

The Irish Catholic

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Thursday, February 27, 2020

€2.00 (Stg £1.70)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

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L'Arche will endure says 'shocked' Community Leaders

Chai Brady

Irish L'Arche Community Leaders are in "shock" and "anger" at what they see as the "betrayal" of founder Jean Vanier after revelations that he sexually abused multiple women.

The heads of the charity's four centres in Cork, Kilkenny, Dublin and Belfast spoke to *The Irish Catholic* about their ongoing work to help staff and supporters affected by the news. Their focus, they said, will continue to be on the vulnerable people in their communities.

Leader in Dublin, Peter Shiels, said they are "absolutely devastated" after an inquiry launched by L'Arche International found the testimonies of six women relating to sexual abuse "credible" on Saturday.

Mr Shiels said that for many people who have given much of their lives to L'Arche's cause the "wind has been taken out of their sails".

"I think Jean was a very respected individual across many different traditions and in many different countries and I think for an awful lot of people they feel devastated, betrayed, hurt

and genuinely confused at what seems to be mixed messages.

"We can see obviously the good, he was somebody that was decades ahead of his game in social care. Yet this conflicting behaviour, people are just really trying to make sense of that. The community are coming together for just a time to reflect and talk."

Sentiment

L'Arche's focus on compassion and building communities in which everyone is welcome will not change, a sentiment that is particularly important in Belfast "where there's been a lot of division over the years", according to community leader Scott Shively.

"I think in terms of why I'm here and why I think most of our staff are here is the people we work with, we really believe in building a community where everyone can belong and where everyone is celebrated for who they are in the world," he said.

"I think it's really hard when the person you've been looking up to all this time has let you down so spectacularly and then at

» Continued on Page 6

Food for thought at the RDS



Alfie Greene, Jeannie Higgins, Patricia Friel and Jimmy Murphy help to staff the Mary's Meals stall at the Divine Mercy Conference which was held in the RDS, Dublin, over the weekend. See Pages 11-13. Photo: Seán Blackwell

MARY KENNY

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Clergy cautious over flu and coronavirus threats

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DAVID QUINN

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9.30am–5.30pm

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

Managing Director: Garry O'Sullivan

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €145. Airmail €250. Six months – €75.

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

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Religious literacy is the key to understanding how the world works

I've just returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Led by Bishop Kevin Doran, 100 Irish pilgrims visited the sites associated with the earthly life of Jesus. It's always a fascinating and moving experience.

As well as the Christian sites, that land is also holy to both Jews and Muslims and understanding this is key to appreciating how a potential peace deal can be reached.

To be ignorant of the role faith plays in the lives of billions of people is to fail to understand and appreciate their worldview. What's also dangerous about a lack of religious literacy and vocabulary is that those who lack it often don't even know they lack it and therefore don't see what they're missing.

Closer to home, a new government proposal to shake-up primary education could see a reduction in time allocated to the teaching of religion.

The proposals are contained in a new draft primary curriculum framework that was published on Tuesday by the State advisory body the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Endeavour

Recent years have seen calls for faith formation – preparation for the reception of the sacraments rather than religious education – to become more of a parish-

based endeavour. There are good reasons to argue that well-resourced parishes with talented and committed catechists can help deepen understanding of the sacraments.

“The study of religion does need to be separated from faith formation”

But reducing education about religion and beliefs is a dangerous experiment at a time when religion is increasingly a lens through which to see and fathom the world. Downgrading the subject also deprives emerging generations of valuable tools to understand what makes the world go round and was a proven strategist for resilience.

The 21st Century has shown that far from being irrelevant, more and more people across the globe are becoming religious and faith is an important backdrop to many challenges facing the world. Add to that the fact that the majority of immigrants coming to Europe – including Ireland – describe themselves as religious, and ignorance of religion means ignorance of the world around us. One doesn't have to be religious

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



to understand religion and know its importance in global affairs.

There is a body of basic religious knowledge that everyone should have. How many Irish teenagers, for example, leave school without having the slightest notions about distinctions within Islam? Do they know the difference between Sunni Islam and Shia Islam? What of Sufis and Salafism?

So what, you might say, what's the big deal? Religion is a private matter, and sectoral interests within Islam (or any other religion) are of little interest in modern Ireland.

But, it is a big deal – to fail to understand some of the competing interests at the heart of contemporary Islam. How can you grasp the central thrust of movements such as so-called Islamic State without an awareness of religion distorted though it may be? To miss the fact that rivalry between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran is at the heart of many of the lingering conflicts in the Middle East is to be ignorant of the volatile geopolitics of the region.

“‘Nietzsche is dead – God’ points to a growing confidence amongst theists that their Faith has risen to the challenge”

The study of religion does need to be separated from faith formation. In the UK, if a school is Anglican, for example, that ethos is catered for quite apart from the religious studies department where the subject is treated as an academic discipline alongside other subjects like history or geography.

While Anglicanism is nominally the state religion of the UK, Britain could hardly be described as a confessional state – it is one of the most secular places in Europe, though it is a complex mix of people from many religious

backgrounds and none. But what policymakers there understand is that religion plays an important role in society and in the lives of individual citizens – to fail to get this is to be tone deaf to something which means a great deal to many people.

So while the Government might trumpet the new decision as reflective of a more diverse Ireland, it is actually only pandering to a very small but vocal lobby of secularist organisations who are stuck in a time warp of believing that over time the world would move beyond religious beliefs.

Confidence

Nietzsche, Marx and Freud all thought that religion would wither and die in the 20th Century. They were on the wrong side of history, and the undoubtedly apocryphal story of a theology student scrawling on the bathroom wall 'Nietzsche is dead – God' points to a growing confidence amongst theists that their Faith has risen to the challenge.

And they have reason to be confident. Religion is experiencing a global boom. Christianity may be on the retreat in Europe, and some people even predict that it is dying – North America may go the same way. But, what is actually happening is that the global centre of gravity is shifting towards Africa, Latin America and – increasingly – Asia.

If we're serious about understanding the world and having mature and well-formed opinions about what is happening in the world, religion has to be part of the picture. Faith formation should be reserved for those who want it, but a worldview which doesn't take religion into account is a very impoverished and one-dimensional outlook.

i The NCCA is consulting on the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework. To add your voice to the conversation, see www.ncca.ie



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Bishop suggested Mary I College came under 'pressure' over course rejection

Chai Brady

The rejection of a Christian ethics course by Mary Immaculate College (MIC) has been strongly criticised by the Bishop of Elphin, who has speculated in correspondence to the president of the college that he and the college must have come under "some kind of pressure".

A strongly worded exchange between MIC President Eugene Wall and Bishop Kevin Doran regarding the Certificate in Christian Ethics in Healthcare being disallowed by college authorities can be revealed by this paper after a Freedom of Information request.

In an initial letter sent in October last year Bishop Doran questioned whether the decision to drop the course was due to concerns about "reputational damage resulting from a course in Christian ethics prepared and delivered by its own staff".

Implications

"If this is indeed the case, I would urge you to reconsider your decision, not only for the sake of this programme, but because of the potential implications of your decision for the possibility of doing Catholic theology in the public space," he wrote.

He stated that he recommended MIC develop the programme because of its profile as a "centre of learning

for Catholic theology", their staff had the expertise, and because the programme appeared to be "fully consistent with the college's own strategic plan".

The course was developed to help those struggling morally in Ireland's changing healthcare landscape

Defending MIC, Prof. Wall replied saying there is "unmistakable evidence" that the college "is steadfastly committed to its Catholic mission and identity".

He continued saying MIC is accountable to the Department of Education and the Higher Education Authority regarding "operations and strategic direction".

"Some commentators fail to grasp that it is in a fundamentally different position from Catholic universities and colleges in the USA which are private institutions and, consequently, enjoy very considerable autonomy," he said.

"Responsibility for the management of the college is entrusted to the Executive Team. It acts at all times in a judicious and informed manner to evaluate and safeguard the college's strategic interests."

Bishop Kevin, in his response, agreed that MIC always demonstrated a "serious commitment to its mission and identity".

"Your letter would suggest that you have come under some kind of pressure not to offer the course and that is unfortunate," he said, adding that as far as he is a "commentator" he wanted to note the "apparent divergence between this decision and the clear intention expressed in your strategic plan".

Prof. Wall did not reply to the suggestion in the documents seen by *The Irish Catholic*, nor is there any evidence to suggest that he did come under pressure.

When asked why the course was disallowed, a statement sent to this paper by MIC said they had no plans to expand its programmes in the area of professional

healthcare, "particularly where such programmes would necessitate a diversion of resources from MIC's core programmes".

However, documents in the FOI state the course was to be self-funded and would need minimal staff.

In late 2015 the Catholic Bishops Consultative Group on Bioethics began working on a Code of Ethical Standards for Healthcare aimed at supporting healthcare practitioners and those interested in the quality of care for the sick. It was decided by Ireland's bishops it would be more effective if it was connected to an academic programme.

The certificate was in the

works for 18 months and was developed by the Irish Institute of Pastoral Studies at MIC. About three months after receiving academic approval, members of the Executive Team noted on September 12, 2019, "that the proposed Ethics in Healthcare programme remains unapproved".

Contacted by this paper, three bishops who are on the Board of Trustees of the College Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick, Bishop Kieran O'Reilly of Cashel and Emly and Bishop of Kerry Ray Browne did not comment when asked whether they intervened or questioned the decision to reject the course.

Hell hath no Fury: world champion boxer attributes victory to God

Tyson Fury (left) throws a jab as Deontay Wilder backs off in their heavyweight boxing fight at the weekend.



Aron Hegarty

Catholic boxer Tyson Fury gave thanks to God in his victory speech after being crowned the WBC heavyweight champion at the weekend.

Tyson 'Gypsy King' Fury defeated the previously unbeaten Deontay Wilder in their eagerly-anticipated world title rematch at Las Vegas' MGM Grand Arena on February 22.

Mr Fury, 31, was handed the WBC belt after 'The Bronze Bomber' Wilder, 34, threw in the towel in the seventh round.

Speaking in an interview after the match, Mr Fury spoke of his Faith in God: "First and foremost I want to say thank you to my Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ.

"Those who bring evil against me will not prosper, those who stand in the dark

can never come into the light."

He added: "All praise be to the one and only true God, Jesus Christ."

The British boxer, who has now won 30 of his 31 professional fights, credited his opponent for showing "the heart of a champion".

American boxer Wilder, who had won 41 of his previous 43 fights by knockout, was named by Pope Francis as the Boxers' Representative and Ambassador for Peace through Sport in January.

A humbled Mr Wilder met and spoke with the Holy Father during a visit to Rome in December 2019.

"What an honour it was to meet the Pope," wrote Mr Wilder on his Twitter page. "He's truly a remarkable man that represents true love, happiness and world peace for all the human race."

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Clergy cautious over flu and coronavirus warnings

Róise McGagh

Priests around the country have been taking precautions due to the threat of the flu and coronavirus.

While some efforts have been made in asking the congregation to pray for peace instead of offering a handshake and changing out holy water, many priests are wary of causing panic in their parish.

Fr Tom Clowe PP of Crumlin said the parish were asking people to instead pray for peace as well as replacing the holy water after every mass. They also have hand sanitiser at the ready.

The Dublin Archdiocese published guidance for its parishes on how they could take steps to prevent the spread seasonal flu in early February.

Flu season

Fr Dominic Meehan CC of Templemore, Clonmore and Killea in Tipperary says he hasn't yet taken any precaution. "I think there's more likelihood of picking up infections from door handles or from money then from shaking hands," he said, but still thinks it is wise to be prudent around flu season.

"I think people are under the impression that if they don't offer a handshake during the sign of peace then they might be perceived as being rude.

"People are very understanding, particularly throughout the year members of the congregation may be going through chemotherapy,



their immune systems might be low."

Fr Joe McDonald PP of Ballyfermot also said he hasn't taken any precautions, he feels there can be an

unhealthy extreme that he didn't want to encourage.

Fr Arnold Rosney PP from St Senan's Parish, Shannon, reiterated this feeling of not wanting to cause panic

among parishioners.

In Frosses, Co. Donegal, Fr James Sweeny told *The Irish Catholic* that they stopped handshakes over a year ago due to the flu: "We found certainly in the country, a lot of people actually don't like it." Fr Patrick McGinn PP of Monaghan said this was the case for them as well.

In DCU, where there are a large number of Chinese students and students who have returned from studies there due to the outbreak, Fr Seamus McEntee has said they are using hand sanitiser and, like everyone, keeping a close eye on news of the virus.

Women impacted worse by climate change

Staff reporter

Women are 14 times more likely than men to be killed by disasters resulting from climate change according to a report released by Trócaire.

Released on Tuesday it notes that despite barriers for women engaging in decisions on climate change they "are often at the forefront of tackling climate change and human rights abuses and articulating the need for transformative change".

According to the research, women are far more likely to be impacted by climate change and corporate human rights violations worldwide.

It shows that natural disasters increase young girls' risk of being subject to human trafficking by 20-30%. Attacks on female human rights defenders are rising with 137 women attacked in 2019 for defending their communities. Under half of these were against indigenous women and affected rural

communities.

Bertita Zúñiga Cáceres, leader of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH) spoke at the launch of Trócaire's Lenten campaign of her experience of violence toward female human rights defenders. "Around the world, women face huge risks in standing up for their rights in the face of injustice perpetrated by big business taking advantage of vulnerable communities."

Mary Robinson gives lecture on Faith in US

Former President of Ireland Mary Robinson gave a talk to students at a US university on her Faith this week.

In the lecture titled 'How Faith has Impacted My Life', Ms Robinson discussed her childhood in Ireland growing up in a strict Catholic family in Ballina, Co Mayo.

Ms Robinson, 75, revealed how she maintained her Faith despite not agreeing with the Church on a number of issues such as discrimination against women.

She encouraged students to stand up for themselves and "follow your own path, even if you find you don't agree with certain things".

The Irish Catholic Bumper Christmas Crossword

Congratulations to Frances Kennedy from Co. Cork, who won *The Irish Catholic's* 2019 Christmas crossword competition. The first prize is a fully inclusive pilgrimage for two to Lourdes in 2020. The runners up, Geraldine Murphy from Co. Armagh, Martina Holmes, Co. Cork and P. Gray from Co. Dublin will receive book prizes of *Fáilte Pope Francis* and *Pope Francis in Ireland*.

Solutions

Crossword 1 (December 19)

Across: 1 Cream slice 6 Stable door 11 Mittens 14 Feast 17 Five gold rings 19 Avers 20 At fault 23 Woe 24 Swing by 25 Hue 26 Nit 28 Over 30 Wagner 33 Mass 36 Mammon 37 Dines 38 Sleet 39 Believed 40 Skater 43 Nougat 45 Add 46 Goodness 48 Hitch 49 Bemoan 50 Yule log 51 Avalon 54 Archangel 56 Enough 57 Winter 59 Basil 61 Ice 62 Saint Nicholas of Myra 65

The Three Wise Men 66 God 67 Extra 68 Leo 70 Genie 74 Tsar 75 Unload 77 Plight 78 Soda water 79 Legacy 80 Envy 83 Avatar 84 Aslan 86 Small fry 88 Box 89 Tip-off 93 Cognac 95 Gardenia 97 Torah 98 Puree 100 Cobweb 101 Golf 103 Tablet 105 Race 106 VAR 108 Lie 110 Chorale 111 ETA 112 Ruffian 113 Broom 116 Christmas tree 117 Eyes down 118 Unfed 119 Nursery 120 T-bone steak 121 As Good As It Gets
Down: 2 Emanated 3 Mother superior 4 Lists 5 Captain Nemo 7 Two turtle doves 8 Lift 9 Dive 10 Reopen 11 Modest 12 Trinidad 13 Engagement ring 14 Following yonder star 16 Refer 18 Hymn 22 Gem 27 Ideas 30 West Bank 31 Ask 32 Eyewash 34 Abbot 35 Sling 41 Armour 42 The Liturgy of the Word 44 Unlimited 46 Glow 47 Sachet 48 Hoarse 52 Nip 53 Stage 54 Arid 55 Glissando 59 Bells 63 Darwin 64 Flutes 65 Tour 69 Pal 72 Listen 73 Short cut 76 Deny 77 Pavlova 81

Bling 82 Offal 85 Lay brother 87 Media 90 Pier 91 Jab 92 Poker 94 Ape 95 Gelatine 96 Iona 99 Ear muffs 100 Cock 102 Fly 103 Twigs 104 Bonbons 106 Vestry 107 Repast 109 Rotund 113 Banjo 114 Wren

Crossword 2 (December 26)

Across: 1 Snowplough 6 Staggering 11 Thunder 14 Sated 15 Sedition 17 Scrambled eggs 19 Amass 20 Teacher 23 Pie 24 Testify 25 Axe 26 Try 28 Need 30 Bishop 33 Game 36 Cliche 37 Drill 38 Usher 39 Barbados 40 Ulster 43 Giggie 45 Ink 46 Overcast 48 Water 49 Bursar 50 Auto 51 Saving grace 54 Diatribes 56 Pledge 57 Simple 58 Show 59 Vodka 61 Sue 62 Helen 65 Key 66 Elk 67 Inner 68 Ace 70 Caged 74 Leda 77 Camera 78 Deodorant 79 Dollar 80 Levi 83 Inform 84 Wiser 86 Magritte 88 I do 89 Odds on 93 Top hat 95 Trounced 98 Weeps 100 Nugget 101 East 103 Prayed 105 Eyes 106 Wee 108 Ada 110 Mahatma 111 Urn 112

Languid 113 Jacob 116 Butterfly bush 117 Verbatim 118 Lulls 119 Spheres 120 Devoutness
Down: 2 Outlawed 3 Pedlar 4 Oasis 5 Go Dutch 7 Two Thousand and Twenty 8 Gust 9 Rory 10 Goblet 12 Utensils 13 Dog biscuit 14 Stained-glass windows 16 Tramp 18 Lyre 21 Raven 22 Leg 23 Puma 27 Reads 29 Drug 30 Bluebell 31 Ill 32 Operate 34 Abbey 35 Erect 36 Cox 41 Strode 42 Presentation Sisters 44 Get down to brass tacks 46 Owns 47 Trader 48 Worthy 52 Gin 53 Speed 54 Desk 55 Believers 59 Vying 60 Arc 63 Ardour 64 Salaam 65 Kent 69 Hid 71 Guardian angels 72 Smooth 73 Promoted 76 Ooze 77 Candour 82 Studs 85 Song thrush 87 Azure 90 Dupe 91 Art 92 Papal Nuncio 94 Awe 95 Testator 96 Earn 99 Symbolic 100 Name 102 Taj Mahal 103 Plumb 104 Auditor 106 Walrus 107 Euclid 109 Ocelot 113 James 114 Juno 115 Shot

Free movement of people – is it fair to poorer countries?

The ‘free movement of peoples’ is one of the most strongly-held tenets of the European Union. It would not be too much to say that the EU’s absolute adherence to this principle was one of the triggers of Brexit.

David Cameron, as British Prime Minister, begged the EU to allow the UK some leeway on this issue – his country was attracting half a million incomers each year – but he was sent away with a resounding ‘No’. Thus the Brexit referendum, the outcome of which we are now well aware.

But the problems arising from this free movement all over the 27 European Union countries is now being examined from a different angle. Is it just and fair to some of the less developed countries in the EU, who are being depleted of their young, their skilled and their fertile citizens?

‘Old people’

The Croatian author Slavenka Drakulic certainly believes so. By 2050, she predicts (drawing on research by the Balkan expert Tim Judah) Croatia



Mary Kenny



Slavenka Drakulic. will be “a poor country of old people with nobody to support them”. It will have lost 22% of its population who’ll have migrated to other, richer parts of the EU. Ms Drakulic points out that Croatia is not alone:

- Once a month, a very nice cleaner comes and gives my habitat a good going-over. “I’m afraid it’s a bit of a mess, Janet,” I said as she arrived. “Mary,” she replied, “I get so much job satisfaction coming to you. Some houses I go to, they’re so spick and span I wonder if I make any difference. Here, when I’ve finished, I know I’ve made a difference!”
- There’s a role for everyone in God’s universe, and those of us who are untidy clutterbugs are helped and supported by those who can put us straight!

Bulgaria will lose around 39 % of its population, and Romania 30%. Poland, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina are in the same boat; the figures are slightly less but the trend is the same.

“When the young migrate from their native land, it automatically dents fertility”

What are the chances for Latvia and Lithuania, both of which have experienced dramatic emigration surges since they joined the EU?

Free movement of peoples has allowed, even encouraged, movement towards the centre of the EU, and away from the less developed fringes. So poorer countries are afflicted with something which has haunted Irish history – the spectre of depopulation. And, of course, it is usually the skilled, younger people who leave.

This serious social problem is nowadays compounded by falling fertility: all over Europe, there is a shortage of births, which Ms Drakulic alludes to in passing. From Hungary to Finland, incentives are being introduced to encourage families to have babies. But when the young migrate from their native land, it automatically dents fertility – they take their fertility with them.

I have benefitted, in a way, from free movement myself. So have many Irish people. But looking at the bigger picture, a major social problem is certainly arising within the balance of the EU.

Slavenka Drakulic’s essay can be found on the website VoxEurop.eu



A strange time to rebut advances

Mairead Boland-Brabazon, chief executive of L’Arche Ireland, has paid tribute to the ‘bravery’ of six women who have come forward to report that Jean Vanier, the founder, sexually abused them. But why did they not come forward when Vanier was alive? Why did this inquiry only emerge after the man was dead?

The women reported that Jean Vanier “initiated sexual relations with them, usually in the context of spiritual accompaniment”. Were these sexual relations fully consummated? Are the “adult women” in question intellectually handicapped? If not, were they in a position to rebut advances?

Is this a Harvey Weinstein scenario? Just speaking personally, I feel there are more questions to be asked – and answered – in this regrettable situation.



Augustinian OSA Lay Forum

On March 21st we will gather in Kilkenny for our Synod, the first such gathering we have had in our 750 year history in Ireland.

At the Synod, building on the quiet work of our Forum over the past six years, we will seek to discern the future of the Augustinian mission in Ireland at this time of great challenge and change.

It will be a day of prayer and questioning and planning...an exciting day informed by the input, wisdom and inspiration of our communities all over the country.

We warmly invite you to attend.

Come and see! Be Restless! Gather with us to voice your contribution - it will be held and heard respectfully. Together let us journey and shape our Faith and our future.

