

The Irish Catholic

MARY KENNY

Diana really wanted to do 'that' interview
Page 5



CATHOLIC IN CUBA

Religious life in the secretive state
Pages 14-15



NIAMH UÍ BHRIAIN

The abortion review must not be a whitewash
Page 8



Thursday, May 27, 2021

€2.50 (Stg £2.20)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

Call for bishops to trust parishes on Confirmation and Communion

Jason Osborne

Bishops in the Republic have been urged to trust priests in parishes with decisions around holding First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies.

It comes after the Department of the Taoiseach sent a circular to the Church hierarchy advising they postpone the ceremonies of First Holy Communion and Confirmation for May and June, to be resumed "when it is safe to do so". North of the border, the ceremonies have been taking place in-line with public health guidelines.

Clare TD Michael McNamara told *The Irish Catholic* he believed the State should not interfere with the Church's internal decision-making, and vice versa.

"If the State was to say to parents: look, we're strongly discouraging you from having large parties, confirmation parties or communion parties, then I would understand that entirely and maybe even agree with them if the advice was not to have gatherings indoors," Mr McNamara said.

"But, if it's saying not to carry them [the sacraments] out...the last time I checked First Communion and Confirmation were sacraments.

» Continued on Page 2

Making the journey home...



James and Anna Horton and their children Benedict and Daniel (in Anna's arms) with Bishop Noel Treanor after James and Anna were received into the Church. Daniel was baptised in the same ceremony.

Poots refuses to say if he'd accept Mass invitation

EXCLUSIVE

Chai Brady

The incoming DUP leader Edwin Poots has refused to say whether or not he would be willing to attend Mass if invited.

A spokesman for Mr Poots told *The Irish Catholic* that the party has worked with the Catholic Church on a number of issues.

However, when asked whether or not Mr Poots would accept an invitation to attend Mass, the spokesman failed to answer but instead said that "Mr Poots is heartened that people of all faiths are able to return to congregational worship and has received a number of invitations from the faith community which he will consider in due course".

Mr Poots is a member of the Orange Order which forbids members from taking part in Catholic ceremonies. However, previous DUP leaders have in recent years steered the party away from this hard-line attitude.

Peter Robinson attended the funeral Mass of murdered Catholic PSNI officer Constable Ronan Kerr in 2011. And in 2017, Arlene Foster attended the requiem Mass for the former deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness in Derry.

» Continued on Page 4

FAMILY & LIFESTYLE

Hiking the hills of Ireland

PAGES 31&33



DAVID QUINN

How the West became 'WEIRD'

PAGE 13



FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS

Happy and holy in Antrim and Tyrone

PAGES 17-19



MAGNIFICAT Prayer Companions

Order your copy today

Phone 01 6874024

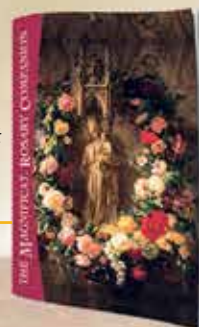
Visit www.irishcatholic.com/shop

Rosary Companion

Bring your heart closer to Jesus through Mary

€5.50

+ €2P&P



Adoration Companion

Stay close to the Lord in adoration and love

€9.99

+ €2.45P&P



Prayers for the Moment

Perfect for the time your heart is open but words are few

€29.99

+ €4.50P&P



Inside this week

Hong Kong

The new bishop with the Irish connection

Page 12

TV and Radio

Conspiracy theory and the 'far-right'

Page 35

Fr Silvester

A God of relationships

Page 16

Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Northern Correspondent: Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie

Multimedia Journalists: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

Ruadhán Jones, ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Jason Osborne, jason@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €165. Airmail €250. Six months €85.

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Post-pandemic we need to grow in confidence to invite people back

"Covid-19 has changed the Church," we hear. It's almost a cliché at this stage, but that doesn't make it wrong. Change is a constant in life – the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus said: "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man".

Cardinal Newman put it well when he said: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often".

As we return to Mass – admittedly in a limited fashion due to ongoing restrictions – it's important to ask how Covid-19 has changed the Church and whether we are active participants in shaping the Church of the future or just mere bystanders. Even worse, is the ever-present temptation to be a hurler on the ditch offering little more than a cynical commentary.

"There are kind words of invitation too for those who may have been away"

A lot of the narrative around the post-pandemic Church speaks of decline: elderly priests and religious who have succumbed to the virus; aging priests who will not return to ministry; ailing parishioners who will be too frightened to come to Mass; those whose faith will have weakened and the cynics who will have felt their life just as good without regular attendance at Mass.

But, where in this is the resurrection? Surely we as Christians are the people who have been to the tombs in which society has buried the Faith and found them empty?

Jesus did not reveal the sacraments as optional



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



IT HAS BEEN A TESTING TIME FOR ALL OF US...
The world has changed as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our parish life, along with other parts of society, has changed in ways we could not have imagined.

extras – they are vital for our communion with God and with one another. As parish communities, we must do all we can to return to Mass "with a purified heart, with a renewed amazement, with an increased desire to meet the Lord, to be with him, to receive him and to bring him to our brothers and sisters with a life full of faith, love and hope" (Cardinal Robert Sarah).

Comfort zones

This will mean leaving our comfort zones. As Pope Francis has observed more than once, when the Church does not come out of herself to evangelise, she becomes self-referential and then gets sick.

"I think about the times in which Jesus knocks from within so that we will let him come out. The self-referential Church keeps Jesus Christ within herself and does not let him out," Pope Francis writes.

One initiative to try to welcome people back to a fuller expression of their faith that I heard about this week is in the parish of the Three Patrons in Derry. A parishioner wrote to me enclosing a very attractive

'Welcome Back' leaflet (picture left) that has been distributed to homes in the parish. "Is a leaflet letterbox drop an effective means of evangelisation?" my correspondent asks. "Probably not," he writes, "but it is something. And something is better than nothing. Sadly, in many parts, nothing is what is happening at the moment".

"Cardinal Newman put it well when he said: 'To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often'"

The leaflet goes on to say: "Now is the time of fresh hope in all of our lives. We all need the goodness of God in our lives. Together again at Mass, we receive the gift God gives us in Holy Communion, the gift of himself".

There are kind words of invitation too for those who may have been away. "If you had dropped out of the way of praying, or coming to church or of allowing God into your life, now is a time of new

beginning: You especially are welcome. No one who comes to the Lord is turned away," the leaflet says.

Hope

Initiatives like the one in Derry are small signs of hope and examples of what can be done when people think creatively about the life of a parish. Jesus in the Gospels is repeatedly depicted inviting people. If we believe that our Faith has something to offer, we have to become more comfortable in inviting others to be with us.

"Never waste a good crisis," a friend of mine in public relations says. Maybe Covid-19 is a wake-up call for the Church in Ireland to follow the example of Pope Francis and get out of ourselves a bit more and start inviting people to take another look. It's certainly better than the "we've tried nothing and nothing works" mantra of the prophets of doom.

▶ To join Friends of The Irish Catholic and support Catholic journalism, please phone the office on 01 6874094 for more information or to make a contribution.

Call for bishops to trust parishes on First Holy Communion

» Continued from Page 1

"It's a matter for religious organisations to determine these things," he said, continuing "the separation of Church and State is a good thing".

In Co. Cork Gurrabraher parish priest, Fr Tom Walsh said he believes it is "wrong" of the bishops not to trust their priests to organise the sacraments safely.

"We're just getting dik-tats, you can't do baptisms, etc. I think the bishops themselves are being over-cautious," he said.

This was echoed by Fr Ted Sheehan of Glounthaune, Co. Cork, who said the Church's continuing compliance with State advice was "disproportionate".

"I think it's disproportionate and I think that individual priests should be able to, in conjunction with the school, organise safe gatherings of a certain number," Fr Sheehan said.

Fr Sheehan was also critical of the Church appearing to take on responsibility for parties and other functions that

might take place after the ceremonies. He said it is wrong to be "putting it on the priest to control what they're supposed to be doing after the celebration. Surely that's their own responsibility?"

"If they're listening to the guidelines from the Government, surely that responsibility should be theirs', not ours," he said.

Meanwhile, Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown stressed that compliance with the measures is important. He said that the Church has to "be seen to be socially behaving responsibly."

"We clearly can't accept responsibility for what happens outside, on the other hand, everyone knows that First Holy Communion and Confirmation are social events for many, many people, rather than religious events. You can't disconnect one from the other," he said.

Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Armagh Bishop Michael Router agreed, saying "it's being socially responsible [to delay the sacramental celebrations south of the border] as the parties are inevitable".



BE PART OF A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER

Adukual* (18) and her seven-month-old baby, Elizabeth* live in South Sudan, a country torn by years of conflict.

Like millions of others, every day they depend on Concern Worldwide to survive the devastating effects of war, poverty and hunger.

Concern is able to help thanks to the support of people like you, who have left us a gift in their Will. Will you consider doing the same?

For more information, please request your free copy of Concern's legacy booklet. Contact Siobhan on 01 4178020, email siobhan.oconnor@concern.net or visit www.concern.net/bequest – finding out more does not, of course, oblige you to leave a gift.

Why not do it right now before you turn the page?

Concern Worldwide, a company limited by guarantee, Registered Company Number: 39647, Registered Revenue Number: CHY 5745, Registered Charity Number: 20009090, Registered in Ireland, Registered address is 52-55 Lower Camden St, Dublin 2

* Names changed to protect identities.

ENDING
EXTREME POVERTY
WHATEVER
IT TAKES

Capuchin Day Care Centre 29 Bow Street, Dublin 7



Every day The Capuchin Day Care Centre provides 600 Meals for people who are homeless and each week 1000 Food Parcels for those on the poverty threshold.

Help Bro. Kevin continue providing this caring service.

Bro. Kevin or Therese 01 8720770
www.homeless.ie

Vocations boom follows in NET Ministries' wake

Jason Osborne

NET Ministries Ireland has continued to place God in the hearts of young people around the island, with a large number of missionaries finding their vocations to religious life and marriage in recent years.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Executive Director Tony Foy said that over the past 18 months, six young men have entered the seminary from NET.

Mr Foy said this was "incredible" with the year everyone has just had. He said it could be viewed from one of two perspectives: these vocations were going to happen anyway, or that "God has shown us that if we're faithful to him, he will be faithful to us".

"To come out again fighting for another year, and just all these vocations happened to come at this time," Mr Foy said, "I would be inclined to interpret it through the lens of...God has actually shown his faithfulness to us, and shown there's some fruit there".

These are "discerned" vocations according to Mr Foy, "they're tested".

"It's not to say all the guys... who are entering seminary are going to end

up being ordained, but they're being very seriously discerned," he said.

Seeing success on the marriage front too, Mr Foy said people don't come to NET to find a husband or wife intentionally, but that it sometimes happens.

"It might be at the back of their minds, but lots of really incredible marriages have come from it," he said.

The secret of the missionary group's success is a three-pronged approach to ministry: encounter, discipleship, and a "lighthouse effect".

With the encounter ministry, they're "setting up situations where young people get the opportunity to encounter Jesus," Mr Foy said.

The discipleship stage sees more time invested in the young people they encounter, the goal being "journeying" with them in the Faith.

The "lighthouse effect" is "the hope of knowing there are missionaries on the ground in Ireland, giving hope to the Church, be it to people who are going to Mass, supporting the missionaries...to the priests," Mr Foy said.

US singer says God supported her while making new album after losing father

Chai Brady

Well-known US musician Natalie Bergman has opened up about the influence of God in her most recent album which was written after a spiritual retreat to a Catholic monastery in New Mexico.

While Ms Bergman is best known for her role in folk pop duo Wild Belle, alongside her brother Elliot, *Mercy* is the first album she released on her own. The album is imbued with a sense of praise and despair, influenced by the pain she felt after her father and step-mother were killed by a drunk driver in 2019.

Speaking about her time in the monastery, Ms Bergman said: "I asked a lot of questions. I talked to God. I listened. There were some beautiful and comforting answers that were revealed to me."

"It brought me closer to God. I've had a strong faith my entire life. It's been my compass. I've always had God at the centre of my core. Of course, I've abandoned God and paid attention to things that were harmful to me. But it was very easy for me to go directly to God because it was my only option."

Ms Bergman said that she lost "the greatest love I've ever had" after the car crash, "but through this horrible event, I have found a purpose unlike I've ever had. I feel like I'm myself for the first time. And I'm thankful for that".

She added: "I felt supported by God while I was making this record."



Natalie Bergman



NCBI
Working for People
with Sight Loss

The Power is in YOUR will ... be part of OUR vision

It can be a frightening time when you, or a loved one's sight, starts to fail. **National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI)** provides support and services to almost 55,000 people with a vision impairment nationwide. Serving people since 1931, our experience helps people to live independently and to make the very best of their remaining vision. We provide the rehabilitation support, guidance, and technology skills needed. Public support is vital to ensure these services continue to grow into the future.

You can help by remembering NCBI in your Will.

By making a gift, big or small, in your will to NCBI, you leave a legacy of hope for so many people.

For further information phone (01) 882 1972

or visit www.ncbi.ie/personal-giving/

Email: foundation@ncbi.ie

CHY 12673



Dublin archdiocese alone in Baptism ban

Jason Osborne

The Sacrament of Baptism is continuing in every diocese in the Republic except for the Archdiocese of Dublin, *The Irish Catholic* has found.

Baptisms are continuing on a smaller scale in every diocese around the Republic, and in the North, while they remain prohibited alongside First Communion and Confirmation in Dublin archdiocese.

However, a baptism may be administered in "exceptional circumstances" or "in danger of death", such as in the case of a critical illness, a spokesperson for the diocese told this paper.

"Archbishop Farrell is very aware of the situation of families in the archdiocese who eagerly anticipate the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation," a response received by this paper reads.

"The archbishop has emphasised that it is important that these joyful occasions are celebrated with full regard to the continuing threat posed by circulation of the virus and in full compliance with public health requirements."

The statement said that the public health advice is that "ceremo-

nies such as these" should not take place at the time of resumption of public worship.

"Mindful that parishes and families alike will wish to prioritise public safety, the archbishop has requested that celebrations of the sacraments may not take place, and that dates for celebrations should not be proposed until parishes are notified that it is appropriate to do so."

“Mindful that parishes and families alike will wish to prioritise public safety”

This is despite the fact that baptisms continue to take place on a smaller scale in the dioceses around the country, as well as in the North. A number of priests told this paper of the baptisms they've been performing in recent months, with only immediate family present.

"Archbishop Farrell envisages that ongoing engagement with public authorities will enable the position to be reviewed in due course. It is Archbishop Farrell's strong hope that there will be a total return to the public celebration of all of the Sacraments at the earliest possible date," the statement concluded.

St Patrick honoured in Belarus with first Orthodox church

Ruadhán Jones

The church – the first dedicated to "St Patriky, the Enlightener of Ireland" by an Eastern Orthodox Church – was blessed and officially opened on the grounds of an Irish-funded orphanage in Belarus.

The Church of St Patrick at Vesnova, in southern Belarus, was funded by the Belarusian Orthodox Church, and was dedicated to the saint as a tribute to the work of Irish donors and volunteers for the past 25 years in trans-

forming the lives of the children and young adults who reside in Vesnova.

Statement

A statement from the Chernobyl Children International (CCI) explained that "when first discovered twenty-five years ago by volunteers from the Adi Roche Chernobyl Children International (CCI) charity, Vesnova was a children's mental asylum".

"Today it is a world class childcare centre. CCI has invested more than €3 million in the

centre and hundreds of Irish volunteers have worked on construction projects there," the statement continued.

CCI CEO and founder Ms Adi Roche, who was awarded the Belarusian Orthodox Church's highest honour – The Medal of Saint Kirill of Turovskiy (first degree) – said they were "honoured" by the church's dedication.

"The people in Vesnova are our dear friends and neighbours, and so we share with them in loving friendship and care for our dear Irish saint," Ms Roche said.

Traveller community hit hard by Dublin diocese Baptism ban

Staff reporter

An "avalanche" of baptisms is due in the Traveller community of Dublin archdiocese due to the Baptism ban.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Fr Paul O'Driscoll of the Parish of the Travelling People said

the large number of coming baptisms is because "Traveller families tend to be larger than general".

As well as this, "there would also be a tradition of not waiting too long". That's the culture, according to Fr O'Driscoll, "that the Christenings would happen quite soon after birth".

Acute pain is "felt, but understood" in the Traveller community, he said, because "the present circumstances are unprecedented".

"The Dublin diocese have the largest concentration of population, so that is the reason behind that decision, because the

liturgical celebration naturally leads to social celebration, and that's very understandable, very much a family event," Fr O'Driscoll said.

"The concern behind the present situation is that the bulk of the population are not yet inoculated."

Cheque-mark for Trócaire Somalia mission



Colm Hogan of Trócaire (left) receives a cheque for €28,482 for a project in Somalia to build a tuberculosis hospital from Fr Michael Coady, Fr Martin Cosgrove, Philip McCluskey and Máirín Hogan from Rathfarnham Parish.

Poots refuses to say if he'd accept Mass invitation

» Continued from Page 1

Mr Poots is also a member of the Free Presbyterian Church founded by Ian Paisley which has frequently been critical of ecumenism and denounced moderate Protestant clerics who attended Catholic ceremonies.

If he reverses the policy of his immediate predecessors and declines invitations to attend Mass, it is likely to increase fears from some observers that Mr Poots wants to bring the DUP back to its traditional roots.

However, the DUP spokesman also pointed to areas of common concern between the Church and the party insisting that "The

DUP has worked with the Catholic Church on many issues from freedom of worship through to protecting the life of the unborn".

Mr Poots caused controversy last year after claiming that Covid-19 cases in nationalist areas outnumbered those in unionist areas "around six to one".

Sinn Féin labelled his language "sectarian claptrap".

However, Mr Poots claimed the controversial remarks about coronavirus were not sectarian because "most Sinn Féin leaders don't attend the Catholic Church on a regular basis".

Our Lady of Guadalupe Prayer Group

...invite you to pray for an end to abortion

Guest Speaker:
Fr Brendan Walsh SCA

"Truth versus Relativism, with love"

Friday May 28th @ 8pm
Zoom ID: 899 7927 7686
Passcode: 838315

We meet on the 4th Friday of the Month
(same zoom details)



Diana really wanted to do 'that' interview...

Over the past week or so, the BBC's globally-famous interview with Princess Diana in 1995 has come back to haunt the corporation. Accusations – and evident proof – of underhand and deceptive methods of gaining access to Diana have emerged. Diana's brother, Earl Spencer, has shown that the interviewer, Martin Bashir, used forged documents to obtain the interview – documents which triggered Diana's fears and suspicions that the Palace was spying on her.

“But there is plenty of evidence that Diana wanted to take revenge on Charles because of his adultery”

Prince William has claimed that the *Panorama* interview was partly responsible for Diana's ultimate death, because it enhanced her feeling of paranoia – and this led to the series of events which ended with that fatal car crash in 1997.

It's yet another example that past events don't just fade away – they often come back to haunt those involved. “Be sure your sins will find you out,” as that portentous phrase from the Book of Numbers has it.

Complicated

And yet, I think the story is a little more complicated. Prince William wants to believe that his mother was railroaded into that broadcast, partly because he hated her doing it anyway: even as a child, he loathed Martin Bashir because of it.

But there is plenty of evidence that Diana wanted to take revenge on Charles because of his adultery. She sought that opportunity to air their marital grievances in public. Her shattering words “there were three of us in this marriage” redounded across the globe, referring to her husband's relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles.

Indeed, no thundering preacher could have highlighted the pain, the damage, and the retribution that can flow from an adulterous relationship more effectively than Diana did in that moment. And that was precisely the effect she wanted – even though, later, she understood that it had upset her children.

And of course it led to a



Mary Kenny



St Teresa of Kolkata holds hands with Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997 just months before Diana's death. Photo: CNS

“Questions are being asked as to whether a national broadcaster should benefit from a compulsory licence fee in a new media age – questions that have also been asked about RTÉ”

series of events that ended so dreadfully: Diana's frazzled attempt to escape the publicity that she had helped to create: that ghastly scene in Paris when a driver who had been tipping Ricards all day took to the wheel. It was truly akin to a Greek tragedy. But many different events had contributed to the mournful ending.

Heads have rolled at the BBC, and the corporation's entire operational structure has come under scrutiny. Questions are being asked as

to whether a national broadcaster should benefit from a compulsory licence fee in a new media age – questions that have also been asked about RTÉ.

Unethical methods

Accountability there must be, and the BBC evidently allowed unethical methods of journalism to prevail. But the seeds of the story lay in Diana's wounded feelings at being betrayed.

● A friend from our local church told me that the Israeli TV drama *Shtisel* is one of the best things available on Netflix. “It's so involving – completely character-driven,” she said. So, I've started watching it, and it's surely one of the most unusual of television series. The storyline is set among Haredi – sometimes called Ultra-Orthodox – Jews in Jerusalem. They adhere loyally to their religious traditions, which include, charmingly, having loads of children – the Ultra-Orthodox do not practice birth control – and often approaching marriage through matchmakers. Prayer is a natural part of everyday life. Duty to family and community are key values, and everyone must work. Life can be hard, and their dwellings are modest. Yet the tone is funny and human, and characters have faults and take wrong turnings. Also, they never stop eating!

A fascinating glimpse into a way of life that is rarely visible to us now – and yet, to those of us who remember an Ireland of yore, recognisable in so many ways.

Larking about in sensational antics

The mainstream media has been marking the 50th anniversary of the notorious ‘Condom Train’ of 1971, and I've turned down three requests to revisit it – I've given my account of it in a short memoir, *Something of Myself*, and that's on the record for anyone to peruse.

A far more significant aspect of the Irish women's liberation movement, to me, was the publication of the pamphlet *Chains*

or *Change*, which I co-authored in the same year. This outlined the many reforms that really were due to the status of women – for widows, deserted wives, unmarried mothers, in employment, education, childcare, the law, financial arrangements, and much more. It wasn't accurate in all respects, but it is a historic document – available at the National Library of Ireland. For me, this was a much more laudable achievement

than getting on that train, which was really a publicity stunt, in which Mary Robinson so wisely declined to take part.

She chose to reform the State's 1935 Act prohibiting the importation of birth control artefacts through the process of the law, which was the dignified approach characteristic of Mrs Robinson's level-headed judgement, rather than larking about in sensational antics!



St. Francis Hospice Dublin



Support Sunflower Days
Month of June

Donate and Dedicate a Sunflower

CALL 01-8327535

OR ONLINE

hospicevirtualflowergarden.com

Thank You

Company Registration Number 153874 Registered Charity Number 20027193

'Very disappointing' if constitutional challenge against Mass ban is spiked

Chai Brady

A law professor has said he would be "very disappointed" if the challenge against the now-lapsed restrictions on religious gatherings is dropped by the High Court.

