

# The Irish Catholic

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# Border parishes fear Brexit will lead to dark days of past, warns Primate

## 'Ireland needs bridges rather than borders'

Greg Daly

Ireland's border communities fear border structures and barriers becoming magnets for violence in the wake of a hard Brexit, the Primate of All-Ireland has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about his trip to Poland this month for the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh said several of his fellow bishops expressed their concerns about Brexit and he had explained how crucial the European movement has been to Ireland's peace process.

In his comments, the archbishop tried "putting a human face on the sort of high level senior negotiations" that took place between EU leaders in Salzburg last week, he said.

Dr Martin had explained how "the solidarity of other European countries formed

a very important backdrop and canvass upon which the Irish peace process was written", he said, noting how John Hume had understood this especially well and had "effectively used the European platform to bring us beyond the kind of squabbles and narrow understanding of nationalism which could itself engender strife and division".

### Struggles

"Hume was very much somebody who spoke about our common belonging to Europe as something that lifted us beyond the interior strifes and struggles that could happen between near neighbours. In other words, he was about bridges rather than borders," he said.

The archbishop said he has used the theme of bridges not borders in speaking to his fellow European bishops about

» Continued on Page 2

## Recalling a remarkable papal visit

Two boys dressed as Pope Francis share a joke during an opening ceremony for the World Meeting of Families in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal on August 21. They are featured in a new commemorative book published by Columba Press to mark the Pope's visit. See Pages 14 and 15. Photo: Noel Ferry



MARY KENNY

No, cancer is not lurking in every mouthful PAGE 5



PAIN OF MOTHERHOOD

Bonding with your baby  
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DAVID QUINN

What the Pope did and didn't say  
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# Calling young people to the challenge of discipleship

**N**ext month's Synod of Bishops in Rome will focus on the issue of youth and vocational discernment. Often when we speak of 'vocation' in the Church we mean the specific and unique call to priesthood and religious life. This is hugely important and as recent research in this newspaper showed, the situation in terms of priestly vocations in Ireland is dire.

We must never lose sight of the fact that within the life of the Church, God always calls people to take on the extraordinary vocation to serve him in consecrated life. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that it is a basic tenet of our Faith that God has a unique plan for each and every individual.

The task of the Christian is to discern where God is calling them and what he is asking of them in the concrete situations in which they find themselves. For most people, this will be marriage, but that is only part of the picture. God is constantly promoting us to be more fully the people we are supposed to be.

**“The task of the Christian is to discern where God is calling them and what he is asking of them”**

Cardinal Newman captured it well when he wrote that “God has created me to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

another. I have my mission – I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow I am necessary for his purposes”.

The role of parents, educators and the wider Christian community is to help people to discern what God's will is for their lives.

It is to help them penetrate the depth of their consciences to understand what it is they ought to do in life. In contemporary culture, where faith in God is often seen as something to ridicule, the Truth of the Gospel is often portrayed as something external or imposed on individual freedom.

**“When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return”**

Whereas the reality is that the Catholic tradition holds that the truth of who we are is written on our hearts – discipleship rests in finding this truth and coming to terms with it.

As Benedict XVI said when he became Pope in 2005 addressing young Catholics: “Today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes

nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life.”

The Church in Ireland needs to hear these words – and this call needs to be at the heart of our ministry and outreach to young people. In a world often indifferent to the supernatural or where young people are encouraged to live their lives as if God doesn't exist, the Church has to remind them that they are made for more.

### Anxiety

Abuse of alcohol, drugs and superficial pleasure-seeking often seem the only goal of many young people. The question for our contemporary culture is why are levels of anxiety and a lack of feeling of belonging so high amongst young people who – on the surface of it – have never had it so good?

The synod in Rome and the discussion around young people and vocational discernment can hopefully offer the Church in Ireland a useful template with which to try and engage more and more young people with the exhilarating and challenging life that is discipleship.

## Primate warns of fear in communities over Brexit

» Continued on Page x

solidarity, noting how he had grown up close to two of Derry's major border checkpoints between the North and the Republic, “which were heavily fortified and which themselves became symbols of division and

therefore attracted violence, attacks, and indeed death and destruction”.

“I therefore expressed the nervousness of the communities that live on the border that any return to border structures and barriers could attract violence and could

become sparks or tinderboxes for strife once more,” he said.

Dr Martin noted that his own Archdiocese of Armagh is divided by the Irish border, with roughly 40% of his flock living in the Republic and 60% living in the North. Other bishops, he said, were intrigued by

this and by how there are Irish parishes divided by the border, with this being “quite unusual” in Europe.

The gathering in Poznan was attended by bishops from 39 European bishops' conferences.

1 See Page 8.

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# New religious breathe fresh life into Mitchelstown

Chai Brady

A new group of nuns is hoping to bring fresh spirituality and hope to a Cork town after the community lost the presence of the Presentation Sisters in 2002.

Four young sisters of the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother, hailing from the US, were installed in Mitchelstown over the weekend by Bishop William Crean who said they would assist in the "pastoral mission" of the parish.

Superior Sr Mary Donovan told *The Irish Catholic* they will be working in the parish and schools mainly this year, and hope to "help everyone they meet and especially the youth to get closer to the Eucharist and Our Lady".

## Vocations

She said the loss of religious in the community has been "very difficult for the town, they've lost a bit of their spiritual support that they had before and we hope to bring that back".

In working with young people Sr Mary said it wasn't



Sisters pray at Mitchelstown Mass welcoming new nuns on Saturday, September 22.

about bringing them into religious life or the priesthood, but to help them find their vocations – but if they feel the call "that's only a good thing".

"We're going to play it by

ear, we'll have to see how everyone reacts especially the young people because they haven't seen religious so we don't know what their reaction is going to be.

"We're open to everything,

even in our few days walking through the town we've had a bit of everything, young people coming up to us and asking us lots of questions – I think it will be interesting."

The four sisters are Sr

Mary from Delaware, Sr Miriam Loveland, Michigan, Sr Megan Murray, Illinois and Sr Rachel Maria Hernandez, Florida. All the sisters were trained in Spain, which is where the order was

founded.

The founder of the order Fr Rafael Alonso Reymundo, Reverend Mother Sr Ana and other members of the community attended the Mass welcoming the sisters last Saturday in the parish church.

## Loss

Parish priest Canon Michael Fitzgerald said Mitchelstown had nuns for 150 years, and that it was an "enormous loss" when they left.

"There's an amazing interest, these are four women who've given up their lives, their family and their country for Christ and that has to have a powerful affect," he said.

He added that parishioners are "delighted" to have a religious order back again.

There will also be a community of two priests and two brothers arriving in Cork.

Taking up residence in Mallow, they aim to minister and work with young people in the Diocese, in schools and support their families in sharing Faith and life.

# State should consider limiting 'extreme' blasphemy – former AG

Greg Daly

The Government should explain whether it believes it ought to be legal to publish anything at all of a blasphemous nature, a former attorney general has said.

Speaking in a debate in the Seanad about next month's

referendum on repealing the constitutional ban on blasphemy, Senator Michael McDowell said that rather than simply repealing the ban, a better amendment would have been that "the right of free speech and freedom of expression guaranteed by the article may be regulated by the State on the grounds of blasphemy,

indecent or sedition".

Mr McDowell said the Constitution should allow the Oireachtas to defend religious sensibility at "some extreme level".

"I am mystified that we should now say nothing in Ireland can be prosecuted on the grounds that it causes massive offence by its blasphemous character

and it cannot be restrained in any way, whereas something which is indecent – pornography of some kind, although these days it would have to be extreme pornography – is still to be criminalised under the Constitution," he said.

Maintaining that "there are things at the very extreme about

which a society is entitled to say, 'That goes too far'", Mr McDowell said that if following the October 26 referendum legislation should be brought before the Seanad to decriminalise all forms and all degrees of blasphemy, "we should have a long and searching debate ... as to whether that is what the people really want to do".

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# Defunct Stormont 'frustrating' as suicide plan blocked – priest

Chai Brady

Despite ongoing deadlock in Stormont blocking a new suicide prevention plan, a specialist priest has said anyone "who is struggling" will be supported.

Fermanagh-based Fr Cathal Deery, who trains clergy and chaplains in dealing with suicide, admitted it is "frustrating" that the Protect Life 2 strategy could not be implemented as it needs to be signed off by a health minister.

"Those who make decisions, those who implement policy, will always be under pressure so of course there will be frustration if there is not any progress made in implementing a protect life strategy to help those

who are working in the area of suicide awareness/prevention to help those in crisis," he said.

However he said that "anybody who is struggling will still be supported and will receive help".

The inability to enact the strategy "doesn't negate" the good works of charities working to prevent suicide, he said.

Fr Cathal founded the The Living with Suicide Day Retreat, coming up on Saturday, September 29, in Lough Derg, which allows people affected by suicide to get support "in a safe environment".

With the North of Ireland having the highest rate of suicide in the UK, he described it as a "crisis" and said "suicide crosses all boundaries and it can happen at any time".



Listowel in Co. Kerry has been named Ireland's Tidiest Town at the 2018 SuperValu Tidy Towns Awards. The town also claimed the award of Ireland's Tidiest Small Town. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Tidy Towns competition, which SuperValu has sponsored for 27 years. Picture shows at centre Martin Kelleher, Managing Director of SuperValu; Julie Gleeson, Chairperson, Listowel Tidy Towns; and Michael Ring, TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development; surrounded by the Listowel Tidy Town's Committee. Photo: Naoise Culhane

## Warm welcome for return of pioneering priest

Greg Daly

The restoration of a statue of Ireland's leading 19th-Century temperance campaigner to Dublin's O'Connell Street last week has been welcomed by Ireland's Capuchin community.

The statue of the Kilkenny-born Capuchin, Fr Theobald Mathew, who was instrumental in starting Ireland's Pioneer movement, was removed from the capital's main thoroughfare in 2016 to facilitate work on the city's Luas extensions, with Dublin City Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland having sought a new home for the statue since then.

Describing the statue's return as "wonderful", Bro. Richard Hendricks told *The Irish Catholic* that the process of finding the statue a new home had been "very amicable".

City transport needs meant the statue could not be returned to its original spot but the plan had always been to have the monument re-erected in a position of similar prominence elsewhere in the city.

About 19 different locations were considered before



The Fr Mathew statue in its original spot on O'Connell Street, Dublin.

the decision was made some months ago to return the statue to a new spot on O'Connell Street, he said.

"Fr Mathew is the only figure to be commemorated on the main streets of both Cork and Dublin," Bro. Richard continued, adding that the statue is O'Connell Street's only one to have been sculpted by a woman, Mary Redmond, explaining that it was erected

by public subscription with unanimous support from Dublin Corporation.

Its original placement at the top of the then Sackville Street was intended to create a kind of symmetry with the O'Connell Monument at the street's southern end, he said, the Temperance movement and Daniel O'Connell's Emancipation movement having been Ireland's two great popular movements in the first half of the 19th Century.

### Lessons

Noting how Fr Mathew had been one of the first Irish people to work ecumenically, Bro. Richard also observed that both he and Dublin ascetic Matt Talbot have important lessons to teach today about the role of Faith in fighting addiction.

"At a time when we're seeing addiction of all kinds as more and more prevalent, both of these figures remind us that spirituality offers a holistic path to healing – the healing of relationships, of body, of mind, of heart, and of soul, and that perhaps without looking to the spiritual side our healing is imperfect," he said.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Bishops review safeguarding structures

The bishops of England and Wales have announced they will undertake a new independent and comprehensive review of the safeguarding structures currently operating in their dioceses.

In a statement issued on September 24, as the bishops gathered in Rome for their *ad limina* visit, they said they had spent time together reflecting again on the impact of recent reports "containing stark revelations of child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, including in England and Wales, and of evident failures of local leadership".

#### 'Neighbourhood' project gets boost

A new series of nationwide events to promote the NeighbourWood Scheme has been announced which provides funding for the establishment of neighbourhood woods, which are "close-to-home" woodlands developed through local partnerships for recreational use by local communities.

"I would like to see more of these being developed across the country for local communities to enjoy," said Andrew Doyle TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine.

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**I**t is no idle boast – it is not a boast at all – but I think I know as much about the damage that alcohol can do as any man or woman alive. Alcohol abuse devastates lives – and afflicts every family member connected to the abuse. It can drag a man or a woman down to the very depths of depravity, and is a source of at least 70% of violence in the home.

Alcohol dependency is a source of unalloyed misery.

It is also clear that alcohol can be linked with ill-health. It has been known for many years that cirrhosis of the liver is often caused by over-indulgence in alcohol (and rich food). Not unexpectedly, cirrhosis has traditionally been a leading cause of death in France – albeit sometimes at an advanced age.

And now doctors are warning that at least seven types of cancer, most notably breast cancer, are associated with imbibing alcohol. There has been a

# No, cancer is not lurking in every mouthful of 'drink'



**Mary Kenny**



well-supported movement to put cancer warning labels on alcohol products. But it seems that this will not now occur – the Public

Health Alcohol Bill has passed through all stages of the Seanad with no such amendments made.

Senator Frances Black

is appalled by the failure to legislate for the cancer warning labels, claiming that one in eight breast cancers is due to alcohol. "Are the profits of the alcohol industry more important now than women's health?" she asks.

## Horrors

Yet for all my knowledge about the horrors that alcohol can inflict, I cannot agree with Senator Black, and it has nothing to do with the profits of the alcohol industry, for which I don't give a fig.

It is more about a Burkean distaste for the idea that the State be empowered to regulate every aspect of personal life.

Health education should teach awareness of the dangers of alcohol: but it should also be

proportionate and balanced.

But the causes of cancer are many, varied and complex. And because we have eliminated so many other diseases, more of us will, in the end, inevitably die from cancer.

And I'm not convinced of the inevitable link between breast cancer and drinking. Some doctor tactlessly told a woman suffering from cervical cancer that "nuns don't get cervical cancer": and it is medically true that cervical cancer hardly ever affects virgins. But nuns are more vulnerable to breast cancer – although nuns almost never drink alcohol. This disproves the absolute link that Senator Black underlines.

Senator Black says that failing to label alcohol products is "an insult to those who have suffered

from cancer". But slapping a cancer label on every bottle of wine is tantamount to blaming the most moderate drinker for every tipples.

## Complex

Indeed, claiming that breast cancer is caused by alcohol is tantamount to blaming a cancer victim for getting the disease, when the causes may be much more complex (and can be genetic).

I hate alcohol abuse. I loathe the company of drunks. I think there should be much more help for alcohol addicts. But millions of people can drink moderately, with no harm whatsoever to themselves or others, and with much cordiality. It would be quite wrong to demonise such consumers, or tell them they're courting cancer with every mouthful.

## Post-Civil War misery well portrayed

President Michael D. Higgins [pictured] spoke brilliantly at a stunning and important documentary shown at the Clifden Arts Festival last week. The documentary film is called *Keepers of the Flame*, fronted by Prof. Diarmaid Ferriter, and it is a sensitive, knowledgeable and beautifully put together story about the aftermath of the events between 1916 and 1921.

The film-maker Nuala O'Connor has drawn on an extraordinary wealth of evidence from ordinary Irish people – particularly in relation to the themes of remembrance, and



of military pensions.

The sad truth is that some deserving applicants for pensions – some in dire poverty too – were refused them, or only got a paltry amount. Some of the decisions to award state pensions in the aftermath of this troubled period were political.

What was so impressive about Michael D. was his sensitive approach to the whole Civil War period.

He absolutely understands that there were sincere and principled people on both sides.

A marvellous piece of film work.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Ireland must focus on 'real progress'

Ireland remains "profoundly unequal" despite its current roaring economic prowess, a leading justice advocacy group has warned. Dr Sean Healy, CEO of Social Justice Ireland has said that the numbers of homeless, in poverty and those on waiting lists indicate that the improving economy should be directed towards "social development and well-being for all".

Dr Healy added that "real progress" toward leaving no-one behind in our current thriving economy will require "robust policy coherence" across and within government departments and will ensure that the poorest, most deprived and marginalised sectors of society are reached first.

### Keep the Faith in spite of 'challenges' – priest

Christians everywhere have had to face "failings and challenges" but must continue to spread the Faith in spite of this, an Irish priest has said.

Speaking at a celebration to mark the 150th

anniversary of St Mary's church in Fermanagh, Mgr Joseph McGuinness of Clogher said the people of the area had been Christian for many centuries before the building of the church and the Faith was kept alive even without churches, and often without priests.

Taking inspiration from Christ, Mgr McGuinness said the disciples of Jesus went on to preach the Gospel fearlessly in the face of challenges "and that the Christian communities they created found their way through all their difficulties and continued to grow", he said.

### Irish princess turned saint

The religious history of an Irish princess who became a saint is to be explored as part of the Dublin Festival of History which runs until October 7. 'The Legend of St Sunniva and its Representation of the Christianisation of Norway' will explore the life of St Sunniva, the patron saint of Bergen.

Tradition holds that she was an Irish princess who fled the unwanted attention of the Vikings, eventually to settle on the island of Selja, off the coast of Norway.

It takes place in Oak Room, Mansion House, Dawson Street, on October 5 at 1pm.



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# Honour Magdalene legacy by helping women of today – historian

Greg Daly

Investment to help vulnerable women would be the best way of commemorating the experiences of women who spent time in Ireland's Magdalene Laundries, according to the author of an important study of two Dublin laundries. "Dare I say that the most fitting memorial to women and girls who found themselves in Magdalene laundries, for however long, would be to invest in services that keep women today from ending up homeless, that support them in the struggle of parenting, that give them routeways into employment," Maynooth University's Dr Jacinta Prunty told *The Irish Catholic*.

Adding "what I'd like to see is investment in local services that open doors and give reasons for hope", Dr Prunty said that education should be at the heart of this.

## Sale

Dr Prunty, author of *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853-1973*, was speaking against the background of Dublin City Council's vote earlier this month to block a planned sale of the site of the Seán McDermott Street laundry to a Japanese hotel chain.

The decision opens a way to placing a memorial on the site to commemorate those who suffered institutional abuse in Ireland.

Echoing the recent call from Dr Gillian O'Brien of

Liverpool's John Moore's University that a museum would commemorate the complex history of the laundries better than a straightforward memorial, Dr Prunty said Dublin's new Tenement Museum might be a better location for a museum than Seán McDermott Street.

"The building fronting Seán McDermott Street is actually the convent, home to the nuns who took charge in 1888 and built, and rebuilt, the complex," she said.

## Projects

Over time the site housed a range of residential projects

including emergency accommodation and a teenage training centre, all of which intertwine with the history of the area and with changes in society.

"All these things considered, I wonder would the new Tenement Museum, 14 Henrietta Street, be a good future

venue for a museum display dealing with the Magdalene Laundries and other types of residential homes or shelters, including the workhouse system," she ventured, saying that such a location would help give context to a history that is currently being explored.

## New Book of Kells course explores medieval Ireland

Chai Brady

A free online course developed by Trinity College Dublin will allow learners worldwide to explore the history of Ireland through the Book of Kells. The new four-week online course will help people to learn more about the manuscript and begins on October 8.

Called 'The Book of Kells: Exploring an Irish Medieval Masterpiece' it is aimed at anyone with an interest in Ireland, medieval studies, history, art, religion and popular culture.

The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was designed by TCD academics and staff from the library. Using the Book of Kells the course will explore the landscape, history, theology, and politics of early medieval Ireland and explore how that past is understood in modern Ireland.

## Theology

Learners on the course will explore the art, theology and materiality of the manuscript and the meanings that it holds. Each week the course will explore a different side of the Book of Kells; its history, how it was made, interpreting its images, and what the book means for popular culture today. Registration for the course can be found at: <http://bit.ly/BookofKellsMOOC> and the course trailer can be seen at: <https://media.heanet.ie/p/f6e0f46d919dcc12f51782b4a2251920>

## An All-Ireland double



Bishop Fintan Monahan and Flan Sheedy from Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare, enjoy a chance to hold the Sam Maguire and Liam McCarthy cups at the Ploughing Championships.

# Where's the dignity in helping people to die?

In the past few years, the moral legitimacy of euthanasia has become a hot-button issue and even in Christian circles, opposition to its implementation has been waning. Indeed, only last week did former Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu say that terminally ill people should have the right to a "dignified assisted death", following a murder charge against a campaigner for the legalisation of euthanasia.

"Just as I have argued for compassion and fairness in life, I believe that terminally ill people should be treated with compassion and fairness when it comes to their death," the Nobel Laureate said in a statement after the arrest last week of Sean Davison, who founded DignitySA, a right-to-die group.

"This should include affording people who have reached the end-stages of life the right to choose how and when to leave Mother Earth."

The clergyman's comments



Colm Fitzpatrick

don't differ that much from those of former archbishop of Canterbury Dr George Carey who said in 2014 that assisted dying prevents "needless suffering" and isn't "anti-Christian".

Although there may be a growing consensus in favour of that position, for human rights activist Baroness Nuala O'Loan, this belief couldn't be further from the truth. Speaking to this paper, she said euthanasia is "morally wrong" and that the practice attacks those most vulnerable in society. This is certainly a claim with substance, given the chilling findings of a

study last year which showed that in 2015, there were 7,254 assisted deaths in the Netherlands, 431 of which were "terminations of life without request".

The elderly who feel they may be burdensome to their family or society, those with mental health problems, and individuals who feel they can't speak up for their own humanity will inevitably be targeted.

Despite the tragic consequences of euthanasia, Baroness O'Loan said every year there are "constant attempts" to put a bill through Westminster in support of it, and that Ireland will soon also see the introduction of them.

Supporting such a motion undermines Church teaching and Christian principles so much so that Baroness O'Loan said it was "shocking" that any clergyman would not "recognise the importance of protecting life from conception until the grave".

Expressing a similar mentality,

theologian Fr Vincent Twomey believes that assisted suicide or euthanasia is far from dignified, and flies in the face of what "dying with dignity" in the Christian context actually means.

