

The Irish Catholic

MARIA STEEN

Where's the tolerance for dissent?

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Housing is a constitutional right says Bishop McGuckian

Crisis turning into catastrophe – McVerry

Chai Brady

The Government must be "pushed" to enshrine housing in the constitution as the housing crisis becomes a "catastrophe", according to a bishop and campaigners.

Speaking after an event involving Ireland's Christian Churches on homelessness, Bishop Alan McGuckian of Raphoe said having a home is as fundamental as the right to life and education.

"It's a year since our council wrote strongly on this highlighting that housing really is a human right. We should be pushing our Government to recognise that, that's down to all of us," Bishop McGuckian told *The Irish Catholic*.

"The housing crisis has disimproved in the last 12 months and as we heard today there's no promise that anything is going to change to make it better, it's going to get worse."

Leading housing activist Fr Peter McVerry said the crisis "is going to become a catastrophe and we as Church have to make a response to that". He was speaking at the call to action for churches on the housing crisis organised by ecumenical group Irish Inter-Church and the Irish Council of Churches.

Attitudes

A Bible study resource was launched aimed at promoting reflection on the attitudes that exacerbate and perpetuate the problems of homelessness and housing insecurity called 'In Six Months A Lot Can Change'.

Fr McVerry said the only homeless people who are visible are rough sleepers, which shapes a perception of homeless people which must be tackled "amongst our congregations".

"That is so unfair on the vast

» Continued on Page 4

Faiths come together for climate action



The Dublin City Interfaith Forum held a pre-rally at Custom House Quay where a short service of prayers was said before joining the Climate Action Day protest in Dublin on Friday, September 20. The service was organised by a new Irish inter-faith climate group called 'Faiths for Climate Action'. Photo: Sam Boal/Photocall Ireland

Bring back St Michael prayer – exorcist

Greg Daly

One of Ireland's top exorcists has called for the Church to reintroduce the prayer to St Michael at the end of Masses.

Between 1886 and 1967, Masses around the world concluded with a prayer calling on St Michael the archangel to protect Catholics from the devil and evil spirits, but following the Second Vatican Council the practice was stopped.

Fr Pat Collins, however, believes this may have been a mistake.

"In recent decades it sometimes seems as if all the powers of hell are attacking the Church both from within and from without," he writes in *The Irish Catholic* this week. Arguing that St John Paul II's 1979 request that Ireland resist the temptations of the devil could be honoured by saying the prayer to St Michael after Masses, he urges Irish bishops to restore the practice.

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DAVID QUINN

Let's have a 'Green pledge'

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MARY KENNY

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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment returns next week

Post-referendum confession call was healing offer – Bishop

Greg Daly

A call for Catholics to go to Confession if they had voted to allow abortion in Ireland last year was an attempt at bringing healing to Irish society, Elphin's Bishop Kevin Doran has said.

Speaking at the opening Mass of the MaterCare international medical conference in Rome, Bishop Doran told a congregation of health care professionals how three days after last year's referendum on removing the rights of unborn human beings from Ireland's constitution he was asked to take part in a radio discussion about the vote.

"Everything in me wanted to tell them to get lost," he said. "I was sick of all the cheering and flag-waving that had taken place over the weekend. But I felt the need

to say something to encourage people."

Asked on RTÉ's *Today* with Seán O'Rourke what he would say to Catholics who had voted yes, Dr Doran related how he had said that if they had done so knowing and intending that abortion would be the outcome, he would invite them to come to confession, where they would be received with compassion.

Tendency

"Some people were very angry with me. That's because there is a tendency to think of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as some form of humiliation through which people are required to go," he said. "On the contrary, for the Church and for me personally, 'Confession' (or reconciliation) is a celebration of the mercy of God, which I need

and to which I have recourse on a regular basis. I hope that it might also help to bring healing in our society and in our Church. Confession is about humility but it should never be about humiliation," he said.

Highlighting how true conversion is brought about through mercy rather than condemnation, Dr Doran said that while the Church is obliged to teach the truth, it is vital that it act compassionately.

"As Church we are called to teach the truth, as Jesus did, and as is the responsibility of every mother (and father). We are also charged with the responsibility of reaching out to the ones who are lost, hurt or afraid. The Church teaches best when she reflects the tender love of a mother," he said.



Peeping through the glass at historic Clonliffe

Sam Sobolewski (3) peering through a glass cabinet showing some of the history of the former Clonliffe College Seminary. Dubliners had a final chance to see what life was like in one of the city's most historic buildings when the former Clonliffe College Seminary opened its archive on Culture night. Photo: John McElroy

Follow The Irish Catholic on Twitter

Pro-life group determined to stop 'safe access zone' legislation

Chai Brady

The Pro Life Campaign (PLC) have said they remain "resolutely determined" to protect the right of citizens to hold demonstrations outside abortion clinics as the Minister for Health continues to pursue legislation that would make it illegal.

The pro-life group said that Minister Simon Harris has invited a select group of Oireachtas members to a progress briefing on his plans to introduce legislation on 'Safe Access Zones'.

Proportionate

Spokesperson Maeve O'Hanlon said: "The Pro Life Campaign remains resolutely determined to protect the rights of citizens to engage in peaceful and proportionate witness to the value of unborn human life and the presentation of alternatives to abortion to any woman who may be considering it. "It has always been our position, however, that this can and should be done while demonstrating a clear sensitivity to the circumstances which some women may find themselves in."

She said that the PLC reject the premise that if they're against 'safe access zones' they support unsafe access to abortion providers.

Legislation

Ms O'Hanlon added: "The fact that the Minister's preferred description has moved from 'Exclusion Zones' to 'Safe Access Zones' also serves to highlight the fact that an attempt is being made to present the proposed legislation in more palatable language while the substance remains essentially the same.

"Our very existence as a human rights-based organisation is to advocate for the meaningful protection of life, both born and unborn in as respectful and constructive a manner as possible."

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Trócaire tackle Taoiseach on climate after runway revamp

Chai Brady

The CEO of Trócaire has questioned Taoiseach Leo Varadkar's seemingly contradictory approach to tackling climate change after he opened a renovated Mayo runway the day after a global climate strike.

Caoimhe de Barra's comment comes as Mr Varadkar celebrated the projection passenger numbers to Knock airport would increase by 20%.

Ms de Barra posted on Twitter: "Commenting on the #ClimateStrike, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar says 'we totally get the message'. I have to question that when in the same video he announces €9m Govt investment in Knock airport and

a desire to see passenger numbers go up 20% to 1m."

Regarding the CEO's statement a Trócaire spokesperson said her comment "was simply highlighting the lack of coherence to government policy on climate change".

"Notably, Pope Francis has called on all countries to urgently reduce carbon emissions but so far Ireland is still way off track for answering that call."

Priests have defended the airport renovations saying it plays a vital role in connecting communities in the West of Ireland.

Rector of Knock Shrine, Fr Richard Gibbons, who is on the board and trustee of the airport along with Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam, said it is a "key piece of infrastructure" in the

Goodwill gesture welcomed

● The rector of Knock Shrine received "a very positive reaction" after a video went viral of him giving the Taoiseach a vial of holy water before his meeting with Boris Johnson.

Leo Varadkar was opening a refurbished runway at Knock airport when Fr Richard Gibbons handed over the gift. Fr Gibbons told the Taoiseach it was for "added protection" before he flew to New York to meet the British Prime Minister. Mr Varadkar quipped: "Do I throw it over him?"

The priest described it as "just a simple goodwill gesture" done in "good humour".

West of Ireland.

The airport is "very conscious" of climate change, which comes up at board meetings and is "taken very seriously", he said. However, he adds they are reliant on technology to create fuel-efficient planes, as well as fuel developed to be more environmentally friendly.

Fr Gibbons highlighted

the need to provide services and opportunities in rural areas. He said: "Quite a number of people travel back and over to England and other destinations for work."

"Business relations between the West of Ireland and Britain are very important to people here and there's quite a lot of movement that way. Family

of course too, family visits – that connectivity.

"If you destroy an element of connectivity you reduce people's chances of connecting and relationships...it's very important to us here and to build-up rural communities."

Fr Gerry O'Connor CsSR, based in Mahon in Cork, said that although change has to be made to lifestyles as "our common home is under threat" it shouldn't just be poorer people and struggling communities bearing the burden.

He said when targeting climate change those who are less privileged shouldn't become more disadvantaged "while certain elitist areas and certain professions and certain people dwell in elitist categories".

'Reach out to our migrants', bishop urges

Every parish in Ireland is to receive a resource pack for the World Day of Migrants, Bishop Denis Brennan of Ferns has said, encouraging parishioners to reach out to migrants and refugees.

"Our first thoughts and prayers are with our migrant brothers and sisters who live here among us in Ireland, in our dioceses, our parishes and most especially those in direct provision centres in our country," said the bishop, who chairs the Bishops' Council for Immigrants.

Resources

Describing how resource packs have been sent to every parish in the country ahead of the 105th World Day of Migrants on Sunday, September 29, Bishop Brennan said: "I encourage everyone to make use of these resources to reach out meaningfully and warmly in their parishes."

Noting how Pope Francis had chosen the theme 'It is not just about migrants' for the day, Dr Brennan recalled the Pope's emphasis on how migrants and refugees are not simply a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved.

Actor Pitt ditches atheism, 'clings to religion'

Staff reporter

One of the world's best-known actors Brad Pitt [pictured] has said he's left Atheism behind and "clings to religion".

In a wide-ranging interview published in a US magazine, Mr Pitt (55) spoke of his Christian upbringing and the importance of religion in his life.

"I grew up with Christianity. Always questioned it, but it worked at times. And then when I got on my own, I completely left

it and I called myself agnostic," he told *GQ* Magazine.

"Tried a few spiritual things but didn't feel right. Then I called myself an atheist for a while, just kind of being rebellious. I wasn't really. But I kind of labelled myself that for a while. It felt punk rock enough."

'Guilt'

Previously Mr Pitt has spoken of his "Christian guilt" over decisions on what he should and shouldn't do. When he was in school his

parents would go to religious Christian revival meetings where he said he felt "moved by the Holy Spirit".

His religious questioning continued when he enrolled as a journalism student at the University of Missouri in Columbia. He dropped out of college during his last semester to pursue an acting career in Los Angeles. The superstar said "I cling to religion" during an interview that also focused on his upcoming film *Ad Astra*.



Mrs Ann Kelly

The publisher and staff of *The Irish Catholic* would like to extend sincere sympathy on the sad death of Mrs Ann Kelly – devoted mother of our Managing Editor Michael Kelly. May she rest in peace.

JOE WALSH TOURS | AUTUMN PILGRIMAGES 2019

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Archbishop calls on Irish Church to be more 'forceful'

Chai Brady

Irishman and former Archbishop of Pretoria in South Africa William Slattery has said the Irish Church should be more "forceful, more self-confident" in spreading the Good News, as it's shifted away from "being close to people".

Returning home last month, Archbishop William (Liam) Slattery OFM said the Church is hugely important for community and has a lot to offer, but it can be a "battle" to get this message across, particularly in the Western world.

Archbishop Slattery's resignation was accepted by Pope Francis in late April this year, the Franciscan missionary spent 49 years in South Africa working among the poor, through apartheid and severe political unrest. Dr Slattery was born in Portlaoise but grew up in Tipperary, he returned to Ireland last month.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* he said: "I think the Church in Ireland will have to

be more forceful, more self-confident and also do what it does well, be close to the people, maybe over the last number of years it's shifted a bit; not close enough to the people."

He said that the Church is more limited, saying "in the past the Church did everything".

The child abuse crisis, he says, is "absolutely devastating", and hits at the very meaning of Christianity which is "care, blessing, hope, healing".

"I think the Church has to do that, it has to be courageous and imaginative responding to people, helping people to heal, go out there and talk to people even though you will get criticism."

"The Church depends on community, when community gets weak, churches get weak because we grow strong not only through knowledge but you meet God through belonging. Where there is a strong sense of belonging God is not far away."

Read more on Pages 12-13.

Irish missionary voices to be heard in Church Amazon summit

Greg Daly

Two Irish clerics have been asked to take part in the Vatican's upcoming Synod of Bishops on the Amazon.

A Kiltegan Father originally from Monkstown, Co. Dublin, Bishop Derek Byrne of Primavera do Leste-Paranatinga in Brazil will join Fr Peter Hughes, a Galway-born and Columban Father who works for CELAM, the Latin American episcopal conference, at the gathering in Rome next month.

Now based in Peru, Fr Hughes has been a key player in setting up the synod.

The October 6-27 assembly will be focused on the needs of the millions of people living in and near the world's largest rainforest, and comes after 18 months of preparations, entailing consultations with hundreds of communities in nine South American countries. The synod's formal title is 'The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and For Integral Ecology'.

While the core focus of the conference will be the needs of those residents of the Amazon region whose

lives are threatened by environmental destruction on a hitherto unknown scale, the synod will consider such diverse issues as illegal deforestation, exploitative mining practices, rapid urbanisation's challenges to the family.

Challenges

The synod will also consider the challenges the Church in the region faces in being more prophetic, exploring the possibility of ordaining married men to the priesthood in situations of extreme need, with its working document or instrumentum labo-

ris calling for the Church to identify what type of official ministry might be conferred on women.

Such issues have made the synod, the fourth of Francis' papacy, controversial for some, with its working document having been openly criticised by Cardinal Gerhard Müller, formerly head of the Church's doctrinal watchdog the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and by Cardinal Walter Brandmüller, erstwhile head of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences.

Cardinal Raymond Burke

has announced that he will be undertaking a 40-day "crusade of prayer and fasting" in hopes that the synod's working document, which he says contains theological errors and heresies, will not receive synodal approval.

Synod

Bishop Byrne and Fr Hughes will be among 185 voting members at the synod, almost all of whom will come from nine South American countries, with these being supplemented by 80 non-voting lay experts and auditors, including 33 women.

Knock Knock...it's the Lottery



Grace Mulqueen, Manager, Knock Shrine Museum, show three statues which have undergone conservation work and are now being returned for veneration at the Shrine. The project was enabled by National Lottery funding. The statues had stood at the site of the apparitions from 1932 until 1979. Photo: Keith Heneghan

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Call to put right to housing in Constitution

» Continued from Page 1

majority of homeless people who only have one problem, they don't have enough money to pay for their own accommodation," he said.

"If we could get the right to housing in the constitution, that doesn't mean the following day everybody can go up to Dublin City Council or wherever and demand a home, no of course not, but it does give a priority to housing in Government policy and it does impose

on them an obligation to produce policies that over a period of maybe 10 or 15 years would ensure that the right to housing is given to every person living in this country."

According to official figures there were 10,275 people homeless in the week of July 22-28 July this year across Ireland. The number of homeless families has increased by 178% since June 2015 and more than one in three people in emergency accommodation is a child.

Site of Little Nellie's Cork grave taken off market

Staff reporter

Owners of a lucrative Cork City site of a former Good Shepherd Sisters convent have taken the property off the market.

Devotees of Little Nellie

of Holy God, known by many as the unofficial patron saint of Cork who is buried at the sight, have continuously voiced concerns about being able to access the grave.

Moneda Developments ensured there would be

access to her resting place but blocked pilgrims from entering the site due to "public safety concerns" on Little Nellie's birthday. However, they added they provide access for maintenance of the grave and requests for limited access could be made through their team.

The company had the site on the market for just five months. The land was on sale for €6.75 million.

A planning application for almost 200 apartments and over a dozen houses was approved by An Bord Pleanála. Its prime location close to Cork city and university and Apple headquarters makes it a desirable development opportunity.

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My pitch for a compulsory religious education

Every September we read reports of disgruntled secular parents who object to the fact that their children are being taught about religion, in religious-ethos schools.

I find it difficult to understand why a parent would send their child to a faith-based school, and then complain that faith values are taught there. However, I suppose we have to make allowances for practical considerations that may occur – perhaps there isn't a secular or non-denominational school that is in their area, or that they consider suitable.

But there are also other agendas going on. Some parents take a have-your-cake-and-eat-it attitude: they want the benefits of a faith school, which may include good grades and an admirable community ambience, without actually having to subscribe to, or even hear about, faith values.

There is also a growing secular body of opinion that children should not be taught any religious values at all, as this constitutes 'indoctrination'. And that any compulsion in the matter of faith education is unacceptable.

But surely education about faith, at the very least, is essential to being educated at all?

History

Two books published this year have really illuminated this – and I'd make their study a compulsory part of learning about history and humankind.

One is Tom Holland's magisterial tome of Christian civilization *Dominion: The Making of*



Mary Kenny



the Western Mind, which I have previously alluded to. It is a sweeping history of the ideas that have made our world, and elucidates how Christianity has, literally, 'made' the western mind. Christianity, as we know, has frequently failed to live up to its ideals, but the 'values' are part of law, morality, charity, the literary and artistic expressions of the human mind, art and architecture, and even conventions such as manners.

“Even those – perhaps especially those – most opposed to faith are drawing on faith values”

Tom Holland's is a large tome of 594 pages: but a slim paperback by the philosopher John Gray, entitled *Seven Types of Atheism* is under 160 pages of reading, and it's brilliant.

Gray, who writes for the left-wing *New Statesman*, embraces no religion himself, and yet he shows, case by case, how every contemporary strain of secular and atheistic thinking depends for its intellectual substance on religion in general, and Christianity in particular.

Secular thinking

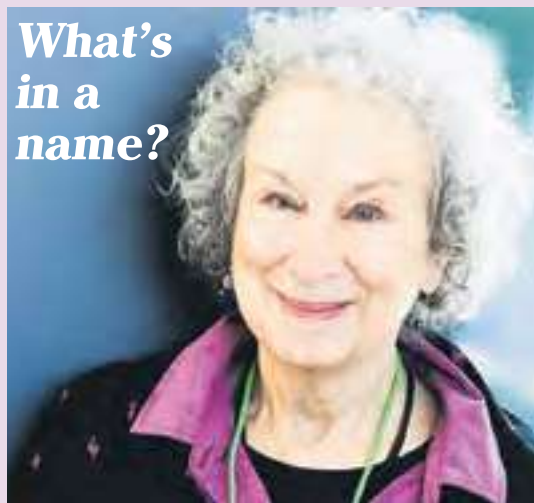
From John Stuart Mill to Voltaire, from Locke, Kant and Schopenhauer, to Marx, Dostoevsky, Comte and Russell – they all derived their thinking from traditions of faith. “Secular thinking,” writes Gray, “is repressed religion.”

Even those – perhaps especially those – most opposed to faith are drawing on faith values.

Not to know and understand this, it seems to me, is to be woefully under-educated. That's the perspective I would, personally, put to those

parents seeking to withdraw their child from religious education while attending faith schools.

What's in a name?



● Margaret Atwood [pictured], the Canadian feminist writer, lost her spouse on September 18. The British mainstream media reported that the writer Graeme Gibson was Ms Atwood's 'husband': in Ireland, it was reported that he was her 'partner' – perhaps 'wife' is now regarded by some 'woke' progressives as antediluvian.

But the lady herself described Graeme as not only her husband, but an ideal husband. So there!

● 'Does feminism hate motherhood?' That's the theme of a talk I'm due to give next Wednesday, October 2 at the Davenport Hotel, Dublin at 7.30pm, tracing the genesis of hostility to motherhood to the French feminist Simone de Beauvoir. The talk is sponsored by the Iona Institute and entrance is free.

Tragic side to left-behind dreams

Oughterard has very different connotations for me than the present controversial conflicts over the placing of refugees there in Direct Provision.

Oughterard was always the 'Gateway to Connemara', and during family holidays, when we crossed that bridge over the Owenriff river, by Lough Corrib, we felt we really were in 'the west'.

It was always such a picturesque town, famous for its fishing. Back in the old days, the Anglo-Irish gentry would refer to it as 'Outer-ard', but if their pronunciation was eccentric, their affection for the place was genuine.

An old lady recounted a touching story of life in Oughterard before World War I, when she was a young girl there.

Each year, many of the officers who were serving in the British Army, would come to Oughterard in the mayfly season, in May and June, to fish. She remembered it as a magical time, when there were summer lights around the town, and parties of young people.

Hostilities

Then, they heard, in mid-summer of 1914, that hostilities were threatening in continental Europe and the troops were recalled to prepare for a possible conflict.

So convinced were the anglers that "it would all be over by Christmas" that, she remembered, they left their fishing tackle behind, confident they'd come back to continue fishing.

But none of them ever returned.

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Time for Church to re-introduce prayer to St Michael

The power of Satan is real, and we must pray to overcome it, writes **Fr Pat Collins CM**



According to Pope Leo XIII's private secretary, when the Pontiff had a vision of demonic spirits about to mount an attack on the city of Rome he wrote the prayer to St Michael the Archangel. It reads: "St Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; may God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of

souls. Amen."

In 1886, Leo instructed that the prayer was to be said after every low Mass. However, when the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) were introduced in 1967 the prayer was no longer said after the Celebration of the Eucharist.

Mistake

In retrospect, perhaps that was a mistake. In recent decades it sometimes seems as if all the powers of hell are attacking the Church both from within and from



Pope Leo XIII (inset) and a statue of St Michael the Archangel.



without. Many people feel that Pope St Paul VI was correct when he said in 1972 "from some crack the smoke of Satan has entered the temple of God".

When I spoke about my book *Freedom from Evil Spirits* on the *Late Late Show* in February, I said to Ryan Tubridy that there are reasons in contemporary Ireland to think that a tsunami of evil is threatening to overwhelm us.

Aware that this is so, it is not surprising that recent Popes have encouraged Catholics to recite the prayer to St Michael in private. In 1994 St John Paul II said: "May prayer to St Michael strengthen us for the spiritual battle that the Letter to the Ephesians speaks of: 'be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might'." (Eph. 6:10)

Leo XIII certainly had this picture in mind when, at the end of the last century, he brought in throughout the Church a special prayer to St Michael. Although this prayer is no longer recited at the end of Mass, I ask everyone not to forget it and to recite it to obtain help in the battle against the forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world.