This comes after a High Court judge said he did not see a point in fixing a hearing date for businessman Declan Ganley's action against the Covid-19 penal provisions which stopped him attending Mass as he considered the case moot as the restric-

tions have been lifted.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Associate Professor of Law in Trinity College Dublin, Dr David Kenny said: "With cases like this, and there is some case law on this topic, you shouldn't always let mootness stop a case when it's of public importance. The powers to limit religious services aren't gone, this could arise again further on in the pandemic."

"I understand that the judges are concerned that there is limited court time at the moment and so they

are obviously disinclined to hear applications that aren't fully live but this one is very much worth going ahead and I would be very disappointed if it was found to be moot," Dr Kenny said.

The State had agreed not to raise the issue of mootness. However, the judge said that this was not binding on the court.

The case was raised in November and was put back to December, at which time various Covid-19 restrictions on religious worship had been lifted.

About four months later, the State put in its evidence, but by that time the measures put in place after December had also lapsed. Neil Steen SC for Mr Ganley said that the case raises important issues under the European Convention on Human Rights and the Constitution and should be addressed. The State reiterated it would not raise the issue of mootness.

Speaking further about the case, Dr Kenny added: "We have to be very slow to rule things out because of mootness if the issue itself

is still potentially live, and I think it is, if there were another round of lockdowns I think we would see the same restrictions brought in again.

"Particularly with the Covid measures, if we insist on it getting to full hearing and determination before the measures are undone because of subsequent relaxation of the rules, then we may never get any challenges against these measures because it will always be too late."

The judge returned the matter to next month.

Irish Jesuits express pride at appointment of new Hong Kong Bishop

Ruadhán Jones

The Provincial of the Irish Jesuits said the appointment of Bishop-elect Stephen Chow SJ, who completed his novitiate in Ireland, has made them all "very proud".

Fr Leonard Moloney told *The Irish Catholic* that they're "very proud because we know him very well, he did his novitiate here, he studied philosophy here".

"To have a bishop in Hong Kong at this most challenging time in its history who came through our province and who might not have been a Jesuit if not for our mission out there decades and decades ago – we're very proud," Fr Moloney added.

Bishop-elect Chow is well-suited to the position, said Fr Ashley Evans SJ, who knew Chow through their work in South-East Asia, as the Hong Kong bishop knows the complexities of the region while remaining "down to earth".

"That is a great strength, he has a lot of good friends and ordinary people in Hong Kong," Fr Evans said.

See page 12.

Places of worship key to post-pandemic recovery

Jason Osborne

A new report has revealed that Churches will be "vital" in helping to restore "individual and community wellbeing" and building resilience.

The research, carried out by the University of York in England, saw over 5,500 people surveyed from across a range of backgrounds, and the results disclosed the impact closing churches had on social contact and on mental wellbeing, particularly the restrictions on funerals and other support for the grieving.

Some 79% of all respondents highlighted social isolation as a key issue in their community, while 75% of non-Church members wanted access to churches as places of quiet reflection and comfort.

Up to 87% of churches regularly contacted the isolated while 91% offered online engagement.

Commenting on the findings, Gladys Ganiel, sociologist at Queen's University Belfast, said "I think in some ways it's a continuation of what Churches are doing already during the pandemic".

Referring to research she had done earlier in the

pandemic across the whole island of Ireland, Ms Ganiel said "75% of parishes and congregations in the four largest denominations had either increased or maintained their services to the wider community".

She described this as "impressive" given the context of the pandemic.

"The Churches are continuing to do that as we come out of the pandemic, and obviously now I think one of the big lessons that's been learned is about the importance of community. People being isolated and so forth," Ms Ganiel said.

750 years on, Multyfarnham Franciscans are still learning



Fr Kieran Cronin OFM from Multyfarnham Franciscan Friary and Gary Fitzpatrick, an Engineer from Church Services TV, complete the installation of a webcam so the friars can broadcast virtually for the first time in their 750 years in Westmeath.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New area manager for St Vincent de Paul in Newry and Mourne

Rosemary Cunningham has been elected the new Area President of Newry and Mourne, to reinforce the ethos of the society at a local level.

Mrs Cunningham is a long-time member of the society, joining the St Brigid's Conference 14 years ago.

Speaking about becoming Area President, Mrs Cunningham said: "Looking ahead and thinking about my presidency, I'm excited that I might actually be able to meet some of the members face to face in the conferences I'm now representing across the Newry and Mourne area."

"I'm looking forward to being involved in some of the bigger picture activity and I'm privileged that I'll have support from across the network."

Irish bishop criticises Belarus 'unlawful' arrest

After an Irish registered aircraft was forced to land by a Belarus fighter jet, Bishop Kevin Doran called for the unlawful arrest to be taken to the high courts.

"An Irish registered aircraft, with all its passengers, has been diverted on a false pretext by Belarus," Bishop Doran said. "This unlawful arrest should be taken to the international courts."

Bishop Doran called for all Belarus-registered aircraft to "be excluded from landing anywhere in the EU".

After the flight was grounded, Belarus authorities arrested journalist Roman Protasevich on accusations of terrorism and inciting riots. They also arrested his girlfriend Sofia Sapega.



Follow *The Irish Catholic* on Twitter

IrishCathNews



Faith Renewal Events

Join us as we begin a new series of online events to nourish your faith this summer.

These retreats and lectures will provide time for reflection, enrichment and learning with others. The virtual nature of the events allows you to take part from the comfort of your own home, at your own pace.

Evening Examen

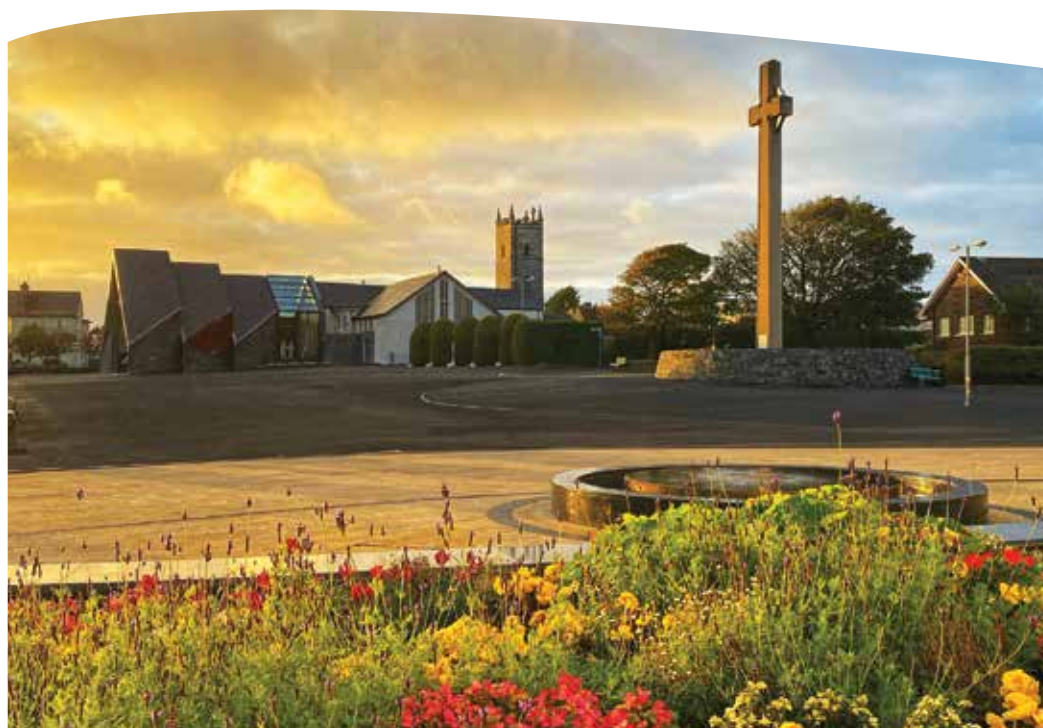
— every Tuesday evening throughout June & July

Beginning on Tuesday 8 June, 8pm

Join our experienced prayer guides **online** each Tuesday evening at 8pm for daily Examen.

The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. The Examen is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole experience.

Available online at www.knockshrine.ie/watch-live and on the Knock Shrine Facebook page



KNOCK SHRINE, KNOCK, CLAREMORRIS, CO. MAYO, F12 Y226
t: +353 (0) 94 93 88100 e: info@knockshrine.ie
w: www.knockshrine.ie

Upcoming Events Online

www.knockshrine.ie



Scripture Summer School

— in association with Tarsus Scripture School

June 1– 22 'Believing and Belonging: Biblical Perspectives on the Community of Faith'

Facilitated by Jessie Rogers, Sean Goan and Kieran J O'Mahony

- Biblical models of the people of God. (Jessie Rogers)
- Experience of church in Mark's Gospel, the Book of Revelation and the first letter of Peter (Sean Goan)
- The Pauline assemblies: rows, reconciliation, renewal. (Kieran J. O'Mahony)

15 pre-recorded lectures (to watch in your own time) and 2 webinars. The series will begin with a welcome webinar on Tues 1st June at 7.30pm. Finishing on Tue 22 June with a webinar and Q&A session. Cost: €40 per household. Register Online at: <https://www.tarsusscriptureschool.ie> or find out more at www.knockshrine.ie

Jesuit Week: A Week of Ignatian Spirituality

Sun 25 July – Sun 1 August

With Bishop Alan McGuckian, Pauline McKeown and Patricia McCarthy

You are invited to join us virtually for a week of prayer, meditation and scripture, connecting with ourselves, each other, creation and God.

The sessions will include key features of Ignatian spirituality– personal engagement with scripture, reflection on our life-experiences, and making good decisions through discernment.

The Retreat will be introduced on Sunday 25 July at 8.30pm and will end on Sunday 2 August with the morning session. There will be three 20-minute sessions each day:

- 10.30 am – Retreat led by Bishop Alan McGuckian of Raphoe Diocese
- 4.00 pm – Guided Meditation
- 8.30 pm – Guided Examen (Review of the day)

Participants are also encouraged to join in 12 noon Mass online from Knock Shrine as part of the retreat.

Please that registration/ booking is not required. All sessions will take place online at www.knockshrine.ie/watch-live

All events will be live-streamed at: **www.knockshrine.ie**

Niamh Uí Bhriain

The View



The abortion review must not be a whitewash

Just three months into the supposedly progressive and compassionate abortion regime established by Simon Harris after the repeal of the Eighth Amendment, the unthinkable happened.

A preborn baby boy was diagnosed with Trisomy 18 in the National Maternity Hospital. His parents said that they were not afraid to care for a sick child, but they were told the condition was 'fatal' and not to wait for the results of a second test. They say they never brought up the word abortion, but it seems they believe they were made to feel that was the best option. The little boy was aborted. Then the result of the second test came back. The first test was wrong. The baby didn't have Trisomy 18. He was perfectly healthy, but by then it was too late.

It was too late because abortion is irreversible. Once a life is ended there is no going back. And the truth is that we don't know how many other cases like this have arisen under the abortion legislation. But we do know that should be investigated - as should many of the other shocking and horrific outcomes of the law.

Review

This year, the Department of Health is obliged to undertake a review of the legislation. That review must not be a missed opportunity.

The incoming Secretary General of the Department of Health, Robert Watt, recently told the Oireachtas Health Committee that the review will take a three-part approach - and will include a public consultation. In effect this means that you will have

a chance to have your say on the abortion regime.

But at this point, unless the review is simply a rubber-stamp for the abortion regime and a platform for abortion campaigners to further expand this already radical law, the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly should take care that the correct terms of reference are set for the review.

That means examining the devastating failures for the legislation - including those outcomes that we were repeatedly assured would never happen, such as the tragic abortion misdiagnosis case in Holles Street.

It means looking at the startling rise in the number of abortions for Irish women. Some 6,666 abortions took place in Ireland in 2019, the first year of the abortion regime - more than double the number of abortions which had been carried out on 2,879 women who travelled to Britain for the procedure in 2018. An unknown number of women, estimated by some at 1,000 or more, also took abortion pills in that year.

“This year, the Department of Health is obliged to undertake a review of the legislation”

The appalling rise in the abortion rate in 2019 reversed almost a decade of decline in the number of abortions undergone by women living in Ireland. This massive upwards shift was predicted by pro-life activists during the 2018 referendum and strongly denied by abortion campaigners including members of government. We can see who was telling the truth now. So much for Leo Varadkar's promise of abortion being 'rare'.

The review must include an analysis of why the abortion rate increased so rapidly to 6,666 abortions in 2019, and what can be done to reduce the number of abortions now taking place in Ireland.

The fact that late-term abortions are being carried out in Ireland, despite denials that this would ever happen, must also be reviewed.

The recent, shocking revelations from a University College Cork study published



Members of the Life Institute at an awareness event at the Dáil this week marked the third anniversary of the repeal of the constitutional right to life of preborn babies, and remembered the 6,666 unborn children whose lives were ended by abortion.

in the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* has confirmed that late-term abortions are taking place and that the method being used is foeticide - where the baby is given a lethal injection of potassium chloride into the heart.

Potassium chloride is controversially used to execute prisoners on death row in the US. As researcher Ruth Foley previously observed, in the US, it is considered so painful that the authorities in charge of executions believe it necessary to first give anaesthetic to avoid being inhumane to the prisoner being put to death. A recent article in *The Washington Post* confirmed that an injection of potassium chloride can cause such pain and suffering in adults being executed that both an anaesthetic and a paralytic are administered prior to the lethal substance. The author, an associate professor of anaesthesia at Harvard Medical School, cautions that even these measures may only mask rather than prevent the "burning pain" of the administration of the poison.

Pain relief

There is no obligation to give babies undergoing late-term abortions in Ireland pain relief. Minister Donnelly must ensure a review of this extraordinary cruelty is included in the terms of reference. The review must also examine why BJOG study also found that doctors

in Ireland were left "begging for help" if babies survived late-term abortions.

They might also consider why another study - also carried out by abortion-advocating medics - and published in April 2021, says senior Irish doctors were being trained internationally to carry out late-term dismemberment abortions, known as 'dilation and evacuation'. We were also assured that would never happen. Any review worth its salt must look at what was promised to the public and why those promises appear to have been broken.

“The review must include an analysis of why the abortion rate increased so rapidly to 6,666 abortions in 2019”

The disturbing abortion misdiagnosis case discussed above must also be examined. Two full years after their baby was aborted, the parents say they are facing obstacle after obstacle in relation to a full inquiry - from the same politicians who told us abortion was being introduced to help families. During the referendum, when parents in 'Every Life Counts' repeatedly warned that parents would face this kind of pressure, and that babies with suspected

serious disabilities would be targeted, they were shouted down or ignored. They have tragically been proved right.

An investigation into the case should also seek to establish a protocol to ensure parents are not pressured into having an abortion - and are given factual, peer-reviewed information and offered support to continue with their baby.

Reporting

The review should also examine the exceptionally poor reporting and record-keeping around the provision of abortion in this country given that it was revealed recently, for example, that no national reporting system is in place in relation to adverse outcomes to using the abortion pill. It should listen to the voices of women who, in the three-day waiting period, changed their mind and continued with their pregnancies.

And it must also hear from pro-life doctors and nurses, in regard to their experiences with the abortion regime and especially in regard to conscientious objection.

But unless the terms of reference now being set for the review allow for a full examination of the outcomes of the abortion law thus far, the process won't be worthwhile. In that regard, it is vital that pro-life people speak up to seek fairness in the process. Tell your TD today that the terms of reference for the review must be inclusive and seek to examine all the facts including the negative outcomes.

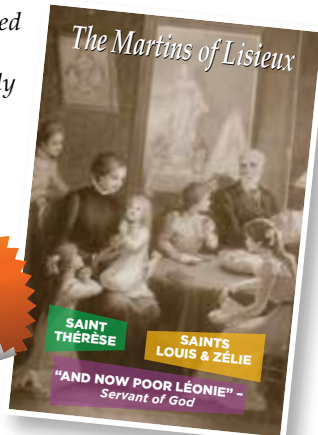
A review which is simply a whitewash is unacceptable.

THE MARTINS OF LISIEUX

Insights into the extended Martin Family of The Little Flower. Beautifully illustrated, 24 pages of exceptional quality.

Michael O'Connell, Author

BUY NOW
€7
free P&P

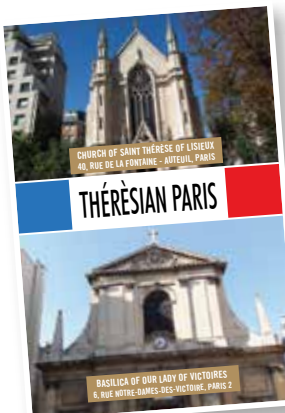


THÉRÉSIAN PARIS

Little known churches of direct relevance to St. Thérèse. Beautifully illustrated, 20 pages also of exceptional quality.

Michael O'Connell, Author

BUY NOW
€7
free P&P



Order Today

Tel: 086 819 8186

Email: sttheresebookorders@gmail.com
or available from

Whitefriar Street Church Book Shop



St. Thérèse National Office,
Whitefriar Street Church,
56 Aungier Street, Dublin 2.

“The fact that late-term abortions are being carried out in Ireland, despite denials that this would ever happen, must also be reviewed”

Healing the wounds of extremism in Africa



Conn McNally

On the 20th of April this year, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) launched our Freedom of Religion in the World Report. This biannual report looks at the state of religious freedom in all 196 countries in the world during the 2018-2020 period. The situation for religious freedom across the world is dire, with the persistence of Islamist radicalism being the most concerning issue for Christians globally. ISIS has morphed and changed following their defeat in Iraq and Syria. A series of proxy groups have emerged affiliated with ISIS and other Islamist groups creating a "transcontinental caliphate". These groups lack central command but are receiving outside funding and arms. The local affiliated groups have proven to be expert at injecting their poisonous ideology into local disputes and grievances, with the Church frequently being the primary target of the Islamists' crosshairs. Nowhere in the world are the impacts of this new trend being felt as acutely as in Africa.

Projects of Healing

In response to this crisis ACN has committed €8 million in funds to help the African Church to heal the wounds caused by this persecution. Nowhere in Africa or in the world is the persecution of Christians as deadly as it is in Nigeria. More Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria than in any other single country in the world. The murderous campaign of Boko Haram has left thousands dead and countless families and communities grieving.

ACN is sponsoring several projects to provide spiritual and psychological training to impacted communities to help with healing. For example, in the Diocese of Maiduguri in north-eastern Nigeria the terrorist campaign by Boko Haram has left two thousand widows. Thousands of children in the diocese have been left without a father. ACN is sponsoring a project to set up a training centre in the diocese. This centre will help to train trauma therapists to help the bereaved recover.

Call to Prayer

ACN understands the vital importance of the Faith in helping people recover from the trauma left by groups such as Boko Haram. Bishop

Oliver Dashe Doeme of the Diocese of Maiduguri has put a plea that we at ACN are more than happy to pass on. The bishop is asking for Catholics to pray the rosary for Nigeria. The bishop said the following:

"I ask that you pray for the end of violence, and pray particularly the rosary. Through fervid prayer and devotion to Our Lady, the enemy will certainly be defeated. Back in 2014, in front of the Blessed Sacrament where I was praying, I received a vision of Jesus. He offered me a sword in that vision, which then turned into a rosary. He told me that 'Boko Haram is gone' three times. And he disappeared. And since then we have been praying the Rosary and engaging in other Marian devotions in the entire diocese."

The Growth of Islamism in DRC

The threat posed to Christians in Africa by Islamists is very serious. African governments will have to be part of the solution by providing adequate security. ACN recently spoke with Bishop Paluku Sikuli Melchisédech of the Diocese of Butembo-Beni, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). There is a Ugandan Islamist group called the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) operating in the region. The ADF does not claim to be an Islamist group, but their actions say otherwise, with local people kidnapped by them forced to convert to Islam and take Muslim names.

“One thing that stood out from Bishop Melchisédech's interview was the deep affection that his congregation held for Christ's Church”

Thousands of people in the area have been killed in recent years and approximately 3 million people being made refugees. Bishop Melchisédech asserted that the government will have to do something about the situation in the area. The region is majority Catholic, with most of the non-Catholics being Protestants. There is a concerted effort to Islamise the region. Numerous mosques, funded by wealthy outside donors, are popping up in the area.

One thing that stood out from Bishop Melchisédech's interview was the deep affection that his congregation held for Christ's Church. The bishop was adamant



Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme

that the people know that the Catholic Church wants what is best for the people. The bishop also said the Catholic Church built both the health and education systems in Congo. This is something the local people, both Catholic and Protestant, know and appreciate.

The faith shown by Bishop Melchisédech has reinforced the determination of us at ACN to offer aid to the African Church. The next decade or two is going to be very hard for the African Church. The faith of African Catholics is very strong, and they will stay true to

the Faith. We at ACN, with the help and prayers of our benefactors, will be there to offer whatever aid and help we can, so that the Church in Africa may continue to grow and flourish.

Conn McNally is a member of staff at Aid to the Church in Need Ireland.

Yes, I would like to make a one off gift to ACN Ireland wherever the need is greatest

☐ €60 ☐ €130 ☐ €250 ☐ Other €

*If you are a taxpayer and donate €250 or more in any given year we can reclaim the tax paid and make your donation go 45% further.

Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa Debit

Card Number

Security Code Expiry Date

Your Name

Your Address

Your Email

Please Sign Here Date / /

For Credit Transfers and Direct Debits our bank details are:

IBAN IE32 BOFI 9005 7890 6993 28 | BIC BOFI IE2D

Please detach this form and return, with your gift, to the address below.

I do not require an acknowledgment.

PONTIFICAL
FOUNDATION



Irish Catholic 2021

If you want to learn more about ACN's work or help persecuted Christians please visit www.acnireland.org or ring (01) 837 7516

We can't be indifferent to unborn's cries, says bishop on abortion referendum anniversary

Ruadhán Jones

We cannot be indifferent to "the cries of... the unborn who may be denied life", said Bishop Brendan Leahy, adding that an Ireland "worth working for" is one where all life matters.

The bishop's statement came on the third anniversary of the referendum that removed protections for the unborn in Ireland, May 25.

Bishop Leahy called for "courage and resilience" as we mark this event.

"While, as the democracy maxim states, the people have spoken," Bishop Leahy continued, "that does not mean other voices are to remain silent; that those who believe in the sanctity of the life of the unborn should go quiet."

"Life matters. An Ireland worth working for, an Ireland worth dreaming about, an Ireland worth presenting to the world will always be a country where life matters and where we care for one another."