## “There were 7,254 assisted deaths in the Netherlands, 431 of which were ‘terminations of life without request’”

"The positive meaning of 'dying with dignity' inspired the Irish Sisters of Charity to open up the first ever hospice for the dying at Harold's Cross in 1879 and so inaugurated the worldwide hospice movement that really allows the terminally ill to die with dignity and love," he said.

"The use of the term 'dignity' as a euphemism to describe assisted suicide or euthanasia is nothing less than diabolical".

Fr Twomey pointed out that nowadays the notion of dignity has taken on a new meaning which ignores the fact that our lives are not in our hands but are God's, and stressed that without the influence of Christian morality, this outlook is only going to get worse.

"It's the beginning of a movement to introduce euthanasia that's widespread in the western world – a world that no longer knows the meaning of suffering; has no longer any sense of God in their lives; who feel they can control everything and once they can't control it, they get rid of themselves.

"So, you're dealing with a phenomenon that's going to get stronger in the absence of any genuine Christian belief."

Voices like these are worth listening to when considering a topic that can drastically change our attitude towards the sanctity of life.

## Martin Mansergh

### The View



# Bridging the gap will take more than a border poll

**I**t used to be said that whenever the British came close to solving the Irish Question the Irish changed the question. The Good Friday Agreement addressed the causes of conflict in Northern Ireland, but now it is the British who have changed the question.

A border poll post-Brexit would not just be about Irish unity versus remaining in the UK. It would also be about whether a majority of people in Northern Ireland see their future inside or outside the European Union, taking into account the nature of any Brexit deal. Allowing the people to revisit a Brexit decision, that is not working out, would be a better outcome.

Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald had it right the first time, when she said a border poll would be premature until the outcome of Brexit negotiations is known. She had to beat a hasty retreat, and demand an immediate one, when her party's northern mentors reacted negatively.

### Irish unity

Insistence on Irish unity may pay electoral rewards, without ever advancing the actual objective. According to John Bew's biography, Clement Attlee, British Labour leader and later Prime Minister, once dismissed party militancy, saying he was "sufficiently experienced in warfare to know that the frontal attack with a flourish of trumpets, heartening as it is, is not the best way to capture a position". That is also the abiding lesson of the all-party Anti-Partition campaign in the late 1940s.

Republicans looking for an early border poll should be careful of what they wish for. To pre-empt the arrival of a Catholic majority, unionists could decide that it would be in their interest to have a border poll, expecting a clear majority for continuance of the Union, and then claiming this was a decision for a generation, even though



the Agreement allows further polls at seven years' intervals.

Experience elsewhere, in Quebec, Scotland and Catalonia, does not support the hope that a poll defeat builds momentum for ultimate victory. Holding a referendum with no majority for constitutional change would raise tensions needlessly, and could open a permanently discouraging Pandora's box of difficulties and divisions even amongst nationalists.

In this area, contradictory opinion polls are quite unreliable. While the NI Secretary of State has independent discretion to call a border poll, one must be called if it appears likely that a majority in Northern Ireland wish to become part of a united Ireland.

**“Any attempt to modify the Irish State's unequivocal repudiation of that campaign by a future government or president would create a political storm”**

There is criticism that in theory a united Ireland could come about on a very narrow majority of 50% + 1, though that does not deter Brexit being pushed through based on a narrow UK-wide majority. In reality, if opinion were that evenly divided, it would not satisfy the criterion of likelihood of

change requiring the calling of a border poll.

Irish unity would take place in different circumstances from German unity. The German Democratic Republic imploded with the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The danger was a mass migration from East to West Germany. The obstacle to German unity had always been Soviet military force. Defenders disputing that East Germany had been a criminal régime were few. In contrast, a united Ireland could not just be the Republic writ large.

Unionists accept that Northern Ireland was a cold house for Catholics, a metaphor implying that they should have found a warmer home elsewhere, but they will never accept it was illegitimate or that the Provisional IRA campaign to destroy it was legitimate. Any attempt to modify the Irish State's unequivocal repudiation of that campaign by a future government or president would create a political storm.

Many advocates of Irish unity in the Republic mistakenly assume that all unionists require are material and symbolic reassurances that they can hold what they already have, such as the Commonwealth with the crown as its head, British citizenship, the substance of the National Health Service, and existing welfare benefits.

Suggestions that Irish unity will be part-financed

by large-scale public sector 'rationalisation', ie redundancies, mainly in Northern Ireland, are anything but reassuring to either community. Northern Ireland living standards, slightly above those of the Republic, continue to be underwritten by an £11 billion subsidy from the rest of the UK. Irish unity, like German unity, would have substantial costs for the larger entity.

Pre-1914, Belfast played a role in global markets. How will Northern Ireland mainstream itself outside the EU? The Irish

Government simply wishes to preserve the status quo of a frictionless border, an important part of the peace dividend. The EU fear that the British are trying to use the border as leverage to preserve the entire UK's free access to the Single Market and Customs Union, while seeking competitive advantage by being able to shed existing EU obligations and make their own trade deals.

**“Northern Ireland living standards...continue to be underwritten by an £11 billion subsidy from the rest of the UK”**

Religious factors, which played an emotive part in resistance to Home Rule 100 years ago, figure little in today's debates. Substituted for the nearly extinct fear of Rome Rule is a 'godlier than thou' charge by a South Belfast rector that the Republic is now the least Christian part of the western world (*Irish Times*,

July 17).

The gulf in attitudes and experience after 100 years of partition will not be easily bridged. Narrow gauge republicanism persists in traditional attitudes that show little instinct for accommodation.

How does a party reconcile the claim that the question of the Union Jack alongside the tricolour on top of Leinster House could be discussed, while one of its TDs presses for the statue of Prince Albert, patron of the sciences, to be removed from Leinster Lawn? It is deplorable that the new Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, previously PSNI Deputy Chief Constable, was variously described as an outsider, a foreign candidate and had to defend his Irishness.

If Ireland is to be reintegrated, there will be many others, past and present, long written off for not conforming to nationalist paradigms of Irishness, including those who fought in two world wars, whose place in a new citadel will need to be guaranteed.

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# Missionaries defy threats from kidnappers and radical Islamists

Chai Brady

There has been a "great increase" in attacks and kidnapping of missionaries by radical Islamists and poverty-stricken youths over the last 20 years, the Irish-born Superior General of the Society of African Missions (SMA) has said.

This comes as an Italian missionary of the order was kidnapped last week in south-west Niger by an armed group believed to have entered the country from nearby Burkina Faso.

Speaking to this paper Fr Fachtna O'Driscoll said they are "deeply troubled" and that he is contacting people on the ground on a daily basis for updates. At the time of print they had not heard anything about the fate of Fr Pier Luigi Maccalli – taken on September 17.

Fr Fachtna specifically mentioned Nigeria having become much more dangerous, with kidnapping and ransoming of priests becoming

more common.

"There's a lot of poverty, there's a lot of young men especially who might have even gone to college but there are no jobs so this is a quick way to make some money. It's frightening, very frightening," he said.

"And there's also the Muslim fundamentalist sorts as

well, in those areas in particular it's very insecure. They're operating more in the areas that are Muslim-dominated, in some of the other areas you would have gangs who go around kidnapping people for a quick ransom."

He said even 10 years ago it would be quite rare, but "now it's quite common" in parts of

Nigeria anyway.

Asked whether priests are being targeted Fr Fachtna said that there is sometimes a belief the Church would pay the ransom for a member of clergy. However, specifically mentioning Nigeria, he said Church officials have said they

will never give money for any kidnapped priest "so that message has gone out strong".

## Prudent

Despite the growing concern for missionaries Fr Fachtna said it is not a job, it's a vocation, "so the missionary is

called by God, and part of that is giving their life for it".

"I don't think this will stop missionaries doing their work even in the most dangerous places, but of course they have to be prudent, take precautions and not to do anything stupid," he said.



Kidnapped Italian missionary Fr Pier Luigi Maccalli.

## 'Bridges not borders' key theme of bishops' solidarity gathering

With this year's plenary gathering of the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe being held in Poland, solidarity seemed an obvious theme, alluding as it did to the trade union founded by Lech Walesa in 1980 that was crucial in bringing about the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe.

"The theme of solidarity I think was also to get all of us to understand the roots of the whole European project, which involved bringing together countries many of whom had been at war with each other, to see the European project and solidarity within Europe as something that lifts them out of the kinds of nationalistic tendencies that can be harmful," Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin told *The Irish Catholic*.

"I'm not saying this as an anti-national thing, people were of course very strong on their own identity and diversity within Europe, but solidarity in how it effects the mission of the Church and indeed draws the nations of Europe together was the key theme of the gathering," he said.

## Solidarity

Although by no means all 39 countries whose bishops' conference heads gathered in Poznan earlier this month are EU countries, Brexit was an inevitable topic for a gathering of European bishops on the theme of solidarity, such that Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin did not need to introduce the topic.

"The issue of Brexit itself came up and you can imagine that many of the western bishops from some of the countries like Germany, from France, from



Greg Daly

Spain were taken by the whole issue of Brexit and the impact that it's having on the European Union. It was into that context that I spoke," the archbishop said.

"Essentially because we were on the theme of solidarity, I was trying to reinforce the importance of union within Europe, which is broader than simply the European Union, and the importance of solidarity and how the solidarity of other European countries formed a very important backdrop and canvass upon which the Irish peace process was written," he said, continuing, "I was basically explaining to the delegates how important the European themes had been to the development of our peace process."

**“Many of the western bishops from some of the countries like Germany, France and Spain were taken by the whole issue of Brexit”**

In doing so, Dr Martin drew on his own experiences and spoke of one of his home city's greatest sons.

"Of course, being a good Derryman, I cited the contribution of John Hume, who I think very effectively used the European platform to bring us beyond the kind of squabbles and narrow understanding of nationalism which could

itself engender strife and division," he said.

"Hume was very much somebody who spoke about our common belonging to Europe as something that lifted us beyond the interior strifes and struggles that could happen between near neighbours. In other words, he was about bridges rather than borders."

The gathered bishops were very interested, Dr Martin observed, in what this had meant for him growing up.

"I gave a particular example which the delegates were very interested – the fact that I had grown up so close to two of the major border checkpoints, on the Culmore Road and the Buncrana Road in Derry, two of the main arteries South to North, which were heavily fortified and which themselves became symbols of division and therefore attracted violence, attacks, and indeed death and destruction."

With this background, he said, he was able to speak about how borders and barriers are not simply lines of maps, or even physical borders and barriers, but can help create sectional interests and mindsets, and testified to the nervousness of Ireland's border communities about how the restoration of border structures could attract violence.

Explanations of how his own diocese is divided between Ireland and the UK intrigued his fellow bishops, he said, with several of them speaking to him about this over coffee at the gathering.

"Remember, this was a gathering of 39 European countries, many of whom really would not have understood the Irish border question," he said.

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# What the Pope said... and didn't say

The blandness of Francis' speeches in Ireland is mysterious, writes **David Quinn**

**I**t is now one month since Pope Francis was in Ireland. If you were to conduct a poll and ask people what they remember about the visit, how would they respond?

If you asked them what the Pope had to say, I think the top answer by far would be his various references to the scandals. What would be No.2, and how distant a No.2 would it be? Would people bring to mind what the Pope said about too much use of social media? Or that families must always be ready to say "please", "sorry" and "thank you" to each other?

Perhaps instead they would remember the images. For example, his visit to Knock, or meeting families and couples face-to-face at the Pro-Cathedral or Croke Park, or offering words of comfort to the homeless at the Capuchin Day Centre. In other words, they would remember a pastoral Pope, and that is not to be underestimated.

## Pastoral Pope

Pope Francis, it seems to me, wants to be remembered first and foremost as a pastoral Pope, and only secondly as a teaching one. Pope Benedict was a teaching Pope first and foremost, because that is what he was by training and vocation: a teacher and, more specifically, a university lecturer.

St John Paul II was also a university lecturer, but he did plenty of pastoral work as well, especially in his earlier years as a priest, and was particularly good with young people. He seemed to draw energy from them.

Unfortunately, the scandals almost certainly overshadowed to a large extent everything else Pope Francis tried to do while here. That was probably unavoidable, but most likely

Pope Francis speaking during his visit to Ireland.



reduced the World Meeting of Families itself – the reason for him being here – to a footnote from the point of view of the general public.

But even allowing for the fact that Pope Francis wishes to emphasise the pastoral, his written statements while here were still curiously lacking in anything memorable or substantial, especially in comparison with what he has sometimes had to say on other trips abroad.

For instance, he was in Lithuania last weekend, and when meeting civic and political leaders he took the opportunity to warn, in effect, against populist, nationalist movements. He said: "If we look at the world scene in our time, more and more voices are sowing division and confrontation – often by exploiting insecurity or situations of conflict – and proclaiming that the only way possible to guarantee security and the continued existence of a culture is to try to eliminate, cancel or expel others."

This was fairly confrontational stuff, considering the rising support for nationalist parties that wish to curb immigration in countries such as Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and of course there is the impending(?) departure of the UK from the EU, which is very much a nationalist impulse.

The Pope seems to be setting his face against these movements. You expect the head of the Catholic Church

to speak out for or against developments that seem to go for or against the Gospel message.

When Francis was in Georgia in 2015, in off-the-cuff remarks he lambasted 'gender theory' (the idea that differences between the sexes are irrelevant and that we get to choose our own gender) as a major threat to the family.

**“In Ireland he said nothing as strong as what he said in either Lithuania or Georgia”**

Speaking to a woman who gave her testimony in front of him, the Pontiff said, "you mentioned a great enemy of marriage today: gender theory".

"Today the whole world is at war trying to destroy marriage," noting that this war isn't being fought with arms "but with ideas".

There are "certain ideologies that destroy marriage", he said. "So we need to defend ourselves from ideological colonisation."

In Ireland he said nothing as strong as what he said in either Lithuania or Georgia. In his address in Dublin Castle to political and civil leaders, he briefly mentioned the "throwaway culture" that leads to abortion. He briefly mentioned Church/State relations, but there was little flesh on the bones.

Likewise, with all his other addresses in Ireland. We have had major

referendums on marriage and the right to life, both of which are obviously intimately wrapped up with family life.

Few countries in the last few years have been witness to such radical attacks on the family and the right to life as Ireland. We are a prime example of how a given ideology can colonise a country. We saw the huge pressure we came under from the likes of the UN and even the big multi-nationals.

The Pope was never going to directly confront the Government about these things, but there was plenty of scope to expand on them, as he has done on previous foreign trips. Pope Francis is well capable of doing so, as we have seen.

## Local advice

So, why didn't it happen this time? Presumably he was acting on local advice. When a Pope visits a country, especially one he has little familiarity with, he will be extremely reliant on local advice. When Pope John Paul II came here in 1979, his addresses were written by

the late Cardinal Cahal Daly, and they were very meaty.

When Pope Benedict visited Britain, France and Germany he had a great deal to say about Church and State and the place of religion in society. He probably wrote most of these addresses himself, as these were areas of great interest to him.

Who was mainly responsible for writing Pope Francis's Irish addresses? Was there a conscious decision to avoid controversial topics, to not really challenge the body politic or the wider society?

To repeat: Pope Francis himself is well capable of speaking about these issues. It could have been done in a way that was thought-provoking without being confrontational. So why didn't this happen on the trip, especially in view of what happened in May? It would be good to know the answers to those questions.

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An Irish family who met the Pope in Croke Park are a testimony to God's transforming power, writes **Greg Daly**



**I**f few images caught Ireland's imagination as much during the papal visit as much as Alison Nevin's selfie with Pope Francis at the Festival of Families, few stories will have caught hearts as much as that of Damien and Mary Richardson that evening.

Drug addicts in their teens, the couple are now long-settled and parents to a lively family of 10 children, a living example, they told the Pope, of how with God's help they had travelled from "the darkness of addiction to the joy of family".

Brought up in north Dublin and the inner city, Damien left school at 15.

"I'd a lot going on in my head at that time, you know that way," he says. "I'd a few small jobs and nothing really serious, and I just started dabbling in drugs – in drinking a bit and smoking cannabis. This escalated over the years."

Ecstasy tablets were the norm in the rave culture of the early 90s, but Damien went further. "I was doing that for a few months and then I went back to a party and there was a lad smoking heroin out of tin foil. I said 'what's that?' and he said 'this is heroin, do you want a go?' and I said 'yeah, go on, give us a go of that'. And I started smoking heroin then."

Within a few months he was a serious abuser. "I came from a good family, and my life had totally changed," he says, adding that as he "got into crime" he ended up in prison several times.

Drugs just seemed the 'in thing' to do, he says: "I thought that was what life was about, to have this feeling, this stimulation, this drug inside you."

## Corner

He was 23, in 1996, when he first turned a corner.

"My father was a holy man, he was always praying for me," he says, describing how whenever his father would meet a priest he would ask him to say a Mass for Damien. "He was in a prayer group, and someone showed him a video cassette, and on the video was two American girls speaking about how they'd been to Medjugorje on a pilgrimage, and had stopped taking drugs – it completely changed their lives," he says. "My Da said 'right, I have to get Damien to Medjugorje'."

Damien wasn't living at home at the time, but used to arrange to meet his father for tea. Though he would regularly let him down by not showing up, he did meet him when his father asked him to come to Medjugorje

with him. "I'd let him down so many times, so I really felt I owed it to him to go to this place," he says, adding that brochures his father showed him, filled with pictures of beaches, waterfalls and beautiful women, may well have swayed him more than the prospect of a week or more at a Marian shrine.

Even on his way to the flight he was wavering, but ultimately felt that after his father had booked and paid for the trip, he couldn't let him down again. "It's only a week – it won't kill me," he thought.

"I remember waking up on the bus to the sound of all these people praying the rosary, and I thought to myself 'Jeany Mack, what am I after getting myself into?' he says.

"So I got to Medjugorje, it was August 1996, the sun was shining, it was nice, and I hated the place for the first three days, I hated myself, I hated me Da, and for three days and nights I couldn't sleep for the effects of the drugs and the heat," he says, describing how despite this he felt God in his heart one morning when he fell asleep briefly on a bench by a statue of Mary.

In the end he spent two weeks there, with something happening to him that he describes now as "like an illumination of conscience".

"I came home and still struggled with addiction, but I never stole after that. Something happened to me inside," he says.

**“You just imagine being in flats, there's guys outside the door selling drugs...”**

He and Mary started going out, initially in an off-and-on way, shortly after he returned to Ireland.

"We met through a mutual friend," he says. "She also was a heroin addict – she's from the north inner city. There was seven siblings in

# From addiction's darkness to family's joy



her family, including herself, and six of them went on the heroin. The whole family was destroyed."

Growing up in the inner city, Mary had been raised in a world where drugs were the norm.

"You just imagine being in flats, there's guys outside the door selling drugs, there's the conversation of the day," Damien explains. "If you're immersed in that, if you grew up in that environment 24-7, where police are chasing lads through the streets and police kicking doors in looking for drugs, it's all people talk about how to get drugs, how to be ruthless, how to be

deceitful..."

During that time the two had their first child, Tammie, and went on a methadone programme until 2002, when things reached a tipping point for Damien.

## Breakdown

"I had a breakdown, I was sick of the drugs and very suicidal – I just wanted to end my life, I just couldn't keep taking drugs and something had to give," he says. "So in 2002, a sister of mine once again brought me to Medjugorje, and after being there about three days I kind of recuperated and got my strength back."

He'd been there several times since 1996 with Mary and Tammie, and though he was familiar with the Cenacolo community there, a community of young men, all recovering addicts of one sort or another, he had never taken it seriously. This time would be different.

"I went up to one of the lads and told him that I was from Dublin, I'd been on drugs for 14 years, I was very suicidal, and lost the will to live," he says. "So he looked me in the eye and said a sentence I'll never forget. He said 'Damien, the drugs will always be there – you have to change your life and come back to God.'"

Did Damien know, the man asked, that a Cenacolo house had recently opened in Knock? No, he hadn't known that. "He gave me the number of Knock, and I came back then to Ireland," Damien says. "I had to detox off the methadone and drugs, and I went to about four assessment meetings, and I entered the community shortly after that in 2002."

## Italian nun

Community life at Cenacolo was to transform Damien. Cenacolo, named after the Upper Room or Cenacle of the Gospels, was founded in 1993 by an Italian nun, Mother





Elvira Petrozzi.

Based around the idea of recovery through prayer, work and friendship, there are now about 70 Cenacolo houses around the world, each with the same template: days starting around 6am with adoration, communal prayer, scripture reading, communal meals and work ranging from cutting firewood and preparing food to tending animals and cleaning.

There is time for recreation like football, but television, newspapers, radio, internet or mobile phones are all forbidden.

Describing it as "tough going", Damien says he was nonetheless willing to try anything. "I'd tried it my way and it didn't work, so whatever these people suggested I would do."

He'd been struck, after all, by the young men he'd met in the Medjugorje community.

"When I went to Medjugorje, I'd look into the ladies eyes and could see peace, and I was jealous and envious of what they had," he says. "They didn't look like drug addicts – they looked like lads who were confident, hard-working men, and I wanted that. That's all I ever wanted."

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Lamenting how destructive addiction can be, not least to confidence, Damien is effusive with praise for Cenacolo.

"The way it works is it's residential – you can't leave. I was down in Knock for a year, then I was transferred to the Cenacolo house in Medjugorje, and I was over there for five months," he says.

"There's a big emphasis on friendship, and friendship is not just about tapping you

on the back and saying you're a great fella. It may be about saying stuff to you that you find uncomfortable," he says. "It's quite challenging, Cenacolo is."

While Damien was in Knock and Medjugorje, he says, Mary had been staying with his father and was taking methadone, but did a detox course at a HSE centre just before he came out of Cenacolo.

"When I came out, I was after living a lifestyle of prayer and we started praying together, and during that time I started my own little business," he says.

"The first thing I wanted to do was get good with God and get married to Mary. We had a wonderful wedding, and got married in 2005," he continues, adding that they went to Medjugorje on their honeymoon to thank Our Lady for her help.