In 2018, Pope Francis echoed those sentiments when he asked Catholics everywhere to pray the Rosary each day during the month of October and to conclude it with the prayer to St Michael to preserve the Church from the attacks of the devil – the great accuser – while at the same time not only making the Church more aware of and resistant to the faults, errors and the abuses committed in the

past, so that evil may not prevail.

Earlier this year I had occasion to conduct two parish missions in Michigan in the US. While there, I found that the prayer to St Michael was being recited after every Mass. When I enquired about it, I was told that bishops in more than a dozen American dioceses have recommended that the prayer should be recited after every Mass.

“One way of responding to St John Paul’s request...is to say the prayer to St Michael the Archangel at the end of each Mass:

That got me thinking. When St John Paul II was in Ireland in 1979 he said in a prophetic way at Limerick: "Your country seems in a sense to be living again the temptations of Christ: Ireland is being asked to prefer the 'kingdoms of the world and their splendour' to the kingdom of God."

Satan, the tempter, the adversary of Christ, will use all his might and all his deceptions to win Ireland for the way of the world... dear sons and daughters of Ireland, pray, pray not to be led into temptation...I ask you today for a great, intense and growing prayer for all the people of Ireland, for the Church in Ireland, for all the Church which owes so much to Ireland. Pray that Ireland may not fail in the test."

Surely, one way of responding to St John Paul's request, which is as relevant today as the time when he made it, is to say the prayer to St Michael the Archangel at the end of each Mass. Perhaps some of our bishops, like their counterparts in the US, will recommend this practice in their dioceses. It is sure to call down great blessing on the Church in our beloved country.

● Fr Pat Collins CM is a Vincentian missionary, exorcist and author of *Freedom from Evil Spirits: Released from Fear, Addiction & the Devil*, published by Columba Books www.columbabooks.com

“In 2018, Pope Francis asked Catholics everywhere to pray the Rosary each day during the month of October and to conclude it with the prayer to St Michael to preserve the Church from the attacks of the devil”

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Greg Daly

Reality spells end of the vocational path for Belfast Adoration Sisters

Catholics across Ireland, and most especially in Belfast, were left perplexed on Monday by the news that onetime top BBC journalist turned trainee nun Martina Purdy had left her Belfast convent, after being told that her congregation was too small to allow her and three other temporarily-professed sisters to continue in formation.

In a statement to BBC Northern Ireland Ms Purdy said: "My congregation – Adoration Réparatrice – has grown too small and fragile to meet the standards of governance required in the Catholic Church. Consequently my religious vows expired this afternoon and I am no longer a Sister of Adoration. This is deeply painful for all concerned."

Subsequently she and another high-profile sister in formation, former barrister Elaine Kelly, published personal statements on Twitter in which they spoke of their disappointment, but also their gratitude to God and to the communities in which they had

lived happily for the last five years.

"Since entering the congregation in 2014, I have had the time of my life and, without question, I would do it all again," Ms Purdy wrote, explaining that with declining numbers the congregation was not in a position to allow any of its temporary professed sisters to become fully professed. Adding that she had now entered a period of discernment and would like people to pray for her, she said: "My desire to carry out my mission remains undiminished."

Circumstances

Similarly, Ms Kelly said while she had never foreseen being required to leave in such circumstances, she understood why "in accordance with canon law and the need for governance in [the] congregation", her formation would have to come to an end.

"The call from Jesus to follow him continues in a new and fresh way," she wrote. "I will take all the amazing experiences and all I've learned as a Religious and carry it with me as I discern the next stage



Martina Purdy at last year's Croke Park Festival of Families in WMOF2018. Photo: Greg Daly

of the journey as a committed Catholic."

Since 2014, the addition of four new members to the Sisters of the Adoration community on the Falls Road has been a small but vibrant sign of life and hope for the Church in Ireland, but it is important to grasp that while the sisters' Belfast was growing, this was not the case elsewhere.

Indeed, neither of the congregation's two other communities – in Ferns, Co. Wexford, and in the motherhouse in Paris – has any new members in

formation, and as was made clear in the Second Vatican Council, religious institutions must have a genuine plausible capacity for growth.

1965's *Perfectae Caritatis* ruled, for instance, that: "There may be communities and monasteries which the Holy See, after consulting the interested local Ordinaries, will judge not to possess reasonable hope for further development. These should be forbidden to receive novices in the future. If it is possible, these should be combined with other more flourishing communities and monasteries whose scope and spirit is similar."

Proportion

The following year, Pope St Paul VI declared in *Ecclesiae Sanctae* that when considering if an institute should be suppressed, factors to be considered include "the small number of Religious in proportion to the age of the institute or the monastery, the lack of candidates over a period of several years, the advanced age of the majority of its

members".

Guidelines around religious life for women have changed recently through 2016's Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere* on women's contemplative life and the subsequent implementing instruction *Cor Orans*. These requested women's monastic communities to revise their constitutions, including around how to suppress congregations and monasteries with aging and declining memberships.

It is unclear whether or not the Adoration Sisters used these documents as a guideline, but these documents have certainly forced many communities in Ireland and elsewhere to look honestly at their viability.

One might expect that the four newly-released former sisters will seek to join another religious order, but there is no guarantee of that. Orders are like families and indeed like spouses in a way, and one would hardly expect every widow to marry again, and certainly not straightaway.

Not all orders are the same, after all: each has their own charism, and it is worth remembering that the Adoration Sisters on the Falls Road have a very distinct role in their West Belfast community. They have, in a sense, a charism within a charism, and now that they are barred from continuing in that vocational path, the former sisters will need time and space for prayerful discernment.

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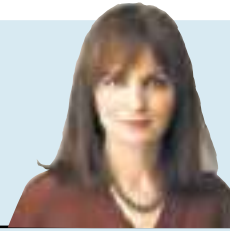
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Maria Steen

The View



Where's the tolerance for dissent?

September is a month that means back to school for most families: new uniforms and bags are donned while the trees shed their leaves and the last of the summer sun wanes.

It is an exciting time, full of expectation that the newness of a fresh start brings. It is, for Catholic parents whose children are starting school for the first time, a new chapter in meeting their divine obligation to educate their children. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes this awesome responsibility as the primary duty of parents towards their children.

In the words of the Second Vatican Council in its declaration on Christian Education, a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share. In other words, as parents and educators we are attempting to form the adult from the child, so that he or she will be able to go out into the world and pursue the task or vocation

that God has planned for him or her, remembering that the ultimate end that each one of us should be pursuing is heaven.

But can what is being taught in Catholic schools truly be called a Catholic education? Because of the State's involvement in our schools – usually in the form of paying teachers' salaries – there are influences that are distinctly un-Catholic – and even anti-Catholic.

Effort

Over the last number of years, the State has been busily planning reforms in the area of religious teaching and relationships and sexuality education (RSE). If only they would put as much effort into literacy and numeracy, our children



would be better off. Instead, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), which is a statutory body that advises the Minister for Education, is intent on diluting any possible religious influence in schools, and intensifying emphasis on explicit sex education.

Meanwhile, the Provision of Objective Sex Education Bill, which the government has said it will not oppose, seeks to make it compulsory that children – including primary school children – be taught about different types of sexuality, different types of gender, methods of contraception and abortion.

The Bill proposes that schools and boards of management be allowed to uphold the ethos of the school in all areas except RSE. The report on RSE by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Skills published in January of this year makes similar proposals.

This approach to RSE is antithetical to Catholic teaching. For instance, those proposing the bill think that abortion should be taught to children as a right and a good, a freedom for women. As a Catholic, I see it as oppressive of women and a terrible injustice done to an innocent baby. These are irreconcilable positions. They represent totally different values and worldviews.

If people want to raise their children with the belief that human life has no intrinsic value, I am not going to force them to do otherwise. But note: it is the secularists who want to force religious people to be taught something that goes against their traditions, beliefs and conscience.

They want to impose their worldview on all children and their parents. So the question is: who's the liberal now? Where's the tolerance for dissent?

The identifying mark of a Catholic education is that it takes a certain moral outlook, based on the idea that it acknowledges God as creator who has revealed certain truths and His laws to us, and to whom reverence is due.

“The world is content with setting right the surface of things”

Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, who is canonised on October 13, expressed this purpose of Catholic education in his series of discourses given in Dublin in 1852, later published as *The Idea of a University*. He wrote of how the Church's involvement in university education does not focus on intellectual pursuits for their own sake, but for the sake of religion, for the sake of the Church's children and their moral and intellectual good, their usefulness in God's plan.

We should be able to say the same of any

Catholic school. Can we? Does God's plan for every individual child's life figure in the school day, in what is being taught and how? Are secondary school children encouraged to be ambitious and pursue worldly goals, not for their own sake, in Newman's words, but rather to fulfil the task set to them by God? Is God's law taught and respected in Catholic schools? And if not, how are they different from any other school? What is the point of a Catholic school that does not teach Catholic doctrine or put God at the centre of the school day?

Classrooms

Many, including some committed Catholics, are now of the view that it would be better for the Church to take religion out of the classroom and leave it to the parishes to catechise children. While I am all for more and better catechesis in parishes, I think that we cannot allow religion to leave the school and the classroom. To do so would be to fail our children miserably. Our faith is not something we put on or take off depending on where we are, but rather the very core of our being. And of course, to remove religion completely from schools merely clears the path for a so-called “neutral” education that is in truth opposed and hostile to our religion and its precepts.

As Cardinal Newman says, the world is content with setting right the surface of things; the Church aims at regenerating the very depths of the heart. A Catholic education then requires the education of the whole person, particularly the interior. For as Christ says, “what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but lose his soul?” And so a Catholic education speaks to the mind, body, heart and soul.

If we are trying to teach our children, not just to reach their potential in academic or other terms, but also to become good people with a love of God, should we not by lesson and example be telling them to make their relationship with God part of their every day?

Isn't that what he deserves from our children, and what our children deserve from us?

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Needed: an environmentalist Temperance movement



A 'Green Pledge' could be an important step forward, writes **David Quinn**

What should the Church itself do about climate change? Some parishes now have climate change committees and various religious orders have long had a strong commitment to preserving the environment. Pope Francis has made it a central theme of his pontificate.

The last time concern for the future of the planet was so great was probably in the 1970s. Back then, there were warnings that resources were about to run out, hundreds of millions of people would die of starvation and hundreds of thousands of species would become extinct. Fortunately, none of these predictions came to pass.

Some scientists in the 1970s even warned that the planet was cooling, not heating, and that a new Ice Age might be on the way.

Now we have scientists warning that unless we take drastic action to reduce carbon emissions the planet will continue to heat up causing extreme weather, droughts, rising sea levels, mass extinction and food shortages.

It is hard to defy a scientific consensus. It seems we must believe them.

Industrial revolution

Carbon emissions are, of course, caused by the burning of fossil fuels like coal and gas and oil. Fossil fuels have given us the energy that drove forward the industrial revolution. They have created our prosperity and drastically reduced poverty in countries like China and India over the past few decades alone as they modernise their economies.

But the downside is that



the planet is heating up as a result of the CO₂ released by the burning of fossil fuels and the consequences are potentially catastrophic.

So, we need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. The very difficult trick will be to do this quickly without severely damaging the economy.

To return to the first question, what can the Church do, beyond preaching? It is obviously very easy to speak against global warming. It is much harder to do something concrete that will actually make a difference.

“One thing parishes (and religious orders) could do is start a climate change version of the Pioneers”

The Government is encouraging us all to insulate our homes, to move to renewable energy and to switch to electric cars. Presently, it offers subsidies to help us. There is also a small carbon tax on fuel, and this is set to increase in the coming budget and then again in subsequent budgets. This will make it even more expensive to heat our homes and drive our cars unless we move to renewable energy.

If parishes are serious about fighting climate change, then they need to think about doing the same thing. As this paper reported a few weeks ago, some are already (literally) putting their money with their mouth is. That is, they have installed renewable heating systems in their churches and improved their insulation.

But even with subsidies, it is an expensive business, running into tens of thousands of euro. Many parishes in poorer areas will never be able to make this transition.

And if it is expensive for churches to reduce their carbon footprint, it is obviously also expensive for individual households to do it, or to switch to electric cars. For the time being, only the affluent can afford to make the switch unless a family is willing to make big financial sacrifices.

Something else parishes may need to look at are overseas pilgrimages. Air travel emits lot of carbon thereby contributing to global warming. Can a parish both preach against climate change and organise several pilgrimages a year that send so much CO₂ into the atmosphere? That is a hard square to circle.

One thing parishes (and religious orders) could do is start a climate change version of the Pioneers. The aim of the Pioneers, in common with other temperance organisations was (and is) to reduce alcohol consumption.

The aim of a climate change version would be to encourage Catholics to reduce their carbon emissions. In a way, it would be another temperance movement. This time, we would be moderating behaviour that harms the planet. There could even be a new version of the Pledge.

Those taking the Pledge would consider whether they really need to go on that foreign holiday, or could they holiday in Ireland instead?

They would look at their mobile phone usage. The more powerful a smartphone is, and the more you use it, the more electricity it burns. The burgeoning mobile

heating systems and better insulation as soon as they could afford to, and maybe economise in other areas of their lives to let that happen.

The temperance movement of the past is considered now to have been a failure, but actually that is not the case because it had great success in reducing levels of alcohol consumption.

“Many who claim to be ‘Green’ are not practicing what they preach”

In fact, in a way the movement became too successful for its own good. It overreached, and in the US introduced Prohibition which lasted throughout the 1920s.

But even after Prohibition was lifted at the end of

1933, alcohol use in America remained at half what it had been before Prohibition resulting in many saved lives. Consumption of alcohol in the US did not reach its pre-Prohibition level until the 1970s.

If an entire society can be persuaded to change the way it consumes something as radically embedded in our culture as drink, perhaps we can also dramatically reduce our carbon footprints?

At present, a great many of those who claim to be ‘Green’ are not practicing what they preach. Clearly, self-professed environmentalists are going to have to lead the way by living Green and showing the rest of us it can be done. The Church can help by launching a new, Green temperance movement aimed squarely at practicing Catholics.



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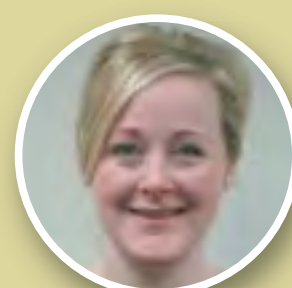
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A matter of conscience



There is a danger that conscientious objection will only be allowed when it can make little difference, writes **Dr Keith Holmes**

Conscientious Objection in Health Care describes medical scenarios where clinicians refuse to engage in a clinical activity on the grounds that such participation would contravene their ethical moral or religious beliefs. While this may apply to a variety of areas, the most frequent scenarios include abortion, euthanasia, and physician assisted suicide.

The legal situation in Ireland in respect of conscientious objection and abortion is that any individual may refuse to participate in a scenario involving abortion, but must ensure, if they do so, that a speedy referral is made to a colleague who will carry out the procedure. In other words, one must not frustrate the process by referring to a colleague who may also conscientiously object.

While employees of a Health Authority may object to carrying out a procedure, the Authority itself must ensure that the procedure can be carried out; in other words an individual may be a conscientious objector but an organisation, in receipt of public funding, cannot.

Judgements

St Thomas Aquinas, the renowned Dominican Theologian, described conscience succinctly as "the mind of man making moral judgements". Christian and Catholic teaching is that one must obey one's conscience absolutely, which can create a conflict with the law of the land. Therefore one is duty-bound to ensure that one's conscience is as fully informed as is reasonably possible.

The secular under-



standing of conscience rejects the notion of a higher authority. If one takes a utilitarian view, which seeks the benefit of the greatest number of people, it leaves a very vulnerable group, including the unborn, the elderly, the weak, and those less able to advocate for themselves. In contrast, a faith-based perspective, as the Australian bioethicist Archbishop Anthony Fisher states, is that "all human beings matter, matter equally, and matter very much".

Conscientious objection was first described in modern times in the US, when the Society of Friends (The Quakers) refused to participate in Military Service in the US Army on moral and religious grounds, and were granted exemptions. Subsequently, with the enactment of the Abortion Act in the UK in 1967 and the legalisation of abortion in the US in 1973 when the Church Amendment was introduced, the notion of conscientious objection in health care gained traction.

Why is conscientious objection a problem?

In essence, people reject conscientious objection on grounds that divide broadly into those which are philosophically based and those which are based on service delivery.

Those who object on a philosophical basis argue that there is no place for religion in the law, that religion, if one chooses to

engage in it, is a private matter, but should in no way interfere with how one carries out one's job, and certainly not in contravention of the law of the land.

The argument against conscientious objection on the basis of service delivery is perhaps easier to understand. This argument states that if professionals object on whatever grounds, that they are creating a barrier to access of whatever service that might be.

This would inevitably lead to an inefficient delivery of service, might result in patient's having to travel large distances, and indeed at times may result in professionals seeking to avoid the less appealing or more challenging aspects of their profession, by an appeal to conscience.

Conflict

Essentially it pitches conscience, which Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights describes as a basic human right, in conflict with patient self-determination which others would see as being of paramount value.

It remains unclear as yet the extent to which Obstetricians and General Practitioners will evoke conscientious objection in cases involving abortion, and similar scenarios are likely to play out with euthanasia and doctor-assisted suicide into the future.

International practice suggests that conscientious

clearly stated conscientious objection. This results in a dilution, over the years, of those who would be conscientious objectors.

In addition, the law that stands challenges the notion of Catholic Health Care, whereby publicly funded organisation which provides services for a designated catchment area cannot shirk its responsibility under the law.

“The argument against conscientious objection on the basis of service delivery is perhaps easier to understand”

In summary therefore, conscientious objection is well described, well recognised, and seen in many ways as being a basic human right. In the current dispensation, following the new legislation pursuant to the

repeal of the Eighth Amendment, and bolstered by a directive from the Medical Council, it is incumbent on doctors who conscientiously object to carrying out abortion to nonetheless ensure a speedy referral to those who will, and thus finding themselves acting as agents, and working for an organisation which must itself ensure that such procedures are carried out.

We have a considerable deficit to make up until true conscientious objection is allowed, and sadly, as has been described, it will probably only come to pass when those who conscientiously object are such a minority that it makes little difference to the profession as a whole.

Keith Holmes is a Consultant Child Psychiatrist at the Lucena Clinic, St John of Gods. He is a past council member of the Irish College of Psychiatry and current President of the Irish Catholic Doctor's Learning Network.

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After celebrating Mass in a church high in the South African mountains, an Irish missionary saw a man approaching him in a way that spelled danger; he had not seen him at the service.

While working as a priest the now Archbishop Emeritus Liam Slattery OFM was stabbed just after Mass. He fortunately managed to avoid a fatal wound by dodging the knife aimed straight at his chest.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about his 1993 ordeal, Archbishop Slattery says of his attacker: "He wasn't at Mass or anything like that, he was just walking past and he came around, next thing I saw was a big white handkerchief with a knife in it.

"So I got out of the way the first time, being accustomed to hurling in Tipperary, but I fell over my bag which was on the floor and he got me across the back. When I got up I was able to take him on, then he ran away.

"It was a weekday Mass, it was all women and children and older people. So no-one helped me. I could feel blood all over my body, I drove myself to the hospital about 40km on a bad road and I fainted when I got in there."

Wound

He described the wound as looking like a cross down the middle of his back. After being in the hospital for an hour the whole congregation arrived in the back of the lorry – about 120 people – "all roaring and crying and lifting up my jacket and my bloodstained vest".

Shortly after he returned home he was approached by the Papal Nuncio of South Africa who informed him the Pope wanted to appoint him a bishop. He refused.

Chai Brady speaks to an Irish missionary about the Church in South Africa, and what the Irish Church can learn from it



"I said no, I came out her to be a missionary, I'm a Franciscan, I came out to serve the people and do the work of the poor really," Dr Slattery says.

"So they went off, I gave them other names, but they came back three months later and... they insisted." He was appointed Bishop of Kokstad.

“At the time, 87% of land was reserved for ownership by white people, despite black people making up a vast majority of the population”

Born in Portlaoise, Archbishop Slattery spent most of his childhood in Killenaule, Co. Tipperary – near Thurles and Cashel. He has two brothers and two sisters, one of whom is a Sister of Charity.

Going to school in Franciscan-founded Gormanstown College in Meath helped him learn about the order and their charism, coupled with reading missionary magazines delivered to his house. Archbishop Slattery's vocation became clearer – he wanted to be a priest and work on the missions. This is what he pursued after completing his Leaving Cert in 1962.

He studied in UCG and Rome until eventually he was ordained in 1970 in Rome, he described joining the priesthood as a "wonderful decision, I would

make it again". Archbishop Slattery spent a few months waiting for his visa in Ireland before arriving in South Africa in 1971, where he would spend almost 50 years strengthening the Church by a plethora of means, all in the context of complex politics, severe violence and protests, apartheid and many more challenges.

Archbishop Slattery described the country at the time of his arrival as the "land of apartheid" in which he experienced first-hand the systemic racism black people faced.

Two weeks after his arrival he was asked to do a funeral, so he went to get the coffin and the remains of the deceased. The morgue had two sections, whites and non-whites, so "even in death they were separated", he recollects.

"You felt terrible about it, because you were working in African parishes and you were always meeting your people in town and when you stop to greet them some of the white people would look at you and things like that," he says.

"For example if my fellow priest, an African, wanted to go in to get fast food or anything like that, they couldn't go in."

In one of the roadhouses which are dotted along the vast country where people would stop to get food, he recollects a story that really brought home the unjust treatment of black people when he was travelling with a fellow priest.

He says: "They would serve me with a plate and



they would give him a paper plate, sitting beside me. It was everywhere apartheid. It was absolutely unbelievable.

"As well as that you'd feel terrible, you'd walk in and there'd be a whole line of people in a shop, African people, and you'd walk in at the end of the line of course and the shopkeeper would say 'yes, can I help you?' over the heads of all those old African people. It was an awful situation, gosh it was a blood curdling situation."

“After that he went to work in Johannesburg after learning the local language, Sesotho”

Archbishop Slattery says he would endeavour to stay out of a situation in which he would be advantaged because of his colour, but it was difficult because of segregation in almost everything, beaches,

transport etc.