We need to care "when we hear that in

the year following the referendum 6,666 lives were ended in the womb through abortion", the bishop of Limerick said.

"We cannot be indifferent to the cries of the off-the-radar homeless, the bewildered addicts, the unborn who may be denied life, the vulnerable elderly."

Meanwhile, Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín said the "harshness of the new regime that makes it legal for the State to end the life of one individual living human being, never mind

6,666 lives, is hard to fathom".

"Human rights campaigners such as ourselves claimed that Ireland would follow the same path as every other country that legalised abortion and see a massive spike in the number of terminations of life. This has now sadly come to pass," Mr Tóibín said.

The Pro-life Campaign (PLC) and the Life Institute held rallies to mark the anniversary, with the PLC calling the legalisation of abortion "an absolute betrayal of women".

Barney Curley: A man with an intense personal faith

Chai Brady

Legendary gambler, trainer and man of faith Barney Curley who died on Sunday aged 81, has been honoured for his "unusual talents" and the "amazing" things he did for the poor.

Charity

Born and brought up in Irvinestown in Co. Fermanagh, Mr Curley's dramatic battles with bookies are the stuff of legend, particularly the Yellow Sam betting coup in June 1975. He is also famous for his charitable work for Direct Aid for Africa, the charity he founded in 1996.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Senator Ronan Mullen, who proposed that Mr Curley receive the Oireachtas Human Dignity Award – which he did in 2015 – said: "I remember hearing him saying the Rosary once and he would end each decade with the Chaplet prayer, this was a man with an intense personal faith and he didn't flaunt it but he certainly didn't hide it either."

"I was intrigued by the fact that he had a strong spiritual core but was involved in this world of tricking bookmakers and pulling stunts and all of that attractive roguish stuff... using his unusual talents in the world."

Mr Curley had been instrumental in

the early careers of several prominent jockeys. In recent years he had been largely dedicated to his charity work.

Irish missionary

Regarding Mr Curley's charity, Senator Mullen said: "Very often there was an Irish missionary connection, he clearly had a lot of respect for the fact that the missionaries were getting the stuff done on the ground without any big palaver."

"He had always been impressed by missionaries he had encountered and how much good these people were doing and the simplicity of their approach to life."

Court finds suspected British agent killed 3 Catholics

A court has issued an order against a suspected loyalist agent holding him liable for the unlawful killing of three Catholics in Co. Armagh, according to *The Irish News*.

The judgment has been issued in respect of Mid-Ulster loyalists Alan Oliver, Anthony McNeill and Thomas Harper.

Mr Oliver, now a born-again Christian, is a suspected British agent who played a central role in the Mid-Ulster UVF, which was responsible for dozens of sectarian murders.

Mr McNeill, Mr Harper and Mr Oliver have been linked to a gun attack on a mobile shop in Craigavon's Drumbeg estate in 1991 which claimed the lives

of Katrina Rennie (16), Eileen Duffy (19) and Brian Frizzell (29).

The order was issued after Mr Oliver, Mr McNeill and Mr Harper made no appearance to defend the civil action by Mr Frizzell's brother Pat. He also sued the PSNI chief constable, the MoD and the secretary of state.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vatican press grilled by Pope as financial pressure grows

Pope Francis challenged the Vatican's in-house journalists over the effectivity and viability of their work, asking how many people consume their news.

The Pope's critique comes as the Vatican feels the pinch following a predicted shortfall of €50 million and a major pension funding shortage.

The Pope's critique came as he visited the Vatican Dicastery

of Communications – which costs more than all the Holy See's embassies combined – Vatican Radio, and the headquarters of the Vatican's newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

The Pope said their work was good, but there was a "danger" that their work does not arrive where it is supposed to.

Bishop Barron marks Bob Dylan's 80th birthday with musical tribute

Bishop Robert Barron, the founder of the popular Word on Fire ministry, marked the "very special day" by playing the Nobel Laureate's song 'Every Grain of Sand'.

"I discovered Bob Dylan the same year I discovered Thomas Aquinas, I was 14," Bishop Barron said in a video.

"I had never heard popular music with that sort of level sophistication and poetry in the lyrics. And so Bob Dylan had me from that moment on."

Bishop Barron said that Dylan's lyrics have "shaped the way I think about a lot of things".

St Malachy's students confirmed in the Faith



Pupils from St Malachy's Primary School, Armagh, who were confirmed on Saturday May 22, are pictured following the Sacrament with Archbishop Eamon Martin.

An Invitation to Join **FRIENDS OF** The Irish Catholic



I passionately believe that Irish Catholics need a strong and independent Catholic media to present the beauty and truth of our Faith, but also to challenge the distortions and untruths about our Church that are too often present in other media. Will you join me in this mission?" – Managing Editor Michael Kelly

Along with supporting the newspaper, Friends receive exclusive access to:

From the Editor's Desk

our premium video series which sees Michael Kelly in conversation with distinguished guests.

25% off books

from *The Irish Catholic* shop, including the best-selling *Freedom from Evil Spirits* by Fr Pat Collins, David Quinn's *How we Killed God*, and more.

Monthly e-Newsletter

with featured highlights and special features.



CONTACT ☎ 00353 1 6874094 ✉ info@irishcatholic.ie

Or send us the order form below

☐ MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT - ☐ €10 ☐ €20 ☐ €30 ☐ €_____

Monthly contributions are billed each month. You can cancel your contributions at any time.

METHOD OF PAYMENT

PAY BY CREDIT/DEBIT CARD: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card No: _____

Exp date: _____ / _____ CVV No: _____

MY DETAILS

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

POST IT TO :

THE IRISH CATHOLIC

Block 3b, Bracken Business
Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford,
Dublin 18, D18 K277.

Alternatively, if you would simply like to make a contribution to support Catholic journalism, you can send a cheque to **The Irish Catholic**.

Ireland proud as Irish-trained Jesuit named bishop of Hong Kong



Bishop-elect Stephen Chow Sau-yan completed his noviciate in Ireland, continuing a 90-year link between the nations, **Ruadhán Jones** learned

Jesuit bishops are a rare thing, largely because the Jesuits vow not to seek such offices and will only take up a bishopric if the Pope asks them directly. As such, it wasn't easy for Fr Stephen Chow SJ to accept the appointment as bishop of the key region of Hong Kong explains Fr Ashley Evans SJ, an Irish Jesuit who knows Bishop-elect Chow through his work in South-East Asia.

"We don't even see it as a high position," Fr Evans continues. "We see it as sometimes a bit awkward as Jesuits don't really want to be bishops... Stephen shared on Facebook that it took him a long time to respond to the Pope's request, he had to talk with many Jesuits and the Superior General in Rome before he could make a decision. It wasn't an easy decision for him."

"The Church in Hong Kong is a minority one, but it's a vibrant Catholic community"

But this only adds to the sense of pride the Irish Jesuits take in seeing Bishop-elect Chow being given such great responsibility. He is, after all, a product of their theologate in Ireland, having completed his noviciate here, as well as studying philosophy, from 1984 to 1986. Fr Leonard Moloney SJ, Provincial of the Irish Jesuits, tells *The Irish Catholic* that they are "very proud".

"We're very proud of that because we know him very well, he did his noviciate here, he studied philosophy here," Fr Moloney says. "He's been the provincial in Hong Kong for the last two or three years. I've had intermittent contact with him on different matters and he gave me sound advice on a political stance on the Uyghur people, very profound advice."

"The Irish Jesuits had gone out to Hong Kong 80 or 90 years ago, started



A man holding a banner reading "Chinese communist party is shameless, break the promises", shouts during a protest against the new national security law in Hong Kong July 1, 2020. Photo: CNS.

"One of Bishop-elect Chow's 'great strengths' is that he is down to earth and has maintained very close contacts with the people of Hong Kong"

a mission there and it's now, if you like, in Chinese hands," he continues. "To have a bishop in Hong Kong at this most challenging time in its history who came through our province and who might not have been a Jesuit if not for our mission out there decades and decades ago – we're very proud."

Vast experience

The new Hong Kong bishop is well suited to his position, Fr Evans believes, due to his vast experience working in the complex South-East Asia region.

"I knew him from my time working in South-East Asia," Fr Evans says. "He was co-ordinator for the education work for the Jesuits in the China province and I was the co-ordinator for the Jesuit work in education for the Cambodia mission. He was involved for maybe eight or nine years he was in that work. That was the work he did before he became provincial in China, he was only provincial for about four or five years."

"What he had to do in all that work was cross lots of cultural boundaries, people from Mainland China, from Taiwan, from Hong Kong and Macau – all talking to each other, working together and so he has a good grasp of that whole complex politics of China and the ecclesial situation in China."

He had a good sense of how that fits into Asia and the Asian dynamism. Then he was part of the secretariat of Education of the society, so he had to go to Rome occasionally. So he developed a universal perspective also. He's very well connected and well able to relate to all these groups."

At the same time, one of Bishop-elect Chow's "great strengths" is that he is down to earth and has maintained very close contacts with the people of Hong Kong, Fr Evans adds. "He never lost that. That is a great strength, he has a lot of good friends and ordinary people in Hong Kong. He knows a lot of people. I can understand then why the Vatican and the Pope wanted him to be bishop."

In particular, his experience in education has helped him develop a good understanding of young people, which Fr Evans believes to be very important for Hong Kong. Hong Kong's political system is being "dismantled" by the Communist party in China, Fr Evans says, and young people have been at the front lines of resistance.

Vital

"He is (close to young people), that's absolutely vital in Hong Kong because what happened during the democracy protests over two years ago is that they were led by young

people," Fr Evans continues. "College students and high school students led those. In the beginning the older generations were not so enthusiastic for all this umbrella revolution and very explicit marches blocking the streets in Hong Kong."

"We're very proud of that because we know him very well, he did his noviciate here, he studied philosophy here"

"They gradually united the whole people in Hong Kong behind them, with huge, huge support among the population. But that protest work has come to nothing since and Hong Kong is slowly being dismantled, both the legal and political framework, by the Communist party in China who want to keep complete control of everything. It is very hard for the young people in Hong Kong, some of whom are in prison now for organising protests or participating."

This exemplifies only the political complexities of Hong Kong which face Bishop-elect Chow, Fr Evans says. There are still the difficult relations

between China and the Church to contend with.

"On the Church front, it's also very complicated because you have the Patriotic Association and you have the 'Underground Church,'" Fr Evans explains. "The Vatican has made an arrangement with the China Protocol, signed for two years and renewed for a few years, when there was a discussion around the appointment of bishops and an agreement."

Compromise

"The former archbishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal Zen, he opposes any compromise with the Communist government. He went off to Rome to meet Pope Francis to try and persuade Pope Francis not to sign this document, he said the Communist party has one aim and that is to neutralise anything there is to do with the Catholic Church."

"That is the context in which Stephen Chow has had to take over this leadership of the Diocese of Hong Kong. Cardinal Zen is an old figure who has a strong stance against the Communist government and a big following in Hong Kong and Zen is popular among the young people. Cardinal Zen is very popular with the young people."

All things considered, however, Fr Evans' theme is one of hope and support for Bishop-elect Chow, and for the beleaguered Catholic community: "The Church in Hong Kong is a minority one, but it's a vibrant Catholic community, vibrant parishes and locations," Fr Evans says. "It's not very big, but it's certainly vibrant."

How the Church made us 'WEIRD'



A man's face is illuminated by his mobile phone as he stands on top of a roof at sunset to get a signal in Dublin. Photo: Clodagh Kilcoyne



By helping to weaken the clan system, Catholicism helped to pave the way for individual freedoms, writes David Quinn

Western societies are 'WEIRD', that is to say, compared with almost everyone else who has ever lived, and is still alive today, we are much more individualistic and, in a certain way, non-conformist. Counter-intuitively, the Church helped to make us this way, but not in the manner you made expect, that is, by making us rebel against it.

WEIRD

'WEIRD' is an acronym for 'Western, Educated, Industrial, Educated and Democratic'. It was coined by Joseph Henrich, a professor in human evolutionary biology at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Weirdest People in the World: How the West became psychologically peculiar and particularly prosperous*, which was published last year to mainly extremely positive reviews.

Prof. Henrich is not a religious believer, but his book nonetheless gives huge credit to religion for helping to knit societies together and to the Catholic Church in particular for helping to make people in the West so individualistic compared with most people raised in other cultures.

To cut a long story short, it is basically the thesis of Prof. Henrich and his team that over the course of several centuries, the Church helped to weaken the clan systems of much of Europe, and that this had colossal effects the Church itself often didn't anticipate.

Basically, for the great bulk of human history, and in much of the world to this day, people belonged, or belong, in clans, which can be big or small, powerful or weak.

You are defined by the clan you belong to, and it shapes your life. You do not define yourself as an individual, you do not belong to clans voluntarily. You are born into them and you remain in them for life. The clan will look after you, but you also owe extremely strong duties to it and you must know your place and your role within it.

One of your jobs is to help uphold the good name and honour of the clan. If you bring shame on the clan, you will be severely punished, and possibly even killed. Crimes against fellow clan members can be punished more severely than those against non-clan members because the duties you owe to fellow clan members are so strong.

Arranged marriages are commonplace. In-clan alliances are strengthened, and so are alliances with other clans. Royal families have done this since time immemorial, and in the West, still did so until relatively recent times. Queen Victoria's chil-

dren were famously married off to various powerful European royal houses in order to bring them closer together. What royal families did was writ large, what the most humble also commonly did.

You were also expected to help your fellow clan or tribe members if you got into a position of influence. It would have been regarded as very strange, even treacherous, not to do this. How could you not help your own? In the West we now typically condemn this as cronyism or corruption.

“Prof. Henrich says that the slow weakening of the clans over time had huge effects on Western psychology, making us 'WEIRD', or more individualistic”

The arranged marriages were very frequently cousin marriages. How could they not be? If you were marrying someone in your clan, you were certainly related to them.

Prof. Henrich's thesis is that the Church eventually disrupted a lot of this through its campaign and prohibitions against cousin-marriages. He calls this the Church's 'Marriage and Family Programme', or MFP.

The Catholic Church at one point even forbade you marrying your seventh cousin, never mind close ones. Prof. Henrich and his team note that the more powerful the Church was in a given area, and the more closely aligned a bishopric was with Rome's agenda, the more

successful was its MFP.

He observes, for example, that the clan system persisted longer in Ireland because it took longer for the MFP, that is, the prohibitions against cousin marriage, to reach our shores. Looking at the evidence, he says it wasn't as successful in southern Italy either.

Royal families and the nobility generally would also be granted plenty of dispensations because it was seen as important that royal families would cement alliances for the sake of peace. That's why cousin marriage in royal families was so common.

Prof. Henrich says that the slow weakening of the clans over time had huge effects on Western psychology, making us 'WEIRD', or more individualistic.

Crucially, if we no longer had the clans to rely on, then we had to form other organisations that we could fall back on when in need.

But these organisations were voluntary, like the medieval guilds. We had to belong to a clan, but we didn't have to belong to a guild in the same way.

Within the clans, the rules of behaviour were dictated by where we belonged in the clan and what our relationship was to others, especially senior members, like your father, who could have power of life or death over you.

Impersonal

But members of a guild would often not be related, so they had to come up with new rules not based on relationships, and those rules were far less relational, and more impersonal and objective.

They also gave rise to rudimentary forms of democratic participation because governing positions were often elected. You didn't get a

particular position simply because you were the oldest male, although the nobility obviously remained powerful.

The more voluntary society became, and the less clan-based, the more individualistic it became as well. More and more stress was placed on individual freedom, personal choice, and representative governance, eventually up to the top positions in society.

“Of course, a big problem is that the West has now become too individualistic, but that's a story to return to some other time”

Most people today probably believe that the Church was the great enemy of personal freedom through Western history. But Prof. Henrich's point is that by helping to weaken the clan system, it also helped to pave the way for those very freedoms, even if it hadn't fully intended to.

Other writers have also shown how Christianity laid the foundations for Western individualism, but Prof. Henrich comes at the topic from an original angle, and even if he himself didn't mean it, his book amounts to an excellent riposte to those who believe the Church's influence on history has been only, or mostly, negative.

Of course, a big problem is that the West has now become too individualistic, but that's a story to return to some other time.

One step forward, two steps



Irish Franciscan Fr Gearóid Ó Conaire OFM tells **Ruadhán Jones** about the plight of the Church in Cuba against a background of transition in leadership and Covid

It's hard for us in Ireland to grasp the complexities and challenges of life in Cuba for Catholic clergy, religious and laity. This has only become accentuated by the country's worst economic crisis in decades. Franciscan Fr Gearóid Ó Conaire OFM, the only Irish religious in Cuba, has spent three years ministering in a parish in Habana, the capital city, and knows some of the complexities of life in Cuba.

"We have friars who come here and it's only after several months that they begin to understand the complexities of life," Fr Ó Conaire says. "We encourage friars to come initially for three months to see and experience life here, because it is a vocation within a vocation. It presents challenges in most aspects of life. Not every friar finds it easy to adapt and stay."

Remaining

Cuba is one of the last remaining Marxist-Leninist Communist states in the world. After the 1959 revolution, in which the Communist rebel forces were victorious, it had been hostile to religion, officially recognised as atheist and maintaining strict control over religious freedom. This has improved in the 20 years since Pope John Paul II visited.

"Before John Paul's visit in 1998, there were 40 religious congregations," Fr Ó Conaire explains. "Until then there had been a limit on the number of priests permitted to minister, keeping it at about a 100, either for those ordained in Cuba or missionaries coming from abroad. Now after '98, things have improved, including getting the state to recognise Christmas as a day of rest and holiday and then Pope Benedict was able to get Good Friday added to the list as well."

"Over the years, it has become much easier for religious congregations to establish themselves in Cuba. The number has grown from 40 to 120. The diversity of religious is also noteworthy. At a week-long orientation given by the Conference



Br Jesús Aguirre OFM with people of Santa Cruz taken in the church yard on the morning of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12.

of Religious to newcomers in 2019 of the 30 participating orders, there were 21 different nationalities."

Freedom of religion

However, these improvements are relative; as a former Papal Nuncio put it, in Cuba today there is "freedom of cult, but still obstacles for freedom of religion". By that he meant there is freedom to worship, but limited possibilities for more general evangelisation. The historical experience until more recently for Cubans has been one of religious intolerance. Following the revolution, pressure was often exerted on Catholics to apostatise by excluding those who professed the Faith and their children from specific jobs, from places in university and more. For many families, faced with the possibility of a contentious and challenging future for their children, they desisted from coming to Church, leading to a loss of practice and of faith for many.

"We have friars who come here and it's only after several months that they begin to understand the complexities of life"

Fr Ó Conaire was one of three friars who travelled to Cuba three years ago following a plea from the Franciscan community for new missionaries, he explains. He is now one of six remaining Franciscan friars in

Cuba – to put that in context, before the revolution there were 104 friars in seventeen presences in most parts of the country. He and his brother friars minister in a largely Cuban district to a population of roughly 50,000. His parish, named the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, averaged a pre-Covid attendance in the parish church of 120 to 130 people at both Masses on a Sunday. There are two other churches; one ministered to by another OFM fraternity and the other by a Capuchin fraternity.

"After '98, things have improved, including getting the state to recognise Christmas as a day of rest and holiday"

"For now, our vocation is really one of presence and accompaniment of the people by listening and creating the space for them to win back trust and to keep hope alive," Fr Ó Conaire says. "Since the visit of St John Paul II in 1998, many aspects of Church life have improved. Someone the other day compared the pastoral and fraternal challenges to the walk of a crab – a backward movement!"

Unique challenges

The unique challenges presented by life in Cuba are part of the reason why few friars who come to the



Fr Gearóid Ó Conaire OFM, pictured on Palm Sunday in front of the church in the parish of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem.

island remain. Fr Ó Conaire gives the example of social outreach.

"The state considers social outreach, particularly in formal education and in health, to be exclusively their responsibility," Fr Ó Conaire "If a religious comes and has experience in pastoral ministry in other countries, you have to be an awful lot more creative in looking for ways to evangelise and reach out, particularly to young people. Pastorally we are also more restricted."

These challenges have been accentuated by a worsening eco-

nomie situation, as Covid and a crippling embargo by the United States have taken their toll on the economy.

One of the issues facing the Franciscan friars during Covid was internet availability. "When we arrived here three years ago, internet was just beginning, it was starting to be rolled out," Fr Ó Conaire explains. "Most people have difficulty paying for internet. We managed to connect through the conference of religious just before Covid struck, which was a great blessing for us because it allowed us then to communicate with family and friars and people outside, but less so with people inside."

"That's the difference for us from other churches around the world where internet is more readily available, where they can have liturgies online. Even though people are

"Over the years, it has become much easier for religious congregations to establish themselves in Cuba"

back for Church in Cuba



Fr Ó Conaire at a pre-Covid feast with local children.

communicating through Facebook and other mass media, most of the people we work with don't have this kind of connectivity. If they do, they have to be very selective in what they spend their time looking at or communicating, because it means more expense."

Economy

Finances are an issue for many Cubans, as Covid and the US embargo have squeezed the economy. A recent plea from religious in Cuba to the political leaders of the dioceses of Camagüey illustrates the issues the population currently faces. According to their parishioners, rising costs of food and rent have rendered wages sorely insufficient; an inability to shop in stores which accept foreign currency only; and the health system lacks the resources for basic treatments.

“Cuba has also now moved into phase three trials for two of four vaccines, which will hopefully be completed in early summer”

“People with common, chronic or psychiatric illnesses often lack essential medications and medical interventions such as antibiotics, pain relievers, sedatives, medical supplies, working equipment, etc.,” the religious say in their letter. “The queues in pharmacies and at emerging points that have been created are endless. People affected are of all ages, children, youth, adults and the elderly. It is the cause of a lot of anguish, suffering and exhaustion.”

The situation regarding foreign currency is especially difficult.

“The Government is desperate for foreign currency and introduced a number of Cuban style supermarkets at which one can purchase foodstuff

and electric appliances, but only by credit card in US dollars or Euros,” Fr Ó Conaire says. “Cash is not accepted. There was a mad rush to take out foreign exchange credit cards which can be topped up from abroad, at least that was the idea.

“However, with an embargo by US banks sending money, which has now affected many European banks and the exit of Western Union from the country more recently, families have struggled to find the means to transfer cash. It is well nigh impossible, including from Ireland, to make bank transfers to Cuba! It was a surprise to see and experience endless queues of people trying to access these supermarkets. One religious’ woman, who runs a canteen for the elderly, waited in line for twelve hours to purchase some essentials, only to be met by empty shelves when she eventually gained access.”