Augustinians in Ireland have worked the length and breadth of the country since their first arrival shortly after the Order was founded in Italy in 1256. Jesus Christ is our only reason for being and Saint Augustine of Hippo is our inspiration. Presently there are Augustinian communities in 12 locations in Ireland with a variety of activities and works.

We recognise that our communities are a vibrant network which comprise our professed members and our lay brothers and sisters, our lifeblood, who welcome us when we arrive, support and accompany us when we are about and are saddened when we go. This network respects the variety but equality of our chosen vocations as lay, professed, ordained and other seekers.

The Forum, which is ongoing, is an exciting and vibrant opportunity for us to share our journey with each other. As restless people with a God shaped vacuum at the core of our being, we experience the greatest fulfilment in community...time shared in prayer, work, conversation and relaxation together. We make our road as we walk this journey together.



We constantly seek others to share the journey! SO...
“Come and See”
Would you join us as a member of our Forum community?
“Let us be restless together”
Share your journey with others who share your love and your concern for the message~ Jesus Christ.
Our Faith. Our Church. Our future as Augustinians in Ireland
How does that look to you... how does that look to others?

Young people express their Faith at Divine Mercy Conference

Róise McGagh

There was a prominent number of young people present at the Divine Mercy Conference at the weekend.

Speaking with *The Irish Catholic*, they said they had found new strength in their faith by joining communities in college and realising they were not alone.

Jack Ryan from University College Cork (UCC) said he had been private about his Faith in school: "Once I started meeting one or two others in different prayer groups in college, then going to Youth2000, one of the biggest things that helped me was that I wasn't alone, there are other young people."

Isolation

He works with *Ignite*, which brings together Catholics from different campuses around Ireland. "We know how hard it is for university students who feel isolated on

Divine Mercy Conference

See Pages 11-13



their campuses and a lot of times people might have the Faith and practicing on their own and going to Mass but not knowing that there's any other Catholics on campus

"It makes college so much easier and it really brings on your Faith."

Jason Osborne from *Pure in Heart* who only recently left college said that he came back to his Faith after becoming atheist in secondary school.

While in college had a friend who invited him to prayer meetings and he began to properly read into the religion.

"Catholicism is really based on cold hard truth, it's very philosophical its very rational and I think you won't know that unless you open yourself up to reading about

it," he said speaking of the misconceptions a lot of young people have.

"What Catholicism has enabled me to do is to put things in perspective and prioritise properly and that's an incredibly liberating thing."

Annette O'Donovan, radiation therapy in Trinity also volunteers with *ignite* said she really enjoyed her work with them: "There's a niche and a need and a want for that in Ireland - every university in Ireland."

While it might seem that young people aren't as involved in the church, in 2018 the European Social survey found that young people in Ireland between age 16 and 29 rank as some of the most religious in Europe.

I won't quit show over abuse, says Fr Ray Kelly

Aron Hegarty

Fr Ray Kelly says he will not quit RTÉ1's *Dancing With The Stars* despite receiving abusive emails, letters and threatening phone calls demanding his departure from the show.

The Co Meath priest, 66, has been the subject of a hate campaign for his continuing presence on the show, which has made him consider leaving.

"I was in a bad place for a few weeks," said Fr Kelly.

"I got hate mail and verbal abuse at the end of January which was very negative towards me, being a priest and being on this show.

"As a priest for 31 years, I've never experienced that level of criticism.

"I hadn't said much and kept quiet about it, but the



Fr Ray Kelly with dance partner Kylee Vincent on *Dancing With The Stars* on February 23.

media wanted to meet me after Darren (Kennedy) got voted off and they unearthed it.

He added: "I owe it to the people who are voting for me to keep going and after what happened with Caroline Flack."

Fr Kelly and Kylee Vincent performed the Salsa to *Feeling Hot Hot Hot* by The Merryman performed by the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

The clergyman scored 14 points with judge Lorraine Barry praising him for having the show's "biggest ingredient" of entertainment.

Likewise judge Darren Bennett, filling in for Julian

Benson, said: "You are here and you are entertaining the nation, so very well done!"

Fr Kelly was announced as the second contestant made safe by the public vote on Sunday, February 23.

B*Witched singer Sinead O'Carroll was the fifth celebrity to depart the show after a dance off with Lottie Ryan.

"I told Sinead that I was sorry [for her being voted off] and that it should have been me," said Fr Kelly.

"I said that she was a great dancer, while I am just hanging in there."

The show continues this Sunday, March 1.

Irish Monk showcases his painting of Mary in Canada

An Irish Benedictine monk is showcasing his huge oil-on-canvas painting of Mary at an exhibition in Canada during the month of February.

Emmaus O'Herlihy's painting of Mary, called *Red Magnificat*, pictures her as both indigenous and almost young enough to be called a child.

His painting is in Toronto's Regis College as part of an exhibition called 'Neighbourhood Earth', which explores what it means to be neighbours to each other and our environment.

"Red Magnificat reflects Christ's challenge to historical patterns of exclusion, cultural prejudice and power," he said.

"Instead of an idealised Marian image, the facial features of this young girl suggest Indigenous ethnic origin, in order to re-contextualise Mary's prayerful declaration of God's preference for those counted among the most marginalised in our society."

He is one of nine artists portraying their work at the show in the Jesuit graduate school of theology from February 2 to 29.

Housing charity probe following claims on ex-chief

An investigation into the activities of a housing charity for senior citizens has been launched by Dublin City Council following the resignation of its chief executive.

The council said it would not go ahead with the planned transfer of lands to the charity for the redevelopment of James McSweeney House on Berkeley Street as a result.

The council is to look into the governance of Cabhru Housing Association Services, known until recently as the Catholic Housing Aid Society (Chas), and "certain claims" made against its chief Miceal McGovern.

New Mayor makes housing No.1

The newly-elected Lord Mayor of Dublin has made tackling the city's housing crisis his top priority amid reports of increased spending on tackling homelessness in 2019.

Fianna Fail councillor Tom Brabazon was elected by 34 votes to 26 in a roll-call vote at Dublin City Council on February 24. His appointment comes after the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive announced they spent €170m putting homeless families in emergency accommodation last year.

L'Arche will endure

» Continued from Page 1

the same time we can't let that stop us from doing what we know is really good work."

The sentiment was echoed in Kilkenny with community leader Chris Hayes saying the core values of L'Arche will remain.

Mr Hayes hopes people recognise that it's something they have no control over. "Nobody within any of our communities has done anything wrong," he said, "our safeguarding approach is very good.

"That's the message I was trying to tell everybody today, that outside this very bad news there's so much good in the community: that we don't lose sight of that."

In Cork, L'Arche leader Vivienne O'Brien said that she was "dreading" speaking to their assistants about Vanier, but that they said despite the news, what he wrote "was true".

"Their experience of living with people with disabilities has changed them and they've developed real friendships... and it does bring out the best in them and in us. They're young people who had that insight," she said.

"What he did was terrible, but what we have to try and figure is that his word is true. When you hear young people saying that you realise that the messenger was wrong but the message is still the same."



The Carmelite Friars invite you to a series of reflections over the Season of Lent to consider ways in which we can discuss new life.

WHEN: Saturdays from February 29 - April 10

WHERE: St Thérèse Room, Carmelite Community Centre, Aungier Street, Dublin 2

TIME: 12pm - 1pm

29 FEBRUARY

"Why We Have to Start Stopping: How to fight back against our exhausting busy-ness"

Dr Kevin Hargaden | Dr Hargaden is a Ruling Elder in Presbyterian Church in the Lucan area and also works as Social Theologian at the Jesuit Centre for Faith & Justice.

7 MARCH

"And the Word was made flesh" - Encountering God and each other in the Digital Age.

Dr Andrew O'Connell | Dr O'Connell is a scientist working in Dublin and also writes occasionally on matters of faith.

14 MARCH

The scales falls away from the eyes (Acts 9:18) - Recognising Christ: Towards a New Life

Dr Martin O'Sullivan | Dr O'Sullivan is a medical doctor who works in the area of mental health.

21 MARCH

The Scriptures and Transformation

Fr Paddy Boyle | Fr Boyle is a parish priest in the Dublin Archdiocese and also teaches Sacred Scripture.

28 MARCH

In Silence and in Hope Will Be Your Strength (Isaiah 30:15): Lenten & Paschal Wisdom from the Carmelite Rule on Work and Life

Rev Dr Simon Nolan, O Carm | Fr Nolan is a Prior of Whitefriar Street, and lectures in philosophy at Maynooth University.

4 APRIL

The Mission of the Family

Patrick Treacy, SC | A barrister, an author and a co-founder of the centre of Christian spirituality 'Integritas' and an advocate for Christian education.

11 APRIL

"Purification and Transformation in the Dark Night."

Ms Sophia White, MA | Ms White is a research student in theology.

Refreshments Provided

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Martin Mansergh

The View



Sinn Féin heirs could make history

One mercy of the General Election is that it diminished attention to the actual moment of Brexit on January 31. Brexit was not an election issue, given all-party agreement and support, but history will give credit, absent from the ballot box, to the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney and their officials for protecting vital Irish interests thus far.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's venue for his keynote speech the following day was symbolic. The Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich is redolent of the era of William and Mary and the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1689, by analogy with which Johnson boasted of a 'glorious Brexit'.

Edmund Burke, whose north Cork family origins were from 'the hidden Ireland', a reasoned champion of Catholic rights, is sometimes credited with being the father of British conservatism because of his outspoken opposition to the French Revolution.

He described the 'Glorious Revolution' in Ireland as "not a revolution, but a conquest", and the penal laws created by it "as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people... as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man".

Sensitivity to Northern Ireland was not displayed during the British cabinet reshuffle which removed the effective Northern Ireland Secretary of State Julian Smith, who with Simon Coveney helped restore the power-sharing Assembly and Executive in Northern Ireland last month. His successor arrived, either badly briefed on the withdrawal agreement regarding conditions for Northern Ireland's continuing EU access post-Brexit, or engaging in gamesmanship as a negotiating ploy.

Boris Johnson has talked up prospects of a bridge across the North Channel, despite south-west Scotland's distance from main centres in England. Unless the Chinese were brought in to accelerate

the project, could there be a risk that it would connect an independent Scotland to a united Ireland? Sensibly, the fastest link between the two islands and their main centres of population, especially with the high-speed rail link HS2, would be across the central corridor of the Irish Sea, providing a journey of around 3-4 hours between Dublin and London, and if Britain had stayed in the EU it would have attracted EU financial aid.

“It would certainly be piquant, if the two heirs of the Sinn Féin that won independence a century ago were to come together again at national level”

The collective duty of the 160 Dáil deputies is to elect a Government. The President is unlikely to accept that this is impossible and grant another dissolution and election any time soon. While some parties may argue that they should stand

Sinn Féin's leader in Stormont, Michelle O'Neill.



aside as they have not been given a mandate, no party or deputy has received a mandate never to be in government.

Parties that did well are loosely described as election winners. Indeed, Sinn Féin made spectacular advances, and the Greens and Social Democrats impressive ones. Aontú's Peadar Tobin and Carol Nolan formerly of Sinn Féin held their own, as did others who held to what till recently were mainstream values. Siding with 'socially progressive' liberal humanist changes carries an electoral price, a contributory factor in the disappointing

performances of Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil. No one won the election, and the three front-runners were a virtual dead heat with Sinn Féin joining the mainstream.

It would certainly be piquant, if the two heirs of the Sinn Féin that won independence a century ago were to come together again at national level in coalition. They have long worked together in local authorities. They would face in opposition the other strain in Sinn Féin that has lately started to play a political part in the country's further development. Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael should be proud of the fact that, with others, particularly Labour, they have been partners in democracy. Perhaps now they have to be main partners in government. It is wisely claimed that the challenges of Brexit, housing and health need a majority government.

Peace process

Controversy surrounds the position of Sinn Féin. Times change, but if the hostility it now faces as a democratic party had been shown when it was being persuaded to abandon support for paramilitary violence the peace process would have been stillborn.

The deal offered by the British and Irish Governments from 1993 was that if violence was forsworn they could take part in democratic politics the same as other parties. To partake in the Northern Ireland Executive they had to sign up to and abide by the Mitchell Principles of democracy and non-violence. Their leaders have long denounced dissident republican attacks, and Michelle O'Neill recently appeared at a PSNI

recruitment event.

If SF satisfy democratic conditions north of the border, and security and intelligence have been careful not to say that they don't, it is unfair to people in Northern Ireland to claim that they fail to do so south of the border, notwithstanding differences in the scope of government.

Any perceived attempt to block democracy risks inviting a delayed but stronger reaction later. If, as Mary-Lou McDonald claims, the IRA no longer exists, it would help confidence to declare that the Green Book is obsolete, and that Sinn Féin today takes neither guidance nor instruction from it.

“The Government must stick to the terms of the Good Friday Agreement on a border poll”

It is easy to forget our history. Michael Collins, when head of the Provisional Government in 1922, was still a member of the IRB, with which Defence Minister Richard Mulcahy was involved till his resignation in 1924. Fianna Fáil in 1928 claimed to be "a slightly constitutional party". Political rallies in the early 1930s featured rival paramilitary groups. Shadowy forces are omnipresent in democratic politics everywhere.

The decisive issue is policy compatibility. The Government must stick to the terms of the Good Friday Agreement on a border poll, which, if soundly defeated, would set back the cause of a united Ireland. There is no evidence of any significant unionist conversion following Brexit. The anti-partition campaign of the late 1940s demonstrated that one-sided zeal will not hasten a united Ireland.

Radical tax promises would narrow the tax base and drive out wealth.

The more parties differ in policies the more of them they will have to drop to be in government together.

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The case for religious orders



The world is better for their presence over the years, writes **David Quinn**

The record of the nuns is under attack again. The latest accusation is one of racism against children of 'mixed race' who found themselves in Mother and Baby homes and other Church-run institutions.

The last Mother and Baby home closed down several decades ago and it is entirely believable that racist attitudes were to be found in them, and in society at large.

A report from the Collaborative Forum of Former Residents of Mother and Baby Homes was leaked to the *Sunday Independent* last weekend. It has not yet been published because it makes serious allegations against people who have not been given a fair chance to defend themselves (and may never be in a position to do so).

The report instances individual examples of racism in some Mother and Baby homes and also notes how difficult it was to place children of mixed race with adoptive families.

It quotes a memo sent to the then Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley, in 1966, which said that the chances of mixed-race children in Ireland at the time ever getting married was "practically nil and their future happiness can only be assured in a country with a fair multi-racial population, since they are not received by either black or white".

This tallies with the experience of mixed-race children in countries such as Australia at the time. Children with an Aboriginal mother (say) and a white father were often not accepted by either race, and grew up in institutions, often run by one of the Churches. Attempts, later heavily criticised, were made to raise the children as 'whites' so they could integrate into the wider society.

Indeed, even today it is



often hard to place children from minority ethnic groups who are in the care system with families.

Study

A recent British study showed that the average white British child waits 919 days for adoption but boys of black African descent face the longest wait – 1,302 days, a year longer, which can make a very big difference in the lives of small children.

The results of the investigation into the country's Mother and Baby homes, and other similar institutions is to be published in the coming months.

When that happens, we can expect another wholesale assault on the reputation of women religious. Who will speak up for the great good they have done down the centuries, to the present time?

“When we weigh the good that women religious orders have done compared with the bad, the scales come down very heavily on the side of the good”

Ireland over the past few decades is like a country that has heard only the case for the prosecution against the Catholic Church, but almost never the case for the defence. What system of justice would provide a jury only with the case for the prosecution and then expect it to decide innocence or guilt on that basis?

On balance, when we weigh the good that women

religious orders have done compared with the bad, the scales come down very heavily on the side of the good.

We take it for granted that so many schools, hospitals and other charitable outreaches were run by women religious (and male too, of course), but for a long time, many of these places would not have existed at all without the religious congregations.

It took someone to found a teaching order say, or a nursing order, and then, over time, build up a network of schools and hospitals that were often vast and global in scale and run incredibly cost-effectively because the religious provided their services for next to nothing and were available for far more hours each week than lay-people with families.

Education

Here in Ireland, the amount of money the State saved thanks to the religious orders is enormous. In its early days, the Irish State could simply not have afforded the education and healthcare system that was provided by the religious congregations.

Replacing all the religious who once worked in our schools and hospitals has come at huge expense and the recent election was fought partly on the basis of the inadequacies of our healthcare system, little of which is in Catholic hands anymore.

On the other hand, our schools are still mostly Church-run and we hear few complaints about them.

Down the centuries, countless numbers of Irish people, especially those from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds, have had

and risked their lives in tropical climates, to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the world, and to extend the networks of schools and hospitals they had already founded at home.

“Any clear-headed, objective person would have to respond that the world is far better off because of the Catholic religious orders...that have carried out so much good work on behalf of so many people”

To this day, the Catholic Church is responsible for the education and healthcare of millions of people worldwide every single year. No other voluntary organisation comes close. They provide what very poor countries often could not hope to provide on their own.

Around the world, the Catholic Church, very often led by male and female religious, runs 140,000 schools, 5,500 hospitals, 18,000 health clinics, 16,000 homes for the elderly and handicapped, 10,000 orphanages, 12,000 nurseries and 37,000 centres of informal education. Two-thirds of these are found in developing countries (see *Earthly Mission* by Robert Calderisi).

Imagine if all these disappeared or had never existed? Do we imagine for one second that the world would be better off for that?

Any clear-headed, objective person would have to respond that the world is far better off because of the Catholic religious orders, male and female, that have carried out so much good work on behalf of so many people for so long.

Yes, the crimes of religious must be noted, but any fair account must also list the tremendous good they have done.



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- Pope Benedict XVI

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Likely candidates to become the next Archbishop of Dublin

Bishop of Ossory Dermot Farrell – ‘The Manager’

As a former President of Maynooth College with a strong insight into the situation of the Church around the country, Ossory's bishop is certainly a contender to take up this post.



Although it's rare for bishops to be moved from one diocese to another, it's not unheard of – Kerry's Bishop Kevin McNamara (1926-1987) served for three years as Archbishop of Dublin before his premature death. This move is all the more likely as Ossory is in the Dublin metropolitan province, and so is a cousin of the archdiocese.

After returning from Rome where he served as Director of Formation in the Pontifical Irish College, Bishop Farrell was appointed a Curate in Tullamore parish in 1988 and lectured in Moral Theology at Maynooth. He was eventually appointed Vice President of St Patrick's College in 1993, and then President in 1996.

He has served as parish priest of Dunboyne and Kilbride, meaning he is aware of the challenges the Church is facing at a local level. With a reputation for being decisive and a good manager, Bishop Farrell is definitely on the cards and is believed to be a favoured choice in Archbishop's House.

Bishop Paul Tighe – ‘The Lawyer’

While this name may not be familiar to many, Bishop Tighe is a high-ranking Irish prelate working in the Roman Curia. Originally from Co. Meath, he was consecrated a bishop in 2016 and has been the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture since October 2017. This council subsumed the older Council for dialogue with Non-Believers by Pope Paul VI in 1965, and is the Vatican's means of engaging with people who don't necessarily identify with the Faith.

With the current archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, sending his resignation to Pope Francis on his birthday in just over a month, April 8, *The Irish Catholic* looks at some likely contenders in the search for a new leader.

He's very well-regarded and has plenty of experience in Dublin given that he was parish chaplain and teacher in Ballyfermot, and was appointed head of the Theology department in the Mater Dei Institute of Education in 2000.



In 2004, he was named the director of the Communications Office of the archdiocese, and subsequently established its Office for Public Affairs, working closely with the archbishop in dialoguing with public bodies and non-governmental organisations.

Described by Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin as having a “strong pastoral outlook” and “a fine theological mind”, the law-educated bishop could certainly return to Dublin to take up this role.

“Given that the archbishop's post is a national role, alongside the fact that Brexit may throw Ireland into political disarray, a candidate who has deep connections in Europe might be the best fit”

Msgr Ciarán O'Carroll – ‘The Historian’

It has been speculated for a number of years that this Dublin native is a forerunner to be the new archbishop. Msgr Carroll is currently Rector of the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, and so is well-known by the Curia. Before this 2011 appointment, he was the Episcopal Vicar for Evangelisation in the Archdiocese of Dublin and Administrator of the Catholic University Church on St Stephen's Green.



Not only is Msgr O'Carroll known for his robust pastoral background – he ministered in a number of parishes including Naul, Sutton, Rathmines and Saggart – but also his academic strengths.

A graduate of UCD and Rome's Gregorian University, he holds a doctorate in ecclesiastical history and has been the author of several publications on the subject including a study of a previous rector of the Irish College Paul Cardinal Cullen – *Portrait of a Practical Nationalist* (2008). On top of this, Fr O'Carroll has lectured in ecclesiastical history at a number of third level institutes including Holy Cross College in Clonliffe, Dublin, and at St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Fr John Dardis, SJ – ‘The CEO’

If Pope Francis wants to appoint a Jesuit brother as Primate of Ireland, Fr John Dardis is the obvious

choice. While there's not a great tradition of promoting Jesuits to the role of Irish bishop, the 2017 selection of Raphoe's Bishop Alan McGuckian shows there's always an exception to the rule.

Ordained in 1987, Fr Dardis played an instrumental role in establishing Dublin's Jesuit Communication Centre in 1989, becoming its first director. His abilities only strengthened when he spent three months with Radio Kwizera in Tanzania and Rwanda in response to the increasing numbers of refugees fleeing from the Rwandan genocide, and the volatility around the African Great Lakes Region into the Western parts of Tanzania.



Upon his return to Ireland, Fr Dardis became Dublin Archdiocese PRO and Communication Director, and he later became Provincial of the Irish Jesuits indicating his strong leadership skills. Fr Dardis did a root and branch reform of the Irish Jesuit Province. He is currently based in Rome, working as a General Counsellor for Discernment and Apostolic Planning, but before this appointment, he was the President of the European Provincial Conference from 2010-2017.

Given that the archbishop's post is a national role, alongside the fact that Brexit may throw Ireland into political disarray, a candidate who has deep connections in Europe might be the best fit. His ability to make structural decisions will be of advantage.

Kildare and Leighlin's Bishop Denis Nulty – ‘The Pastor’

Known for his strong media presence and ability to defend the Faith on divisive topics like same-sex marriage and divorce, the 64-year-old would be a suitable candidate to fill the archbishop's shoes.

