pilgrimage in Medieval Ireland*.

Louise Nugent is an archaeologist and curates the popular blog *Pilgrimage in Medieval Ireland*. Her latest book, *Journeys of Faith* is published by Columba Books.

“The ecclesiastical site of St Mullins traces its history back to the seventh century, when St Moling founded a monastery on the banks of the river Barrow”



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Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas, kneels at El Paso's Memorial Park holding a 'Black Lives Matter' sign. After 'taking a knee' during that demonstration in solidarity with George Floyd – an unarmed black man who spent several minutes under a Minnesota police officer's knee before becoming unconscious and later dying – the bishop received a call from Pope Francis. Photo: CNS

Our Churches are rarely exceptions to America's original sin of racism

2019 marked a banner year for the US Church in terms of race relations, or so I had thought.

Washington, DC, the nation's capital and a long-time bastion of African American heritage, received its first ever black archbishop through the appointment of Wilton Gregory, the long-time leader of Atlanta, Georgia. To punctuate the appointment, it was announced on the very anniversary of the civil rights crusader Martin Luther King Jr's tragic assassination.

Just a few weeks before that, when Bishop David Talley was installed as the new Bishop of Memphis, Tennessee, the day after that Mass in his first public outing, he toured the city's National Civil Rights Museum.

"It was an extraordinary two-hour immersion in the evil of slavery, its institutional character, the disastrous effects seen through the generations, and the children and teens and adults that affected great change in our nation in their suffering," he tweeted after leaving the museum, which is on the site of the Lorraine Hotel where Rev. King was killed.

A few months prior to all of



Letter from America
Christopher White

this, the US bishops had adopted the first collective pastoral letter on racism in nearly 40 years, titled 'Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love', and at that same meeting voted to put forward the cause for canonisation of Sr Thea Bowman, a trailblazing African American religious who was the first black woman ever to address the US bishops before her death in 1990, famously leading them in a collective singing of the

spiritual *We Shall Overcome*.

Yet on May 25, when George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was killed by a police officer who pressed his knee on Mr Floyd's neck while other officers looked on as he pleaded "I can't breathe" – and as the scene was filmed in a now viral nine-minute video painfully capturing the life drain out of his body – it made abundantly clear just how much work remains in the cause for racial justice, for all people, but one that should be championed by Catholics in the US with a particular vigour.

Aftermath

'We shall overcome' indeed, we hope, but we should be under no illusions that we have. America's original sin of racism plagues the nation and our churches have rarely proven to be an exception.

In the aftermath of Mr Floyd's death, some Catholic media outlets in the US couldn't bring themselves to even mention that Mr Floyd

was a black man and simply noted that he was an individual killed by police.

“There are 37,302 active priests in the US, with only 250 identified as African American”

Naming the sin of racism is an initial first step on the road to justice but even that seems to be a challenge for some Catholics – hence the reticence of so many to join the chorus of those saying, unequivocally, that 'Black Lives Matter'. Their reasonings, they say, is that the institutional Black Lives Matter movement is not in full agreement with the Church on issues of sexuality or they point to fringe voices within the movement.

"Let me introduce you to some of the fringe voices in the pro-life movement," quipped one conservative black Catholic on Twitter in response to such a remark, noting that some pro-lifers advocate for violence against abortion facilities but they are not allowed to define the movement as a whole.

Our Catholic churches seldomly prove to be different and in too many places foster a narrative of white superiority and prominence. When black Catholics show up for Mass, they are greeted with art that seldomly resembles them and congregations led by white priests who rarely speak to the experience of black Catholics in this country out of fear of making their congregations uncomfortable.

According to official data, there are 37,302 active priests in the US, with only 250 identified as African American, or 0.7% of the total number. Only two dioceses in the country are led by black Catholic bishops.

This underrepresentation can't change overnight, but it should at least be made a priority. Until then, it's all the more important that US Church leaders follow the example of individuals like Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas.

“If we are honest, racism is really about advancing, shoring up and failing to oppose a system of white privilege”

Bishop Seitz, whose ministry is on the Mexican border, has become a leading champion of migrants in this country, but his witness for the cause of life and justice is no less vociferous when it comes to unborn human life. Yet as a white Catholic whose flock is mostly brown, he understands the need to confront our sins by first honestly naming them and he knows this is a moment that calls for such a witness.

"If we are honest, racism is really about advancing, shoring up and failing to oppose a system of white privilege and advantage based on skin colour," he wrote last autumn. "When this system begins to shape our public choices, structure our common life together and becomes a tool of class, this is rightly called institutionalised racism."

That sort of moral consistency led him to become the first Catholic bishop to join with protestors after Floyd's death, taking a knee in prayer while holding up a 'Black Lives Matter' sign.

Days later, he would reflect on his experience, writing: "Look at the witness of those who are bravely taking up their parts in the drama of salvation unfolding in front of us...they are showing us what the reign of God looks like and what our country can look like when we all have a place at the table. Let's encourage them. And pray with them. And thank them."

"With grace," he continued, "they are joining the living ranks of a long faith tradition of labourers for greater justice, like Moses, Jesus of Nazareth, Joan of Arc, Harriet Beecher Stowe, James Earl Chaney, Oscar Romero, Thea Bowman and so many others. Thank God. Thank God."

Amen.

① Christopher White is the national correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter and is based in New York. Follow him on Twitter @CWWhite212.

“Some Catholic media outlets in the US couldn't bring themselves to even mention that Mr Floyd was a black man”



World Report

IN BRIEF

Covid-19 hits Yemen's hospitals hard

● CAFOD and other humanitarian agencies warn that Yemen's health care system, already ravaged by five years of civil war, is collapsing, while its people risk famine as the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country struggles with the coronavirus pandemic.

"Yemen is desperate for peace," Lise Grande, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, said of the world's worst humanitarian crisis in which 24 million people have no choice but to depend on international aid.

A June 2 donors' pledging conference raised only a little over half of the \$2.41 billion needed to cover essential aid until the year end, leaving a gap of more than \$1 billion.

Bishop criticises relaxing Sunday trading laws

● A bishop has urged Christians to speak out against plans to relax Sunday trading laws in the UK as the economy reels from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

In a June 21 homily at Shrewsbury Cathedral, Bishop Mark Davies criticized the government's intention to lift the current six-hour limit on Sunday trading.

"As we emerge from lockdown, it is regrettable that the government is considering removing the remaining legal protections of Sunday in order to make it a full trading day," the bishop of Shrewsbury said.

Cardinal George Pell's prison diary to be published

● The publisher of the prison diary of Cardinal George Pell [pictured] said the text reveals the courage, conviction and Christian charity of the cardinal.

"This journal reveals the Cardinal Pell I know and that every Faithful Catholic should get to know," Fr. Joseph Fessio, SJ, of Ignatius Press said over the weekend.

Pell "proclaimed Christ and the Church's moral teachings without fear and with full knowledge of what the cost would be. And he paid the price with good humor and, like Christ, a love of his enemies," Fessio added.



The publisher expects to publish in spring 2021 either an abridged version of Pell's prison journal or the first volume of the full text.

Covid-19 solidarity should extend to refugees – Caritas

● People around the world have practiced solidarity during the pandemic, and they should do the same for refugees, Catholic humanitarian leaders said on World Refugee Day.

"COVID-19 has taught us an important lesson, the need for global solidarity to fight against anything that affects humanity," said Aloysius John, the secretary general for Caritas International, in advance of World Refugee Day on June 20. "This year, 2020, must lead us to a new way of responding to the refugees and their plight," he said.

Polish Church celebrates Pope St John Paul II's baptism

● The Church in Poland will celebrate the centenary of the baptism of St John Paul II Saturday.

The future Pope was baptised on June 20, 1920, in the Chapel of the Holy Family of the Basilica of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Wadowice, southern Poland.

When he returned to the basilica in 1999, Pope John Paul II said: "With profound veneration I...embrace the threshold of the house of God, the parish church of Wadowice, and in it the baptism, in which I was joined to Christ and received into the community of his Church."

Pope criticises 'hypocrisy' of politicians during pandemic

In a reflection offered to *BBC Rethink*, a series asking how society can change for the better after the Covid-19 crisis, Pope Francis has warned the poor have "become part of the landscape".

The Pope [pictured] was speaking in Spanish with a voiceover provided by the BBC and was provided by the Vatican for the series, but taken from an interview Francis gave to his biographer Austen Ivereigh in April.

"This coronavirus crisis is affecting us all, rich and poor alike, and putting a spotlight on hypocrisy. I am worried by the hypocrisy of certain political personalities who speak of facing up to the crisis, of the problem of hunger in the world, but who in the meantime manufacture weapons," the Pontiff said.

"This is a time to be converted from this kind of functional hypocrisy. It's a time for integrity. Either we are coherent with our beliefs or we lose everything."

Francis said every crisis contains both danger and opportunity.

"Today I believe we have to slow down our rate of production and consumption and to learn to understand and contemplate the natural



world. We need to reconnect with our real surroundings. This is the opportunity for conversion," he explained.

Crisis

The Pope also said the crisis is a "moment to see the poor".

"We can't settle for a welfare policy such as we have for rescued animals which is how the poor are often treated," Francis said.

"We disempower the poor.

We don't give them the right to dream of their mothers. They don't know what affection is, many live on drugs. And to see them can help us to discover the piety, which points towards God and towards our neighbour," he added.

During the programme, the BBC's Amol Rajan said the Pope's message "argues for a radical recalibration of our priorities, so we think

less of ourselves and more of the systems we inhabit whether natural or economic. In that regard it was a call that reaches far beyond Catholicism to something universal: our capacity to be selfless".

BBC Rethink is scheduled to present the reflections of over 30 different thinkers, including former US Ambassador to the Holy See Samantha Power and billionaire George Soros.

'Take action' to promote religious freedom, say US bishops

The US bishops are urging Catholics to "pray, reflect and take action" on religious liberty in the United States and abroad during Religious Freedom Week, which runs from June 22-29.