### Adoration

The couple's Faith has been central to their lives together for years, Damien says.

"Adoration is huge, and prayer for me is a big part of my life. The holy rosary – I've prayed the rosary the last 16 years, and I'm off heroin the last 16 years. That would be a big part of our prayer life," he says, wryly adding that with 10 children they hardly ever manage to all go to Mass at the same time. "Confession is a big thing for me: the healing I feel when I go to a priest," he adds.

A knee injury five years ago prevented him from driving or working for a year, and at a local employment agency he was advised to upskill, so he has done certificate and

diploma courses in counselling and addiction.

"For the last year I've been doing voluntary work up in Newry, up in Cuan Mhuire. I did my placement there, and am hoping to start back in the classroom in a few weeks time and finish off the degree," he says.

Meantime, as those present during the Festival of Families in Croke Park or who watched it online will have realised, Mary and he have had a series of children – aside from the 20-year-old Tammie, who now volunteers with NET Ministries, they have nine children under 14 years of age.

"We're open to life," Damien says. "We came back to the Faith, and me and Mary have a lot of lived experience that most people haven't got. We've been in the darkness of addiction that not many people experience, and when we did get a second chance we grabbed it with both hands."

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With their links to Knock kept up over the years, they were invited there in 2017 to speak and help launch the World Meeting of Families, sharing their testimony and meeting other families.

Fr Timothy Bartlett, Secretary General of WMOF2018, was present when they spoke telling them afterwards how impressed he'd been by their story, and a few months later iCatholic came to film the family for part of series on *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis' exhortation on marriage and family life.

About three months ago, he continues, Fr Bartlett rang him up and asked whether the Richardsons would be

going to the World Meeting. "I wonder would you do me a favour," he began, and Damien said of course, thinking they would be perhaps asked to give a brief testimony at the Pastoral Congress in the RDS.

"The favour I want you to do is I want you to meet the Holy Father," Fr Bartlett had continued – Damien says that he almost fainted with shock.

"He said we'd like you to represent the people of Europe – it wasn't even Ireland. He said have a chat with Mary and ring me back, tonight or tomorrow or whenever. I think we rang him back in about 60 seconds," he says.

### Preparation

A camera crew came out from Tyrone Productions not long afterwards, making their video over two days, all in preparation for the Festival of Families on Saturday, August 25.

"It was a beautiful day, and we'll never forget that night," Damien says. "It was an unreal night, to be sitting there and watching all the stars perform and then for the Holy Father to come in and to be sitting with him for an hour."

"When we got up there and were talking to the Holy Father, it was like as if the whole crowd was gone," Mary interjects, having joined us during the interview, "and then after he addressed us we looked around and they were all still there."

"83,000 of them," Damien adds.

"There's something Pope Francis said to us that was very profound," he continues. "He said: 'Thank you Mary and Damien. Thank you for your openness to life. It's great to have 10 children. Thank you for your testimony of love and Faith. You experienced the power of God's love to change your life completely and to bless you with the joy of a beautiful family.'"

"And he came off script, and the interpreter was sitting beside him, and Pope Francis said: 'Do they make you angry?'"

Mary laughs: "Sure they do!"

"And I said 'There's moments when they do, if we're being honest,'" continues Damien. "And he said 'This is *la vita*, this is normal'. And he laughed."

"That moment when he said it, he looked us in the eye, and that was just unreal. That was a real special moment."

**i** For information on Cenacolo Community, which provides free residential treatment for alcohol, drug, and other addictions, visit [communitycenacolo.ie](http://communitycenacolo.ie) or call the community at 094 938 8286 or Jean on 087 268 7040.

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*Following The Pink Ribbon Path* is a revised edition which includes Mary Redmond Ussher's journey through the cancer experience and a new introduction and biography written by Mary's son Patrick after her death in 2015. It also contains a number of testimonies from the many people who were touched by Mary and found support thanks to the first edition of the book, including RTÉ broadcaster Miriam O'Callaghan and former president, Mary McAleese.

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**“We’re open to life...we’ve been in the darkness of addiction that not many people experience, and when we did get a second chance we grabbed it with both hands”**

## Pilgrimage can teach about your own Faith, writes Fr Shane Sullivan



**F**rom July 16-July 31, I had to opportunity to go to Ecuador with a group of seven young adults from different parts of Ireland (Mayo, Galway, Tipperary and Antrim) along with two of the Roscommon-based Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother on a mission trip none of us will ever forget.

### Preparation

Before we even set foot in Ecuador each of us were touched by the extraordinary generosity of the people in our parishes. The Servant Sisters spoke at Masses in Castlebar and Athenry parishes this spring and the young missionaries made appeals themselves in their parishes, local schools and amongst family and friends.

The response was beyond anything we could have expected. Not only were we

able to fundraise the cost of flights for the young people but were able to leave money under the direction of the local sisters and brothers in the communities we visited.

The generosity of local people will be felt for some time in some of those poorest communities in Ecuador.

### The Faith of the Ecuadorian people

Once we arrived we were confronted with a systemic poverty unlike many of us had ever seen before. We first went to work in some of the poorest barrios of Guayaquil, Ecuador's most populous city. Without the local knowledge of the Servant Sisters and Brothers it would have been impossible for us to have travelled safely there. We were able to connect with people in truly dire circumstances.

One of the most remarkable people we met was a

# With God and Mary in Ecuador



woman named Sara whose husband had abandoned her and their two infant children after she was diagnosed with MS. She is now bed-ridden and can't see anymore.

Her sons, now 14 and 12 are like her eyes and hands. She directs them from her bed in all the household chores that need to be done. The Irish women got to spend time with her over their days in Guayaquil. They were most struck by her graciousness, her dignity and her Faith.

Far from blaming God, she loved Him. She knew she depended on Him and in their conversations facilitated by the sisters she and the missionaries connected and encouraged each other in their love for Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin. Time and again we saw this unshakable Faith and abiding dignity in the people of Ecuador.

### Missionaries on fire with love

In Guayaquil the sisters and brothers together run a parish called Our Lady of Loreto, in the district of El Condor.

The work they have there is overwhelming. They visit some of the poorest families in the district, bringing food baskets to some families who survive on as little as US\$50/month. And they spend their time on bringing the blessings of the Catholic Faith to people who have had very little experience of it.

They work in some of the poorest schools where they are beloved by teachers and children alike. Additionally, they have over a thousand children in catechesis and



Visiting some of the local residents in Guayaquil.

over a hundred trained catechists.

**“When the body has all it wants and more, it suffocates the spiritual”**

Spending even the briefest of time with these remarkable men and women would leave you in no doubt about their motivation: they love Our Lord, Our Blessed Mother and our Catholic Faith with an intensity and sincerity that highlighted our lukewarmness.

They live in poverty themselves, a freely chosen poverty. Their diet is simple. Consciously and intentionally they have rid their lives of what is comfortable and luxurious in order to be more like Jesus and Mary.

And paradoxically their lives are richer than most people's here – and I include our lives as priests and religious. They summed it up for us one evening at the dinner table.

They said that when we're too physically comfortable, when the body has all it wants and more, it suffocates the

spiritual. And they're right!

### Confidence in Christ

For them the spiritual was paramount. They worked with apostolic ardour, had zeal for souls and were confident. They spoke confidently about the blessings God gives us in the Catholic Faith, they confidently taught the Faith and they audaciously looked for every opportunity God gave them to pass that Faith on or build it up where they found it.

During our trip we stayed in a district city called Chone in the province of Manabi.

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Visiting some of the sick in Guayaquil with a local sister.



Visiting students in Playa Prieta.

During a visit to a very poor family's home we were told that an elderly uncle was downstairs and quite sick. We went down to say hello and perhaps give him a blessing and found the man, named Segundo, on his deathbed. This man had lived such poverty his whole life that he wasn't baptised or even on a civil register.

**“The sister made the offer of Baptism to Segundo and there, on his deathbed, Segundo accepted”**

I watched as a religious sister spoke to this man and deftly felt out what he was able for and what God might have in store for him. She was an instrument in God's hands, powerfully attuned to the movement of the Holy Spirit by all her hours spent in adoration, the freely-chosen poverty, the self-denial and the acts of love.

After a few minutes she made the offer of Baptism to Segundo and there, on his

deathbed, Segundo accepted and was made a Son of God. We later returned to give him the sacraments of Confirmation and the Anointing.

There was absolutely no sense that the Faith was an imposition or something to be apologised for. There was equally no sense that we needed to change it to make it more palatable or more agreeable. The brothers and the sisters knew their Faith, they knew its goodness and shaped by Our Lord in prayer—they knew in any situation how to successfully communicate it.

#### In the footsteps of Sr Clare

Our mission trip reached its climax with four days in Playa Prieta, a rural village in the district of Manabí, where the Derry-born Sister Clare Crockett served the last years of her life and where she died in an earthquake in 2016.

Her life and death were the inspiration for this trip and it felt as though she was somehow present in each place we worked. This was especially true of the school of the Sacred Family in Playa Prieta.

On the site where the convent and school collapsed, killing Sister Clare and five young women discerning religious life, there now stands a sanctuary. It is the heart of the newly-rebuilt school. Visiting there was a great privilege for each of us. We knew we were walking on holy ground, where one of our own and one of our best lived and served and died.

We went to Ecuador to work and serve and we came home changed and aware of how much more in us has to change.

We prayed for ourselves there, for those at home who had made this mission trip possible and we prayed for Ireland. Our trip in Ecuador was a remarkable blessing from God and Our Lady.

**i** If you want to find out more about Sister Clare and her companions you can visit the website [sisterclare.com](http://sisterclare.com) and if you want to help sponsor a family or assist in the work done by the sisters and brothers in Ecuador you can visit their website at [homeofthemothers.org/mghm](http://homeofthemothers.org/mghm)



## Homelessness doesn't care how young you are

The average age of homeless people is now 32. Homelessness with young people is at crisis point in Ireland right now.

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A scene from the crowd waiting for Pope Francis to speak at Knock Shrine. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018



Pope Francis blesses children dressed as witnesses to the apparition in Knock in 1879. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018



Two boys dressed as Pope Francis share a quiet word at the opening ceremony in Letterkenny cathedral in the Diocese of Raphoe. Photo: Noel Ferry



Marie Walsh, Sarah O'Leary, Imelda O'Leary, Barry O'Leary, Margaret O'Leary, David O'Leary, Dennis O'Leary and Ronan O'Leary awaiting the Pope's arrival at the Phoenix Park. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018

# Extraordinary and joyful days captured for eternity

## Staff reporter

A beautiful commemorative book following Pope Francis' visit to Ireland last August, has been released on sale this week. *Pope Francis in Ireland* is published by Columba Books and written in partnership with *The Irish Catholic*, leaving pilgrims with a lasting souvenir of this historic papal visit to Dublin and Knock, as well as the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) events and the preparations which took place across the 26 dioceses on the island.

The first papal visit to Ireland in almost 40 years and some 38 years after the then Fr Bergoglio spent three months in Dublin as a Jesuit priest, this spectacular book offers a fabulous photographic diary of the Pope Francis' two-day intensive pilgrimage and covers the day-to-day events of the WMOF from August 21-26, offering in-depth reporting from the journalists of *The Irish Catholic*.

Starting with the tour of the Icon of the Holy Family and the various family celebrations held in dioceses across the island in preparation for WMOF, this colourful souvenir brings readers on a journey through the national opening ceremonies, the pastoral congress, Pope Francis' arrival and his diplomatic and pastoral tour of Dublin, the Festival of Families in Croke Park, the papal visit to Knock Shrine and the closing Mass in the Phoenix Park.

## Leader

The book also explores who Pope Francis is as an international leader and what his visit means for the Irish Church and people, including an introduction from renowned papal watcher, Fr Michael Collins.

Above all it captures the faithful Catholic people of Ireland who turned out in their tens of thousands to see their Pope, and commemorates those extraordinary and joyful few days in August which gave the Irish Church a much-needed boost of energy.

📖 Pope Francis in Ireland retails at €24.99 and is available to order on 01-6874096, sales@columba.ie or online at [www.columbabooks.com](http://www.columbabooks.com)



Larry Cassidy (11) smiles through the bad weather conditions at the Phoenix Park. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018



Pope Francis blesses Bella Hartigan, aged 11 months, with her mother Candice, at the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018



Pope Francis gives the thumbs up to a group of young Irish dancers at the Festival of Families in Croke Park. Photo: John McElroy/WMOF2018



A group of 120 children, including members of the Palestrina Choir, perform the song True Friend at the Festival of Families in Croke Park. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018



Pope Francis arrives at the Phoenix Park. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018



The view from the altar as Pope Francis celebrates the closing Mass in the Phoenix Park. Photo: Maxwells/WMOF2018

# Out&About

## Trócaire roll their sleeves up at Ploughing Championships



**OFFALY:** The team from Trócaire attend their stand at the National Ploughing Championships in Screggan, Tullamore.



**CLARE:** Fr James O'Brien cuts the cake at his Diamond Jubilee celebration of priesthood as Bishop Fintan Monahan stands beside him. Parishioners and family members attended the joyous event.



**OFFALY:** Pakie and Eamonn from Doon CBS Primary School with their sister Tilly and President Michael D. Higgins attend the National Ploughing Championships.



► **WATER-FORD:** A new postulant, Emma Brady from Co. Cavan, has been welcomed to St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn on the Feast of the Nativity of The Blessed Virgin Mary.

◀ **MAYO:** Children carry a Catholic Grandparents Association banner during the group's pilgrimage to Knock.



Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**MAYO:** Representatives from the Catholic Grandparents Association are pictured with clergy, religious and Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo in Knock. They went on pilgrimage to the Shrine earlier this month.



**WESTMEATH:** Bishop Michael Smith presented medals to students from the Diocese of Meath during the Vigil Mass in Mullingar Cathedral. They had participated in the Pope John Paul II Awards over the last year. Bishop Tom Deenihan, who was attending a course in Rome for new bishops, sent his congratulations to the recipients. Two of the students received the highest award, the Papal Cross.



**OFFALY:** Breda Fennelly and Fr William Coleman, Rochfortbridge, enjoy the National Ploughing Championships with Bishop Denis Nulty in Scraggan on the opening day.



**OFFALY:** Bishop Denis Nulty visits representatives from the Love Both campaign's stand at the National Ploughing Championship in Tullamore.

## IN SHORT

### Movie night in Moville

A powerful film that tells the story of a nun who died in an earthquake in Ecuador will be screened in a parish in Donegal in the same month four nuns of her congregation will be installed in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.

Former actress turned nun, Sr Clare Crockett, joined the Servants Sisters of the Home of the Mother when she was 18 after beginning acting at age 14 and hosting a Nickelodeon programme by the time she was 16.

At the time, even when she landed a small role in a feature film, she said: "Neither success, nor fame, nor human love could fill me. I knew that only by doing what God wanted could I be truly happy." Following a greater call, she entered religious life.

Released this year, *All or Nothing: Sr Clare Crockett*, will screen on October 26 at 8pm in St Eugene's Hall, James' Street in Moville – organised by St

Joseph's Young Priest Society (SJYPS).

Speaking to CatholicIreland.net, the editor of the movie, Sr Kristen Gardner, who is American but based in Spain, said that it was a moving experience to see how well the movie was received in Derry. "Above all what moves me is to see how Sr Clare's story is able to touch so many hearts and I think being here in Derry was especially beautiful to see how she can bring so much hope to the young people."

In Ireland the Servants Sisters of the Home of the Mother have a community in Roscommon Town and this month four nuns from the US arrived in Mitchelstown, and were installed on Saturday – having been invited by Bishop William Crea to "put fresh heart into the disciples".

Admission to the film is free but donations from the movie night will go towards the work of Sr Clare's community in Ecuador.

### Diamond Jubilee

Also, in celebration of the 60th anniversary of St Pius X Church in Donegal, the SJYPS in Moville Parish are inviting people to a Diamond Jubilee coffee morning.

Kicking off on Friday October 26, from 10.30am until 12 in Taobh na Cille (beside the Church) in Moville, donations will go towards the education of seminarians for priesthood.

The branch of the SJYPS also wishes to thank Fr Pat O'Hagan PP and Fr Patrick McGoldrick CC, "who serve their Parishioners so well whilst recalling gratefully too, past personnel".

The SJYPS said: "We give thanks to our fellow parishioners who fulfill lay roles in the parish, serving us all 'with varieties of gifts but there is the same Spirit' (1 Cor 12: 4). We give thanks to God for our praying parish community through the years – those living and those deceased."

## CLARE

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

Ennis Parish, led by Fr Tom Hogan, will make a pilgrimage to Italy on October 15-22. Details: Mary 087 124 7669.

Mothers' Prayers in Cloughleigh Church every Tuesday evening from 7-7.45pm. During Mothers' Prayers we pray for our children and all who need our prayers. New members are always welcome. Info contact Noreen at 085 1530051.

## CORK

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

## DERRY

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

## DUBLIN

Life to the Full (Jn 10: 10) Book Club on Thursdays in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay 7-8.30pm. Join other 20-30 year olds to meditate, share and discuss life, faith, purpose and how to live life to the full. Life to the Full Bookclub will resume on October 4. Info: st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie or www.facebook.com/lifetothefullbookclub

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

## FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm. www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly

## GALWAY

Healing services at Emmanuel House, Clonfert, led by Eddie Stones and team weekly on Wednesday from 12-2pm and Thursday 7-9pm and a healing day every first Saturday from 10.30am-5pm with Confessions available and Mass. Bring lunch.

## KILDARE

Leixlip Parish Cell Groups: An invitation is extended to everyone to experience a cell meeting in a home near you (morning or evening). Meeting dates: October 2 and 16. Info: Bridie 086 3807917, Donal 086 4472605. Morning groups: Mary 087 6205435, Maura 087 4141706.

Family Cell Meeting: A cell meeting for parents/carers/expectant parents and babies/toddlers in Our Lady's Parish Centre on Tuesday afternoons 1-2pm. Volunteers will lead the meeting, prepare refreshments and help with the toddlers. Upcoming dates: October 2 and 16. Info: Kate 086 4132511. Email: leixlipparishcells@gmail.com Website: www.parishcellsireland.ie

## KILKENNY

First Saturday Devotions, Adoration, Rosary, Divine Mercy and Prayer for Healing from 7-9pm in St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy.

## LIMERICK

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

Young adults ages 18-35 are invited on a pilgrimage with the Dominicans to Bracciano and Rome from October 25-29. Please email limerick@op-tn.org for more information or to request an application.

The Dominican Sisters in Limerick will be offering Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori-based religious education programme, for children ages 3-9 beginning in October. Interested parents please contact limerick@op-tn.org or 085 2255796.

## LOUTH

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

St Gerard's Solemn Novena at St Joseph's Redemptorist Church in Dundalk from October 8-16. Weekdays: 7am, 9.30, 11.30, 1.10pm, 2.30, 4.30, 6, 7.30, 9, 10.30. Sunday: 7am, 8, 9.30, 11, 12.30pm, 4.30, 6, 7.30, 9.00. Confessors available every day except for Sundays. Visit: www.redemptorists.dundalk@cscr.ie

The Secular Franciscans will celebrate the Feast of St Francis of Assisi at their monthly Mass on Wednesday October 3 at 7.30pm in the Augustinian Church on Shop Street, Drogheda. Blessing of the Sick and Veneration of the Relic of St Francis will be included.

## MEATH

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

## ROSCOMMON

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

## WATERFORD

A Monastic Experience Weekend takes place from October 26-28 at Glencainr Abbey for women interested in finding out more about Cistercian life. Please contact vocations@glencainrabbey.org for details.

## WICKLOW

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

St Patrick's Prayer Meeting on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre beside St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town.

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# An economy built for others

One of the many striking aspects of *The Irish Catholic* during the period under review was the sheer range and diversity of the subjects discussed within its pages. There were, as one would expect, a plethora of articles on what might loosely be described as the 'internal' life of the Church – Masses, retreats, pilgrimages, doctrinal developments, church appointments, the work being done by Catholic charities, and the like – and also discussion of aspects of the Church's engagement with the outside world (most especially through its coverage of Vatican affairs).

The editor, however, never lost sight of the fact that the faithful in Ireland looked to the Church as a well-spring of ideas for the life of the nation more generally, and every so often provided thought-provoking commentary on a range of secular issues.

**“British policy-makers assumed that what was good for the rest of the UK must be good for Ireland”**

The editorial discussion on the theme of Irish post-war industrial reconstruction in the edition of September 28, 1918, was a case in point. The article began by noting that the distinct nature of the Irish economy had historically been overlooked by British policy-makers, who assumed that what was good for the rest of the United Kingdom must *ipso facto* be good for Ireland.

To illustrate the point the author cited the application to Ireland of the 1911 National Insurance Act, the provisions of which, it was argued, might have been appropriate for the industrial English economy but were not suited to Irish rural life. (Of course, it might have been pointed out, by way of a counter, that England, too, had its farms and farmers, while Ireland had its own industrial heartland, in north-east – and thus largely Protestant – Ulster.)

### Sceptical

The author was conscious, but sceptical, of promises to assist in the process of reconstruction recently made by Lord Lieutenant Viscount French. With past experience in mind, there was a natural suspicion that the offer of better government was being proffered

### 100 years on

Irish industry was a subject of real concern a century ago, writes  
**Gabriel Doherty**



Chief Secretary Edward Shortt, as sketched by RG Eves.

exports consisted disproportionately of live animals, unprocessed foodstuffs, or raw materials such as wool.

Shortt noted the malign consequence of this pattern of trade, namely that the added value to be gained through an indigenous food processing industry was lost to the country. Not surprisingly, however, he neglected to dwell on the politically sensitive charge that it was to the food producers "across the water" that this added value accrued.

It was to take another 40 years, and the Lemass revolution of the 1960s, for the potential of this Irish food-processing industry to be properly realised.