With over 30 years of clerical experience, the

Slane-born prelate served as a priest in Meath and Drogheda before his 2013 bishop appointment. Bishop Nulty is also familiar with the Dublin area as he followed a course of study in All Hallows College, leading to an MA in Management for the Pastoral and Voluntary Services being awarded by DCU.



His other roles which include Chairman of the Council for Marriage and the Family, and Member of the Council for Clergy, show that he's definitely prepared for the administrative and pastoral duties the job of archbishop requires. Friendly and well-liked, plenty of laity across the country would be overjoyed to see this appointment.

Dr Charles Brown – ‘The Diplomat’

When Dr Charles Brown was appointed as Papal ambassador to Dublin in 2011, he was an unlikely candidate since he had not come from the Vatican's diplomatic academy.

The New Yorker – who is now 60 years old – had worked closely with Benedict XVI and was the Pontiff's hand-pick for a Church that was reeling from revelations of abuse mishandling and episcopal resignations.

Archbishop Brown moved quickly to express the Pope's closeness to Irish people and in a break from his predecessors, toured the country speaking at parishes and celebrating Masses in every corner of the island.

Despite spending decades of his priesthood in administration, his work with the Missionaries of Charity has given him a lively pastoral sense.

While theologically conservative, he has always shown himself as someone who is able to engage with different points of view.

He was well-liked by many priests who



experienced his pastoral skills on visits to their parishes.

He has been Apostolic Nuncio to Albania since 2017 and his appointment as Archbishop of Dublin would show the sort of creativity that Pope Francis is known for. It's a long shot to be sure, but it would be a bold move that would enliven the Church in Dublin with a leader with a keen sense of all the many challenges without being an insider. He would also be a strong media performer and an influential voice on the bishops' conference.

“He has garnered an intimate understanding of the reception of the Faith”

Dr Gareth Byrne – ‘The Educator’

There's perhaps no better person that appreciates the religious challenges Ireland faces today than this Dublin priest. Having twice been Chairperson of the Council of Priests – the advisory body to the Archdiocese of Dublin – Dr Byrne has garnered an intimate and comprehensive understanding of the reception of the Faith in the



country. But his impressive pedigree extends beyond this; he is currently Associate Professor of Religious Education, and Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education at the DCU Institute of Education.

This former school chaplain is a dark horse running in this race.



Let’s spread the Gospel to fight evil, conference is told

Róise McGagh

The RDS was packed with people of all ages at the weekend for the Divine Mercy Conference.

The three-day event is in its 29th year and ran under the theme ‘Deliver us from evil’.

This was spoken about extensively by guest speakers which included Primate of All Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin, Fr Peter Glas, Fr Pat Collins, Maria Steen from the Iona Institute and Fr Brendan Walsh SCA.

Around 3,500 people attended on the Saturday. There were stalls at the event from religious orders, pro-life groups, Catholic publications, pilgrimage groups and many more.

Don Devaney, Chairperson of the conference told *The Irish Catholic* the conference aimed at “creating an awareness of how evil can insidiously seep into our lives and take away our peace”.



He said he felt that the coincidence of all the speakers putting special emphasis on the Rosary showed how important prayer is in keeping evil at bay.

Struggle

On Saturday, Archbishop Eamon Martin told a personal story about his parents who pledged to pray the Rosary every day they were married.

Maria Steen used the theme to discuss the issue of abortion and the campaign of emotivism that she said was used by the pro-choice campaign. She encouraged people to engage their intellect when it came to the debate.

Fr Peter Glas, who was an exorcist in England for 10 years, spoke of his own personal struggle when in Medjugorje and an Irish priest said to him: “Once in your lifetime you need to leave your comfort zone, you need to leave your bones and start walking into the depth, into the water without fear.”

He said he had heard the Gospel many of times but this time it struck him. He heard God tell him to climb up the Cross Mountain that night and stay there.

He found a new motivation to spread the word of Divine Mercy after this experience and encouraged everyone at the conference to do the same.



NOVENA OF GRACE 2020

Halston Street Parish
4th to 12th of March

Theme: The Grace to love one another as Jesus loves us

Date	Novena Mass	Led by
Wed 4th	7.30pm	Fr Martin Bennett OFM Cap
Thurs 5th	7.30pm	Fr Patrick Flynn OFM Cap
Fri 6th	7.30pm	Fr Cory and the Greek-Romanian Catholic Community
Sat 7th	6.00pm	Fr Martin Bennett OFM Cap
Sun 8th	12.00pm	Fr Patrick Flynn OFM Cap
Mon 9th	7.30pm	Fr Severino and Brazilian Catholic Community
Tues 10th	7.30pm	Fr Mike Burgess OFM Cap
Wed 11th	7.30pm	Fr Mike Burgess OFM Cap
Thurs 12th	7.30pm	Fr Mike Burgess OFM Cap

The first Novena of Grace to be preached in Ireland was held in Halston Street Parish in 1712. The Parish has held a Novena of Grace every year for over 300 years.

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Confessions available before Mass each evening. Blessing with the cross of St Francis Xavier on the final night.

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Divine Mercy Conference



Damien Murphy and Daniel Woulfe.



Bro. Daraigh Quinn, Bro. Philip McMahon and Bro. Denis Ahern.



Paula Tolhurst, Melanie Devereux and Jean Warden.



Leo Pinto working at the Conference.



Clodagh Gallagher, Sarah Kate Moynihan, Alanna Bradley and Annette O'Donnell.



Helena As.



Vinny Vinn.



Melanie Devereux.





Patrick Manning, Tony Hegarty, Paula Tolhurst, Melanie Devereux, Jean Warden, Stephen Dwan and James G.



Sarah Kate Moynihan (left) with Clodagh Gallagher.



Youth2000 stall staff Mairéad Blake, Rossa Maloney and Emma Maloney.



Colin Whitla, Annette O'Donnell and Stephen Dwan.



Mark Gallagher and Rebecca Peer.



Jackie Kenny and Dave Hunt.



Therese Larkin and Christopher Smyth.



Caoimhe de Barra

Faith in action – Trócaire's Lenten campaign

Over the coming days and weeks, the faces of two women will adorn the walls and tables of homes in parishes all over Ireland. Standing alongside their young children, Angela and Madris are like all other mothers in the world who want to provide futures for their children. But these two mothers have remarkable stories to tell.

As the faces of Trócaire's 2020 Lenten Appeal, Angela and Madris continue to overcome enormous odds to protect their children from two deadly threats.

In Honduras, a logging company is destroying the land and polluting the rivers on which Angela and her family depend. Her children Jocsan and Nicole cough from the dirty air, while baby Helen's skin is infected from the toxic water. Angela's life has been threatened for standing-up for her community's right to defend their land and water supply.

"We want to protect the water and the air," she told us. "I have never considered giving up. I want a better life for my children."

Over 10,000km away, in a dusty farm in eastern Kenya, Madris surveys the brown fields and prays that one day they will turn green. After two seasons of failed rains, farmers such as Madris are struggling to grow any food to feed their families. Like many more like her, Madris often goes hungry so as her children can eat.

Rains

The climate in eastern Kenya – as with many more regions across the developing world – is becoming hotter and drier. The old predictable rains are gone, leaving farmers unsure of when and what to plant.

Trócaire is working with the local Catholic parish to support families such as Madris's. Thanks to the generous support of people in Ireland, Madris has received chickens as well as tools and training to support her through the long droughts. Working with the parish, Trócaire has also established a savings and loan group, which provides support to women such as Madris.

Over the next six weeks, Catholics across Ireland will reflect on the Lenten message. In our communities and our homes, we will gather for prayer, penance and almsgiving. The stories



Bishop Crea with the Lent 2020 Parish resources.



Angela Murillo Bardales from Honduras with her children Nicole, Jocsan (5) and Helen (6 months). Photo: Mark Stedman



Madris in Kenya with her children (l-r) Julius (12), Joy-Faith (6), Erick (8), Alex (7) and Eugene (16). Photo: Gary Moore

of Angela and Madris will feature strongly in our thoughts as we think of the millions of people across the world who struggle for daily survival, facing hunger and the threat of violence as they try to provide for their families.

Trócaire's Lenten Appeal is the vehicle through which Catholics in Ireland express

their support for their fellow brothers and sisters overseas. As Ireland's largest fundraising campaign, it is testament to the enormous generosity of parishes across the island.

Testament

It is also testament to the incredible footprint of hope that the Catholic Church in Ireland leaves in some of the

poorest places on Earth. The Lenten Appeal allows Trócaire to bring aid and support to approximately three million people each year. That is three million people whose lives have been touched, changed and in many cases saved by the compassion of Catholics in Ireland.

We are incredibly grateful to people all over Ireland who

contribute to Trócaire during Lent, or indeed throughout the year. As our Chairperson, Bishop William Crea, recently noted while writing in these pages, the mission of Trócaire – to support the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world – is the embodiment of the mission of the Church.

Trócaire belongs to the

Faithful community of Ireland. Our teams across the world work incredibly hard – often in the most difficult of circumstances – to ensure your support is put to work in the most effective way possible.

As an agency of the Catholic Church, Trócaire is at all times guided by Catholic Social Teaching and all of our work is fully compliant with the values and teachings of the Catholic Church.

“It is sometimes easy to forget that there is more love and compassion in this world than there is hate and indifference”

In this fast-paced and digital age in which we live, we are constantly reminded of the division and conflict that exists in this world. It is sometimes easy to forget that there is more love and compassion in this world than there is hate and indifference.

Throughout the Lenten season, parishes the length and breadth of Ireland will prove this by doing what they can to ease the burden of strangers thousands of miles away who they will never meet. There is no greater example of our Faith in action.

“The Lenten Appeal allows Trócaire to bring aid and support to approximately three million people each year. That is three million people whose lives have been touched, changed and in many cases saved by the compassion of Catholics in Ireland”

i Caoimhe de Barra is Trócaire CEO. To support Trócaire this Lent, or to download Lent parish resources, visit trocaire.org

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Fr Jeremiah Donovan: mixing



For one West Cork priest, the Church is about people – although a little cement never goes astray, writes **Róise McGagh**

Fr Jeremiah Donovan began his journey when he joined the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1959.

His work took him from West Cork to Goiás in central Brazil. Here he was a founding member of the Anglo Irish missions that brought education and set up parishes in some of the most rural parts of the country.

He now resides, aged 86, in the parish of Mary Immaculate in Inchicore, Dublin. He released a book of his meticulously recorded memoirs in December 2019.

Mixing Mortar with Philosophy is not just the name of Fr Jeremiah's book but the way he views lay people's role in the parish. This comes after his experience in a place where the opportunities for people to practice religion came few and far between.

* * * * *

Jeremiah was born in 1934 and inherited his unusual name from his maternal grandfather. As he grew up in a farm environment in Kilcrohane, West Cork, he gained a lot of practical skills that would be of great use in his work as a missionary. He was sent to Brazil on the first Anglo Irish mission. There was a mission near where they were seeking to go of American Oblates, but it was decided by the provincial Fr Pat Mc Donnell that they would establish their own.

"He wanted the Anglo Irish province to exercise their own mission and take on responsibility for our necessities and support," said Jeremiah, speaking with *The Irish Catholic*.

Fr Pete Moriarty, who was head of the mission, was reassigned and came back from the Philippines to rejoin the Anglo Irish Oblates. Fr John Cribbin and Fr Ned Barret were the other two who traveled for that initial mission, both very recently finished up in the seminary.

Fr Jeremiah Donovan surrounded by Brazilian grasses and, below, outside the Church of the Immaculate Conception (built with the help of primarily voluntary labour and the fundraising efforts of the parish over 30 months, completed in 2006).



Jeremiah and his niece Gerardine with the donations from the proceeds of his book launch in December which went to Cork Penny Dinners.

No grudge

Jeremiah had not actually volunteered to go to Brazil, but had told Pat he wouldn't hold a grudge if he were to be sent. Between the trip and his ordination he had been appointed to Kilburn in London, worked in Ashford in Kent and filled in for the Dean of Belcamp in Dublin.

"I arrived in Brazil on December 2, 1962 and Ned Barret was on the same plane. Pete Moriarty and John Cribbin came by boat and had a terrible journey because it was freight and they stopped at every port," says Jeremiah while talking of his two-day journey to Matera, Brazil.

Before beginning their mission in March 1963 they spent time

in the suburb of Rio de Janeiro, Petropolis, intensively learning the Portuguese language and about South American culture. They also performed some pastoral duties in Sao Paulo.

"It was a fantastic experience to hear words in Portuguese and to understand them," says Jeremiah, "We learned through our ears like children learn to speak their

mother tongue."

Gerardine, Jeremiah's niece, who helped him write and edit the book, talked about how it might seem less of a shock now, but in the 1960s, these men were facing an opposite world, not just because of the heat.

"That very dramatic change, not only were they taking on something very different in South American culture but also the Church; there was a chasm opening up between what traditional church was back in Ireland, what South American church was like and the Church itself was changing very fundamentally."

“The changes of Vatican II heavily impacted the work of Jeremiah's mission”

They happened to arrive in Brazil as the effects of Vatican II were rippling into the everyday practices of Catholicism. Masses were no longer said in Latin or a solely liturgical act, but a celebration that was said facing the audience – no longer facing the altar.

The changes of Vatican II heavily impacted the work of Jeremiah's mission, for one it established the principle of participation by the

mortar with philosophy

laity in the celebration of mass. The mission in Matera was trying to figure out this new balance, and without the close watch of a bishop or deacon, found its own rhythm of heavily involving the people in its running. This was somewhat a necessity due to the low population of priests.

"There was no one to tell us to do anything so we just ploughed our own furrow. We decided who would decide; the people, we'll listen to the people. We saw what their needs were.

"When they heard a religious congregation was coming into that area, people said 'wonderful, they will build a *collegio*, a college for secondary education for our children because there were only five or six people in the whole area who had the opportunity to go second education. There was none near at hand and if there was people would have had to pay for it," said Jeremiah.

They listened to the people of the area. The mission ended up taking over two primary schools and establishing a secondary school.

Their provincial took over an area the size of Louth within which there were three municipalities. In the time they were there, Matera was moved and became Paranaiguara, the old city being flooded by a hydroelectric dam.

* * * * *

A lot changed in the 52 years Jeremiah was in Brazil. His book, like Jeremiah, according to Gerardine, is "terribly accurate". It records all of the places into which the congregation expanded and the parishes that they took under their wing.

Jeremiah and two Sisters of St Joseph from the US made up the team that set up the secondary school. It took them years to get the programme approved by the municipality, but their experience and qualifications in teaching stood to them.

“Everyone in the Church is celebrating. Without the priest you can’t have Mass – but you can have a celebration”

"When the first group was prepared for their graduation, we still hadn't got authorisation," said Jeremiah. He told of how they were celebrating Mass for the graduation and word came in saying it had finally been approved.

"It wasn't that they were setting up a religious order school as was in Ireland it was a municipal school, as opposed to being a church school," said Gerardine explaining that the students did not have to study Religious Education, it was necessary to be provided but no one had to take it. This was very different from any of the religious congregation schools in Ireland at the time.

Jeremiah told of how when he was younger he was 15 miles from



The first four Missionaries – Fr Jeremiah Donovan, Fr Ned Barrett, Fr Pete Moriarty and Fr John Cribbin, the founders of the Oblate Anglo Irish mission in Paranaiguara, Brazil, March 1963.

‘Lay people should be able to perform marriages and baptisms’

Fr Jeremiah Donovan believes that lay people should be far more involved in the running of parishes.

"The Pope says everyone was baptised as a layperson, the deacon the archbishops, the priests and the Faithful, if they want to become clerics they can," he said pointing out his thoughts that clergy should have no more privilege than the ordinary Catholic: "We were all baptised the same and we all have the same dignity."

However, Jeremiah thinks that it's too late in the Irish context, that we may have been looking to a priest to do these things for too long.

Gerardine, Fr Jeremiah's niece, told *The Irish Catholic* of how "he would always say, 'marriage, you don't need a priest for that, you marry one another' he used to say to myself and my husband."

"Baptism can be done by the properly trained persons, Ministers of the Eucharist, Ministers of the Word or Ministers of the Gospel.

"Confession and the actual consecration was priest led but everything else was wide open, even sermons in church."

the nearest secondary school, there was no public transport and you couldn't go by bicycle as it was too far.

"So I really appreciated what we were asked to do and that we were paid for doing it. We were really contributing to that for which people had been dreaming of for years."

* * * * *

The school was open to everyone, without charge. "That was the biggest grace they could have got from our arrival," said Jeremiah. "Some of them did go on to train as doctors, as lawyers and as engineers because of the start that we gave."

"Sometimes we do have the temptation, if I take over it will happen faster," said Jeremiah. His philosophy was to help the communities he worked with help themselves. He believes that empowering communities and giving them ownership over their parishes and Faith, creates a more sustainable Church.

In Brazil, Gerardine said, "they were very transparent. Everyone knew what every collection was going to, why, where, when." Everything was published and the community managed their own tithings. They raised the funds for their own church and built it themselves under the guidance and help of the missionaries.

Fundraising

The church on the front of Jeremiah's book *Mixing Mortar with Philosophy* is a symbol. The people came to him and said they wanted to build a church. He sought permission for them and promised the Oblates it would not cause them debt. Then the community did all their own fundraising.

"There's ownership, if you've

raised the money for that bell that window, there's pride and responsibility," said Jeremiah: "It helps to keep the Faith alive." This is where he mixed mortar with philosophy.

His views were influenced by liberation theology, a movement developed mainly by Latin American Roman Catholics, which tries to address the problems of poverty and social injustice as well as spiritual matters.

"That is how they got imbued with that sense of working with the poor," said Gerardine.

Jeremiah believes that the social system in the world at the minute is mostly immoral: "If you don't respect the basic humanity of your fellow person you're in sin." He says he follows what God would want, for people to help each other.

"Once you're involved in building churches for people, then we are building Church. A Church of the people of God. I credit Pope Francis with that, he always speaks of the people of God, not the family of God. The people, they are the Church."

This meant that many people trained in theology and would help out with many priestly duties.

"I don't really think that priests are that necessary, nor deacons if you empower people," said Jeremiah, "the Bishop has the ability to authorise people to do marriages, do baptisms.

"Everyone in the Church is celebrating. Without the priest you can't have Mass – but you can have

a celebration." The mission saw its purpose as giving people the training and the language to have their own self led bible groups and celebrations.

"We dropped most of the stuff we learned, and dogma and laws, that wasn't what was important," said Jeremiah, "What was important was creativity and helping people to see what they wanted in their own lives."

Gerardine explained it as: "They were giving people the language and the terminology, it was self actualisation, self realisation."

The mission received two priests from Ireland every year and expanded to Uberlandia in 1970. Jeremiah moved there, becoming the coordinator of the Anglo Irish province in Brazil. As part of that, they were later granted a ranch, a *fazenda*, in an area close by. It was over 40 acres and Jeremiah developed and added to it, running it with the skills he had acquired in his youth and in trips back to Ireland over the years.

“Baptism can be done by the properly trained persons, Minister of the Word or Minister of the Gospel”

Gerardine explained: "The significance of it was knowledge transfer and skills training to local people within the area because of farming methods he knew of from coming back and forth to Ireland.

"People were working within an area where there was little employment, ultimately it got sold, and the proceeds would have been used for the education of oblates within the South American community there."

* * * * *

Jeremiah said he had hoped to end his mission in Brazil and had even required a plot in his local cemetery. He had to move back to Ireland due to ill health: "I'm back here and I'm so limited in my activity I need a wheelchair to get around. I'm very very slow, I have Parkinson's disease and I have no balance, so I can't do much."

This you would never know from the meticulous recordings and the accuracy in every detail of his memoir that he began writing in 2015. Jeremiah wrote most of the book with Gerardine on Google Hangouts, adapting very well to the technology despite having difficulty typing due to his condition.

While he said he is comfortable now back in Ireland, he said he is happy with the person that Brazil turned him into. "I learned from the people more than they learned from me."

“The Pope says everyone was baptised as a layperson, the deacon the archbishops, the priests and the Faithful, if they want to become clerics they can...we were all baptised the same and we all have the same dignity”



P. Fintan Lyons O.S.B.

Lent is not likely to be anyone's favourite season. There is enough to contend with in the weather of February and March, even if the days towards the end are brighter and there are signs of growth in an already resurgent nature. The most perceptible positive feature of the passing weeks is that they do begin to hint at a happy outcome, resurgence of a kind for all. But there is a problem for those who are loyal to religious practice with its acceptance of penance in anticipation of Easter joy. They may be discouraged by the prevailing scepticism about everything to do with religion, as other meanings continue to be sought for what is perceived as a coming protracted weekend.

Secularising the religious feast

A secular feast can be created by dining out when it all begins on the Friday, as many do, while at home there will be Easter eggs and games for children. It is also an occasion to parade new fashions, not realising that in the liturgy there is a tradition of white garments at Easter going back to the gospel accounts of men in white meeting the women who came to the tomb on Easter morning, as well as the wearing of white garments by those baptised at Easter. A subtle feature of the secularisation of Easter is the renaming of Holy Saturday as Easter Saturday - after all, the word Easter comes from the Old English name of the goddess, Eostre, so that the weekend can logically have a wholly secular or pagan connotation. Yet the faithful who have to struggle against all this can sense too that there is still in secular society an inherited undercurrent of Christian culture that associates Easter with newness, with a positive outlook on life for the months ahead.

It is for those who are religious to make that culture a perceptible force in society, to transform otherwise dreary months into a whole season of hope and expectation by making clear Lent's reason for existing, namely the three days of celebration of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. This is the reality that gave Lent its origin and gives it its meaning. As a season in the Church's yearly cycle it developed gradually, evolving from an original two days of fasting, Friday and Saturday, and little in the way of liturgical activity in advance of the great Easter Vigil, except that vigilant fast itself. In the early centuries it was seen to be appropriate for a period of preparation to be introduced for the baptism of the newly converted at the Easter Vigil, so that they would rise to new life with the risen Lord.

Preparing for Lent

As this time could be seen as preparation for the Christian life of mission, a period of forty days duration found its inspiration in Jesus' own

Living with Lent



“Fasting could have diverse meanings; it could mean simply postponing the single meal which was the norm in Roman society, or it could mean abstaining from certain foods or reducing the quantity consumed.”