The first day of the observance is the feast of Sts Thomas More and John Fisher, both martyred for their Catholic faith.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has prepared materials – in Spanish and English – about current issues and challenges to religious freedom that are available at <https://bit.ly/3hNYFTU>. Each

day of the week highlights a different issue, and the materials include related lectionary notes, promotional bulletin inserts, and graphics and social media downloads.

Essential

"What's really essential is to be able to make decisions that are consistent with our beliefs," said Jeff F. Caruso, founding director of the Virginia Catholic Conference in Richmond, which tracks current state legislation and spearheads advocacy efforts.

"Engaging in the public square is an integral part of our life in Christ and our baptismal responsibility," he told the Arlington Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Diocese of Arlington.

Catholics are "called to make a difference for the common good," he said. "Whether it involves health plans or adoption and foster care, our beliefs and our services go together – they're animated by the same faith. What we're talking about is the freedom to serve consistent with our beliefs."

Lockdown 'increasing grooming risk of children online'

The increased screen time and isolation due to quarantine measures or restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic have put vulnerable minors at greater risk of grooming and abuse online, a Jesuit safeguarding expert said.

Almost every nation that has had lockdowns or other

restrictions has had similar consequences in which young people are spending a lot more time at home, "alone, online with no supervision or being checked on", said Jesuit Fr Hans Zollner, a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

With increased screen time

and so many options available for interacting online with others, "pornographic material also becomes more accessible" to predators and to children who have no limits on what they can access and no guidance on what they should do to protect themselves from people contacting

them online, he said.

"We have to educate about protecting the dignity and respect of vulnerable people, especially young people."

Fr Zollner is also a professor of psychology and president of the Centre for Child Protection at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.



Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Brotherly love



Retired pope Benedict XVI visits his parents' grave in Regensburg, Germany, June 20. Photo: CNS

Court rules against President Trump's plan to end DACA

In one of the most anticipated cases of the term, the Supreme Court ruled against efforts by the Trump administration to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA.

In a 5-4 decision, the court said the Trump administration's actions in rescinding the program were "arbitrary and capricious".

Last November, the court examined three separate appellate court rulings that blocked President Donald Trump's 2017 executive order to end DACA, a programme that started in 2012 by executive order under the Obama administration. It has enabled about 700,000 qualifying young people, described as 'Dreamers', to work, go to

college, get health insurance, a driver's license and not face deportation. These young adults were brought to the US as children by their parents without legal documentation.

"We welcome the US Supreme Court's decision noting that the Trump administration did not follow proper administrative procedures required to repeal the DACA programme," said a statement by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"To DACA youth, through today's decision and beyond, we will continue to accompany you and your families. You are a vital part of our Church and our community of faith. We are with you," said the statement by Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, president

of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Washington Auxiliary Bishop Mario Dorsonville, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Migration.

The bishops urged the president to "strongly reconsider terminating DACA", noting that "immigrant communities are really hurting now amidst Covid-19 and moving forward with this action needlessly places many families into further anxiety and chaos".

They also urged US senators to "immediately pass legislation that provides a path to citizenship for 'Dreamers'. Permanent legislative protection that overcomes partisanship and puts the human dignity and future of 'Dreamers' first is long overdue."

BLM movement inspires Myanmar anti-racism campaign

With anti-racism protests gripping the United States and other countries, young activists in Myanmar see it as the right time to challenge racism in the Buddhist-majority country.

Launching a campaign called 'Don't call me 'Kalar'' on Facebook, the effort seeks to end the use of a term that historically referred to people from the Indian subcontinent.

But today the K-word is often used as a racist term for people with dark skin.

Hatred

The word has helped fuel hatred against the Rohingya, a long-persecuted Muslim minority who are denied citizenship in Myanmar. Thousands of Rohingya have been forced to flee to Bangladesh by violent military assaults.

A group of young activists started the anti-racism campaign by changing their profile pictures. They told said they were inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement protests that rippled globally following the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who died when he was pinned to the ground by a Minnesota police officer.

Zay Linn Mon is among

the activists. He said the campaign aims to highlight racism in Myanmar. "Does the Indian community accept this word? The problem is privileged people who don't see this as an issue," Zay Linn said.

He said the term also has been used to describe Tamils and Muslims. Parents often warn their children that "a big Kalar" will come and get them if they misbehave.

Vatican roundup

Build new future with *Laudato Si'* say Vatican panelists

● The coronavirus pandemic and ongoing global crises clearly indicate that Pope Francis' encyclical on caring for creation urgently needs to be implemented worldwide, a panel of church leaders said.

"After Covid-19, nothing will be the same," Aloysius John, secretary general of Caritas Internationalis, said last week at a Vatican news conference unveiling a new document. "As Pope Francis said, it is time to build a new future and this new future must be built in the light of *Laudato Si'*. It is time for everyone, governments and civil societies, to make that conversion effort to which the Holy Father exhorts us in this prophetic encyclical," he said.

John was one of several speakers at the news conference to present the document 'Journeying Toward Care for Our Common Home. Five Years after *Laudato Si'*'.

Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, the Vatican foreign minister, said the pandemic "has highlighted many, many things, many, many areas in which we have a lot of work to do".

"The question is whether we are going to pick up on these questions" and work to address them, he said at the news conference.

Retired Pope Benedict XVI visits brother in Germany

Retired Pope Benedict XVI, who is 93 years old, travelled to Germany to visit his ailing older brother, Msgr Georg Ratzinger, who is 96.

The Vatican press office confirmed that Pope Benedict went to Germany on June 18 to visit his brother.

"The Pope emeritus is now in the city of Regensburg, where he will spend the time necessary," said Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office.

Pope Benedict was accompanied by his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, one of the consecrated laywomen

who cares for him and his household, a doctor, a nurse and the vice commander of the Vatican gendarme corps, Bruni said.

The two brothers, who were ordained to the priesthood together in 1951, have always been close.

While his brother was Pope and even after he stepped down from the papacy, Msgr Ratzinger would come to the Vatican to spend Christmas and a summer holiday with his brother.

The two also had a sister, Maria, who died in 1991.

Global rosary sees prayers offered for Pope

● A global rosary initiative dedicated to praying for priests offered prayers from around the world for Pope Francis.

The annual Global Rosary Relay last week was sponsored by the Worldpriest Global Apostolate and was to include a gathering of people on Zoom video chat platform praying for the Pope's intentions, said a statement from the apostolate.

According to its website, the Worldpriest Global Apostolate was founded by Marion Mulhall in 2003 to "affirm the dignity, beauty and gift of the priesthood of Jesus Christ to humanity".

The day was also inspired by St John Paul II's establishment of the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 19.

"The idea is a simple one: each of the participating shrines around the world prays a particular mystery of the rosary at a particular half-hour in thanksgiving to God for our priests and to implore the protection and loving care of Our Lady, mother of all priests, for all her priestly sons," the website said.

Letters

Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2,
or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

Letter of the week

Clergy must stand against 'rising tide' facing schools

Dear Editor, I agree fully with your editor's comment [IC 11/06/2020]. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life, the alpha and the omega if you like. The disrespectful way it is approached by some should not be facilitated or tolerated.

I think there is an argument for the Church to take First Holy Communion out of the hands of the primary school management and put in a place a programme that pays proper reverence to this unbelievable privilege and blessing we have received, the word made flesh in body, soul and divinity. The same applies to the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage.

The Church could put in place a programme that requires a

commitment to attend sacraments for a set period of time before and after Communion and use that time to properly form children and teach them the significance of what they are about to experience.

Catholic primary schools have been allowed to introduce a very extreme and damaging secular RSE programme (a lot of which runs counter to Church teaching) to schools all over the country with little or no opposition from the Church. We have an incredible situation now where young children in Catholic schools will be taught about a range of topics such as gender identity, pornography, LGBTQ, etc... during the week and then be taught a different narrative at mass on a Sunday.

It is heart-breaking for parents who are Catholic who have sent their children to Catholic schools and believe in the teachings of the Church to see our Church allow these types of things to happen under the watch of priests on boards of management and bishops who oversee parishes.

I understand that a lot of the clergy would find standing up against the rising current cultural secular tide difficult but the love, mercy and teachings of Jesus Christ have been around for nearly 2,000 years and have always remained the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Yours etc.,
Brian O'Hanlon,
Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Right time to move First Communion preparation to parishes

Dear Editor, I completely agree with your message about First Holy Communion [IC 11/06/2020] in which you say parents aren't taking the Sacrament seriously. In my view, which I have expressed privately on many occasions, children should be prepared for the Sacrament within the parish setting.

We can no longer rely on schools to be the primary place of preparation as it's becoming increasingly clear – particularly reading the front page of your latest edition [IC 18/06/2020] – that there is going to be a major push to create a one size fits all model in Irish schools in the term of our next government. This will be the next great challenge for the Church in Ireland and being able to hang on to our Catholic schools with their valuable ethos alone will surely become the next battleground, let alone making sure that children within those schools receive adequate teaching and formation in preparation of receiving the Sacrament.

We must not let children in this age bracket's spiritual lives suffer because of the politics of modern Ireland, their relationship with Christ must begin at home and be complemented by our parishes. It is only young people who will be able to keep parish life alive in the future.

We must move quickly on this before it's too late and a generation of young people are let down because of our failure to prepare.

Yours etc.,
Cathy Philips,
Knocklyon,
Co. Dublin.

Good deeds are one way of showing our Faith

Dear Editor, My first impressions of Bairbre Cahill's article [IC 11/6/20] on the consequences of Covid-19 for the Church were positive. However, I later felt uneasy with an aspect that seemed to suggest a salvation merited by good works.

Bairbre asked "are we open to being evangelised by the Gospel goodness of so many all around us, of every creed and none?" She goes on to list a number of admirable acts of humanitarian service as 'holiness'.

Any consideration of a saving holiness must begin with the most quoted verse of the Bible: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life" John 3:16.

Good deeds are one important way that we show our Faith, our belief in Jesus, is real.