Hope

However, there are definite signs of hope, both for the Church and for the country. The Government has done a good job in controlling the spread of Covid – at the pandemic’s height, the country averaged just a thousand cases a day. Given that Cuba had a population of 11 million,

this compares well with responses around the world.

Cuba has also now moved into phase three trials for two of four vaccines, which will hopefully be completed in early summer and distributed for free. This bodes well for the island-economy and leaves many hopeful that they will be able to welcome tourists and more family members back soon. For the Church, they have increased their outreach through social media during the pandemic. Equally, as Fr Ó Conaire points out, he has more freedom to celebrate Masses in Cuba than we had in Ireland until recently.

“We’re unsure for what length of time those who are currently serving, will stay. The initial commitment is usually for three years”

“In the parish, we’ve set up a WhatsApp group, for communications, reflections on scripture and Church teaching,” Fr Ó Conaire says. “But we’ve also managed well here from March to November, apart from a couple of months when the



Analuisa Negret Triana and Daniela Gurerro Argus, members of the parish community with Fr Ó Conaire.



The six Franciscan friars based in Cuba (from left) are Br Manuel Pineda OFM (Guatemala), Br Luis Pernas OFM (Cuba), Br Félix Padrón (Cuba), Br Gerard Saunders OFM (USA), Br Gearóid Ó Conaire OFM, Br Jesús Aguirre-Garza OFM (Mexico).

lockdowns were quite intense and we were not celebrating publicly at that time.

“But coming towards the end of last year, we started to celebrate, and we kind of had the main doors closed, but slowly and surely, we opened the side doors. Taking all the precautions, we started to let people back in. In Ireland people have got in trouble for distributing communion – here, funnily enough, we can do that!”

Post-Covid Church

Covid interrupted the friar’s efforts to improve their outreach to the local people. But as hopes increase for the availability of vaccinations, they can begin to focus on the future once more. And that future must be more reliant on Cuban vocations, Fr Ó Conaire explains.

“We’re trying to organise ourselves and look to the future – the future has to be a Cuban Church for Cubans,” he says. “There’s still interest by missionaries in working in Cuba. But the number of people who actually come and the number who eventually stay here, is very small. We have to take that into account when we’re building for the future. Six of our friars have come and gone in the last three years. We’re expecting three other friars to offer their services between now and 2024. We’re unsure for what length of time those who are currently serving, will stay. The initial commitment is usually for three years.”

His own Order is indicative of the challenges facing the Church: “Now, there’s only two Cuban Franciscans in Cuba,” Fr Ó Conaire says. “But we have three men studying in the Dominican Republic and we’re inviting two postulants to enter. Part of our work, back in March of last year we were already starting to go out and visit people in their homes. We were thinking of setting up alternative education programmes around art and drama and music and sport, the plastic arts and language.

“Through these programmes we wish to connect with younger people, and with children. In each of the courses we have a component for ethical and social responsibility promoting reflection on fundamental human values.”

Political uncertainty

Efforts to minister in any country across the world will be in part determined by the country’s political situation. Cuba emblemises this fact perfectly, being affected by politics within and outside its borders. When Joe Biden was elected president last year, there were hopes that he would lift the severe restrictions Donald Trump had placed on them.

“One religious’ woman, who runs a canteen for the elderly, waited in line for twelve hours to purchase some essentials”

Thus far, however, President Biden has not prioritised relations with Cuba, nor has he revoked any of the legislation issued by then-President Trump in relation to Cuba, including making it more difficult for families to transfer funds. The unprecedented increase in public protests in recent times may be one of the reasons the US is biding its time, as well as waiting to see the composition and projection of a new leadership for the Communist Party, after the withdrawal of Raul Castro.

This, of course is the second area of political uncertainty. Although a new Communist Party leader was elected April 20, with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel taking the role, the extent of political change remains to be seen. He is a layman and has the blessing of Raul Castro.

“Raul Castro encouraged more tourism and opened up to foreign investment,” Fr Ó Conaire explains. “The Government says that they are opening up private enterprise to foreign investment in 2,000 different areas. But there are 120 very key areas that will still be in exclusively state control, such as in education and health, communications and the media in general.”

Regardless, the Church in Cuba will continue to plug away in its crab-like manner, taking a few steps forward, a few back – always with hope for the future.

A God of relationships

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



As he was about to ascend to heaven, the Lord Jesus instructed the apostles to go, make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Today we are celebrating the Most Holy Trinity.

Four hundred years before Christ, the Greek philosopher Plato came up with two questions about God: if there is only one God, what does he think about, for if God is an intelligent being he must think about something?

And question number two: if there is only one God, whom does he love? And to be happy one must love. Plato was on the right track but the answers to his questions would only come to light in the New Testament with the revelation that the one God is a threesome of interpersonal relationships. Scripture reveals that God is not distant and isolated but a community or family of knowing and loving.

The mark of the Trinity on all creation

Six years ago, in preparation for the assembly in Paris on climate change, Pope Francis wrote an encyclical letter on the subject, drawing attention to theological and moral aspects of the problem. "For Christians, believing in one God who is Trinitarian communion suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation" (*Laudato Si'*, 239). Some 900 years previously, an extraordinary Benedictine nun in Germany, Hildegard of Bingen, wrote that God arranged everything in this world in consideration of everything else. This is what Pope Francis described as the mark of the Trinity on all creation.

The development of quantum physics has increased an awareness among scientists that no single unit in the universe exists on its own but is part of the whole. A growing number of scientists who previously dismissed any idea of God are now intrigued by the notion of God as an inter-related Trinity of Persons. It makes sense to them.

Science needs moral guidelines

Theology establishes a foundation for moral prin-

ciples. Science will always require moral principles. The advances in globalisation and instant communication worldwide ought to develop the inter-connections between all nations and all people, but without moral principles, problems are getting more serious. The gap between rich and poor is ever increasing. One per cent of the population own 50% of the wealth. That cannot be right.

Events of recent weeks reflect the callous greed of people. Oil-rich tycoons want to take over golf and soccer for chosen clubs and players, paying them exorbitant monies while the struggling club or player is driven to the wall. Vulture funds buy up new housing estates for future profit, thereby preventing struggling people from investing in their new home. A known criminal gang hacks into our national health service, gathers sensitive personal information, and demands an outrageous ransom while putting the health and lives of many people at risk. As technical power increases, then moral guidelines are increasingly necessary. As Pope Francis continues to remind us, we do not live in isolation but we're all brothers and sisters.

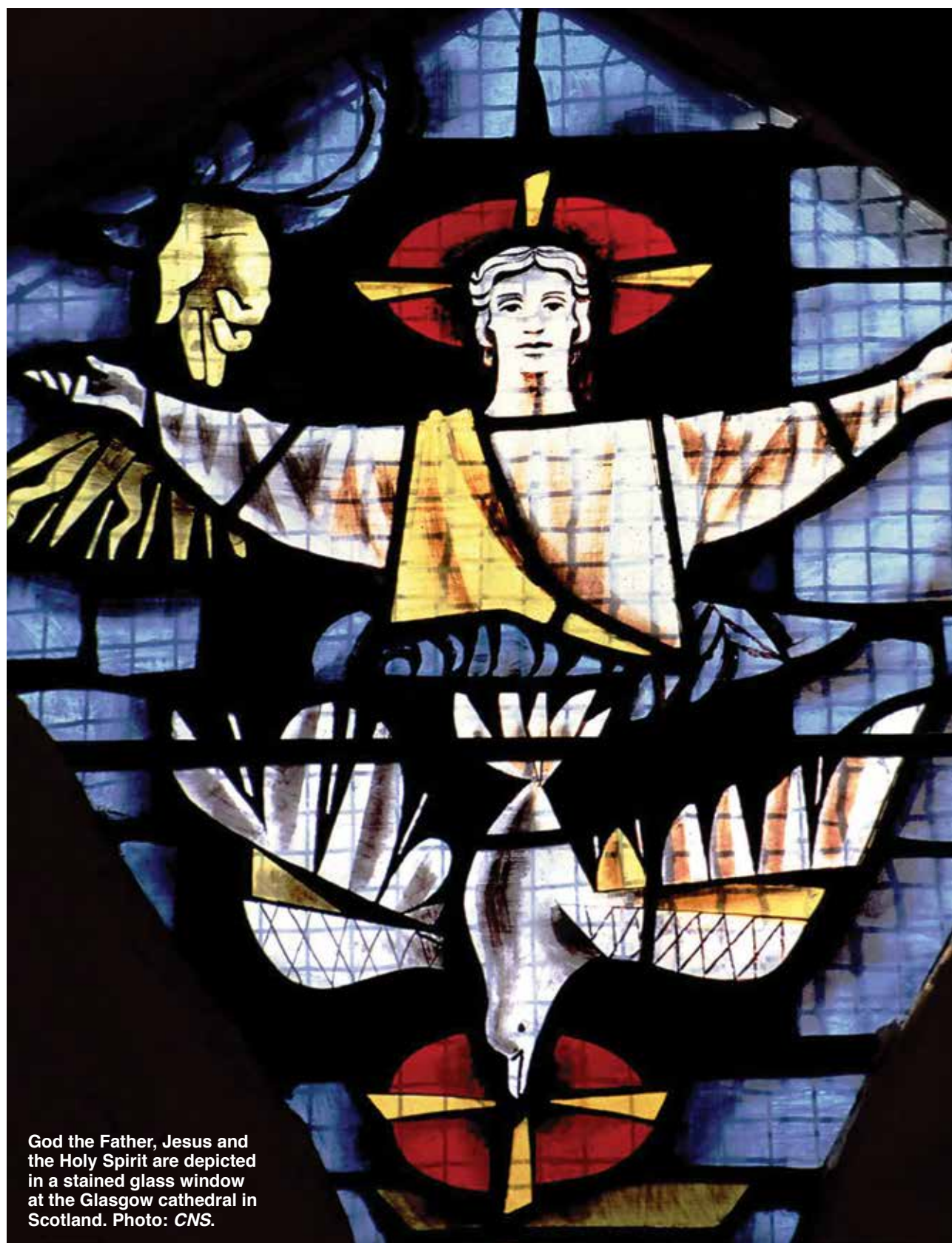
A global community

The Covid-19 pandemic has been an immense tragedy in many ways, but one good result has been an increased realisation than we are a global community, all of us inter-related, each one of us depending on others and each one of us sharing responsibilities with others.

Recalling the words of Pope Francis, the triune God has left a mark on all creation. We are made in the image and likeness of God, each one connected with others in knowing and loving.

Some prayerful reflections

Let us reflect now on the Blessed Trinity in a more prayerful way, listening to some holy people of the past. St Paul began his letters with a blessing such as, "The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Our most familiar little expression as we begin to pray is, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." St John,



God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are depicted in a stained glass window at the Glasgow cathedral in Scotland. Photo: CNS.

in his first letter, described how love begins in God the Father, is shown to us in the human life of God the Son, and is planted in us by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

St Patrick used the shamrock, with its three leaves on the one plant as a symbol of the blessed three-in-one.

Julian of Norwich was absorbed in God as 'my Maker, my Upholder and my Lover'.

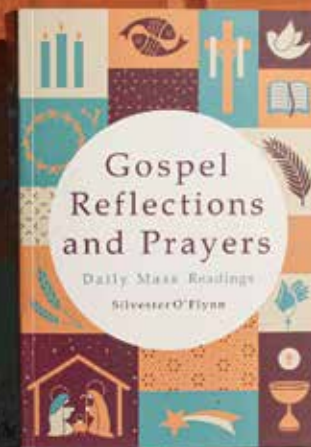
Prayer

As I get out of bed in the morning, I like to greet God in this little prayer. Father of life, Word of light and breath of love. But surely, the greatest prayer is in the celebration of the Eucharist. Through Jesus, with him and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, for ever and ever. We pray through Jesus, our mediator, because no one can go to the Father but through him. We are with him because he is our brother who came to share our human nature. And in him, as members of the body of which he is the head.

St John Damascene applied the imagery of the movements of water to God's movements with us. "Think of the Father as a spring of life, of the Son as the river flowing from that spring, and of the Holy Spirit as the sea. For the spring, the river and the sea are all one nature. Think of the Father as a root, of the Son as a branch and of the Holy Spirit as a fruit, for the substance in these three is one."

More of Fr Silvester's Gospel Reflections

ARE AVAILABLE



ORDER
Gospel
Reflections
and Prayers
TODAY

€19.99
+€4.50 P&P

columba BOOKS

Phone 01 6874096 | Visit www.columbabooks.com

First Holy Communion in Ballygawley



Fr Michael O'Dwyer joins twins Emily and Sophie Wilson on their very special day.



The Fisher family are joined by Fr O'Dwyer as they celebrate Schira's special day.



Ella-Rose Gillespie has fun at her Holy Communion.



Ella-Rose Gillespie, dad Eamon and aunt and godmother, Jayne after First Holy Communion in Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone. Photos: Jason McCartan



Brigh and a very proud McGarvey family.



Daithi celebrates his day with mum Paula and sisters Molly, Lycrecia and Cassie.



Ella-Rose with her grandparents Melvin and Anne Gillespie.



McAteer twins Ava and Mia and sister Isla receive their treats from Super Whip's Chris Kennedy following St Mary's PS Holy Communion on Saturday afternoon.



Darra, Ronan and Darra enjoy their ice-creams.



A day to remember for the McAteer family as twins Ava and Mia celebrate their Holy Communion with Fr O'Dwyer, parents Kevin and Imelda, sister Isla and grand-father Tommy Turbitt.



Sean Loughran and his family.



Finlay Boyd with little brother Fraser, big sister Ella, dad Jamie and mum Arlene.



Twins Emily and Sophie with brother Matthew, sister Aimee and mum Tina.

First Holy Communion at St Peter's in Belfast



Olivia and Aodhan
Fishe and Che Selby.



Anton McNally and Kaelum McLaughlin Madden.



Anna Rose
Townsend



Sean Og
Donnelly, Alisha
McGrady and
Ethan Denny.



Christopher
Marek



Hannah
Dube



Faolan
McCann



James Bolton, Tony Harvey, Ethan Denny and Kaelum
McLoughlin Madden.



Patricia
Marek



Marek Pilo, James
Bolton and Ethan
Denny.

First Holy Communion in Loughmacrory



Sophia McCallan with parents Danny and Theresa and little brother Shea.



All 29 pupils of St Teresa's PS, Loughmacrory, Co. Tyrone with class teacher Mrs McElholm, Fr Mallon, Fr O'Neill and school principal, Mrs Sweeney. Photos: Jason McCartan.



The Corrigan family celebrate Joseph's big day.



James Curran and family.



Dad Mark, sister Eimear and mum Helina step out for Shea McElhone's big day.



Cormac Ward enjoys his day with mum Cathy, dad Noel and little sister Aine.



Emmett McElduff with dad Dermot and mum Annaleis.



The Donaghy family join Alicia at St Mary's Church.



Molly-Kate and the McCullagh family.



Brenda-Marie Logue with her little sister Cora, mum Aisling and dad Karl.



Saorla and the O'Brien family.



A proud day for the Kelly family as James makes his Holy Communion.



Roisin Cunningham with sister Cara, brother Thomas Og, dad Tommy and mum Caoimhe.

Out&About

A Royal welcome for Kingscourt Pastoral Council



CAVAN: Annette O'Rourke, Chairperson of Kingscourt Parish Pastoral Team, made a presentation to express thanks on behalf of the parish to the team who were involved with the broadcast of all Masses and religious services on the parish webcam and Facebook live during the recent lockdown in Kingscourt Church, May 10.



CAVAN: Pictured are Pat Sherlock and Paddy Madden in Kingscourt church on the reopening day for public worship.



CAVAN: People return to the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Felim, for 10am Mass, where principal celebrant Fr Kevin Fay was assisted by Fr Thomas Small.



LAOIS: Morning Mass is celebrated in the Sts Peter and Paul's Church in Portlaoise. Photo: Agnes Sasiada



CORK: Mass at the Sacred Heart Church on the Western Road, celebrated by Fr Charles Conroy, a Cork-born MSC.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication

Mass gathering as Knock Shrine reopens for worship



MAYO: Claire Salmon from Knock with her parents Mena and Jimmy Lahiffe (Co. Clare) at the first Mass following the reopening of Knock Shrine on May 11. Photos: Sinead Mallee



MAYO: Paul Bennisson, Knock Shrine security staff with Knock Parishioner, Sr Helen, at the re-opening of Knock Shrine on May 11.



MAYO: Fr Doyle distributing Holy Communion during the first Mass following the re-opening of Knock Shrine May 11.



MAYO: Fr Richard Gibbons, Rector, Knock Shrine with Parishoner Bert Dennedy at the re-opening of Knock Shrine May 11.



MAYO: Local parishioner Davinia lighting candles at the outdoor candleabrum at Knock Shrine May 11.



MAYO: Pilgrims entering the Church at Knock Shrine following the re-opening for Mass on May 11.



MAYO: Una Nolan, musical director at Knock Shrine sings at the first Mass following re-opening May 11.



MAYO: Mass at Knock Parish Church following the re-opening May 11.



CAVAN: The young people from Baillieborough Community School and parish receive a Papal Award and Pope John Paul II Awards at Mass in St Anne's Baillieborough. They are pictured with Alison Holton, school chaplain and Fr Ultan McGoochan, PP.



ANTRIM: The Catholic Chaplaincy's Pastoral Manager Shannon Campbell and students at Queen's University Belfast made the most of the chaplaincy's Cloister Garden and the good weather, May 13.



SLIGO: Parishioners at St Patrick's Church, Strandhill, got a nice surprise when Fr Niall Ahern announced at the end of mass that they were being treated to an ice cream as a welcome back from Mammy Johnston's, May 16.



TYRONE: Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore present a cheque to Trócaire, May 12, from their annual campaign collection by students and staff. Pictured at the presentation of cheque are Principal Mr James Warnock, Francis McNamee, Alanna McGaughey, Mrs Patricia McQuaid of Trócaire, Aimee Nugent, Grainne Donnelly and Mr Paddy Toner, head of Religious Education.



CORK: Parishioners returning to Mass in Clonakilty Parish Church, where Mass was celebrated by Msgr Aidan O'Driscoll.



WICKLOW: Socially-distanced congregants at St Patrick's, Wicklow Town welcome Fr Donal Roche as he prepares to celebrate the first public Mass since Christmas. Photo: Susanna Braswell



CARLOW: The Poor Clare Sisters provide musical accompaniment at St Clare's Church as Graiguecullen/Killeslin Parish return to Mass. Photo: Agnes Sasiada.



ARMAGH: Mrs Marie Kelly is presented with a special award, the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, in recognition of her wonderful service in the life of the Church over many years, May 6.



CARLOW: Stewards at St Clare's Church Graiguecullen worked hard to make the return to Mass safe, May 10.



KERRY: St John's Parish Youth Group celebrated the Feast of St Brendan May 16, by walking along the Kerry Camino from St Brendan's Church Curraheen to Fenit Oratory and onto the Statue of St Brendan at Fenit Harbour. Pictured are the youth group with Fr Vitalis Barassa, St John's Parish Tralee.



CORK: Megan Austin, David Stewart and Hannah Daly, main organisers of the Edmund Rice College, Carrigaline, Trócaire Lenten Appeal, present the proceeds, €817, to Jan Twomey, Centres and Volunteer Officer Trócaire (left). Included is Adele Flynn, Principal, May 14. Photo: Mike English.



TIPPERARY: Parishioners were delighted to return to Mass at St Mary's Church, Irishtown, Clonmel.

Events

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



World Report

IN BRIEF

Judge sets bail of \$1.6 million for Italian broker

● A UK judge has set a bail of \$1.6 million for Gianluigi Torzi, the businessman who helped to broker the Vatican's controversial purchase of a London investment property. Judge Paul Goldspring ordered the broker to put up the sum because he feared that Mr Torzi was a flight risk following his arrest in London at the request of a judge in Rome, reported *Bloomberg News* May 19. The news agency said that Mr Torzi was required to surrender all his passports and would not be released from custody until he put up the full amount. Mr Torzi was arrested in London on May 11, accused of money laundering. He is also under investigation by the Vatican for his role in securing the Secretariat of State's purchase of a London property.

Catholic priest among 11 kidnapped in Nigeria

● A Catholic priest serving in Nigeria's northern Kaduna archdiocese is among 11 people reportedly kidnapped on Monday. ACI Africa, said that gunmen attacked Kadaje community in Kachia, a Local Government Area in southern Kaduna State, on May 17, killing eight people and kidnapping 11 others. "The people of Kadaje of Kachia woke up early Monday with gunshots of bandits," a source told the website *Sahara Reporters*. While the inhabitants of Kadaje "cried and called for help," the source said that no one, including the military personnel who have been deployed in the region, came to their aid. "At the moment, 11 persons are missing while eight have died. A priest ... is also missing," *Sahara Reporters* quoted the source as saying.

US High court to hear major abortion case

● The US Supreme Court said in a May 17 order that it will hear oral arguments during its next term on a 2018 Mississippi abortion law banning most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The case is *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. The court's term opens in October and a decision is expected by June 2022. Just after then-Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant signed the law March 19, 2018, a federal judge blocked it temporarily from taking effect after the state's only abortion clinic filed suit, saying it is unconstitutional. The US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the block on the law. The state's Catholic bishops, Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson and Bishop Louis Kihneman III of Biloxi, commended Mr Bryant's signature.

Pelosi's archbishop hopes for dialogue on abortion support

● The Archbishop of San Francisco last Monday responded to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who said last week she was "pleased" with a recent Vatican statement on Communion. Ms Pelosi, who is Catholic and pro-abortion, had claimed that a May 7 Vatican letter to US bishops instructed the bishops not to be "divisive" on the matter of Communion for pro-abortion politicians. Last Monday, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco – Ms Pelosi's home diocese – said that the Vatican actually supported "dialogue" between bishops and pro-abortion Catholic politicians "to help them understand the grave evil they are helping to perpetrate and accompany them to a change of heart". The Vatican also acknowledged the possibility of denying politicians Holy Communion if they persist in their cooperation with legal abortion, Archbishop Cordileone said.

Argentine lawyers take legal action against restrictions on Mass attendance

The Catholic Lawyers Corporation of Argentina filed a writ of *amparo* on May 18 contending that recent health regulations decreed during the Covid-19 pandemic "flagrantly violate" the free exercise of worship and religion.

An increase of coronavirus cases in April, especially in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area, which accounts for 40% of the country's population, led health authorities to announce more restrictive measures through a Decree of Urgent Need April 30.

Through May 21, in areas with epidemiological and health safety alerts such as Buenos Aires Province, business hours and the hours when people may freely move about were restricted by the decree; sports, social, recreational, and religious activities in enclosed spaces were suspended, as were social gatherings of more than 10 people in public outdoor spaces.