The Supper with Christ and the Angels, Francisco Pacheco, 1615. After being tempted in the desert, Jesus Christ was rewarded by angels with “heaven's bread and the food of God's celestial banquet”.

preparation for his mission by his forty days fast in the desert. It came then to be a season of fasting for all, penitential in the sense of purification in preparation for the transformative feast of the Pasch, as the original name expresses it. Hence, a fast before a feast, in accordance with the context in which Jesus himself put fasting, when he said that when he, the bridegroom,

was taken away, then the disciples would fast (Mt 9:14). If it is a penitential season, it is also one of joyful anticipation of the return of the Lord from death bringing new life to the world, a new creation as St Paul puts it (2 Cor 5:17).

A brief history of fasting

In the history of Christianity, fasting came to be practised also outside that context of the Church's feasts. An ascetical way of life began to be practised by people who wished to go apart from a corrupt society. This was a time when Christianity was no longer persecuted but had been integrated into the Roman Empire, with church leaders now belonging to the upper echelons of society and prone to the corruption that was part of the way of life of a prosperous pagan world. The solitude of the Egyptian and Syrian deserts, where food was hard to come by, was the obvious setting for men and women who decided to go apart in a desire to control all natural desires such as appetite, and in general to subdue the passions.

That way of life was admired but not imitated by the Christian population in general; the members of the community did observe fasts from the early centuries onwards, basically connected with the seasonal feasts, but also as part of their Jewish Christian heritage. Jews fasted on Mondays and Thursdays; to distinguish

themselves from Jewish tradition, Christians fasted on Tuesdays and Fridays, with Friday having the particular significance of commemorating the Lord's crucifixion. These were penitential exercises but were not of the extreme kind practised by the desert dwellers. In fact, fasting could have diverse meanings; it could mean simply postponing the single meal which was the norm in Roman society, or it could mean abstaining from certain foods or reducing the quantity consumed.

In the early centuries the nature of fasting did not have the exactness associated with later centuries - with the Lenten Regulations read out in church a generation ago. For example in the sixth-century, St Benedict in his Rule only required moderation in all things, and that in Lent the monk should deny himself 'some food, drink, sleep, needless talking and idle jesting.' He should 'look forward to Easter with joy and spiritual longing'.

The symbolism of food

Symbolic acts are important in a truly human life. Food is fundamental to the continuance of life and has its symbolic as well as its nutritional role. It functions most symbolically in the feast that is central to the Christian life, the Eucharist, and is at the heart of most festivities, though it can also function symbolically by being restricted or even by its absence. The church's feasts and seasons need to be seen in the overall context of food, feast and fast, and restriction of food intake can be a powerful way of living with Lent.

P. Fintan Lyons' new book 'Food, Feast and Fast' is available from Columba Books. Pre-order your copy today at www.columbabooks.com.

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Aron Hegarty

An unexpected meeting of foreign ministers from China and the Vatican in Germany last week raised hopes of an improvement in relations between the two states sharing no diplomatic ties.

Talks between China's Wang Yi and Archbishop Paul Gallagher at the Munich Security Conference on February 14 were the first held between the sides since Papal representative Archbishop Antonio Riberi was expelled in 1951.

Their historic discussion centred around agreeing to continue an "institutional, bi-lateral dialogue" to benefit the Church and Chinese people by bringing them closer together.

An unconvinced Dr Michael Kinsella, National Director of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) Ireland, though says the landmark meeting changes nothing about Communist China's continuing persecution of Christians.

"Every Communist regime throughout history has always sought the destruction of the Catholic Church, so why would China be any different?," Dr Kinsella said.

"After every deal between the Church and Communists comes an ideological sinicisation, but it always ends in failure and results in more persecution."

The outbreak of the coronavirus may be grabbing headlines, but it has not stopped China from cracking down on religion and even using the epidemic as an excuse to restrict religious practices.

Spread

Since the alarming spread of the virus from Wuhan province to 30 countries and territories worldwide, the Chinese government has enforced stricter sanctions on religious groups, organisations, meetings and functions.

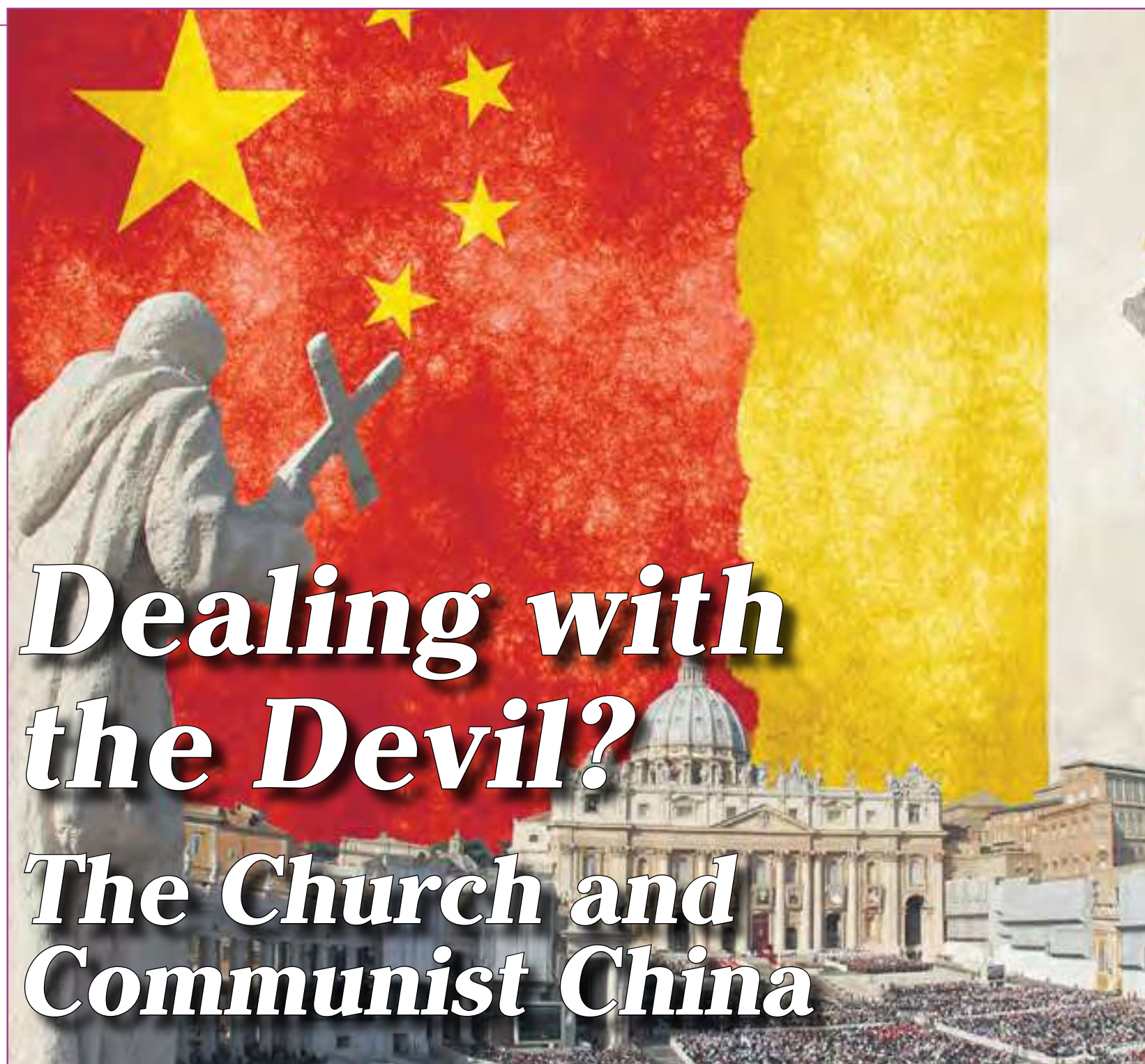
The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) introduced new regulations on February 1 to oversee all aspects of religious activity in the country.

These administrative measures, containing six sections and 41 articles, are part of a five-year sinicisation plan by the Communist Party to establish state governance over religion.

Senior officials of the CCP are reportedly wary of the influence that 'foreign religions' have on its society and warns that all Catholics are required to follow a Chinese model of the Faith.

Dr Kinsella says these measures have been a long time coming and empowers the explicitly atheist CCP to further persecute Chinese Catholics.

"The Vatican knew several years out that some of the most extraordinarily repressive restrictions on religious freedom in human his-



Dealing with the Devil?

The Church and Communist China

tory would be imposed on people of every faith and creed within China this year," he said of China's latest religious sanctions.

"This makes the 2018 Sino-Vatican deal look all the more contemptable given that any deal reached would have to operate under these restrictions."

China, which celebrated its' Lunar New Year on January 25, the Year of the Rat, is aiming to clamp down on religious activity that may "subvert" its government by introducing tighter controls.

Article 5 of the policy states:

"Religious organisations must adhere to the leadership of the CCP, adhere to the directives on religions in China, implementing the values of socialism."

Additionally, "religious organisations", reads Article 17, "must spread the principles and policies of the CCP, follow the leadership of the CCP, adhering to and following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics".

"Without the approval of the religious affairs department of the people's government, no activities can be carried out in the name of

religious groups," reads Article 34.

The other articles state that religious organisations "must establish a learning system" to train employees in aligning with CCP policies and also requires that government authorities be involved in the selection of religious officers and disputes.

"The deal wasn't just made with the Devil; it seems as if it was written by the Devil himself"

Dr Kinsella, whose objective with ACN Ireland is to support and promote the Church in countries where Catholics are suffering persecution or discrimination, compared the terms and conditions of the policy to doing a deal with the "Devil".

"The deal wasn't just made with the Devil; it seems as if it was written by the Devil himself," he said of the rules imposed by China.

"Not only must every Chinese Catholic submit every facet of their loyalty, morality and behaviour in obedience to the CCP, but the Church itself 'must spread the principles and policies of the Chinese Communist Party, educating religious personnel and religious citizens to support

the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party'."

* * * * *

Since the Communist Revolution in China in 1949, the Church had existed in full communion with Rome. The Communists attempted to expel Catholics, but many of them remained.

By 1957, the Communist regime created a state Church - the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (CPCA) - loyal to the CCP and rejected the authority of the Vatican.

This drove many Catholics 'underground' to practice their Faith and for decades China has had two churches - the "official" state-backed Church and the "unofficial" underground Church which remained loyal to Rome.

The state-sanctioned CPCA appointed its own bishops chosen by government authorities without approval from the Vatican and named bishops to attend to 'underground' Catholics in China.

On September 22, 2018, a provisional agreement was announced between Beijing and Vatican officials seeking to resolve this dispute on the appointment of bishops aimed at unifying the 'underground' Church and the CPCA.

The terms of the agreement



The Faithful attend Mass at Beijing's South Catholic Church. Photos: CNS



be disclosed, Dr Kinsella says the arrangement does not bode well for anyone but the CCP themselves.

"The deal is absolute evil," he said. "It's unbelievable to think that the Catholic Church would agree to sign themselves up to essentially becoming agents of Communism."

"The CCP have got everything they wanted out of this deal and the Catholic Church in China has become a department of the government and part of the Communist regime."

He continued: "In tandem with much wider socially repressive policies imposed by the Chinese Communist Party – including the implementation of the truly terrifying 'Social Credit Score' – the deal (from accounts provided by Chinese Catholics themselves) was not a good one for the Holy See or for Chinese Catholics."

The 'social credit score' Dr Kinsella speaks of is a system designed by the CCP to reward good citizenship for people who call out "bad" or unlawful activity.

An example of this was in March 2019, when Chinese authorities in Guangzhou offered cash incentives to those who informed them of any 'underground' churches or "unofficial" places of worship.

According to ACN Ireland's 2017-19 edition of the 'Persecuted and Forgotten' report, those with useful information would receive 100 yuan (€13) – rising to 10,000 yuan (€1,311) – for anyone who helped identify members of outlawed religious groups.

Priests in the eastern province of Zhejiang are banned from attending funeral prayers outside a religious place

On the 2018 Simo-Vatican agreement, Dr Kinsella warned: "The deal also allows for the apocalyptic scenario of a Chinese Bishop, who must be pre-approved for selection by the Chinese Communist party, being made a Cardinal which then opens the possibility of an ecclesial agent of the Chinese Communist Party being electable as a Pope."

Since the compromise, underground churches and clergy in China have been subjected to a coercive campaign to align them with the CPCA.

In November 2018, Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou was arrested for the fifth time in two years. He was reportedly held in isolation and subjected to indoctrination in Communist ideology for 10 to 15 days.

The following month, local authorities formally closed the Early Rain Covenant Church then arrested Pastor Wang-Yi and 160 Christians for "inciting subversion of state power" by practising their Faith.

In the Archdiocese of Fuzhou, over 100 churches have been closed down since August 2019. Catholic churches in the city of Fuqing were locked shut and surveillance cameras installed to keep out parishioners.

In the Mindong diocese, around five Catholics parishes resisting the CPCA were closed for not complying with 'fire safety standards'.

Fuan pastor Fr Liu Guangpin, 71, was evicted from his residence and Saiqi parish priest Fr Huang Jintong, 50, was exiled from the city. In the same area, a retirement home run by the Little Sisters of Mercy and Charity was shut down.

The Suanfeng parish was also closed, but later reopened after a CPCA priest was appointed.

Other 'underground' priests have said they are forbidden to meet with each other and are subjected to constant harassment from government authorities.

Since the latest rules were put into force, priests in the eastern province of Zhejiang are banned from attending funeral prayers outside a religious place under the government's Regulations on Religious Affairs.

"Priests are not attending religious ceremonies," said Catholic priest Huang Jian of the Wenzhou Diocese.

"There would be penalties (if priests attended)," reported Father Guo of the Henan parish. "The punishment could even be closing the Church and cancelling the priest's priesthood certificate."

* * * * *

Dr Kinsella, who has covered religious persecution as a University College Dublin graduate and is an occasional lecturer in Ethics, Philosophy and Politics, says the treatment of Catholics in China has got worse since the 2018 accord.

"The reports unfortunately indicate that the persecution of Christians has increased since the deal," he said.

"This is partly because it has provided the Communist Chinese government legal and diplomatic structures within, which their party policy of the eradication of Christianity can be pursued without any feasible diplomatic resort or political retort by the Holy See."

He added: "Cardinal Zen predicted this tragedy would happen and has been emphatic in his condemnation of the deal by saying 'they're [sending] the flock into the mouths of the wolves. It's an incredible betrayal; the consequences will be tragic and long-lasting."

Some world leaders – such as Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen – have reportedly written to Pope Francis to express concerns over

China's "persecution of religion", complaining that such actions constitute "abuses of power".

A US government report on human rights in China released in January reaffirms that the persecution of Chinese Catholics has worsened in the past year.

The report, which covers the period from August 2018 to August 2019, read: "Local Chinese authorities subjected Catholic believers in China to increasing persecution by demolishing churches, removing crosses and continue to detain underground clergy."

The Church has a long history of entering into accords with nations...so long as Faith is not compromised

"Scholars and international rights groups have described religious persecution in China over the last year to be of an intensity not seen since the Cultural Revolution," the report said.

One of the report's recommendations to Congress is for its' members to advocate "the right of Catholics to be led by clergy who are selected and who conduct their ministry according to the standard called for by Catholic religious beliefs".

The commission had been established by Congress in 2000, as China was set to enter the World Trade Organization, to report on human rights in the country.

* * * * *

An estimated 12 million Catholics reside in China, with official statistics saying that six million of those are part of the state-sanctioned CPCA.

Dr Kinsella questioned the integrity of making such a compromise with the CCP, saying that the "Devil" always comes to collect. "Would St. Peter have brokered a deal with the Romans so that Roman officials could have pre-selected candidates for Bishops in exchange for restricting Christian persecution in those times?", asked Dr Kinsella.

He continued: "Do we really think this would have lessened the ferocity of persecution against Christians?"

"To anyone working in the area of Christian persecution – and who is aware of the long, tragic history of failed diplomatic deals that have catastrophically failed persecuted Christians – the questions are both rhetorical: 'No'.

"There is no case in history where a Communist or Socialist government has ever held their end of the bargain because the eradication of Christianity, even if it means the genocide of Christians, is a core tenet of every Communist or Socialist programme."

* * * * *

The Church has a long history of entering into accords with nations. In medieval times, they contended with the claim of kings to the right of selecting the bishops in their land.

St Augustine recognised that "making disciples of all nations" would require compromise, so the Vatican has been willing to make such agreements so long as the Faith is not compromised.

The concordat of 1801, signed by Napoleon and Pope Pius VII, aimed to bring an end to the conflict between French revolutionaries and the Church. Napoleon would select bishops and control Church finances in France. In return, Catholic clergy could return from exile.

This established a National Church which recognised the Pope, but under state control. Pope Leo XIII though would later advise a policy of rallying to the cause of the Republic.

Another example comes from the 1933 concordat with Germany, signed to protect the Catholic Church from National Socialism. The Nazis, however, quickly breached this agreement.

Several years later, Pope Pius XI wrote a letter to German Catholics urging them to resist the temptations of a "national religion".

There are then the Church's dealings with the Soviet Union during the Iron Curtain, where they pursued a minimalist policy of survival by agreeing not to criticise Communist governments.

Since then not a whole lot has changed, as the Vatican remains silent despite the increasing rate of Christian persecution in Communist China from the fallout of the 2018 accord.

The Chinese national flag flies in front of a Catholic church in Huangtugang, China.



would enable the Pope to have the final say on the appointment of bishops in China and the Vatican would recognise seven bishops selected and appointed by the Chinese government.

However, the deal with China also includes an agreement by Pope Francis to recognise bishops appointed by the CCP and for 'underground' Catholics to register with the CCPA.

This has caused widespread confusion among Catholic leaders and faithful, who are concerned that this will expose those in the 'underground' Church to further repression from the CCP.

Cardinal Joseph Zen, former Archbishop of Hong Kong, reportedly described the agreement as "an incredible betrayal" while adding that "a Church enslaved by the government is no real Catholic Church".

"You cannot compromise with the Chinese Communist Party," he said on February 11. "They (CCP) want complete surrender."

* * * * *

The 'underground' Church, according to Cardinal Zen, "is doomed to disappear" as older bishops are dying with no new bishops being appointed.

Although the full extent of the 2018 Simo-Vatican deal has still to

Out&About

Candles burn brightly in Ennis



CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe diocese attends a Neo-Catechumenate Mass in Ennis.



DUBLIN: The under-19 division of St Mary's Secondary School recently secured a win against Maryfield College in the SSA Regional League final. Back row: Shauna Benson, Sarah Durack, Ciara O'Connor, Rachel Crowley, Xue Gao, Jessica Carroll and Sarah Keenan. Front row: Gemma Keenan, Niamh Cummins, Maya Keyes, Zoe Kane and Nikita Corrigan.



INDIA: A group from Coláiste Éanna CBS, a school in Rathfarnham in Dublin, play with children in Calcutta (Kolkata) with the organisation Calcutta Connects which provides supports for education projects.



CORK: Eileen Mullane of Bweeng is presented with the Benemerenti Award for her service for 20 years as sacristan in Bweeng church.



KERRY: Post Primary Religious Education Teachers gather for In-service training in Kerry Diocese. Mairéad Hickey, Pierce Dargan, diocesan advisor Tomas Kenny and Jonny Sommerville, visiting speaker.

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



▲ **FRANCE:** The Oblate Lourdes Pilgrimage Leadership Team and friends travelled to Lourdes this month for meetings and the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

◀ **INDIA:** A group from Coláiste Éanna CBS, a school in Rathfarnham in Dublin, went to Calcutta (Kolkata) to support educational projects and initiatives such as the Panikhali Rural Development Society with the organisation Calcutta Connects which was established by past pupils.



DOWN: St Patrick's Primary School Drumgreenagh welcome Paul McGreevy from MCG Signs as part of their Junior Entrepreneur Programme (JEP) project.

IN SHORT

Parish cells are system of evangelisation

Parish Cells of Evangelisation will celebrate 30 years in Ireland during this year. Organisers of Leixlip Parish Cell Groups say parish cells have been a feature of parish life in over 40 parishes around the country. The spiritual leader is Fr Michael Hurley PP in Tallaght.

Leixlip Parish Cells have been in existence since 2004. From small beginnings of one group the cell community has now expanded to

Confey and Celbridge/Straffan and encompasses 13 small Faith groups.

The cells follow the format of the early Church, forming small Faith communities, gathering in homes and are committed to the formation of centres of prayer and evangelisation throughout the parish.

Pope Francis at a meeting in Rome with the worldwide cell communities told them: "Meet in homes to share the joys and expectations that are present in each person's heart, your cells are a genuine experience of evangelisation that is very similar to what happened in the early days of the Church."

One of the group, Bridie Clancy, says:

"In Leixlip, meetings take place on a fortnightly basis on Tuesdays. Most meetings are in homes either in the morning or evening.

"A family cell meeting for carers with toddlers/babies is hosted in the parish centre on Tuesdays from 1-2pm. A men's cell meets in the Parish Centre at 7.30pm. The next meetings are on March 3 and 24.

For further information or prayer intentions: Bridie – 086 3807917; Donal – 087 9277971, Men's Cell: Thomas – 087 2348821 and the Family Cell: Kate – 086 4132511. Website: parishcellsireland.ie

ARMAGH

An evening of Prayer and Reflection will take place for all Ministers of Word and Eucharist in the Armagh parish, in Mount St Catherine's Primary School on Tuesday, March 3 at 8pm. Those interested are asked to leave their name at the parish office.

CLARE

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

CORK

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

A Pro-Life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month at the Poor Clares Monastery, College Road, at 7.30pm.

A Weekend of Praise Worship and Healing in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, on Saturday and Sunday, March 7 and 8. Mass and confessions on both days. Keynote speaker is Maria Vadia Florida. Also Fr John Keane Macroom and Msgr Finbarr O'Leary and Mir Music Ministry. Commencing 9.30am both days. Enquires: Celia 087 2405568.

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, at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell on the third Tuesday of every month.

DONEGAL

New Holy Face of Jesus prayer meeting: The oratory St Mary's Buncrana, Tuesdays following Rosary after 10am Mass. Contact: 085 2525 612.

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.

The Pope, the Word and the World: This Lent Our Lady Help of Christians on the Navan Road will spend time with the Word of God as the Pope interprets it in Laudato Si' in their pastoral centre beside the church on Mondays 2, 9, 23 and 30 in March at 7.30pm. Facilitator: Céline Mangan OP.