As the classical hymn goes: "I will cling to the old rugged Cross, till my trophies at last I lay down. I will cling to the old rugged Cross and exchange it someday for a crown."

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

some role in formation and so should the parish.

This is not a numbers game that we are happy to see full churches at least

twice a year. Let's have a rethink.

Yours etc.,
Henry Halligan,
Convent Hill, Co. Waterford.



Time to rethink First Holy Communion

Dear Editor, With regard to the rethinking of Holy Communion article [IC 11/06/2020], the problem is that it has become too much of a parish thing and a school thing. First Holy Communion is that first encounter with Jesus the bread of life for the child concerned so its individual. It should be allowed take place at any Mass weekday or Sunday during the week.

The emphasis has got to go back to encouraging the child to build a personal relationship with Jesus without all the fanfare, it's about character building on the values of the Gospel and not the rigidity of months of how to sit and stand and walk up and walk down and all the theory that goes with it. Like applying for a Baptism, the same procedure should follow for First Holy Communion and Confirmation an application is made to the parish priest or parish office. The school should have

Resource and strengthen parish communities

Dear Editor, There is a woeful disrespect for First Communion these days and it is most certainly because parents no longer recognise its significance. How can we reach children whose parents have no interest in the Church and as you said in your editorial [IC

11/06/2020], just see it as a day out? It's reduced to an event based on money, presents and the after party.

To reach children and show them the freedom and love found in Christ we must reach out to parents. The best way, in my view, is to have a vibrant parish

community that is both inviting and supportive. We can no longer rely on schools and it seems they are next in the line of fire from our 'benevolent' new Government who believe they know better how to raise children than anyone else. For parents who have lapsed in their

faith, parishes are our best bet, this is where we should focus resources and post-Covid-19 perhaps we can begin a rejuvenation that will flourish and strengthen Catholic communities.

Yours etc.,
Paul Dempsey,
Cork City, Co. Cork.

Corpus Christi processions are for all faiths and none

Dear Editor, I refer to Fr Conor McDonough's article on Corpus Christi procession [IC 11/06/2020].

Some months ago (21st Century!) Fr Conor's order organised a very beautiful and public Rosary procession to commence the Novena to Our Lady of Fatima through the same commercial heart of the city as the annual Eucharistic procession. The Prior distributed flags of the order and large 'Pray the Rosary' posters to the many participants. Dramatic? It took place on a busy Saturday at 2pm and was highly respected by 'neighbours who are not with us in faith'.

Or Lady is Mother of all nations and

gives graces and blessings to all, e.g. to the atheists who witnessed the Miracle of the Sun in 1917. Public witness is more relevant now in a diverse culture, a very important mission in the heart of a city. On just one special day, Corpus Christi, for a short time, Jesus walks on a busy afternoon street blessing whoever he wishes: the families enjoying the Sunday, the shoppers, the deaf, the blind, etc.

The commercial world gets this attention for a while just once a year. He unites all in the visible presence of the Eucharist on this special day. Every parish group from north, south, east and west reverently process and unite at the

heart of the city for benediction of all, believers or not. Even the Papal Nuncio has been a recent homilist.

Every year visitors pause with respect and interest in the Corpus Christi procession. Consequently, they may respond to grace received on that day. If they do not share the same faith as the priest nor attend his church Jesus finds an obvious route to reach and bless them on an ordinary street at a sacred event. These neighbours have every right to encounter him in the public arena and must be facilitated.

Yours etc.,
Máire Browne,
Douglas, Co. Cork.

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



▲ **MYANMAR:** A young woman is pictured near her hostel in Yangon. Young activists in Myanmar have opened a campaign to end the use of the word 'Kalar', often used as a racist term for people with dark skin.

▲ **UAE:** A diver inspects transplanted coral near Dibba Port in Fujairah. Photos: CNS



USA: People in Washington kneel and raise their fists near the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial on June 19. The date, known as Juneteenth, honours the end to slavery in the US.



USA: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and their supporters celebrated outside the US Supreme Court building in Washington after the court ruled against ending DACA which was being pushed for by the Trump administration.



VATICAN: Pope Francis meets Attilio Fontana, president of the Lombardy region, during an audience with doctors, nurses and health care professionals from the region. Lombardy, in northern Italy, suffered the highest number of Covid-19 cases in the country.



SPAIN: Cardinal Juan Jose Omella of Barcelona, in procession with his crosier, arrives to celebrate Mass in the Basilica of the Holy Family after it reopened following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.



Society's deep failure in charity

St Eugene de Mazenod, the founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Religious Congregation to which I belong, left us with these last words as he lay dying: "Among yourselves, charity, charity, charity." I don't always live that, though I wish I could, especially today.

We are in a bitter time. Everywhere there is anger, condemnation of others, and bitter disagreement; so much so that today we are simply unable to have a reasonable discussion on any sensitive political, moral, or doctrinal issue. We demonise each other to the point where any attempt to actually reason with each other (let alone to reach agreement or compromise) mostly just deepens the hostility. If you doubt this, simply watch the newscasts any evening, read any newspaper or follow the discussion on most moral and religious questions.

The first thing that is evident is the naked hatred inside our energy and how we tend to justify it on moral and religious grounds. This is our protest: we're fighting for truth, decency, justice, God, family, Church, right dogma, right practice, for Christ himself, so our anger and hatred are justified.

Anger is justified, but hatred is an infallible sign that we are acting in a manner contrary to



Fr Rolheiser

truth, decency, justice, God, family, church, right dogma, right practice and Christ.

It would be hard to argue that this kind of energy issues forth from God's spirit and does not source itself elsewhere.

Looking at Jesus we see that all his energies were directed towards unity. Jesus never preached hatred, as is clear from the Sermon on the Mount, as is illustrated in his great priestly prayer for unity in John's Gospel, and as is evident in his frequent warnings to us to be patient with each other, to not judge each other and to forgive each other.

But one might object: what about Jesus' own (seemingly) bitter judgments? What about him speaking harshly of others? What

about him losing his temper and using whips to drive the money-changers out of the temple? Indeed, what about his statement: "I have come to bring fire to this Earth?"

These statements are perennially misinterpreted and used falsely to rationalise our lack of genuine Christian love. When Jesus says that he has come to bring fire to this Earth and wishes it were already blazing, the fire he is referring to is not the fire of division but the fire of love. Jesus made a vow of love, not of alienation.

His message provoked hateful opposition, but he did not self-define as a cultural or ecclesial warrior. He preached and incarnated only love, and that

“When Jesus says that he has come to bring fire to this Earth and wishes it were already blazing, the fire he is referring to is not the fire of division but the fire of love”

sometimes sparked its antithesis. (It still does.) He sometimes triggered hatred in people, but he never hated in return. Instead, he wept in empathy, understanding that sometimes the message of love and inclusivity triggers hatred inside of those who for whatever reason at that time cannot fully bear the word love.

“The Gospel never lets us bracket charity...”

As well, the incident of him driving the money-changers out of the temple, forever falsely cited to justify our anger and judgement of others, has a very different emphasis and meaning. His action as he cleanses the temple of the people who were (legitimately) exchanging Jewish currency for foreign money in order let foreigners buy what they needed to offer sacrifice, has to do with him clearing away an obstacle in the way of universal access to God, not with anger at some particular people.

We frequently ignore the Gospel. Factionalism, tribalism, racism, economic self-interest, historical difference, historical privilege and fear perennially cause bitter polarisation and trigger a hatred that eats away at the very fabric of community; and that hatred perennially justifies itself by appealing to some high moral

or religious ground. But the Gospel never allows for that. It never lets us bracket charity and it refuses us permission to justify our bitterness on moral and religious grounds.

The Gospel calls us to a love, an empathy and a forgiveness that reach across every divide so as to wish good and do good precisely to those who hate us. And it categorically forbids rationalising hatred in its name or in the name of truth, justice or right dogma.

The late Michael J. Buckley, looking at the bitter polarisation in our churches, suggests that nothing justifies our current bitterness: "The sad fact stands, however, that it is frequently no great trick to get religious men and women to turn on one another in some terrible form of condemnation. Wars, even personal wars, are terrible realities, and the most horrible of these are often self-righteously religious. For deceived or split off under the guise of good, under the rubrics of orthodoxy or liberality, of community or of personal freedom, even of holiness itself, factions of men and women can slowly disintegrate into pettiness or cynicism or hostility or bitterness. In this way the Christian church becomes divided."

We need to be careful inside our cultural and religious wars. There is never an excuse for lack of fundamental charity.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 25, 2020

Personal Profile

‘When we walk out the church, we’re in missionary territory’

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Healthy snacking



What's for dinner, when can we eat, can I have snack now – all these questions have piled on top of us during lockdown.

Many are cooking regularly for children and isolated friends and family, as well as balancing home schooling and working from home.

The lockdown period has seen a 45% increase in the consumption of junk food and sweets, according to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Much of this is due to increased anxiety and tension, while boredom and easy access to our food cupboards adds a



Without a consistent routine, we may be eating more than usual or finding it difficult to think of what to cook writes Ruadhán Jones

great temptation to snack the time away.

But though the pandemic has increased the number of treats we're consuming, it only exacerbated a trend well established before lockdown.

In 2017, a report was released which examined why adults gave treats to children. The report concluded that “children are being continually ‘treated’

with unhealthy food to such an extent that it is no longer considered to be a ‘real treat’: this behaviour has become normalised into children's daily or weekly routine”.

The report was released by SafeFood, an all-island body who promote safe and healthy eating on the island of Ireland. They recommended that adults be encouraged “to

reintroduce the true definition of a treat – regularly referred to by participants as “real treats” – as an event or item that is valued because it is rare or “out of the ordinary” and gives great pleasure”.

How to treat yourself

Does that mean an end to all snacking? Not at all! It's still a good thing to eat fun treats and snacks, but virtue is in moderation and a treat is all the nicer when it is actually a treat.

Part of the problem is that parents and childminders' childhood experience of the rarity of treats contrasts with the easy availability and routine provision of treats to the current generation.