The Catholic Lawyers Corporation filed their writ of *amparo* because, they maintain, the DNU "flagrantly violates the freedom of worship and religious freedom guaranteed in the National Constitution and in human rights treaties".

"This has been a total suspension with no exceptions, not even by complying with limited attendance requirements and other protocols, an action which we consider prohibited by Article 27, paragraph 2, of the American Convention on Human Rights."



Pro-life advocates attend a rally outside the Basilica of Our Lady of Lujan in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on International Women's Day, March 8, 2020. Photo: CNS.

The health safety decree violates "all the principles of necessity, proportionality and temporality established by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights", the lawyers argued.

Restriction

Regarding the restriction only to hold outdoor Masses with no more than 10 people, the Catholic Lawyers Corporation pointed out that this "causes greater harm than what is sought to be avoided because it exposes the Faithful to inclement weather, thus risking their health".

In their appeal, the lawyers also expressed their surprise that "the most traditional and sacred celebrations in the churches are prohibited, but not live television programs which are mere entertainment, which do not have any informative character".

Bishop Alberto German Bochatey Chaneton, Auxiliary Bishop of La Plata, acknowledged May 15 the importance of safety precautions to avoid spreading the virus, but maintained there is "a primal human right to live our religiosity, our piety, our worship that the government of the day cannot grant or take away".

Bishop Bochatey, head of the Argentine bishops' healthcare ministry committee, said: "That belongs to the human being, it is a human right that goes beyond the world of governments and circumstances. The government, of course, has the proper authority to act during this time of pandemic" and to take measures to care for people's health.

The bishop said that decreeing that only 10 people can attend an outdoor Mass, and no one can attend in an enclosed area, are measures "totally unresearched, disproportionate".

Hong Kong bishop-elect: I am not afraid, but prudence is a virtue

The newly appointed bishop of Hong Kong gave a press conference Tuesday in which he said he believed that prudence and dialogue were a way forward in the challenges facing his diocese.

Bishop-elect Stephen Chow Sau-yan told journalists May 18 that he did not think it would be wise to comment on especially controversial issues, particularly on China, the day after his appointment.

"That would be rash," he said. "But it is not because I am afraid, but, I think,

I believe that prudence is also a virtue."

During the 45-minute press conference, organised by the Diocese of Hong Kong, Bishop-elect Chow spoke mostly in Cantonese, but he also responded to questions in English about religious freedom in Hong Kong at a time when it is being tested after the passage of national security laws.

"For me, religious freedom is a basic right," Bishop-elect Chow said, adding that he believed that Cardinal John Tong Hon, the diocese's apostolic

administrator since January 2019, had encouraged the government not to forget the importance of allowing the practice of all faiths.

With "Beijing, I believe that we must also start also with a sense of – we don't assume they are enemies ... So how can we, through our faith, have some dialogue, can have some understanding together," the bishop-elect said.

Bishop-elect Chow's episcopal consecration is scheduled for December 4.

Spanish bishops denounce exploitation of migrants amid crisis

The Spanish bishops' conference expressed concern that migrants were being used to exert political pressure after a sudden influx of migrants in the Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla increased tensions between Spain and Morocco.

In a statement released May 18, Auxiliary Bishop José Cobo of Madrid, head of the conference's migration department, and Dominican Fr Xabier Gómez, the department's director, warned of the exploitation of migrants following a diplomatic row

between the two countries. "Appealing to the supreme value of life and human dignity, remember that the despair and impoverishment of many families and minors cannot and must not be used by any state to exploit the legitimate aspirations of these

people for political purposes," the statement read.

Spanish authorities were caught off guard May 17 when an estimated 8,000 migrants – including more than 1,500 unaccompanied minors – entered Ceuta, a Spanish enclave bordering Morocco.



Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Israel-Gaza ceasefire relief after over 200 killed



A Palestinian man drives his car, which was damaged in an Israeli airstrike, as he heads to a garage in Gaza City May 19, 2021. Photo: CNS

Germany's ecumenical assembly ends, but one bishop questions its benefits

Some 400 people attended, Germany's Third Ecumenical Convention in Frankfurt including German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, that concluded May 16, but Bishop Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg, head of the Catholic bishops' commission on ecumenical relations, told the website *katholisch.de* that he could not see that the convention gave a particular boost to ecumenism.

In terms of language and visually, the meeting "largely took place in an internal Church bubble" and was thus unlikely to have reached nonbelievers or people

who were distanced from the churches, the German Catholic news agency KNA said May 17, reporting on his remarks. "Nevertheless, I am impressed that the meeting could take place at all at this difficult time and apparently did reach a large number of people."

The convention, or *kirchentag*, wrapped up three days of events in which approximately 160,000 people, mostly via video conferencing, participated in discussions, Bible readings, worship services and other events exploring theological and social issues. Protestants and Catholics called for the

Church to work for justice in society and the Church.

Bishop Feige was critical of the "ecumenically sensitive services" that took place during the convention. He said the issue of shared Communion was "extremely complex and emotionally charged." This made it all the more important to move forward carefully, he said.

KNA reported that at the convention's four central services, it was left up to visitors' consciences whether they wanted to participate in Communion or in the Lord's Supper of the other denomination. At the Catholic service in Frankfurt

cathedral, Bettina Limperg, Protestant president of the *kirchentag*, received Communion. Thomas Sternberg, Catholic president of the *kirchentag*, took part in the Lord's Supper at the Protestant service.

Mr Sternberg said he had often taken part in the Lord's Supper before, just that this was the first time he had done so publicly, KNA reported. To him, it was decisive that Christ himself had made the invitation, he said.

Ms Limperg said she felt no difference between the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist.

High Court orders jailed Indian Jesuit to hospital for evaluation

The High Court in Mumbai order prison authorities to take an ailing 84-year-old Jesuit to the hospital, as it heard his appeal to receive bail on medical grounds, Indian media reported.

The High Court said Jesuit Fr Stan Swamy must be taken to JJ hospital at noon May 20.

Media reports said the court ordered the hospital to have him examined by a neurologist, orthopaedic physician,

general practitioner and ear, nose and throat specialist.

The court ordered the hospital to report back to the judges May 21.

Fr Swamy suffers from Parkinson's disease, hearing loss and lumbar spondylosis. Jesuits and family members believe he might also have Covid-19.

"Fr Swamy had a severe cold, fever, body pain and diarrhoea and could not

even attend a call from his legal team. This indicates that he was suffering from Covid-19," his elder brother, Irudaya Swamy, 90, told a virtual news conference May 15. "We are not sure if he is getting proper medical attention. His health condition is getting worse."

The priest has been in Mumbai's Taloja Central Jail since October 9, a day after he was arrested in Ranchi, capital of Jharkhand state in eastern India.

Vatican roundup

Blood of martyrs slain by ISIS 'a seed that will bear rich fruit'

● Pope Francis has said that the blood of 21 martyrs killed by ISIS on a Libyan beach in 2015 is "a seed that will bear rich fruit for Christian unity".

In a May 10 letter to the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch Tawadros II, the Pope said that the men's deaths had touched the lives of Christians around the world.

Referring to those who have suffered in Christ's name, he wrote: "Among this 'cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1), I call to mind particularly the 21 Coptic martyrs killed on February 15, 2015, whose blood is not only the 'seed of Christians', but also, I am deeply convinced, a seed that will bear rich fruit for Christian unity."

"They too are saints, saints of every Christian tradition."

The beheading of the 21 men, dressed in orange jumpsuits, was shown in a propaganda video released by ISIS on February 15, 2015. The jihadist group had kidnapped the construction workers in the Libyan city of Sirte. Twenty of those killed were from Egypt and one, Matthew Ayariga, from Ghana.

The 21 men were canonised by Tawadros II.

Modernising Vatican finances a 'huge task'

● The Vatican's Council for the Economy faces a "huge task" in its efforts to quickly bring up the Holy See's accounting and financial transparency to international standards, according to one of its lay members.

"We are very much focused on getting those basic standards in place and making sure the information that is in front of the Pope when he makes decisions is thorough, complete, and fair. And we're not in that situation yet," Council for the Economy member Ruth Kelly told EWTN News.

Ms Kelly is one of seven lay people on the Vatican

council overseeing the administrative and financial structures and activities of the Roman Curia, institutions of the Holy See, and Vatican City State.

The lay members work together with eight cardinals to set the budget for the Holy See's entities and raise the level of financial transparency.

The Council for the Economy is also currently implementing an investment policy for the Vatican and "a huge training program" in financial standards for those who work in its departments and dicasteries, according to Ms Kelly.

Revised canon law on crimes, penalties nears completion

● The revised section of the Code of Canon Law dealing with crimes and penalties, including those related to clerical sexual abuse, should be ready for publication before the end of summer, said the secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts.

Bishop Juan Ignacio Arrieta, who spearheaded the project, confirmed the imminent publication in late May after the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales released correspondence about changing the current code "to clearly distinguish" between a priest violating his promise of chastity and sexually abusing a minor.

Pope Francis already said in February 2020 that the work on a revised Book VI of the Code of Canon Law, "Sanctions in the Church", was complete.

The revision, the Pope had said, was needed "to make it more organic and responsive to new situations and problems" that the Church has become more aware of since the code was published in 1983.

Work on the revision began in 2008. As the Church's chief legislator, it is Pope Francis who will decide whether or not to promulgate the revised book and order that it replace the current law.



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

Let's face it, labour complaining about management isn't exactly new. Even the Gospel of Matthew records a scene of workers who've toiled all day in a vineyard grouching that Johnny-come-latelys who showed up just before quitting time were getting the same wage ... and, in a template for such disputes throughout time, their objections fall on deaf ears as the boss does what he wants anyway.

In that light, the fact that the Vatican's worker bees recently sent a petition to Pope Francis asking him to meet to discuss his recent decision to cut salaries, complaining that lay managers in the Vatican sometimes get exorbitant salaries while the compensation of front-line workers languishes, shouldn't be terribly surprising.

However, this is the Vatican, where two considerations make this development significant, however predictable it is.

“Though the workers don't name names, it's not too difficult to figure out the kind of figures they're talking about”

First, we're talking about an environment in which the cult of the *bella figura* usually reigns supreme, meaning the importance of putting a good face on things. There are precious few incentives to go around voicing complaints in public, which means that for the workers to have taken this step, frustrations must be running high indeed.

Second, the Vatican routinely speaks out on social justice, including labour/management relations, to the rest of the world. If it's going to hold itself out as a moral authority, then obviously it has to be seen to walk its own talk, practicing what it preaches.

Background

The background to the petition, which was published in full by the Italian news agency Adnkronos last Thursday, came in a late March *motu proprio* by Pope Francis in which he decreed salary cuts for all Vatican personnel, including cardinals. That decision was driven by the need to contain costs in light of the Vatican's ballooning deficit, a result in part of shortfalls in annual income due to coronavirus-related shutdowns.

In effect, the workers' argument is that crude across-the-board cuts don't address chronic underlying inequities in the Vatican system,

Vatican labour protest highlights any Pope's management dilemma

Pope Francis greets people during his general audience in the San Damaso Courtyard of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican May 19. Photo: CNS.

“The Vatican routinely speaks out on social justice, including labour/management relations, to the rest of the world”

particularly a sometimes-dramatic gap between what lay managers and supervisors are paid in contrast to ordinary staff, as well as the diversion of funds to pay for expensive external consultants and experts.

“What are we really paying for, Holiness?” the workers ask rhetorically. “Is it the coffers of Peter's Pence destined for the poor, or to increase the salaries of lay managers or the extremely costly external consultants that are used regularly?”

“The real problem is that the Vatican is based on a system of privileges that are damaging, both at an economic level and to its reputation,” the workers assert.

Among other things, they point to salaries for some of those lay managers ranging from €6,000 to €10,000 a month, all the way up to €25,000. Such compensation, they say, “never fails to arouse amazement” and is “too much for a system like ours, which should be based on a spirit of service to the Church”.

Though the workers don't name names, it's not too difficult to figure

out the kind of figures they're talking about. When Australian Cardinal George Pell was named Secretary for the Economy in 2014, for example, he hired his former CFO in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Danny Casey, to run the office at a reported salary of €15,000 a month, which works out to an annual salary of about €180,000. He was assigned a high-end apartment that rented at €2,900 a month as part of his compensation package.

“It's basically a ‘damned if you do, damned if you don't’ dilemma”

At the time, Italian journalist Emiliano Fittipaldi, who would eventually be charged in the “Vatileaks 2.0” scandal, called that expenditure “crazy”, though Cardinal Pell's argument was that if you want first-class professional expertise, you have to pay for it. Also in his defence, Cardinal Pell fully expected that a new Vatican Investment Fund he intended to launch with

Mr Casey's help would generate sufficient revenue to fund the position and then some, but his wings were clipped before he could get it off the ground.

Rare

Such cases in the Vatican are fairly rare, but not unheard of, and understandably irritating for an ordinary lay person who does secretarial work in the Roman Curia for an annual salary of perhaps €20,000 and lives in a crummy one-room Vatican apartment that hasn't been properly maintained for decades.

Still, in any other institution in the world, paying €180,000 for a top-flight business manager wouldn't be considered excessive ... in fact, it probably wouldn't be considered at all, it would be automatic.

This, in a nutshell, is the problem Pope Francis or any Pope faces.

It's basically a “damned if you do, damned if you don't” dilemma. On the one hand, we insist that Popes be good business managers, or at least that they find good business managers to run things for them. We want

the Vatican to make efficient use of resources, to avoid waste and scandal, and to adopt best practices of transparency and accountability.

On the other hand, we also want the Pope to be a *paterfamilias*, treating his workforce not as cogs in a machine but members of a family. We want him to practice Catholic social teaching in the administrative operations of the Vatican, paying just wages, giving labour a voice, and, in general, not acting like a heartless CEO but a living saint.

These expectations may not be impossible to reconcile, but there's an undeniable tension. The clearest example right now is the question of laying people off – everyone knows the Vatican is over-staffed relative to its resources, and what any other organisation would do under those circumstances is trim payroll. Yet no Pope wants to be the one to tell a guy whose family has worked for the Vatican for generations that he's out of a job, especially in the middle of a pandemic.

Assuming Pope Francis does meet with the delegation of workers currently clamouring to see him, he'll undoubtedly listen carefully and sympathetically. Finding ways to satisfy them without breaking the bank or depriving the Vatican of badly needed expertise, on the other hand, may prove harder to pull off.

China-watcher says new Hong Kong prelate embodies 'balance' on Beijing



Elise Ann Allen

An expert on Chinese affairs has called Jesuit Fr Stephen Chow, the newly-named bishop of Hong Kong, a balanced choice for the Vatican as it attempts to navigate the complicated and rapidly changing on-the-ground status of the territory.

Speaking of the appointment, Fr Bernardo Cervellera, head of AsiaNews, said that from what he can tell, Chow "seems like a person who will defend the fundamental rights of the Church, but who will also be open to dialogue".

"There is a median position between the radical, anti-China democrats, and the radical pro-China anti-democrats," and Chow is someone who represents this position, Fr Cervellera said, adding, "He is a person who underlines the values and principles of the Church but won't become ideological or anti-China with a side taken."

Chow's highly anticipated appointment was announced May 17, although his mandate won't become effective until December 4.

Chow, 62, replaces Bishop Michael Yeung, who died in 2019, leaving an important vacancy that was not easy to fill given the rapidly changing status of Hong Kong, which, since 2018, has been the site of massive pro-democracy protests initially sparked by a bill allowing extradition to mainland China.

“In terms of dialogue with China, Chow said the starting point must be from a position of faith”

Tensions increased last year with Beijing's rollout of a new national security law which went into effect June 30, 2020, and which bans treason, secession, sedition, subversion, foreign interference, and terrorism, among other things. The new legislation also allows the Chinese Central government to establish agencies to help Hong Kong fulfil its security requirements whenever they deem necessary.

Tensions

With tensions high and division between pro-democracy activists and pro-China supporters becoming more acute on the ground, finding someone to lead the Church who can strike the right balance has been no small task.

Yet in Fr Cervellera's view, Chow, at first blush, seems up to the task.



Bishop-designate Stephen Chow Sau-yan of Hong Kong speaks during a news conference at the Catholic Diocese Centre in Hong Kong May 18, 2021. Photo: CNS.

It's not yet known what officials in mainland China think of the appointment, but Fr Cervellera said he's heard from many local priests "who were very happy with the choice made by the Pope".

Educated in the US and Ireland, Chow is also a supervisor at Hong Kong's Wah Yan College. Since 2018, he has served as head of the Chinese Province of the Society of Jesus, overseeing the order's activities in mainland China, Macau, and Taiwan at the same time the Vatican penned its controversial agreement with China on bishops' appointments allowing both parties to have a voice in selecting candidates.

Divisions

Given the deepening divisions in Hong Kong, Fr Cervellera said "It's good that a bishop has finally been named because it is a point of reference for unity".

Chow himself during a May 18 press conference formally announcing his appointment spoke of the need for unity, telling journalists that as of yet he has no major plans for how to achieve this, but "I do believe that there is a God who wants us to be united".

"Unity is not the same as uniformity," he said, adding, "I always mentioned in my schools, we must respect unity in plurality. It is something that we must learn to respect—plurality."

“I always mentioned in my schools, we must respect unity in plurality. It is something that we must learn to respect—plurality”

Noting how even the community at his school has been divided about the events of the past few years, Chow said the big question has been "how to bring healing. It takes a long process – and I am not saying I was successful, but I am doing my best. Listening with empathy is very important, and this is the fundamental point."

Chow was initially asked to step on as the bishop of Hong Kong a year ago but refused. However, after receiving a personal letter from Pope Francis asking him to do the job, he agreed.

“Finding someone to lead the Church who can strike the right balance has been no small task”

"It's a difficult situation, because Hong Kong is in a moment of transition. It's a liberal country with the rule of law, and with a solid religious freedom, but it's becoming a state dominated by a national security law, which is a law that's a noose, a territorial law," Fr Cervellera said, saying the new legislation "greatly puts into crisis the rule of law and, according to some priests in Hong Kong, it will also eventually put religious freedom into crisis."

Chow also spoke of religious freedom during the press conference,

telling journalists that "Religious freedom is our basic right. We want to really talk to the government, and not to forget that. It is important to allow religious freedom. Matters of faith – not just Catholic, but any religion, should be free."

Dialogue

In terms of dialogue with China, Chow said the starting point must be from a position of faith.

Beijing should not be viewed "as the enemy", he said, voicing his hope that the Church and Chinese authorities can achieve a better understanding of one another through dialogue. "It is not that I am afraid to talk about controversial or political issues," he said. "Rather, we believe prudence is a virtue."

Fr Cervellera said one key area Chow will likely address right away is "rebuilding" the Church's relationship with young people.

Young people, he said, "who are the ones most penalised in the territory of Hong Kong, punished from a social point of view, employment, work, and penalised by the Church".

Noting that the pro-democracy protests, some of which turned violent, were largely led by youth, Fr Cervellera said some young people felt abandoned by the Church, in part because of the silence of

Pope Francis and other authorities when the new national security law was imposed and activists young and old were jailed for their vocal defence of democracy and their criticism of the Chinese authorities.

"It seemed that the Church was no longer interested in them," Fr Cervellera said, so a priority for Chow is "to rebuild the relationship with youth".

Fr Cervellera also believes that Chow will take the question of religious freedom and the freedom of education seriously.

“It's not yet known what officials in mainland China think of the appointment”

When the national security law was imposed in Hong Kong, "some priests feared that this security law sooner or later would pose a threat to religious freedom in Hong Kong, and to the freedom of education", as some topics taught in the classroom could be considered sedition under the new law.

With nearly 300 schools in Hong Kong, the Church is "an important interlocutor for the freedom of education", Fr Cervellera said.

He pointed to Chow's vast academic experience and his knowledge of the international scene given the fact that he's travelled so much to study. Because of this, Chow "knows many situations", and he also has in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of the Chinese world, he said, adding, "this is an advantage for the future of the mission".

Letters

Letter of the week

Education minister riding 'roughshod' over parents' wishes

Dear Editor, Fr Gerry Young makes some interesting points in relation to the Government's plans to allow gender-neutral toilets in all new or refurbished schools [IC 13/05/2021].

Under Norma Foley's recent leadership, the Department of Education excluded the two largest parent groups from all consultations and there have been at least two significant developments that impinge on Catholic ethos. CSSPA (Catholic Secondary Schools Parents Association),

which represents the parents associations of 50% of the nation's secondary schools, should have been consulted on both the new Relationship and Sex Education Curriculum and the decisions in relation to gender-neutral toilets. Parents throughout the country are largely opposed to the idea that all school toilets are to be gender-neutral.

The previous Minister Joe McHugh piloted the Education (Student & Parent Charter) Bill 2019 which was designed to give parents and students

a greater voice on school matters. Sadly that bill seems to have been sidelined by the present minister as she rides roughshod over parent rights.

CSSPA regards the failure to consult parents as a matter of deepening concern and will continue to fight for the rights of Catholic parents to have their voices heard on matters of Catholic school ethos.

Yours etc.,

Alan Whelan, Vice President CSSPA
Killarney, Co. Kerry

Supporting the wonderful Apostolic Work

Dear Editor, I read with great interest the lovely interview with Mrs Mary O'Reilly by Chai Brady [IC 29/04/2021] about Apostolic Work, with her helpers sending Mass kits to deserving parishes in Africa.

Mrs O'Reilly is a wonderful lady, long may she be able to continue to do this work with her helpers. For anyone interested in becoming involved with or donating to Apostolic Work they can contact Mrs Mary O'Reilly: 25a The Stiles Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3 or by calling 01 8338556 or 086 8891236. Thanking you.

Yours etc.,
John O'Brien
Castlelyons, Co. Cork



Pandemic response can't be compared to dictatorship or Nazism

Dear Editor, The heroic efforts of our government, public servants and the ordinary men and women around us for the last year and a half to fight a world pandemic has been portrayed by your correspondent Philip Gonzales [IC 13/05/2021] as dictatorship, totalitarianism and Nazism must be answered.

Dr Gonzales equates the emergency measures brought in by our government to fight the pandemic with those of Nazi Germany. He believes that the same mentality which led sections of the US

government to deny legal process for suspected terrorist detainees and the Chinese government to trample on basic human rights, motivated our Government and health personnel in dealing with the crisis.

What an appalling insult this is to our public health officials and health care workers struggling valiantly at the front line of this pernicious disease day in day out. He reduces them to mindless minions working to bolster what he disparagingly terms 'biosecurity' and the 'health

dictatorship'. To attempt to lump our response to the pandemic with emergency responses of dubious validity to crises real or perceived in recent history, and to shoe-horn it into some fashionable philosophical theory, is facile, contrived and unhistorical.