GALWAY

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

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).

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the Assumption, Urlingford, every first and third Friday, from 2.30-5.30pm.

LIMERICK

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Adult Formation Course Level 1 Part 1 offered at St Saviour's Dominican Church from February 28-March 3, 2020. For more information email: limerick@op.tn.org

LOUTH

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.

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

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

MAYO

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 afternoon from 2.30-3.30pm in the Oratory, Enfield, for Adoration, Rosary, Chaplet and petitions. Also once per month a Lay Apostle meeting.

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.

Trim parish – 'Life in the Spirit' seminars continue Thursdays, 7.30pm, in the parish centre. All welcome.

ROSCOMMON

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

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Drumboylan Church on the first Friday of the month from 9am-11pm.

WESTMEATH

Holy Face of Jesus prayer meeting: La Verna retreat centre beside private hospital Ballinderry, Mullingar. Thursdays at 7.30pm. Contact: 085 2525 612

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.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Catholic Bishop in China overcomes coronavirus

● A retired priest in China has made a remarkable recovery from the coronavirus just days after being diagnosed with the epidemic. Bishop Joseph Zhu Baoyu of Nanyang, who is 98 years old, fell ill with pneumonia from Covid-19 on February 3. On February 12 he tested negative, but two days later discovered his lungs were no longer infected.

Monsignor Zhu Baoyu, who had other illnesses such as arrhythmia and pleural effusions, was cured thanks to a thoracic drainage catheter.

Doctors and epidemiologists say his case is “exceptional” as the virus is proving fatal for elderly and patents with clinical conditions.

Thousands celebrate birth centenary of Bangladesh saint candidate

● Thousands of Catholics celebrated the birth centenary of Archbishop Theotonius Amal Ganguly – Bangladesh’s first candidate for sainthood.

Masses and memorial services were held at three churches in Dhaka to pay tribute to Archbishop Ganguly on February 18.

The process for his canonisation started in 2006 when he was declared the country’s first Servant of God and since documents were submitted to the Vatican in 2018, the decision is still pending.

“We are eagerly waiting and praying for the day when Archbishop Ganguly would be declared ‘venerable’ and move toward being declared a saint one day,” said Holy Cross Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario.

Iraqi churches destroyed by ISIS to be rebuilt

● Two Catholic churches left in ruin by ISIS attacks in Iraq are to be rebuilt, UNESCO has announced.

Al-Tahera Church in Mosul, founded 1862, and the Dominican Al-Saa’a Church, founded 1973, were severely damaged during the invasion of June 2014.

The reconstruction of the churches is part of the UN

heritage agency’s “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” initiative. ISIS destroyed at least 28 religious sites in the city with reports of militants forcing Christians to convert to Islam or be killed.

Despite ISIS being driven out of Mosul in 2017, many Christians fled the city and few have returned due to fears of insecurity.

Bishops urged to launch Greece refugee relocation projects

● Three leading Cardinals have called for relocation projects for refugee families in Lesbos and other camps in Greece in a letter to EU Episcopal Conferences.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, Archbishop of Luxembourg, asked the Church “not to remain indifferent” and give hope to more than 20,000 adults and 1,100 unaccompanied minors living in precarious and overcrowded structures.

The two other signatories are Cardinal Michael Czeny of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, and Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, Almoner of Papal Charities.

“If Europe still wants to use the adjective ‘Christian’, now is the time to show it through active charity, opening humanitarian corridors for migrants,” said Cardinal Hollerich.

Philippine Catholics told not to clap or touch at Mass

● Catholics in the Philippines have been told to abstain from clapping or making any physical contact with each other at Mass.

Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan warned by clapping, prayer “becomes an audience in need of entertainment; liturgical ministers become performers; and preachers become erudite toastmasters. It should not be so.”

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines has already asked the faithful not to hold hands during the ‘Our Father’ and not to shake hands during the sign of peace.

They advise priests to distribute the Eucharist in hands and change the holy water regularly due to concerns over spreading the coronavirus.

S. Korea cancels all religious services until March 5

An archdiocese in South Korea has suspended all Masses for two weeks and cancelled the Ash Wednesday liturgy in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus at religious gatherings.

Archbishop Thaddeus Cho Hwan-kil of Daegu has banned all Church meetings until March 5 after new cases were reported from Christian congregations in parishes and religious houses in the area.

In an urgent directive, he urged Catholics to pray in homes and engage in spiritual exercises, including the reading of the Gospel, to observe the day of obligation.

The move comes just over a week after Hong Kong’s diocese suspended all Church programs until February 28.

The city is now in lockdown and on red alert for the first time since the H1N1 virus outbreak in 2009, which killed 250. At least six people have died from the coronavirus in South Korea and more than 600 have been infected. Many of the total number infected are people who attended prayer programs of a Christian sect based in the city.

Korea’s Centers for Disease



Control and Prevention (KCDC) links the infections to a 61-year-old woman, identified as ‘Patient 31’, who tested positive early last week.

The woman in question, according to the agency, had no recent record of travelling overseas but reportedly attended the Church services before and after she had symptoms of the virus.

At least 15 people who attended the prayer ceremonies with Patient 31

have tested positive for the coronavirus with more than 400 showing symptoms.

Quarantine

Hundreds are believed to have attended services with the affected woman in recent weeks at a branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony.

The Shincheonji Church, founded in 1984 by Lee Man-hee, advised its 9,000 members to stay home and

encouraged those who had attended services to be tested and quarantine themselves.

The Church, now temporarily closed, issued a statement on February 23 claiming its followers were the “biggest victims” and that they had been subjected to “groundless criticism and hatred” since news emerged of the outbreak.

“Taking measures to temporarily shut down the Shincheonji facilities is not a suppression of religion but for the sake of the lives and safety of the residents and citizens,” said South Korean president Moon Jae-in.

At least 2,600 people from around 79,000 confirmed cases have died from the disease, which has spread to more than 26 countries worldwide, causing widespread economic and travel disruptions.

Israel and Bahrain have imposed an entry ban on South Koreans while Samsung closed down a smartphone plant after a worker tested positive for the virus.

Neighbours North Korea, meanwhile, have quarantined 380 foreigners in an attempt to stop the virus breaking out.

Students abused in Argentina school demand Vatican cooperation

Three former pupils of an Argentine school for the deaf have travelled to Rome to demand the release of records on priests who abused them.

Daniel Sgardelis, one of those abused at the Provolo Institute for the Deaf in La Plata, said he wants an international law which would force the Vatican to “stop covering up”.

“We need this to change,” he said. “It’s been a long time – 50 years – and it’s still the same.

“We are victims and we need for them (Vatican) to give us evidence.”

Mr Sgardelis was accompanied by Ezequiel Villalonga and Claudia

Labeguerie, two survivors from Mendoza, following a visit to Geneva, where they told the UN Committee Against Torture of their abuses.

Sufferings

They also told the UN committee that despite the Pope and Vatican being informed of their sufferings at the institute, no concrete action has been taken to release the names of abusers.

“We went to the United Nations to denounce the abuses and tortures suffered, and we need the Pope to end this,” said Mr Villalonga. “We also need him to give the evidence and the photos

(of the abusers), because in Argentina we have not received justice.”

The students claim they were physically abused at the schools if they attempted to use sign language, which left many unable to communicate the sexual abuse to their families or authorities.

They were taught only one hand gesture by the abusive priests: an index finger to the lips to demand their silence. “We need this to stop,” said Ms Labeguerie. “We suffered a lot, we weren’t allowed to speak in sign language, we felt that we weren’t listened to.”

East Africa Bishops rally to fight locust plague

Catholic bishops in East Africa have called for increased action to combat the region’s worst desert locust infestation in 70 years.

Like scenes from the Book of Exodus, swarms of locusts are ravaging grazing lands and endangering the economies of seven countries heavily dependent on agriculture

for food security.

Bishop Giorgio Bertin, who heads the Church in Djibouti and Somalia, says Catholic leaders have been urging citizens to use all means to fight the insects. “It is too big for us,” said Bishop Bertin. “The locust plague is a concern of everyone.”

He suggested that “coun-

tries with military bases” should “use planes to spray the locusts” as a means of fighting back.

Somalia declared the locust crisis a national disaster in January. The swarms came in December and from there they have moved into Kenya.

Reports indicate the locust

have reached Tanzania, South Sudan and Uganda in the past week, having already decimated crops in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Desert locust swarms can travel up to 150km a day and can devour as much food as 35,000 people in a day, according to the United Nations.



Edited by Aron Hegarty
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Cold comfort for Syrian refugees



Children stand in the snow near tents at a makeshift camp in Azaz. A military offensive in north-western Syria has caused thousands to flee with many of them sleeping in freezing temperatures. Photo: CNS

Biden turns to Catholicism to boost his falling ratings

US presidential candidate Joe Biden has highlighted his Catholic Faith in a new campaign advertisement released last week.

The Democratic Party representative hopes focusing on religion will boost his ratings after seeing a sharp decline in his poll numbers following recent losses in the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary.

Mr Biden, who is a baptised Catholic, said that "Faith is what has gotten me through difficult times in my life" including the deaths of his first wife, eldest daughter and son.

"I go to Mass and I say the Rosary," he said, adding that he found it to be "incredibly comforting".

"Personally for me, Faith, it's all about hope and purpose and strength, and for me, my religion is just an enormous sense of solace."

While Mr Biden profiles his Catholicism, it has been a source of controversy over his political career and he has endorsed policies that are contrary to Church teaching.

Shortly after his election as vice president, Bishop Joseph Martino – the then-bishop of his hometown of Scranton – rebuked Mr Biden for his views on abortion.

"I will not tolerate any politician who claims to be a faithful Catholic who is not genuinely pro-life," said Bishop Martino in 2008.

During the 2008 campaign, Mr Biden also received a letter from the then-bishop of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, after he received Communion at a parish in the diocese.

The letter reiterated the Church's views on abortion and the bishop offered prayers that Mr Biden would

"live by the virtue of fortitude as you proclaim your support to the Person of Christ in the most vulnerable of his members: the pre-born child".

In October 2019, Mr Biden was refused Communion at a Church in South Carolina.

The priest denied him Communion in accord with a 2004 diocesan policy that prohibits politicians, who have been supportive of legal protection for abortion, from receiving the Eucharist.

"Catholic public officials who consistently support abortion on demand are cooperating with evil in a public manner," said the 2004 decree.

"By supporting pro-abortion legislation, they participate in manifest grave sin, a condition which excludes them from admission to Holy Communion as long as they persist in the pro-abortion stance."

Indian Christians accused of converting children freed

Eight Christians accused of kidnapping 60 children for the purpose of converting them to Christianity have been acquitted in India.

The six men and two women were alleged to have attempted an illegal religious conversion of tribal children were freed in Madhya Pradesh on February 18.

The adults were on their way to Nagpur with the children in May 2017 when they were arrested and charged under the Madhya Pradesh

Freedom of Religion Act.

"No one should be targeted for their faith," said Tehmina Arora of the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

"The anti-conversion laws are tools to harass and target Christians and should be repealed since they restrict the freedom of religion guaranteed under the constitution of India."

Madhya Pradesh is one of the few states in India with a tough anti-conversion law.

According to the law, it is

mandatory for a person to obtain prior permission from the state before converting to another religion.

Institutions

"The Church and its institutions should be very alert and careful in the state because it is nothing new," said Archbishop Leo Cornelio of Bhopal.

"Our people are attacked even when they are carol singing, which the fanatic groups consider as religious

conversion. The Church does not promote or propagate religious conversion."

Elsewhere in India, Catholic bishops have called the government to stop using religion as a criterion for determining Indian citizenship.

Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, meanwhile has been re-appointed President of The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India following an election last week.

Vatican roundup

First meeting between China and Vatican for 70 years

● A first meeting between The Holy See and the People's Republic of China (PRC) since 1951 took place in Germany on February 14.

Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the Holy See's Secretary for Relations with States, met with PRC State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, at the Munich Security Conference.

The meeting, which was made public through a communiqué of the Holy See's Secretariat of State, said the two parties held a discussion that "took place in a cordial atmosphere".

They discussed a "willingness to continue the institutional dialogue at the bilateral level to promote the life of the Catholic Church and the good of the Chinese people".

Both parties said contact with each other has "developed positively" over time and expressed "a desire for greater international cooperation" to foster peace in the world and "considerations on intercultural dialogue and human rights were exchanged".

Pope Francis prayed for those affected by the coronavirus and expressed his closeness to the Chinese people, inviting the faithful "to pray for our Chinese brothers and sisters".

Meekness unites, anger divides – Pope

● During his weekly general audience, Pope Francis said those who are meek, are patient, gentle and merciful, drawing people together and salvaging relationships.

The Holy Father described on February 19 how meekness means holding onto one's trust and relationship with God, and guarding his gifts of peace, mercy and fraternity.

"Anyone can seem meek when all is calm," he said. "But how do we react when 'under pressure' or

are attacked, offended or assaulted?"

The Pope alluded to Jesus as a model of meekness in how he "handed himself over to the one who judges justly".

"The meek are not people-pleasers, but are Christ's disciples who have learned to defend a whole other land.

"Meekness unites; anger divides," he added. "A moment of anger can destroy so many things; you lose control and you don't evaluate what is really important."

Sixth suspect investigated in financial probe

● An investigation into financial and real estate investments has been enlarged following the opening of the Vatican judiciary year last week.

The investigation started in October 2019 and initially focused on five Holy See employees, who were later suspended.

Now Monsignor Alberto Perlasca, 59, has become the sixth suspect in the case with documents and computer equipment seized from the Italian priest's house and office.

A communiqué issued by the Holy See Press Office said: "The measure was undertaken pursuant to the investigation into financial and real estate investments by the Secretariat of State, and is linked, while respecting the presumption of innocence, to what emerged in the initial interrogations of the officials under investigation who had already been suspended."

The investigation, initiated by the Vatican judiciary in response to internal reports, seeks to substantiate the allegation of specific crimes, such as embezzlement, abuse of authority and corruption.

Speaking on February 15, Pope Francis said: "Suspicious financial situations are not in keeping with the nature and purpose of the Church, and have generated disorientation and anxiety in the community of the Faithful."



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

February 21 marked exactly one year since the anniversary of Pope Francis' historic summit on the clerical sexual abuse crisis, which brought together presidents of the world's bishops' conferences to promote a global culture of transparency and accountability.

Coincidentally, the milestone came as the world focuses on a very different kind of epidemic: the coronavirus, which to date is believed to have killed more than 2,200 people across mainland China. The global total of infected people is more than 75,000, the vast majority in China's Hubei province.

The juxtaposition at first glance may seem unrelated, but there is a sort of link.

Consider that two months into the coronavirus outbreak, we can speak with basic statistical confidence about how many victims there are and where they are, at least outside the epicentre. As is well documented – China initially tried to cover up the disease, and there are still serious doubts about whether it's being forthcoming regarding the extent of new infections and deaths. Still, dogged researchers across the world are hard at work trying to get at the reality of the situation, and we have a fairly good handle on infections and treatments elsewhere.

By way of comparison, decades into the clerical abuse crisis there's still no such hard data about its global reach.

Solid information

There's reasonably solid information about the number of cases and victims, and therefore the percentage of priests guilty of abuse in the US, Australia, Ireland, Germany and other settings which have been epicentres of the crisis, but we don't have much clue about the spread elsewhere.

What tends to fill that gap are *a priori* assumptions, reflecting the perspectives and biases of whoever's talking.

For instance, Archbishop Marcel Utembi Tapa of Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo, by far the largest Catholic country in Africa in terms of population, has said that "cases are rare in our country".

In that, Archbishop Utembi reflects the kinds of things many African bishops have said since the outbreak of the abuse crisis in the late 1990s and early 2000s: child sexual abuse by clergy is mostly a Western issue.

Given the social stigma against



Sex abuse survivors Denise Buchanan and Alessandro Battaglia at St Peter's Square during last year's Vatican meeting on the protection of minors in the Church. Photo: CNS

Pope's summit on clergy abuse: what we know one year on

homosexuality in Africa, priests preying on boys doesn't happen on a wide scale.

To the extent Africa has a problem with sexual misconduct by clergy, it takes other forms, especially relationships with adult women. One can hear similar things from bishops in other parts of the world. Most survivors scoff in response, insisting such comments reflect denial.

“Medical researchers will tell you it's not useful in combating disease to make assumptions about what causes it”

During a press conference this week in Rome organised by the US-based group BishopAccountability, a question came up about clerical abuse around the world. The answer was that it must be similar to what we know about the US and elsewhere – meaning somewhere around 5% to 8% of clergy guilty of abuse. The comparatively low number of cases reported in the Congo or the Philippines, therefore, must be a reflection of poor reporting and cultures of shame that discourage victims from coming forward, not

a real difference across geographic regions.

Yet the study of epidemiology, very much in the air due to the coronavirus outbreak, tells a different story.

As one might imagine, the spread of disease is a subject that's been keenly studied by health organisations and researchers. One consistent finding is that the spread of an epidemic or pandemic is terribly uneven. Even where different populations face exactly the same risk of exposure, how hard they're hit is dependent on a number of factors, including overall health levels, exposure to unsafe water and food, the quality of health care systems, the nature of the diet, air quality levels and any number of other things.

In other words, medical researchers will tell you it's not useful in combating disease to make assumptions about what causes it, how it spreads, and whether its impact is the same everywhere. Instead, you have to collect the data and then try to make sense of it, rather than starting with a model and massaging the data to fit.

Granted, the analogy between a virus and the clerical abuse crisis is inexact, among other things because a disease is generally

a natural phenomenon while the sexual abuse of a child is an abominable crime. Nevertheless, the comparison is instructive.

“Neither ecclesiastical nor civil authorities in most parts of the world have invested the resources to provide a reliable picture”

Is it possible, for instance, that there was something in Western cultures during the peak years of the crisis that produced a level of abuse not seen elsewhere? Or, is it possible that the crisis is actually far worse in other settings that lack a legal and cultural support system for victims to seek redress, where clericalism is far more rampant, and where cultural attitudes towards sexual relations with adolescents and even children are radically different?

Generalised data

The only answer to either question right now is “sure, that's possible, but we really don't know”. One can try to apply generalised data from the World Health Organisation about child abuse worldwide, for

instance, which suggests levels are depressingly high pretty much everywhere, but that's inexact.

That, in turn, brings us back to where things stand one year from the Pope's summit.

What's striking is how much still isn't understood. Neither ecclesiastical nor civil authorities in most parts of the world have invested the resources to provide a reliable picture, so we're left with guesswork and projections.

For sure, the immediate work of identifying abusers and those who covered up for them is critically important, among other things because it's what tends to spark lawsuits, grab headlines and drive protest. Yet the slower and less sensational task of understanding the origins and distribution of clerical abuse, including the environmental and cultural factors which either encourage or obstruct it, also merit a spot on the to-do list.

Perhaps expanding the infrastructure to do that kind of research is one resolution to take away from this anniversary – because, let's face it, ‘disease’ is an unfortunate fact of life in the Church as much as anywhere else, and it would be nice to have a reliable tracking system for where and how it spreads.

① John L. Allen Jr is the editor of Cruxnow

Brazil's black Catholics struggles with the Church and society

Eduardo Campos Lima

The search for a new dialogue between black Catholics and the hierarchy is on the agenda with Afro-Brazilian Catholic activists struggling to promote and increase participation of black people in the Church and society.

Almost 56% of Brazil's population has some African descent and, according to a recent survey on religion conducted by Datafolha, people with African descent make up 55% of the total number of Catholics in Brazil.

But many black Catholic activists argue there's a general deficit of Afro-Brazilian culture in the Church and a disproportionately low percentage of black bishops in Brazil's episcopate.

Like the US, Brazil had slavery dating back to its Portuguese colonial history. In fact, Brazil imported more Africans than any other country, and slavery was only abolished in 1888, shortly before Brazil's monarchy was replaced by a republic.

However, Brazil didn't have the same history of legal segregation, and the country never developed the clear separation between blacks and whites that existed in the US. Despite the fact the majority of Brazilians have some African descent, less than 8% identify as black; most identify as *pardo*, meaning mixed ethnicity.

The effort to encourage a real consciousness of the African heritage in the Brazilian Church has to go beyond the pursuit of enculturated liturgies, said Archbishop Zanon Demettino Castro of Feira de Santana, who is charge of the Afro-Brazilian Pastoral Commission of the Brazilian National Bishops' Conference. "We can't confine the issue of the Afro-descendants in the Church within the frames of an isolated Afro-Brazilian Pastoral Commission nor reduce it to folkloric expressions. We have to go beyond the 'Afro Mass'," said Dr Castro.

Legitimacy

The October 2019 Synod for the Pan-Amazon region has deepened the understanding of inculturation and its legitimacy in the dialogue of the Church with traditional cultures, particularly in the Amazonian context, Dr Castro said.

Although the synodal debates have opened a path for the application of such concepts to the Afro-Brazilian culture, there's still much progress to be made, said the archbishop.

"There are dozens of *quilombola* communities in the Amazon, but the *Instrumentum Laboris* [the Synod's working document] failed to adequately address such theme," he said.



The Fraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Black People celebrate their *congado* festival in Ouro Preto, Brazil. Photo: CNS

“When there’s no money for the basics, a family starts de-structuring. Black people are currently struggling against pauperisation”

Quilombola communities are traditional settlements usually formed during colonial (1500-1822) and imperial times (1822-1889) by slaves who escaped captivity.

"Bishop José Valdeci Mendes of Brejo, who attended the Synod, had the opportunity to advocate the relevance of the discussion concerning *quilombolas* in the Amazon," he added.

For Dr Castro, an important element brought by the Synod was the pre-synod preparatory process, where laypeople and the clergy were given a chance to communicate their concerns to the bishops' conferences.

"This can help us to learn more about the people of our dioceses and their African roots," he said.

From February 17-21, Mexico hosted a week-long meeting for bishops in charge of Afro-American pastoral commissions, which Dr Castro attended.

"The pastoral activity of African perspective takes place not only inside the Church, but also outside, by requirement of the civil society. It collaborates with the legitimate claims of the popular movements [...] and with affirmative action, supporting alternative initiatives for the education of black people," Castro said.

One of the most renowned black Catholic movements in Brazil is Educafro, an organisation that offers free preparatory courses for black and poor students who want to attend university - something that in Brazil requires passing a highly competitive exam, which historically excluded black youth.