"When they began to run out of whites, for example if you went to a cinema, since Africans and coloured people were not allowed into cinemas they had to use these young girls to show you your seat with a torch. They had to reverse to the screen because they were not supposed to look at the screen, it was an unbelievable country," he says.

* * * * *

At the time, 87% of land was reserved for ownership by white people, despite black people making up a vast majority of the population.

"So left right and centre you were hit with it. The way you responded to it: first of all you worked really hard, extremely hard above all to provide services for our African people, Church services."

The vast majority of his work was among black people, he says, but he also met some "fine white people as well".

"I found fine people among all groups but certainly racism was prevalent in South Africa at that time."

The first five months he spent after he arrived were in the mountains, in a region called Lesotho, an enclaved country within South Africa. The mission was only accessible by plane. Working in the nearby townships, the then priest would travel by horse and cart to 24 chapels below the mission.

He says: "You'd be away for a week and sleep on the floor of the schoolhouse and in the morning then you'd have baptisms, confession, confirmation, Mass, funerals, blessing tombstones, the whole day with the people in that particular place."

“The policy was to allow in one Catholic for every 15 Protestants, which was the admission that they applied to Catholics coming into the country”

"Then in the afternoon you'd head off to the next place, over the mountains. Fantastic mountains, 9,000 feet above sea level, then you'd go on, same process again, 10-12 hours."

Sleeping on a cow dung floor in a sleeping bag, he learned to take his tea without milk or sugar. After that he went to work in Johannesburg after learning the local language, Sesotho – one of the 11 official languages in South Africa.



Archbishop Emeritus Liam Slattery OFM. Photo: Chai Brady



Police patrol the streets after overnight unrest and looting in Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo: CNS

Nowadays he speaks all of them.

Catholic churches did not segregate people by colour, he says, but because there were black and white areas most people stuck to their local church.

“I used to visit houses all the time, so I had a tremendous knowledge of people”

Regarding the Church response to apartheid, Archbishop Slattery says the government terminated the visas of 11 Franciscans because of their work with black communities, and that there would be people listening during church sermons who would report to government officials what was being said.

“I had to wait nine years before I got a permanent visa to be in South Africa, I had to renew it every six months, temporary visa. Whereas other people, the people that they wanted in South Africa, those people would get a visa before they leave their home country,” he says.

“The white government in South Africa said there were two great dangers for the future of South Africa, the black danger and the Roman Catholic danger.

“And in fact the policy of the department of interior was to allow in one Catholic for every 15 Protestants, which was the admission that they applied to Catholics coming into the country.” This was done in order

to maintain the proportions of various churches as they were, according to Dr Slattery. The number of Catholics currently in South Africa number around 9%, between 3-4 million people.

Tragic situation

During his time in South Africa the archbishop also worked with miners who were in a “tragic situation because a lot of them were dying young and I mean once a week you’d nearly be called up to wheel out a wheelbarrow and bury someone”. A meagre sum was sent to their family after their death.

Later becoming a novice master, training parish priests in Kwazulu-Natal, he spent 10 years there.

“I used to visit houses all the time, so I had a tremendous knowledge of people, and individuals and languages and culture and things like that,” he says.

“There you were very conscience again of apartheid, because that area, we had a farm there, but all the other farms were white farms.”

They were trying to create white areas and black areas to “consolidate” them.

“Now in Kwazulu-Natal there were 27 spots, they called them black spots were the majority were Africans, and they were trying to move the people out of those spots. We were fighting against that as well and trying to help the people.”

* * * * *

Continuing his teaching role he became the rector of St John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria for seven years,

which he described as “tough”. They had about 80-90 students, black and white people, which the government said was illegal. Archbishop Slattery says they received many letters and threats of closure.

“It was also different interiorly because 75% of the students were African and it was the time of the struggle, Steve Biko and all those years in the 1980s, ANC (Africa National Congress), liberation of Mandela was on the cards but it didn’t happen for years – all that was going on.

“So 75% of your students are totally in favour of that, and then you have 25% of students who are white and they saw the liberation of Mandela as the introduction of communism to South Africa.

“You’d have in the church one student praying for the liberation of Mandela, Lord Hear Us, and then the next student would be praying for the suppression of the Communists and God bless our government in their struggle at the border – they were involved in the struggles in Angola, Namibia and Mozambique. You’re trying to keep those groups together.”

Despite the challenges the seminary managed, and now several of his former students are now bishops. One particular occasion some of the seminarians asked if they could join a protests outside South Africa’s parliament, which had to be discussed. “But I said we have to let them express themselves, so 37 of them put on their cassocks, which they generally didn’t wear, got rosary beads and headed off down the road and arrived in front of the union building when there was an international press conference taking place, and they were on the BBC news that afternoon.

“The present South African government is much more favourable to the Church...”

“Giving them outlets like that, that they can show that they’re part of the struggle, that they shared their people’s struggle, in that way you allow them to feel that they’re involved.

“You have to acknowledge who they are. They were right, what they were protesting against was: asking for the release of Mandela, for free and democratic elections, for the abolishment of apartheid, for free education and things

like that: that’s what they were looking for.”

It was in 1993 that he was appointed Bishop of Kokstad, after the stabbing incident, which he was embarrassed by because his ordination took place in 1994, and that year the first democratic election took place and Nelson Mandela was elected.

“This is totally hitting at the very meaning of Christianity which is care, blessing, hope”

He says: “In other words it was the emergence of a black majority government – I felt I was going into a diocese which was rural, but I felt that it’s the time for black people.” The people were “fantastically receptive” however, he says, “even though it’s a 95% African diocese”.

“Between 1994 and 2003, those first nine years were when AIDS ravaged South Africa. I do know that up to 8% of the population of South Africa are HIV positive.

Now it was only after 2003 that the government woke up to the fact, and now has given the ARVs but the people won’t take them and they won’t get tested, many of them, even to this day and they’ve a terrible job,” he says.

Speaking of the Church’s role in the country he says it “did a fantastic service in South Africa as regards schooling, getting people into schools, social services. All the first rural clinics in South Africa were built by the Church, all, the first rural clinics in the whole country”.

The present South African government is much more favourable to the Church, with Archbishop Slattery saying in a meeting in March of this year with President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa, the issue of marriage and family was broached.

“He was telling me that last year if you read the birth certificates of all the children born in South Africa, 62% have no father’s name on their birth certificate,” he says.

“It a huge problem then,

so marriage and family are very insecure, and that’s all very well you know, living in with your companion or your partner, but ultimately when marriage weakens you know the lives of children weaken as well. Their formation, their security and all that is weakened.”

“There’s a tremendous enrichment in knowing Jesus Christ and we have to put people in contact with him, give them the confidence of that but that means living a life that’s simple, living a life that’s for the people, of service of the people that teaches and informs. If the priests do that they will hold a minority, a remnant, but the Bible is full of remnants, small groups who have remained faithful over the years.”


Dr Slattery’s resignation as Archbishop of Pretoria was accepted by Pope Francis in April, with Bishop Dabula Mpako taking the reigns – a former student of his. He is currently spending some time in Ireland before he returns to South Africa.

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Out&About

Council for Life meets in Maynooth



KILDARE: Chair Bishop Kevin Doran gathers with members of the Council for Life at their first meeting in the Columba Centre, Maynooth.



CLARE: Fr Joe Haugh and Fr Gerry Kenny of Doonbeg parish make a presentation to sacristan Jerzy Kandler who returns home to his native Poland.



DUBLIN: Putting the finishing touches to new panels dedicated to the life of Mary Aikenhead at Gardiner Street Church are Sr Ellis Coe and Sr Phyllis. Photo: Chris Bellew/Fennell Photography



TYRONE: Year 14 pupils from Omagh's Sacred Heart College celebrate their formal.



DUBLIN: Altar servers preparing to process to the altar at a Mass in DCU St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, for the beginning of the school year. Photo: John McElroy

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



▲ **CARLOW:** Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo and Kildare and Leighlin's Bishop Denis Nulty stand at the Trócaire stand as part of the National Ploughing Championships 2019 in Ballintranee.

◀ **CORK:** Four new novices, Bro. Bruno Mary Kelleher, Bro. Nathan Peer, Bro. Mark Murphy and Bro. Laurence Augustine Rigney, stand with Fr Gregory Carroll OP, Prior Provincial, and Fr Philip Mulryne OP, Master of Novices, after receiving their habits.



MAYO: Ballintubber Abbey welcomes its first of two Maltese groups visiting Ireland to take part in a pilgrimage on the Five Pilgrim Paths of Ireland. Photo: Michael Donnelly

IN SHORT

Malta pilgrims make mark in Mayo

After a year of planning, Mayo's Ballintubber Abbey recently welcomed its first of two Maltese groups visiting the Emerald Isle to take part in a pilgrimage on the Five Pilgrim Paths of Ireland.

The ancient area has been celebrating Mass and religious services continuously for over 800 years, and it was in this spirit that the group organiser James Portelli decided that the group would have a priest and that every morning they would attend Mass.

"Just four of our group attended the optional Mass on the first day of our Pilgrimage on the Pilgrim

Paths of Ireland. On the last day 27 pilgrims participated. A spiritual transformation had certainly taken part in the course of those six days." The pilgrims started on St Kevin's Way, Glendalough (30k), they then walked St Finbarr's Pilgrim Path in Co. Cork (37k), undertook the Pilgrim way at Cnoc na dTobar in Kerry (9k), Cosán na Naomh in the Dingle Peninsula (18k) and finally, the challenge of Tóchar Phádraig, the Pilgrim Path from Ballintubber Abbey to Croagh Patrick (30k). In all, the distance walked was 124 kilometres.

On the final evening the group had a banquet and the Pilgrim Passports were stamped and all were presented with the Teastas Oílithreachta, 'The Pilgrim

Certificate'.

James compared the Irish pilgrimage to the Camino in terms of antiquity, culture, spirituality, captivating scenery, ecology and Christian inspiration and challenge. He hopes to bring other groups from Malta and Italy in the future.

Undertaking the challenge of the Medieval Pilgrim Paths of Ireland is something that is gaining traction – not only with foreign groups but with Irish people.

For more information about the work of Ballintubber Abbey or the Pilgrim Path see: <https://www.ballintubberabbey.ie/> and <https://www.pilgrimpath.ie/>

ARMAGH

Mass of Thanksgiving in St Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday, October 12, at 1pm to celebrate the 80th year of Apostolic Work in the archdiocese.

On Sunday, September 29, special prayers will be offered at the 5.30pm Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral to mark the 40th anniversary of the visit of Pope Saint John Paul II to Ireland.

CLARE

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

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

CORK

Rosary Rally in Cork on Saturday, September 28. Assemble at the City Library, Grand Parade at 2pm and proceed to St Mary's, Popes Quay for Mass to mark the beginning of the Fatima Novena.

Weekend of prayer, praise, worship and healing in Charleville Park Hotel on November 9-10. Keynote speaker is Fr Pat Collins with Sr Josephine Walsh, Msgr Finbarr O'Leary and Fr John Keane. Mir Music Ministry. Mass and Confessions both days. Closing Mass will be celebrated by Bishop William Crea.

DERRY

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

St Maria Goretti Prayer Movement: Prayer for healing for victims of abuse and reparation for the Church. First Holy Hour of prayer in the Immaculate Conception Church, Trench Road Derry at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell, on the third Tuesday of every month.

DUBLIN

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

FERMANAGH

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

GALWAY

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

Day of prayer and reflection at Emmanuel House, Clonfert, on October 5 at 10.30am led by Eddie Stones and team. Please bring a packed lunch.

KERRY

Weekly Monday prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, from 8-9.30pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

KILDARE

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

KILKENNY

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

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

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

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

A memorial Mass celebrating the life of St Francis of Assisi, including blessing of the sick and veneration of his relic, will take place in the Augustinian Church, Drogheda on Wednesday, October 2 at 7.30pm. Celebrant: Fr John Dalton OFM.

MAYO

The Pope John Paul II Award National Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine will be held on Friday, September 27, from 11am-4pm.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Church of St Joseph and the Immaculate Conception Bohola every Wednesday from 10am until 10pm.

MEATH

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

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

ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

WEXFORD

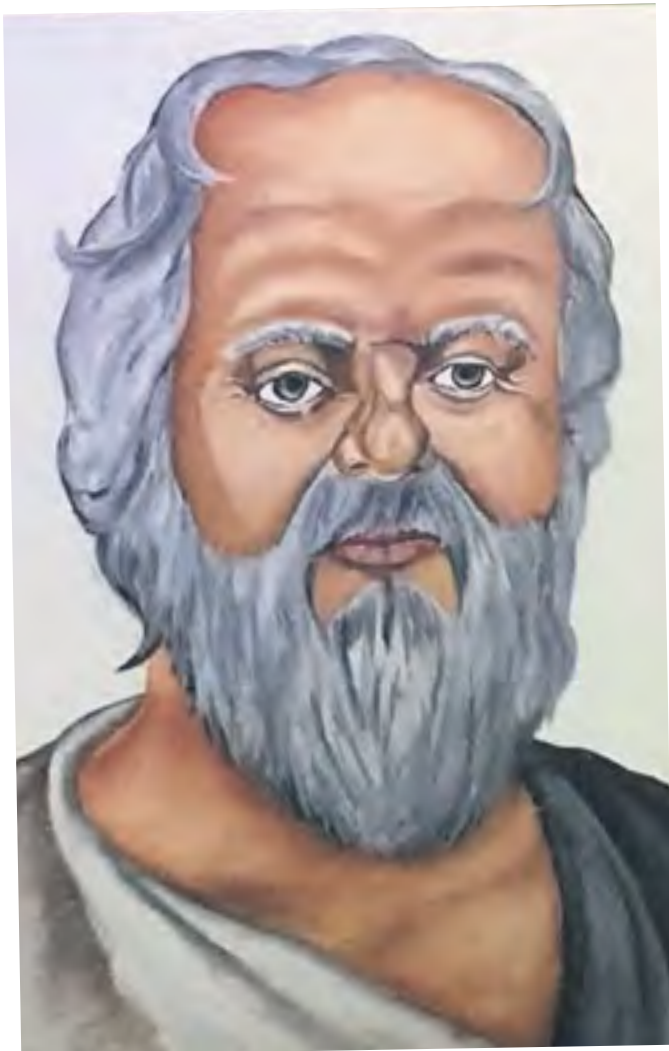
Taizé prayer services every first and third Friday at 8pm in Good Counsel College Chapel, New Ross.

WICKLOW

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

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

Unleashing talent behind



Prisoners in Ethiopia have been shedding

light on remarkable people who made a huge contribution to our world, writes **Fr Paddy Moran CSSp**

Recently an exhibition of Irish prison art was put on display in the historic Kilmainham Gaol. The exhibition was entitled 'Unlock' and was described as a "showcase of the work of Irish prisoners and prison teachers revealing a more positive side of prison life". A most excellent idea to celebrate that which is positive.

Over in Ethiopia another exhibition connected with a prison art programme is going on at present.

A number of years ago the Spiritans began an art project in Arba Minch prison in southern Ethiopia. On six occasions Irish artists were brought over to teach the male and female prisoners. The classes were a great foundation for a programme that

continues to this present day.

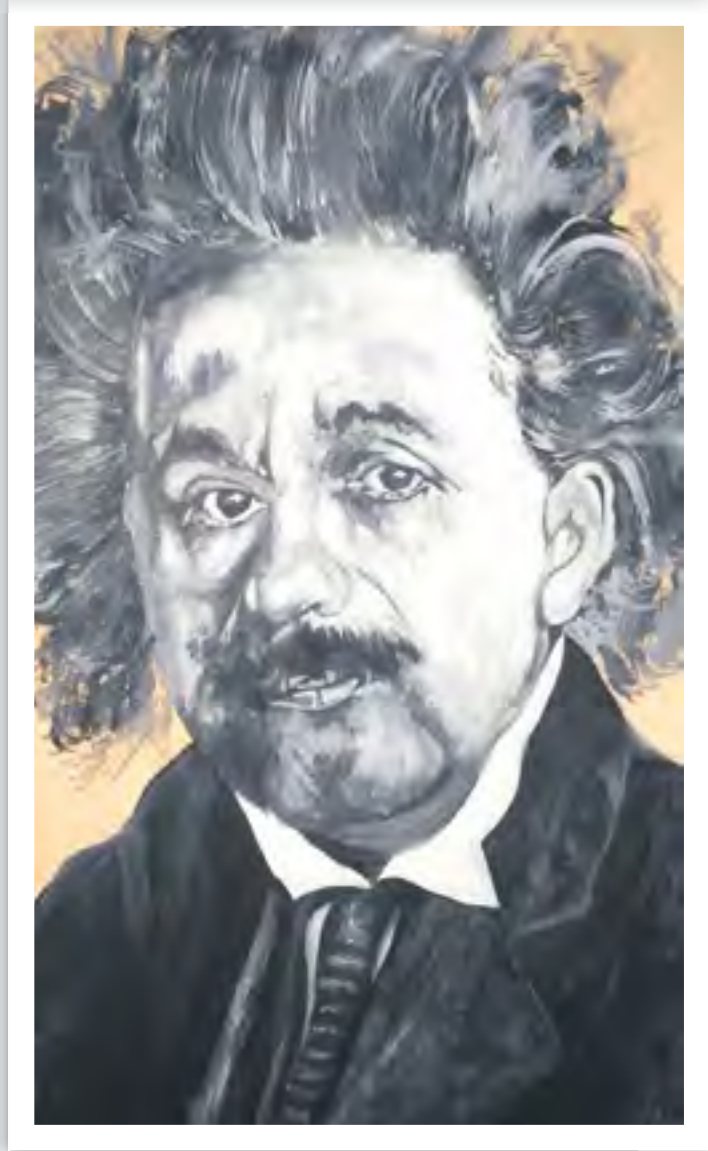
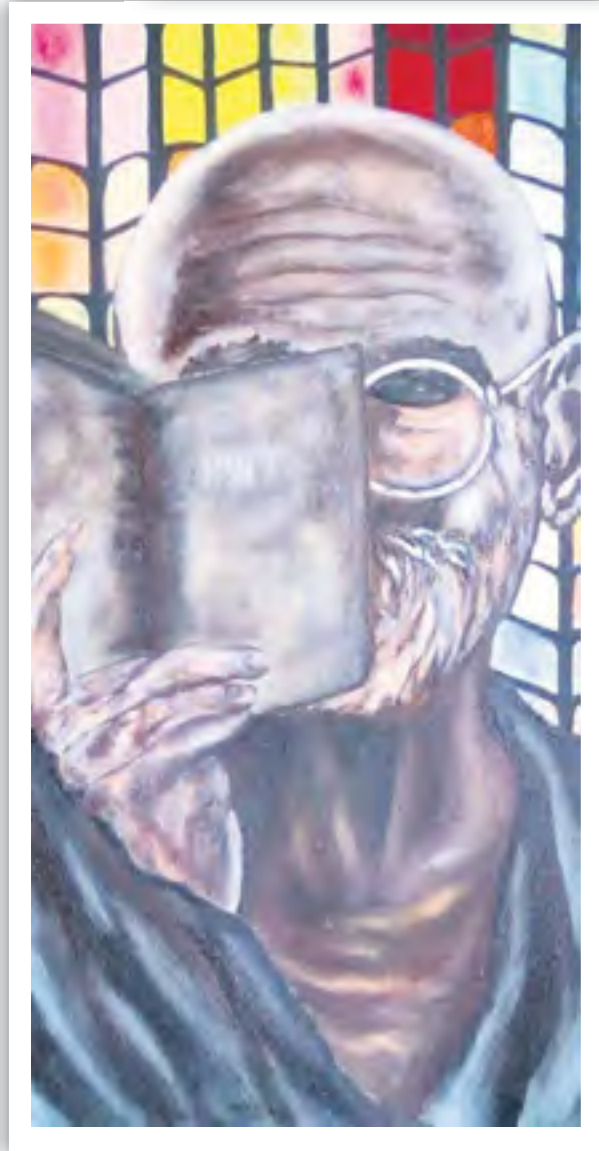
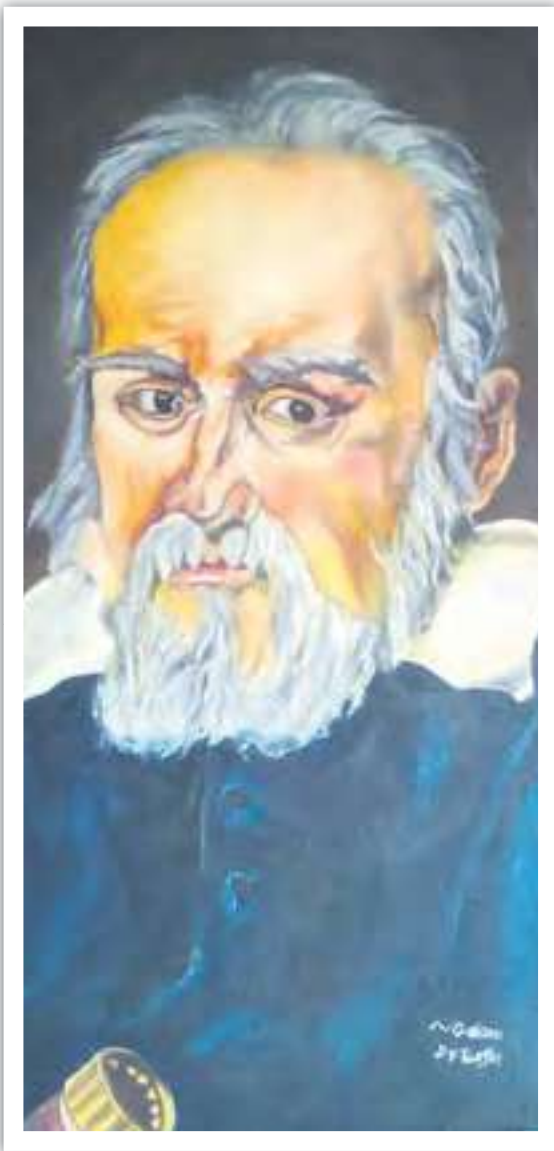
As well as those who paint full-time in the prison there are now three painters who have left the prison and are now working full-time as artists. One of those released artists, TesfaMichael Yohannes, recently was commissioned to create a series of paintings to be exhibited in a new public library in Arba Minch. He created the 'Genius collection' as a celebration of extraordinary people who have made enormous contributions to our world.