The dead were not left unburied as Dr Gonzales claims nor the sick left to die unattended. Ordinary caring, committed and loving individuals in our various caring services stood up to the plate. All the Faithful regretted restrictions placed on public

worship, especially the irreplaceable Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but I believe the vast bulk of them understood why it was necessary. They may not hold a philosophy degree but do possess an innate common sense.

While public worship was curtailed, the Lord I believe was present among the men and women in our hospital wards and nursing homes, caring as he always does for the vulnerable and suffering.

Yours etc.,
Séamas Ó Maitiú.
Blessington, Co Wicklow.

Failing to understand complaints about worship restrictions

Dear Editor, I have read a lot in the *Irish Catholic* about Mass being unavailable publicly up to recently. I fail to understand the complaints about this and would like to give an alternative opinion.

We are in the middle of a terrible world pandemic which I think in general has been well controlled by European governments by lockdown, both to save vulnerable people and to avoid over demand on hospital services that could cause choices to be made about who is worthy to save, and great damage to those who care for us in hospital. See for example what is happening in India and what happened in Brazil.

Sometimes some freedoms have to be sacrificed for the public good.

Mass was being celebrated in lockdown to glorify God, offer reparation for the world's sins, to thank God for all he gives us and for the salvation of the world. I found this comforting. One can unite oneself with the Mass in the morning offering.

God knows of and allows this pandemic and would want lives to be saved. Decisions that are made to do this may not be perfect but our politicians are obliged to do the best they can according to normal wisdom. Scientific advice is a gift of God to be used by us and allows us share in his creation. God understands

that we cannot attend Mass in lockdown and is not limited in his bestowal of graces.

Everything was closed apart from necessary shops, but to me leaving the churches open for private visits was on a par with what was allowed in the secular realm. These visits are a great comfort.

I do accept that the bishops need to keep constant contact with the government about when to allow public masses just like other parts of our society also need to do; it is the way our Western democracies work.

Yours etc.,
Marian Lindsay
Artane, Dublin 5

facebook community

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

Irish Gaza nun calls on Govt to help restart stalled peace process

Ireland is now a member of the UN Security Council and should be able to use its position to influence the council and its member states to try to get the peace talks going again. – **Brendan Kennedy**

Ex-taoiseach remembers Ireland's debt to religious

Yes that Government and others before them had great respect for the Catholic faith and all religions – **Noeleen Moffatt**

Yes Bertie I agree but in the world of today it is much more newsworthy to keep hammering away at the negative than to remember the good. – **Margaret Nealon**

A populist government is a value-free government that stands for nothing but its own popularity and if Church-bashing appears to be a vote winner that is what they will do. – **Brendan Kennedy**

Perhaps he should have a word with the present leadership of FF. We remember the contribution of the religious. They clearly don't. – **Alan Mcpartland**

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

Irish people did not willingly swap one language for another

Dear Editor, The words "The Irish People are not sentimental. See how quickly they abandoned the Gaelic language in the 19th century" in Peter Costello's book review on *We remember Maynooth* [IC 13/05/2021] – words of the former Maynooth Professor of English, Fr Peter Connolly – indicate that the professor of this "Intellectual, social and culturally active" Maynooth of the 1980s was either indifferent to or unaware of the barbarous Penal Laws which preceded the Famine and its horror and devastating consequences. Irish people, on the verge of extinction, emigrated in their millions and died in their millions. To believe that "the Irish" willingly swapped one language for another beggars belief.

Thank God for President Michael D. Higgins who, when commemorating the Famine of the 19th Century on Sunday May 16, 2021, at least could empathise with the victims of the harrowing experience of the famine and recognise the plight of the Irish people and their disrupted language and culture.

Yours etc.,
Pauline Uí Argáin
Dún Laoghaire, 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



▲ **EL SALVADOR:** Ricardo Rodriguez, wearing camouflage, plays the part of a soldier during a re-enactment May 14, on the banks of the Sumpul River in northern El Salvador, where US-trained members of the Salvadoran military killed more than 600 unarmed civilians in 1980. Photos: CNS

◀ **ENGLAND:** Community coordinator Terence Surin hugs Joan Brock, 101, a resident at Alexander House Care Home in London, as Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease May 17.



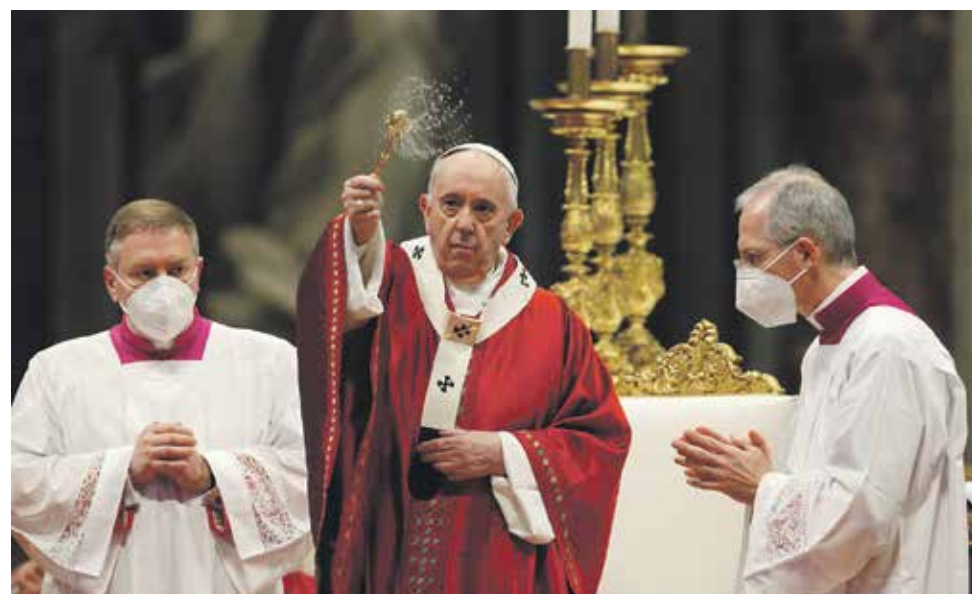
USA: A newly married couple walks over a dune in White Sands National Park in New Mexico's Tularosa Basin May 21.



SPAIN: A Moroccan boy swims using bottles as a float, near the fence between the Spanish-Moroccan border, after thousands of migrants swam across the border, in Ceuta, May 19.



USA: A firefighter works to stop the spread of the Loma Fire off Via del Cielo in Santa Barbara, California, May 21.



VATICAN: Pope Francis sprinkles holy water as he celebrates Pentecost Mass in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican May 23.



The binding power of hatred

Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. We know this works for love. Does it also work for hatred? Can someone's hatred follow us, even into eternity?

“Agnes doesn't know what to do with that hatred, which dominates her world and poisons her happiness”

In her recent novel, *Payback*, Mary Gordon poses that question. Her story centers on two women, one of whom, Agnes, has hurt the other, Heidi. The hurt had been unintentional and accidental, but it had been deep, so deep that for both women it stayed like a poison inside their souls for the next forty years. The story traces their lives for those forty years, years in which they never see each other, don't even know each other's whereabouts, but remain obsessed with each other, one nursing a hurt and the other a guilt about that hurt. The story eventually culminates with Heidi seeking out Agnes to confront her for some payback. And that payback is hatred, an ugly, pure hatred, a curse, promised to last



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

until death, ensuring that Agnes will never be free from it for the rest of her life.

Agnes doesn't know what to do with that hatred, which dominates her world and poisons her happiness. She wonders if it will also colour her eternity: “Her last meeting with Heidi had troubled her belief in the endurance of the ties of love. Because if love went somewhere after death, where, then, was hate? She had understood that, in Heidi's case, it was the other side of the coin of love. Even after death would Heidi's hatred follow her, spoiling her eternity, the cracked note in the harmony, the dark spot in the radiance? Since Heidi had come back into her life, Agnes had, for the first time, been truly afraid to die. She had to make herself believe that

the love of those who loved her would surround her always... keeping her from the hatred and ugliness that Heidi has shown her. She had to believe it; otherwise... the otherwise was too unbearable even to name.”

Family of love

Gabriel Marcel correctly states that to love someone is to ensure that this person can never be lost, that he or she (as long as the love continues) can never go to hell. By that love, the other is connected (“bound”) always to the family of love and ultimately to the circle of love inside of God. However, is this true then too for hatred? If someone hates you, can that touch you eternally and contaminate some of the joy of heaven? If someone's love can hold you for all eternity, can someone's hatred do the same?

“The hurt had been unintentional and accidental, but it had been deep, so deep that for both women it stayed like a poison inside their souls for the next forty years”

This is not an easy question. Binding and loosing, as Jesus spoke of it, works both ways, with love and with hatred. We free each other through love and constrict each other through hatred. We know that from experience and at a deep place inside us intuit its gravity. That is why so many people seek reconciliation on their deathbeds, wanting as their last wish not to leave this world unreconciled. But, sad fact, sometimes we do leave this life unreconciled, with hatred following us into the grave. Does it also follow us into eternity?

“We cannot make someone stop hating us, but we can refuse to hate him or her and, at that moment, hatred loses its power to bind and punish us”

The choice is ours. If we meet hatred with hatred, it will follow us into eternity. On the other hand, if we, on our part, seek reconciliation (as much as is possible practically and existentially) then that hatred can no longer bind us; the chord will be broken, broken from our end.

Leo Tolstoy once said: “There is only one way to put an end to evil, and that is to do good for evil. We see that in Jesus. Some hated him, and he died like that. However,

that hatred lost its power over him because he refused to respond in kind. Rather, he returned love for hatred, understanding for misunderstanding, blessing for curse, graciousness for resentment, fidelity for rejection, and forgiveness for murder.” But... that takes a rare, incredible strength.

In Gabriel Marcel's affirmation (that if we love someone that person can never be lost), there is a caveat implied, namely, that the other does not willingly reject our love and choose to move outside of it. The same holds true for hatred. Another person's hatred holds us, but only if we meet it on its own terms, hatred for hatred.

We cannot make someone stop hating us, but we can refuse to hate him or her and, at that moment, hatred loses its power to bind and punish us. Granted, this isn't easy, certainly not emotionally. Hatred tends to have a sick, devilish grip on us, paralysing in us the very strength we need to let it go. In that case, there's still another salvific thing remaining. God can do things for us that we cannot do for ourselves.

God's compassion

Thus, in the end, as Julian of Norwich teaches (and as our faith in God's compassion and understanding lets us know) all will still be well, hatred notwithstanding.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, May 27, 2021

Personal Profile

Following a call to promote the priesthood

Page 34



Hiking the hills of Ireland



In the last feature, I discussed the mental and physical (and spiritual, too) benefits of open-sea swimming, but this week we'll cast our eyes to the hills. One of the best things to come of the pandemic is a renewed appreciation of nature. For those of us of a religious bent, seeing God's hand behind the beauty and the grandeur of creation has done wonders in keeping us balanced throughout the past year.

In Ireland, we're lucky to have natural wonders in abundance – not just the touristic hotspots of Killarney, the Wicklow mountains, the Cliffs of Moher or the Skellig Islands – but also the man-



Last time saw swimming discussed, but this week we take to the hills, writes Jason Osborne

ifold and plentiful parks, groves, forests and beaches. We have a small island awash in God's natural gifts.

So while sea-swimming offers much, so too does getting out there and enjoying some land-based nature immersion, and there's no better way to do that than hiking. It seems as though many people will be having

another 'staycation' summer, so it's time to get out there and explore what Ireland has to offer.

As with swimming, hiking comes loaded with benefits, but must also be undertaken safely. I mentioned last week that any encounter with the natural world must be seasoned with caution, and the same is true of Ireland's wilds – you must be careful. But

before that, why do it in the first place?

The good hiking does

Besides the views that uplift your soul, hiking comes packed with benefits. As I've mentioned on a couple of occasions, it is a low-impact activity, which means it's one of the less stressful activities for your body – alongside swimming and cycling.

It's a powerful cardiovascular workout, which means that it raises your heart rate into an elevated zone. This sees your heart strengthened, as well as more fat and calories burned. As a result, hiking lowers your risk of heart disease and improves your blood

pressure and blood sugar levels. Of course, if you have any sort of genetic conditions or the like, such as diabetes, no form of exercise should be viewed as a sort of 'cure-all'.

Hiking also boosts your bone density, as it's a weight-bearing exercise. In keeping with that, it naturally builds muscle (and therefore strength) in your glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings and various muscles in your hips and lower legs, such as your calves. Not limited to the lower half of your body, it also strengthens your core, which keeps you stable as you walk all over often unsta-

» Continued on Page 33

Family News

AND EVENTS

IRISH-LED RESEARCH REVEALS WEAKNESSES IN OVER 700 CANCER CELLS

Thousands of 'Achilles Heels' or 'cancer vulnerabilities' have been found in an analysis of more than 700 different kinds of cancer cell following research led by Queen's University Belfast (QUB).

The discovery could lead to new ways of stopping cancer cells in their tracks using existing drugs, while also offering new targets for future drug development.

Such drugs could be used to combat cancers that are resistant to current standard treatments, according to a press release from the university.

Dr Ian Overton, senior lecturer from the Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research at Queen's University, said:

"Understanding the molecular fingerprints of cancer can pinpoint ways to target drugs precisely to those patients where they will be most effective. Our work makes a step towards more effective and personalised cancer treatments, ultimately saving lives."

VAST MAJORITY OF WORKERS SUPPORT REMOTE WORKING OF SOME FORM

Over 95% of workers now support some form of remote working, according to results from the Second Annual National Remote Working Survey.

Results also showed that fewer than 5% of respondents are in favour of a full-time return to the office.

Over 6,400 people were surveyed from both the public and private sectors by NUI Galway and the Western Development Commission.

The results showed an increase in support for some form of remote working since the first survey a year before, which took place just after 'work from home' advice was first implemented.

It revealed that the number of employees who want to work exclusively from home has nearly tripled over the last year, from 12% a year ago to 32% now.

The survey also reflected the attitudes of 2,100 managers towards the effect of remote working on their teams.

Just less than 47% of managers responded that there was no difference between managing their team remotely and doing so in-person, though 44% said there was more difficulty in managing remote teams. Just 9% said it was easier to do remotely.

CLIMATE CHANGE DESTROYING WORLD'S OLDEST ANIMAL PAINTING

Indonesia cave paintings are decaying at a rapid pace due to the effects of climate change, according to researchers.

This includes the picture of a wild pig drawn 45,500 years ago on the island of Sulawesi, which is thought to be the world's oldest cave painting of an animal.

Other cave-motifs in the area depicting scenes of hunting and supernatural entities are subject to the same rate of decay.

The salts within the caves swell and shrink as the environment heats and cools, which can cause parts of the pictures to flake off the cave walls.



Introducing spirituality to young people in a secular world

In my last article we explored the lack of spiritual consciousness in modern secular society and the capacity of meditation as a universal practice to awaken and deepen personal spiritual experience, whether such experience finds expression in secular or religious terms.

This way of looking at spirituality is very different to the traditional understanding in conservative societies which spoke of religion instead of spirituality and which saw religion in terms of strict adherence to a set of beliefs. Although often conflated, faith and belief are very different things. As I see it, the concepts of faith and spirituality have more to offer modern society than the concepts of belief and religion. Certainly the former must precede the latter. Please don't misunderstand me – I have profound respect for religious belief but I think if we truly want to help young people to explore how to live well, to tease out what we mean by mindful living, then the starting point in modern secular society must be on personal spiritual experience rather than religious belief.

Shy nature

Australian researcher Phil Daughtry observes that "given its inexplicit and shy nature" signs of the spiritual can easily be overlooked or dismissed as irrelevant by secular, mainstream culture. He argues that while young people are "least likely to be engaged with traditional forms of spiritual teaching yet ironically [they] are most likely to engage in an open, non-didactic conversation about spirituality and religion". And so he cautions that an overzealous, too-certain, dogmatic religious approach may inhibit rather than enable tentative spiritual expression. Accordingly, whatever words we use to explore spirituality with those who do not identify meaningfully with any faith

Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



tradition, we must, initially at least, avoid the use of explicit religious language or theological terminology; instead, we must appeal to the innate desire to be live an authentic life.

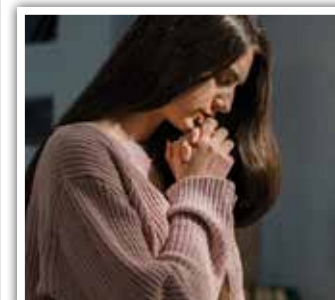
“A love of truth, a personal dedication to truth and a practical living out of life according to truth”

Whatever approach we take, it must be grounded in hope, and appeal to that 'shy hope in the heart' of every person. Our language and approach must be tentative and ambiguous, be comfortable with uncertainty and paradox and speak to the lived experience of those with whom we engage. Failure to engage effectively with young people will leave many without a meaningful way to name, recognise, and develop the sense of the sacred as an important orientation and way of being in the world.

Our education system, at least on paper, recognises the importance of spirituality in the development of the person. Section 9 of the Education Act 1998 requires all schools to "provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and... promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students... in consultation with their parents, having regard to the

characteristic spirit of the school". In addition, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the body responsible for the development of curriculum, has issued Well-Being Guidelines for the Junior Cycle. These state that the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing encompasses social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental and physical wellbeing. In other words, it acknowledges spirituality as a vital component of wellbeing. However, the Department of Education and Science has done little to define what it understands by the term 'spiritual development' or how it should be evaluated. Indeed, it seems likely that it conflates spiritual development with religious instruction.

The Irish theologian Fr Dermot Lane has defined faith as "a love of truth, a personal dedication to truth and a practical living out of life



according to truth". I think that works very well as a definition of spirituality, especially if adapted to read "a search for truth, a personal dedication to truth and a practical living out of life according to truth". Fr Lane goes on to say it is "An insight into the truth of God followed by a personal response to that insight which affects daily living". The first sentence works very well even as a definition of spirituality in a secular context while the second sentence clarifies how that may be experienced in a religious tradition that believes in God.

Young people need support in finding their spiritual voice in ways that resonate with and are authentic to their lived experience. Fr Lane has also written that "The question of God for us today in the twenty-first century, as distinct from any other century, is about the possibility of experiencing God in the world." Meditation has much to offer in this regard; research demonstrates that meditation has the capacity to awaken and nurture the spirituality of the person. It enables one to give metaphorical expression to personal spiritual experience. It can enable young people to test the validity of personal spiritual experience for themselves and lead to their incorporating such experience of spirituality within their own structures of meaning and those of the culture in which they live.

Silence

Because the language of meditation is silence, meditation is an ideal practice for engaging young people in a search for truth; as a daily practice it can assist them in the process of exploring their inner lives by providing space, opportunity, and validity for rich spiritual experience and mysteriously awakens that shy hope in the heart which is our innate spirituality. Parents would do well to consider the possibility of family meditation on a regular basis.

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

» Continued from Page 31



ble terrain. As would be expected, and very important as you get older, hiking improves your balance and helps to control your weight.

Also, of perennial importance, it boosts your mood. Research has shown that hiking has a positive impact on symptoms of stress and anxiety. While the vistas you pass would be explanation enough, the effects of exercise are in large part responsible for this, releasing hormones that result in 'happier' moods.

On a spiritual level, though, hiking does an enormous amount towards slowing you down after a busy week of work. In recent weeks, I have been doing a good bit of walking in the nearby Wicklow mountains and it's done wonders for setting a more contemplative pace for my racing mind. Observing the slower ways nature takes can't but have an effect upon your own inclination to hustle and bustle.

As you sit watching the sun move through the sky, or passively take in the wind stirring the trees, it's not so hard to believe that it's ok to slow down for a while, too. God stirs the world according to the rhythm he thinks best, and it's no harm to try and match it sometimes.

Some tips

Before darting into the hills, it's best to make sure you're adequately prepared, both physically and in terms of equipment.

Proper clothes, boots and provisions are essential for any sort of foray into the mountains. It's possible to go into outdoor shops and receive all the professional help you need in sourcing the right equipment, from fleeces, to base layers, to boots and socks.

However, it's still possible to receive most of the help you need online, too. A simple google of something along the lines of 'best hiking gear' or 'which hiking gear do I need?' will turn up perfectly suitable results.

A shorthand look at equipment will tell you that runners are fine for very easy terrain, but that it's a different story in the wilds. Boots or trail shoes are a must, with older hikers or peo-

ple with ankle difficulties advised to seek out something with ankle support. While it's no perfect safeguard against injury, they'll certainly help.

Breaking the boots in beforehand is a must, as otherwise your first experiences of the boots will be one of painful blisters. Good hiking socks can mitigate this, but it is important to get the boots right to avoid unnecessary suffering.

“Once you do make your way into the mountains, stick to the forest roads and well-signposted trails”

With regards to the rest of your clothing, a couple of pieces of advice to keep in mind are: light and breathable is best, and a 'layering' system is a must; don't be fooled at sea-level, as a perfectly warm day can quickly become chilly once the heights are ascended; always be prepared by bringing a couple of extra items in your bag (an extra layer, a hat and gloves at least).

Once the clothing and equipment are secured, next it's time to ensure we're up to the task on the level of fitness, health and safety. Starting off slowly is essential – whether that's



walking around the neighbourhood or local park, or taking brief trips some of the way up the local hill. You want to build up your fitness before tackling any major hikes.

Once you do make your way into the mountains, stick to the forest roads and well-signposted trails. This is the best way to progress from civil to 'wilder' walks. Consult maps or guides beforehand, as well as the weather forecast, and always tell someone where you're going – just in case.

Bringing some food and water is important too, as well as a small first aid kit. Again, this depends on the length of your walk. If it's a well known trail not too far from the house, you don't need much. However, if you're planning on trekking off into the Wicklow, Mourne or Kerry mountains for a couple of days, it's imperative you consider just how much you need.

Religious outings

This being *The Irish Catholic*, it'd be remiss if I didn't mention a couple of routes of religious significance.

St Patrick's Way in Co. Mayo takes in many of the region's holy wells and early Christian remnants, ending at Croagh Patrick, which speaks for itself. Either hike can be done on its own but combining the two makes for a real epic.

St Kevin's Way in Co. Wicklow is another route steeped in early Irish Christianity. Centred around Glendalough, it takes in the site of St Kevin's monastic settlement. Most of the settlement is gone unfortunately, but many of the remaining structures date back to the 11th and 12th Centuries.