* * * * *

Educafro's leader, Franciscan Fr David Santos, claims the Brazilian Church reproduces the racism that encompasses all dimensions of the Brazil's society.

"The proportion of black bishops is notoriously low in the country, but the number of black seminarians and priests is huge. However, the Church many times impedes them from gaining consciousness of their ethnicity and of the oppression they suffer," said Fr Santos.

He says Educafro has been working to educate and train black people in order to give them access to high-ranking positions in the government and in the private sector. This year, he added, the organisation is particularly concerned with the absence of blacks in financial institutions, law firms and technology companies.

Educafro is also concerned about the widespread police killings

of black people throughout the country - most of them young. Between 2017 and 2018, over 75% of the victims of police actions were black, according to a study made by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security. Educafro calls this the "genocide of the black youth".

Solange Palazzi is historian and the coordinator of the Afro-Brazilian Pastoral Commission in the city of Ouro Preto.

“Sometimes the efforts to raise awareness of racial issues are attacked by Church members”

He said the fight against the growing deterioration of the black people's concrete conditions of life is the biggest challenge nowadays.

"When there's no money for the basics, a family starts de-structuring. Black people are currently struggling against pauperisation," she said Palazzi.

Ms Palazzi is also a member of the Fraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Black People, a Catholic organisation founded in the city in 1685 by African slaves. Such societies were created throughout the country in colonial times and functioned as places of assistance, solidarity, and resistance.

Since the 17th Century, the fraternity has organised an annual festival every October called *congado*. A king and queen are elected by the group and they

parade with their escorts to the Church, in a procession with plenty of music and dancing.

"Over the years we suffered several attacks on our identity, because the Church didn't allow black expressions inside the temples," she said. According to Ms Palazzi, some dioceses in Brazil encourage Afro-Brazilian chants, dance and rites during Mass, but many bishops still don't like such elements in worship.

"The Afro-Brazilian Pastoral Commission in Ouro Preto supports the black brotherhoods and all other black groups that are active inside the Church," she said.

According to Camila Moraes de Oliveira, a doctoral researcher who is studying the Afro-Brazilian Pastoral Commission's anti-racist struggle, there's a growing prejudice against black people in Brazilian society, something that affects the activities of the black Catholic movements.

"Sometimes the efforts to raise awareness of racial issues are attacked by Church members and even by members of the clergy who don't acknowledge the existence of racism inside the Church," said Ms Oliveira.

In her opinion, the Church can play a fundamental role in the fight against racism in Brazil.

"It has an enormous relevance in the Brazilian society and influences many people. When it suggests a discussion of racial issues, it can really contribute in this matter."

📍 Eduardo Campos Lima is a special for Cruxnow.com

Letters

Letter of the week

We should not applaud during Mass

Dear Editor, Many people are uncomfortable with clapping during Mass. Cardinal Francis Arinze said: "When we come to Mass, we don't come to clap. We don't come to watch people, to admire people. We want to adore God, to thank Him, to ask Him pardon for our sins, and to ask Him for what we need."

Pope Benedict himself said: "Wherever applause breaks out in the liturgy because of some human achievement, it is a sure sign that the essence of the liturgy has totally disappeared and been replaced by a kind of religious entertainment." (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*).

Number 45 of the *General Instruction for the Roman Missal* says: "Sacred silence also, as part of the

celebration, is to be observed at the designated times."

The Conciliar Fathers of Trent taught: "They shall also banish from church all...noise and clamour, that so the house of God may be seen to be...truly a house of prayer." (Council of Trent, Session XXII, 17 September 1562, 'Decree Concerning the Things to be Observed and to be Avoided in the Celebration of Mass'.)

When a man is being ordained to the diaconate, priesthood or episcopacy, when a diocese is erected (and the new bishop appointed) or in the Rite of Sending for the RCIA, applause is used to signify the Faithful's assent. But these are the only times when clapping is allowed.

Applause generally signifies gratitude or admiration for a job

well done. If people are applauding the choir at the end of Mass, that is inappropriate. The function of liturgical musicians and choirs is to assist people in their praise of God through the Mass, not to perform for entertainment.

The crowds at St Peter's do not applaud during Good Friday. The crowds at St John Lateran do not applaud as the Holy Father is processing the Blessed Sacrament throughout his Cathedral on Holy Thursday. During the Corpus Christi procession, there is no applause as the procession moves from St John Lateran to the Basilica of St Mary Major. So we should not applaud during Mass.

*Yours etc.,
Kieron Wood,
Rathfarnham, Dublin.*

Mary Immaculate morals testament to immorality

Dear Editor, Why should we sully the good work of Mary Immaculate College in Limerick by so called proponents of morals? Their concept of morals is testament to immorality. If only they could see that.

*Yours etc.,
Patrick Quigley,
Ballyfermot, Dublin.*

facebook community

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

Appointment of new Dublin bishop to be fast-tracked

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has clearly indicated that he will submit his resignation letter to Pope Francis in a few months time when he reaches his 75th birthday. His time at the helm of Dublin archdiocese has rarely seen him out of the news and he has not been slow to engage with difficult issues of the day. If it is his wish, he deserves many years of peaceful retirement.

Now is the time to think about possible leadership successors. Catholics deserve a voice in selecting his successor. I suspect that the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, would welcome suggestions from faithful Catholics for the three names to be submitted to Pope Francis when the time comes.

When I lived in London I remember several occasions when both Cardinal Heenan and Cardinal Hume asked parishioners to submit names of possible area bishops.

Lay Catholics felt very empowered by the experience. Priests too have their ways of having their voices heard as back in the 70s the priests of Brentwood Diocese engaged in an exercise which included a very professional questionnaire to determine the qualities they sought of their next bishop.

Bishop Patrick Casey was duly appointed bishop and undertook to serve in that capacity for ten years. After ten years he returned to his home diocese as a parish priest. Surely now is the time for Irish Catholics to speak up and suggest names of priests or bishops that they feel would provide the leadership needed for the next ten years.

– **Alan Whelan**

Archbishop Martin is well aware of the enormity of the problems faced by the Diocese and the challenges his successor faces making this a most urgent matter.

– **Peter O'Reilly**

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

The power of musicians and film stars to inspire

Dear Editor, It was wonderful to see your article on the music group Snow Patrol's lead singer Gary Lightbody calling for Christian unity (IC 06/02/2020) during the Four Corners Festival in Belfast.

Wouldn't it be wonderful

to see more talented, much-renowned celebrities speak like this at Christian events the world over? Unfortunately many of them seem to show no regard for religion and its ability to bring about peace, instead

they focus on the negatives. Young people would benefit greatly from artists expressing the opinion that Christianity is not some archaic 'uncool' thing that only older people care about, but can bring about positive

and monumental change to families, communities and even countries. It seems these kind of celebrities are few and far between.

*Yours etc.,
Jess Kelly,
Galway City, Galway.*

Concern about future of Accord

Dear Editor, I was sad to see that Accord has continued to see a decline in the amount of people availing of its marriage and counselling services (IC 13/02/2020). It is a wonderful service.

They've managed to outlive the Government's threats of pulling funding and retained their State funding but it seems they're still losing popularity, I hope people will come to realise, and continue to realise, the importance of their work.

*Yours etc.,
Gary Donnelly,
Navan, Meath.*



Unfortunate timing of Archbishop Martin's recommendation

Dear Editor, The Archbishop of Armagh, Éamon Martin, has recently recommended that politicians work towards a border poll in Ireland (IC 06/02/20). This might seem to be reasonable recommendation for a person of influence in the Catholic community in Northern Ireland and would be consistent with provisions in the Good Friday Agreement.

I believe however that the timing of the Archbishop's statement is unfortunate. The main group / party

actively promoting the holding of a border poll is Sinn Féin. The relevant context is that the Catholic Church has an unambiguous pro-life stance and opposes the provision of abortion services, while Sinn Féin has in the last two years facilitated the introduction of abortion services in both parts of Ireland.

In the Republic of Ireland, the party strongly supported the repeal of the Eighth Amendment and passing of consequential legislation. In Northern

Ireland, by standing aside, they frustrated attempts by other parties in the Assembly to resist the extension to Northern Ireland of British abortion laws.

Suffice to say that in 21st Century Ireland the previously established patterns of loyalties and allegiances lack the clarity they once had.

*Yours etc.,
Michael Walsh,
Clontarf, Dublin.*

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



ROME: Ezequil Villalonga, Daniel Sgardelis and Claudia Labeguerie, sex abuse survivors at Catholic schools for the deaf in Argentina, at a news conference in Rome on February 20. Photos: CNS



USA: A pedestrian gives money to a homeless man outside St Francis of Assisi Church in New York. Some say almsgiving, one of three pillars of Lent along with prayer and fasting, gets the least attention.



SYRIA: Women and children who fled from Idlib province gather around a fire in Afrin. Thousands of displaced people are sheltering under strips of plastic tenting in the cold and snow.



KENYA: A grandmother shares her lunch with the youngest of her seven grandchildren as part of a Catholic Relief Services' program for family nutrition in Konjiko.



SINGAPORE: A woman wears a mask as a precaution against the coronavirus and prays at Kwan Im Hood Cho Temple last week.



AUSTRALIA: Cardinal George Pell leaving the Melbourne Magistrates Court. His lawyers will appeal his conviction for sexually abusing two 13-year-old choirboys to the High Court of Australia on March 11-12.



The renowned spiritual writer Ruth Burrows begins her autobiography with these words: “I was born into this world with a tortured sensitivity. For long I have puzzled over the causes of my psychological anguish.”

Unfortunately, to our loss, too many spiritual biographies don't begin like this, that is, by recognising right at the start the bewildering, pathological complexity inside our own nature. We're not simple in heart, mind and soul, nor indeed even in body. Each of us has enough complexity within us to write our own treatise on abnormal psychology.

And that complexity must not only be recognised, it needs to be respected and hallowed because it stems not for what's worst in us but from what's best in us.

We're complex because what beguiles us inside and tempts us in every direction is not, first of all, the wiliness of the Devil but rather the image and likeness of God. Inside us there's a divine fire, a greatness, which gives us infinite depth, insatiable desires, and enough luminosity to bewilder every psychologist. The image and likeness of God inside us, as John of the Cross writes, renders our hearts, minds, and souls 'caverns' too deep to ever be filled in or fully understood.

It's my belief that Christian spirituality, at least in its popular preaching and catechesis, has too often not taken this seriously enough. In short, the impression has too much been given that Christian discipleship shouldn't be complicated: why all this resistance within you! What's wrong with

Our congenital complexity



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

you! But, as we know from our own experience, our innate complexity is forever throwing up complications and resistances to becoming a saint, to “willing the one thing”.

Moreover, because our complexity hasn't been recognised and honored spiritually we often feel guilty about it: Why am I so complicated? Why do I have all these questions? Why am I so often confused? Why is sex such a powerful impulse? Why do I have some many temptations?

The simple answer: Because we are born with a godly fire within. Thus the source of so many of our confusions, temptations, and resistances comes as much what best in us from the wiles of the Satan and the world.

What should we do in the face of our own bewildering complexity?

Some counsels for the long haul:

1. Honor and hallow your complexity. Accept that this is a God-given gift inside you and, at the end of the day, it's what is

best inside you. It's what separates you from plants and animals. Their nature is simple, but having an immortal, infinite soul makes for lots of complications as you struggle to live out your life within the finitude that besets you.

“Hallow your spontaneous impulses and temptations by searching for that higher love and higher value towards which they're pointing”

2. Never underestimate your complexity – even as you resist massaging it. Recognise and respect the “demons and angels” that roam freely inside your heart and mind.

But don't massage your complexity either, by fancying yourself as the tormented artist or as the existentialist who's

heroically out of step with life.

3. Befriend your shadow. It's the luminosity you've split off. Slowly, with proper caution and support, begin to face the inner things that frighten you.

4. Hallow the power and place of sexuality within you. You're incurably sexual, and for a godly reason.

Never deny or denigrate the power of sexuality, even as you carry it with a proper chastity.

5. Name your wounds, grieve them, mourn your inconsummation. Whatever wounds that you don't grieve will eventually snakebite you. Accept and mourn the fact that here, in this life, there is no finished symphony.

6. Never let the 'transcendental impulse' inside you become drugged or imprisoned. Your complexity continually lets you know that you're built for more than this life.

Never deaden this impulse inside you. Learn to recognise, through your frustrations and fantasies, the ways you often imprison it.

7. Try to find a 'higher love' by which to transcend the more immediate power of your natural instincts. All miracles begin with falling in love. Hallow your spontaneous impulses and temptations by searching for that higher love and higher value towards which they're pointing. Offering others your altruism and the gaze of admiration will feel so

good and right that it will bring to fulfillment what you're really yearning for.

8. Let your own complexity teach you understanding and empathy.

By being in touch with your own complexity you will eventually learn that nothing is foreign to you and that what you see on the newscasts each day mirrors what's inside you.

“God is your builder, the architect who constructed you and who is responsible for your complexity. Trust that God understands. Trust that God is more anxious about you than you're anxious about yourself”

9. Forgive yourself often. Your complexity will trip you up many times and so you will need to forgive yourself many times. Live, knowing that God's mercy is a well that's never exhausted.

10. Live under God's patience and understanding. God is your builder, the architect who constructed you and who is responsible for your complexity. Trust that God understands. Trust that God is more anxious about you than you're anxious about yourself. The God who knows all things also knows and appreciates why you struggle.

“The image and likeness of God inside us, as John of the Cross writes, renders our hearts, minds and souls 'caverns' too deep to ever be filled in”

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 27, 2020

Personal Profile

Working in the healing industry with Fr Conlon

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Spring Clean for the new decade

It might not really feel like spring at the moment, with the only hint being brighter evenings. However, that doesn't mean it's a bad time of year to clear out the cobwebs and declutter. You've made it through a gloomy January and most of a freezing February; it's time for some refreshment to get you through to warmer days.

The tradition of the spring cleaning has been passed down through every Irish family, it's a way of welcoming in the warm. Imagine how exciting this was in times without central heating.

It can of course be very daunting to tackle some of the problem areas you've been avoiding since clearing away the Christmas decorations. Preparation is key to tackling such a big task.



Roise McGagh reveals eleven tips on making your spring clean a breeze

Here are a few things to keep in mind before you get started:

Set some time aside

Decide exactly when and for how long you are going to spring clean, and be realistic. It might only take you eight hours to clear a small apartment, but it might take up most of your weekend to do an entire house. Many people can't spend large chunks of their day cleaning. Setting aside half an hour as often as you can will get

the same results.

Plan it out

Make a list outlining the general areas you want done, the places that need decluttering and the ones you want to deep clean. Then prioritise and create a makeshift schedule of the different areas into the time you have allotted yourself. This might sound overly meticulous, but it's just to avoid the clean taking the entirety of spring, or you giving up entirely after spending two hours

mostly looking at old photographs. Time-based cleaning means your home may not be spotless or a storage haven by the end, but it will definitely be a lot cleaner and tidier overall than when you started. No one notices a perfectly clean oven when the rest of the kitchen hasn't gotten a lick.

Get your materials ready

Have your mop clean and ready, vacuum emptied, new shower curtain ready, some dusters at hand and all of your solutions ready to go. If you think you'll need extra storage boxes or a new rug, try and get them in advance. There's nothing worse than running out to the shop every time you realise you need something else.

Declutter

This is best done before the actual cleaning. You'll have to go through the places where clutter gathers – this can be anything from old clothes to old birthday cards – and decide whether to keep it, pass it on or throw it away (preferably in some kind of recycling bin). Sort things you want to keep into neat boxes or drawers – try not to go for piles that will eventually be unravelled or knocked over. It is best to dust or wipe while decluttering so you don't have to go over the same place twice.

Work top to bottom

Start with the ceiling and finish with the floor. If you first tackle the cobwebs then the shelves and

» Continued on Page 33

Family News



AND EVENTS

WE CAN ALL DO IT

For anyone with children on the Autism Spectrum living near Wexford, Cottage Autism Newtork (CAN) hosts many different events that parents, kids or the whole family can attend.

Over the next few weeks they have coding classes, teen bowling, soccer, brick play time and more. There are also some coffee mornings for parents to meet and chat. Most of these events are cheaper than €10, even for non-members. CAN is a charity and voluntarily run organisation that "aims to improve the quality of life of families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder by providing support, promoting equality and inclusion as well as raising awareness in the community by being a voice for our members".

These kids of activity can be great for socialising for parents and kids alike. They also help develop practical skills and can get families together for some good old fashioned fun.

SUGRU, THE MOULDBABLE GLUE

From the London based company, Sugru is a mouldable glue. Starting at €8.99 for three pieces and going up to €16 for around eight pieces it's not terribly expensive and very useful. One of the big draws is how you can safely mould it around the end of an intact wire to stop it from wearing (iPhone users will know the struggle). It holds well, stays flexible, is waterproof and heat and cold resistant to pretty extreme temperatures. It was invented by the Kilkenny native Jane Ni Dhulchaointigh. She came up with the idea while studying for her MA in product design in the Royal College of Art. She decided that instead of making more products she wanted people to be able to fix or improve the things they already had.

GOOD GUT HEALTH GOES A LONG WAY

A recent report has found that eating a 'Mediterranean diet' for a year can promote gut bacteria linked to 'healthy ageing' in elderly people. It was published in Gut; an online journal by British Medical Journal (BMJ). Researchers suggest it could slow the advance of frailty and the mental decline. Previous research has shown that a poor or restrictive diet, common among the elderly - especially those in care - reduces the types and range of bacteria (microbiome) in the gut and which helps speed up oncoming frailty. People on the Mediterranean diet that had a positive change in their gut indicated so with reduced frailty; in walking speed and hand grip strength, and improved brain function, such as memory. The diet also reduces the production of potentially harmful inflammatory chemicals. These changes were mostly driven by what we already know is good; an increase in dietary fibre and associated vitamins and minerals. In particular, C, B6, B9, copper, potassium, iron, manganese, and magnesium.

Use Lent to reject the crass and superficial



I attended a really fascinating talk recently in St Saviour's Priory in Dublin, part of the Symposium lecture series which takes place on the first Thursday of every month. A large, enthusiastic crowd was attracted by the title 'Edith Stein's Understanding of Human Flourishing'. Otherwise known as St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein was a German Jewish philosopher who converted to Catholicism after reading The Life of St Teresa of Avila becoming a Discalced Carmelite nun. She led a life of extraordinary holiness in the midst of much suffering and ended her life in an Auschwitz gas chamber on August 9, 1942.

Those who came to the talk couldn't have left without wanting to learn more about this outstanding, intelligent, saintly woman. The speaker, Dr Robert McNamara, teaches Philosophy and Theology at the Franciscan University of Steubenville and is well known through his work with the Aquinas Summer School.

He spoke specifically about Edith Stein's depiction of the human soul as "an interior castle", a description used by St Teresa of Avila. She recognised the innermost being of the soul as "the abode of God". Like the physical body which needs food and nourishment to survive and thrive, our soul needs spiritual nourishment which it incorporates into its being to become the best version of what it should be.

Pope John Paul II said at Edith Stein's canonisation that her deep spiritual awareness made her "a model to inspire us and a protectress to call upon". After Prof. McNamara's insights into the life of St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, I found myself wondering how his description of the inner life of the soul



A parent's perspective Maria Byrne

and the inner castle with its many rooms could be related in practical terms to a parent's role in trying to help their children to "feed" this inner life.

We're all increasingly tuned in to what we eat and are aware of the needs of the body and what we should or shouldn't be consuming, be it sugar or salt content, allergens, calorie counts or artificial additives.

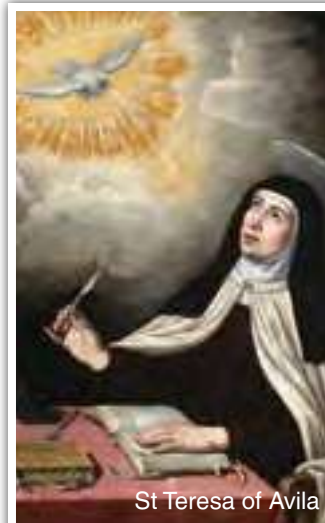
“The invitation to love is always there, but we have to respond.”

For many families, sport and keeping fit is a huge part of every week, and programmes like 'Operation Transformation' are becoming more and more popular. Once we eat well, get enough exercise and follow some common sense guidelines, our physical bodies usually tick along fine. When it comes to the spiritual, a bit more is required.

According to Robert McNamara, our active cooperation is needed to feed the life of the soul. The invitation to love is always there, but we have to respond. He explained that faith can be lived on a very superficial level without us ever getting to that deeper level where our soul reveals its true essence with all its unique powers and qualities.

How do we work towards trying to promote a deeper faith in our families and homes? High

on our list of priorities has to be prayer. As my children get older, noise levels in the house have got higher. As parents, we're reluctant to quell our children's natural exuberance or be killjoys when it comes to varying musical tastes, constant chatter or, in our family's case, the tones of trumpet or tuba practice. Silence is golden but it's in short supply.



St Teresa of Avila

Edith Stein was a great believer in the need for stillness and silent prayer. She wrote that "we need those hours in which we listen silently and let the divine word work within us". We have to carve out those quiet times and, unpopular as it might be at first, we must turn off and tune out the noise. Not many of us are too far from a church, so even a 15 minute visit to just be

in God's presence can become a family custom.

Bring children's prayer books, light candles and make it an occasion. The best way to build faith and to promote a deeper love of God in our families is to avail of the sacraments. The Eucharist should be the centre of our lives so we can try to go to Mass more often. Edith Stein was quite direct in wondering how Catholics could have time for all sorts of diversions "which waste time and energy like crumbs" but no time for daily Mass where she said one "would be recollected, not distracted and where energy was not wasted but gained". She urged people to avail of Confession often too, leaving our sins in the hands of God and trusting in his forgiveness.

What really struck me about the talk on Edith Stein was the focus on how what we absorb from the outside world becomes a part of who and what we are and influences our relationship with God. This Lent is a good time to reject what is crass and superficial and go for all that is lovely, good and true.

Expose children to the most beautiful music, embrace all that is authentic, introduce the great works of art, source things that enrich the life of our families, feed their souls and lead them to develop that interior castle where, they'll not only find their true selves, but where they can really rest in God's grace. In the words of Edith Stein: "In order to be an image of God, the spirit must turn to what is eternal, hold it in spirit, keep it in memory and, by loving it, embrace it in the will."