TesfaMichael is the fruit of the prison art programme. He learnt his skills as a prisoner but was determined to carry that learning into life after prison. As well as developing his own art practice he also as a free man returns to the prison three days a week to teach other prisoners how to paint. This is his collection.

Fr Paddy Moran CSSp was a missionary in Ethiopia for 11 years. Presently he is the *Vocations Director for the Spiritans in Ireland*. For more information on becoming a Spiritan missionary his e-mail is youth@spiritan.ie



the bars



Padre Pio's Stigmata: an unusual message of hope for today's Catholics



We have to keep hoping in the midst of crises and in the face of our fears, writes **Fr Thomas Casey SJ**

They're not ornaments you know," Padre Pio once exclaimed to a zealous pilgrim who grabbed his hands so firmly that the Capuchin saint began to writhe in pain. Padre Pio suffered from the stigmata – wounds in his hands, side, feet and shoulder – and he also suffered from the publicity they brought. But he didn't lose his sense of humour, and after a medical examination that seemed to go on forever he joked: "It's better to be a mouse between two cats than Padre Pio between two doctors!"

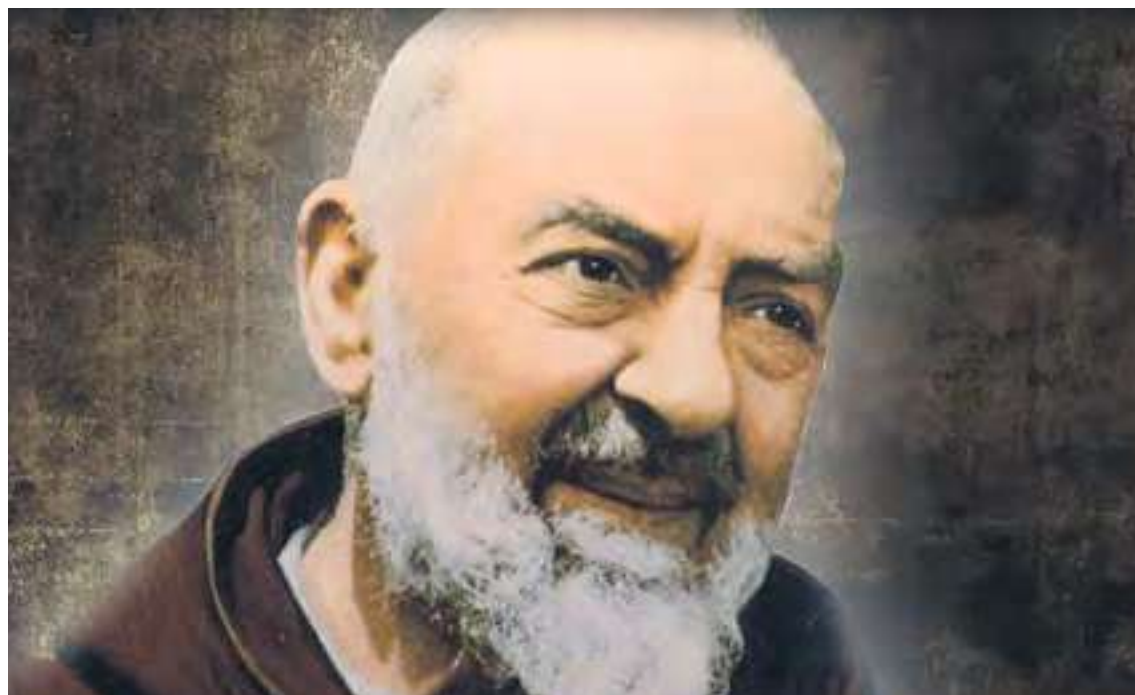
Born Francesco Forgione in 1887 in Pietrelcina, he spent most of his priestly life in the town of San Giovanni Rotondo. Canonised by Pope John Paul II in 2002, Padre Pio's feast day is September 23, the date of his death in 1968.

Padre Pio is probably the most loved saint in Italy, a kind of modern-day Francis of Assisi. The devotion of Irish people for this revered Capuchin friar almost equals the fervour of the Italians, and many of our compatriots have taken this stigmatist and mystic to their hearts.

Black hair

It was only when I visited San Giovanni Rotondo that I began to see how deeply he still touches people. At Padre Pio's tomb in the crypt of the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie (St Mary of the Graces), people of all ages knelt and sat in prayer.

A young father with an untidy mop of black hair pushed a buggy toward the railing surrounding the tomb. He prayed for a few moments, before hastily genuflecting as he turned to go. In the church above, a young family entered. The father, a swarthy figure in an ill-fitting jacket, walked up to a side-altar, with his wife and little daughter a few steps behind. He shifted awkwardly on his feet as he



fingered a bouquet of flowers in his hand, before placing it next to a large squat candle. He blessed himself and, kissing his right finger, walked back outside with his family.

Padre Pio's most obvious wounds were the stigmata, which continued to bleed for 50 years. But he also suffered from periods of darkness and desolation, moments where he felt "pitched past pitch of grief", in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, and wondered what his life was all about and where it was going.

“It was in September 1918, just a couple of months before the end of the First World War, that Padre Pio received the stigmata in a mystical vision...”

Maybe that's why so many people feel they can bring him their own questions and their own inner struggles. They intuitively know that Padre Pio kept hoping against hope. Although he hoped that

the sufferings and difficulties he experienced weren't the final word, he didn't know how and when they would clear up.

He didn't demand that God would resolve everything in a particular way and by a particular deadline. And yet no matter what happened, and even when things became worse for him instead of better, he kept hoping. Nothing shook him from hoping: that's what gave his hope such astonishing power.

* * * * *

It was in September 1918, just a couple of months before the end of the First World War, that Padre Pio received the stigmata in a mystical vision after celebrating Mass. He was 31 years old at the time. Christian tradition understands such phenomena as signs of identification with the suffering Christ. And down through the ages some Christians have opened themselves up to God so generously that they have become identified in this intimate way with the sufferings of Christ.

But when Padre Pio's stigmata were brought to the attention of medical experts, several doctors doubted their authenticity. Various

theories were put forward to explain them – some claimed they were psychologically produced, others maintained they were self-inflicted lesions.

Still others wondered whether they were the result of deep trauma. Gradually a deeper wisdom won out: the conviction that Padre Pio's stigmata pointed to a mystery beyond any medical explanation.

During my brief visit to San Giovanni Rotondo, I noticed few people who were physically incapacitated. Perhaps those who came to pay their respects had wounds that were not so visible: stigmata I could not see. I wondered had they broken relationships, mood disorders or difficult careers.

Ordinary people

It struck me how much Padre Pio still touches the lives of ordinary people – and not always people you would expect to see in church, yet people who want something real and believe that Padre Pio can help them acquire it.

Suffering is one of the words that comes to mind when we think of Padre Pio. Is there a message in this for Catholics in general?

The sight of Padre Pio

undergoing such a visible crucifixion may just be a prophetic sign that the Catholic Church has to undergo its own suffering, its own death, and not the glorious one for which it might have wished.

But instead a journey it never anticipated – the slow sapping of its energy, the helplessness of feeling overwhelmed, a difficult path where the light of the Resurrection is only dim and distant, where "love is not a victory march – it's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah" (Leonard Cohen).

But suffering is not the only word or even the principal word that comes to mind with reference to Padre Pio. He was above all a man of hope. This is expressed well by his famous and oft-quoted phrase: "Pray, hope and don't worry."

Despite his stigmata, the Crucifixion was not the last word for Padre Pio. Yet 2,000 years ago it appeared that way to many of Christ's disciples, and that's why they lost hope in the immediate aftermath of his death.

“Gradually a deeper wisdom won out: the conviction that Padre Pio's stigmata pointed to a mystery beyond any medical explanation”

His mother Mary, on the other hand, kept hoping. She knew during the darkness of Holy Saturday that the Resurrection of Jesus appeared totally improbable. But her hope didn't depend upon probability assessments.

Her hope depended upon God, and that's why she could trust that new life, although seemingly beyond reach, was nevertheless possible. Padre Pio was always close to Mary, and shared her deep sense of hope.

God always calls us to hope. Left to ourselves, we can all too easily be undermined by the darkness in ourselves and in our world. Certainly we shouldn't deceive ourselves by denying or discounting the messiness and dangers of life. But for all that, we can learn from the example of Padre Pio to keep hoping in the midst of crises and in the face of our fears.

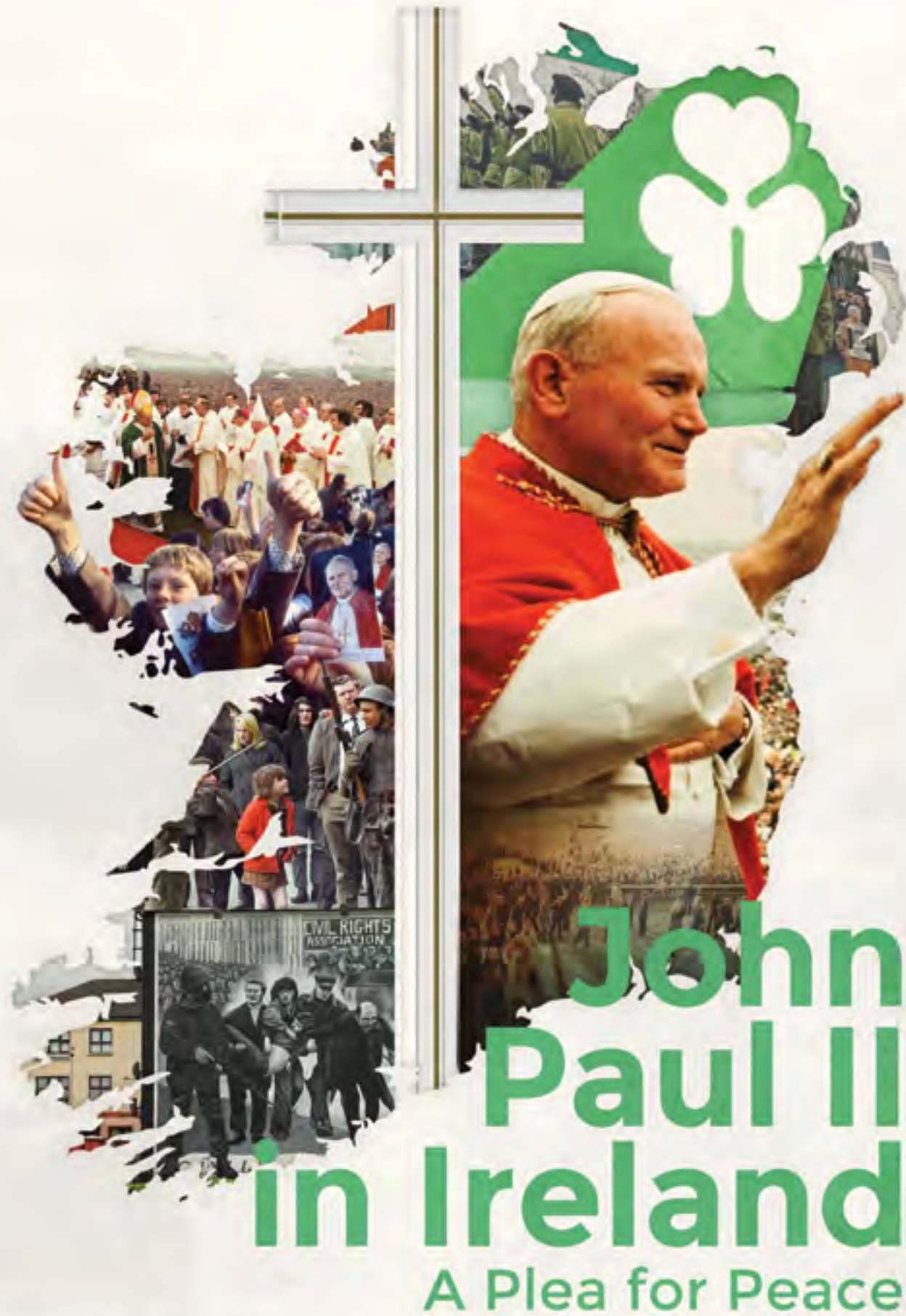
If God were to write a message of hope to us today, perhaps he might write it in a way we least expect. Who knows, he may have already written it in the flesh and body of this saintly Capuchin friar.

i Fr Thomas Casey SJ is Dean of Philosophy at St Patrick's College, Maynooth.



Church-Shrine of St Padre Pio of Pietrelcina and, left, a close-up of his stigmata.

"On my knees, I beg you, to turn away from the paths of violence..."



John Paul II in Ireland

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Remembering 40 years since Pope St John Paul II's visit to Ireland



Chai Brady

It's been 40 years since Pope St John Paul II's iconic visit to Ireland, which drew crowds of millions. Since then Ireland has changed dramatically, but his messages of peace and faith are as relevant today as if they were said yesterday.

The Polish Pontiff, who was just 59 years old at the time, kissed the ground the moment his feet touched Irish soil, drawing huge cheers from those gathered.

It is well documented that about a third of Ireland's population attended the Pope's Mass in the Phoenix Park, but two of his most memorable messages were made during different addresses.

It was after the Phoenix Park Mass on September 29, 1979, that he travelled to Killineer, near Drogheda, and spoke in front of a crowd of about 300,000. He wholeheartedly engaged with the issues that were devastating communities in the North of Ireland, and begged those engaged in violence during the Troubles to stop.

He was unable to visit the North because of security concerns due to the horrors of the civil conflict raging at the time, but many people from Northern Ireland made the trip.

Pleading

The Pope famously said: "Now I wish to speak to all men and women engaged in violence. I appeal to you in language of passionate pleading. On my knees I beg you to turn away from the paths of violence and to return to the ways of peace. You claim to seek justice, I too, believe in justice and seek justice. But violence

only delays the day of justice.

"Violence destroys the work of justice. Further violence in Ireland will only drag down to ruin the land you claim to love and the values you claim to cherish.

"In the name of God I beg you: return to Christ, who died so that men might live in forgiveness and peace."

John Paul II was much-loved in Ireland and his visit had a profound impact. Some 10% of boys born in Ireland in 1979 were named after the Pope.

On September 30, at the Mass for Youth in Galway, is when he uttered

probably the most famous words for many people during his visit to Ireland: "Young people of Ireland, I love you!"

“The moral standards that the Church and society have held up to you for so long a time will be presented as obsolete”

He also warned young people of a future that decries religion as



His cape blown over him at a windy Dublin Airport, Pope John Paul II kisses the ground upon his arrival.



September 29

- An Aer Lingus Boeing 747, named St Patrick, brings Pope John Paul II from Rome to Dublin Airport. The Pope kisses the ground as he disembarks.
- After being greeted by the President



of Ireland Patrick Hillery, the Pope flies by helicopter to Phoenix Park where he celebrates Mass for 1,250,000 people, one third of the population.

- Travels to Killineer, near Drogheda, where he leads a Liturgy of the Word for 300,000 people. The Pope implores: "On



Pope John Paul II makes his way from the Aer Lingus 747 'St Patrick' after his arrival at Dublin Airport.



archaic, and how worldly interests would be presented as a new standard of living, leading to selfishness.

"The moral standards that the Church and society have held up to you for so long a time will be presented as obsolete and a hindrance to the full development of your own personality," St John Paul II said.

"Mass media, entertainment, and literature will present a model for living where all too often it is every man for himself, and where the unrestrained affirmation of self leaves no room for concern for others."



my knees I beg you to turn away from the path of violence and return to the ways of peace."

● **Returning to Dublin that evening, the Pope is greeted by 750,000 people as he travels via Popemobile through the city centre and visits Áras an Uachtaráin.**

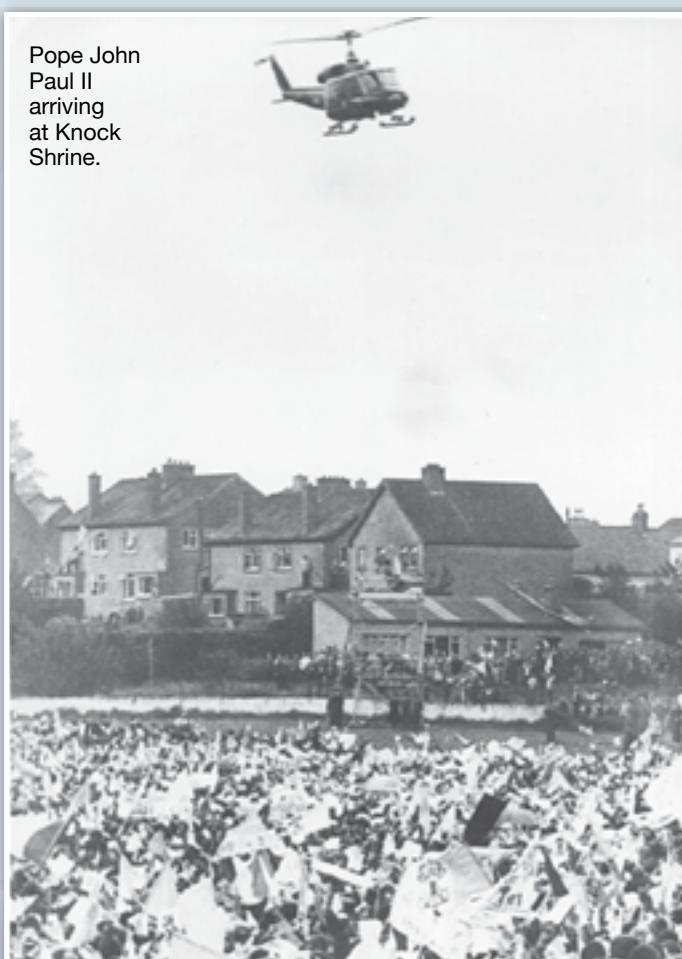
● **Final engagement is a meeting with journalists at the Dominican Convent in Cabra.**

● **Pope John Paul II spends the night at the nearby Apostolic Nunciature on the Navan Road in Cabra.**





Pope John Paul II arrives to celebrate Mass at the Phoenix Park.



Pope John Paul II arriving at Knock Shrine.



1979 Papal Visit Timeline

Sunday, September 30

● The Pope meets with disabled children at the Cabra Dominican Convent and holds an audience for the Irish/Polish population in the gardens of the Papal Nunciature. Departs for Galway by helicopter.

- Arrives in Galway, where he celebrates a Mass for young people. Motorcade through Galway. He then leaves Galway and flies by helicopter to Knock.
- Celebrates an outdoor Mass at Knock and then prays at Knock Shrine and commemorates 100th anniversary.





Motorcade through Knock.

- Flies by helicopter back to Dublin to meet Irish bishops. He dines at the Dominican convent.



Monday, October 1

- The Pontiff flies to St Patrick's College, Maynooth, to meet seminarians, priests and university students and give an outdoor address.
- Travels to Limerick by helicopter

and arrives to celebrate Mass at Limerick racecourse. Motorcade through Limerick.

He leaves by helicopter for Shannon International Airport.

- Papal plane, Aer Lingus Flight 1, a Boeing 747, takes off for the US.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Migrants 'enrich us' and are 'not a danger' – bishop

● The head of the migration commission for the Spanish Bishops' Conference emphasised that love of neighbour is essential for Christians, and this includes care for migrants and refugees.

"We don't love God if we don't love our brothers," stressed Bishop Luis Quinteiro of Tuy-Vigo in a presentation on the bishops' preparations for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

Bishop Quinteiro called migration "a decisive issue" and said he hopes that the World Day of Migrants and Refugees will help remind people that foreigners are "not a danger, but help to enrich us".

Miscarried children registration bill gains support

● The Panamanian bishops expressed their support last week for a bill that would allow parents to register their children who were miscarried, as this would help "the parents alleviate the pain and make more bearable their mourning over the loss" of their baby.

The bishops made the statement in a communiqué titled "The right to registration of identity of the child in the womb" regarding Bill 18 on "Identity of child who was miscarried".

This law would create at the national level "a book of deceased persons who were conceived but not born" and would amend Article 60 of the Civil Registry to include "those that occur in the mother's womb whatever the cause of death, gestational age, or weight that it had at the moment of death".

One-year anniversary since priest kidnapping in Niger

● One year ago, Fr Luigi Macalli was abducted in the middle of the night, from his parish Church in Niger. The priest remains missing, and his friends and family say they have no idea where he is.

"We commemorate the first anniversary of the abduction of our Italian SMA confrere, Fr Pier Luigi Macalli," the Society of African Missions, Fr Macalli's

religious community, posted online last Tuesday.

"It is a sad day for the Society of African Missions, for his missionary brothers, his family and especially for the people of Niger whom Fr Luigi served with great faithfulness and love." Fr Macalli was kidnapped from his parish in remote Bomanga, near the border between Niger and Burkina Faso, in western Africa.

Cardinal Dolan slams online money scam in his name

● Cardinal Timothy Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York issued a statement last week clarifying that he will not and has never used social media to privately solicit donations. The cardinal made the statement in response to an online scam operation being conducted using his name to solicit funds.

"I've heard from some of you you've received Facebook or Twitter messages from an account pretending to be me," said the archbishop on Twitter. "Please know I will never reach out privately on social media to ask for donations."

Cardinal Dolan encouraged anyone who had been asked to donate money by an account purporting to be him on Twitter or Facebook to report it to the archdiocese.

Theologian backs out of German synodal path

● A member of the International Theological Commission has announced that she is no longer available to participate in the "binding synodal path" undertaken by the bishops' conference of Germany. Marianne Schlosser, a member of the International Theological Commission, cited concerns over both the approach and methodology of the "synodal path" when she announced that she could no longer participate.

Saying she could not identify with the intermediate report of the preparatory group, Schlosser raised a number of issues, in particular identifying a "fixation on ordination" of women.

This "fixation" was neither theologically and historically nor pastorally and spiritually justified, she told news agency KNA.

Don't surrender procreation to 'medical manipulation', bishops urge

France's Catholic bishops have opposed legislation to allow medically assisted procreation for single mothers and lesbian couples and urged citizens to help block its enactment.