A final one to consider is the Pilgrim's Path in Donegal, which makes its way up the back of the Slieve League cliffs. While not associated with one saint in particular like the other two, it leads to a Mass rock and derelict chapel where once illegal Masses were held during the Penal times of the 17th and 18th Centuries. The trail ends at the top of the Slieve League cliffs, which are three times the height of the Cliffs of Moher.

Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

“A h sure we will make a video, a bit of storytelling and poetry, some music and song, telling the story of Colmcille” says I. Well naivety is a wonderful thing! If I had any notion of what I was taking on I wouldn't have done it but here we are now with an hour long programme about Colmcille filmed in multiple locations around Donegal, Derry and Argyll in Scotland.

June 9 is Colmcille's feast day but a year of celebrations began on December 7, 2020 and runs until December 7, 2021 which is the 1500th anniversary of his birth. Many events have been planned over the year and you can find out more on www.colmcille1500.com. I felt that it was important that Lionra Leitir Ceanainn should be involved and should make sure that Irish is at the heart of the celebrations.

Indeed we have experienced the richness of working with contributors in Argyll and the Islands on the west of Scotland who are Gaidhlig speakers. Joy Dunlop has attended many of our online planning meetings and we regularly share emails – Joy writing in Gaidhlig and me in Irish. Initially I worried that I wouldn't understand enough but I have found that if I listen for overall meaning rather than worrying about individual words I can understand very well.

I have been enjoying the challenge of that and it has got me thinking. If Joy was talking on some random theme then I probably wouldn't have a notion but we have a shared context – Colmcille – and that gives me enough of a foot-hold to be able to follow her Gaidhlig. When I can relax and listen for meaning then the similarities between Irish and Gaidhlig become more apparent and I delight in making the connections.

We have an elderly man on the video talking about Colmcille in Iona, the life of the monks, the legacy of Colmcille. Initially I was at a loss but when Joy broke it down a little for me I gradually found that I could follow John and could delight in the way he talks about Colmcille as if he had been a much loved next-door neighbour. The programme *Sli Cholmcille* will be launched on the Lionra Leitir Ceanainn Facebook page – with subtitles – on Friday June 4, at 8pm.

So often in life we make presumptions about people. We decide in advance that we will not be able to communicate with them, not necessarily because we speak different languages but because we have different outlooks, different life experience, different goals. And yet somewhere beneath



those differences there are things that connect us, a shared context which could help us listen for meaning, understand what matters. I think that as we move towards a process for the Synod in Ireland we would do well to remember that.

I spoke last night at the launch of the book *Maynooth College reflects on Covid-19*. Across all the inputs there was an awareness of the challenges and trauma of the past year. There was also the sense that we are now being offered an opportunity to recalibrate our lives, to do things differently. That applies to the wider society – how we deal with inequality, with environmental degradation, with isolation – and also to the Church. How do we re-animate parishes? How do we re-engage people whose last thread of connection was broken when Mass went online? How do we draw out and reverence how people have experienced the presence – or absence – of God over these months?

I wished last night that we had been in a room in Maynooth College for the launch, that we could have continued the conversation late into the night because there was a lot to talk about. That is what we need going forward, the capacity to engage in open and honest conversations, not just with the people who agree with us but more widely. We have a shared experience of vulnerability and insecurity, a shared desire for well-being and fullness of life. I want to sit down with you over a cup of tea and ask, “How are you?”

Following a call to promote the priesthood

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

On January 15, 1994, while she was praying before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration at a retreat, Marion Mulhall received her vocation. This vocation was and still is “to promote the priesthood at any price, to use my skills and experience in advertising for the good of the Church,” Ms Mulhall tells *The Irish Catholic*.

“It was after Pope John Paul’s announcement that the Worldpriest Global Apostolate was founded and it quickly grew in size”

The fruits of this call are many. A lay Carmelite with a strong devotion to the mystics, Ms Mulhall is also the founder and CEO of Worldpriest Global Apostolate, a lay organisation of professional communications people formed in 2003 to “affirm the dignity, beauty and gift of the priesthood of Jesus Christ to humanity”. When asked about the work she has done, Ms Mulhall says that it is simply about “faithfulness to a vocation”.

“If you were to say to me to sum it up in one word, it’s faithfulness,” she continues. “I had been working as an entrepreneur very successfully in advertising for 25 years before receiving my call in 1994. I then started calling around to people and



Marion Mulhall, founder of Worldpriest Global Apostolate, meets Pope Francis June 3, 2016.

setting the wheels in motion. We quickly began to pick up pace and interest grew.

Sanctification

“At the time, it struck me that we didn’t have a dedicated day of prayer for the sanctification of our priests. This was something we spent a great deal of time hoping and praying for. Then, only a few years later in 2002, Pope John Paul II declared that the

Feast of the Sacred Heart would also be dedicated as a day of prayer for our priests. It made all our waiting and prayers worthwhile.”

It was after Pope John Paul’s announcement that the Worldpriest Global Apostolate was founded and it quickly grew in size. She and her team at Worldpriest then went on to develop and organise the Annual Global Rosary Relay for the Sanctification Priests, one of the Church’s

largest global prayer gatherings. On one day every year, each of the participating prayer locations prays a particular mystery of the Rosary at an allocated time in thanksgiving to God for our priests and to implore the protection and care of Our Lady, Mother of all priests, for all her priestly sons.

“Ms Mulhall says there’s always been a great symmetry to her life, which confirms to her the provenance of her call”

The idea for this global rally was an “inspired gift” which came to Ms Mulhall in 2011: “The gifted inspiration that I received from Our Lady was 20 countries, 20 mysteries,” Ms Mulhall explains. “Now, the meaning of that is pretty clear. It is the decades of the rosary. The day really belongs to Our Lady. It is her rosary, her mysteries, her priests – and priests are really touched by it.”

The Worldpriest organisation and the Global Rosary Rally are external signs of Ms Mulhall’s personal faith, she says. From a very young age, she had a strong attachment to the Faith, one which was nourished by her parents.

“Oh, they were great people,” Ms Mulhall says. “They were great people of faith themselves and helped me to grow and encouraged my faith. I was only thinking about this recently, that from when I was a young tot, the Faith has been important to me. Even at the age of three, I had a very strong attachment to St Aloysius Gonzaga. I treated him like a personal friend, even more so than a saint. My parents told me I was always talking about him, and that I even asked them why I wasn’t called Aloysius!”

Ms Mulhall doesn’t know where her attachment to St Aloysius could have come from, but she knows that an early blessing when she was just two days old from ‘The Rosary Priest’ – Ven. Fr Patrick Peyton – has had a major impact on the shape of her life. Ms Mulhall says there’s always been a “great symmetry” to her life, which confirms to her the provenance of her call.

“I always say that it was like having two baptisms,” Ms Mulhall says. “I can’t have been baptised when he blessed me, I was so young. Later, just five years ago in fact, I met Pope Francis and that day just happened to be the anniversary of Fr Peyton’s death and a Thursday as well. Thursday is the day we dedicate every month to the global rosary rally. Isn’t that an amazing thing?”

Global Rosary Rally

Although the Global Rosary Rally already spans almost the entire globe, Ms Mulhall always believes that it can continue to grow. For her own part, she says she “will never stop, every day I only get worse”.

“I believe I have been gifted and called to this vocation and all I can do is respond to it in faithfulness. I’m always looking for a new idea, a new way. But when you see beautiful priests coming together and praying with people over Zoom, I do think, can it get better than this,” Ms Mulhall concludes by saying.

The annual rally will take place on June 11 this year, when the world will join in praying the Rosary for the sanctification of all priests the world over. This year, the relay is devoted to the intentions of Pope Francis and will be led by Fr Willy Raymond CSC, president of Holy Cross Family ministries, which was founded by Ven. Fr Patrick Peyton. For more information about the relay and about the Worldpriest Global Apostolate or if you would like to support their mission by donating, visit www.worldpriest.com.

Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson



Delicious white chocolate and raspberry muffins

Tart raspberries and sweet white chocolate, what’s not to like? The best thing about this classic bakery-style muffin recipe is that it is completely customisable and can be used as a base for whatever flavour you feel like. If you’re not the biggest fan of white chocolate, dark chocolate works really well here too. Some other great ideas are blueberry, apple and cinnamon or double chocolate. Not only that but they are very easy to make, a perfect recipe for beginner bakers or for making with the kids this summer. It makes about 6-7 jumbo sized, fluffy muffins but if you don’t have a muffin tin to hand you could always make mini versions in a cupcake tin which would yield more. Another thing that can sometimes be tricky to get hold of are full-size muffin cases but you can always just make your

own rustic, tulip shaped muffin cases from squares of baking paper.

Ingredients

- 100g soft margarine
 - 125g caster sugar
 - 2 free range eggs
 - 100ml full-fat natural yoghurt
 - 50ml whole milk
 - 225g self-raising flour
 - ¼ tsp baking powder
 - 25g fresh raspberries
 - 35g white chocolate cut into chips, plus extra for decoration
- Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/190°F/Gas mark 6. Line a muffin tin with large muffin cases. In a mixing bowl, cream the margarine and sugar together until pale and fluffy. In a separate smaller bowl, combine the eggs, milk and yoghurt. Then whisk this into the margarine and sugar mixture. At this point, it will



look bubbly and curdled but don’t panic! Sieve in the flour and baking powder and fold in gently. It is so important to try and not over-stir at this point or you will lose the fluffy texture you’re looking for. If the mixture is too thick you can add a very small amount of water to soften it. Now fold in the raspberries and chocolate chips. Try not to break the raspberries up too much while trying to evenly distribute them. Spoon out the mixture into your prepared muffin cases. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown. A skewer inserted into the middle of the muffin should come out clean. Leave the muffins to cool for a few minutes in the tin then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. They can then be served as they are or for an extra touch of indulgence, drizzle some melted white chocolate over the top.

These muffins are best enjoyed on the day they are made but they will keep for about three days in an airtight container at room temperature. They also freeze really well so if there are any leftovers save them for another day!



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Media obsession with the 'far right' provides ample cover for left-wing conspirators

Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you." This worrying phrase comes back to me every time I hear conspiracy theories being obsessed about in the media. And predictably such discussions are usually linked to obsessions about the 'far right'.

The **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) has been particularly guilty as charged on both counts, but recently they've taken it to a new level – a whole new series on famous conspiracy theories. They could be accused of giving air to these theories, but the stories do have a certain fascination. On Tuesday of last week the topic under the 'conspirascope' was the allegation that the 1969 moon landing was a hoax. We heard from the devotees of the theory with stories of lunar inconsistencies, including one awkward and ignorant moment when a guy tried to swear on the Bible that he had been to the moon. The hoax footage was supposed to have been filmed by director Stanley Kubrick, who allegedly admitted his guilt in bizarre coded messages in his later film *The Shining*. Conspiracies certainly provided the



Pope St Paul VI watches the moon landing in 1969. The conspiracy theory about the event got an airing on Newstalk. Photo: CNS.

plots for films like *Capricorn One*, *Conspiracy Theory*, and TV series *The X-Files*. More recently there's the 'bent coppers' conspiracy from *Line of Duty* – 'it goes all the way to the top', like a good elevator. The proliferation of bizarre theories provides effective camouflage for those involved in real conspiracies and the media's obsession with the far right provides ample cover for left wing conspirators.

Resurgence

You couldn't get much farther to the right than the

Nazis, and you'd always be worried about a resurgence. I'm not convinced that Nazi memorabilia would bring this about, but it might accompany it. On **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk) that same Tuesday, there was a minor controversy about a Nazi poster being auctioned from Co. Meath. Mick Barry TD was effectively saying 'down with this sort of thing', and thought the suitable place for the item was in a museum, so people could learn from it. Columnist Ian O'Doherty saw this as a version of left-

wing censorship, but their area of agreement was considerable – both had revulsion of Nazi ideology. I liked Mr O'Doherty's assertion that if you clamp down too heavily on such items you'd be in danger of making martyrs out of morons, though I could also see merit in Deputy Barry's museum idea.

Show

Back on the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) last Friday the show started with Fr Iggy O'Donovan. I found his contribution very downbeat about the state of the Church. At the end he said he had hope but I didn't find much of it in the rest of the interview. Yes he had some valid points, for example about the apathy towards the Church in some quarters and about the legacy of clericalism. And yes the pandemic exposed weaknesses from which the Church will take a long time to recover. But recovery will not be promoted by such bleak assessments. With Pentecost imminent I would like to have heard more about the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I find Fr Iggy too inclined to see things in black and white – the lovely liberals v the nasty right wingers.

Towards the end Fr Iggy said there was room for all

PICK OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY

BBC Radio 4 Sunday May 30, 7.10am

A detailed look at the ethical and religious issues of the week

UNREPORTED WORLD

Channel 4 Friday June 4, 7.30pm

In the city that never sleeps, *Unreported World* discovers a homelessness epidemic in New York's shelter system made worse by the Covid-19 crisis.

SELMA

RTÉ 2 Friday June 4, 9.30pm

(2014) David Oyelowo, Carmen Ejogo, Tim Roth. A chronicle of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.'s campaign to secure equal voting rights via an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965.

views, but where were the diverse views on the show? Once again it was one of Pat Kenny's wooden interviews, when the issue was crying out for a real debate or discussion. Mr Kenny obviously wasn't willing or able to ask any challenging questions, even as devil's advocate, so he should have included a guest that might have a more hopeful, less polarised view of the Church's present and future. There were accusations of hypocrisy on the part of the Church, but the prophets of diversity would want to question their interest in hearing a diversity of views.

I found there was a different tone when Pat Kenny interviewed Fr Aidan Troy on

last Monday morning's show. Fr Troy is currently ministering in St Joseph's Church near the Champs Élysées in Paris and was commenting on the opening up of society and Church after Covid-19 restrictions. He was so enthusiastic about the return of First Communion and about the great lay volunteer teachers who did all the preparation on Zoom with the children. And in other good news there were 23 young adults for Confirmation. Now that made me hopeful.

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



Music

Pat O'Kelly



The NSO battles on to bring us much cheer

Despite current restrictions on public gatherings, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra has been battling on at the National Concert Hall with Friday evening broadcasts on Lyric FM repeated on Sunday mornings on RTÉ television. These take place without an audience, which is less than satisfactory for the dedicated musicians but, at least, they are employed.

Tomorrow's May 28 programme, under chief conductor Jaime Martín, opens with the Allegretto from Mahler's Fifth Symphony said to express "a love letter in musical form" that can be "intensely poetic and deeply personal". Luchino Visconti's 1971 film *Death in Venice* used the movement to particular effect.



Tara Erraught who will feature in the NCH tomorrow evening (Friday).

The concert concludes with Mendelssohn's First Symphony written in 1824 when the composer was 15. Mind you, he had already completed 13 string

symphonies but, with its added woodwind and brass, the C minor is considered his first 'real' excursion into the genre. Built on the classical style of Mozart, occasional dramatic influences of Beethoven can also be detected in the outer movements. In between comes a lyrical Andante and an energetic Minuet.

Child prodigy

The third composer in this concert is Erich Korngold (1897-1957) who, like Mendelssohn, was a child prodigy. His *Sechs einfache Lieder* (six simple songs) were published in 1916 but he had been working on them from the age of 13.

They have been described as revealing "a composer of

immense talent and considerable resources" and that being "richly romantic and highly impressionistic, [the songs] show Korngold's signature soaring emotions, lustrous harmonies and dramatic immediacy are already fully formed". The texts are principally by Joseph Eichendorff (1788-1857), one of the great German romantic lyricists. Dundalk diva Tara Erraught will be tomorrow's soloist.

Born in what is now Brno in the Czech Republic, Korngold came from a Jewish musical family. His exceptional talents were recognised early on with Mahler calling him a 'genius' and Richard Strauss recommending he should avoid Vienna's conservatory, as he

was already years ahead of anything he could learn there. His ballet *The Snowman* was a sensation when premièred in the Austrian capital when he was 11.

Korngold probably reached his peak in Europe in the 1920s, particularly through his opera *Die tote Stadt* (The Dead City) for which he and his father produced the libretto under the shared pen name of Paul Schott.

Besides his compatriot composers, Puccini was wildly enthusiastic about it following its simultaneous premières in Hamburg and Cologne in December 1920. The NSO gave it a concert performance at the NCH on April 12, 2019 under Patrik Ringborg with Celine

Byrne, Charles Workman and Ben McAteer in leading roles.

Producer Max Reinhardt invited Korngold to California in 1934 asking him to arrange Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* score as film music. Numerous other highly successful Hollywood commissions followed and Korngold, who became a naturalised US citizen in 1943, escaped the horrors unleashed in Germany and Austria by the Nazi regime that had already banned his music.

Korngold died in Los Angeles in November 1957 following a stroke. His output, which afterwards experienced a period of neglect, is deservedly resurfacing in concert and recital programmes.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



The Catholic roots of Christian culture in the USA

Peter Costello

The other week I was writing in these pages about the cultural meaning of the advent of printing in North America, which began not with the English puritans but with the Spanish clergy.

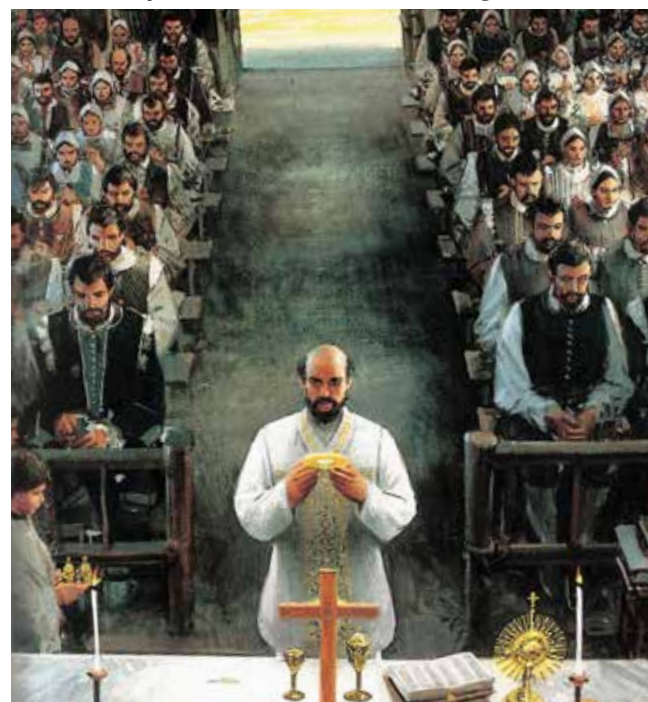
This focused my mind on the fact that the national myths of the USA, but not of Canada or Mexico, manage to exclude any particular narrative if it was not puritan.

What the Mexicans call the 'US Intervention in Mexico' in 1845-46 remains in the memories of some Americans as the beginning of the US 'role in the world'. But the earlier history of Latino culture in the territory of what is the United States today plays no part in popular memory. The pilgrim fathers came to New England in 1620 - which is late in the day again compared with Mexico and Canada. Jamestown in Virginia was founded in 1607. An earlier effort was made in 1585 at Roanoke, North Carolina.

Dates

Contrast these dates with those of the Latino areas of the USA. The city of St Augustine in Florida was founded on September 8, 1565 by Spanish admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Florida's first governor.

By some two decades, St Augustine is the oldest continuously-inhabited European-established settlement in the United States, and was the capital of Spanish North America for some 200 years.



Offering Mass in early colonial Florida (painting by John Berkey 1988)

This long gap between the arrival of Columbus in the West Indies and founding of Jamestown is acknowledged by only a few Americans as 'our forgotten century'.

The city was once captured by the British, but then returned to the Spanish. It was finally annexed by Andrew Jackson in 1819 - it is all too easy these days to forget the reality of the force of arms by which the USA was created.

Ignored

Earlier American civilisations were at this time ignored for the most part, as neither the English nor the Spanish set much store by the history and cultures of the Native Americans.

The point which should not be overlooked is that the better known and celebrated English settlements were preceded by some two centuries and more of Catholic culture in a band across the southern states from Miami on the Atlantic to Santa Monica on the Pacific.

Yet this has no role in the national myth. As one writer, Joseph Judge, put it in 1988: "Was ever a tale writ in blood. Or more put away in memory...for little remains but bone and parchment."

But there is a great reluctance to make this era a part of 'the American story' in any way at all. Which seems very strange in some ways, though not perhaps in these islands, where the reluctance to accept other people's stories as part of 'our story', is a well-established mode of thought.

Just what sort of 'Good Catholics' were our grandparents?

The Best Catholics in the World: The Irish, the Church and the End of a Special Relationship by Derek Scally (Sandycove/Penguin Ireland, €20)

John Bruton

Derek Scally is a journalist with *The Irish Times*, based in Germany for the last 20 years. His perspective on the subject of Catholicism in Ireland is shown in the dedication of the book to his parents, "with thanks for their belief".

Aged 44, he says he is "a member of the last generation to have a full Irish Catholic childhood". He served as an altar boy at Mass in his north Dublin parish, but now admits to having a "shaky grasp on Roman Catholicism".

This is an honest book and painful reading, all the more so because the author is not fundamentally unsympathetic to Irish Catholicism. He sees that it had given meaning and purpose, to the lives of successive generations of Irish people.

He conducted hundreds of interviews with members of the Church, from Cardinal Seán Brady, to the head of the Sisters of Mercy, to the people still active in his own old parish in Edenmore. He draws out their understanding of the events that influenced the decline in practice and faith among Irish Catholics over the past 60 years. He also interviewed victims of clerical sex abuse, former residents in mother and baby homes, and women who lived out their lives in places like the Magdalen laundries.

Inevitably the picture is selective. The focus is on those who suffered, or were treated unjustly in Church settings.

Counter-factual

There is no counter-factual in the sense that the book does not explore what might have happened if these Church-run institutions had never existed, and people were left to their fate.

There are no international comparisons either. The book deals with early twentieth century Irish Catholicism, as if it was something completely unique for its time. Many of the abuses and cruelties the book identifies were found in other cultures too. It is hard for a reader to quantify

how uniquely 'Irish', or 'Catholic', the problems were.

The author accepts that priests and nuns have taken the blame, not only for the failings of some among them, but also for the failings of wider Irish society.

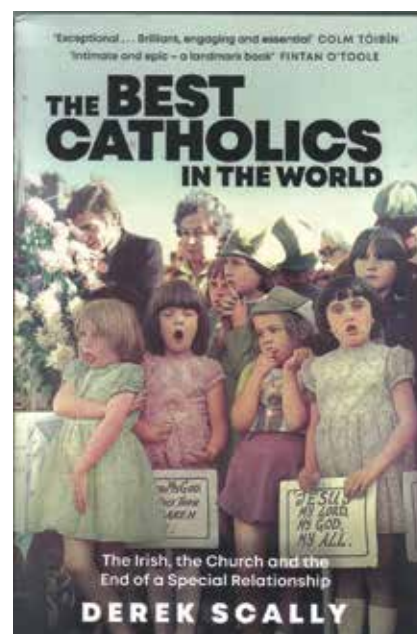
“The Church reflected the evasions of Irish society, just as much as the other way around”

Ireland was much poorer financially when some of the abuses occurred. But lack of money is never an excuse for turning a blind eye to rape or cruelty.