So, in the spirit of the times, while lockdown has unsettled old routines, it has also provided us with an opportunity to establish new ones.

HSE dietitian Olivia Kelly Holton, believes that “spending time at home gives us a unique opportunity to instil good eating habits within the household and to be good role models for our children's dietary choices”.

The HSE has published a number of useful tips and guides for getting our diets on the right track.

Planning notice

Much of the advice will sound familiar. It comes down to

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Family News

AND EVENTS

TIME TO MAKE ART AMONG THE ANIMALS

Many families have been cooped up for a long time, only now being able to go on some visits and days out, what better way to celebrate the easing of Covid-19 restrictions than getting creative and letting children's imagination flow?

'Come make art among the animals' is an event set for Saint Anne's Park, Dublin City farm on St Anne's All Saints Rd, Clontarf East, Dublin.

In this workshop students learn painting skills by creating a landscape step by step. Students are each given a wooden frame and shown different painting techniques. They have the opportunity to get creative when creating their frame. The workshops are for children aged 8-12.

Organisers say: "We will work outdoors so they are somewhat weather permitting. The students are spaced out keeping within Covid-19 restrictions."

The event takes place on Tuesday, June 30 from 10-11.30am and costs €22.20. Bookings can be made at: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/funky-frames-and-landscapes-tickets-109946924210?aff=erelpanelorg>

NO SCREEN TIME RULES WHEN PARENTS STRESSED – STUDY

Stressed parents often abandon screen time rules for children according to new University of Guelph research finds.

A pioneer study in Canada found parents of young children reporting high levels of life or parenting stress were less likely to monitor and limit their children's screen use and more likely to use their own devices in front of their children.

The research comes at a time when many Canadian families are experiencing more stress than usual due to Covid-19. The study was published in the *Journal of Children and Media*.

It surveyed 64 parents from 39 families of children 18 months to five years of age taking part in the Guelph Family Health Study. The parents were asked about their stress as well as whether they monitored and limited their children's screen use, and whether they used screens in front of their children.

FIFTH OF WORLD POPULATION MORE VULNERABLE TO COVID-19

About 20% of people around the world have at least one underlying health condition that makes them more vulnerable to severe Covid-19 illness, according to researchers.

The analysis of data from 188 countries points to 22% of the world's population may need more protective measures. However, not all people with underlying conditions will develop severe COVID-19 illness if infected with the new coronavirus authors stated.

The international team of investigators concluded that 4% of these people would require hospitalisation, according to the study published in *The Lancet Global Health* journal.

"We hope our estimates will provide useful starting points for designing measures to protect those at increased risk of severe disease," said study author Andrew Clark, an associate professor of public health and policy at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

Letting our hearts be opened

While Thomas Merton may have been the first in our time to open up to a wider audience the ancient tradition of Christian meditation, it was John Main who recovered and simplified the practice for ordinary women and men. Prior to that it was to be found mainly in contemplative monasteries.

The practice of meditation by lay men and women grew as a result of John Main's work and led to the foundation of the World Community for Christian Meditation, led today by Laurence Freeman.

Throughout Ireland there are Christian meditation groups which, before the pandemic, met weekly in homes, parishes, hospitals, schools, and prisons, to meditate together, while, typically, those who attend such groups meditate twice each day in their own homes. Throughout the pandemic many continue to meditate in groups online through Zoom.

“It is widely recognised that the Christian tradition has over-emphasised prayer as an activity of the mind rather than the heart”

John Main wrote a simple prayer which is recited before the start of meditation and which reads as follows: "Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence where Your love is revealed to all who call." Over the next few articles I'd like to reflect on the depth of meaning in this simple prayer, beginning today with the opening words 'Heavenly Father'.

The first thing to say is that the prayer as a whole is centred on the Trinity. The prayer appeals to God to reveal to us the Spirit of God's Son

Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



who dwells within each one of us. John Main believed that when we entered the silence of meditation, we entered the flow of love between the Father and Son which he saw as the Spirit.

The initial words of the prayer, 'Heavenly Father', remind us that our intention in meditation is to be still in the presence of God, our Creator and acknowledges our understanding that we are God's children. It is fundamental to our Christian understanding that we are children of God and are called into personal relationship with God. Meditation deepens that understanding and that relationship. Of course, for many people nowadays, who may never have experienced a loving father in their lives, attaching a gender to God may be unhelpful. But the Bible also speaks of "the God who gave you birth" so we may equally think of God as a loving mother. Or, simply, as love.

Referring to God as 'Heavenly' reminds us that God's nature is not like ours. God is the ground of all being yet we somehow, mysteriously, participate in God's being. And John Main believed that it is in meditation that we come to experience that reality most deeply. So those opening words 'Heavenly Father' serve to clarify and remind us of our intention in meditation. And intention is a distinguishing and important feature of different kinds of meditation. Intention

differentiates meditation as a faith-based practice from the secular practice of meditation in mindfulness.

What makes Christian meditation distinctive is that it is Christ-centred and recognises the deep connectivity between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. In the Christian tradition meditation is understood a form of prayer, silent, imageless, wordless prayer. We tend to think of prayer as a mental activity – hence the expression saying our prayers but prayer is "the raising of the mind and the heart to God".

However, it is widely recognised that the Christian tradition has over-emphasised prayer as an activity of the mind rather than the heart.

But when we recite the John Main prayer at the start of meditation, we ask God to open our hearts, not our minds. So whatever we experience in meditation, it is heart-felt rather than mind-based. It moves us beyond rational thinking. It is not irrational but trans-rational, beyond the rational. It is a movement beyond mental activity about one's relationship with the Divine, to a communion with the Divine, which Christians believe is mediated through Christ.



The important point here is that meditation is not what you think, it is about letting go of thought and allowing our hearts to be opened by God. So while it

is our intention, it is God's work – meditation is about allowing ourselves to be transformed in the silence. Meditation is more than just a practice, it is essentially about relationship. Not alone does meditation change our relationship with our thoughts, it also changes our understanding of who we are at the deepest level of our being. That new perspective changes how we see all of reality and hence our relationship with ourselves, with the Divine, with others and all of creation.

“The initial words of the prayer, 'Heavenly Father', remind us that our intention in meditation is to be still in the presence of God”

The fact that meditation is a prayer of the heart rather than the mind was captured beautifully by Alex, a twelve-year-old girl, when she said to her teacher: "When I hear the chimes at the start of meditation, I imagine it is God ringing my doorbell and I open my heart to let Him in." I invite you now to spend some time in the stillness and silence of meditation where you can begin to experience that truth for yourself.

i After 40 years in the education sector Noel Keating was awarded a PhD for his research into the child's experience of meditation and its spiritual fruits. Noel now leads, in a voluntary capacity, a project which offers free in-service to primary schools who may wish to consider introducing meditation as a whole-school practice. Noel is author of *Meditation with Children: A Resource for Teachers and Parents*.

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planning and establishing a routine, says dietitian Aoife Hearne.

“Planning can really help,” Ms Hearne says. “Making a daily or even a weekly list of the meals you’re going to eat can really help you with your shopping. Routine can also really help. Try to have three meals and one to two snacks spread throughout the day.”

Keeping to a schedule can help stave off boredom and control our tendencies to graze on food all day.

As part of your plan, scheduling snack times is especially important, according to Aileen McGloin of Safefood.

“First make a plan as a family and make one that is achievable,” Ms McGloin advises. “So, if you are having snacks morning, noon and night, maybe just aim to have them in the evening.”

“If you’re having them every evening, maybe just go for a treat free day. Whatever change you decide to make, just make it small and achievable and it will make a difference.”

Why do we snack

You could also think about why your kids eat more treats than you might want them to. Do they ask for them? Are you using treats to reward good behaviours or prevent bad ones? Where are they eating these treats?

Thinking about these might help you to understand some of the triggers. Once you’ve set a goal, you’ll need to work with your family to agree this. Everybody has to be in this together if it’s going to work.

If you’re still struggling, sticky notes on cupboards and fridges can help remind us of our aims and to make it easier for yourself and others, don’t keep large volumes of treats at home – this adds to the temptation.

In addition, keeping healthy snacks like nuts, fruits, cheese and veg can fill the voids between meals, especially for kids. Safefood provide a number of options for tasty and nutritious snacks, ranging from fruit and breadsticks to cheese and tomato toasties.

Making mealtimes easy

Once we’ve started controlling our snacking, that’s the first part of the battle complete. It leaves us with ample opportunity to enjoy our main meals of the day.

It can be a bit of a vicious circle; I’ve been snacking and am not that

hungry, so I don’t put as much effort into meals, so I snack more often... To break the cycle then, we need to put a bit of effort into our meal times, cooking dishes that are flavoursome, fun and filling.

I’ve found the time at home to be great for experimenting with new dishes. What I’ve discovered is there are all sorts of ways to spice up your meal times, but they don’t have to be labour intensive or very expensive. A quick stir fry can be as satisfying as a steak (though I’m not sure everyone agrees with me on that!).

As with most things it seems, it’s best to start with a plan. A weekly shop is a much easier thing when you know exactly what you need.

Think about how many meals you need to make and try to have a balance between quick meals and those meals where you go the extra mile. You can also save time and money by choosing recipes that use the same key ingredients.

Make a go-to list of meals that your family enjoys and alternate between these. You could introduce new recipes each week and if it’s a hit add it to your favourites! Get the kids involved too by asking them what they would like to eat and seeing if any have an interest in cooking themselves. If children feel they’re involved in the meal, they’re more likely to eat it.

Don’t forget breakfast

I don’t know about you, but when anyone mentions mealtimes I immediately think of dinner. Breakfast and lunch can sometimes seem like afterthoughts when you know there’s a steak (or a stir fry) to come.

But breakfast in particular is an important meal and can set the tone for the day. Dietitian Olivia Kelly Holton suggests



that while establishing a good breakfast routine won’t solve all our problems, “starting the day with the right nutritional route can certainly make the rest of the day a little easier on our much-loved little ones”.