**“The arrest of Ireland's industrial development is directly attributable to the hostile attitude of her alien rulers”**

The paper was almost as far ahead of its time in lamenting the failure to nurture Ireland's water resources, its inexhaustible reserves of 'white coal', as a means of generating electricity – this a full seven years ahead of the 'turning of the sod' at the start of the Shannon hydro-electric scheme.

While the discussion of the subject matter may have been a little cursory in certain respects, the editorial is a useful corrective to some lazy modern commentary, which suggests that the Irish Catholic Church of the day was contemptuous of, or hostile or indifferent to, the development of industry in the country. The explanations for the subsequent failures in this area, it seems, need to be sought elsewhere.

**❗ Gabriel Doherty teaches in the Department of History, UCC, and is a member of the Government's expert advisory group on the Decade of Commemorations.**



It was only in the 1960s under Seán Lemass that Ireland's food industry began to realise its potential.



Lord Lieutenant Viscount John French.

in lieu of the promise of self-government contained in the 1914 Home Rule Act, which remained in abeyance pending the war's end.

Rebutting the argument that Ireland needed the British political connection in order to prosper economically, the leader-writer argued that the reverse was true, that

"the arrest of her [Ireland's] industrial development is directly attributable to the hostile attitude of her alien rulers".

More welcome to the paper was the speech made during the previous week by Chief Secretary Edward Shortt, who had lamented the fact that Ireland's agricultural

# Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today



**Finding Faith  
in Ireland:**

New research shows  
a way forward

Page 22

## Faith beyond a reasonable doubt

What reason do we have to believe? A new video resource, Catholicism: Beyond Reasonable Doubt is available to anyone who wants to share their faith or go deeper

**H**ow can the whole Catholic Faith be explored in 107 minutes? A new resource has the answer – it's a video based, free course that can be used privately, in the parish setting or as a discussion starter for those who have questions. The author, Tom Ascoug, has studied Catechesis, but had searched in vain for something like it to share. "I figured the Church had good resources for sharing the truth – compact and concise faith development tools. But, in the Mass, you are offered faith development at a deeper level. I found in school that the 'first conviction' of faith wasn't in the formation offered. My fellow classmates didn't have reasons to believe. I said to the head of my Catholic school:

'give us reasons to believe or the majority of this class will leave here without faith!' There was emphasis on God's love – but there weren't real reasons for people to have faith."

Tom says that there are ample opportunities to discuss those reasons, and that this resource is wide-ranging, but concise. "There are opportunities when people come looking for something – it's okay to spend a little time with a resource. It could be a refresher or a presentation of the faith – you could tell someone to watch it and then meet for a coffee to discuss the material." He's happy to have developed something which can be used to introduce anyone from teens on the reason behind faith.

» **Continued on Page 20**



### Editor's Note by Eoin Walshe



**"Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:15).**

**O**n what basis do we believe? What reason do we have to believe? Are we ready to make our defence of the hope that is in us? There are one hundred and sixty-eight hours in a week – one thousand, four hundred and forty minutes in each day. This week, a new video resource

## An account of our hope Welcome to Cornerstone: Building Tomorrow's Parish Today

called Catholicism: Beyond Reasonable Doubt is highlighted. It endeavours to help us answer the above questions in just 107 minutes!

### **This week spotlight**

Also this week: A response to the results of a recent survey of young people in Ireland is presented – "Sobering" research findings present "excellent opportunity" for Catholic Church. Dr Fáinche Ryan continues her series on the sacraments – this week explaining that the sacraments are rooted

in love. Once again, we have next Sunday's Second Reading – reading what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today. This week's reading is James 5:1-6. There is also a piece detailing the thoughts of renowned Catholic speaker, David Welles, on how best to accompany young people exploring faith – positing "young people are not a problem to be solved." Don't forget to check out the weekly 'People of God' profile

to hear about a little bit about one of our sisters or brothers in Christ. And, this week's 'Fish & Tips' presents two different ideas for disconnecting to connect.

**Join us on the journey of the building tomorrow's parish today!**

**If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on [eoin@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:eoin@irishcatholic.ie)**

## What is Cornerstone?

The focus of Cornerstone is building tomorrow's parish today; inspired by the Great Commission, each week there are features relating to Scripture, sacraments and service as well as shining a spotlight on vibrant pastoral ideas being realised in parishes around the country and beyond. Our aim is to help every parish best answer the call to 'saying, doing and being' Christ in their context; sharing the good news! Whether

actively involved in parish ministry, feeling disconnected from your parish or both; Cornerstone is for you. A cornerstone is the first stone set in the construction of a building from which all other stones will be set in reference to, thus determining the entire structure. The Irish parish of tomorrow should be built "in reference to" the Church's cornerstone: Jesus (Ephesians 20-22).

# Faith beyond a reasonable doubt

» Continued from Page 19

**“I kept my eyes peeled for years,” says Tom. “I came across material – but there was nothing in the category of the first introduction to the faith that wasn’t just piecemeal. There are great courses – but the phase one, initial proclamation was absent.”**

Tom says the course gives much needed answers to fallen-away Catholics don’t know what they have rejected. “Levels of knowledge in the population are very low. Irish people have been turning from the faith – now, if they understand what they are rejecting, that’s one thing. But, there is great hope that people can be attracted back to the Church – overcoming that lack of information and knowledge in the Faith.” His material started out in live talks delivered to youth groups and other circles and was well received. He’s happy it is now in its free format and can be accessed by anyone. “Pope Saint John Paul II called on us to be prepared to give an account of the hope within. People struggle a lot with effectively conveying their faith. People really want to know the reasons to believe. It’s important to have answers.”

The series has 7 episodes of around 15 minutes length. “The first 6 episodes are about conveying what Catholicism is about: evidence for God, evidence for The Faith, encouraging people to search for God through the evidence. Even if people are practicing Catholics or Christians of other denominations, if they are not convicted of the reasons to believe – they practice from habit. When people fervently grasp that God exists – it’s a game changer – it serves an interest for discovering more about why God exists.”

**“There is great hope that people can be attracted back to the Church – overcoming that lack of information and knowledge in the Faith.”**

The first episode discusses science, the second focuses on Revelation and God’s work through history, much of that in The Bible. “Before one can reference them, one needs to check the credibility of the documents, then to see what the Bible tells us. This works like a birds-eye view of the whole story, showing the interconnectedness the of faith dimensions, where Islam and Judaism separate from Christianity.” Then,

episode three discusses the nature of God: “The Trinity – the power of love between father and son and the love produces the Holy Spirit – how this is the blueprint for the person and the way to understand the family.”

**“Jesus never left us,” says Tom, “his person transferred into the Sacraments!”**

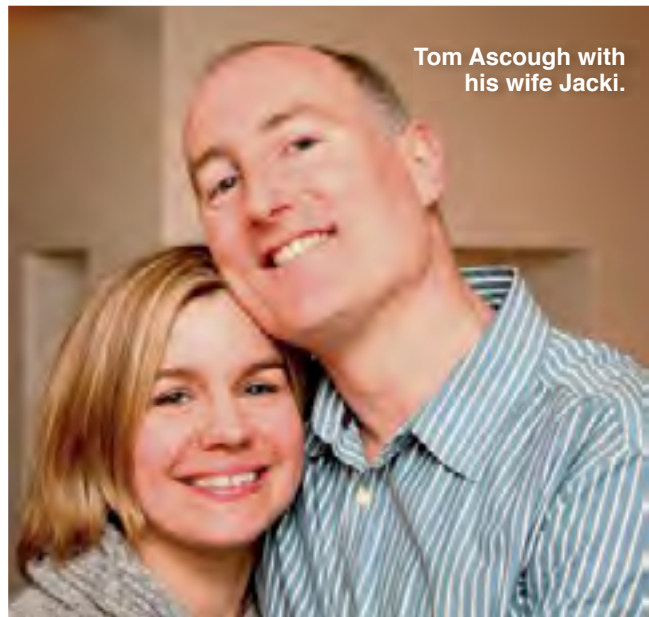
The further episodes discuss The Fall, Sin and Salvation in Christ, tackling along the way the difficult questions that are often levied at Christians: “suffering, pain and problems in the world.” The sixth episode covers The Sacraments. “Jesus never left us,” says Tom, “his person transferred into the Sacra-

ments!” Once these big topics have been laid out in the first six episodes, the final two episodes discuss The Church and The Great Commission,

and, of course, what to do about it. “Episode Six looks back over the 2,000 years of The Church. The Church has stayed faithful to its essence

over all these years – despite human limitations. It invites you to see how The Church has been guarded by the Holy Spirit.” Then, in the final episode, “a valid case is made that this is a chance to get involved.”

The course is designed for anyone and requires no training. Tom describes it as ‘Plug and play’. “I’m glad that I have got this done and off my chest – now it’s up to parishes, priests, those involved in formation and lay people to use it.” Along with the YouTube series, which can be found on a dedicated page easily at Catholicism: Beyond Reasonable Doubt, there is also an app, ‘Centerpass’, which aims to “get people involved in evangelisation through the parish”. It seems, with resources like this, it has never been easier to do so.



Tom Ascough with his wife Jacki.

## Scripture

**Reflecting on Scripture is an important part of the Christian faith. Often, however, we Catholics do not allow ourselves the time to really reflect on the Word of God. This weekly series will explore the Second Readings from the coming Sunday’s Mass. These readings were written specifically for the early church, but since it is a living Word, we can still try to see what it is saying to the Church today.**

**James 5:1-6**

An answer for the rich. Start crying, weep for the miseries that are coming to you. Your wealth is all rotting, your clothes are all eaten up by moths. All your gold and your silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion will be your own sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you stored up as your treasure for the last days. Labourers mowed your fields, and you cheated them – listen to the wages that you kept back, calling out; realise that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. On earth you have had a life of comfort and luxury; in the time of slaughter you went on eating to your heart’s content. It was you who condemned the innocent and killed them; they offered you no resistance.

**Spend some time in prayer with the reading.**

1. Find a quiet place, and give yourself fifteen minutes without distractions. Read the section once, and then pause for reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and response to the passage.
2. Read the passage a second time. Ask yourself: What do I find challenging about this reading? Is there anything that I can try to do differently in my life as a response to it? What is the message in this reading for our parish? Write down anything that comes to your head.
3. Pause in silent reflection, and then read the passage a third time.



## PARISH INITIATIVES

# Young people are not a problem to be solved

Today's Catholic youth require "joyful accompaniment" says leading catechist.



**R**enowned Catholic speaker David Wells has said that the Church in Ireland must not view young people merely as "a problem to be solved". Wells, a UK catechist who regularly talks at conferences around the world, was speaking ahead of the Engage Youth Ministry Conference in Dublin on 8th December 2018. Churches throughout the Western world "are failing at a parish level and it's just not working for young people", he continued. What is needed, Wells said, "is a new theology of accompanying young people", which requires "free and cheerful missionaries" who understand that "a joyful church will attract young people anyway".

As part of his presentation at the Engage conference, Wells will look at recent research from both the UK and USA. "Increasingly, what we're discovering in the UK, is that the issues raised in the US are the same as here. There is widespread disaffection in young Catholics in both countries, which has profound implications for parishes", Wells said. "Surprisingly", he continued, "the issues we're encountering with young people are worldwide", and not limited to any one nation.

What is becoming clear is that for young people throughout the Western

culture, there is "an increasing disconnection with the notion of commitment, but still a desire to belong to things," said Wells of the research. This dynamic invariably creates a strange situation for the Church. A key issue for the UK Church for example, in Wells' eyes, has been that influential figures have "lacked imagination" when it comes to developing a relevant strategy for youth.

**“Young people today must belong before they believe. That's the distinction between them and their grandparents”**

This lack of imagination is something that the Engage Youth Ministry Conference seeks to address, aiming to challenge, envision and equip those working with youth and young adults in the Catholic Church in Ireland today. "The key purpose of the Conference is to assist the further development of Catholic youth ministry in Ireland", said Tim Nichols of Tine Network, the main organiser of the event. "It is a conference for bishops, priests, and laity, exploring how we evangelise and disciple young people," he continued.

But this will require a firm commitment to going in a new direction, accord-

ing to Wells, the conference's main speaker. "What is needed is a huge cultural shift," he said, "because young people today must belong before they believe. That's the distinction between them and their grandparents". A major area for renewal, therefore, is the whole approach to Confirmation. "It's necessary to rethink the preparation that is given for Confirmation. There are increasing numbers of parents who tell their children to use the Sacrament as a moment to choose: make your Confirmation, and then you can decide if you want to be part of the faith. It's a reverse of what it's intended for. We need a complete rethink of this," he said.

The best way of dealing with this is to start a process of accompanying young people on their faith journeys. The Church must "rethink what we're actually asking in terms of parish. We must help clergy to get to grips with the whole idea of accompaniment. It's not a new thing, it's not a new initiative. This is exactly what Pope Francis is asking of us," continued Wells.

Key to getting this right, though, is ensuring that "we get to grips with the notion that we're not looking for fully fledged Catholics right from the beginning of the process. We must look to small signs of progress instead". Invariably

this means investment in better training and developing a more incisive strategy. Wells notes that "we've got to be more skillful in understanding what it means to accompany someone from their current position to where we'd like them to be, rather than just having them in that place first." This process might well be pastorally exhausting and very much focused on the long-term, but it is undoubtedly a vital component of successfully engaging young people in the Catholic faith today. For Wells, the answer is simple, and it lies in the Christian virtues of joy and mercy.

**“Young people want to know that they are loved and loveable, and that there is a role for them in the Church today.”**

"Most of all, young people want to know that they are loved and loveable, and that there is a role for them in the Church today. Those things can only come from encountering the Christian virtues. This is where true meaning comes from."

To book tickets to Engage Youth Ministry Conference, or to find out more, see <https://www.engageyouth.ie/>

## Fish &amp; Tips

## Daily Ideas for Disciples

**Disconnect to connect**

There are one thousand, four hundred and forty minutes in each day (1,440). How many of those minutes do we spend mindlessly scrolling on our phones? And then, how many of those minutes do we spend mindfully connecting with God in prayer? This week there are two slightly different approaches to prayer and your smart phone!

Firstly, consider charging your phone downstairs – particularly overnight. Therefore, giving yourself some time and space to disconnect from the world of social media and plug into prayer, and family.

Secondly, if you have your smart phone with you through the working day, why not try

setting reminders on the hour or every three hours. When your phone vibrates, take a minute to stop, breath and reconnect with God...

"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7).

*If you have any "daily ideas" that have helped you in your faith journey and daily discipleship then please share them via email ([eoin@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:eoin@irishcatholic.ie)) or on the Cornerstone Facebook page (@CornerstoneOnlineParish).*

## People of God

**Regina Mac Carrick (30)**

**Parish:** Parishes of Donabate, Portrane and Balheary

**Occupation:** Accountant / Quality Control

**Describe your faith in 7 words:** Central, Crucial; Humbling; Life giving; constantly evolving

**What ministry/service/role do you have in your parish?** Various, including Ministry of the Word and Eucharist, Youth Ministry, PPC and welcome team.

**How/why did you get involved?** I moved to my current parish just over 3 years ago and arrived knowing nobody. I took a few days off work around the move and attended the weekday morning Mass in my new parish. I was immediately met with great welcome and was introduced to some parishioners. Over my first year in the parish, being a Minister of the Eucharist meant that I got to know the priests, as well as many of the parishioners, which in turn paved the way for my getting further involved in ministry, and bringing some new ideas to the parish.

**What is your favourite thing about it?** Being able to witness to, and support, others in their faith and encourage them to also become involved in ministry. I really feel so privileged to be able to serve others through ministry.

**What helps keep you connected to your parish?** Regularly attending and ministering at Mass and other



events within the parish. Also, the openness of the priests of my parish to my sometimes 'random' ideas and a willingness on their part to letting me try things.

**Tell us ONE OF YOUR...**

**Favourite ways to nourish your faith:** Spending time with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration, at least 1 hour a week. Reflecting on my day and noting down what I am thankful for in a 'Praise diary'. Reflecting on the Gospel of the Day. Regularly attending Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Challenges to your faith:** Challenges to my faith are many and varied, but, to pick one example, I'd say when situations, whether in my personal life, work or ministry, do not appear to be going to plan... 'my' plan that is!

# EVANGELISATION

## ‘Nobody speaks to us about the faith’ – Young Irish Christians

“Sobering” research findings present “excellent opportunity” for Catholic Church

A recent survey of Irish young people has thrown up some challenges for the Church today. Conducted by Barna on behalf of Christ In Youth, the Finding Faith in Ireland research was launched late last year. The research looks at the attitudes and beliefs of young people in Ireland, especially when it comes to their faith. Jasper Rutherford, head of Christ In Youth Europe, said that he wanted the research to be “a gift to the Catholic Church in Ireland today”. “Some people have called the findings sobering”, Jasper continued, “but I see them as a wonderful opportunity to hear what the young people of Ireland are saying.”

While a majority (70%) of Irish youth are Christian – and Catholic specifically (60%) – this appears to be in name only. A key element is the fact that “the young Irish view of Christianity puts more emphasis on rule-following over a relationship with a loving and gracious God”. For

young people, the Christian faith still equates to a dry list of dos and don’ts, rather than an ongoing, life-giving, personal relationship with the Risen Christ. A second worrying finding from the research is that “few young Christians seem to believe that God understands them.” Ironically, this speaks to a desire on behalf of the young people for an intimate relationship with God, but one that has yet to be realised. This presents a strong challenge to the development of the Catholic faith.

While a number of the statistics might raise concerns, the research also points to some exciting opportunities for the Catholic Church in Ireland today. While the study found that “one-in-four young people in Ireland is currently going through a crisis of faith”, Irish youth still asserted that “the process of questioning faith alone does not lead young people to leave the Church”. This would appear to present a credible opportunity for the Church to seriously engage with young



Jasper Rutherford of Christ in Youth Ireland launches the research

people on matters which are clearly of concern for them.

**“There is a vital need for the wider Church to walk fearlessly alongside the youth in helping them dig beneath the surface”**

If a quarter of all young people are interested in questioning the faith, then it is not a stretch of the imagination to say that they would be willing to engage in vibrant, thoughtful discussion. Indeed, “many young people discuss feeling driven away from Christianity by unanswered questions, injustices and controversies

highlighted in the media”. There is a vital need for the wider Church to walk fearlessly alongside the youth in helping them dig beneath the surface and finding the incredible depths of richness the Catholic life has to offer.

Amazingly, the findings state that “more than half of Christian young people do not know an adult who regularly talks with them about their faith”. There is much to be gained, therefore, for an increase in family discussions, or for mentored faith relationships within parishes. Anyone who might be skeptical of their chances of engaging with young people about faith should take heart from the results which show that parents are identified as among the key influences who can make Christianity more appealing – by young

people themselves. Indeed, “a key part of resolving the tension between a chaotic world and a purposeful life is Christian community.” The idea of creating a vibrant group where young people feel they fit is a strong one, and one that seems to be welcomed by the young people themselves.

**“This points to a desire to have a grounded, practical faith, rather than one purely for the intellect.”**

But these conversations should not just be theoretical. The research found that “71% of young practicing Christians

in Ireland want to find a way to follow Jesus that connects to the world they live in”. This points to a desire to have a grounded, practical faith, rather than one purely for the intellect. Young people today want to live out their discipleship – to practice it in corporal ways. The Church must encourage and accompany young people on this journey.

One of the final conclusions from the research leaves the Church with a simple but effective solution for moving forward. “Adults who care about young people’s spiritual development could play a key role in taking them from a nominal to a sincere faith – a shift that could redefine an individual’s life, and on a larger scale, the spiritual landscape of the Republic of Ireland”. The ball remains in the Church’s court.

## Sacraments



## The Sacraments are rooted in love

Dr Fáinche Ryan

To be a Christian is to be a follower of Christ. It is an invitation to live differently, to radically reorient our values and to try to live lives which accord with the values by which Jesus lived. To be a Christian is to always seek to learn more about the God whom Jesus taught us to call ‘Our Father’. To be a Christian is to be a member of a community, a community called Church. The Church, founded by Jesus, progressed by people who believed Jesus had an important message to proclaim, that of God’s saving presence in human history, a presence which became manifest in a particular way in the life of Jesus. These people, the early Christians, wished to tell this story, and to proclaim to the whole

world the fact that the Holy Spirit has been gifted to us, promising newness of life. The Holy Spirit both invites and empowers us to live differently, to seek to live and die as Jesus did.

It is, however, difficult to live as Jesus lived, and virtually impossible alone. For this reason, from the earliest days Christians have gathered together: to pray together, to worship the God that is Trinity, and then to go back to their everyday life to proclaim this God of love to others. Love has always been central to the Christian journey, ‘By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another’ (Jn 13:35), and this should come to us as no surprise because Love is a name for God – as we read in the first letter of John, ‘God is love’ (1 Jn 4:16).

These words express the fundamental principal of a Christian life: a Christian is someone who has come to know and to believe in God’s love. This can only come through an encounter with the living God, a God who is love, an encounter which gives life new meaning, and gives new direction to all that one does. An encounter which invites a response, a changed way of living, and an encounter which teaches that life does not end with death. The centrality of love is a message we have inherited from our Jewish brothers and sisters, something they acknowledge every time they pray the Shema: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might’ (Deut 6:4-5).

# A compromise too far?



**A much-vaunted deal between the Vatican and communist China is eliciting pushback, writes Max Rosner**

**A**fter years of intermittent talks, the Holy See and Chinese Communist Party have signed a provisional deal regarding the confirmation and appointment of bishops. Pope Francis has formally recognised seven bishops originally appointed by the communist authorities without Vatican approval.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State insisted that “for the first time, all the bishops in China are in communion with the Bishop of Rome”. This move, which has drawn criticism from several Church leaders, was allegedly a non-negotiable point for the Chinese government. The agreement could put to rest a source of major tension between the two states since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Recently, this tension came to a head when several Chinese bishops were excommunicated under Pope Benedict XVI because of their unyielding loyalty to the state.