"We hear and understand the suffering of those who cannot have children from their union with a person of the opposite sex and of homosexual women who aspire to have children," said Archbishop Eric de Moulins-Beaufort of Reims, president of the bishops' conference. "But our societies are making a collective mistake when they pretend to resolve sufferings with medical and juridical techniques, and when they turn medicine intended for caring and curing into a vehicle for demands and frustrations."

Bioethics law

The archbishop spoke at the College des Bernardins in Paris, as France's National Assembly prepared to debate a revised bioethics law extending rights to state-funded medically assisted procreation.

He said the French bishops repeatedly had outlined what was at stake in the projected measures, but added



A baby is seen during her baptism. France's Catholic bishops criticised legislation to allow medically assisted procreation for single mothers and lesbian couples and urged citizens to help block its enactment.

that the Church's "attitude of listening and dialogue" had been ignored by legislators in "their fascination with the promises of medical and juridical techniques".

Archbishop de Moulins-Beaufort warned the measures risked "pointing the way to a liberal eugenics", and said the "beauty of parental love for children" could not justify "surrendering procreation to medical manipulation" and "family relationships to DIY".

Archbishop Eric Aumonier of Versailles urged citizens to consider the "grave transgressions" embodied in the legis-

lation, which would "place the desire of adults before the welfare of children".

"The child risks no longer being received as a gift, but as a right," he said.

He said the Catholic Church welcomed "every conceived life" and "every family as it is", but called on Catholics to help "awaken consciences", by "explaining to friends, colleagues and relatives what is at stake".

Deregulation

Changes to the law, promised by President Emmanuel Macron before his May 2017

election, are opposed by some legislators, who fear they will spur legalisation of surrogacy and further deregulation of embryo research.

Around 80,000 children are born annually in France through member-assisted procreation, which is available to single mothers in 26 of the Council of Europe's 47 member-countries, and to lesbian couples in 14.

In a September survey by the French Institute for Public Opinion, two-thirds of citizens backed the proposed measures.

Ecuador bill to decriminalise abortion in rape cases fails

A bill to decriminalise abortion in all cases of rape failed in the Ecuadorian legislature last week, amid opposition from the Church and civil organisations.

It would have allowed abortion also in cases of non-viable foetal deformity, incest, and non-consensual artificial insemination.

Sixty-five members of the unicameral National Assembly voted in favour, five short of the number needed for it to pass. Fifty-nine voted against the bill, and six abstained.

Abortion is legal in Ecuador only

in cases of the rape of a woman with mental disabilities or when the mother's life is determined to be at risk. The bill to decriminalise abortion in some cases was introduced to the full legislature in January.

The proposal was first made in 2016, and it was approved by the legislature's Justice and the Structure of the State Commission in December 2018.

Some legislators proposed that instead of decriminalising the abortion of children conceived in rape, rapists be given greater penalties.

Tens of thousands of Ecuadorians marched on the streets of Guayaquil in June to protest the bill, as well as to support marriage, conscience protections, and parental rights.

Archbishop Alfredo José Espinoza Mateus of Quito issued a statement saying, "abortion cannot be the answer that a civilised society gives to the pain and anguish of women, men, and their families. Talking about abortion as a solution is a painful irony...abortion cannot be a 'solution', it is a drama, a failure of every society."

Family calls for assisted suicide reform in England

Family members of an 80-year-old woman in England are advocating for legalised assisted suicide after the woman was found not guilty by a UK court in an apparent "mercy killing" of her husband.

Mavis Eccleston, 80, was accused of killing her husband Dennis, 81, with a lethal

dose of prescription medicine.

Prosecutors claimed that Mavis had done so without Dennis' knowledge or permission.

But, according to the BBC, Mavis told jurors at the Stafford Crown Court that she and her husband had both intended to take their lives

with the medication, and that they had decided to do so after Dennis' diagnosis of terminal cancer.

The couple was found in their apartment by family members last February, after they had taken the drugs. The couple was rushed to the hospital and given an antidote to the medication. Mavis sur-

vived; Dennis did not.

After the hearing, Joy Munns, a daughter of Dennis and Mavis, called for the legalisation of assisted suicide "so that dying people aren't forced to suffer, make plans in secret or ask loved ones to risk prosecution by helping them", the BBC reported.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
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Clinging to hope



Nigerians evacuated from South Africa after xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals arrive at the airport of Lagos, Nigeria. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria has condemned recent verbal attacks on Pope Francis as well as xenophobic attacks by South Africans on foreigners staying and working there. Photos: CNS

Eritrean bishops call out 'hatred of Faith' after school closures

Eritrean bishops protested the government's seizure of Catholic schools and asked that the Church be enabled to continue its educational and health services.

"If this is not hatred against the Faith and against religion, what else can it be?" the bishops said in a letter to Eritrea's minister of public education.

"Our voice of protest" is raised again at the government's "arbitrary and unilateral measures", the bishops said, noting that the closure of its schools follows the seizure of its clinics and other medical facilities in June.

"Considering that the actions that are being taken against our educational and health institutions are contrary to the rights and to the legitimate freedom of the Church and heavily limit the exercise of the postulates of Faith, mission and social services, we ask that

the recent resolutions are reviewed and the consequent course of action promptly stopped," the bishops said.

The Most Holy Redeemer Secondary School of Asmara's seminary was closed two years ago, with three other secondary schools closed in September; one of the secondary schools includes a primary school.

Health facilities

The bishops said in June that all health facilities run by the Catholic Church in Eritrea – more than 20, with many on the property of monasteries – had been seized by the government.

In their letter to the minister, Semere Re'esom, the bishops asked that the Church be allowed to continue its "precious and highly appreciated services to the people".

If the government seeks changes

to the way these institutions are run, there should be "open and constructive dialogue", they said, noting that the Church has always sought dialogue "on everything concerning the situation of our church and our nation".

The Catholic Church makes up about 5% of Eritrea's population of six million people.

Ruled by President Isaias Afwerki since 1993, Eritrea has been strongly criticised by human rights groups, especially over reports of detention without trial, open-ended military conscription and bans on some faiths. Regulations introduced in 1995 limit any developmental activities of religious institutions, including schools, hospitals, agricultural projects and sponsoring education for vulnerable children.

Most Americans support conscience clause – poll

An overwhelming majority of Americans (83%) said they support conscience protection rights for health care professionals because they should not be forced to perform procedures against their moral beliefs.

91% of faith-based health care professionals said they need conscience protections and would rather stop practicing medicine altogether than be forced to violate their conscience.

These responses came in two polls conducted in July and were released last week along with several other findings by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' committees on pro-life activities, religious liberty, domestic policy and social development, and their subcommittee on promotion/defence of marriage and the Christian Medical & Dental Associations, the largest faith-based organisation for health care professionals.

Regulations

Greg Schleppenhach, associate director of the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, said the impetus for conducting these polls was the recent action by the Trump administration to put new regulations forward to enforce about 25 existing conscience protection laws.

"(This) has put the whole issue of conscience protection into the news," he noted.

In May, President Donald Trump announced a conscience protection rule that says medical workers or institutions would not have to provide, participate in or pay for procedures they object to on moral or religious grounds, such as abortion and sterilization.

It was to have taken effect July 22, but enforcement was postponed because it is being challenged in court.

Vatican roundup

Priesthood is not a job but a gift, Pope says

● Being a priest is not a job or fulfilling an employment contract but is a gift from God that should be contemplated and treasured as such, Pope Francis has said.

Those who turn ordained ministry into an occupation "lose the heart of the ministry, lose the gaze of Jesus who looked upon all of us and told us, 'Follow me'", he said on September 19 during morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The Pope focused his homily on the day's first reading in which St Paul writes to Timothy (1 Tim 4:12-16): "Do not neglect the gift you have."

Ordination is a freely given gift from the Lord, the Pope said; it is not "a job" or "an employment contract" in which one "must do" something.

"Doing is secondary," he said. First and foremost, "I must receive this gift and safeguard it as a gift and from that – in the contemplation of the gift – everything else springs."

When ordained ministry is not seen and treasured as a gift, he said, "deviations" emerge, starting with "the worst ones, which are terrible, to the more everyday ones that makes us base our ministry on ourselves and not on the gratitude of gift and love for he who gave us this gift, the gift of ministry".

Francis' council meets to discuss key reform project

● Pope Francis' new six-member Council of Cardinal Advisors met last week to continue work on the forthcoming apostolic constitution, incorporating into the draft suggestions submitted by bishops' conferences and others during the summer.

According to a brief press release from the Holy See press office, the council met with a focus on "re-reading and modifying the draft of the new Apostolic Constitution", which has the provisional title *Praedicate evangelium*.

"This first rereading, which has come to an end, was a passage of listen-

ing and reflection that responds to the indications of the Holy Father in the sense of communion and synodality," the statement said.

The new constitution has been the advisory group's key reform project since its establishment in 2013, one month after Pope Francis' election.

Praedicate evangelium will replace *Pastor bonus*, the current apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia promulgated by Pope John Paul II on June 28, 1988, and subsequently modified by both popes Benedict and Francis.

Canon law needed for 'ecumenical dialogue' – Pontiff

● Pope Francis has said that canon law is essential for ecumenical dialogue with Orthodox and Oriental Churches.

"Many of the theological dialogues pursued by the Catholic Church, especially with the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Churches, are of an ecclesiological nature. They have a canonical dimension too, since ecclesiology finds expression in the institutions and the law of the Churches," Pope Francis has said.

In an audience with members of the Society for the Law of the Eastern Churches, Pope Francis said: "Canon law is essential for ecumenical dialogue," adding that "ecumenical dialogue also enriches canon law."

Canon law is the Church's legal discipline, it gives expression to concepts like natural and divine law, and orders the Church as an ecclesiastical society.

Pope Francis said that the Church can learn from the synodal experience of the Eastern churches.

"Synodality expresses the ecumenical dimension of canon law," Pope Francis said, explaining: "the commitment to build a synodal Church – a mission to which we are all called, each with the role entrusted him by the Lord – has significant ecumenical implications."



Letter from Rome

In season of synods, Italy may be next to see if Pope's gamble pays off



John L. Allen Jr

Under a Pope for whom 'synodality' is the buzzword par excellence, meaning broad consultation and shared decision-making, it probably should be no surprise that synods and their vicissitudes are destined to be the biggest Catholic drama over the months to come.

We already know about the controversial Synod of Bishops for the Amazon set to open in the Vatican on October 6, and a tug-of-war between Rome and the German bishops over plans for a two-year national 'synodal journey' has also been well chronicled. In October 2020, the Church in Australia will gather for its first plenary council since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

Now, it seems, we may soon be able to add Italy to the list of places either contemplating or planning its own synod. In this case, the press is coming from the Primate of Italy himself, meaning the Pope, and his closest allies.

The drumbeat began in February with an essay by Italian Jesuit Fr Antonio Spadaro in *Civiltà Cattolica*, the Jesuit-edited journal directed by Spadaro which enjoys semi-official Vatican status.

"Only an effective exercise of synodality within the Church can help us read our situation today and engage in discernment," Fr Spadaro wrote, making the case for a national synod. "And this can only happen thanks to broad involvement of the People of God, in a synodal process that's not restricted either to the elites of Catholic thought or to the contexts (specific and important) of formation."

Reflection

During an address to the powerful Italian bishops' conference on May 20, Pope Francis directly referred to a "probable synod of the Italian Church", which was followed by Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti of Perugia, president of the conference, telling reporters, "the synod could be the start of a path that will take a long time".

Most recently, the edition of *Civiltà Cattolica* that came out last week carries a reflection by 90-year-old Italian Jesuit Fr



Pope Francis speaks during a meeting with bishops ordained over the past year and tells them that they must spend time in prayer and time with the priests and people of their dioceses. Photos: CNS

Bartolomeo Sorge, a fixture on the Italian and Vatican scene since the era of St John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. Noting that the Italian Church has held a national convention every 10 years since 1976, Fr Sorge insisted it's not enough to respond to today's challenges.

"A simple national ecclesial convention won't do it," he wrote. "Therefore, isn't a synod necessary?"

A decision to hold a synod, or at least to consider it, could come as early as this week when the Permanent Commission of the Italian bishops' conference meets in Rome. Among the items on the agenda is "to offer proposals for paths to renew the missionary face of the Italian Church".

Why do Francis and his team want a synod for Italy? Sorting through the arguments, three points seem to loom largest.

First, Francis is a populist at heart, and believes the people could pressure their leaders to implement elements of his reform program he currently believes are being blocked.

For instance, his May 20 line about a "probable synod" came in the context of expressing frustration that an expedited and simplified process for annulments he decreed in 2015 still has not been implemented "in the great majority of Italian dioceses".

Likewise, when Francis issued *Vos Estis* in May, requiring dioceses to create reporting mechanisms to lodge complaints against bishops for their handling of abuse allegations, one of his closest allies, Maltese Archbishop Charles Scicluna, openly invited the Italian rank-and-file to complain if their diocese drags its feet on the Pope's edict.

Francis and his team also believe a synod could address the political role of Italian Catholics

The idea is that breaking the logjam may require an end-run around the ecclesiastical bureaucracy, appealing to the base.

Second, Francis's allies believe that a synod would be a chance to demonstrate that the Pontiff has strong popular support despite the oft-nasty criticism he generates, usually from more conservative and traditional quarters.

Fr Sorge was especially strong on the point.

"Is it possible that our Christian community does not know what to do in the face of the violent and frequent attacks against Pope Francis, coming largely from inside his own house, which even reach the absurd request for his resignation?" Fr Sorge wrote.

"Formal declarations of filial

attachment and adhesion are of little use," he added. "We need, rather, to reassure the faithful, with an official and solemn act, that the Gospel essence of the Petrine service in the Church always remains unchanged, even if the way of exercising it changes, as Pope Francis is doing."

Third, Francis and his team also believe a synod could address the political role of Italian Catholics, especially the irony that millions of Catholics in the Pope's own backyard routinely vote for politicians with strong anti-immigrant and nationalistic positions at odds with Francis's teaching and leadership.

Tension

That tension comes to a boil most often over Italian politician Matteo Salvini, the former Deputy Prime Minister and now opposition leader, who defies the Pope on immigration while brandishing a Bible and a rosary of the Madonna of Medjugorje.

"We ask: What authoritative response can the Italian Church pronounce, in the light of the Gospel and the Church's teaching authority, about the fact that millions of faithful – priests and – share, or at least support, anthropological and political concepts that can't be reconciled with a Gospel vision of man and society?" Fr Sorge asked.

To be sure no one missed the point, he made things even clearer in a footnote.

"More concretely, what should we say and do with regard to those who extort votes from people with fear and hate, hiding behind the mask of a false religiosity?" Fr Sorge wrote in footnote 15, and although he didn't use Salvini's name, the reference was unmistakable.

The bottom line is that Francis and his advisers are frustrated with the narrative that Francis is "controversial", convinced that most of the grumbling, in Italy as elsewhere, comes from a cadre of elites, political opportunists and special interests who don't represent the Catholic grassroots. A synod, therefore, would be a chance to demonstrate what they believe is a broad popular consensus in support of the Pope's leadership.

Only time will tell if they're right.

Francis has a 70% popularity rate among Italians overall, and his support is even stronger among those who go to Mass

Exit polls in the most recent Italian elections showed that Salvini was the most popular candidate among Catholics who go to Mass at least once a week, capturing 33% support. That's roughly 15 million Italian Catholics who may not quite be ready to stand foursquare with Francis, at least on the immigration issue.

On the other hand, a survey earlier this year by the respected polling firm Demos found that Francis has a 70% popularity rate among Italians overall, and his support is even stronger among those who go to Mass. Most of that backing is probably fairly solid, given that Italians are hardly *naïfs* – indeed, given the media climate here, they're probably more exposed to criticism of the Pope than any other culture on earth, so it's not as if they've never heard the case for the opposition.

Of course, the Church isn't a democracy. Nevertheless, Francis and his team appear determined to inject a greater democratic spirit in Catholicism through the revival of synods, trusting it will strengthen the Pope's hand, and Italy may well be next up to see if the gamble pays off.

John L. Allen Jr is Editor of *Cruznnow.com*



Charles Collins

Since Brexit has dominated the UK news for the past three years, it might be easy to miss the great strides being made by the government in promoting religious freedom in the same time period.

The latest move has been to appoint Rehman Chishti, a Conservative Member of Parliament, as the new Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

He replaces Lord Tariq Ahmad, the inaugural holder of the position. Ahmad was appointed to the post by then-Prime Minister Theresa May last year.

The position is similar to the US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, currently former Kansas governor and senator Sam Brownback.

Ahmad launched the UK government's first ever programme to find innovative solutions to promote and defend religious freedom, and also worked closely with the Holy See, the EU's Special Envoy for Promotion of Freedom of Religion, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in developing the role.

However, Ahmad had a pretty full plate. He was also the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

Chishti's appointment means Britain will now have a dedicated person on the issue of religious freedom.

Appointments

The appointment also strengthens the position's institutional standing, since it will now have existed under two prime ministers.

A 'special envoy' is not a statutory position, and can be abolished by the prime minister – by contrast, the US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is mandated by law.

The appointment also came with assurances that the implementation of the recommendations from the recent independent review into the UK's support for persecuted Christians will continue, under Chishti's lead.

The review, led by the Anglican Bishop of Truro, pointed out various reforms Britain's Foreign Office should take to better identify and combat the persecution of Christians around the world.

This news was welcomed by religious freedom activists, who will always be nervous a new government won't prioritise the promises made by its predecessor. This is especially true with the present prime minister, Boris Johnson, who came into office in July with the singular purpose



Brexit protesters hold placards and a flag of the European Union outside the Houses of Parliament in London. Photos: CNS

During Brexit storm, UK's efforts to protect religious freedom fly under the radar

of completing the drawn-out withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

The previous Foreign Minister, Jeremy Hunt, had been a strong advocate for religious liberty, but he had also been the chief rival for the leadership of the Conservative Party after May announced her resignation.

With Johnson's victory, Hunt was out of the cabinet, but his successor – Dominic Raab – has promised to continue his policies.

"A staggering 83% of the world's population live in nations where religious freedom is threatened or banned. It is an area where the UK can and must make a difference," Raab said when Chishti's appointment was announced.

New position

Like Ahmad, Chishti is a Muslim. Chishti is the son of an imam, and was born in Pakistan, arriving in the UK when he was only six.

When announced in his new position, Chishti said "my family

and I have always been able to openly and freely practice our faith".

"I want to ensure every citizen around the world is able to enjoy this basic right. Freedom of religion, practice and belief is one of the foundations of a free society," he said.

“Chishti is the son of an imam, and was born in Pakistan, arriving in the UK when he was only six”

Chishti was a leading champion for Asia Bibi, the Pakistani Christian mother who spent nearly a decade in prison facing a death sentence after being accused of insulting the Quran, and has often spoken out against Pakistan's draconian blasphemy laws.

He called on the British government to offer her asylum after her eventual acquittal last year, and resigned as the

Conservative vice-chair and trade envoy to Pakistan over the UK government's refusal to do so.

Based upon his past advocacy, Chishti is expected to be a more muscular advocate for religious liberty than the often more diplomatic Ahmad.

The Catholic Church welcomed his appointment, offering their support for the new envoy.

Already it is paying dividends: Earlier this year, the Catholic and Anglican churches offered a joint proposal calling for the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief to be a dedicated position.

Advocate

The bishops must also have approved of a specific mention by the government that Chishti will "advocate for the rights of all individuals here in the UK...who are being discriminated against and persecuted for their faith or belief".

There have been accusations that the Foreign Office's emphasis on religious freedom wasn't

being emulated, especially in the powerful Home Office, which handles security and immigration issues in the UK.

The British Home Office has drawn complaints from Christian leaders for rejecting asylum applications from Christian converts from the Middle East, who can face a death sentence for apostasy.

The bishops have called on the government to take a "joined-up approach" involving not just foreign policy, but also security, trade, resettlement and asylum policy, rather than treating it as an isolated diplomatic activity.

Catholic leaders have also suggested the UK government produce an annual report on religious persecution, similar to the one published by the US State Department.

However, the looming October 31 Brexit deadline – and the expected resulting confusion and/or chaos – means Church leaders might have to wait just a bit to get their full wish list. But they are certainly happy that with Chishti's appointment, a few more items have been checked off.

Charles Collins is Managing Editor of Cruxnow.com

“He called on the British government to offer her asylum after her eventual acquittal last year, and resigned as the Conservative vice-chair and trade envoy to Pakistan over the UK government's refusal to do so”

Letters

Letter of the week

We are all called to welcome strangers

Dear Editor, I was heartened by the fact that Limerick's Bishop Brendan Leahy drew a firm line between Christianity and racism last week (IC 19/09/19). Racial intolerance was more prevalent, normalised and accepted 50 years ago, but we now live in different times and should know much better. Ireland has become more globalised and through this process we have learned that embrace other cultures and nationalities.

This change should not be denigrated, but celebrated. This positive attitude above all should be held

by Christians who believe that God created both man and woman in his image; a teaching which applies to human beings of all races and creeds.

Those who enter Ireland whether for employment reasons or as asylum seekers need to be welcomed. Often, English is not their first language and they are unaware of how they will make ends meet. This was echoed by the bishop when he reminded Catholics that "some of those who come to Ireland have escaped from very dangerous situations, including religious persecution". Imagine flee-

ing a situation of social upheaval and violence with your family to arrive in a country that spits on you with racial slurs and abuse? Imagine feeling alone in a country where you don't understand how to effectively communicate who you are and what your story is? Imagine the fear and sorrow of not knowing how your family will survive?

As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger.

*Yours etc.,
Ursula O'Reilly,
Navan, Co. Meath.*

Comment on authoritarian priests quite unfair

Dear Editor, Fr Declan Marmion reports that certain unnamed speakers at a recent conference in Maynooth referred to "a troubling characteristic of some newly-ordained priests."

They spoke of a tendency to authoritarianism and a view of priesthood as a kind of elite caste". (IC 05/09/19)

Fr Marmion does admit

that he does not believe this to be true of all younger clergy or seminarians but he does not reject completely the remarks he reports.