Class distinctions abounded, and 'respectability' was at a premium. This encouraged silence about embarrassing things. It allowed 'knowing,' but simultaneously not 'really knowing', that certain things were going on.

In this, the Church reflected the evasions of Irish society, just as much as the other way around. But it is human nature that, when failings are finally exposed, the anger is directed at others, or at the system.

It is true that Irish society was shaped by strict - and sometimes unforgiving - notions of sexual morality which were inculcated by the Catholic Church. But this was not a particularly Irish, or even



Catholic, thing, Victorian morality, and Victorian hypocrisy, was to be found on our neighbouring island, and further afield too. It just survived a decade or so longer here.

It was Irish families, not Irish priests as such, who banished unmarried daughters, when they became pregnant.

It was cash-strapped Irish governments which, in the early years of the State, were content to allow religious orders to take on the responsibility for running reformatories, and other institutions to shelter people, whose families who could not, or sometimes would not, look after them.

Scientific

This book is impressionistic rather than scientific. The author allows the interviewees to tell their story. It does not provide a roadmap to redemption for the Church in Ireland, or for Irish society, but it contains some hints.

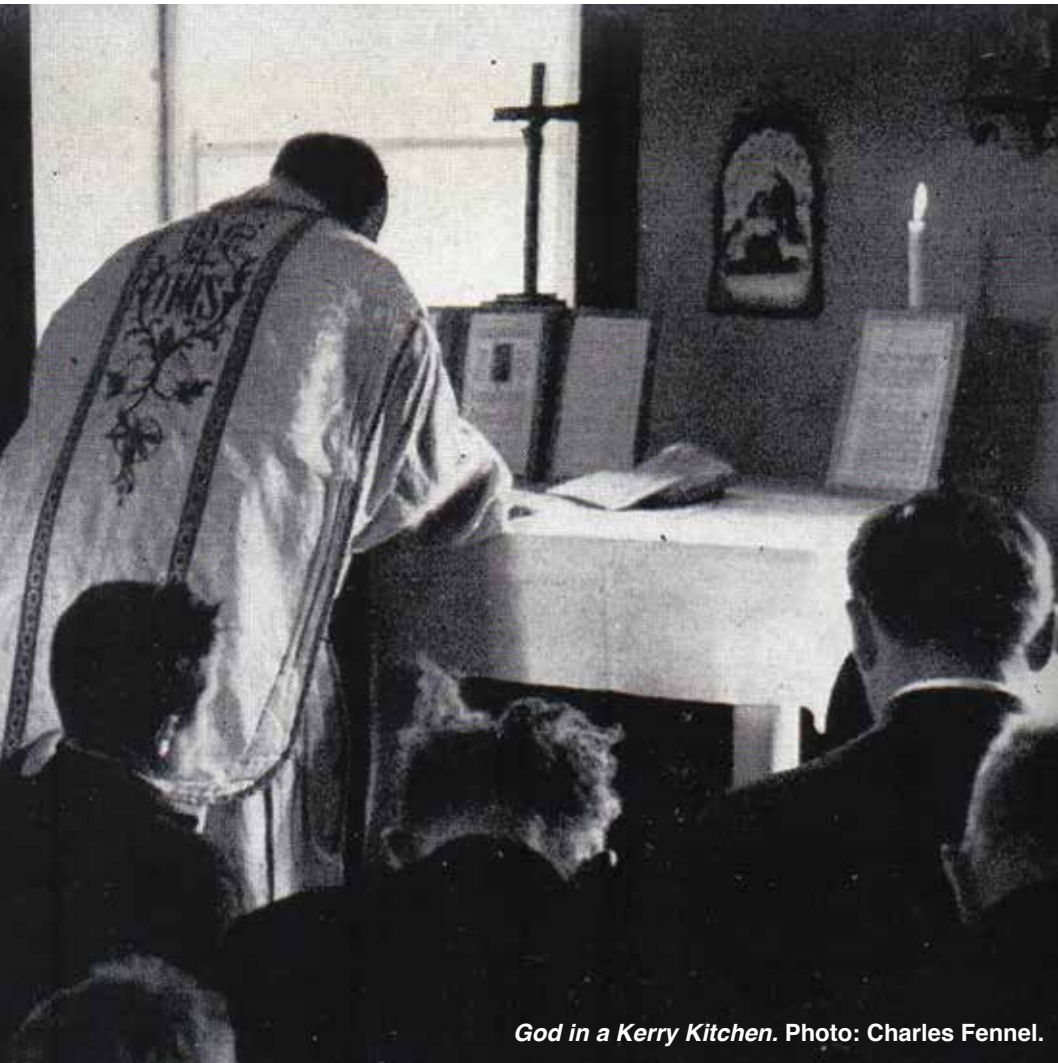
Although the author thanks his parents for their belief, he admits that religion was never discussed in his home when he was growing up, "let alone personal faith". That job was left to the school.

So it is no wonder that, when the scandals came along, people could stop going to Mass and feel good about it, without thinking what they were losing.

As Bishop Paul Tighe told the author, the Church discouraged people

“The book deals with early twentieth century Irish Catholicism, as if it was something completely unique for its time”

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.



God in a Kerry Kitchen. Photo: Charles Fennel.

from asking questions: "We became a lazy Church, and we are reaping that legacy now", he said.

Learn

The author, who lives in Germany, might usefully have studied the Catholic Church there over the last century. That might show whether there are lessons Irish Catholicism could learn, or could have learned. Equally he might have established if the Irish case is really as exceptional as his provocative book title implies.

While this book will annoy many people, it may be a spur to the necessary heartfelt and rigorous discussion about the role of faith in our society, a discussion Irish people have been postponing for a long time.

It should also prompt us to ask if this generation itself, like the previous one, is turning a blind eye to family responsibilities, like when it leaves elderly relatives unvisited in nursing homes, the running of which is now no longer delegated by Irish families to vocational nuns, but to profit-seeking corporations.

i John Bruton was Taoiseach from 1994-1997.

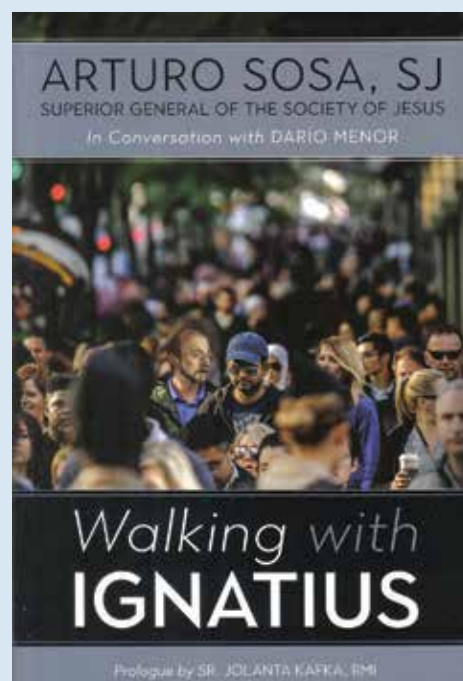
Following the Ignatian Way

Walking with Ignatius

by Arturo Sosa SJ, in conversation with Dario Menor, prologue by Sr Jolanta Kafka RMI (Messenger Publications, €19.95/£19.95)

Peter Costello

In conversation with a respected journalist, the Superior General of the Jesuits provides some reflections that will provide, so to speak, a theme for the 'Ignatius 500 Year' we are facing into. The key idea is that in his own life St Ignatius provides an instance of conversion, of a change of thinking and living that is transformative. The idea of conversion should awake all people, perhaps even not Catholics, to seek to find a way in which they can reorient their lives and move forward to something not only more fruitful, but more engaging with others. This should not be thought of as a book for the eyes of 'ours only' - as the old Jesuit version of 'most secret' ran. The way of Ignatius is not intended to be a secret, but an open message in clear. In the coming year we will hear much more of this.



Maynooth and Covid-19

Maynooth College reflects on Covid-19: New Realities in Uncertain Times

ed. Jeremy Corley, Neil Xavier O'Donoghue and Salvador Ryan, foreword by Archbishop Eamon Martin (Messenger Publications, €9.95/£8.95)

Peter Costello

I write this on a morning when queues are forming outside Penney's department store as people seek madly to mark what many are bound to see as the end of the Covid-crisis. The idea of moving on too quickly has to be resisted. Ireland as a society has to take time to reflect on what this last year and more has meant to us personally, and socially as a community - and this is what these sixteen essays presented in this book from the faculty at St Patrick's College Maynooth attempt to do.

Historians and sociologists are doubtless at work already preparing explorations of these recent events in the light of their disciplines.

These essays which are intended for a wide readership and not just academic discussion explore what the Covid-era has meant to the Church, and more vitally perhaps what it may mean for the future.

The essay by Salvador Ryan, 'The Final Rupture? Covid-19 and Popular Religious Practice in Ireland' connects with earlier work he has done and may be the most important piece in the book. It explores issues that weigh heavily on the minds of many involved in parish life.

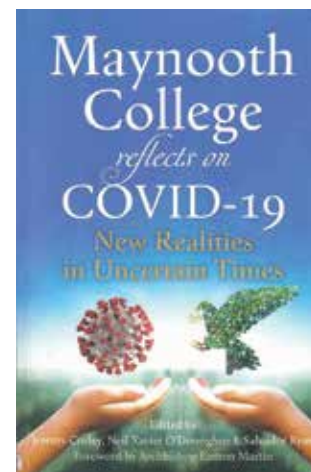
Can we pick up where we left off? It is very unlikely. But what develops could all too easily be allowed to be affected by the trends of society rather than the parish trying to affect life in the district round it.

Strikes

That point strikes one in other places too. The parishes have perhaps been too closely absorbed in themselves. Perhaps they need to see themselves as a part of the wider community it ways it never did before.

The full effect of what has happened over the last year or so will only slowly become apparent. There is a moral reckoning to be made about many aspects of the period, especially the strangely uncivic opinions and acts of many of our neighbours. But was the reaction of the some in the Church appropriate either?

There was much talk about 'freedom': and that is



something that needs to be opened up to better understanding. As Yeats once said, "In dreams begin responsibilities". Many call to be free but also free from social responsibility. That is something that needs to be discussed. Citizens have rights, but also duties. The ideal of mutual aid fades away in sterile controversy.

Online

And also, as is so often the case these days, all too many people, and especially all too many Catholics, are happy to accept what they read online from the US. Or more often than not they pay no attention at all to the source of the information they accept.

Indeed that may well be the core of the matter for the future: our relations with 'the truth.' When the infections cease and the last individuals have been inoculated the moral reckoning will continue.

The essays in this book are designed to aid and abet those living and working in parishes to develop ideas and

strategies to get the parishes through the next period of change. It ought to be widely read; discussed and used for there can be no return to the old, perhaps too comfortable and unchallenged ways for many.

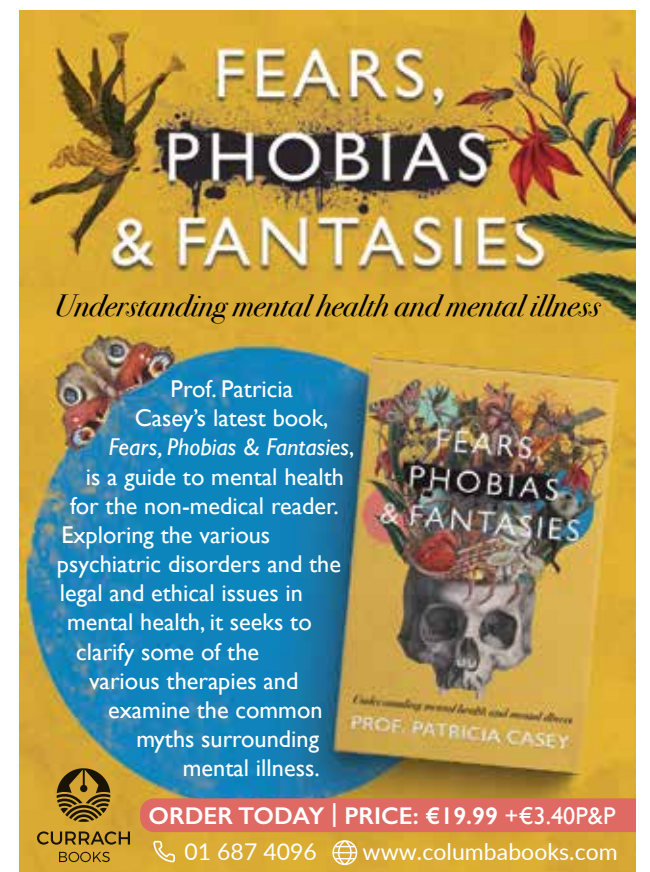
Surprises

One of the pleasant surprises in this book was not the essays that make up the book, but the introductory conversation between Austen Ivereigh and Pope Francis.

This, in a few pages, was a revelation of the character, mind and caring skills of Pope Francis. He quotes from Virgil several times, and refers also to *I Promessi Sposi*, that key book of modern Italian culture, the book which in its way helped create the very Idea of Italy, a classic novel which hardly anyone on this small island will be aware of.

Rather than rely on worn out clichés of the daily preacher the Pope adverts to works of the imagination which are really alive in his memory and those of many Italians. Wonderful. The reader may well exclaim out loud almost, "What a man! What a mind!" It is no discourtesy to the other writers to say his few pages are really the beating heart of the book, his words the touchstone of reality and possibility.

"Take care of the now, for the sake of tomorrow," he says, "always creatively, with a simple creativity, capable of inventing something new each day. Inside the home that's not hard to discover, but don't run away, don't take refuge in escapism, which in this time is of no use to you."



ORDER TODAY | PRICE: €19.99 +€3.40P&P
01 687 4096 www.columbabooks.com

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

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.



To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact eve.kerton@focusireland.ie or phone 1850 204 205

FOCUS
Ireland



Please remember GOAL in your Will

42 years on we continue to deliver lifesaving support to the most vulnerable people in our world. Leaving a gift in your Will is priceless.

Contact Courtenay on 01 2809779 or via email at cpollard@goal.ie

Registered Charity No. 20010980; CHY 6271

By remembering Missio Ireland in your Will, you are leaving a gift of hope for all God's children

Missio Ireland is the Holy Father's official charity for overseas mission and missionaries.

Please help your Church to survive & flourish!

To learn how, call Fiona on 01 497 2035 or email info@missio.ie



Remembering
**MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS**

Samples / Information
KENNEDY PRINTERS
BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND
Tel. 027 50102
www.kennedyprinters.ie
email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

SERVICES

ALL UNWANTED home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

GENTLEMAN AVAILABLE for gardening, painting, handyman jobs. Anything considered. Phone 0877183105

FURNITURE/EXERCISE EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

WHITE CANE CHAISE LOUNGE with cushion, three-seater pale blue/green sofa, twist and shape exercise platform. All in good condition. Contact 087 2442386.

Advertorial

Hoping...

to be in a relationship?

Seeking...

someone who shares your faith?

Finding...

it difficult to meet the right person?

Then call Heavenly Partners on 01 568 6568

www.heavenlypartners.ie

heavenlypartners

Support Irish Missionaries



'NET helped me make my faith SO much stronger than it's ever been, and it's really helped me improve as a man of God.' – **Michael (19), Dublin**

Please help support young NET missionaries like Michael to minister to the youth of Ireland.

Phone 074 919 0606 to make a donation today.

Who will pass on the flame of faith?

For over 130 years, *The Irish Catholic* has been a voice of hope and inspiration for Catholics in Ireland. Help us pass on the flame of faith, by remembering us in your Will.

Phone 01 6874028 in strictest confidence

Be part of the Miracle | China Church Solidarity

I have been visiting China since 1979 and working systematically there since 2000. In 2014, we were able to open an Augustinian Sisters' Active contemplative Monastery (pictures below). I unhesitatingly call this a wonder and a miracle in the context of Communist China. The foundation of this monastery can be sourced to many, including the prayers and financial support of many in Ireland and Britain, but in a special way to the extraordinary faith of two people: the Mother Foundress, Sr Mary, who with her family lived through all the oppression of the '50's and '60's in China and the positive response of an elderly bishop despite his suffering during the same period.

I once asked Sr Mary's Bishop how was it possible for him to say yes when asked to sponsor

this Contemplative Monastery in his diocese in such difficulties for Christians in China. His reply was profound: "When Sister Mary told me her story and the dream of her contemplative vocation, my twenty years in prison, ten of these in solitary confinement, flashed to memory, painful as they were. But in a moment I saw the point of it all. It was a grace that allowed me to recognise and understand her call to initiate a contemplative monastery, as that was the only option available to me while in prison – Contemplation."

The Monastery was formally opened in 2014. However, permission to open the Monastery was given by the government with a BIG CONDITION, namely, that a Nursing Home for the Aged would be attached to the monastery. This was acceptable

to the sisters and would constitute the "active" part of their mission.

We expect the cost of the nursing home to be about one million, nine hundred thousand US dollars. The Catholics of China have collected \$500,000 to date and now I'm seeking support outside of China to raise another \$1,000,000.

I am most grateful for your generosity to us over the past twenty year which has helped strengthen the Church of China in its mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Please continue to support the mission of the Monastery with your prayers. If you wish to support with a donation, please return the coupon on the lower left or donate via Paypal on our website: www.ccschina.co.uk.



Please print in block letters

Name

Address

Post Code

Please send cheque made payable to CCS or cash
FAO Fr Eamonn O'Brien ssc, China Church Solidarity,
Dalgan Park, Navan, Co Meath, C15 AY2Y.

Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



All dogs go to heaven



SOME PEOPLE ARE LUCKY to have one 'Uncle Jack' as they grow up; I had two. My mother had a brother called Jack, and an uncle of the same name. Over time, each got his own suffix, to distinguish them: her brother became 'Uncle-Jack-in-the-bank' (who, when he retired, became 'Uncle-Jack-in-Galway') and her uncle was 'Uncle-Jack-the-priest'. He never retired – not officially anyway.

'Uncle-Jack-the-priest' was also 'Uncle-Jack-the-greyhound-trainer'. Canon law at the time forbade priests from having anything to do with a sport to which gambling might be attached, so an Irish-canon-law solution had to be found to a universal canon-law prohibition. In

every parish where he ministered, Uncle Jack found homes where greyhounds were parked, fed and found, walked and taught to race. Taking the pseudonym 'T.P. McCarthy', his dogs participated in races up and down the country, often with Uncle Jack viewing the races, but always from a distance. In his lifetime, the greyhound track in Cork was on the Western Road. Admission was forbidden to clerics, but clerics might become friendly with families who had homes backing on to the track, from which races might be viewed. I don't think the canon-law formulators dreamed of such possibilities, but Uncle Jack did.

Despite his love for dogs and dog-racing, Uncle-Jack-

the-priest was not in any way a trivial character. In the parishes where he served, he left a trail of Lourdes grottoes, including one particularly beautiful one near Glanmire, just east of Cork city – and a reputation for reliable, dutiful service.

I have followed him in two of the parishes to which he was appointed. For most of the 1960s, he served as parish priest in Uibh Laoire, housed in a beautiful mansion overlooking a lake in the splendidly-named townland of Tir-na-spideoga (meaning 'the land of the robins'). Uncle Jack had two curates to assist him and enjoyed a life of some leisure, involving a lot of driving, poker-playing and greyhound racing. By the time I hit Uibh Laoire, the mansion was sold, the curates had gone on to greener pastures and the workload had doubled. I have a feeling Uncle-Jack-the-priest

might have smiled on me though, as I, like him, got to grip with this scenic place, in all its moods and tenses.

My current parish also provided Uncle-Jack-the-priest with a home for seven years. He was sent here as a young man to mind his uncle, the doddery Fr Denis, who remained as parish priest till he died aged 91. I don't think those were happy years for the younger man; maybe it was a bit like ministering as a priest but living at home under the authority of one's parents. Maybe that's when he developed a passion for greyhound racing?

Nevertheless, he 'ran the race to the finish', as St Paul's reading, suitably chosen for his funeral Mass in 1979, put it. And he kept the faith. And if there are dogs in heaven, and I feel there must be, I would imagine he's racing them still.

Racing dogs round the Republic

● My priestly granduncle who raced greyhounds had stories told of him in every parish where he served: everywhere he was known, in the Cork accent, as "de priest who liked de dogs"! In Inchigeela I heard about a trip he took to Clonmel for a race, with a gang of youngsters he had brought

along, as well as the champion hounds. The youngsters, who were supposedly minding the dogs, were all discovered smoking by the priest. He was outraged, not at the youngsters' behaviour, but at the danger to canine health: "Stop the smoking", he roared: "think of the dogs!"

Inviting youth to Sunday Mass

● One of the challenges in the parish where I serve is to invite young people to take part in Sunday Mass. The Bidding Prayers seem to suit, but the prayers need to be topical. With them in mind, I devise bidding prayers every week, which the ACP are so kind as to allow me to publish on their website. You are welcome to use these prayers: simply go to www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie, click on the LITURGY tab, and go to the third section there, from which you can download prayers for this Sunday. Free! I hope they are a help to you.



The Little Way Association HELPING PEOPLE AFFECTED BY VIRUS

India is bearing the brunt of a new wave of the pandemic. A doctor in Mumbai has described a covid ward there as resembling a scene from Dante's *Inferno*. Priests are among those dying from the illness, crematoria are overloaded, and at least one diocese has been offering its facilities to be used for treating covid patients. Even those who have not contracted the virus are suffering from the disease's impact on the Indian economy and society.

Can you spare a donation for covid-stricken India?

The Little Way Association is in touch with the church in India, gathering details of the most pressing needs there. Many of our supporters in Britain and Ireland have themselves been affected by the pandemic but, if you can spare a donation for India, it will be forwarded to clergy and religious there without deduction.

Every penny that you donate goes intact to provide basic sustenance, water, medicine and housing for the children, families and individuals who need them.

Please give what you can. Thank you and may God reward your generosity.

All our donors are remembered at Masses offered for their intentions and the missionaries always promise prayers for their benefactors.



"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

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat. Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **POOR AND NEEDY PEOPLE OF INDIA**
€..... NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES
€..... WELLS AND CLEAN WATER
€..... MASS OFFERINGS
(Please state no. of Masses _____)
€..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to
www.littlewayassociation.com

**DONATIONS FOR THE
MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT
DEDUCTION FOR ANY
EXPENSES.**