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next the floors, you'll avoid returning dust and dirt to an area that you just cleaned. It's also a good idea to start upstairs and work your way down, or from one end of the house to the other. This will make sure, along side your list, that you don't forget anything.

Deep clean

This is the time to go at the places you rarely get to. Give your mattress a hoover, deep clean the oven, re-grout the shower, clean the windows, clear the cobwebs from outside your front door, tackle the mould, defrost your fridge and freezer and give the front of your kitchen cabinets a wipe. Don't forget to replace the filters in your kitchen fan or other ventilation systems.

Delegate

If there are more than you in the house, or maybe even an army of little cleaners, give them some tasks. Split the bulk of the work between the adults of the house and give smaller tasks to kids, like dusting or wiping surfaces. Make it fun by whistling while you work, or singing, or promising a small reward for the help.

Keeping air flowing is also essential if you have allergies.

You can't always do every task yourself; some jobs like outside upper window cleaning, power washing, painting and chimney cleaning might require a professional with the right equipment.

Clean green

Store bought cleaning products are not only often harmful to the environment, but harmful for you to breathe in. There is no need to use bleach on absolutely every surface, you will be shocked at just how effective some

hot soapy water and a scrub or some soft steel wool can be. Sodium bicarbonate or baking soda is really great at removing scummy dirt and white distilled vinegar is great for removing and killing mould. Vinegar, baking soda, and water – your own personal volcano – mixed together in a bottle is a time old cleaner that works wonders. If you want it to smell nice you can add some tea tree or a squeeze of lemon.

You can find plenty of methods online to help you clean cheaply and safely with natural products.

A steam cleaner might even be a worthy investment, it can clean a huge number of surfaces, just using hot vapour, even furniture.

Air it out

If you do want to use up some of the products you have, make sure you use them in a well-ventilated area. If you ever feel lightheaded when cleaning – stop and get some fresh air and make sure you open a nearby window. Keeping air flowing



is also essential if you have allergies. Cleaning may release a lot of dust or spores into the air. Cleaning dust with a damp cloth can stop it from flying and avoiding spray cleaners will help stop you breathing in anything you shouldn't.

Protect yourself

To avoid any allergic reactions to dust or products and to avoid drying out your skin, make sure to wear protective items of clothing and keep your skin and lungs protected. To keep you safe when spring cleaning, wear some rubber gloves, a mask, have long hair tied back, and a long sleeve top you won't mind staining.

Choose some brightly coloured sheets, cushion covers, towels and table cloths to bring some spring to your home

Set a new tone

To put some final touches on your freshly cleaned home, make some small changes to make it seem brighter and clearer. Cosy season is gone. Move around furniture and change the position of your lighting if you can. Choose some brightly coloured sheets, cushion covers, towels and table cloths to bring some spring to your home despite the winter conditions outside. Maybe even take in a few daffodils and put them in a vase as a finishing touch.

Spring cleaning can be a great way to rejuvenate your life in a simple way. Your mind might also feel decluttered after you're finished, when your living space is clear and shining.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



My wife and I were test-driving an electric car the other day, when my 10-year-old son announced from the back seat, "This might be the car I learn to drive in!"

He was right, too. He turns 11 this autumn, and we could easily keep the car for another six years. In six years' time, we'll have a grown man who is driving cars. Yet six years ago, we had a four-year-old boy, playing with his toy cars. I'll never understand the tricks time plays.

I love the movie *Boyhood*, which was filmed over 12 years, so that you actually see the boy actor grow into a man during the course of the movie. It is a tender film, beautifully portraying the transformation we all go through, during those short years when we morph from children into adults. I often feel like I'm living in such a movie, watching our little characters grow up, as time slips by in a haze, punctuated periodically by moving scenes, when I suddenly notice some poignant new marker of the kids' maturity. It might be their suddenly increased height, a glimpse of their future adult face, increasingly grown-up conversation, or some new grown-up skill, such as casually making scrambled egg on toast for the entire family.

When I consider time, I think of how rudely short our existences are on this Earth. It seems that we are only just settling in, when it's time to leave. Yet it also strikes me that, a child born today need only live until 79 to do so. Then I think too of the world we are bequeathing them. It's improving in many ways, disimproving in others. Where possible, we try to play some small part in trying to improve it. Whether the more apocalyptic warnings about global warming are overdone, I do not know. Yet we already see increasingly violent storms, fewer frosts and a longer growing season. The effects on Ireland will be less severe than elsewhere, where drought, heat and desertification are feeding into devastating events such as the Australian bushfires. It's surely reckless to continue to merrily produce greenhouse gases, given what we know.

Our family's small efforts to go green have been proven quite fun and interesting for the kids. They helped enthusiastically with harvesting our own timber for our new stove, which has successfully heated the radiators in our house all winter. We've used very little oil as a result, and as we regrow the timber, the wood is carbon neutral fuel. The kids proudly bring in logs for the fire, knowing the work they did back in the summer is helping to heat the house.

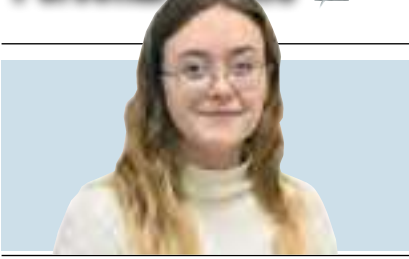


We've also beefed up our insulation and switched to renewable electricity, and we try to run appliances at night. The kids set timers on the dishwasher, practising their sums by adding on the number of hours needed to ensure it runs after 11pm. Meat is now less frequently on the menu, and we've discovered some tasty vegetarian options.

Buying an electric car as our second car seems like another positive step to take. While each step involves some initial outlay and effort, in the end it just makes life easier, the house warmer, and saves money. Children learn much more from what you do, than from what you say. Teaching kids to think more about the environment is interesting, since it requires consideration for other people, who may live very far from us, or who may not yet be born. It also involves considering of the needs of other species, fauna and ecosystems. It is an acknowledgement that we are not islands, but connected to and responsible for others, including those yet to be born. We are reminded in a broader sense that even our small actions have consequences, and what we do, and how we treat others, can echo long into the future, and reverberate far in the present too.

Working in the healing industry with Fr Conlon

Personal Profile



Róisie McGagh

“I work in the healing industry. “It all began in Bundoran I suppose around 1985,” says Fr Noel Conlon. People would call to him and he would pray with them. Word quickly spread around the area, and “nearly overnight there was an awful crowd coming,” he tells *The Irish Catholic*.

Fr Conlon, known widely as ‘the healing priest’, was ordained in 1980. He was initially sent to the parish in Bundoran as a curate and remained there for eight years.

He tells of how one day the parish priest came to him and there were five or six cars in the drive; people were coming to him to be healed. “He said ‘if you don’t tell the bishop I’m going to tell him,’” says Fr Conlon.

“Fr Conlon began healing as much as he wanted during the week and helped out with the parish at the weekend.

He approached Bishop Joseph Duffy at a conference, telling him that people were coming to him for prayers and blessings. The Bishop said it was great, but Fr Conlon says he didn’t realise how busy it was initially.



“Then when he found out exactly what was happening, he was sort of negative toward it.” Bishop Duffy sent Fr Conlon to Carrickmacross and assigned him parish duties and teaching in the school, saying he would have no time to do anything else.

“I told nobody about the healing but sure within weeks people were coming, they were breaking the door down.

It was crazy, even at school I’d be in a class and somebody would be coming in looking for you,” says Fr Conlon.

For three years, he says he had no control over it: “Some Sundays you could have 300 to 500 people there it was just mental.”

After mass and some dinner, he would begin healing people, and would often continue until

2am. He used to also take groups of people to try and manage the flocks coming for prayer.

“There was one particular Wednesday night I’ll never forget,” he says. “There was a girl came to the door she had overdosed, I had to take her in and put her in a room, somebody else then called and I had to take them and put them somewhere else, I called the ambulance in the middle of it and the place was packed.”

He was healing out of his own home at the time and there were two other priests living there.

After that incident Bishop Duffy called Fr Conlon. “He said he had thought about the healing ministry and I was doing nothing wrong, I was doing something that was good and it was needed.”

Fr Conlon was began healing as much as he wanted during the week and helped out with the parish at the weekend.

“It has been that way now since. I don’t do many parish duties at all now, maybe weddings and baptisms.”

“It takes up my whole life,” he says, giving the example of how on Thursday, his only day off, he is ‘inundated’ with messages and letters.

He was once on *Countrywide* with Marty Morrissey in 2012 which booked him out for eight months straight.

Even on Christmas day, he says “I was sitting down for my dinner the phone rang couldn’t believe it, the timing.”

“His uncle Joe was the one who told him he could heal, who himself was known for healing mostly animals, and people too.

“I went to see two people yesterday in the hospital in Drogheda but ended up seeing about 12”, he says, showing the need for the ministry of healing – which is recognised by the Church. Fr Conlon feels that most priests have the gift of healing if they try and use it.

In the busy times, when he had no control over the throngs of people coming to him, he went to Medjugorje and found strength there. He talked to a Capuchin Monk who told him ‘if you’ve a gift use it; God wants us to use our gifts’. And so, he continued.

In order to be able to heal and listen attentively for such long periods of time, Fr Conlon gets up at 6am and walks while saying the rosary. He then prays in the oratory for two hours before breakfast “just

to be ready for the day to give me the strength and the healing, and the words.”

Fr Conlon always felt drawn to healing, being told from a young age that he had a gift. He never met his father, who died eight days before he was born – giving him the cure for ‘dirty mouth’ as candida or thrush was known at the time.

His uncle Joe was the one who told him he could heal, who himself was known for healing mostly animals, and people too.

“He gave me certain prayers and told me I had all the cures; he had a special cure for psoriasis or eczema. Children would come to him and it would clear up.”

He tells stories of people coming to him with extreme pain and it vanishing; a woman with a cancerous tumour which also vanished after prayer; a couple that couldn’t conceive who, after instructions to pray together, fell pregnant and a young man over Christmas who had 21 heart attacks and managed to recover.

Fr Conlon says he doesn’t always know if he has helped people as they don’t all report back, but those who do are very appreciative: “I feel useless sometimes in situations. I feel I’m not helping at all but then you get a card and some reassurance that you’re doing good.”

After 35 years of healing, while getting tired occasionally, he feels fulfilled by helping others. He says he is often a last resort, “I do say to them, when the lord was here, Jesus himself, he didn’t heal everybody, not everybody touched got healed.”

Judging by the waiting lists, he is working wonders.



Children’s Corner

Róisie McGagh

Water you looking at? Nothing!

Are you a budding magician or maybe even fully grown one? Magic tricks are great fun for everyone and often have an element of science involved in their secret methods.

In this trick you will make water totally disappear from a cup. This is based on science so get your goggles on, but don’t worry it’s very simple.

What everyone else will see is, you pouring some water into a cup and waiting a few moments. Then, when you turn the cup over, nothing will pour out – the water will seem to have disappeared! You don’t need a special cup or water, you can do this easily with any cup in our house that isn’t see through. What’s special is what is inside the cup, which you will keep a secret from your audience

The few things you will need are:

- Sodium polyacrylate
- A mug or a cup that you can’t see through.
- A container – a glass or a jug – from which you can pour water, or a tap nearby.

Before you begin your trick, make sure no one is looking and pour around one tablespoon of

sodium polyacrylate into the bottom of your cup.

It would be a good idea to give this experiment a go before you try it in front of anyone. You’ll need to know the balance of the measurement of sodium polyacrylate to the liquid so that all of the water is absorbed.

To expertly execute this trick, follow these steps:

- Prepare your cup.
- Gather your audience.
- Pour water into the cup until it’s about ¼ full.
- Work your ‘Magic’ by waving your hands over the cup – allowing time for the water to be absorbed.

When you think it’s ready, turn the cup upside down to demonstrate that the water has disappeared.

Make sure the audience never catches a glimpse of the inside of your cup, they won’t suspect a thing.

How does it work? The sodium polyacrylate, despite its complicate name, is a simple compound is sold in many forms in DIY shops, gardening shops, or nurseries.

The simple name it often goes under is ‘moisture-saving pellets’. Which is why it is used in disposable nappies, it makes sure babies stay dry.

Sodium polyacrylate are hygroscopic, which means that they absorb and hold moisture, sort of like a sponge. When you mix it with water it turns into a solid gel.

This leaves no more liquid in your cup to pour out.

If you can’t source this magic compound, you can replace it by squishing a dry sponge into the bottom of your cup and making sure it won’t move. Then pour a little less water in than above and abracadabra – it’s gone.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Mary Lou's lack of respect a bad omen?

Watching the news coverage last week, the atmosphere in Leinster House as the 33rd Dáil got under way was largely cheerful and celebratory – especially as we saw the newly elected TDs arrive in style or not, often with their proud families.

However, on last Thursday night's *Nine News* (RTÉ1) we saw things getting nasty as every party leader failed to get a majority. Particularly objectionable was Mary Lou McDonald's profanity as she lit into the Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael parties. There was a lot of talk about respect and kindness last week, but Mary Lou wasn't extending much respect to Christians.

Predictably this attention grabbing clip got replayed several times, e.g. on the *Pat Kenny Show* (Newstalk) last Friday. Pat was not amused – "I didn't like the sound of that," he said.

The left wing parties are chomping at the bit to get into power, but can't seem to get the numbers. I reflected on left wing politics when I watched *Historic Catholic Converts* on EWTN on Tuesday. The focus was on Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. She was quite a left wing activist when young but even when she became Catholic her passion for social justice never waned. We learned from presenter



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald features in RTÉ's TV debate.

Fr Charles Connor that she was thought too left wing by some conservative Catholics, and accused of promoting "clerical fascism" by the extreme left!

Journey

The story of her journey to Catholicism was fascinating – there was huge influence from dedicated Catholics that she mixed with – they were powerful role models, and gradually she edged her way towards the Church.

She was also influenced by several Catholic writers – primarily philosopher and co-worker Peter Maurin. She

wasn't blind to the problems of the Church, and I was struck by the quote Fr Connor used from another writer who influenced her, the theologian Romano Guardini: "One must live in a state of permanent dissatisfaction with the Church!"

We were reminded that the cause for her canonisation is in train, and that the late Cardinal John O'Connor of New York was a great supporter of that cause. He didn't see the fact that she had an abortion when young as an obstacle as he reckoned that her regret helped steer her towards

the Church. The fact that she was once part of a group that attacked the Church was another advantage, in terms of her insight, though he saw obstacles too, e.g. her stance of absolute pacifism and her perfectionism.

The programme wasn't presented very imaginatively – basically just a filmed sermon, with minimal use of visuals. I realise that often EWTN shows are designed to be radio friendly, but TV is a visual medium – RTÉ's award winning *Life and Soul* shows how a show can work on radio and still be visually striking.

Inspired

However, the show did make me want to read more about Dorothy Day and hopefully many others will be similarly inspired. Her ability to get along with people who disagreed with her provides an important example for our fractious and polarised times.



Dorothy Day.

PICK OF THE WEEK

TURAS COSNOCHTA

RTÉ2, Wednesday, March 4, 8.30pm

Pilgrims at Lough Derg shed their shoes and persevere through the hardest part of the pilgrimage, the all-night vigil.

TABÚ

TG4, Wednesday, March 4, 9.30pm

How the Coast Guard has continued to serve despite the loss of colleagues and friends, in their own words.

CATHOLIC LIVES

EWTN, Thursday (night), March 5, 12.30am

David Kerr speaks to Dame Nuala O'Loan, House of Lords appointee, former Police Ombudsman and columnist with this newspaper.

Though Dorothy Day was very aware of social justice issues, I doubt if she was ever called 'woke'. As we learned on *The Big Questions* (BBC1, Sunday) it was originally used to describe social awareness during the struggle for civil rights for the African-American community in the USA, but, according to Andrew Doyle, author of *Woke: A Guide to Social Justice*, was co-opted by 'an intolerant regressive brand of the social justice movement'. The 'big question' was: 'Is wokeness a new religion?' and Doyle certainly saw echoes of religion – zealotry, purity of doctrine, seeking out offence and heresy.

He saw wokeness as legitimising bullying and infecting the arts, the media HR departments and the law. He instanced 120,000 police investigations into "non-crime" hate incidents, as if

the police had solved all the actual crimes! Catholic chaplain Mia Fox from Newcastle University thought the framing of the question did a disservice to religion. James Porter from the UK's Students for Life instanced attempts to shut down pro-life meetings at his college.

Other contributors didn't see it as that big a problem, and saw young people having to put up with being called 'snowflakes' and experiencing 'woke sneering'.

The debate was generally insightful, respectful and cheerful, with all views getting a hearing, a model for how one might wish it could be outside the studio.

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Music

Pat O'Kelly



Esposito Quartet performing the final Triskel event? It must be!



Mia Cooper.

It seems I can't escape from Beethoven at the moment but then it is his 250th anniversary. A recent email from Gillian Hennessy of Cork's Triskel Arts Centre tells me about its commemorative programmes.

Supported by the National String Quartet Foundation, the final Triskel event takes place at lunchtime on Saturday, March 7 with the Esposito Quartet, directed by the brilliant leader of RTÉ's Concert Orchestra, Mia Cooper.

Separated by the première of Donnacha Dennehy's *Wig*, the principal works are Janáček's *First Quartet*, The Kreutzer Sonata, and Beethoven's final essay in the genre, his *Op. 135*.

Subtitle

Despite its subtitle, the *Janáček Quartet* is not related to Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*. The Moravian

composer took his inspiration from Tolstoy's novel while Beethoven's sonata was written for French violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer. Beethoven described him as a "dear kind fellow who, during his stay in Vienna, gave me a great deal of pleasure".

The *Op. 135* is thought to reveal Beethoven's serene acceptance of the inevitability of death. This notion comes from a letter to his publisher Moritz Schlesinger, in which he wrote: "Here, my dear friend, is my last quartet. It will be the last; and indeed it has given me much trouble. I could not bring myself to complete the last movement.

"But, as your letters insisted, in the end I finished it. And that is the reason I have written the motto 'The difficult decision – must it be?' It must be!"

Now, while Beethoven wrote this to Schlesinger, 'must it be?' is also believed to have a less serious

background. Ignaz Dembscher, a government official at whose house a number of Beethoven's quartets were played, did not pay the composer. Disgruntled, Beethoven censured any further performances.

Little canon

Dembscher turned to Beethoven's violinist friend Karl Holz for a solution. With Holz adamant about paying the 50 florins, Dembscher is said to have grudgingly muttered "must it be?" On learning this, the delighted Beethoven wrote down the words and music of a little canon – it must be. It must be. Yes, yes, yes, yes. Across with the wallet! Across! Across! It must be. Beethoven locked the motif in his brain.

Whatever about that, the last quartet is quite different from its immediate predecessors. It has a kind of spartan quality. Brevity is secured by concentration. Rests are

frequent; climaxes brief. The essential ideas might even be in shorthand. The work was premièred in Vienna almost a year after the composer's death in 1827.

Dating from 1923, Janáček's *First Quartet* was written at the behest of the *Bohemian Quartet* to whom it is dedicated.

But its origins also came from the composer reading Leo Tolstoy's short story *The Kreutzer Sonata*.

This portrayal of an unhappy, tortured, beaten woman, who is killed by a jealous husband, was the kind of plot, which appealed to Janáček. Indeed death, misery and jealousy are familiar subjects in his operas.

Like Beethoven's *Op. 135*, in this Quartet the ideas are concentrated into a taut instrumental structure reinforced by close thematic association. Janáček said he conceived the piece "as a unified, intact, psychological drama".



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Msgr Dr Antony Perumayan.

A South Asian view of the pro-life question

Womb with a Window: Ethical Reflections on the Personhood of the Unborn Through Scripture and Science by Msgr Dr Antony Perumayan (Shanway Press, £12.00; contact 15 Crumlin Road, Belfast, Antrim BT14 6AA; email info@shanway.com; tel: Northern Ireland 028 9022 2070)

Peter Costello

The reverend author of this book is the National Co-ordinator of the Syro-Malabar Church which sees to the spiritual care of some 4,000 Indian Catholics of the St Thomas Tradition now resident in Ireland in some nine centres across the island. He himself was born in India in 1949, where he was educated, though he later took a science degree in Leuven.

This book is both a summary of Catholic teaching on the true nature of the unborn person. The material on this is deeply resourced and impressively documented. But the theology is presented in a setting of spiritual and scientific reflections on the nature and meaning of human life.

Changing Ireland

Many in the pro-life movement will find this an inestimable book, but it is in its way a small sign of the times in changing Ireland, and as such is also to be welcomed.

This book, which represents the fruits of a long pastoral and scientific career, is a sterling contribution to Catholic writing in Ireland, where Msgr Perumayan, after service in many Indian parishes, has made his home since 2011.

Arthur Griffith, the ambiguities of his life and politics

The Enigma of Arthur Griffith: 'Father of Us All'

by Colum Kenny (Merrion Press, €19.95)

Thomas Morrissey

The sub-title 'Father of Us All' stems from a declaration of W.T. Cosgrave in 1925 attributing to Michael Collins the statement: "Griffith was the greatest man of his age, the father of us all."

There have been a number of biographies of Arthur Griffith. This book is different.

If it were a standard type of biography, much of its material might be considered extraneous to Griffith's life. This, however, is a different approach to biography: a series of essays.

These are on such themes as Griffith and Mother Ireland; The Name of the Father; Ballads, Songs and Snatches; Women as Comrade and Wife; Griffith, Race and Africa; Connolly, Yeats, Synge and Larkin; and Arthur Griffith and Joyce's *Ulysses*, provide the author with opportunities to explore literary and social backgrounds, to stray into the Oedipal implications of the homeland as 'mother' and Griffith as 'father of us all', and whether de Valera's absence at different times (absence in America, absence from the treaty negotiations etc) might in some possible

way be due to his unsettling personal experience of absent parents!

The author's partiality for the works of James Joyce, especially *Ulysses*, results in frequent references to any mention of Griffith in *Ulysses*, irrespective of its value to an understanding of Arthur Griffith. Despite, and perhaps because of such treatment, the book is interesting and the result of research over many years.

Feature

A most interesting feature of *The Enigma of Arthur Griffith* is Mr Kenny's examination of Griffith's writings, especially the United Irishman and Nationality, as means to a greater understanding of the man, while also emphasising Griffith's openness to publish articles by authors and on subjects which did not reflect his own views.