These comments seem to me unfortunate for a number of reasons. First, they are made by unnamed persons against others who are not named; the clergy who have been criticised

cannot defend themselves. Second, at least on this island, younger priests are so few that many readers will wonder if newly-ordained clergy they know are among those being criticised. Third, these remarks are hardly calculated to encourage future vocations.

I must add that the priests I know, young or

old or middle-aged, are not authoritarian in any reasonable sense of the term. One hopes that authoritarian has not been used in this report as code for orthodox: one knows that sometimes that is how that word is meant.

*Yours etc.,
CDC Armstrong,
Donegall Road, Belfast.*

The learning goes on

Dear Editor, I read Colm Fitzpatrick's piece "What do deacons do?" (IC 12/09/19). It is well written with good historical information and context.

I feel that after the 'year of discernment', it should have been explained that there is a further three years of theological studies. There is also spiritual direction and experience of parish pastoral placement and formation. So, it is a discernment, formational and academic process of four years in total, before ordination. The permanent diaconate is still in its 'early days' in this country and is a ministry of service with great potential.

Permanent deacons work 9-5 jobs or shift work, have a family in most cases - if married - and then serve in their ministry in parish. It is not a replacement for priests or to exclude/replace lay involvement in the Church. In fact, it is a ministry of service that compliments both

*Yours etc.,
Deacon John Nestor,
Castlemartyr,
Co. Cork.*



● **Dear Editor,** It is with great sadness that the usefulness of the Sunday missalette is being questioned (IC 12/09/2019). I'm sure I'm not the only one to benefit from missalettes making relevant and meaningful the message of the Gospel for today's confused world. I personally love

to follow the different readings and reflection at the end. If we want to deter even more people from the Sunday Mass, the withdrawal of a vital 'aid' would be a good start.

*Yours etc.,
Agnes McEvilly,
Rosscahill, Co. Galway.*

Will our Government continue to proffer a deaf ear?

Dear Editor, You stated that "the voice of the people must not be ignored" (IC 12/09/2019) but I wonder if that is a forlorn hope. After all, the voice of the people here was ignored before the referendum for repeal of the Eighth Amendment by the refusal to allow a level playing field and a proper debate.

However, I do believe that there will be much more of an effort by the people of Northern Ireland to fight against the imposition of abortion from Westminster. How hypocritical of Sinn Féin, which refuses to take seats at Westminster but has lobbied MPs there to foist abortion on the people of Northern Ireland, which, in fact, is

inviting Britain to ensure that Irish babies are killed in the womb. How can they get away with such treason?

I totally agree with you that "rather than acquiescing in the undermining of democracy in the North, the Irish Government should be standing up for the principles of the Good Friday agreement and leaving important decisions in the hands of locally elected people", and the importance of this is emphasised by the fact that every MP and Member of the House of Lords from Northern Ireland voted against the move.

How is the Irish Government going to be held responsible for this outrageous

lack of support for the people in the North and for the democratic process? Where are the courageous voices, apart from yourself, raised against this disgraceful abandonment of our Irish people? The Pro-Life Rally in Belfast combined unionist and nationalist and Protestant and Catholic against the imposition of abortion there.

While it was so encouraging to see this coming together of all concerned at the proposed killing of unborn babies, is it to be undermined by lack of support from the Irish Government?

*Yours etc.,
Mary Stewart,
Ardeskin, Donegal Town.*

facebook community

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

Racism has no place among Catholics – Bishop Leahy

We are all God's children so let's not insult the creator by our racism! – **Ancilla Grenham**

Opposing mass immigration isn't racist. He should condemn real issues instead, like abortion. – **Noel Kelly**

Doctrine not politics will split the Church

Ireland needs leadership, a person who is not afraid in the 'upper room', a person with unique and intellectual substance; who can lead and who can be a strong in the face of adversity. It's happened before in history...let that person appear and let them lead. – **Aoibheann Douglas**

The Church is full of weak mealy-mouthed and compromised placeholders who don't believe, practice or sincerely teach the ancient Christian faith. Teach devotion to the Eucharist, mental prayer, mystic spirituality. Explore the Faith heritage of the island and be proud of it. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no one gets to the Father but through him. If you don't believe that you are not Catholic. – **Will Lynch**

Some counsels on Faith and religion for this generation

If you're taught to love God and use what aids the Catholic Church has to offer to help you get closer to God and build your relationship with God...that's where thoughts of sin come from. How can the thought of sin darken your mind if you're not damaging a relationship you don't have? – **Joanna Marie Burke**

If you think that Church going is out of date, you should have seen the unprecedented thousands who attended the solemn novena in Holycross Abbey in Co. Tipperary all last week. From 7am-9pm, every Mass was jam-packed including a marquee set up to take the overflow. It belies what the media is saying but not a sign of one of them to record what the real truth is. – **Peg Hanafin**

When we create God in our own image and likeness

Teach children the basics: Jesus' true living presence in the Eucharist, and how at every tabernacle he waits with love for you, prayer, adoration, Stations of the Cross, daily Mass readings, Confession and how God forgives (Prodigal Son). Jesus, love and Our Blessed Mother; that when we go to Mass each week, Jesus gives you eternal life with him. – **Siobhan Boylan**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



▲ **USA:** Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, 16, listens to speakers during a climate change demonstration outside the US Supreme Court in Washington. Governments have an unprecedented "moral duty" to take urgent action to combat climate change, Catholic development agencies said before the UN Climate Change Summit.

◀ **JORDAN:** Some of the 200 Iraqi Christian schoolchildren who study English, science, maths, Arabic and Aramaic are seen, at an afternoon school programme set up by Fr Khalil Jaar at Our Lady Mother of the Church in Amman.



MEXICO: Residents waded through a flooded road in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Lorena in Manzanillo. Photos: CNS



VATICAN: Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople exchange gifts at the end of a private meeting.



SCOTLAND: Prison officers carry the relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux through Barlinnie Prison to the chapel in Scotland. The relics are making a three-week tour of Scotland's Catholic dioceses. Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow celebrated Mass for inmates and staff at the Prison.



VATICAN: Pilgrims cheer as Pope Francis arrives for his general audience in St Peter's Square.

Jesus Christ – the person and the mystery

We quite naturally tend to think of the word 'Christ' as Jesus' second name. We think of the name 'Jesus Christ' like we think of names like 'Susan Parker' or 'Jack Smith'. But that's an unhealthy confusion. Jesus didn't have a second name. The word 'Christ' is a title which, while it includes the person of Jesus, speaks of something wider than Jesus alone. What's the difference between 'Jesus' and 'Christ'?

Jesus refers to a concrete person who, though the Second Person within the Godhead, walked this earth for 33 years and is still today someone whom we understand and relate to as an individual person. Christ refers to something larger, namely, the huge mystery of both creation and salvation of which Jesus, as the Christ, plays the foundational role but which includes the Eucharist, the Christian community, the historical Christian churches, the community of all sincere people who walk this planet, and physical creation itself. Jesus is a person with whom we seek to be in a relationship with in friendship and intimacy, while Christ is a mystery of which we and all creation are part of and within which we participate.

Implications

This has huge implications, not least in how we understand spirituality and church. In essence, this is what's at stake: what's more central to us, what Jesus has done and asks of us or the person of Jesus himself? It's interesting to look at the various Christian churches in terms of that question: Are they more focused on the teaching of Jesus or on the person of Jesus? Are they more focused on Jesus or on Christ?

In terms of a large over-generalisation, we might say that Roman Catholicism and mainline Protestantism have tended to focus on the teachings of Jesus and the demands of discipleship that flow from those teachings more than they have on the person of Jesus himself.

The reverse is true for the Evangelical tradition, where the emphasis has been and continues to be on the person of Jesus and our individual relationship to him. In fairness, both traditions, clearly, also include the other dimension. Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants haven't



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

ignored the person of Jesus and Evangelicals haven't ignored the teachings of Jesus; but, in both cases, one has been more central than the other. Roman Catholicism, for its part, also emphasised the dimension of one-to-one intimacy with Jesus but placed that within its devotional practice more so than within its mainline theology which is focused more on the mystery of Christ than on the person of Jesus.

Spirituality, not surprisingly, tended to follow the same pattern. Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants, unlike the Evangelicals, have not made one-to-one intimacy with Jesus the centerpiece of spirituality, even as they hold it up as the ultimate ideal.

“What's more central to us, what Jesus has done and asks of us or the person of Jesus himself”

Their emphasis is on Christ. Evangelicals, on the other hand, focused on

an affective, one-to-one, intimacy with Jesus in a way that often left Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants wondering exactly what Evangelicals meant when they asked us: “Have you met Jesus Christ?” “Is Jesus Christ your personal Lord and Saviour?” “Have you been born again?” Conversely, Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants often looked critically at their Evangelical brothers and sisters, questioning whether their over-riding emphasis on personal salvation and personal intimacy with Jesus does not distract them from having to deal with some central teachings of Jesus that have to do with social justice and with wide faith embrace.

Admittedly, both emphases are needed. We see that clearly in the preaching of the early church. The renowned scripture scholar Raymond Brown tells us that, beginning already with St Paul, the earliest Christian preachers shifted the primary focus of their proclamation to Jesus himself, almost as if they could not announce the kingdom without first telling of him through whom the

kingdom was made present.

Proclaiming a person himself (rather than just that person's message) was novel for the early Christian preachers. Their proclamation of Jesus' person was radically different from the way the Hebrew Scriptures honour Moses, in that they honour his message but never draw attention to his person in terms of asking anyone to relate to him.

As an aside: there's a lesson here in terms of how we often treat our saints and holy persons. We honour them through admiration when what's really asked of us is that we imitate their actions.

Christian discipleship, clearly, asks for both, intimacy with Jesus and attention to what he taught, personal piety and social justice, firm loyalty to one's own ecclesial family and the capacity to also embrace all others of sincere heart as one's faith family.

Søren Kierkegaard once suggested that what Jesus really wants is followers, not admirers. That's spoken as a true mainline Protestant. Evangelicals wouldn't disagree, but would argue that what Jesus really wants is an intimate relationship with us. The earliest preachers of the Gospel would agree with both Kierkegaard and the Evangelicals. We need to proclaim both, the message of Jesus and Jesus himself.

QUESTIONS of faith

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



Should a bride wear white on her wedding day?

When it comes to marriage, films and television shows often depict the ceremony with the bride donning an elegant, white dress as she walks up the church aisle towards the groom.

This portrayal of weddings is not much different from those in real life; most women considering marriage usually take wearing a white dress as a given. But why has this practice become the norm, and does the Church have any teachings concerning dress code for this sacramental service?

It's commonly believed that brides have traditionally worn white on their wedding day as it symbolises virginity – however, wearing this colour of dress is a relatively recent phenomenon. The trend only became popular in the 19th Century when Queen Victoria wed Prince Albert in 1840.

Following the immense worldwide press her ceremony received, wearing white eventually became the model most brides opted for. Before then, prospective wives chose from an assortment of colours and garments which varied depending on one's country of origin.

Popular choice

Many poor brides intentionally decided not to don white as they wanted to re-wear the dress, and given how difficult white is to clean, wearing this colour of gown was not a practical choice. Other decided to wear blue because it represented purity and was associated with the Virgin Mary. Black was perhaps the most popular choice, and sometimes green was to be avoided as it represented bad fortune.

In the West, especially during the Renaissance, wedding gowns became more decorative, longer,

with burgundy as a popular option. Today, white is the standard colour of gown, alongside subtle variations such as ivory.

It's clear that the aesthetic history of wedding gowns isn't as monolithic as commonly thought – but does the Church have any say on this matter?

There is no official teaching on what brides should wear on their wedding day – it is recommended that dresses should be modest to respect the sanctity of the Sacrament.

“Marriage is a promise under God that binds husband and wife together”

It's important to remember that in the Church, marriage isn't a wishy-washy ceremony where people just agree to love one another. It is a promise under God that binds husband and wife together for their entire lives – and this unity is strengthened by divine grace.

“Thus the marriage bond has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved.

“This bond, which results from the free human act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guaranteed by God's fidelity. The Church does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom” (CCC 1640).

Given the seriousness of the matrimonial act, dressing appropriately is a definite – but keep in mind that white isn't the only colour you can wear on the day!

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

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, September 26, 2019

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The birds and the bees



Most people find broaching the topic of sex uncomfortable and for many parents this awkwardness is only heightened when discussing the subject with their children. 'The Talk' as it's euphemistically phrased, denotes the time in your child's life when you think it appropriate to have an objective conversation about how babies are conceived, the various contraceptive methods that people use, and finally some of your own moral or religious guidance on the topic.

Not all experiences of 'The Talk' are the same - some teenagers aren't given one, others are thrown a book and told to digest it, many unfortunately find out about the physical intricacies of it online before parental



Parents should be the first educators when it comes to sex, writes Colm Fitzpatrick

intervention, and there are of course endless cases where both parent and child look down at their feet and avoid eye contact at all costs wondering why each passing minute feels like an hour.

Many parents treat this topic as one-off conversation never to be raised to again, usually emulating how their own household dealt with the issue when they were growing

up. However, it's important that parents are open with their kids when talking about sex rather than treating it as a taboo subject. Moreover, the notion of having a singular discussion about the birds and the bees when a child reaches their teen years isn't the best route; it should be an ongoing discussion during their young developmental life.

"The conversation begins at

the conception of your child, and even when the babies are in the womb they pick up on so many things, whether they're loved or are wanted," says fertility adviser Jackie Ascough of NeoFertility.

"So the underlying message in the whole thing when you're talking to your kids about the birds and the bees is that they understand that they're loved and worth loving and that God loves them."

She adds that this message must be constantly reinforced when they're born, and is conveyed through loving acts like feeding them.

"When they're little, even at times when mum or dad feeds their baby, they're telling their baby that they love them, that they're safe, that they're worthy.

"It's that message that your child gets and that's the message you want to just keep giving them in those younger years because it's actually the foundation all the stuff will rest on. It literally goes all the way back to there personally I think, it's the mindset that you have as a parent," Jackie explains.

The topic of sex contains not only information about the act itself, but a whole array of teachings about what it means to be human and what constitutes a healthy and loving relationship. By reducing the subject down to mere biomechanics and science, the context and implications of sex can be lost.

The need to provide a holistic framework for sex is

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Family News

AND EVENTS

FOOD TINGLES IN DINGLE

Described by locals as 'The Best Weekend of Year', the Dingle Food Festival will take place at the beginning of October in the fishing town of Dingle on the Wild Atlantic Way. Highlights of the festival include cookery demonstrations, over 50 market stalls, workshops, street entertainment, children's events and wine and whiskey tastings (not for the kids!). The most popular part of the festival is 'The Taste Trail'. Festival goers purchase a book of taste trail tickets and can then visit over 70 venues around the town offering tastings of the best food and drink the Peninsula has to offer. The festival in conjunction with various local organisations is aiming to make the Dingle Food Festival waste free by 2020. The October 4-6 event aims to ensure all vendors on the markets and outlets partaking on the Taste Trail, use compostable packaging when serving their delicious offerings.

BONE CHILLING DISCOVERY

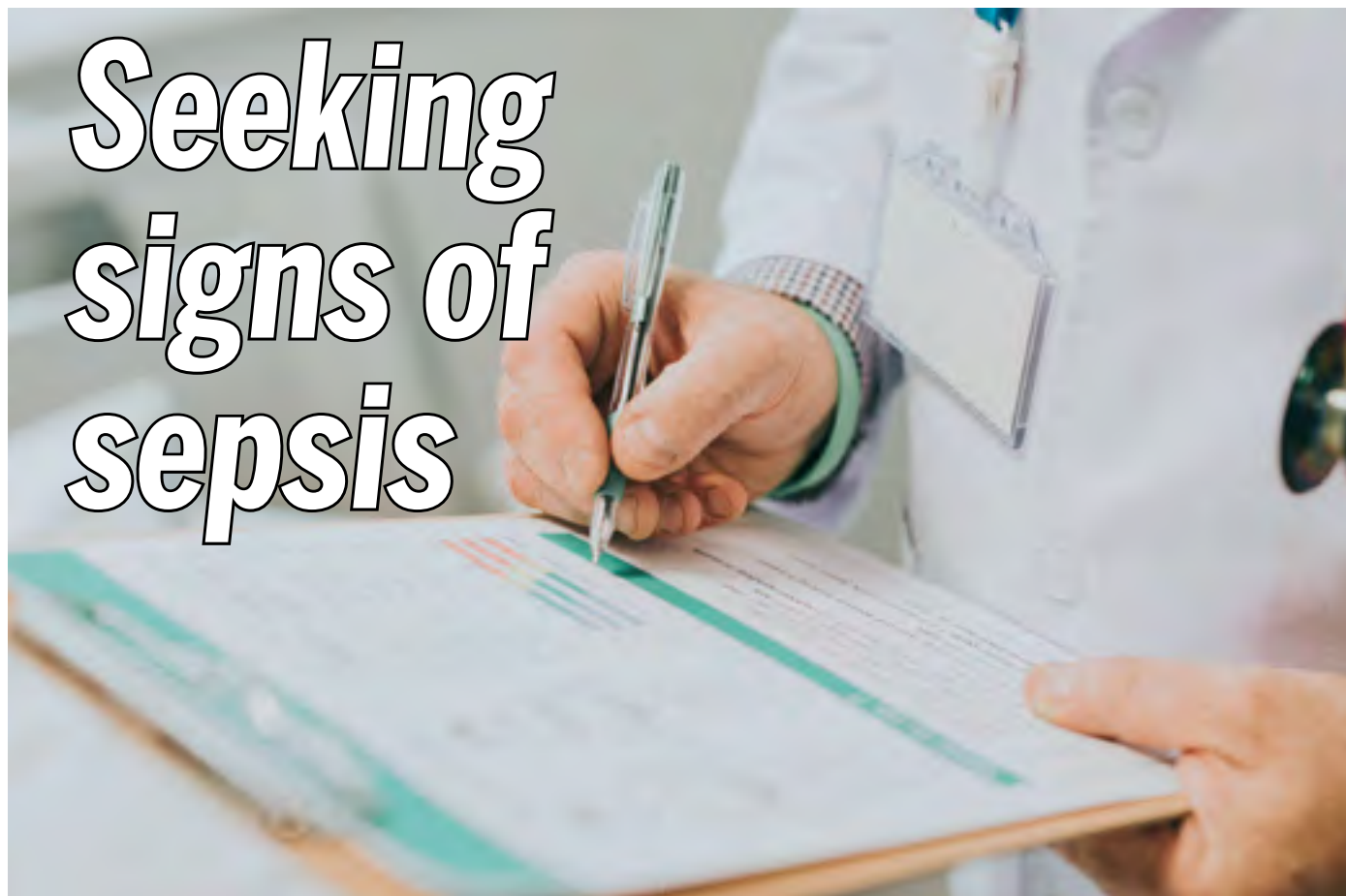
It has been assumed for centuries that when a forensic scientist or excavationist finds a human skeleton that it has remained in that position indefinitely – unless some outside force has altered it in some way. However, new findings have indicated that bodies continue to move around after they've been buried. For the research – led by Alyson Wilson from Central Queensland University in Australia – investigators analysed the movement of a "mature male who died by natural causes". The team took photos of the decomposition process of the body over more than 17 months and found that the remains appeared to shift on their own. For example, the arms were placed alongside the body only for them to be eventually be flung to one side independent of outside intervention. Such findings could help forensic scientists provide more accurate estimates of the time of death.

MAKING A CLEAN BREAK!

When it comes to cleaning, there are endless products on the market to choose from, often leading to a full drawer packed to the brim with half-empty supplies. The problem with many of these items is that they're very expensive, made entirely of plastic, and have a negative impact on the environment. A solution to this almost ubiquitous problem is to make your own cleaning supplies. This might sound like a daunting task, but before these consumerist items landed in shops, people had been cleaning using natural formulas. Take window cleaner; rather than purchasing a bottle of it, use distilled white vinegar. It's cheaper and works just as well. Likewise, toilet cleaner can be made by mixing white vinegar with baking soda. This change will take very little effort as you will probably have most of the ingredients at home.



Seeking signs of sepsis



September has been designated 'Sepsis Awareness Month' in a campaign to increase knowledge and recognition by the public of one of the most common yet poorly understood medical conditions. In fact, sepsis occurs more frequently than heart attacks affecting about 17,000 people each year in Ireland and is the leading cause of death from infection. Indeed, about one in five people who develop sepsis will die.

So what is exactly is sepsis? Sepsis is a life threatening condition that occurs when an infection provokes a severe immune response that can result in damage to multiple organs including the kidneys, lung, heart, brain and liver. Often referred to as blood poisoning or septicaemia it results not just from bacterial but also viral and fungal infections that can lead to "septic shock" and multi-organ failure.

Sepsis can spread with great rapidity and within hours can kill so early identification and treatment is crucial. Whilst any infection can progress to sepsis, it is more common in those who are very young or old or have a weakened immune system. An infection is more likely to become invasive if there are underlying problems such as deep skin breaks, lung, heart or other conditions which can also effect the pattern of presentation. However, sepsis can also take hold in otherwise healthy individuals who pick up very virulent and pathogenic infections and there are also unique genetic factors that influence it too.

Ultimately, the body produces a major inflammatory response that can have devastating 'knock on' systemic effects. Indeed, International Sepsis Day was marked earlier

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



this month and provided the opportunity for Irish families and survivors of sepsis to highlight just how serious it can be, striking unexpectedly and causing death or longterm disability.

“Sepsis develops with such speed that survival rates decrease by 8% for every hour treatment is delayed.”

But infections are common, so what should we look out for to alert us to sepsis? Unfortunately, it is often not possible to identify early on who might go on to develop sepsis and indeed bad flu like symptoms are often mistaken for a relatively benign illness. However, sepsis usually comes on much quicker over hours as opposed to days and there may be signs and symptoms that can indicate severe response to infection. These include altered mental state (drowsiness or confusion), rapid breathing or heart rate, very pale or mottled skin (that will not blanch), passing little or no urine, muscle pain and a high temperature.