The agreement, the details of which will be kept private, also incorporates concessions made by the Chinese President, Xi Jinping. Most significantly, Mr Xi will recognise the Pontiff as the leader of the Catholic Church in China. No religious leader has ever received this designation from the communists, since the president is customarily the leader of all civil organisations.

## Appointments

The Vatican and Beijing have also established a system for future episcopal appointments within China. Under the agreement, the Communist Party would have the power to nominate a set of three bishops for each vacancy, from which the Pope would make his appointment. In keeping with standard protocol, the Pope would formally give the letter of appointment to each bishop, thereby preserving the relationship between the Pontiff and the other bishops in communion with him.

This arrangement, though unorthodox, is not unprecedented. In other times throughout the



Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun, retired archbishop of Hong Kong. Photo: CNS

Church’s history, non-papal actors have taken on important roles in episcopal appointments. During the era of the Papal States, secular leaders from Catholic states would advise the Pope directly on episcopal appointments. This reciprocal relationship even extends to the present day. In 1996, the Vatican reached an agreement with the communist regime in Vietnam under which the Pope nominates three replacements and Hanoi chooses one of the respective candidates.

Given the current secrecy surrounding the Chinese agreement, there is still uncertainty regarding a number of topics, including the status of China’s underground Church. There are an estimated 10 million Catholics in China, nearly half of whom belong to unofficial underground congregations.

Currently, the only state-recognised Catholic association in China is the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, which recognises the state’s supremacy over any religious institution.

In 2017 Francis removed two underground bishops and replaced them with government-approved, formerly-excommunicated leaders.

Reportedly, both underground bishops refused to

step aside.

Another looming question surrounding the deal is the future of diplomatic relations between Beijing and the Vatican. Currently, the Holy See along with 17 nations recognise the Taiwanese government, and not the Communist Party, as the legitimate government of China.

**“The deal arrives at a time of great controversy surrounding the religious question in the Middle Kingdom”**

A party spokesman “stressed that the ongoing negotiations will stay on the religious level, and will not touch on any diplomatic issue such as the establishment of diplomatic ties between Beijing and the Vatican”. Regardless, Catholic and diplomatic leaders in Taiwan are concerned that this deal is a harbinger of fraught relations to come.

The impending deal has elicited pushback from several bishops and human rights activists. Cardinal Joseph Zen, the former bishop of Hong Kong, called the current

deal a betrayal to underground believers who have thus far

refused to accept the authority of the state’s Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association. In an interview Cardinal Zen questioned, “how can we ever trust the Communist Party to nominate a bishop?” He even warned that such an agreement will lead to a schism throughout the Chinese-speaking world.

His concern is not unique. An open letter backed by 15 theologians, academics and lawyers questions the validity of foreign-government involvement in the episcopal process. They cautioned that complying with the CPC would be an “irreversible and regrettable mistake”.

The deal arrives at a time of great controversy surrounding the religious question in the Middle Kingdom. The National Religious Affairs Administration recently affirmed its ban on evangelistic activities, which led to the removal of religious symbols from places of worship across the Chinese countryside. Additionally, the party’s treatment of Muslim Uighurs, a minority group in Western China, has received international attention. According to reports, millions of Muslims were detained under the guise of “fighting extremism” and promoting “unity and harmony”.

Reports also indicate that the state set up “re-education” camps aimed at building stronger loyalty to the state. These actions fall under Mr Xi’s ‘Sinisation’ efforts, or in other words, bringing religious

activities closer to the ideology of the state. United Nations officials and experts in Geneva urged the Chinese government to reverse these actions against the Uighur people. A bipartisan group of US legislators pressed President Donald Trump and the State Department to launch sanctions against China, given these violations of religious freedom.

As is widely-known, the Church finds itself in the midst of extraordinary controversy as it signs a deal with China. Clergy sexual abuse and cover-up continue to plague episcopal conferences in Ireland, the United States, Chile, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. The subject of much of that controversy, ex-cardinal of Washington Theodore McCarrick, was a lead negotiator with China in years prior. In July of this year, Francis received McCarrick’s resignation and ordered him to a life of prayer and penance due to his sexual abuse of minors and clergyman.

**“Environmental stewardship has been a flagship of Mr Xi’s presidency and Francis’ papacy”**

Although China and the Church espouse different views of religion, this deal could spark a dialogue on shared ethical concerns. Environmental stewardship has been a flagship of Mr Xi’s presidency and Francis’ papacy. Mr Xi stressed sustainable development at the recent party congress while the Pope’s landmark environmental encyclical *Laudato Si’* continues to guide his temporal leadership around the world.

Both leaders have also declared war on corruption. Over the past six years more than 100 high-ranking party officials and Chinese civil servants have been arrested on corruption charges. Pope Francis recently warned bishops against clericalism, or in other words, the power separation between clergy and laypeople. On an international level, Pope Francis insists that one could not simultaneously believe in God and be a member of the mafia.

For now, the agreement is private and provisional, giving both parties ample flexibility moving forward. Greg Burke, the Vatican spokesman, affirmed the possibility of future changes and added, “this has been about dialogue, patient listening on both sides, even when people come from very different standpoints”. Nevertheless, it seems these once distant institutions, which together represent one-third of the world’s population, are on the verge of a new epoch of cooperation.

**i** Max Rosner is a postgraduate student at Trinity College Dublin where he studies intercultural theology. His research centres on Catholic-China relations.

**“An open letter backed by 15 theologians, academics and lawyers questions the validity of foreign-government involvement in the episcopal process”**



President Xi.

# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Australian Catholic school group welcomes funding

● A \$4.6 billion (€2.85 billion) funding package for Catholic and independent schools in Australia has won the support of a national Catholic education group, which says the plan corrects key flaws from the previous funding model.

"Families can only have school choice if there is an affordable alternative to free, comprehensive government schools," said Ray Collins, acting executive director of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCED).

"If the only option is a high-fee school, choice is restricted to those parents rich enough to afford high fees."

The NCED has given its full support to the new funding package announced last week by Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

### Bangladesh flooding leaves thousands homeless

● Caritas is fighting against the devastating erosion of several rivers which continue to devour villages leaving thousands of people in central and southern Bangladesh homeless.

The Padma River, one of the country's four major rivers, has flooded over a dozen villages in Shariatpur district in recent weeks. Officials say more than 15,000 people from 5,081 families have lost their homes. In Kanai Nagar village under Chandpai Union of Mongla in Bagerhat district, 485 villagers from 145 families at risk of losing their homes.

Caritas Khulna, which covers southern Bangladesh, has moved 10 families from the village to a safer place.

### China blocks aid for Christians in Myanmar

● Myanmar's military and civilian authorities are blocking humanitarian aid from being delivered to thousands of displaced ethnic Kachin in conflict-torn Kachin State due to pressure from Beijing, according to a new report.

The majority of the state's 1.7 million Kachin are Christians, including 116,000 Catholics.

Bangkok-based Fortify Rights said the Chinese government has been privately urging Myanmar

authorities and non-state ethnic armies to prevent UN and other aid organisations from operating on the Myanmar side of the border opposite China's Yunnan province.

A Myanmar human rights specialist with Fortify Rights said Chinese involved in Myanmar's peace talks with its armed ethnic groups have repeatedly made it clear they view international humanitarian groups as "proxies for Western governments".

### Nun calls Philippine Church to clarify visa deals

● An Australian nun ordered deported by Philippine authorities has called on the country's Catholic bishops to clarify an agreement they signed with the Bureau of Immigration aimed at making the application and renewal of missionary visas easier.

Sr Patricia Fox, whose request for a missionary visa was denied last week, said the bishops should come out with a "clear statement" about the deal.

"I think the bishops need to clarify these [issues on] endorsements," said the nun at a forum in Quezon City.

The agreement was signed in June.

### Indonesia interfaith dialogue attracts almost 200 priests

● As "men of communion", priests are called to establish "healthy relationships with their colleagues, the community of faithful and anyone who belongs to a different ethnic, cultural and religious group", said the Bishop of Bogor (West Java), at the opening of a four-day meeting, September 18-22, for diocesan priests.

About 174 priests from Java – Bogor, Bandung, Jakarta (West Java); Semarang and Purwokerto (Central Java); Surabaya and Malang (East Java) – came to the event which was held in Sentul (Bogor).

## Vatican deal with China 'giving flock to wolves' says cardinal

A well-known Chinese prelate has dubbed a new deal between the Vatican and China as a "betrayal" of Catholics in the country.

For the first time in decades, all of the Catholic bishops in China are in full communion with the Pope, the Vatican announced.

Cardinal Joseph Zen, former bishop of Hong Kong, called on the Pope's secretary of state to step down saying a deal with Beijing would be "giving the flock into the mouths of the wolves".

Pope Francis lifted the excommunications or irregular status of seven bishops who had been ordained with government approval, but not the Vatican's consent.

Representatives of the Vatican and the Chinese government signed what they described as a "provisional agreement" on the appointment of bishops.

### Hopes

Regularising the bishops' status, the Vatican said, Pope Francis hopes "a new process may begin that will allow



Pope Francis holds a letter presented by Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, retired bishop of Hong Kong, during his general audience in early January at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

the wounds of the past to be overcome, leading to the full communion of all Chinese Catholics", some of whom steadfastly have refused to participate in activities or parishes under the leadership of bishops not recognised by Rome.

In recent years, most bishops chosen by the government-related Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association

have sought and received Vatican recognition before their ordinations.

"What is required now is unity, trust and a new impetus," Cardinal Parolin said in a video message recorded before he left Rome to join the Pope in Vilnius. "To the Catholic community in China – the bishops, priests, religious and faithful – the Pope entrusts, above all, the commitment to

make concrete fraternal gestures of reconciliation among themselves, and so to overcome past misunderstandings, past tensions, even the recent ones."

The nomination and assignment of bishops has been a key sticking point in Vatican-Chinese relations for decades; the Catholic Church has insisted that bishops be appointed by the Pope and the Chinese government has maintained that would amount to foreign interference in China's internal affairs.

Catholic communities that have refused to register with the government and refused to follow government-appointed bishops commonly are referred to as the underground church.

Vatican officials always have said that giving up full control over the nomination of bishops would not be what it hopes for, but could be a good first step towards ensuring greater freedom and security for the Catholic community there.

## Italian missionary priest kidnapped in Niger

A Catholic priest has been kidnapped in Niger, near the border with Burkina Faso.

Italian Fr Pierluigi Maccalli, a member of the Society of African Missions, was taken last week after suspected Islamist gunmen attacked his rectory in the village of Bamoanga.

"The kidnapping happened at around 9pm. According to local residents, about eight men arrived on motorbikes, broke into his house opposite the church and forced him to go with them. They returned 10 minutes later, firing into the air to frighten people," said Church spokesperson Thomas Codjovi. "There were also nuns there, but he was the only one they wanted to kidnap."

Fr Mauro Armanino, who escaped

from the attack, said the priest was probably taken by jihadists coming in from Burkina Faso.

Niger's government spokesperson, Zakaria Abdourahaman, said he had no doubt about the origin of the attackers.

"The kidnappers came from Burkina Faso," he said, noting that security forces have since been "combing the area in efforts to find the missionary".

### Congregation

Abdourahaman said police had warned the religious congregation against staying in the area after registering "suspicious movements of jihadist militiamen right at the border with Burkina Faso".

Refusing to leave their mission, the

missionaries instead limited their travels and didn't leave their homes at night.

"In the neighbouring region of Burkina Faso there is, in fact, a vast forest in which the jihadist militants have their bases.

"Currently the diocese of Niamey has sent a group of priests to the village of Fr Maccalli to verify the facts and to make contact with the local community," said a statement from the Society of African Missions.

Armanino said he thinks the group that took Maccalli may have been seeking international recognition for their actions.

## US cardinal drops out of Synod on Youth over abuse crisis

The Archbishop of Newark has announced he will not attend an October gathering of bishops slated to discuss young adults and vocational discernment.

The archbishop cited his pastoral obligations in the archdiocese amid the US Church's ongoing sexual abuse crisis.

"This Synod is a uniquely

important moment in the life of the Church, and I was honoured to have been named by the Holy Father as a member of this special gathering whose topic, 'Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment', is of vital concern to the Church today and in the future," Cardinal Joseph Tobin wrote in a letter to Newark's Catholics.

"However, as you are aware, the Archdiocese of Newark suffers greatly as a result of the crisis that continues to unfold.

"After the revelations of the past summer, I could not see myself absent for a month from our archdiocese and from you, the people entrusted to my care."

He said he wrote to the

Pope who responded with a "beautiful pastoral and compassionate message" releasing him from attending the Synod on Youth.

Tobin was a personal appointment of Pope Francis for attendance at the Synod on Youth, which will take place from October 3-28 in Rome.



Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie

## Read it and weep



A man holds up a sign standing in a spray of water from a fire truck during a rally by immigration activists to protest President Trump administration's immigration policy outside the White House in Washington. Photo: CNS

# Medjugorje shrine expansion planned by Pope's representative

The Polish archbishop tasked with overseeing Bosnia-Herzegovina's Medjugorje shrine has outlined plans for expansion, including more Masses in different languages and facilities for young pilgrims who flock to the site of the alleged Marian apparitions.

"Medjugorje represents Europe's spiritual lungs, a place where millions discover God and the beauties of the Church," said Archbishop Henryk Hoser, retired archbishop of Warsaw-Praga.

"We now have to re-create its infrastructure, firstly by securing its liturgical space. We also need to expand its areas for retreats and provide new places for celebrating the Eucharist, especially for pilgrims," he said.

In May, Pope Francis appointed Archbishop Hoser apostolic visitor to Medju-

gorje, where six young people claimed in 1981 that Mary had appeared to them.

Many people see "only the sociological side of the Church, which is also the face of sinners", and fail to comprehend its religious mission, the archbishop said at a new Catholic youth centre in Warsaw.

### Responsibility

"We all bear responsibility for the Church – we're all called to be apostles, evangelisers and teachers, according to the gifts we've obtained from God," he said.

"Apart from the youthful saints who are sprinters, there are also long-distance runners who move slowly, maturing over long years but also reaching the goal of great sanctity," he said.

In July, Archbishop Hoser said he

hopes more priests will come to provide sacraments and catechesis training at Medjugorje, according to Poland's Catholic Information Agency, KAI.

With rising numbers of mostly young pilgrims and visitors, people wait in very long lines and, in summer, temperatures of over 38 degrees at the shrine's 50 confessionals, he said. Roofing is also needed for Medjugorje's main esplanade, as well as better facilities for conferences and charitable work.

Many groups come from countries in Western Europe, "where the Church has atrophied" and is "suddenly experiencing God's grace", Archbishop Hoser said.

"What's also remarkable is there are now networks in many countries of pilgrims who've been to Medjugorje," he said.

## US diocese releases names of clergy with credible allegations

The Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese's release of the names of priests and deacons credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor "is an appropriate step and part of a commitment to openness and transparency by the Church in this area" a member of the Indiana Diocesan Review Board has said.

"I am hopeful too that it

will bring some solace and healing to the victims and their families," said Donald Schmid in a statement, a day after the diocese released the list.

Since 2002, the diocese has had in place "robust procedures and processes to keep children and vulnerable adults safe", he added.

"More than 17,000 peo-

ple who work or volunteer with children in the Diocese or Diocesan schools have received safe environment training and criminal background checks.

"The Catholic Church and its schools are safe places for children today."

In August, Bishop Kevin Rhoades announced he would release the names, saying that

it was important for victims to see the names of their abusers made public "for all to see, for everyone to know the pain caused by these priests".

"It is my hope that by releasing these names, the innocent victims of these horrific and heartbreaking crimes can finally begin the process of healing," Bishop Rhoades said.

# Vatican roundup

## God 'searches for disciples amongst sinners'

God went looking for and chose so many Christians and saints from the dregs of society, inviting some of the worst sinners to be his disciples, Pope Francis said in a morning homily.

It would be easy to think, he said, that Jesus "doesn't have good judgment in choosing people" given that he chose so many people from "the most despised place" a person could be from at the time.

That is because Jesus does not come to call the righteous, but the sinners, because "those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do", the Pope said, quoting from the day's Gospel reading during Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae, on the feast of St Matthew.

The feast day has great significance for the Pope, who as a 17-year-old boy, strongly felt God's presence and mercy that day, inspiring him to religious life. His episcopal and papal motto – "because he saw him through the eyes of mercy and chose him" – is based on the account of Jesus seeing Matthew, a sinner and tax collector, and calling him to "follow me".

## Two more Chilean bishops' resignations accepted by Pope

Pope Francis has accepted the resignations of two more Chilean bishops, bringing to seven the number of bishops who have stepped down since June in response to the clerical sexual abuse scandal in their country.

The Vatican announced last week the resignations of 60-year-old Bishop Carlos Pellegrin Barrera of San Bartolome de Chillan and 71-year-old Bishop Cristian Contreras Molina of San Felipe.

Almost every one of the 34 bishops in Chile offered their resignation to Pope Francis in mid-May after a three-day meeting at the Vatican

to discuss the clerical sexual abuse scandal detailed in a 2,300-page report compiled by Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta and his aide, Fr Jordi Bertomeu.

Pope Francis accepted the resignations on June 11 of three Chilean bishops, including Bishop Juan Barros of Osorno, who had been accused of witnessing and covering up abuse by his mentor, Fr Fernando Karadima. The Pope accepted the resignations of two other bishops on June 28.

The Pope has named apostolic administrators for all seven dioceses; he has yet to appoint new bishops to the Sees.

## Those exploiting foreigners will answer to God says Pope

No one can remain indifferent to the way minority groups are increasingly the object of so much fear, scorn and hatred, Pope Francis has said. And he warned those who profit from exploiting foreigners or people in precarious situations and those who contribute to today's new forms of slavery will one day have to answer to God for the choices they have made, he said.

The Pope's remarks came in a written speech he handed participants attending a September 18-20 conference on 'Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration'.

In his speech, the Pope noted how "feelings of suspicion, fear, contempt and even hatred" were on the rise against individuals or groups who have been judged to be "different" based on their ethnicity, national origin or religious affiliation, and as such were being considered "not sufficiently worthy of being fully part" of a community's life.

These feelings, he added, "all too often inspire real acts of intolerance, discrimination or exclusion" and can gravely harm people's dignity and rights.

# Pope tackles tolerance, totalitarianism and forgiveness in Baltic visit



**I**n Lithuania, a nation that has experienced invasions, atrocities and persecution, Pope Francis began his visit with a plea to break down walls of suspicion and fear.

"If we look at the world scene in our time, more and more voices are sowing division and confrontation – often by exploiting insecurity or situations of conflict – and proclaiming that the only way possible to guarantee security and the continued existence of a culture is to try to eliminate, cancel or expel others," the Pope said when he arrived on September 22.

Going directly from the airport to Lithuania's presidential palace, Pope Francis' first appointment was with the president, government authorities and civic leaders.

He acknowledged the country's painful past, which included "numerous trials and sufferings: detentions, deportations and even martyrdom". But he also praised the country's culture and people for tenaciously resisting attacks on its freedom.

The Pope's visit, from September 22-25 to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, comes in the year the three Baltic nations are celebrating the 100th anniversary of their declarations of



Chai Brady

independence after World War I. While declared Soviet republics in 1940, the countries were occupied by the Nazis during World War II and then lived under Soviet rule from 1944 to 1990.

Pope Francis, addressing national leaders, said that until the Nazis and Soviets arrived, people of a variety of national backgrounds and religions lived peacefully in Lithuania.

The "totalitarian ideologies" though, "by sowing violence and lack of trust, undermined this ability to accept and harmonise differences", he said. As Lithuanians consolidate their independence and democracy, they must return to those earlier cultural values of "tolerance, hospitality, respect and solidarity".

## Ideology

Lithuanians, the Pope said, know first-hand what happens when a political ideology tries "to impose a single model that would annul differences under the pretence of believing that the privileges of a few are more important than the dignity of

others or the common good".

After leaving the presidential palace he visited the image of Mother of Mercy (*Mater Misericordiae*) at the Chapel of the Gate of Dawn and prayed.

This was followed by a meeting with young people in Vilnius where Pope Francis said he wanted a relaxed conversation, like they were sitting in a pub drinking "a beer or a gira", a slightly alcoholic beverage made from fermented rye bread.

Yet the stories two young adults shared with him and his responses to their concerns were not casual.

Monika Midveryte spoke about growing up with an alcoholic father who beat her and eventually committed suicide. A young man, identified only as Jonas, spoke about being diagnosed with an auto-immune disease and how his illness made him and his young wife realise just how serious their wedding vows were.

Meeting the teens and young adults outside the city's Cathedral of Ss Stanislaus and Ladislaus, which was destroyed and rebuilt several times, Pope Francis urged the two and all their peers to think about how God has been close to them, too, even amid tragedy.

Almost always, he said, it is through other people that God's grace arrives to those

in need. "It doesn't drop from the sky. It doesn't happen by magic, there's no magic wand."

"Don't let the world make you believe that it is better to do everything on your own," the Pope told young people. "Don't yield to the temptation of getting caught up in yourself, ending up selfish or superficial in the face of sorry, difficulty or temporary success."

Pope Francis told the young people, many of whom dream of emigrating for more opportunities, that their lives are not "a theatre piece or a video game" with a final curtain or a lurking "game over".

## “The Pope... prayed a decade of the rosary with thousands of people gathered”

The important thing, he said, is to keep praying and keep moving forward, "seeking the right way without being afraid to retrace our steps if we make a mistake. The most dangerous thing is to confuse the path with a maze that keeps us wandering in circles without ever making real progress."

"Jesus gives us plenty of time, lots of room for failure," the Pope said. But "he never jumps off the ship of our lives; he is always there at



A woman and child share a tender moment as they wait for Pope Francis' celebration of Mass in Kaunas and, right, the Pope prays at a memorial to victims at the Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights in Vilnius.

life's crossroads. Even when our lives go up in flames, he is always there to rebuild them".