Keeping to a schedule can help stave off boredom and control our tendencies to graze on food all day”

The benefits of a good breakfast are manifold, from promoting the breakdown of glucose to jump starting our metabolisms. While this might seem an abstract, scientific thing, it has concrete implications for our mental and physical wellbeing.

“Research has shown that eating fruit, grains and good quality protein within a couple of hours of waking up helps to avoid glucose fluctuations throughout the day,” says Dr Holton. “Glucose fluctuations can cause mood swings, hyperactivity and poor concentration in our little darlings and stress in adults, a combination best avoided in lockdown.”

“Studies show that people who skip breakfast can have a sluggish metabolism causing them to gain extra weight leading to a viscous circle low activity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and heart disease in later life.”

So while we won’t get it right every time, those are two sound reasons to start the day with a good breakfast!

Balanced diet, balanced life

In a period when it’s more important than ever to look after our general health, paying attention to our diet can contribute to greater wellbeing – treat yourself with care and you’ll begin to care for yourself.

A simple food plan can make such a big difference to how you view your diet. While the temptation is to snack on sweet treats and feel-good foods, it’s all the more reason to seek nourishment of a more wholesome and enjoyable kind.

For more advice visit <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7183c5-healthy-eating-during-covid-19/>

Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

“You don’t get to be Racist and Irish,” Imelda May reminded us in her powerful poem recently. I would be inclined to add that you don’t get to be racist and Christian either but that isn’t always clear. Whether it is Donald Trump wielding a Bible in front of St John’s Episcopal Church or a statement from the Church Militant group referring in derogatory terms to Archbishop Wilton Gregory as an ‘African Queen’ because he challenged Trump’s recent visit to the Saint Pope John Paul II shrine in Washington, Christianity has been dragged by its shirt collar into the explosive tensions created by racism.

Many of the far right nationalist groups in America see themselves as ‘good Christian folk’. They use racist and anti-Semitic language to defend their actions and protect what they see as their ‘God-given right’ to their perceived superiority. Even within Catholicism there are echoes of this twisting of the Gospel and indeed within our own country there are those who make claims to Catholic identity, using provocative language, incitement of fear and claims of patriotism to promote a clearly racist agenda.

Events of recent weeks have provoked robust and challenging conversations in our house. We have talked about anger – not as something to be suppressed but as a force for transformation. But then we have also talked about the problem of violence and how Martin Luther King, rooted in faith and a vision of the Kingdom of God could rely on love and peaceful protest to effect change.

The question has been raised: How does faith contribute in any positive way to resolving the conflicts brought about by racism?

For me, it has been vital to be able to direct our adult children’s attention to powerful Christian witness which names the sin of racism and demands change. One such witness was Martin Gugino, a 75-year-old man who is a long-time volunteer with the Catholic Worker Movement. He has spent his adult life working for peace and justice and it was in this context that he was present at the Black Lives Matter protest in Buffalo where he was knocked to the ground

by police, suffering a serious head injury. Gugino and the Catholic Worker Movement take the Beatitudes seriously – blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right. And I need to be able to say to my children: “This is what it means to be a Christian, this is where we need to be.”

If we had any illusions that all those racist issues were only a problem in America we should surely have been well and truly shaken out of such complacency. There have



been many interviews on radio and television where people of colour, both Irish and immigrant, have spoken of the racist abuse they have received here, in Ireland, at school, in GAA clubs, on the streets and elsewhere.

We may see ourselves as innocent of such acts but racism and discrimination thrive in the structures and habits of our society so we need to look deeper. What attitudes have we inherited – and indeed passed on? What is reflected in our humour? How do we engage with those whom we see as being very different to ourselves? How often have we labelled people and dismissed them – ‘ah sure that lot are all the same’? Within our own country how have we treated members of the Travelling Community or the Muslim family that moves in next door? What would people of colour within our own Catholic parishes tell us about their experience? Are we open to such conversations? Do such questions make our hackles rise? Do we become defensive?

Have we the courage of Martin Gugino? Do we take our Christian faith and indeed the Beatitudes seriously? Being outraged at racism and discrimination is appropriate but outrage needs to move to action where we speak out and challenge ourselves, those around us and our society.

'When we walk out the church, we're in missionary territory'

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

Father of six, co-ordinator of Sólta Retreats and co-founder of charity Another Pair of Hands, faith and good works has always been central to Armagh man Bosco McShane.

"Faith was always a big part of my life," Bosco said to *The Irish Catholic*. "A big influence on my life was Mother Teresa and the work she did in the missions."

"She was the be all and end all for me, a living saint walking among us. I always had a strong interest in the missions and wanted to see if I had a vocation."

"I didn't, I have six kids now and my wife is a big part of our retreat team and the foundation of setting it up."

"It's up to them to develop their faith on their own and spread it. We help them on that journey in whatever way we can"

Bosco and his wife Lynette had an opportunity to work with the Sisters of Charity when they went on a mission trip to India in 2003/4.

Calcutta

"We worked for nearly 10 years out in Calcutta, going back and forward, working with people with leprosy, AIDS and TB," Bosco said. "It gave you a great sense of belonging to the Church, gave a sense of the



Bosco McShane

Religious Education

Bosco thinks that religious education should be taken out of schools and done in parishes and the home.

"We're bringing people through school and they still don't know why we do things," he said. "We're lacking a lot of catechesis."

"Faith is everything to me and my family, everything else comes second. We go to Mass every Sunday, we say the rosary every night."

"That's where it has to begin. Parents are the ones who can take catechesis to the next level."

"You can see that with vocations, it's begins in the home. I think if you do your work foundation work in early life, everything else will fall into place."

"That's how it started, we didn't come up with a plan to talk to 12,000 students. That was the work of the Holy Spirit"

When asked about it, Bosco said he had sympathy for those who see Ireland as missionary territory.

"We sent out for years hundreds if not thousands of priests and nuns around the world, but we are in missionary territory now in Ireland," he said.

"We are going to be receiving priests from the countries we went out to. But I'll tell young people who go to mass, the minute you walk out of Church on Sunday, you're in missionary territory."

"You are meant to be a disciple of Christ, to evangelise, to try to be Christ to everybody we see and meet. They'll see then that you have something that they want and they'll want it as well."

Sólta Retreats

However, their main project is Sólta Retreats, which they set up in 15 years ago at the behest of Cardinal Sean Brady, then Archbishop of Armagh.

"The Diocese of Armagh didn't have a retreat group time at the time and Cardinal Sean Brady was looking for a team of 6 to go into schools," Bosco said.

"We were asked if we'd consider taking it on. How it started was that we would go in giving our testimony and telling the students about the great work missionary priests and nuns were doing."

"That's how it started, we didn't come up with a plan to talk to 12,000 students. That was the work of the Holy Spirit."

Sólta Retreats now work with 12,000 students a year, preparing

students for to receive the sacraments, leading retreats and bringing youth groups on mission trips to Zambia.

"Many young people think that after their confirmation, that's the end of it," Bosco said. "But we want to let young people know that confirmation is the beginning of their faith, is the foundation."

"It's up to them to develop their faith on their own and spread it. We help them on that journey in whatever way we can."

Bosco believes that young people are interested in the faith, but much of it comes down to how it is presented to them.

"Young people are definitely looking for something," he said. "I do think they are yearning for something and if we can deliver it to them properly, it will be Jesus Christ and the Blessed Sacrament."

Holy Spirit in action when you saw her sisters.

"We formed charity back then called Another Pair of Hands, working with poorest of poor. All the money raised went back out to India and Africa."

Bosco and Lynette continue with their charity, focusing more on Africa as time went on. Even during lockdown, Bosco continues to help missionaries out updating their websites, advertising for vocations and running virtual classes.

"We work with the Franciscan Missionary Sisters in Lusaka, Zambia. At the minute, we're running a virtual classroom over WhatsApp."

"We'll post in a short reading from Genesis and the like, or else a YouTube video, for them to reflect on. At the end of the day, they'll get back to us with their thoughts."

Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson



A tasty summer treat: rhubarb and orange crumble

This is a twist on a classic crumble flavour, that added orange gives it a lovely citrusy kick. Rhubarb is right in season at the moment so now is the best time to enjoy it. Its delicate pink colour makes it a perfect centrepiece for your summer dinner party. If you want to make the colour even more striking try using a blood orange instead of a regular one. You can also try adding some ginger into the fruit or some cinnamon to the crumble if you'd like to add a little more warmth to the flavours. This is so fast to whip up and is a perfect one for beginners, no fiddling around with tricky pastry.

Ingredients

For the crumble:

- 100g unsalted butter, chilled
- 60g light brown sugar
- 140g plain flour
- 2 tbsp oats
- Rind of one orange

For the filling:

- 50g rhubarb
- Juice of 1 orange
- 60g golden caster sugar to sweeten

Preheat the oven to 200°C/190°F/Fan/Gas mark 6. Trim the ends off the rhubarb stalks, wash and cut them into 1-inch pieces. Place in an ovenproof dish, it can be as deep or as shallow as you like. Finely grate the rind from the orange and set it aside for the crumble. Squeeze the juice of the orange over the rhubarb. Sprinkle over the caster sugar and gently toss everything together to coat. If you like your rhubarb filling very soft you can always cook it on the hob for 10 minutes before adding it to the dish. You can also add more sugar to the fruit if you have an

extra sweet tooth but don't kill all the tanginess, the contrast with the sweet crumble is essential.

To make the crumble, cut the chilled butter into cubes then rub it together with the flour using your fingertips until it resembles breadcrumbs. Some recipes suggest that you can use a food processor for this step. It's personal preference, the processor results in a very fine crumb almost like sand. I prefer it to be a little less even, with a more interesting texture and a rustic feel! Next, stir in the brown sugar and the orange rind. Spread the crumble topping evenly over the rhubarb and orange. Mixing the oats in with the crumble could result in them soaking up the fruit juice and becoming stodgy so instead, sprinkle them on top where they will toast and add even more texture. Bake in the preheated oven for 30-40 mins, until bubbling and golden brown on top. This is delicious both hot and cold with vanilla ice cream, homemade custard, crème fraîche or fresh cream.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Powerful question on Ireland's UN role

In a recent column, I wrote that I'm never ashamed to be Irish despite reservations about aspects of culture and government policies, but I was certainly proud when, last week, we got a seat on the UN Security Council.