Sepsis develops with such speed that survival rates decrease by 8% for every hour

treatment is delayed. In fact, getting antibiotics within the first hour of recognition of sepsis or septic shock can improve survival rates to up to 80%. If you are very unwell and suspect sepsis, you should get to the hospital as a matter of urgency. Control of the source of infection is also crucial and may involve surgery as mortality can increase by up to 25% for each day of delay in removing the infective source.

In general, measures that reduce infection and sepsis risk include good sanitation, personal hygiene and proper management of skin cuts and wounds. If you're diabetic you should pay careful attention



to your foot care and in optimising your blood sugars. Factors such as a healthy diet, maintaining a normal weight, avoiding smoking, alcohol excess and stress and getting adequate sleep may help to keep your immune system strong. You should also make sure to get your relevant vaccinations such as the flu vaccine which becomes available next month.

If you are 65 or over, or have chronic lung, heart or kidney conditions or a weak immune system you should also the get the pneumonia vaccine.

It protects against invasive pneumococcal infection and needs to be given no more frequently than every five years.

A major focus of research is in developing better ways of detecting sepsis in its earliest stages and in predicting those who will go on to develop severe illness. Early warnings clinical systems based on physical signs that prompt closer monitoring have helped. However, it can take many hours before current blood tests indicate the beginnings of a severe infection.

A recently developed blood test measuring Pancreatic Stone Protein (PSP) appears highly sensitive and specific in confirming early sepsis and predicting disease severity and may hold promise in the near future. Work is also underway in producing drugs that could bind to or block the effects of inflammatory chemicals released in the sepsis cascade that cause toxic organ damage.

Finally, resistance to antibiotics has increased in the last decade and poses a threat in the war on sepsis. It's as ever so important to use antibiotics judiciously as repeated courses can increase the likelihood of resistant bacterial strains emerging.

To conclude, if you become very sick acutely and have 'sepsis' symptoms – make sure to get urgent medical attention – it could be a life saver.

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

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paramount in today's world as more and more young people's first exposure to it is discovered through online porn which is often violent and unrealistic. Indeed, research commissioned by NSPCC in 2016 revealed that by age 15, children were more likely than not to have seen online pornography, and that both boys and girls actively search for it. Notably, 53% of boys and 39% of girls who had seen porn believed it to be a "realistic" depiction.

“Parents aren't just competing with computers or mobile devices to broach the topic first, but also with the child's school and their friends.”

“Another thing I emphasise is it's really important that you get in there first with the information, even if it's limited when they're small. You don't want to go in with too much information, you want to go in with age appropriate information for the different ages,” Jackie says.

“You're opening the door of communication and you don't want to be the last one to the party because if you are then you lose your authority.”

Parents aren't just competing with computers or mobile devices to broach the topic first, but also with the child's school and their friends. Jackie explains that when her children were young, she provided them with age-appropriate books that were “gentle” and had just enough information for their maturity. However, as your children grow older, it's vital to dive into the nitty-gritty of the topic or else they may pick up the wrong idea about what it involves. It's important to feel confident when talking about sex and be understanding of your child's questions or misgivings. This isn't a reality far removed from them and

depending on their age, they will have personal queries or curiosities.

“We can forget that the details need to come at some stage because I think they're harder to talk about. It's really important, particularly for girls because as they come into maturity there are a lot of changes. They're very physical, once she starts her cycle and all of that, let her know that it's natural and normal, that it's coming and that it's okay,” Jackie says, adding that the occasion should be marked in some way.

Likewise, she adds, “for boys, I think it's really important that dads are in there as you see visibly that your son is starting to change, that their body is changing and that they understand what's happening and that it's good and natural”.

In an open environment where trust is a given, your child will feel more comfortable asking you about particular topics and will also seek your advice when they're experiencing personal dilemmas. Parents are the first influencers of their children and it's important to use this role to the best of your ability.

The expectations that parents have of their children about sex varies from home to home, but raising her own kids in a Catholic household, Jackie says that these religious teachings should be conveyed and explained.



“...Church teaching, Church encyclicals, there's a couple of things that we read to them and discuss and ask questions and have them ask questions and I do give them basic instruction on fertility awareness, even the boys,” Jackie says, noting that it's important they have some education on the topic.

With so much material out there, it's easy to ignore the subject of sex completely in the whimsical hope that your child will absorb the correct information without your guidance – an option that becomes even more appealing if you too are uncomfortable talking about it. However, Jackie believes that this attitude can have a negative impact.

“First thing, get over yourself; maybe that's how your parents were with you. Let's do it better. This generation has too many challenges, they really need parents to step up with this kind of information,” she explains, adding that if this is territory you're too apprehensive to explore, find somebody you trust to help you. This might come in the shape of an individual who can speak to your child while you're present or perhaps somebody to guide you along throughout the conversation.

“It's okay not to have the answers as a parent, not every parent will have the language or feel comfortable talking about this maybe – find out how to,” Jackie says.

With reams of resources available for parents on this topic, there is no excuse nowadays to avoid discussing what it means to be a sexual being with your children as they become young adults. In an atmosphere of love, care and understanding, a two-way conversation will help your kids to learn more about who they are and navigate in a world that is just beginning to open up to them.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



For much of the past decade, my wife's medical training has dragged our family around Ireland and Britain. We have moved house 11 times in 10 years, through Cork, Dublin, Surrey and the Isle of Wight. Thankfully, our nomadic existence is at last coming to an end, as we settle back into where we began, in our old homestead in West Cork.

When I say “old”, I do not exaggerate. Parts of our rambling old farmhouse have stood since the 1600s, and the deeds date back to 1746. The old place appears to exert a gravitational pull on us, since it always draws us back – even from the sunny climes of the Isle of Wight. The kids adore the old house's nooks and crannies, and spend happy hours exploring the gardens, stream, woods and fields adjacent. They never seem to tire of constructing dens in the woods, building dams in the stream, or helping me bring in firewood for winter.

Our move back was phased over many months, to help gradually introduce the kids to their new school and new friends. We began by taking longer and more frequent holidays home during the past year. The kids even spent a few happy tester weeks in the local primary school during a long Christmas break, making new friends and becoming familiar with new surroundings, and new faces.

Fortunately, they took to it like ducks to water. Our decision to move was confirmed by their evident happiness. Of course, they miss some of their old friends from the Isle of Wight, but they've already made many new ones here. And it's nice

to know that we are here to stay. There is, God willing, little prospect of childhood friendships being jarred apart again by another big move.

Most of my ancestors have lived in Cork for centuries, and so I feel a deep connection to the place. Yet it's a conflicted connection, for the reminders of Ireland's history that surround us in West Cork are not always comforting. Local monuments, edifices, churches and cemeteries all tell tales of Ireland's often divided and troubled past. Yet, despite its history, and despite the weather, there is an easy contentment to this part of the world. Smiles come easily to people, and kindness flows unobtrusively through daily life.

After six years away from Cork, we return to find it changed. When we left, the economic crisis had left scores of unfinished ghost estates in its wake, unemployment was high, and builders were emigrating. Now, hundreds of houses are being constructed and the economy is booming. There is evident prosperity in the air, and the local towns are more colourful, bustling and multicultural than ever before. These days, Ireland is a prosperous, confident and happy place. It has its faults, of course, and not all recent developments were for the best, yet Ireland remains a fine place to raise a family. It does my heart good to hear the Cork lilt is coming back into their voices. As my eldest boy said to me the other day, “It's good to be back where we belong, like.”

A snapshot of Faith alive in Rome

Youth Space



Pilgrimages abroad are a wonderful opportunity to meet like-minded Catholics, writes **Mark Caffrey**

The Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia who are based in Limerick once again organised a young-adult pilgrimage to Rome at the conclusion of this summer. Our journey took us to the very heart of the Faith. Thematically based around St Augustine and his writings, our pilgrimage took us to the church of his own name which houses the relics of his mother Monica. Towards the end of our time in Italy, we made a brief excursion out to the ancient town of Ostia where a well-planned grid of streets was the last for St Monica to walk along before her death in the year 387 AD. Augustine, a great early Church Father, had much to offer us and his words on topics such as prayer and friendship were strikingly relevant to us today.

For myself and for many others who are motivated by their faith to undertake such a journey to Rome, it was certainly the Catacombs of San Callisto (St Callixtus) which deserved pride of place in my highlight reel. Located along the Appian Way and not far from Quo Vadis Church, the catacombs descend four levels down into the soil. Stepping foot on such hallowed ground where the

martyrs were buried, such as that of the original tomb of St Cecilia, it was impossible to not hear the memory of Respighi's second movement from the 'Pines of Rome' echo in oneself. The cries of his 'Sanctus' reverberating in one's bones as one foot stepped out in front of the other. Name after name, symbol after symbol carved into stone filled me with inspiration as I pondered upon their heroic witness.

It was there at the conclusion of Mass in a subterranean chapel that as we sang the 'Salve Regina' I felt the greatest of reassurances in the future of Christ's Church. It was there in the dim and in the cold that a group of 20 young people – all committed Catholics – led by religious brothers and

sisters gathered to pray and to be nourished for the mission of evangelising our home country. Barely a blip on the radar a cynic or sceptic might say. Yet, towering above our heads earlier that day stood the Arch of Titus which commemorated the sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple following the siege of 70 AD. The men who built such a monument and those like them who persecuted the first Christians would never have imagined that almost two millennia later their names and deeds would be forgotten or shrink next to the religion which they sought to suppress. Mother Church has a habit of overcoming such challengers! In the ancient city of a million inhabitants, it was a small

but determined cohort who, in Providence, altered the course of history. The games of the Flavian Amphitheatre are long gone, the cries of the spectators have faded into silence. Meanwhile, the cries of the martyrs resound triumphantly through the centuries. To quote one stanza from Ellerton's beloved hymn, "So be it, Lord, thy throne shall never, Like earth's proud empires, pass away; Thy kingdom stands, and grows forever, Till all thy creatures own thy sway."

Prayer had truly been at the core of our travels. Whether it was a rosary on a train ride into the city, vespers in a small chapel or a morning of contemplative silence every day was anchored in faith. Prayer was what underpinned our pilgrim journey and it was

clearly much more than a mere holiday. For some it was their first exposure to the Liturgy of the Hours whilst others may have only ever prayed it by themselves. To hear it sung, most especially with the stirring 'O Lumen Ecclesiae' to St Dominic, was something else altogether. We either discovered for the first time or fell in love anew with this beautiful part of our inheritance as Catholics. The Office shall surely be a regular part of many of our occasions of prayer into the future. It has to be said that the timeless treasures of our Faith whether they be in print, stone or glass all came alive in this pilgrimage.

Enjoying lunch or dinner on long tables, the conversation jumped from one topic to another. It was a fantastic opportunity to get to know the back-stories of others. The personal testimony of those wearing habits was a powerful account of courageously following Christ and trusting in Him. With people from every province, it was great to mix with new people who weren't from the smaller local or regional Catholic circles that we were used to. Those of us in university also benefited from the pilgrimage by using it as something of a networking opportunity and third-level students who are leaders within the committees of their Catholic student societies shared experience and tips with one another all of which were aimed at growing the Catholic community on campus. Young professionals and recent graduates also shared their invaluable experiences of sustaining their faith, cultivating a life of prayer, whilst being in the world of work. Polaroids won't be the only thing being taken back home after this pilgrimage.



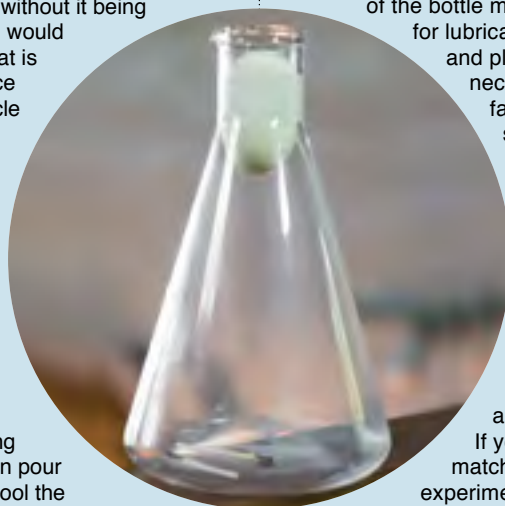
Children's Corner

Colm Fitzpatrick

An egg-cellent experiment you can do at home

Is it possible to fit a boiled egg through the neck of a glass bottle without it being harmed? Most people would answer that such a feat is impossible, but with science on your side this tiny miracle is easily doable!

To perform this curious experiment, place an egg (or multiple eggs if you want the whole family to take part) in a pot of boiling water for around 20 minutes. Make sure you have a parent or responsible adult to help you as there is risk of being scalded. Once the time is up, empty the boiling water into the sink and then pour cold water into the pot to cool the egg. Once cold, peel the shell off – if you swirl the egg around in a cup of water, it will be much easier to peel.



Grab a glass bottle and rub the inside edge of the bottle mouth with vegetable oil for lubrication. Take the peeled egg and place it on top of the bottle neck to make sure it doesn't fall in; the egg should be slightly larger than the bottle neck so use an appropriate bottle like a milk bottle.

Next comes the dangerous part: Take the egg off the bottle and set it to one side. Light two or three matches and carefully place them into the bottle and quickly replace the egg. If you're not fast enough, the matches will extinguish and the experiment won't work. However, if done correctly, you will see the egg begin to wiggle in the bottle mouth and then it will get sucked right in. Amazingly, the egg won't

break or fall apart and should remain completely intact.

So what is the mysterious force pulling the egg inside? The answer is something that you might recognise from the weather forecast – air pressure. The burning match made the air in the bottle expand and get hot. This hot air makes the egg wobble as it tries to escape. When the match goes out the air in the bottle cools down, takes up less space and creates low pressure. The contrast between high pressure outside the bottle and low inside causes the egg to get sucked inside!

It's also possible to get the egg out again. To do this you need to increase the pressure inside the bottle so turn it upside down and tilt it so the egg is sitting in the mouth. Blow into the neck of the bottle, this forces more air into it increasing the pressure inside causing the egg to pop out. Be careful during this process, as the egg could hit you in the face!

There are many other fun science experiments out there that you can do to learn about the world and how it works.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Fly-on-the-wall doc illuminates Vatican

Every now and then there's a high-profile TV programme that takes religion seriously. The occasions are rare enough but worth waiting for.

I was certainly impressed by **Inside the Vatican** on BBC2 last Friday, a fine piece of documentary making from producer-director Silvia Sacco. It was low key, subtle, nuanced and even moving at times. The narration was minimal, the camera unobtrusive and it was peopled by an array of interesting characters.

Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, effectively the Pope's Foreign Minister, reflected on the diplomatic work of the Vatican in striving to create good relations between states. Anne-Julie Kerhuel worked in his department and exuded joy and good humour in her work and took time off for quiet prayer.

The police and security staff searched for bombs in the Vatican tunnels, the gardeners prepared for Palm Sunday and the cleaners dusted the angels. Mark Spyropoulos was a chorister and soloist in the papal choir who had studied music in Trinity College. He found singing the *Credo* posed challenging questions about his own Faith.

In one scene we saw the Pope speaking on contemporary issues to representatives



Chorister Mark Spyropoulos featured in BBC2's *Inside the Vatican*.

of states around the world, but there were others invited – the poor and homeless who were fed by a group of cheerful nuns.

One of the most touching moments was when the Pope visited a local prison to wash the feet of prisoners on Holy Thursday. One Muslim prisoner was impressed and when he heard he was to be involved said: "Do we wash his feet or does he wash ours?"

We got an insight into the Pope's weekly audience – he blessed a very ill woman at an ambulance and later a hon-

eymoon couple who were thrilled to meet him. I expect this Friday's final episode to be more challenging as it deals with the abuse crisis and the papal visit to Ireland.

Meanwhile, **The Leap of Faith** (RTÉ Radio 1) returned last Friday with a worthy start to the new season. Michael Comyn started with a nod to Culture Night, pointing out that many churches and spiritual spaces had been involved. He segued nicely from people out on the streets enjoying that evening's events to those for whom the streets are their place of residence.

I hesitate to use the word 'home'. Fr Peter McVerry, long-time campaigner on the issue, was concerned about homelessness becoming normalised. He said the only ones shocked now were those up from the country or tourists.

There was a fuss when the number of homeless children passed the 1,000 mark, but hardly a mention when the numbers went over 3,000.

I was persuaded by his argument that "the private sector will never provide housing for low income families" and that we needed to go back to building council houses. He reckoned we had tamed the radical gospel, though I wondered about his idea that the churches talk a lot about sex, but very little about wealth and poverty.

That sounded more like a description of life before the mid 1960's.

Rev. Brian Anderson,



Bishop John Fleming.

PICK OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY SEQUENCE

BBC Radio Ulster, Sunday, September 29, 8.30pm

In depth discussion of topical religious and ethical matters, with a Northern Ireland flavour.

LIFE AND SOUL

RTÉ1, Sunday, September 29, 11am

Colm Flynn meets a Cork couple, Colette and Anthony Wolfe, who tragically lost their daughter Leanne to suicide and discovered the Christian faith helped them cope.

EUGENICS: SCIENCE'S GREATEST SCANDAL

BBC4, Thursday, October 3, 9pm

Science journalist Angela Saini and disability rights activist Adam Pearson investigate eugenics – the controversial idea that the human race can be improved by selective breeding.

a Methodist, and President of the Irish Council of Churches spoke of a Bible study initiative to explore the problem of homelessness, and also a move where, joined by the Catholic Church they sought to lobby the Government.

He found ordinary people loving and concerned but unsure of what to do about the problem. Sr Jean Quinn is founder of Sophia (an organisation to support the homeless), and director of a United Nations based coalition of Catholic religious congregations. Her main concern was with the homelessness of women and children, the ones that were left behind most. She described how faith based organisations were picking up the work that governments were failing to do.

Finally, I was surprised to

hear on last Monday morning's **It Says in the Papers** (RTÉ Radio 1) a reference to an *Irish Examiner* headline about Bishop John Fleming of Killala – 'Bishop backs parishioners who want female priests'. A reading of the actual story suggests that the headline was, as headlines often are, quite misleading, with the Bishop just passing on the findings of a survey. This was usefully clarified shortly afterwards by Shane Coleman on *Newstalk Breakfast*, though, by having only Fr Iggy O'Donovan, a supporter of the idea of women priests, to discuss the matter, we only got one side of the story.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
boreganmedia



Aubrey Malone

Film

Trigger-happy women doing their men's dirty work

The Kitchen (16)

Two women in a kitchen spells trouble, as the saying goes. Here there are three. And it's not the kind of kitchen you might be thinking of.

No, this is 1979 in Hell's Kitchen in New York, a stronghold of the Irish Mafia (The Murphias?). The men in these women's lives have been imprisoned for three years after a failed heist.

The subsistence money they've been receiving from The Mob isn't enough to keep them in the style to which they're accustomed so they decide to ape the actions of their "tough guy" menfolk to

supplement it.

Thus Don Corleone becomes Donna Corleone. The Godfather becomes the Godmother, multiplied by three.

Norman Mailer once said that the main achievement of feminism was that it permitted women to behave as badly as men had been doing for centuries. Here they behave very badly indeed. "Everyone is dead!" the husband of one of them exclaims at one point. It's hard to disagree with him.

Mayhem

Kathy (Melissa McCarthy), Claire (Elisabeth Moss) and Ruby (Tiffany Haddish) are the women in question. They create mayhem wherever they go as they seek to wrest



Claire (Elisabeth Moss), Ruby (Tiffany Haddish) and Kathy (Melissa McCarthy) in *The Kitchen*.

control of *The Kitchen* from their male counterparts. Anyone who proves "difficult" gets his comeuppance. If you tangle with these ladies, you better be prepared to sleep with the fishes.

It's more like a comedy

than a thriller at times – and a black comedy at that. There's sex, violence, swearing and a few gruesome scenes, so be warned.

McCarthy continues the career change she began with *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* last

year to play a woman who's deadlier than the male. Her sidekicks follow suit. They talk the talk and walk the walk but they still don't look tough.

For a woman to scare me on screen we'd need to be talking Glenn Close from *Fatal Attraction* or Charlize Theron from *Monster*. Their embrace of gore is also off the wall.

Maybe McCarthy should go back to comedy. These are really cartoon gangsters. Writer/director Andrea Berloff got an Oscar nomination for *Straight Outta Compton*. Where's that Andrea Berloff? She dumbs herself down here to give us an exercise in faux-machismo.

The film is more like the recent *Hustlers* in its puckish-

ness than a version of *Goodfellas* from the distaff side. Its ambition to reclaim a male-dominated genre for women sounded good in theory but it loses much in the process. The manner in which ruthless men cave in before the reconstructed threesome strains credulity to breaking point.

Domhnall Gleeson does a creditable American accent in the role of Gabriel. He becomes Claire's partner after her husband is imprisoned. His performance isn't too bad either, but this is really a woman's film.

I found the general concept hard to swallow, as I say, but if you accept it on an adolescent level it will while away 100 minutes for you without taxing your brain cells too much.

Fair
★★



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

Newman at Littlemore

by Bernard Bassett
(Gracewing, £7.99)

Next month John Henry Newman will be canonised, at long last many may feel. This occasion will see a flood of books to mark both the events, and to enlarge upon people's ideas about the man and his career, adding to the large number of books and reissues already available (many indeed from Gracewing, the publisher of the present book).

These two books are merely the vanguard of a much larger cohort. Fr Bernard Bassett, who suffered a serious heart attack the year this little book was first published in 1984 and died in 1988, was one of the post popular Jesuit writers of the post war years, a man of great charm and great influence as a retreat director.

In this short book he describes how Newman as a young idealist established the church at Littlemore, as an experiment in community living for Tractarian Anglicans, such as he was associated with. It was at Littlemore, where he worked as the Vicar that Newman moved in his religious feelings from being Anglican to accepting the full teaching of the Catholic Church, leading to his departure on his conversion.

This new edition, which has been amended and enlarged, will introduce readers not only to Newman but also to Fr Bassett and his many books, and indeed to the work at Littlemore (which now takes on an ecumenical aspect).