Before joining the young people, Pope Francis stopped at the 'Gate of Dawn', one of nine gates that led into the ancient city of Vilnius. The Pope mingled with dozens of orphaned children and the families that have adopted or fostered them. After praying silently for several minutes before the oversized icon of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy that marks the gate, the Pope gave a brief talk and then prayed a decade of the rosary with thousands of people gathered in the street.

Noting how the icon and the gate were the only parts of the city's fortified walls to remain after an invasion in 1799, Pope Francis said Mary

teaches Christians that "we can defend without attacking, that we can keep safe without the unhealthy need to distrust others".

"When we close our hearts for fear of others, when we build walls and barricades," the Pope said, "we end up depriving ourselves of the Good News of Jesus, who shares in the history and the lives of others" and is present in their suffering.

The wounds of others are the wounds of Jesus, he said. And "charity is the key that opens to us the door of Heaven".

The following day, outside the former KGB headquarters in Vilnius, Pope Francis ended a day of paying homage to victims of totalitarianism and of warning Lithuanians to be

## ‘We need to be converted’ says Francis in parting shot



Pope Francis and Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid wave during a meeting in the garden of the presidential palace in Tallinn, Estonia.

In Estonia Pope Francis called for the Church to be converted and to answer young people's call for change.

After a welcome ceremony, a meeting with the president and government authorities, local leaders and the diplomatic corps Francis spoke at an ecumenical encounter with young people in Charles Church, which is Lutheran.

"When we adults refuse to acknowledge some evident reality, you tell us frankly: 'Can't you see this?' Some of you who are a bit more forthright might even say to us: 'Don't you see that nobody is listening to you any more, or believes what

## ● Estonia

you have to say?" the Pope acknowledged during the meeting in Tallinn.

"We ourselves need to be converted," Francis added, "we have to realise that in order to stand by your side we need to change many situations that, in the end, put you off".

The Pope's speeches had focused on calling the local faithful to openness and mercy, but on Tuesday he mentioned the sex abuse crisis for the first time on the trip.

Young people "are upset by sexual and economic scandals that do not meet with clear

condemnation, by our unpreparedness to really appreciate the lives and sensibilities of the young, and simply by the passive role we assign them. These are just a few of your complaints," the Pope said.

"We want to respond to them; as you yourselves put it, we want to be a 'transparent, welcoming, honest, inviting, communicative, accessible, joyful and interactive community'," he added.

## Denominations

Francis met with youth of varying denominations and ethnicities in the Lutheran Charles' Church in Tallinn, the capital

city of Estonia. He was joined by the Evangelical Lutheran Archbishop of Estonia, Urmas Viilma, the President of the Estonian Council of Churches, Archbishop Andres Põder and the Apostolic Administrator in Estonia, Bishop Philippe Jourdan. Representatives from other Christian communities in the country also attended.

This was followed by an encounter with people receiving assistance from the Church's charitable services in Ss Peter and Paul Cathedral and a Mass in Freedom Square. Flying back to Rome he departed Tallinn just before 7pm, ending his Papal trip to the Baltic States.



attentive to any signs of anti-Semitism or hatred.

The walls of the KGB building – a former jail and execution site – echo the cry of Jesus on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” the Pope said.

### Silent prayer

Although thousands of people filled the square in front of the building, the mood was sombre. And it was punctuated by long pauses for silent prayer.

He had toured the museum with 79-year-old Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevicius, whose photo is featured prominently on a wall display honouring the priests and bishops who endured imprisonment in the building’s basement.

The Pope had gone to the museum after stopping to pray at a monument to more than 40,000 Jews in Vilnius killed by the Nazis. The prayer coincided with the national commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto.

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Standing by the former KGB headquarters, Pope Francis prayed that God would “keep us alert” and strengthen the commitment of Catholics and all Lithuanians to fighting all forms of injustice and defending the dignity of all people.

Pope Francis had begun the day in Kaunas, a city about 60 miles West. But the memory of the victims of Nazism and communism and the obligation of today’s Christians to fight all forms of hatred dominated there as well.

His last appointment was with priests, religious women and men and seminarians, and he began with ad-libbed remarks.

“I want to share what I feel,” the Pope said. “Looking at you, I see behind you many martyrs – anonymous martyrs, in the sense that we don’t even know where they were buried.”

“Do not forget. Remember. You are children of martyrs. That is your strength,” the Pope told them. “They are saints.”

### “Who is it who has nothing to give us?”

Earlier in day, before reciting the Angelus prayer after Mass in Kaunas’ Santakos Park, Pope Francis drew special attention to the anniversary of the destruction of the Jewish ghetto and to the evil of anti-Semitism. Before the Nazis invaded the country, at least 200,000 citizens were Jewish; fewer than 15,000 survived.

A visit to the famed Hill of Crosses near Vilnius was not on Pope Francis’ schedule, but he did point to it as a place where, especially during Soviet times, Catholics defiantly planted crosses to proclaim their Faith.

Earlier, celebrating Mass in the park, Pope Francis had insisted that for a Christian the mistreatment Lithuanians endured first under the Nazis and then under the communists can never justify mistreating others. Instead,

the experience must make victims and survivors even more sensitive and attentive to new attempts to denigrate or dominate certain groups of people.

### Gospel reading

Referring to the day’s Gospel reading from St Mark in which Jesus warns his disciples of the suffering that is to come, Pope Francis said that naturally the disciples “wanted nothing to do with trials and hardships”. And, in fact, they were more interested in discussing who among them was the greatest.

“The thirst for power” is not an unusual reaction to having endured suffering, the Pope said. Nor is discussing “who was better, who acted with greater integrity in the past, who has the right to more privileges than others”.

But when his disciples started speaking that way, the Pope said, Jesus pointed to a child, one who was small and in need of protection.

And, the Pope asked, “whom would Jesus place in our midst today?”

“Who is it who has nothing to give us, to make our effort and our sacrifices worthwhile?” Pope Francis asked. “Perhaps it is the ethnic minorities of our city. Or the jobless who have to emigrate. Maybe it is the elderly and the lonely, or those young people who find no meaning in life because they have lost their roots.”

Whoever “the least” maybe, he said, Christians are called to help them

### Latvia



People attend the papal Mass at the Shrine of the Mother of God in Aglona, Latvia.

## Latvia hears Pope ask: what would Mary do?

“What would Mary do?” – that was the question Pope Francis, in effect, asked Latvian Catholics gathered at their nation’s popular Marian shrine.

Celebrating Mass on September 24 at the Basilica of the Assumption, a shrine holding a beloved icon of the Mother of God in Aglona, 60 miles from the Russian border, Pope Francis insisted Marian devotion was about more than just pilgrimages; it means imitating Mary by staying close to those who suffer, acknowledging situations of injustice, forgiving offences and promoting reconciliation.

In a country that experienced 50 years of Soviet domination and that remains fiercely proud of its post-conquest independence, members of Latvia’s large Russian minority have struggled to obtain citizenship rights, and many claim they still face discrimination. Russian speakers make up about a quarter of the population.

The country declared a holiday in connection with his visit and that, combined with his early morning arrival and cold rainy weather, meant there were few people on the streets of Riga.

But thousands gathered later in the city centre to watch Pope Francis and President Raimonds Vejonis lay flowers at the Freedom Monument, a towering memorial to Latvia’s independence.

The sculpture, dedicated in 1935, was a source of irritation to the Soviets once they annexed Latvia after World War II, but



A young woman attends Pope Francis’ celebration of Mass at the Shrine of the Mother of God in Aglona.

every plan to destroy the monument was put on hold out of concern for the social unrest it would provoke.

### “The country declared a holiday in connection with his visit”

The centrepiece of Pope Francis’ morning in Riga was an ecumenical prayer service in the city’s Lutheran cathedral. Lutherans, Catholics and Orthodox each account for between 18% and 25% of the country’s population.

Following the meeting Pope Francis went to the Catholic St James Cathedral for prayer and a brief meeting with older men and women, who,

the Pope said, witnessed “the horror of war, then political repression, persecution and exile”, including to Siberia.

Reaching the small town of Aglona after a helicopter ride from the capital, Pope Francis drew special attention to Mary at the foot of the cross and Mary as she is seen in the *Magnificat*, her song of praise of God in response to the angel Gabriel’s news that she would bear Jesus.

Today, the Pope said in his homily at the Basilica of the Assumption, Mary “stands near those who suffer, those from whom the world flees, including those who have been put on trial, condemned by all, deported”.

# Letters

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

## Letter of the week

### Bad statistics but they don't lie

**Dear Editor,** If ever there was a case of a picture being worth a thousand words, the map accompanying your analysis of changes in Clogher Diocese ('Mission-focused parishes: a vision for the laity' IC 20/9/2018) was it. Just 52 men in diocesan formation for formation across Ireland, and that's including those men doing a propaedeutic year in Spain before starting in Maynooth or Rome!

It's easy to look at the dioceses with no seminarians at all and to point fingers, but let's be honest: none of our dioceses are in rude health in this

respect, and this over a year after we established our own national office for vocations.

For contrast, it's worth looking over at England and Wales, where, with an active Catholic population roughly the same size as our own, last year 43 men entered formation, with 30 the year before that, 45 the year before that, and 48 the year before that! If those figures aren't staggering enough, look at the figures for new seminarians alone: 29 in 2017, 26 in 2016, 37 in 2015, 42 in 2014, and 32 in 2013. With 166 men starting seminary in just

five years, it's hard to believe that our neighbours don't have four times as many seminarians as we do.

Is it really likely that God is continuing to call for priests in England, but has somehow decided that Ireland is in need of a new model of Church, one that can almost do without clergy? Isn't it more likely that other factors are making it harder for the men of Ireland to hear and answer God's call?

*Yours etc.,  
Lisa Byrne,  
Rathmines, Dublin 6.*

### Time for a renewal of preaching in Ireland

**Dear Editor,** I write to respond to the very interesting article by Colm Fitzpatrick, 'The age-old question: How long should a homily be?' (IC 20/9/2018). I am a layman who has been listening to homilies for nearly 70 years, and I wish to share a few ideas on this subject with your readers, in the spirit of trying to be helpful. I believe that inspired preaching comes from the Holy Spirit, and so the preacher needs to spend time in prayer to the Holy Spirit before attempting to preach the Word of God. As St Paul said: "No one can say Jesus is Lord, unless he is under the influence of

the Holy Spirit." During the sermon at Sunday Mass, it is God who speaks through the words of the preacher, and this will simply not work unless the speaker spends time listening in prayer before attempting to preach.

I also feel that all preaching needs to be Christ-centred as the whole purpose of the homily is to convert people to Christ. Inspired preaching was the main means used by the apostles to the early Church to stimulate faith in Jesus of Nazareth. The sermons recorded in Acts are good examples of this early preaching. Much of our preaching today seems to

be aimed at the head, rather than the heart, and unless both are engaged, conversion to Christ is simply not possible.

When St Ignatius was sending St Francis Xavier on mission to the East, they were both standing on a beach watching the sun rising. Ignatius said to Francis: "Go and set the world on fire." We need the fire of the Holy Spirit in Ireland today to renew Christian faith, and I would like to see the possibility of spreading this fire through preaching extended to those laypeople, men and women, who have received the charism of inspired

preaching. Such people would, of course, have to be trained, and commissioned by the local bishop, but I know many suitable lay candidates who could hold the attention of a congregation for a lot more than five minutes. Finally, could I appeal to preachers not to write the whole sermon and simply read it to us. Some notes are fine, but the reading of the whole sermon dramatically reduces its effectiveness.

Thank you for considering my suggestions for a renewal of preaching in our country.

*Yours etc.,  
Peter Boucher,  
Derry, Co. Derry.*

### Should we establish a Day of Atonement?

**Dear Editor,** September 19, 2019 was a sad day for Ireland. Our President signed into law the abortion Bill giving the State the power to terminate the unborn. Perhaps we should, like the Jewish people, set aside a day each year to mark the commencement of Ireland's Holocaust. Our Day of Atonement could be September 19 each year.

*Yours etc.,  
James M. Bourke,  
Terenure, Dublin 6w.*

### Pro-abortion campaign was based on lies

**Dear Editor,** I certainly do not agree with Fr Joe McDonald's defence of his complimenting the Together for Yes campaign for abortion by describing it as a "wonderful campaign" (IC 20/9/2018). It beggars belief that he could describe the campaign as such when it was based on lies and silencing of those who wished to protect the unborn baby. From using the tragic death of Savita Halappanavar, which was caused by sepsis and dreadful medical neglect, and preventing the

voices of those hurt by abortion being heard, together with the vilification of pro life advocates, it was disgraceful and in no way deserving of admiration.

The losers in the campaign were not those of us in pro life but the countless babies who will not now be allowed to be born. Anyone speaking for them can only continue to fight against the culture of death which now envelopes our land. It is so sad that this has been self-inflicted and this can only be partially excused by the

constant promotion of untruths and ignoring of facts of what was involved by vested interests claiming a cloak of 'compassion'. No, we are not "sore losers" but are brokenhearted at the consequences which will ensue here in the destruction of innocent life for any reason or none.

How could that ever be a cause for anything but deep sorrow and regret?

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



### Denialism still blights our Church

**Dear Editor,** Mark Quinn's letter on Ireland's low vocational numbers ('There's a lot to be positive about' IC 20/9/2018), is a depressing example of the kind of denialism that somehow still blights the Irish Church.

Yes, we know that there among the vast numbers of men who studied for the priesthood in decades past there were men who should never have been allowed past the seminary gate, but the fact remains that the vast majority of our priests were decent and dedicated men, and surely in many cases the equal at least of the seminarians of today.

It doesn't make a lot of sense either to talk of today's rigorous processes for discerning the suitability of men for seminary as though this is somehow responsible – and in a good way, of course – for today's low seminary intake. Is Mr Quinn somehow suggesting that legions of would-be clergy are hammering at the doors of our vocations directors, begging to be allowed to serve God's people at the altar, but that the vast majority of these are turned away as somehow unsuitable?

Mr Quinn's call for prayer is, of course, spot on, but I fear God is calling us to do more than that. After all, we've been told a few times now that Ireland's youth are far more inclined than almost all those elsewhere in Europe to identify as Catholic and to pray. Surely some of them must be hearing God's call – are they being taught to listen when they pray?

*Yours etc.,  
Emma Fitzgerald,  
Lucan, Co. Dublin.*

### Those left unintended are victims too

**Dear Editor,** John Allen's column 'Abuse bombshell effects Church's ability to help children' (IC 20/9/2018), was especially disheartening in how it pointed to a vast category of people who the abuse crisis has hurt. Those abused have always been first and foremost the primary victims of abuse, and people who work in the field talk about the wounded loved ones of the abused and indeed those who were close to abusers and feel betrayed and haunted by their actions as secondary victims.

But that there could be tertiary victims, suffering people whose sufferings are left unintended and who are deprived of help because abusers and those who have protected them have destroyed the credibility of the Church that could help them, is a tragic reality we forget all too often.

*Yours etc.,  
Bernadette O'Leary,  
Dundalk, Co. Louth.*

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

# 📷 Around the world



**USA:** More than 100 young adults pray in front of the Cathedral of St Paul in St Paul, Minnesota during a vigil for survivors of clerical sexual abuse and healing for the Church. Photos: CNS



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis kisses a baby before leading his General Audience in St Peter's Square.



◀ **COSTA RICA:** People protest in San Jose. Unions have been striking to protest a tax-reform bill. The Catholic Church has been called to serve as a mediator between the government and the unions.



▶ **NETHERLANDS:** Firefighters battle a blaze at St Urban Catholic Church in Amstelveen.



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis accepts a portrait of himself from a man attending the 'World Conference on Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration'.



**USA:** Pedro Rubalcava, director of music development and outreach at Oregon Catholic Press in Portland, leads delegates in song during the Fifth National Encuentro, or V Encuentro, in Grapevine, Texas.

# We're all called to a name change



**W**e're all familiar with the incident in the Bible where God changes the name of Abram to Abraham. The change seems so small that often times it isn't even picked up by those reading that text. What's the difference between Abram and Abraham?

The name Abram, meaning 'exalted father', is the name given the great patriarch to whom God made the promise that one day he would be the father of all the descendants of the nation of Judaism. But later when God promises this same man that he is to be the father as well of all nations everywhere, God changes his name to Abraham: "You will no longer be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations." (Genesis 17, 5)

## One nation

What is implied in this change? The name Abraham, in its very etymology, connotes a stretching to become something larger; he's now to be the father of all nations. Abram, the father of one nation, now becomes Abraham (in Hebrew, *Ab hamon goyim*), the father of all the other nations, the 'goyim'.

That change doesn't just stretch a word; it stretches Abraham, a Jew, and redefines his understanding of himself and his mission. He's no longer to understand himself as the patriarch of just one nation, his



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'God and the Angels visit Abraham' by Arent de Gelder (1645-1727) from the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. This work is linked to Genesis 18:10.

own, his ethnic and religious family, but he's to see himself and the faith he is entrusted with as someone and something for all nations. He's no longer to think of himself as the patriarch of one particular tribe, since God is not a tribal God. As well, he's no longer to think of just his own tribe as his family, but to think of all others, irrespective of ethnicity or faith, as also his children.

What does that mean for us? T.S. Eliot might answer that by saying: "Home is where we start from." Our particular ethnic,

religious, cultural and civic roots are precious and important, but they're not the fully mature tree into which we're meant to grow. Our roots are where we start from.

I grew up a very sheltered child, in a very close family, in a very enclosed rural environment. We were all of one kind, our neighbors, my classmates, everyone I knew, all of us, we shared a common history, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, set of values and lived in a young country, Canada, that for the most part looked

exactly like we did. I value those roots. They're a great gift. Those roots have given me a stability that has freed me up for the rest of my life. But they're only my roots, precious, but merely the place where I start from.

And it's the same for all of us. We take root inside a particular family, an ethnicity, a neighbourhood, a country and a faith, with a particular slant on the world and, with that, some people constitute our tribe and others don't. But that's where we start from. We grow, change, move, meet new people and live and work with others who don't share our background, nationality, ethnicity, skin color, religion or particular slant on life.

**“The old sheltered communities that gave us our roots are disappearing and for many of us this is scary”**

And so today we share our countries, cities, neighbourhoods and churches with the 'goyim', the people of other tribes, and that makes for the long struggle, hopefully successful, to eventually see that those others who are different from us, share the same God, are also our brothers and sisters and have lives that are just as real, important, and precious as those of our own biological, national, and religious families.

Like Abraham we need a name change so that we don't

make idolatry out of our youthful patriotism which has us believe that our own tribe is special and that our own country, skin color, background and religion give us a unique and privileged claim to God.

Our world is globalising at a dizzying pace and countries, neighbourhoods and churches are becoming ever-more plural and diverse ethnically, linguistically, culturally and religiously; our countries, neighbourhoods, workplaces and churches are literally taking on a different face.

The old sheltered communities that gave us our roots are disappearing and for many of us this is scary and the temptation is to retrench, to go hard to the right, to militantly defend the old boundaries and to claim God and truth more exclusively again for ourselves. That's understandable, but not where we're called to be by what's best inside our humanity and our faith.

Like Abraham, we're called to a name change.

We're called to cherish our heritage, country, mother tongue, culture, faith and church because only by being firmly rooted within primary community are we stable and altruistic enough to offer family to those outside of our own. But home is where we start from. From those wonderful families that give us roots, we're called to stretch our hearts religiously, ethnically, culturally so that everyone eventually is embraced as family.

We're called to move from being Abram to becoming Abraham.

**“Our world is globalising at a dizzying pace and countries, neighbourhoods and churches are becoming ever-more plural and diverse”**

# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, September 27, 2018

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## The pain of Motherhood



**Y**ou receive the fantastic news that you're pregnant and will finally be a mother. For nine blissful months you feel baby kicks and eagerly await the arrival of your child. Delivery day comes, and with little effort and no medical intervention, you give birth to a crying, but beautiful baby.

You immediately fall in love and begin bonding, realising this is the fulfilment of all that you had wished for and imagined. After a day of rest in hospital, you take your new-born home, ready to experience a life of motherhood with no stress, reservations or fear. That's how the story goes, right?

Now more than ever, women globally are pressurised into



Many women don't feel an immediate bond with their new-born baby, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**

living up to a false ideal of motherhood; one that expects them not to worry about the delivery process; to lose all excess weight and regain a perfect body; and to instantly develop a deep and intimate relationship with their child.

This damaging model of motherhood has been perpetuated primarily through our increased use of social media which often portrays mothers as

goddesses, immune to the tiring and stress-inducing features that rearing a child entails. Lifestyle magazines regularly commit this crime, but online platforms such as Instagram have become the main perpetrators.

There is a growing trend for women to snap weight-loss pictures of their post-baby bodies, and portray motherhood as an ongoing experience of elation, absent of the fears and

drawbacks that accompany it.

Subverting these social-media norms, beauty vlogger Louise Pentland recently posted an online video about her real-life experience of rearing a child void of all the frills, which has garnered traction around the world. The writer and mother-of-two detailed her distressing 36-hour labour which left her unable to bond with her baby and to develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

### Wellbeing

Speaking honestly in the 30-minute video, she said that after giving birth visitors continually congratulated her but never ask about her own wellbeing. Adding to this, Ms

Pentland explained that she often had flashbacks to the birth, felt very little connection with her new-born daughter, and would have traumatic thoughts about her child dying.

After concealing her feelings about the experience to the public for seven years, she is now keen to "let things out" in the hope it will help other women.

To the surprise of some, the experience Ms Pentland described is not an anomaly, as many mothers-to-be and those already with children are susceptible to developing PTSD and the tumultuous effects that accompany it.

About 3-8% of pregnant women develop a fear of

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# Family News

## AND EVENTS

### Go to Babaró!

With a range of workshops, literature, and artistic performances, the Babaró International Arts Festival for Children is certainly one not to be missed.

Suitable for the whole family, especially the kids, the October 15-21 festival will be based in a variety of venues in Galway City and County venues, and aims at giving all children in Galway and throughout the rest of Ireland equal opportunity to access the arts, both as part of the audience and as a participant.