The issue was discussed when Samantha Power, former US ambassador to the UN, was interviewed on **Drivetime** (RTÉ Radio 1) on Thursday. She raised a pertinent point – now that we've got the seat, what are we going to do with it?

She advised us not to be too deferential to the permanent members and also to prioritise. One of her priorities was climate change and she thought we could do well in that area.

The UN peacekeeping activities of our soldiers are a source of ongoing pride, but I also fear we will be too deferential to fashionable agendas. When we had a consistent life ethic here at home, with no death penalty and no abortion, we had much more consistency and moral stature, but now we are compromised.

Power was thoughtful and articulate, always worth listening to. I thought she could have been more even-handed, but, being a Democrat in an election year, she launched a few typical broadsides at President Trump – whether she was accurate or not is not the point. I fear she didn't do



Former US ambassador to the UN Samantha Power featured on RTÉ Radio 1's *Drivetime*.

much to reduce the polarisation that US society is riven by.

Issues of race and inequity featured in **Heart and Soul** (BBC World Service) last Sunday morning. But there was no polarisation here as Irish journalist Colm Flynn told the story of Catholic husband and wife team George and Mimi Limbach who provide, in Philadelphia, meaningful work in computer recycling for ex-prisoners, or 'returning citizens' as they were nicely called.

George went to a Jesuit school while Mimi was inspired by reading her parent's religious pamphlets. Now grandparents, they were

committed to giving dignity and a chance at redemption to the released prisoners.

In Philadelphia there was a 67% re-offending rate, but it was only 5% among those who had worked through the recycling programme.

Flynn pointed out that of the 2.3 million people behind bars in the USA 60% were black or Hispanic and that many argued this was rooted in racism. Such debates often polarise into conflicts between the hang 'em/flog 'em brigade and the bleeding heart liberals, but here was a more nuanced approach – more bridge building than bridge burning. As George said: "If we believe in pun-

ishment and reformation we believe in forgiveness and redemption."

The gravity of the crimes and the suffering of victims were not ignored. George said that sympathy for the victims and care for the perpetrators who had served their time were not mutually exclusive. Mimi saw that the time served was often transformative for the prisoners – they needed that time away, as St Francis and St Ignatius did.

She reckoned some of the ex-prisoners would be dead now if they hadn't been incarcerated.

Sunday Morning Live returned to BBC1 last Sunday morning and I was glad to see Sally Phillips joining Sean Fletcher as co-host. I've long been a fan of her acting and was impressed by her documentary, *A World Without Down Syndrome?* which highlighted the way Down syndrome children are being 'screened out'.

I hope she'll bring extra width and depth to the programme. Other differences for this season included guests joining the discussion remotely rather than being in studio – more lockdown fallout.

The opening section of religious stories in the media is still a bit too light and long for my liking – it included silly items about sniffing candles with fragrances reminiscent of places we miss during

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTÉ1, Sunday June 28, 11am

Fr Damian McNeice celebrates Mass in the RTÉ studios, Donnybrook, with members of the Palestrina Choir of St Mary's Pro Cathedral, Dublin.

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC1, Sunday, June 28, 1.15pm

Claire McCollum shares her love of her home of Northern Ireland by looking back on some of the best faith stories from across the region.

NEW! FOOTPRINTS OF GOD: PAUL

EWTN, Sunday, June 28, 9pm

Steve Ray hosts a fast-paced travelogue-documentary focused on the life of St Paul and the locations of his ministry.



Sally Phillips.

lockdown and sticking our heads in ice cubes to set us up for the day.

There was upbeat coverage of a drive-in religious service in the Bushmills Northern Ireland and a light hearted interview with and Anglican

vicar who is spreading the faith through social media, including an online breakfast!

But more serious matters were included, including an exploration of how Britain should deal with its colonial and slave owning past. It was a well-balanced discussion with a variety of perspectives as to what reactions were appropriate.

I liked the segment on Fathers' Day – we were introduced to a parish group 'Who Let the Dads Out', a support group for fathers – one man had been persuaded to join by his wife and it had led him to the Christian Faith. Good outcome.

boregan@hotmail.com,
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Pat O'Kelly

Music

Stanford's career forever remembered for his pure genius

Relatively recently, I mentioned Charles Villiers Stanford in relation to his opera *The Veiled Prophet*. This spurred me on to delve further into the archives and discover more about the composer born in Dublin's Herbert Street in 1852.

His father, a well-to-do lawyer, John James, was a cellist and noted bass who sang the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at its first Dublin performance in 1847. Charles mother, Mary, also had legal forbears and was an accomplished pianist.

Receiving his early education at home under a governess, Charles' mother supervised his music lessons and realised his precocious talent. Aged seven, he



Charles Villiers Stanford.

gave a recital of piano music by Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Ignaz Moscheles, then quite a popular

composer. A march, composed by Charles when he was eight, was played in a pantomime in Dublin's Theatre Royal.

Charles' godmother, Elizabeth Meeke – a former Moscheles pupil in Leipzig – took charge of his piano lessons.

Stanford later recalled she insisted on him sight-reading a Chopin *Mazurka* at the end of each lesson. By the age of 12 he knew over 50 of them by heart.

Acknowledging the lad needed a 'proper' education, his parents enrolled him in the Henry Tilney Bassett School on Dublin's Lower Mount Street. Under English-born Bassett, the establishment had a considerable

reputation with its past pupils securing lucrative posts in the business world and academia.

Charles accepted Bassett's strict regime as it drew him into a milieu of boys his own age.

The school had a particular penchant for the classics and, while Charles did well in Greek and Latin, his results in other subjects were disappointing.

Moscheles pupil

He made his first visit to London when he was 10 and had composition tuition from Tralee-born Arthur O'Leary then a professor at the Royal Academy of Music. Back in Dublin, Henrietta Flynn, another Moscheles pupil in Leipzig, replaced Elizabeth

Meeke and Stanford also studied with Robert Stewart, organist at St Patrick's Cathedral and professor of music at TCD.

With his only son set on music as a career, John James Stanford insisted he should have a broader university education. Awarded an organ scholarship, Charles went to Queens' College, Cambridge in 1870 carrying an impressive list of compositions in his portfolio.

Immersing himself in college life, he quickly became assistant director of its musical society.

The male-only body was in decline but, as Stanford's attempts to introduce women to its ranks were firmly resisted, he set up a rival

mixed-voice group in 1872.

As its performances outshone those of the original society, a compromise was reached by joining forces under John Larkin Hopkins with Stanford as his assistant.

Organist at Trinity College, Cambridge but in declining health, Hopkins appointed Stanford his deputy at Trinity whither the young man transferred in 1873, the year he made his first visit to Germany.

He met Brahms at the Schumann festival in Bonn and, by then, was being marked out as a classicist on the lines of Schumann and Brahms rather than a modernist, embracing Liszt and Wagner. To be continued.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Representing the Kingdom in

Dorothy Day: Dissenting Voice of the American Century

by John Loughery and Blythe Randolph
(Simon & Schuster, \$30.00/£18.99)

Frank Litton

In 2015, Pope Francis addressed a joint meeting of the United States' Congress. He invoked the memory of famous Americans: "The complexities of history notwithstanding, these men and women for all their many differences and limitations were able by hard work and self sacrifice – some at the cost of their lives – to build a better future."

He named four: Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day.

Dorothy Day may well have been the least-known. Who was she and why is she attracting increasing attention? Cardinal John O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, initiated her cause for canonisation in 1997. His successors continue to support it.

This detailed, well-written biography tells her story with all its complexities and human weaknesses and of the marvellous strength and vision she was graced with in her dedication to the 'Kingdom to come'.

Dorothy Day was born in Chicago in 1897. Her family were middle class if precariously so as her father, a sports journalist, moved from job



Dorothy Day – a saint in the making.

to job. She too aspired to be a journalist.

It was a time when a thuggish and expanding capitalism waged a class war against the exploited, the poor and the vulnerable as they sought to unite in self-defence. She sided with workers, writing for a number of radical newspapers. Her political engagement went alongside a deep love of literature.

She immersed herself in the classics as well as the moderns. No surprise, then, that she was drawn to artistic circles. She was a close friend of Eugene O'Neill, who was on his way to becoming one of America's most celebrated dramatists.

Her passionate search to love and be loved was frustrated as one abusive relationship led to further unsatisfactory ones. She did find happiness in a stable partnership

and was delighted to discover that she was pregnant.

While religion played no part in her upbringing, she did feel the pull of grace, however obscurely. After a night's drinking and partying, she regularly slipped into a church, sitting in the back row, hardly knowing why she was there.

Prospect

The prospect of giving birth intensified these feelings. She resolved that her child would be baptised. She, herself, began instruction in the Catholic Faith. She was, she reported, drawn to the Church because it was, she observed, the Church of the poor.

The growing importance of religion in her life slowly but surely built a barrier between her and her partner, an atheist with a profound

contempt for all things religious.

A painful separation was unavoidable. She worked for a time as a scriptwriter in Hollywood, returning to New York, with her daughter, working once more as a journalist in the radical press.

She worried about what her new-found Faith demanded of her. She prayed. And, then, in answer to her prayer she met, if not an eccentric then certainly, a highly unusual Frenchman. Peter Maurin came from a large peasant family rooted in the south of France. He had joined the De La Salle Brothers, left them, spent time in Paris before travelling to Canada and thence to the US, all the time studying and proclaiming Catholic social teaching in conversation and from the soapbox.

“Day travelled extensively in the US explaining the *Catholic Worker* and its House of Hospitality...”