Apart from Griffith's books and articles, Kenny has delved into a range of sources including the witness statements of more than 30 persons to the Bureau of Military History.

Certain chapters stand out for this reviewer: 'Women as Comrade and Wife', which reflect Griffith's support for women's rights and his special relationship with 'Mollie' (Maud) Sheehan, whom he married, and Maud Gonne, whom he greatly esteemed and who supported him and



Arthur Griffith.

his paper; and the chapter on 'His best friend' Rooney and the impact on him of Rooney's death.

“The lead up to the treaty negotiations and the impact on Griffith, in particular, is vividly conveyed”

The first ten chapters are as much a work of literature as of history. From chapter eleven to the end, however, the emphasis is mainly on political history. Here '1902-1916: Sinn Féin and the Rising' and '1917-1920: Griffith and de Valera' are likely to engage and inform readers, as will chapters 14 and 15, which deal with the negotiations towards the signing of the Treaty.



Arthur Griffith's grave.

In these chapters, the book comes alive in a special way.

The lead-up to the treaty negotiations and the impact on Griffith, in particular, is vividly conveyed: his poor health, the tension, the constant pressure from a range of meetings in London, and the travelling back and forth to Dublin to unhelpful and critical sessions with de Valera, Brugha and Stack, and sometimes a hurried return to England to meet a deadline of meetings there.

Eventually, it would appear, sheer exhaustion and wear and tear wore down the Irish representatives, while their opponents were on their home ground, without extensive travel, and well versed in negotiating skills.

Kenny explores all the different views on the signing of the treaty and examines the various criticisms of Griffith's part in the negotiations. And then the reception in Dublin after the signing, the bitter debate, the country's choice

Ampleforth, a vital tradition in English Catholic education

Ampleforth College: The Emergence of Ampleforth College as the 'Catholic Eaton' by Peter Galliver (Gracewing, £12.99)

Peter Costello

Ampleforth College in Yorkshire over the past centuries as often been called 'the Catholic Eaton', though this title might well be disputed by those who went to Stonyhurst.

However, this short book is subtitled 'We must look to Ampleforth for the lead'. This sentiment was uttered in an earlier time when Catholic education in the Benedictine tradition was seen as of great importance. The intention of the major Catholic school



Ampleforth College today.

was to educate young men (and these days young women) for leadership in the nation's affairs who could stand four square with those from the College of Holy Mary near Windsor and the other so called English

'public schools'.

This was an important matter when towards the end of the 18th Century the Catholic community saw the penal laws ameliorated. Already established schools returned from Europe, and

helped build an emerging 'Catholic England', based the rising middle class as well as the surviving Catholic aristocracy from the Middle Ages.

“The author brings the skills of trained historian to what is intended as a labour of love”

But times change. Today it is often thought that such 'elite' schools have no place in a modern democratic society. One doubts this. In a truly free and a truly open society the education of all in whatever way they would like ought to be a vital factor

in a multicultural society.

There remain many people (as headmasters of boarding schools of all kinds know) for whom such schools are not merely a choice but a necessity. Children of broken marriages often find a sort of refuge from familial turmoil among long established and persistent traditions. Parents working abroad also find them ideal.

Vitality

Peter Galliver taught from 1988 to 2000 at the college, where he was Head of History. He brings the skills of trained historian to what is intended as a labour of love to remind people not only of the past of Catholic

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.



for the treaty, the civil war, and the impact of it all on an exhausted Griffith; the final stage, as grossly over-worked, and scarcely able to sleep, he goes in fear of his life, his health collapses and he dies from a heart attack.

“The interested reader has to go again and again to the bibliography”

The book concludes with

education, but its vitality for the future.

This book derives from his doctoral research at Leeds completed in 2000, and so retains much of the character of an academic study rather than an historical narrative.

“The future of religious schools will always present challenges which will have to be faced”

However, though he focuses on his own college, he gives an account of the adventures and misadventures of Catholic education in England since the Reformation.

an estimation of Griffith's contribution to Ireland of today.

One item that disturbs the full enjoyment of this work is the author's habit of referring to authors quoted in the text by their surnames only, without initials or personal names, so that the interested reader has to go again and again to the bibliography to find out who the author is, which Martin, Mathews or Jones is being mentioned in the text.

He breaks off in the first three decades of the last century. so the future does not concern him. But for those it does concern, and they are many – heads, teachers, clergy and parents – will find this a very interesting study.

In a society where religion itself seems to be challenged, the future of religious schools will always present challenges which will have to be faced, and eventually resolved. In this context Peter Galliver's account of one Catholic tradition of education will be of great value.

📌 *Peter Costello is the author of a history of Clongowes Wood College.*

A survey of Irish nature seen by poets disappoints

Woven Shades of Green: An anthology of Irish nature literature

ed. by Tim Wenzell
(Bucknell University Press/distributed by Rutgers University Press, \$US29.95/£24.95)

Christopher Moriarty

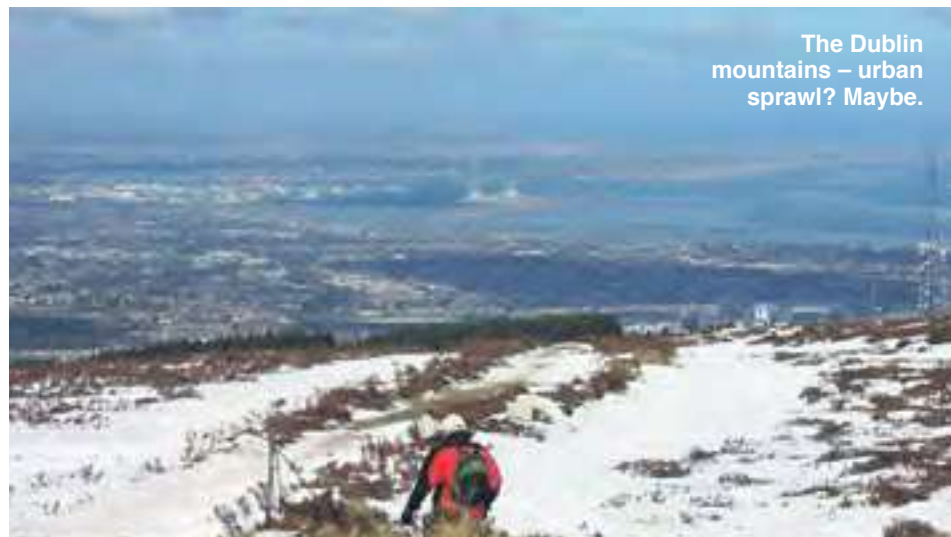
As one of the many writers on Irish nature who is not included in this anthology, I have to declare an interest. The preface indicates that the omission of knowledgeable writers occurs as a result of the editor's intention to demonstrate the lack of interest in nature of Irish people in general.

By 'literature' he means poetry, drama and the like in contrast to the works of those who actually study the subject and write to communicate their observations for the benefit of a wider readership.

This approach might well be of interest, and even value, if the editor's purpose were simply to show how people other than naturalists observe and describe nature. But the copious commentary on the selected writings indicates that he is deeply concerned with the wholly admirable topic of nature conservation and wishes to tell the world of what he sees as shameful neglect.

Humour

This writing in not without its unintentional humour. On the first page of the preface he offers the following quotation by a well-known journalist: "It's quite clear to me that by 2020 this country will be completely destroyed." A footnote indicates that this prophetic statement was made in 2004.



The Dublin mountains – urban sprawl? Maybe.



As I commute towards the city of Dublin through the suburbs and amidst a scene of purple mountains and extensive green space, very much the same as it has been for 40 years, if slightly much changed in the past 20, I wonder where the destruction lies.

Yes, the environmentalists' bugbear of 'urban sprawl' exists – but not on the scale implied by this kind of writing. What is even more regrettable than his use of this strident material is the editor's virtual exclusion of reference to the marvellous work in

progress for some decades in the creation of parks, the setting aside of immense areas for conservation by a host of dedicated workers, and the very remarkable increase in concern for the environment on the part of politicians and public servants.

“A goodly selection of prose, poems and brief excerpts of drama make it a pleasure to dip into”

Also missing are a number of extremely important authors whose work makes it very clear that many Irish people through the ages had a highly sophisticated knowledge and understanding of various aspects of nature.

The 6th-Century author known as 'The Irish Augustine' listed the furry creatures of his country and wondered how they reached the island after Noah's Flood. He concluded

that land masses evolve and Ireland must once have been attached to the continent.

Then came the Welsh visitor Gerald de Barri in the 12th Century who provided a description of Ireland so precise that it would not have been possible for him to make many of the observations himself. They can only have come from observant natives. And perhaps above all is the 17th Century Roderic O'Flaherty of Galway, the writer of an erudite and masterly description of nature and man in *Iar-Connacht*.

These omissions are extremely serious and greatly reduce the value of the book. But what remains? A goodly selection of prose, poems and brief excerpts of drama make it a pleasure to dip into and brings together a satisfying number of old favourites and occasional little-known gems of nature writing.

It seems to provide a suitable text for 'green readings' in the area of Irish studies that is now endemic – and growing – in the US.

Great observers of nature in long-gone days

The Irish Poet and the Natural World: An Anthology of Verse in English from the Tudors to the Romantics

edited by Andrew Carpenter and Lucy Collins
(Cork University Press, €39.00/£19.95)

Peter Costello

The many readers who would be interested in the theme of the Ameri-

can derived anthology above should also look out as well for the this book, edited and published in Ireland.

This covers a period – 1580 to 1820 – when writing about nature was beginning to emerge as a genre. However, it cuts off to an early date – the editors are specialists in the 17th and 18th Centuries. Also some of the writers may well be less familiar to readers than those from the last two centuries.

It would seem then that is there

room in the market place, let alone the classroom, for a more extensive anthology that deals with all sorts of writing about nature, and not merely the 'literary'.

No one rereads Gilbert White or Henry Hudson just because they are great writers, but because they are great observers of nature.

And in the same way R. L. Praeger is an important Irish writer, whatever view you take.

Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie



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The Irish Catholic

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— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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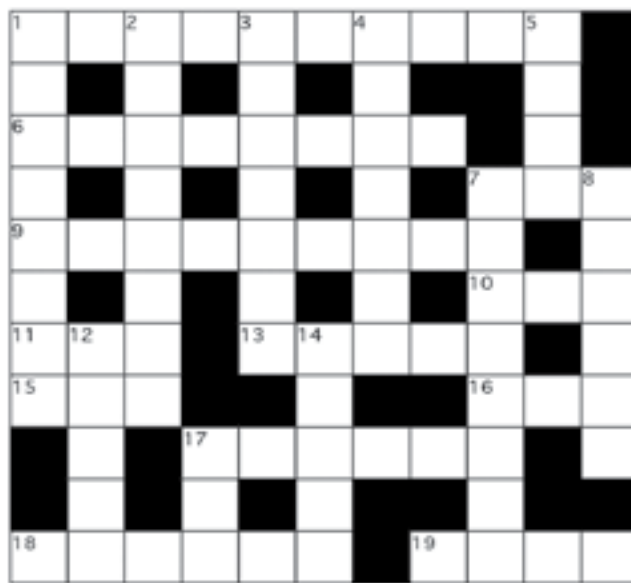
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Crossword Junior

Gordius 321



Across

- 1 Baptised (10)
6 You sit and relax in this comfortable piece of furniture (8)
7 A pig lives here (3)
9 'Aladdin' or 'Cinderella' might be the title of this show (9)
10 Everyone or everything (3)
11 Number that means a single thing (3)
13 Spanish word for 'Mister' (5)
15 Signal 'yes' with your head (3)
16 Snooker stick (3)
17 As much as is needed (6)
18 There is a famous book called "Black _____" (6)

- 19 "Don't go near the _____ of the cliff!" (4)

Down

- 1 The winner of the whole tournament (8)
2 Helped someone's memory (8)
3 Colleges (7)
4 "The publishers brought out a new _____ of the book" (7)
5 Filth (4)
7 Looked everywhere for something (8)
8 Shouted (6)
12 Sound (5)
14 This wood is black (5)
17 Australian bird that can't fly (3)

SOLUTIONS, FEBRUARY 20

GORDIUS No. 443

Across – 1 Roadworthy 6 Chin 10 Grass 11 Billowing
12 Patella 15 Adult 17 Seal 18 Into 19 Libra 21 Vacancy
23 Dirge 24 Disc 25 Real 26 Noses 28 Twisted 33 Methodist
34 Arena 36 Metropolis

Down – 1 Rage 2 Alabaster 3 Waste 4 Rebel 5 Holy water
7 Haiku 8 Night Watch 9 Totally 13 La La Land 14 Assault 16 Wild animal
20 Bridewell 21 Version 22 Chai 27 Satin 30 Scalp
31 Hike 32 Pass

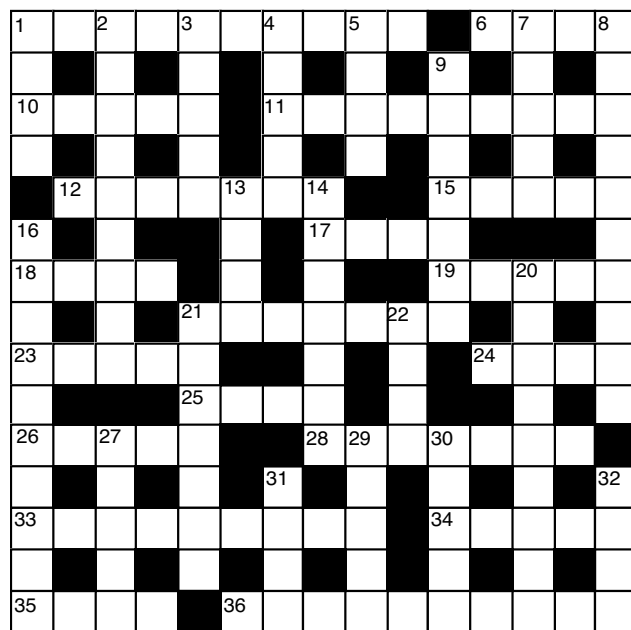
CHILDREN'S No. 320

Across – 1 Firewood 6 Rip 7 Neatest 8 Saint 9 Acts 11 Admire
12 Train 14 Asks 16 Cabins 17 Eleven 18 Laughs

Down – 1 Fantastic 2 Roast 3 Week 4 Outside 5 Spotless
6 Raisins 10 Sailing 13 Uses 14 Axes 15 Keep

Crossword

Gordius 444



Across

- 1 & 6 Jewellery for the Pope? That's an angler's call, it seems (10,4)
10 & 19a This classic American dish may be taken aside (5,5)
11 Eggplant (9)
12 Ghosts coming from the distillery? (7)
15 Pale like a fowl (5)
17 Haggard, frayed (4)
18 & 36 This newer, dreamlike arrangement holds most water in England! (4,10)
19 See 10 across
21 Family that rules for generations (7)
23 Paddle in this when the ocean is choppy (5)
24 Azure (4)
25 Flank taken from a rhinoceros, ideally (4)
26 Elementary, fundamental (5)
28 Book the substitute (7)
33 Batman's sidekick finds a cowl for an outlaw (5,4)
34 Elegance encountered around mealtimes? (5)
35 See 7 down
36 See 18 across

Down

- 1 It's a bother to be found in the midst of Corfu's sun-seekers (4)
2 A woolly hide - or the family

of its producer! (9)

- 3 The result of glacial destruction of reeks (5)
4 Intended (5)
5 Overturn a trashcan in front of the Cardinal to get parts for the pen (4)
7 & 35a Traditional dish - a possible origin of whist, sire (5,4)
8 Distinctive part of the uniform of the crack environmentalist brigade? (5,5)
9 Fine material from the four characters involved in an orgy! (7)
13 Lazily (4)
14 Jumper that perspires? (7)
16 These other fliers describe rooks and ravens (10)
20 Make pain easier to endure (9)
21 Little Desmond acquires a coin on the way down (7)
22 So this is how to reassemble huts (4)
27 Weapon used to dispel bears (5)
29 Terminated (5)
30 Between J and the Hoover, he may make the grade (5)
31 Asian desert (4)
32 At this point, one sees the lady's point (4)

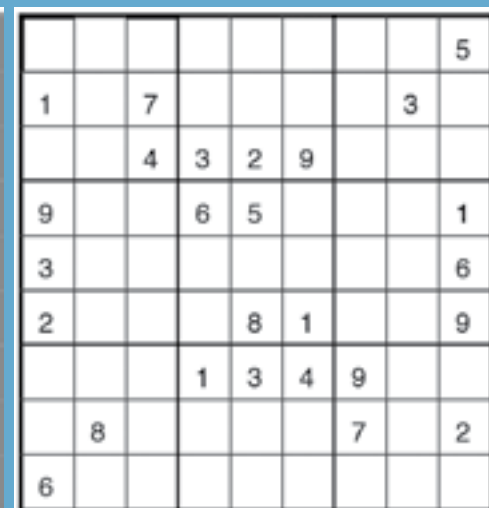
Sudoku Corner

321

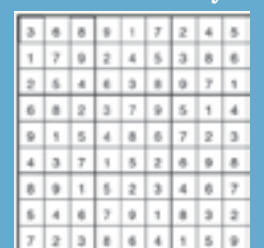
Easy



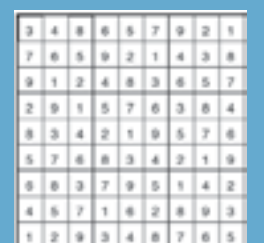
Hard



Last week's Easy 320



Last week's Hard 320



Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter

EVERY CHURCH IN IRELAND has a box-shaped receptacle, of gold or silver, often decorated with precious jewels. In years past this special container was placed in the centre of the ‘high altar’, but now it’s usually on its own, on a separate column or plinth, with its own spotlight, in its own distinct space, very clearly identified and obvious. A light burning nearby marks the spot – often red, the colour of love.

It’s wonderful how beautifully-kept this vessel is: we call it the Tabernacle. And it is appropriate that the Tabernacle receives such honour, for here God lives among the people, under the form of the sacred Bread of Life.

Storehouse

Liturgists tell us that this container has two functions. It is not, they remind us, a storehouse for large quantities of hosts, since hosts should be freshly consecrated for every Mass. It is to be the place where Communion is reserved for the sick and dying, and for the quiet prayer of the people.

Catholics have always had a devotion to the Lord, present in the tabernacle. People who enter a Catholic church note where the tabernacle is, and genuflect on one knee before it, whenever they pass nearby. While in the church,

When two feels less than one



people often address their prayers there, laying their worries in Jesus’ care. For centuries, the ‘Visit to the Blessed Sacrament’ was a part of Catholic devotion, with people dropping in to the church when passing, to say ‘hello’ to the Lord and ask for divine assistance. Quiet adoration happened in every church, every day, without fuss or effort – yet effectively.

Then something changed. It was as if this quiet adoration was not enough. Some wanted the Blessed Sacrament taken from the tabernacle and displayed, visibly, in a monstrance, in solemn, perpetual, adoration. Was the quiet presence in the tabernacle

insufficient? Was the visual needed as well? Perhaps the idea came from Heaven, or from a vision, or perhaps some people just needed to see the one they prayed to.

“Some have answered the call to solemn adoration and have had meaningful prayer experiences”

Once this idea gained currency, changes had to be made. Premises had to be provided for this solemn adoration, with former

baptisteries or mortuaries being converted, heated and lit. Then people had to be found to keep this solemn adoration running, with the suggestion of each giving an hour to prayer. Some priests had another item added to their daily schedule, exposing and reposing. Security was a consideration also.

The end result was that some churches ended up with two locations for the Blessed Sacrament, in the tabernacle to be quietly adored by the Faithful, and in the adoration room, to be solemnly adored. The child who asked “mammy, are there two Jesuses?” was told to be quiet!

I wonder if having two venues for prayer to the Blessed Sacrament in the Church has been for the best. Undoubtedly, some have answered the call to solemn adoration and have had meaningful prayer experiences as a result. Others may well wonder whether the demands resulting from solemn adoration have been excessive, and whether they can be sustained.

For me, either way of praying is good.

Sometimes, though, the old ways are best.

A Prayer before the Cross (for Lent, or any time)

Jesus, I kiss the crown that rests upon your head, that sacred crown you bore for my sins and the sins of the world.

I kiss your hands that bore the nails of the cross, and I ask you to place those healing hands on the sick who asked me to pray for them.

I kiss your side that was pierced by a lance and from which flowed water and blood, and I pray that like a tsunami, it would wash away all my sins.

I kiss your feet that bore the nails of the cross, and I ask you to allow me to place my head gently on them, so that you can feel the touch of human flesh.

Jesus, as you look down from the cross at your mother Mary and St John, I ask you to glance mercifully at this sinner who is trying to repent of his sins.

Jesus, I trust in you.

– Composed by a lay Catholic who lives in Douglas, Cork



Holy Spirit Sisters need water harvesting system for village school

In a remote area of India, close to the border with Myanmar, the Holy Spirit Sisters run a village school for children unable to travel to the parish centre, which is 33 kilometres distance away. At present the school has 220 pupils, most of whom come from deprived families, living by subsistence farming and struggling to make ends meet. The only source of water in the village is rain water and a nearby stream, as the land is not suitable for a well, or bore-hole. The Holy Cross Fathers, who are in charge of the parish, have appealed to The Little Way Association for financial help to install a rain water harvesting system for the Sisters and their village school.



“Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself as it were at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and the very least trifle is precious in His sight.”

– St Therese

You can help repair a mission chapel

The Little Way Association has a long history of providing humble places of worship for far-flung parishes in mission countries. Nature can take its toll on these simple buildings, and we receive requests from priests for help with repairs.

We humbly ask that you allocate some of your kind giving to our chapels fund. By ensuring that these small but dignified churches are in good repair, you help to make possible the offering of Holy Mass in needy Catholic communities.

The missionaries and people overseas who benefit from your generosity invariably promise to pray for their benefactors’ intentions.

Can you help The Little Way Association make a big difference in the daily lives of the Holy Spirit Sisters and the children they teach?

A source of clean water is vital for the health and well-being of any community, large or small. Can you help The Little Way Association to assist those who do not have access to clean, safe water? We have new requests for grants to fund water projects every week. Any donation will be sent without deduction and gratefully received. Thank you, and may God reward your generosity.

You and your intentions are remembered in a daily Mass offered in the Missions for all our friends and benefactors.

Cheques should be sent and made payable to:
THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
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