Each year, the festival hosts a diverse, week-long programme full of inspirational events for all kinds of children, including those with different levels of physical or intellectual ability.

This is a great chance for your children to come out of their comfort zone, meet other people and be inspired by some memorable performances. With a whole host of events, there'll be something for everyone.

**NOT SO FAST...:** Most of us enjoy some form of fast food, but these habits may have to be quashed given new research which links an increased risk of cancer with the consumption of foods that have a low nutritional quality.

The study, conducted by Mélanie Deschasaux, at the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research revealed that regular consumption of foods with low nutritional quality was associated with an increased risk of colorectal cancer and cancer of the upper aerodigestive tract and stomach, as well as with lung cancer in the case of men.

For women, in particular, eating foods that are low in nutrients is tied to a higher risk of liver cancer as well as postmenopausal breast cancer.

The research team believe that their findings are strong enough to call for the implementation of better policies in more countries regarding how foods are labelled.

### Cold sore, no more!

This time of the year is sometimes described as the sick season, because with changes in weather and children restarting school, it's very easy for germs to spread and create havoc.

Given the higher chance of a weakened immune system, it's very easy to catch a usually harmless but highly unpleasant virus: a cold sore. Cold sores are small fluid-filled ulcers that appear around the lips and mouth. They go through different stages of development and usually take one or two weeks to heal.

However, there are some gizmos that might help you conceal it if other treatments aren't working, such as ointment. Invisible cold sore patches hygienically seal any ruptured blisters and effectively prevents the spread of the virus, providing healing benefits at each stage of the cold sore outbreak.

You simply place one on the infected area and can even cover it with makeup so that no one is any the wiser! Don't forget to wash your hands afterwards.



Tara McGahan at Croke Park.

### Tara McGahan

**W**hen I was planning my Summer holidays this year, I had no idea that they would include a unique experience as part of a group of international media who were in Ireland for the visit of Pope Francis for the World Meeting of Families 2018. But, that's exactly what happened on Saturday and Sunday (August 25, 26) when I was invited by the WMOF2018 Media and Communications Manager to be part of her team.

Having recently been offered a place on the Journalism Course in DCU, I grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

#### Saturday, August 25

There were a total of five media centres in operation for the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland with the main one in Dublin Castle. I arrived there for 8am on Saturday, August 25 feeling nervous and excited. I had to go through a full security check before I received my official accreditation to be part of the media covering the visit.

**“I was taken aback by all the well known faces who were there from across RTÉ, BBC and UTV”**

I was taken aback by the huge numbers of media in the Dublin Castle media centre (about 1200 in total from 31 countries). There were desks as far as you could see with busy journalists writing and recording. I was taken aback by all the well known faces who were there from across RTÉ, BBC and UTV. I stood alongside Miriam O'Callaghan, Bryan Dobson and Conor Pope.

I was assigned to the Italian broadcasting company RAI as a runner. The RAI team were

accredited as part of a group known as the VAMP – the Vatican Accredited Media Pack.

These are a small group of media who travelled to Ireland with Pope Francis on the papal flight and had access to all the venues he was to visit while he was in Ireland. A total of 68 VAMP came to Ireland on the papal flight.

I met up with the RAI TV team in Dublin Castle after their arrival with Pope Francis for his address to Civic Society. I was straight in at the deep end and was shown how they record and edit TV clips. I helped the cameraman set up for filming and had to ensure that the location we chose was suitable.

It was exciting to watch the

see how much effort goes into everything behind the cameras.

From my position at level 7 in the Hogan Stand I could see the crowd beginning to build. Broadcasters began going live around the world. As the time approached for Pope Francis to arrive we were escorted by the media team down to the pitch so as we could access more close up shots of the Pope as he arrived to celebrate with families from across the world.

It was surreal to be standing just a few metres away from Pope Francis as he passed by in a customised golf buggy. He received a wonderful Irish welcome from the crowd of almost 80,000. The Festival of



The media team with Marty Morrissey in Croke Park. Tara is front to the right.

crew set up and to see the reporter prepare to go live. It was a unique experience for me to be behind the scenes and I learned so much.

On Saturday evening I boarded the last media shuttle bus for Croke Park for the Festival of Families event with Pope Francis.

We were directed to the level 7 Media Centre in the Hogan Stand. The place was buzzing with journalists, editors, technicians and more well known personalities such as Marty Morrissey and Brendan Donohoe. It was incredible to

Families event was amazing.

The media and comms team had a debrief afterwards up in level 7 and we received our places and instructions for the Closing Mass the next day. I returned to my accommodation feeling tired but exhilarated, ready for day two.

#### Sunday, August 26

I had a really early start again on the Sunday morning. The VAMP were split into two groups – one was bound for Dublin Airport for the flight to Knock and the other [the group I was in] was bound for Phoenix Park. We met at Dublin

Castle for a security screen and were given a garda escort directly to the media centre in the Phoenix Park site where the Mass was to take place.

There was another large media centre in operation for the 1,200 journalists. It was a hive of activity by the time we arrived.

The TV crews and photographers were escorted to their positions for the Mass – some were on large media risers (platforms) and others had staged movements accompanied by a press officer and a garda. I assisted RAI TV with more of their live broadcasts in Italian. Their pictures were colourful and cheerful and showcased a very positive image of Ireland.

**“We met at Dublin Castle for a security screen and were given a garda escort directly to the media centre in the Phoenix Park site where the Mass was to take place”**

The day passed by in a blur of enthusiastic Mass-goers and a busy media centre. The VAMP were moved onto their buses for the airport just before the end of the Mass.

They had the return journey home with the Pope. I stayed behind in the Phoenix Park media centre. It was a lot to take in.

There were several media team selfies and pics to record the amazing team I was part of. The entire experience was over in a matter of 36 hours but it was an amazing opportunity.

It has really motivated and excited me for my future studies in journalism. Who knows, there may even be a papal visit somewhere in the future where I will be one of the VAMP on the papal flight, sharing the story with the world!

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giving birth, otherwise known as tokophobia. The symptoms vary but usually include worries specifically about pregnancy and birth, fear of physical harm or death related to the birth, and poor sleep. Everyone is susceptible to it, but a history of anxiety or depression is a risk factor, as is having a history of childhood abuse, whether it be sexual, physical or emotional.

Other studies have shown younger mums may be more vulnerable to developing it, as well as those with weak social connections. But giving birth doesn't end these anxieties, and may just be the beginning of them.

### Trauma

About 9% of women experience postpartum post-traumatic distress disorder, usually caused by a real or perceived trauma during delivery or postpartum. This was the case for Ms Pentland who said in the video: "The birth experience was really, really traumatic. I was left on a ward for 31 hours of a 36-hour labour with no drugs except for codeine."

She added that her hospital room felt like a "cell", the numerous midwives checking in on her was uncomfortable and that she vomited after giving birth. Following this, she was unable to bond with her child, and continually questioned her role as a mother.

**"I think there's a lot of pressure on people to be the perfect everything and then the child should be the perfect child"**

According to Margaret Parkes, a member of the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, PTSD can cause intrusive thoughts and effect our self-esteem including how we behave. Trauma, she says, is anything that happens to us that we don't feel we have control over.

"What happens is that we feel very alone and vulnerable and if we can actually have an opportunity to share what we're thinking with somebody and for those thoughts to be either normalised or just shared about what's going on in her head, then that can be very healing," Margaret says.

She adds that "some people can't

handle change very well", and that the transition from working with a busy lifestyle to now being at home taking care of a new child can cause anxiety.

For women experiencing PTSD in the context of childbirth, symptoms range from flashbacks and nightmares to feeling a sense of unreality and detachment. Although it's rarely talked about, mothers may also develop postpartum OCD.

This entails having intrusive and disturbing thoughts about harming your child or imagining that they will die, for example, by dropping them down the stairs. Indeed, a study from Northwestern University dating back to 2013 found that 11% of new mothers experience significant OCD symptoms and that these compulsions can interfere with the daily duties of rearing a child.

**"It is vital to remember that you or someone experiencing PTSD is not responsible or to be blamed for developing it"**

On top of this, around 80% of women experience what is commonly called "the baby blues", which entails a temporary period of sadness, anxiety or fear after giving birth.

Statistics like these portray the true reality of motherhood, and undermine the frequent claims that it shouldn't feel burdensome or isolating.

Margaret says that women today and people in general are pressurised to fit into the stereotype of perfection, and feel underwhelmed and panicked when they don't meet this standard.

"I think there's a lot of pressure on people to be the perfect everything and then the child should be the perfect child. And then to get the perfect figure back, so I think there's pressure in lots of ways there. We lose then who we really are," she explains.

"That's a huge part of my work – co-dependency. We become what other people want us to be rather than who we are. And then the children are the same. We mould



the children into who we think they should be as opposed to who they really are. And until we become who we really are as parents, we don't become the best parents."

Although it may seem like a dizzying labyrinth impossible to escape from or climb over, there are ways to treat PTSD and other diagnoses closely associated to it.

Margaret says her job is to give clients the tools and skills to help them not give power to these thoughts. Usually, realising that there are other women with similar experiences to yours is the first step on the journey to recovery. If symptoms become too pervasive and frequent, it's recommended that you speak to a doctor or emergency service to seek help.

As a psychotherapist, Margaret emphasises that the neurological side of PTSD is also "really important to understand", and so that is also an outlet to be explored. Some people may benefit from cognitive behavioural therapy or a method called eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) which aims to help the client process the traumatic events, and speed up re-adjustment and recovery.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whatever path is chosen, it is vital to remember that you or someone experiencing PTSD is not responsible or to be blamed for developing it. It is not a volitional choice, but emerges without consent or knowledge.

Despite this, recovery is possible. Ms Pentland, describing her experience seven years on had another child this year, calling the childbirth process "beautiful, calm and relaxed". Her story is a message to everyone that social media can be a contrived platform, distant from the hard-hitting realities of normal life.

Her experience reveals that what's really needed today is not affectation but affection; one that is honest, understanding and healing.

# Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



In the deepest dusk, I found myself in a Hampshire woods, reading the names of Irish holy women from their graves. Many of these departed nuns were born in the 19th Century, and had lived through times of great upheaval, war and conflict.

It moved me to see my compatriots buried in exile, many long forgotten. I whispered an *Ár nAthair*. As I contemplated the distant times these sisters had seen, the thought struck me, that our baby, there asleep in my wife's arms, might – God willing – live to see the 22nd Century, for a baby born this year will turn 82 in the year 2100.

We were visiting my wife's old school for her reunion when we had wandered down the wooded pathway, that led us to discover the small old cemetery.

The school itself is a rambling, dramatic and eccentric gothic building, overlooking a broad spread of English parkland. It has been a girls' Catholic school since the 1920s. Before that it had been the palatial home of Empress Eugenie, the widow of Napoleon III of France. She had lived here in exile, giving shelter to French religious escaping the persecutions of 19th-Century France and founding the nearby Benedictine Abbey.

### Towers

This reunion marked 20 years since my wife had left school. It was my first time visiting the place, and it helped me make sense of my wife's coming of age. She told me tales as we wandered down grand old corridors, and up winding stairs into towers.

She caught up with old friends and we met the former headteacher, a sprightly sister from Dublin. All those who work in education touch young lives. She was no different, having helped my wife in profound ways at a critical time of life.

It was also a pleasure to meet another favourite former teacher, a nun from Miltown Malbay in Co. Clare.

It was fascinating to think how so many such formidable, brilliant and kind Irish nuns have educated and influenced

generations of young women in schools like this across England, and indeed around the world. The evening was also a rare chance for myself, my wife and our new baby to be together – just the three of us. Our other three kids were happy in the care of their grandmother just down the road.

**"There is no doubt that the culture and values of a school help to shapes the child in perhaps permanent ways"**

I could see the impact that this unique place had on my wife. Secondary school is just around the corner for our kids now. Soon we must decide where to send them. It is a profound decision, which will impact the nature of the person they become.

There is no doubt that the culture and values of a school help to shape the child in perhaps permanent ways. Hence the current battles over religious ethos in schools in Ireland – their power is



understood. Hence people spend so much on fee-paying schools.

Yet the thought of elite education troubles me. I do not like the idea of closing our children off from swathes of society. I hate the thought that children whose parents have less get a worse education.

At least we are a few years away from such decisions yet.

Yet those turbulent, critical teenage years loom ever larger. Perhaps what is most daunting about the short half-decade between the ages of 13 and 18 is that one moment you have a child, the next there is a fully independent man or woman standing before you.

That five-year period is the blink of an eye, yet the change is an utter metamorphosis. And then, with aching hearts, we must let go of them.



## Matthew Carlson speaks with a conflict-resolution activist

**A**lthough Brian McKee may have seemed like any other lad growing up in Ireland, he was always a little different than most people his age. Brian grew up in the Passionist Holy Cross parish in Ardoyne, where much of his life revolved around his family, GAA and of course, the Church. "I joined the local GAA club when I was 10 years of age, and I became an altar boy – I passed the test on March 15, 1967," Brian says.

He recalls that at that time, in order to serve as an altar boy, he had to be able to recite the Mass in Latin. He was only seven years of age when he passed the test to become one.

Growing up in Ardoyne, he realised that his parish was a little different than others around. "We were different and, in many ways, we were special and that was something that set us apart from the rest."

### Alienated

He recalls growing up in a very Catholic community that was surrounded by several Protestant areas, which Brian says often made him feel alienated. However, the Passionist community itself was very close. "There's a big sense of belonging in the parish and I suppose the parish's identity was very important to people and the priests were very close to the people," he explains.

Brian was 10 years old when

# Life-long Passionists



Brian McKee, conflict resolution activist in the North of Ireland.

the Troubles began in Ardoyne. In an area that was greatly affected by the conflicts, he says he remembers all the terrible things that happened during that time. "Ninety-nine people from Ardoyne parish were buried as a result of the conflict. Plus, there would have been 400 people from the parish that would have been imprisoned during the Troubles because of the conflict," he said.

**“Once you get young people out of their own environment and get them to see a different side of life, it just changes their life for them”**

Brian is currently writing a book that tells the story of what happened that first weekend in August when the Troubles began. He describes that the streets where he and his mates would play war

games quickly became dangerous battle grounds.

After attending St Malachy's College in Belfast, Brian spent a number of years at the Passionist Juniorate in Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar and then a year with the homeless in a night shelter in Guildford, Surrey. "This was undoubtedly a year in which I learned so much about the reality of loneliness and isolation in people's lives," he says. This is where he says his passion for people continued to grow.

After Brian met his wife, Elizabeth, and was married, he decided to get a better paying job, so he spent 10 years teaching in primary and secondary schools. After that, he became the youth director of the Down and Connor Diocese. Finally, he came to where he is today, self-employed, working with various organisations around Ireland and the world,

moving towards reconciliation.

Most of Brian's work is centered around bringing peace and reconciliation in the North. At the moment, he is working with the youth from Ardoyne and Connor and teaching them about the impact of gang culture and the importance of making positive life choices.

At the end of this year, he will be taking these young people to Cape Town in South Africa to work with residents in townships and to explore juvenile prisons: "Once you get them out of their own environment and get them to see a different side of life, it just changes their life for them."

### Peace

Brian's work in bringing people together has allowed him to travel to different parts of the world. He has been to Africa, the US and all over Ireland teaching young people about the impact their lives can have and how they can pave the

way for peace. "It really opens your eyes to how big this world is and I think that part of the difficulty is when people are working somewhere, whether it's Ardoyne, Belfast or Dublin, we can get caught up in the immediate," said Brian.

"It is the importance of giving young people that opportunity, to get out of their own environment and get them to see how big the world is and try to get them to see the importance of all the small choices that they make are going towards the lives that they are creating."

**“The institutional Church largely sidestepped the task of peace building and conflict resolution, and while many individuals, priests and religious courageously stepped forward, they were often viewed as the mavericks”**

Although reconciliation within the Church and all of Ireland is important to Brian, he doesn't feel that the Church views it as that big of an issue. "The institutional Church largely sidestepped the task of peace building and conflict resolution, and while many individuals, priests and religious courageously stepped forward, they were often viewed as the mavericks of the Church," he says.

According to him, people say that the Church is becoming less relevant, but it is the Church that makes itself irrelevant by retreating to safe grounds and expecting people to come to them. "The Church has never been more needed and the message of the Church has never been more relevant, but we often make the choices not to go into those places," says Brian.

He plans to continue to work within the Passionist order and with the youth to bring peace and reconciliation to Ireland.

## What to do when your get up and go has gone

**I always find it really hard when the weather and seasons change, this affects my relationship, I find myself snappy and irritable towards my wife. How can I beat the winter blues?**

It's understandable that after a lovely summer of sun that it might be especially hard not to be affected by the winter blues. You might find your mood falling as fast as the temperature. And you are not alone: the change in seasons affecting our mood has been recognised as 'Seasonal Affective Disorder' (SAD) which affects up to one in five people. Naturally this can also affect our relationships. The good news is there are many things that you can do to feel better.

One of the things that has a huge impact is shorter amounts of light in the day, soon enough many people will find themselves leaving work in the dark and coming home in the dark.

You have to make sure you take in light during the day, that means getting out into the fresh air

at lunch time. Sit close to a window if you can and try with artificial light to make spaces you are in as bright as possible. You can combine getting this with getting exercise; exercising for 60 minutes three times a week or 35 minutes five times a week has been proven to help mild to moderate depression.

You can also combine this with spending quality time with your wife: get out for a hike or a walk at the weekend together and reconnect. Getting outside is also crucial to getting enough vitamin D, a lack of which can impact our mood; we often don't get enough of the 'sunshine vitamin' in Ireland, that is why some winter sun might be just the tonic you need, or at least try taking a vitamin D supplement.

The winter blues may cause you to crave sugary foods but these will only make you feel worse, causing you to crash and feel lethargic and irritable. Make sure you are eating a balanced diet with lots of fruit, vegetables, good fats (like avocados and handfuls of nuts) as well as protein.

The music you listen to, the books you read

and the TV you watch can have an impact on your mood. Create a positive playlist that you can listen to.

It would be a great time to volunteer: according to a recent research project at Exeter Medical School volunteering leads to increased well being and lower levels of depression.

Have you got a good sleep routine? It's important to get up at the same time each morning and get at least 7 hours of sleep each night, so ensure you have a good bedtime ritual to help you fall asleep.

Make sure you make time each day to pray, to be present with God and give yourself time and space to breathe. It is a good habit so start and end each day with gratitude, thinking of things you are thankful to God for. Show this gratitude to your wife too, maybe starting or ending the day by telling her something you are thankful to her for.

And remember: if you find yourself still feeling low and unable to cope, seek advice from a counsellor, or an organisation such as Aware or Pieta House.



## Love Notes

Wendy Grace

# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## The new and familiar herald autumn TV

It can be hard these days to find a TV drama that's not marred by gratuitous crude language and worse, so I took notice of pre-publicity for a new show whose creator was reported as saying "the show I want to produce is playful, family friendly and a celebration of old-fashioned puzzle solving".

So said Andy Breckman about his new show **The Good Cop** (Netflix) which launched last Friday, so I was very keen to tune in. It features Tony Danza (star of *Taxi* and a fine modern version of *12 Angry Men*) as well as singer Josh Groban. Danza is the grizzled street-wise cop out on parole after some apparent low level corruption, while Groban is the son, a good cop who plays by the book, obsessively at times. One standing joke is the two of them at a red light, the father saying go ahead it's broken, the son saying no, we'll wait a bit. His philosophy – if one rule goes, they all go!

Based on the first episode it's an amiable show, with likeable characters, a sense of conscience and maybe even spirituality (the son keeps a Bible in his bedside locker). A break from all those dark thriller dramas is welcome, but pacing is a bit limp and it could surely do with some more dramatic tension. However the script is quite witty



Tony Danza and Josh Groban star in *The Good Cop* (Netflix).

at times – at one stage the father says to the overly fussy son "you're making the coffee nervous", and a lazy cop muses on questions like "why do the Flintstones celebrate Christmas?" and "why does Hawaii have an interstate highway?" (think about it!).

### Papal visit

Also launching last Friday night was a welcome new series of **Leap of Faith** on RTÉ Radio 1. Not surprisingly, Michael Comyn and his guests took a look back on the

recent papal visit. However it was disappointing in that it once again covered just the familiar topics of abuse, LGBT issues and the role of women. Not that these shouldn't be discussed, but they were done to death before during and immediately after the visit, and I heard nothing new here from Patsy McGarry of the *Irish Times*, Joe Little of RTÉ and Sarah McDonald, freelance journalist on religious matters.

Now, media people might say these were the key issues

of the visit, but to a large extent it was the media that made these the almost exclusive filters through which the visit was reported. There was no mention of the upbeat arts events at the World Meeting, nor even of the Croke Park concert.

The huge variety of talks and topics in the RDS didn't get a mention, nor did the cheerful and enthusiastic activities in the dedicated spaces for teens and children. Is this positivity not to get a look in at all?

This show needed diverse voices, not just a few guests largely agreeing with each other – we had McGarry referencing Mary McAleese, a lengthy clip of a McAleese interview where she referenced McGarry, a clip from Colm O'Gorman – all singing from pretty much the same hymn sheet.

McGarry did think people



Patsy McGarry.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### SONGS OF PRAISE

**BBC1 Sunday, September 30, 2.30pm**

Seán Fletcher meets people who have managed to forgive in difficult circumstances and those who work for peace.

#### THE SUNDAY SHOW

**Virgin Media 1, Sunday, September 30, 4.30pm**

Sarah McInerney returns with a weekly studio show reviewing the week's news and politics.

#### GREAT MOMENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

**EWTN, Tuesday, October 2, 10am**

Fr McCloskey and Harry Crocker address the real causes of the Crusades.

engaged with the person of Pope Francis but not with the institution – he didn't think it would lead to any extra vocations, or any increase in Mass attendance. And maybe he's right but who knows? He also suggested the visit was too short, with too much trying to be squeezed into such a short time, and maybe that's true too.