He supported himself working as a labourer. He introduced her to the Thomism of Jacques Maritain, the personalism of Emmanuel Mounier, the thought of Peguy and the social critique of G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. The Catholic tradition strengthened and expanded her understanding of the disorders of capitalism.

He encouraged her to deploy her journalistic skills demonstrating its relevance. On May 1, 1933 the first edition of the *Catholic Worker* hit the streets. It was obvious that the witness of thinking should be matched by the witness of action.

Destitute

The Gospel is clear: "Amen I tell you, inasmuch as you did to the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me." So they opened a House of Hospitality that welcomed the destitute, the damaged, the broken and the homeless, providing food and shelter and above all, the love and acceptance that the Gospel demands. It was hard work.

It was clear that both required the 'clarification of thought' and regular weekly meetings were an integral part of the House's routine. Luminaries such as theologian Frank Sheed and philosopher Jacques Maritain were willing speakers.

Day took the Sermon on the Mount seriously. She could not see how war, particularly modern war that targeted non-combatants, could be justified. Her pacifism reduced the considerable support that her work received as World War II approached.

Day travelled extensively in the US explaining the *Catholic Worker* and its House of Hospitality. She was an admired figure, her commitment to the poor inspired. But there were reservations. American Catholics

Visions of fervent human hopes and fears



Heaven on Earth: Painting and the Life to Come

by T. J. Clark
(Thames & Hudson, £18.95)

Peter Costello

British-born writer T. J. Clark is a Professor Emeritus of the History of Art at the University of California, Berkeley. His main field of interest has been 19th-Century French art, and such artists as Manet and Courbet, so this book represents something of a fresh departure.

He has been identified as a 'Marxist', but that merely means that he wishes to draw our attention to the social and economic circumstances in which art is produced, something that those who adopt a more aesthetic approach often dislike – despite the manner in which market value affects the appreciation of art.

Depictions

This new book deals, as the subtitle says, with "painting and the life to come". This might seem to many to mean depictions of the beatific vision. But no; we cannot know what that is like theologians remind us, despite the visions of saints and such sages as Swedenborg in his *Arcana Coelestia*. For Clark the life to come is a visionary expression of something better for humanity than what we have: famine, plague, war and death.

The introduction and the finale are indeed politically orientated, but the substance is a set of essays on Giotto, Brueghel, Poussin and Veronese, rounding off with a Picasso work in the UNESCO building in Paris.

These are full of interest: the Poussin essay with a long discussion of the Catholic doctrine of the efficacy of grace as expressed in his series on the Sacraments, and the nature of his belief contrasted with Giotto's.

“This book deals in detail with some of the world's most arresting images”

One need not agree completely with Clark's views to gain many insights from this book. For instance, interesting as what he says about Brueghel is, yet one feels more would have been gained by relating the painter's images of life to the imagination of Rabelais. But the French author, like so many other authors who would provide a context for the artists discussed, is not mentioned at all.

However the book is pervaded by a sense of Marxist melancholy. With the decline of that philosophy, he seems to think there is no hope of a future for the Left, or indeed any political view.

But this book in presenting this view fails entirely to address the

worldwide ecological movement (to which Pope Francis has notably contributed). There is no hope for a Marxist future. But the human spirit will, perhaps through new ideas of society and art, find out a future, but a future very different from 'the normal life' so many ache to return to – which for many in the world was far from a normal human existence.

That this book in dealing with ideas of the future life here on Earth fails to speak about the ecological movement explains a great deal about the overall political failure of Marxism.

But the melancholy apart, this is a book that deals in detail with some of the world's most arresting images. The chapter on Giotto, for instance, caught my deep attention, having recently visited the Arena Chapel in Padua and seen that painter's great work of many images, 'Last Judgement', which fills the whole room – he is truly a remarkable painter.

The saddest image in the book is not a painting, but a photograph of the course of the UNESCO building in Paris, which shows Picassos' 'Fall of Icarus', almost entirely screened from view by the massed concrete segments of the brutalist architecture – the imagination of the painter entirely overpowered. This photo, just in itself, is an allegory of the artist in modern times.

'Giotto's Last Judgement', Arena Chapel, Padua.

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.

today's society



● In the recent protest in the US, a Catholic Workers' activist was struck down by the Buffalo police, sustaining brain injuries [photo above]. Martin Gugino is an devout Catholic, educated at Canisius High School, a Jesuit school in Buffalo, and a passionate advocate for many causes, among them Black Lives Matter.

He would make regular trips from Buffalo to New Haven to help with tasks at Amistad, the Catholic Workers house of hospitality there that describes its mission as "follow(ing) Jesus in seeking justice for the poor". A witness in our time, Gugino, still hospitalised, was later traduced by President Trump.

There are more than 150 Catholic Worker houses across the US and another 29 worldwide. There is a 'Café Dorothy Day' in Paris where young French intellectuals meet to discuss their faith and its implications.

There is no Catholic Worker house in Ireland.

were merging into the mainstream. They were growing in prosperity; some attained great wealth. The clerical establishment enjoyed the welcome they could get in the circuits of power.

It was tempting to suppose that if the Kingdom had not arrived, they

inhabited something close enough. They did not relish the *Catholic Worker's* reminders that this was not so.

The US had much blood on its conscience: how could one forget the slaughter of the innocent in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Its nuclear arsenal and military-industrial complex suggested

that this conscience was dormant, if not dead. Then there was the poverty amidst the wealth exacerbated by racism, the legacy of the sin of slavery.

“She distrusted institutions because they hampered autonomy and responsibility”

Day belongs to the tradition of US 'anarchism'. We see this in her politics and in the Houses of Hospitality she inspired. She never sought to incorporate these into a movement coordinated by hierarchy with herself as leader.

Indeed, she declined a director's position in the House of Hospitality. Her co-workers, nonetheless, referred to her behind her back as the 'Abbess'. A witness, I suppose, to the clarity of her vision and an authority far from authoritarianism.

She distrusted institutions because they hampered autonomy and responsibility. Yet she respected the institutional Church. She may have criticised clerical leaders, but she recognised that the sacramental life and pieties that consoled and strengthened her, the teachings that inspired her, depended on a tradition of attempting to live the Gospels that only an institution could sustain.

Surely, a representative of the Kingdom for our time.

“The saddest image in the book is not a painting, but a photograph of the concourse of the UNESCO building in Paris, which shows Picassos' Fall of Icarus”



'Lamenting Over the Body of Christ.'

Lockdown literature · Chapter 6

Back to the origin of all things

Charles Darwin.



In this series some of our literary collaborators will be giving suggestions for lockdown reading, books of all kinds to enlighten us and raise our spirits. This week: Christopher Moriarty on Charles Darwin's fundamental belief in a Creator as expressed in his epoch making study *The Origin of Species* (1859)

Millions of Christians to this day believe that the creation story in the Bible is a true account of the facts about the origin and development of the world. They are a small minority amongst the Faithful – but their view in 1859 would have been that of the mainstream.

That was the year in which a weighty book was published with the two-pronged title *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Its author Charles Darwin described it as an 'abstract' of his ideas. Abstracts are usually a few hundred words rather than that many pages in length, but this was no ordinary work. Challenging the literal truth of the Bible, it rapidly took its place amongst the most revolutionary and thought-changing books ever published.

The first edition of 1,100 copies sold out immediately. The second, with alterations, appeared two months later. *The Origin* went through six editions in the author's lifetime and he added to each one of them to make corrections or explanations or respond to the many challenges that were made.

Paperback

You can buy a paperback on-line for less than €10 and you will never regret it. In the midst of the controversy he aroused, the fact that Darwin was a first-rate writer and a brilliant populariser of natural history is often overlooked. This is a book to read and enjoy, either to dip into or read from cover to cover in the sedentary time that we are exposed to these days.

Darwin's plan for his life before he went on the voyage of the Beagle on which so many of his ideas emerged, was to marry Emma Wedgwood, a first cousin, and to become an Anglican clergyman, a rural vicar no doubt.

However, some high-profile atheists have taken to the worship of their concept of Darwin and his meaning. So it comes as a surprise to read his words in the very last paragraph of the work: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one."

This paragraph was one of the many that he altered and the change is remarkable. In the first edition exactly the same words are used, but with no mention of the Creator. The concept was introduced in the second edition and it stayed in the book for the remainder of Darwin's long life.



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Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Legacy for Life



There is no greater legacy that will leave a mark on future generations than supporting our pro-life and pro-family work.

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Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

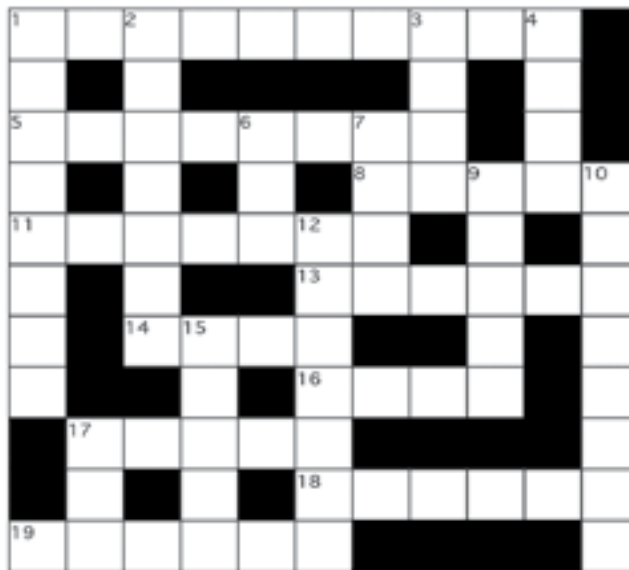
Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 338



Across

- 1 Popular summer fruit (10)
7 Something in your way that will hinder you (8)
8 Warning bell (5)
11 He called the genie by rubbing his magic lamp. (7)
13 'The buyer paid the price asked by the _____. ' (6)
14 Travel by boat. (4)
16 Points a weapon at a target (4)
17 You use it to think (5)
18 This playing piece has two sets of dots on it (6)
19 Places where you can book a room for the night (6)