Unearthly Beauty: The Aesthetic of St John Henry Newman

by Guy Nicholls
(Gracewing, £25.00 hb)

If Fr Bassett's concern was with the ordinary reader, Fr Guy Nicholls' book dealing with the aesthetics of Newman is very much for the scholar. The role of art, architecture and music in Newman's life and by extension in the life of the Church is a profound topic. Here in Ireland we can see the results of Newman's concern with such matters in the fabric and purpose of the University Church in St Stephen's Green.

The outcome of many years of study and thought, this book is likely to become an important landmark in the ever increasing literature concerning England's new saint. The author, an Oratorian priest who lectures in theology at St Mary's College, Oscott, outside Birmingham, is the founder and director of the John Henry Newman Institute of Liturgical Music, which focuses on the ancient traditions of Latin and music in the church.

His five detailed chapters, drawn from his doctoral work, present an insightful critique of both what Newman believed and what he achieved. But, of course, Newman was a saint for all seasons too, and his life and work presents many other aspects to his myriad admirers.

As the author explains, his focus is on "the other-worldly" in Newman, so for this reason he eschews any discussion of Newman as writer. However, readers might like to know, that the book pages in *The Irish Catholic* issue of October 10 will contain an extended treatment of Newman, one of the giants of Victorian literature, as a writer in many genres.



When Ulster armies clashed at night

Nights in Armour
by Samuel Thompson
(Mercier Press, €14.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

With the question of Ulster back in the fore of European politics, this new novel reminds us of just what the condition were in the grim past of that province that wise leaders in the Republic and the EU, Northern Ireland and Britain should seek to avoid, with mingled memories of past fears:

*And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
where ignorant armies clash by night...*

Samuel Thompson was born and grew up in the loyalist working-class area of Shankill in Belfast. In 1979 at the age of eighteen he joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary. During the so-called 'Troubles' he served in counties Armagh, Tyrone and in Belfast, where he experienced the loss of colleagues and friends and saw the results of numerous killings and bombings first-hand.

He has distilled his recollection of those experiences into this riveting novel. As a result, there is a ring of authenticity in every character and incident he describes.

At the outset he introduces the 'Players'. They are two Catholics just out of school, lounging on the corner of a street in a Catholic/Nationalist housing estate.

Realising that owing to decades of anti-Catholic discrimination they had little prospect of securing worthwhile employment, they are resentful. They hate the RUC who, as they see it, avail of every opportunity to harass them. And they are familiar with the accounts of the torture and ill-treatment of Republican prisoners in Castlereagh RUC barracks.

Baton

When a police car drives past they pelt it with whatever is to hand. One is caught while doing so and is given such a beating with a baton that he ends up in hospital. Eventually the two are sworn into the Irish National Liberation Army. They set out to ambush and kill a two-man police patrol. In an exchange of shots one of them flees from

Samuel Thompson.



that colleagues in the UDR stalked the alleged killers and delivered their own brand of justice.

“This novel vividly illustrates the almost intolerable challenges members of the RUC had to face during the ‘Troubles’”

The hunger-strike conducted by Bobby Sands and others created a time of deep tension and sharpened the conflict in the streets. The RUC were unable to control the protest marches or even interfere with the well-publicised military funerals of fallen IRA members.

This frustration was but an additional irritant to the discomfort of the four RUC members at the heart of Thompson's novel. They had to be on guard at all times – even when off-duty and were liable to be attacked whenever out on patrol. To cap it all was their attendance at the horrific carnage following wayside and

other bombings.

The four principals in Thompson's novel end their service in the RUC in tragic and unhappy circumstances. One is blown to pieces by a bomb. Another is seriously maimed after an attempt on his life. A third resigns in disgust at the social and political situation in Northern Ireland and emigrates to England. The fourth settles in Portadown, where after the stand-off at Drumcree which the RUC attempted to police, he has his home burnt down by loyalists.

Sincere efforts

This novel vividly illustrates the almost intolerable challenges members of the RUC had to face during the 'Troubles' and their attempts to cope with them and provide a normal police service. Their sincere efforts to that end need to be commended.

However, this novel is written from an RUC perspective. Hence there is not the slightest hint about members who descended into the abyss of the tit for tat, killing of hundreds of innocent civilians in collusion with loyalist murder gangs, UDR and MI5.

“The four principals in Thompson's novel end their service in the RUC in tragic and unhappy circumstances. One is blown to pieces by a bomb. Another is seriously maimed after an attempt on his life”

Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.



The Durrell family on Corfu in the 1930s.

Durrell cooks up a pleasant history of a culinary family

Dining with the Durrells: Stories and Recipes from the Cookery Archives of Mrs Louise Durrell, by David Shimwell, foreword by Lee Durrell, afterword by Jacquie Durrell (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99)

Peter Costello

My Family and other Animals was the late Gerald Durrell's greatest success, an engaging mixture of an amusing family saga with an account of the growing intimacy of the young Gerald with the natural history of Corfu in the mid-1930s. It was followed by two others in the same style spread over this writing career, the recent television adaption of which was also a great success.

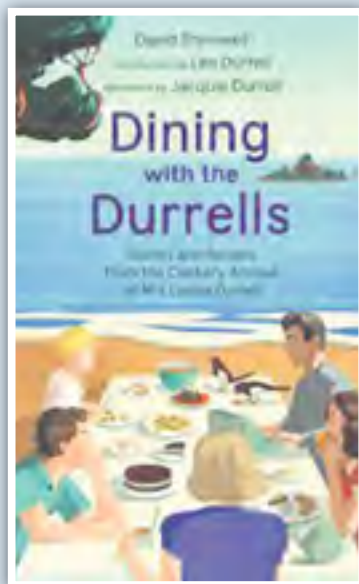
These books may seem to have been about zoology, but they were also as importantly about gastronomy, as delivered by Louisa Durrell, the 'Mother' of the books and TV series.

Though her late husband was an Anglo-Indian of British origin, Louise was Anglo-Irish by descent. Irish readers may in this book catch a tone and approach to enjoying life that has echoes in the books of the Anglo-Irish here in Ireland.

Cookery tomes

Readers will recall that *Mother's* favourite bedside reading (aside from detective stories) were cookery tomes with title like *Simples Dishes* from Rajasthan.

The author of this very entertaining book draws on Louisa's archive for several dishes of Indian origin, but also on many



other more adapted to what would be called 'the Media reran diet'; though in her hands it was a richer feast than modern devotees of diet would care for.

"We lolled in the sea until it was time to return for tea, another of Mother's gastronomic triumphs," as Gerald records. "Tottering mounds of hot scones; crisp paper-thin biscuits; cakes like snowdrifts, oozing jam; cakes dark, rich and moist, crammed with fruit; brandy snaps brittle as coral and overflowing with honey. Conversation was almost at a standstill; all that could be heard were the gentle tinkle of cups, and the heartfelt sigh of some guest, accepting another slice of cake."

Strictly speaking this is not a cook book, but a book about the lively time the family had in Corfu,

buttressed by simply presented recipes from Louisa's archive — there is nothing overly foodie here.

The book is simply good fun, with some good food as a reward. The 11 sections of this book each contain four recipes of assorted curries, cakes, desserts and vegetarian dishes (largely for her daughter Margo). I have to confess that all sounds very delicious and my wife and I cannot wait to cook some of them.

“Strictly speaking this is not a cook book, but a book about the lively time the family had in Corfu, buttressed by simply presented recipes from Louisa's archive”

Lawrence Durrell's novels are not to everyone's taste it has to be admitted — though he was also the author of a play now almost forgotten *An Irish Faustus*. But his book *Prospero's Cell* (1945) and its companion on *Rhodes Reflections on a Marine Venus* are (as I found recently) just as good as they were when I first read them back in the 1970s.

Those who have enjoyed summer holidays in the Greek islands, as so many Irish people have, will relish this book as a source of delight to continue their engagement with the source of our civilisation through the winter months.

Mainly About Books

By the books editor

Popular lore in field and street

Among the many institutions that derive from the 1920s that still survive to this day the Folklore Department of University College Dublin is the most interesting, and perhaps the most culturally significant.

Its productions, such as a recent work on the folklore of our coast-wise fishing communities, often make for austere and academic reading. The basis of its work is less literary than scientific, in a model derived from folklore experts of Scandinavia.

Yet the people involved in its work, such as Kevin Danagher, Séamus Ennis and Seamus Ó Catháin, were decidedly human. More of the human side of folklore collecting is revealed in a book by Bríd Mahon, who was on the staff of the department for many years, while *Green Grass Grows* (1998) is subtitled 'Memoirs of a Folklorist'.

A medieval clerk in England once expressed the sentiment *Sustine modicum: ricolae melius hoc norunt*, "a wait a bit: let us ask the country folk". Or as the poet Ezra Pound re-expressed it in *The Decade of Sheng Min*: "Ask the fellows who cut the hay".

And that is what so many people think folklore was and is: the wisdom of rural families and communities. The Irish folklore collectors concentrated on this, rightly seeing that the long looked for economic improvement would change rural life internally, as it has.

Displaced people

But it raised the question: did the city folklore have not lore of their own? It was all too easy to say, as emigration drained both country and city down to the 1960s, that the folklore of the city was merely that of displaced country people. But it was not as easy as that.

A chapter of Bríd Mahon's book deals briefly with the folklore of the city, a mere seven pages out of two hundred. Writing of Seamus Delargy she remarks: "One thing I shall always regret is his lack of interest in urban traditions, more especially in those of Dublin. Our main task lay in gathering up the folk traditions of Gaelic Ireland before it was too late. Everything else must take second place. Unfortunately, in those years I was the only woman folklorist and the only Dubliner on the staff."

She goes on to make some

remarks on the games she played when small, including 'The Priest of the Parish has lost his Considering Cap', one of the city games played at wakes in the Liberties, which "was a runaway favourite with its daring forfeits and sexual overtones".

This game is described in O'Sullivan's *Irish Wake Amusements*, such as echo in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

Iona and Peter Opie later showed in the brief gathering they collected from Dublin schools in *The Language and Lore of Schoolchildren* (1959), just what has been lost.

Bríd Mahon alludes

a page or so later that now even the belief in ghosts has waned, though flying saucers and other UFOs were on the increase — what are now referred to by American folklorists as 'urban myths'. But aside from this manifestation there would also have been folklore associated with marriage, childbirth, life events and death, which well merited the attention of folklorist but never got it.

“Our main task lay in gathering up the folk traditions of Gaelic Ireland before it was too late. Everything else must take second place”

That is why Bairbre Ní Fhloinn's *Cold Iron: Aspects of the occupational lore of Irish fishermen* (Four Courts Press, €20.00) is so interesting in the part dealing with the fishermen out of Howth.

However, Yeats, who lived there as a child, felt (as he says in *The Celtic Twilight*) that Howth was the most haunted palce in Ireland.

It is interesting that these aspects of urban or urbanised lore interested the women workers in the Folklore department.

Can it be that they were more sensitive to some matters which the male colleagues bound up in trying to preserve their real past, neglected the urban mast of the new generations in Ireland?

As urban Ireland changes all the time with the advent of new cultures, the folklorist would need to be alert not just to the folklore of the past as in the fields and cottages of the west, but the folk life of the present around us in the streets and flats of Dublin as well.



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The Miracle Prayer

Dear Heart of Jesus,
In the past I have asked for many favours.

This time I ask for a special one. (mention here)
Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

Y.F.

The Miracle Prayer

Dear Heart of Jesus,
In the past I have asked for many favours.

This time I ask for a special one. (mention here)
Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

M.D.

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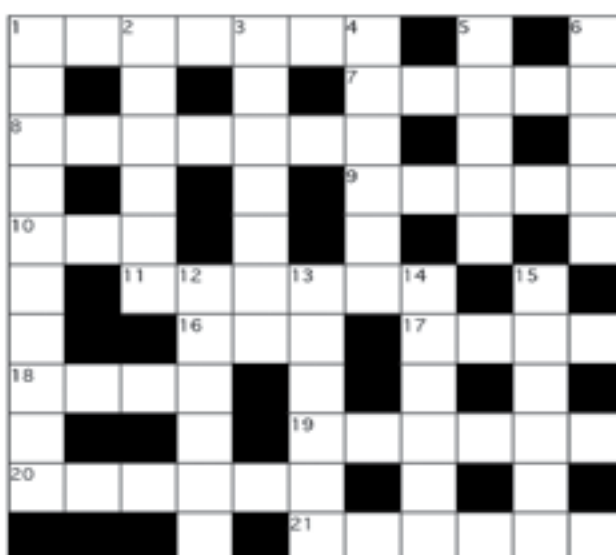
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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 301



ACROSS

- 1 'Harry Potter and the Deathly _____' (7)
 7 Coming from the Emerald Isle (5)
 8 They are completely surrounded by water (7)
 9 Informs, repeats the story (5)
 10 We use 'he' for a boy and _____ for a girl (3)
 11 In many houses, you can go up these to the rooms up there (6)
 16 Large type of tree (3)
 17 Not false (4)
 18 Midday (4)
 19 Huge seas (6)
 20 Sometimes, things are divided into junior and _____ (6)

- 21 Religious building like a church (6)

DOWN

- 1 Frozen raindrops (10)
 2 You might see these flowers in a pond (6)
 3 In sport, a defender hates to score this! (3,4)
 4 She has the same parents as you (6)
 5 The Holy Book of Christians (5)
 6 Large box or trunk (5)
 12 You might have a score of forty love in this sport (6)
 13 Bring something into the country (6)
 14 Small river (6)
 15 Cars can drive through this to go under a river (6)

SOLUTIONS, SEPTEMBER 19

GORDIUS No. 421

Across – 1 Van 3 Firing squad 8 Mortal 9 Civilian 10 Isaac 11 Gruff 13 Sudan 15 Bursary 16 Scratch 20 Pulse 21 Stink 23 Simon of Cyrene 25 Superb 26 Lemon squash 27 See

Down – 1 Vampire bats 2 Narrator 3 Franc 4 Include 5 Sting 6 Unique 7 Dun 12 Fashionable 13 Strop 14 Niche 17 Trumpets 18 Plateau 19 Sitcom 22 Koran 23 South 24 Oil

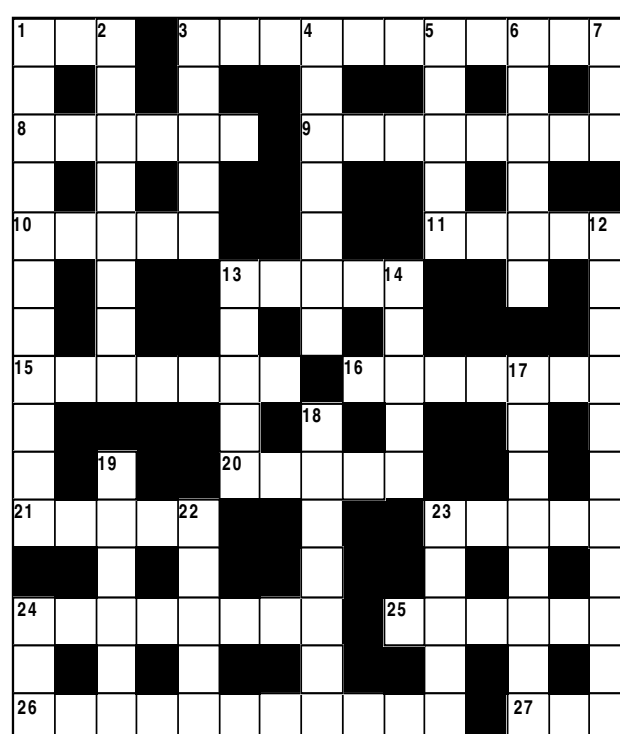
CHILDREN'S No. 300

Across – 1 Breakfast 6 Out 7 Opened 8 Berry 10 Twice 11 Act 12 Ring 14 Niece 15 Mailman 17 Eager 18 Sty 19 War

Down – 1 Broken 2 Electricity 3 Keeping 4 Tour 5 Stay 8 Berry 9 Recycled 13 Imps 16 Mow

Crossword

Gordius 422



ACROSS

- 1 Fruit featuring in gorgeous starters (3)
 3 Where one might buy footwear for one's motor? (3,4,4)
 8 Reply (6)
 9 Acquiring knowledge or skill (8)
 10 Illegal act (5)
 11 The saint is given a drink to play the guitar (5)
 13 Maintain flight in one position (5)
 15 The habits of the excise service (7)
 16 One from Warsaw, perhaps, finds a feline skunk (7)
 20 Pulls - with a pencil? (5)
 21 Killed - with broken nails? (5)
 23 Snooped (5)
 24 & 25 Fortitude, for example, as displayed by a prince of the church? Goodness! (8,6)
 26 Unpin a modem like this, and all hell breaks loose! (11)
 27 Angling stick (3)

DOWN

- 1 How orderly of them to give the Pope some tins! (11)
 2 Young geese (8)
 3 French pancake (5)
 4 Credit the vile bee, perhaps (7)
 5 Rotates or changes direction (5)
 6 This place is for the birds! (6)
 7 In Physics, a unit of work (3)
 12 One of the parables smeared dust around (7,4)
 13 Muggy, sticky weather description (5)
 14 Castles in the air (5)
 17 A cistern could be made into this container (8)
 18 Throwing-spear (7)
 19 Traditional hospital rank (6)
 22 Gullible (5)
 23 Shape that can break sunlight into its constituent colours (5)
 24 Mushroom found in scenic Epping Forest (3)

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Sudoku Corner

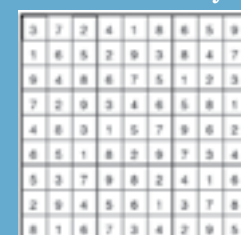
301

Easy

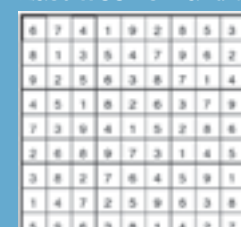
Hard



Last week's Easy 300



Last week's Hard 300



Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



One small step for man, one giant leap for Faith

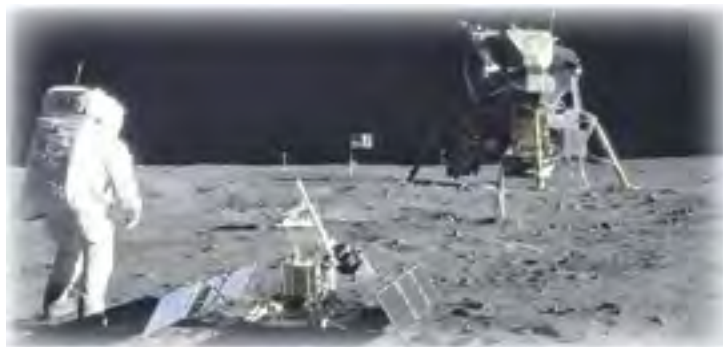
A QUESTION. Do you know what the first food eaten on the moon was? The answer may surprise many of you...the Eucharist!

Of the many interesting milestones marked or celebrated this past summer, one that stood out for me was the 50th anniversary of for the first people to set foot on the moon on July 21, 1969. There were acres of articles and hours of programming to mark this milestone but it was a fascinating piece in the Catholic international magazine *The Tablet* that most caught my imagination and which provided me with the question above.

When the Apollo 11 spacecraft landed on the moon it was some hours before the astronauts actually disembarked and took those first fateful steps immortalised by Neil Armstrong's famous words. However, it was some other words spoken by Armstrong's colleague Buzz Aldrin when the lunar module actually landed that fascinated me.

Global audience

Broadcasting to one of the biggest ever global audiences Aldrin said: "Houston, This is Eagle. This is the



LM (lunar module) pilot speaking. I would like to request a few moments of silence. I would like to invite each person listening in, wherever and whomever he or she may be, to contemplate for a moment the events of the past few hours, and to give thanks in his or her own individual way."

Aldrin himself had planned how he would use this time a few days earlier while still on earth. He was a devout Presbyterian and together with a few friends he had gathered for a private eucharistic

service.

At the end of the service the pastor had given Aldrin a small Communion host, a phial of wine and a tiny chalice which the astronaut packed in a small pouch for personal possessions that he was allowed to take with him. He wanted to express his feeling that what man was doing in this mission transcended electronics, computers and rockets.

It was about communion with God; about reaching beyond humanity, and putting faith not

only in science, but also in the aid of a higher power. And so here he was on the moon and having spoken those words inviting millions around the world to reflect and give thanks, he himself opened the bread and the wine.

“It was about communion with God; about reaching beyond humanity”

With the gravity of the moon the wine began to move slowly up the side of the tiny chalice. Aldrin 'received' both elements and read from John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit, for you can do nothing without me."

In the secular culture of late 1960's America perhaps it was not surprising that what Buzz Aldrin did inside the lunar module was not allowed to be broadcast. To the listening world there was silence but inside that little space machine parked on the surface of the moon a faithful disciple had kept a promise from the upper room: "Do this in memory of me."

St John of God Sisters

● For over 100 years the St John of God Sisters in Kilkenny have provided communion breads for the parishes of the Diocese of Ossory and beyond.

It was with great sadness that we learned earlier this summer the sisters were closing their Altar Bread department. Countless generations of priests and parishioners are indebted to the sisters and their lay staff for this precious service and ministry which they have provided through the years.

As one door closes, another opens. We are grateful to the Cistercian sisters at Glencairn who will now provide communion breads to the parishes of Ossory either directly from the Abbey or through the St Mary's Cathedral Bookshop in Kilkenny.



Pupils and staff at DeMatha school, Assam, India



PLEASE SUPPORT A SCHOOL THAT IS HELPING POOR TRIBAL CHILDREN AVOID A LIFE OF CRIME AND POVERTY

The Trinitarians in Assam, north-east India, write: "Trauma among the young ones, children and women here is immense and the risk of young people being co-opted by extremist groups is real. Young boys are trained and exploited." They add that Catholics are persecuted, state education is poor and much of society is corrupt.

EDUCATION HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE

The Trinitarians have asked The Little Way Association to fund the expansion of their school which helps children avoid a life of crime and poverty. DeMatha school in Tulsibari is presently in temporary buildings and expects present pupil numbers of 100 to double next year. The Little Way Association has been asked to pay for the construction of four new classrooms, as well as urgently needed sanitary facilities for both boys and girls, and clean drinking water.

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