Down

- 1 Bratislava is the capital of

this European country. (8)

- 2 Imps, rogues. (7)
3 Wind a fishing line on this (4)
4 Twelve months (4)
6 Assistance, help. (3)
7 "And one for the little boy who lives down the ____." (4)
9 Book of maps (5)
10 Race that is over 42 km long (8)
12 They are completely surrounded by water (7)
15 Astonish (5)
17 The audience might make this sound if they don't like what they see (3)

SOLUTIONS, JUNE 18

GORDIUS No. 460

Across — 1 Hobgoblins 6 Sped 10 Brent geese 11 Saint Paul 12 Skaters 17 Crag 18 Holy 19 Eliza 21 Chipper 23 Rugby union 24 Spat 25 Aver 26 Tap-in 28 Elation 33 Broadcast 35 Elks 36 Copenhagen

Down — 1 Hubs 2 Break a leg 3 Octet 4 Loser 5 Nail 7 Place 8 Dolcelatte 9 Stagger 13 Each 14 Sceptre 16 Charitable 20 Improving 21 Cyanide 22 Ella 27 Plonk 29 Litre 30 Touch 31 Faro 32 Anon

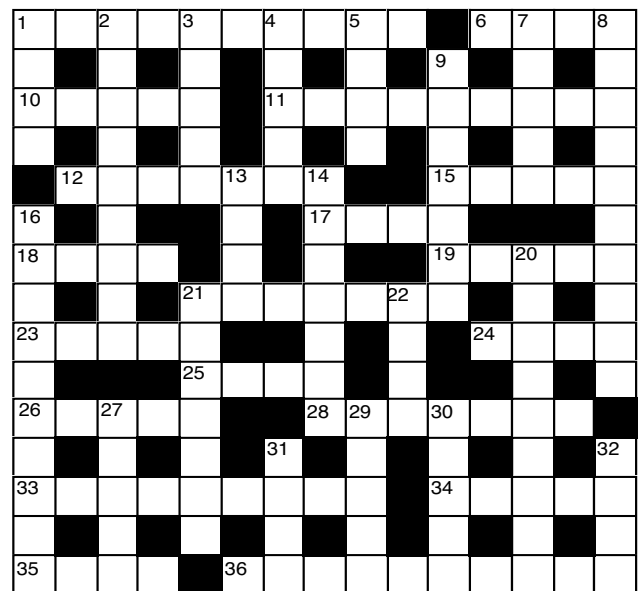
CHILDREN'S No. 337

Across — 1 Boiled egg 7 Captain Hook 8 Chose 9 Edits 11 Evil 14 Tugged 16 One 17 Gigantic 18 Kiss 19 Severe

Down — 1 Bicycle 2 Improving 3 Eraser 4 Ernie 5 Growing 6 Ink 10 Sadness 12 Voice 13 Leave 14 Title 15 Gecko

Crossword

Gordius 461



Across

- 1 With volcanic matter, Conservatives can make toilets! (10)
6 & 10 Maoris run around with a Little Bear (4,5)
11 Pilgrim ship with blooming potential! (9)
12 Woodwind instrument (7)
15 Sit here for a different view of the Andes (5)
17 Killer-whale (4)
18 Sign over the way out (4)
19 Pertaining to the nose (5)
21 Stockpiled (7)
23 Dance to a strange degree (5)
24 Being a symbol of 20 down will give this cat wings! (4)
25 Scallop featuring in cooked lobster and mussel starters (4)
26 See 9 down
28 Appease (7)
33 Earringed soldier? (9)
34 Complains on seeing the Austrian leader in a Belgian city (5)
35 & 22d Barry Humphries' creation is entitled to have made a den thus! (4,4)
36 Being lacking in warmth, Istanbul's country proves an uncomfortable comedown for a tripper! (4,6)

Down

- 1 Citrus fruit (4)

- 2 Wanton destruction (9)
3 Car parts that may benefit from inflation (5)
4 Juliet's lover (5)
5 Have a yen for this Irish singer? (4)
7 Propelled with oars (5)
8 This hormone might have appeared as the nail neared breaking (10)
9 & 26a How could all Canada ask to be upset by such a regretful phrase? (4,3,5)
13 The capital of Norway (4)
14 Bridge call - or what the Democratic Party yearns for after this year's election? (2,5)
16 Shuffled what the reader rang about (10)
20 Ask Martin about the patron of Venice (5,4)
21 The journalist espied a cutter (7)
22 See 35 across
27 Find a rafter alongside one at sea (5)
29 Enticed (5)
30 The Welsh word for Wales (5)
31 Pastry taken out of the foil (4)
32 Catch sight of the eastern agent (4)

Sudoku Corner

338

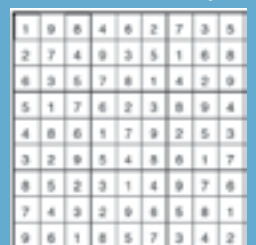
Easy



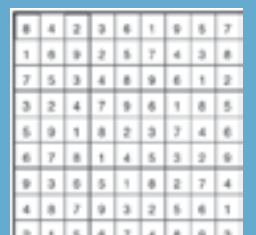
Hard



Last week's Easy 337



Last week's Hard 337



Sometimes it's still best to 'let the hare sit'

I've always enjoyed reading John B. Keane's *Letters of an Irish Parish Priest* (or I did until I became one, anyway). One of the letters frequently received by this fictional pastor came from an anonymous parishioner, who always signed herself 'One Who Tries To Be A Good Catholic'.

This anonymous scribe's notes were usually of the curtain-twitching variety, as the English press describe today's 'Valley-of-the-Squinting-Windows' types residing in the UK. The version described by John B. Keane gave all her letters over to comments on the moral failings of her fellow parishioners. At one stage in the book, these letters from the one who 'tries to be a good Catholic' caused the exasperated PP to comment: "I hope she doesn't try any harder!"

Patience

The pandemic has unfortunately produced a number of such correspondents, trying to be good Catholics (though often simply trying the patience of the recipient). One note that found its way to me was addressed: "To the priest at the church at



Templemartin, or any nearby church, Bandon, Co. Cork." Unfortunately, An Post reckoned I needed it. The unsigned contents provided me with a full account

of the miraculous medal, which attracted the merest glance from me on the way to the bin. (I have learned that correspondents who haven't the courage to include their name don't deserve a reading: future correspondents, please note!)

Comment

Others who 'try to be good Catholics' have found other ways of trying priests' patience. One common route employed in the pandemic was the interpretation of the virus as God's comment on the world of today and its supposed liberal excesses. This virus, I was told, would force many to think again: God was not to be ignored, and would always insist on humanity's bowing to the divine wishes.

In this manner of interpretation, the God who revealed a nature of infinite love and

compassion in Jesus was only half the story. On a bad day, the nasty God appeared, flinging plagues and earthquakes and other disasters at humanity, to force us to see things in another light.

Unfortunately, these folks, trying to be good Catholics, were about the best ads for atheism I could imagine. They put about the image of a god who speaks out of two sides of his mouth, all gentle and lovey-dovey some days, and all mean and nasty on others: an inconsistent, capricious and altogether chilling deity. Not my God, anyway.

It was lucky for us that John B. Keane's fictional parish priest existed in another age, before there were emails and other such intrusions. The email stock of any Irish parish priest could make slaves of any of us over-concerned with speed of reply. The advice of earlier days about 'letting the hare sit' has a relevance for today.

A limited ministry of communications, not taking over the whole day, is a sure way to good mental health for the pastor today – that and the avoidance of anyone who tries too hard to be a good Catholic.

Time to smile...

In the spirit of St Philip Neri, who wanted people to become more human rather than less as they became holier, these may make you smile:

- Turning vegan would be a big missed steak.
- I have a chicken-proof lawn. It's impeccable.
- When the fog lifts in California. UCLA.
- Drink wine. It isn't good to keep things bottled up.
- Electricians have to strip to make ends meet.
- Our mountains aren't just funny. They're hill areas.
- Puns about communism aren't funny unless everyone gets them.
- Well, to be frank...I'd have to change my name!
- Wishing you a happy whatever-doesn't-offend you!



- St Corona was revealed earlier this year as the patron of pandemics. But could I suggest another: Philip Neri. He is sometimes called the patron saint of joy, because he had a good sense of fun and didn't take himself too seriously. (It's said that once, when people were canonising him, he shaved off half his beard, to put people off the scent.) When people are scared witless, a sense of humour can be the best remedy for people of Faith. Or as the Hallmark card people might put it: "Keep smiling, it makes people wonder what you're up to!"

YOUR GIFT WILL HELP PROVIDE FOOD FOR THE POOR AND MARGINALISED

Your gift can make a life-and-death difference for desperately poor families and for sick and needy people who are struggling in the midst of the present covid crisis. The Little Way Association has received many urgent appeals from Bishops, priests, sisters and missionaries asking for help for those in their care. Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera of Eluru, India, writes: "Hundreds of poor people lack food and other basic necessities because of the lockdown and urgently need assistance."

Families are battling against hunger

Heidi Caluori of Arco in Sao Paulo, Brazil, writes: "The people from the slums are the hardest hit by the virus. Not being able to work anymore means people do not receive a salary and have no money to buy food. Families are battling against hunger. We want to continue to distribute food to the people in the surrounding slums. We need your donations!" Sr Eileen Quirke of the Presentation Sisters in Quito, Ecuador, asks for help with: "...Basic Food Kits, and Home Medical Attention (initial visits, necessary examinations, followed by the prescribed medication) for elderly people who are isolating for the last two months in our poor villages."

Every cent that you send for our "hungry, sick and deprived" fund will go intact to those who look after the very poor

Mass is offered daily for all our supporters' intentions. Thank you so much for your prayers and your continued practical support.



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.



Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera and members of Eluru Diocese, Andhra Pradesh, India, distribute aid packages to the poor.



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

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