### Lead reform

Michael Comyn pointed out that apart from those who attended the Mass in the Phoenix Park, about one million people followed it on TV, and McGarry agreed that many engaged with enthusiasm. Asked by Comyn if Pope Francis was the right man to lead reform he said yes, but that he needed the help of strong people around

him convinced of the evils of clericalism.

Speaking of clerics, I hesitate to review *Mass per se*, but I have to say that the music for last Sunday's Mass on RTE, under the direction of Fr Liam Lawton was exceptionally good. Fr Lawton's own parts for the Mass were excellent, but other composers were represented as well – I was impressed by 'The Lord Will Bless All People' by David Haas, used for the Responsorial Psalm, 'Healing Light' by Karl Jenkins and in particular the 'Peace Blessing' of Chris De Silva – a worthy celebration for the World Day of Peace.

[boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com)



Pat O'Kelly

# Music

## Grand festival offers top quality playing in New Ross

Although it officially opens tomorrow evening, Friday, September 28, the 2018 New Ross Piano Festival is already under way. It began yesterday, Wednesday, September 26, with its Young Pianists' Concert when a fledgling group, ranging in age from seven to 17, tried out the Steinway grand at the festival's base – the acoustically agreeable St Mary's Church of Ireland.

Today has been taken over by jazz – this festival is nothing if not eclectic – with the Phil Ware Trio in St Mary's this lunchtime and the Swedish virtuoso pianist and composer Lars Jansson, acclaimed for his improvisations, occupying the evening slot.

The festival, brainchild of

internationally renowned artistic director Dr Finghin Collins [pictured] and aided and abetted by local luminaries, not least the redoubtable festival director Connie Tantrum, has been running successfully since 2006. Last year it found itself among the top ten European piano festivals listed by the UK music magazine *The Pianist*.

Over the years the astute Collins has brought an amazing body of pianists, and other instrumentalists, to Ireland for the first time and 2018 continues his enlightened approach to

artists and programme planning.

This year, for example, brings the Irish debut of US artist of Irish ancestry Anne-Marie McDermott, described as "one of the great pianists of her generation", and Romanian Alexandra Dariescu, "one of the 30 pianists under 30 destined for a spectacular career".

Both appear tomorrow evening, Friday, September 28, with Ms McDermott choosing Bach's 3rd English Suite and Ms Dariescu joining Bulgarian violinist Svetlin Roussev and

French cellist Marc Coppey for Shostakovich's *Op 67 Piano Trio*. Dr Collins rounds the evening off with Chopin's *24 Preludes Op 28*.

Collins opens Saturday's evening concert with a short Debussy centenary tribute and then gives the première of John Buckley's New Ross-commissioned *Three Preludes*. Anne-Marie McDermott and Alexandra Dariescu also return, this time with the former joining Messrs Svetlin and Coppey in Mendelssohn's *2nd Piano Trio* and the latter playing Beethoven's *Op 10/3 Sonata* and Chopin's *Andante Spianato* and *Grande Polonaise*.

At Saturday's late night concert Israeli David Greilhammer presents a fascinating

programme he calls 'Labyrinth'. This intermingles six of Janáček's On an overgrown path pieces with music by CPE Bach, Mozart, French baroque composer Jean-Féry Rebel and the contemporary Haifa-born Montreal-based Ofer Pelz.

### Sonatas

The 2018 festival closes on Sunday afternoon with Alexandra Dariescu in music by French composers Germaine Tailleferre and Olivier Messiaen; Anne-Marie McDermott in sonatas by Haydn and Prokofiev and Roussev, Coppey and Collins coming together for Schubert's B flat *Piano Trio*.

In between there are a series of Coffee Concerts at noon tomorrow, Saturday and

Sunday by Waterford's Billy O'Brien, France's François Dumont and Cuba's Marcos Madrigal.

Billy O'Brien, who studied at the RIAM and in Paris where he was awarded a prix d'excellence at the Conservatoire, introduces his own programme of Chopin and Skriabin. Dumont, of whom it has been written "breathes music in every pore", offers pieces by Bach, Liszt and Debussy's *Estampes* while Havana-born Marcos Madrigal makes Skriabin's *24 Preludes* the focal point of his Sunday matinee.

Booking at St Michael's Theatre, South Street, New Ross in person or by phone 051 421255 or at [www.stmichaelsnewross.com](http://www.stmichaelsnewross.com)



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Creatures of the 'brave new

**Curious Creatures: Frans Post & Brazil** exhibition curated by Niamh MacNally, National Gallery of Ireland, continues to December 9, 2018

**Curious Creatures: Frans Post & Brazil** catalogue edited by Niamh MacNally (NGI, €9.95)

**Frans Post: Animals in Brazil** by Alexander de Bruin (Riks Museum, Amsterdam, €19.95)

**Peter Costello**

When Europeans first intruded into South America their view of the world was greatly changed. For the settled views of the Renaissance, the 'New World' of the Americas, its people, its plants and its animals, came as a shock, the "shock of the new".

Something of that shock is illustrated in the current exhibition at the NGI. It is centred on a painting by Dutch artist Frans Post that has been in the collection for almost a century, 'Brazilian Landscape with a Sugar Mill', painted about 1660.

This shows one of the first enterprises of Dutch colonialism in the Brazils (as some

then called the territory): a sugar mill with black slaves from Africa.

But in the jungle in the foreground are a set of animals, some in strange poses. Recent research by Alexander de Bruin, a Dutch art historian, has cast a flood of new light on the background to these creatures, their creation and their meaning.

He had found in the course of his cataloguing work a set of anonymous drawings. Who they were by, and where were they made was unknown, though clearly they showed South American animals.

On a family visit to the Royal Museum in Amsterdam, he saw a painting by Franz Post, a view of the town of Olinda in Brazil. There in the bush in the foreground were again copies of the animal images he had just found.

With this clue he was able to unravel the secret of Franz Post, and the connections of the drawings he had found with another painting in Paris, as well as the one in Dublin.

### Detective work

Aside from the fascinating art detective work, the drawings and the paintings in which



'Brazilian Landscape, 1660s' by Frans Post (1612-1680), from the Curious Creatures – Frans Post & Brazil exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland from September 8 to December 9, 2018. Photo: © National Gallery of Ireland

# Catholics should face a troubled future with resolve

## How to Defend the Faith Without Raising your Voice: Civil responses to Catholic hot-button issues

by Michael Kelly and Austen Ivereigh (Columba Press, €14.99)

David Quinn

A couple of generations ago, one could have safely assumed that most Irish people shared a set of common values. Even if one didn't necessarily fully subscribe to the Catholic worldview, the culture was such that one would have to live under a rock to be unaware of what the Church taught about a range of issues, much less why.

The situation has now completely changed. Many of the core moral and doctrinal beliefs of Catholicism, and Christianity more generally are considered not simply wrong, but against common sense, and even sometime repugnant. Given that some of those who voted for same-sex marriage and abortion were

practising Catholics, this is not just an issue affecting those who have walked away from the Church. It is an issue that represents a huge wake-up call and requires urgent attention.

Enter this book by Catholic journalists Austen Ivereigh and Michael Kelly (editor of this newspaper) – both of whom have spent many years explaining the teachings of the Church in the mainstream media and in public debates.

**“This book would be an excellent gift from any parent to a teenager or young adult who has walked away from the Faith”**

This is a modern approach to what we used to call apologetics, but it is much more than smart answers to common critiques of the Faith.

The book opens up with an explanation of the model which basically

hinges on the desire to shed light rather than heat on controversial subjects such as the role of the Church in public life, homosexuality, abortion, contraception and the role of women in the Church.

In each case, the book looks for a positive value that motivates the critics of the Church. For example, on the issue of same-sex marriage it acknowledges that most supporters of the re-definition of marriage do so because they are motivated out of a deep-seated desire for what they see as equality.

However, Kelly and Ivereigh go on to demonstrate how this is misjudged and, in fact, sacrifices the rights of children in the pursuit of adult happiness.

The fact that each chapter starts with the common criticisms of the Church's position arms the reader to be ready for the questions they will meet rather than working from abstracts.

The book does not try to defend the indefensible, not least the horrendous issue of clerical sexual

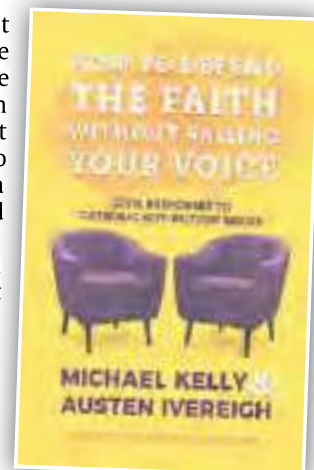
abuse. The issue is dealt with sensitively while pointing to the huge strides that the Church has made in our part of the world at least to ensure that it is now a leader in the field of child safeguarding.

This book would be an excellent gift from any parent to a teenager or young adult who has walked away from the Faith. In the pages they will find robust challenges to the conventional messages they are hearing about the Church from contemporary culture.

### Parish groups

In his foreword to the book, Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin expresses the hope that parish groups will read *How to Defend the Faith Without Raising your Voice* together.

This is an excellent idea that



priests and parish pastoral councils should take up. In politics, activists are often told "don't get angry, get active".

Every page of this book provides the tools people need to understand, appreciate and explain to others, the reasons for the Faith they have in them.

This is a 'must-have' handbook

for anyone wishing to defend and explain some of the toughest and most controversial teachings of the Catholic Church.

Both writers have a wealth of experience themselves doing exactly this in some of the toughest media arenas, and it shows.

Buy this book and see how they do it.

## world'



'South American Tapir' by Frans Post (1612-1680), courtesy of Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem from the Curious Creatures – Frans Post & Brazil exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland from September 8 to December 9, 2018. Photo: © National Gallery of Ireland

they were used, there is food for serious thought in these images. The drawings are delicate and detailed, filled with a sort of melancholy tenderness, even those which had to be drawn from dead specimens.

The Dublin painting by

Post has been a favourite of mine since I was in my teens. For me it was redolent of all the romance (as it seemed to me then) of South America, of Darwin, Wallace, Col. Fawcett, even Claude Levi-Straus.

Now I know that more than romance was involved. Here

in these jungles and mountain wildernesses Europe discovered the true nature, diversity and dynamism of creation which quite eclipsed man's previous ideas. Yet what was to some the wonder of God's creation, was to others a place of plunder.

Yet here again in the lands of not just Post's elegant anteater and sad-eyed tapir, but of the fossil forms of the giant sloth and the glyptodon, the long vistas of the geological past of the world were laid out for Darwin, who derived from such scenes as these the notions that went into the making of his theory of evolution.

### Slaves

Those slaves and the sugar mill strike some very forcibly today, being a product of colonial and post-colonial exploitation and destruction. But we need also to remember that such scenes as Post painted, such animals as he recorded, have profoundly changed the most important ideas of modern man. This is an exhibition to see and to ponder deeply.

**i** This is a family-friendly exhibition, for a set of 19th Century stuffed specimens of some of the animals have been lent by the Natural History Museum, and the staff have prepared materials for schools and families to explore the natural history involved to enhance a visit.

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

# The bishop and the editor

## The Parnell Split in Westmeath: the bishop and the newspaper editor

by Michael Nolan  
(Four Courts Press, €9.95)

### Felix M. Larkin

John Patrick Hayden established the *Westmeath Examiner* in Mullingar in 1882, and was its editor and proprietor for a record 72 years – until his death in 1954, aged 91. His father, and later his brother, owned the *Roscommon Messenger*, and the fact that he was not a native of Westmeath may have contributed to the problems he had with the local bishop, Thomas Nulty, in his early years in Mullingar.

Nulty, bishop of Meath from 1866 to 1898, was active in the land reform movement and was, in fact, the first Catholic bishop to endorse Parnell. Parnell, with the bishop's support, was MP for the Meath constituency from 1875 to 1880. The bishop expected his flock to respect his wishes in all matters – both spiritual and temporal – and was accustomed to receiving such deference.

### Editorship

Hayden, however, used his editorship of the *Examiner* from the very start to challenge Bishop Nulty's control of local politics. He thus wrote in the *Examiner* in 1888 that "no man or class of men are by virtue of their office and position constituted by that one fact alone leaders of the people in affairs not connected with the office".

### The twists and turns of the rivalry between bishop and editor are fascinating

Hayden remained loyal to Parnell in the split in the Irish Party following the O'Shea divorce case. That copper-fastened Nulty's enmity, and led ultimately to the *Examiner* being condemned by the bishop as "sinful". Hayden appealed this

condemnation to Cardinal Logue – the metropolitan of the diocese of Meath – and to Propaganda Fide in Rome, but both upheld Bishop Nulty's action.

The twists and turns of the rivalry between bishop and editor are fascinating, and the tale is told with verve and authority in this volume – one of the latest in the

admirable series of "Maynooth studies in local history".

The author, Michael Nolan, sees the rivalry of the two men as part of a wider struggle between an emergent class of educated lay leaders in Ireland and the Catholic clergy who, in Nolan's words, "had

long regarded themselves as leaders of the Catholic community...and were not prepared to cede their powerful position to a lay leadership".

### When Nulty died in 1898, Hayden was able to advance his career without hindrance

Bishop Nulty triumphed in the short term. However, as Nolan points out, Hayden "had one crucial advantage over the bishop; he was still a young man and could afford to bide his time".

When Nulty died in 1898, Hayden – still only in his 30s – was able to advance his career without hindrance. He had succeeded his brother as MP for Roscommon South in 1897, and he went on to become one of the leading members of the Irish Party at Westminster and a close associate and confidant of John Redmond, a fellow Parnellite.

He held his parliamentary seat until 1918, when the rise of Sinn Féin – ultimately a more potent adversary than Bishop Nulty – deprived him of the political power and influence that he had fought for in the 1880s and 1890s.

# Darkness engulfs the White House

## Fear: Trump in the White House

by Bob Woodward  
(Simon and Schuster, €19.99)

### Peter Hegarty

*Fear*, the revealing account of Trump's time in the White House to date, Woodward's 19th book since *All the President's Men*, describes an "emotionally overwrought, mercurial, and unpredictable leader" and his chaotic administration, in which Woodward has excellent contacts. His book rests firmly on their first-hand accounts.

He reminds us that Trump started badly in that he failed to prepare for office. Never expecting to win the election in November – some would say never wanting to win it – he suddenly found himself with 4,000 jobs to fill, and two months in which to fill them.

The president can't impose order on the administration he has cobbled together: he is a surprisingly docile and ineffectual man, for all his bluster. "I always get overruled," he complains.

### Attacks

An indolent creature, he once asked an expert with whom he was due to discuss cyber attacks to watch the Masters with him instead. He is not "a detail guy", and dislikes "homework" and documents running more than a page. Trump is not however – and

Woodward would hasten to make this point – an empty vessel. He has what he calls certain 'bedrock' beliefs. He maintains for example, that higher tariffs would protect and stimulate American industry. There's no point in telling him that a trade deficit is not always a bad thing, or that the auto industry is in good shape and has not moved to Mexico, or that NAFTA has been good for American farmers.

Trump has become notorious for his ill-considered tweets and remarks. This tweet on the subject of North Korea shook the White House and the diplomatic community: "North Korean leader Kim Jong Un just stated that the nuclear button is on his desk at all times...I too have a nuclear button, but it is a much bigger and more powerful one than his, and my button works!"

Equally shocking was his suggestion that there was a moral equivalence between the racist extremists and protesters who clashed at Charlottesville.

It seems that Trump's people have had enough of his impetuosity and are trying to rein him in or guide him in certain directions. Woodward instances

the day an official stealthily removed a document from the president's desk out of fear that the paper might encourage some precipitate action by Trump. His staff's concern to keep Trump out of trouble may explain why Woodward was unable to talk to him for the book. When he finally did get a word with him last August, he referred to his (eight) requests for an interview: "I

never got a call. I never got a message," Trump told him. "They don't tell me," he says of his staff generally.

Woodward does not judge. He simply sets out what he has learned. In doing so he humanises Trump.

He tells us that the president's concern for the Americans left behind by globalisation is genuine, not electorally-motivated. Trump is a congenial fellow,

who acutely feels the loneliness of high office. He has a solid, affectionate relationship with Melania; both are protective of their son Barron.

Woodward offers a balanced depiction of a man who may be around for some time to come if he can manage to fend off Robert Mueller, the special counsel investigating Russian meddling during the 2016 election, and keep the economy ticking over.



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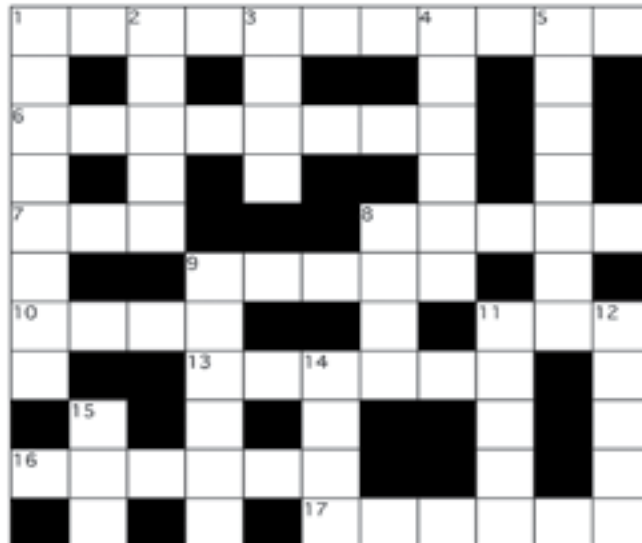
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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 251



### ACROSS

- 1 Homer and Marge's saxophone-playing daughter (4,7)  
 6 In this game, you bend to let others jump over you (8)  
 7 You put this in a fountain pen (3)  
 8 You might get this award for bravery, or for winning a competition (5)  
 9 You put this on a bed (5)  
 10 Egg-shaped, like a rugby ball (4)  
 11 A plus sign tells you to do this (3)  
 13 Time when you might receive a chocolate egg (6)  
 16 Tiny stones they put on the road (6)

### DOWN

- 17 Delightful (6)  
 1 Sweet on a stick (8)  
 2 This fish hunts in the sea (5)  
 3 Out of danger (4)  
 4 Winnie the Pooh's friend from the sty (6)  
 5 You might find apple trees here (7)  
 8 Beef or mutton, perhaps (4)  
 9 This part of a garment covers your arm (6)  
 11 Use words to sort out a disagreement (5)  
 12 Butter is made in this building (5)  
 14 Give something away for money (4)  
 15 Weep (3)

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

### GORDIUS No.369

**Across** – 1 Coal merchant 7 Hut 9 Gnat 10 Newman 11 Tray 14 Snide 15 Dover 16 Mako 18 Packs 21 Nudge 22 Terra firma 24 Lays 25 Freed 26 Eject 29 Egad 33 Plover 34 Vary 36 Ere 37 Companion set

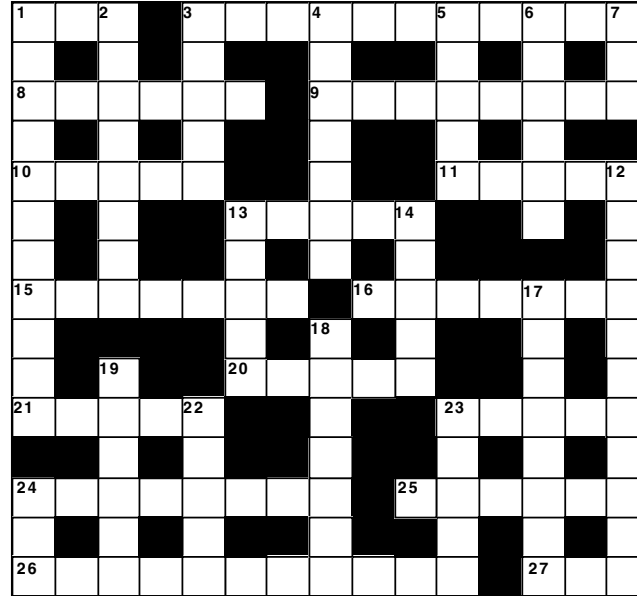
**Down** – 1 Con brio 2 Arts 3 Mint julep 4 Rowan 5 Hoard 6 Thor 8 The rod and Thy staff 9 Golden fleece 12 Avidly 13 Brief 14 Super 17 Air bed 19 Craft 28 Coven 30 Alec 32 Yves 35 Rut

### CHILDREN'S No.250

**Across** – 1 Harry Potter 6 Dagger 7 Chef 8 Ask 9 Eats 11 Evil 12 Wheat 16 Order 17 Chair 19 Colour 20 Zebra  
**Down** – 1 Hidden 2 Right 3 Pirate 4 Ticket 5 Raffle 10 Sweeter 13 Anchor 14 Write 15 Razor 18 Rare

## Crossword

Gordius 370



### ACROSS

- 1 Bushwhacker Kelly needs early detention, for starters (3)  
 3 Tree with highly-distinctive bark (6,5)  
 8 A time when all was covered by glaciers, etc (3,3)  
 9 Stone left at sea that's nice to drink (4,4)  
 10 See 20 across  
 11 Item of cloth repair work (5)  
 13 A classroom fool can be seen in Verdun, certainly (5)  
 15 Invalidate, undo (7)  
 16 Oh, mould the criminal thus (7)  
 20 & 10a Science fiction villain found in a strangely hard, red vat (5,5)  
 21 Unspeakably great member of the Marx Brothers (5)  
 23 & 24 Crowd at a concert consisting of Benedict and Francis only? (5,8)  
 25 Place in a crypt (6)  
 26 A Conservative before the advent of airborne troops (by way of being in readiness) (11)  
 27 Barrel given to Uncle Norman, to begin with (3)

### DOWN

- 1 A source of digital colour! (4,7)

### 2 See 23 down

- 3 Natural sweetener (5)  
 4 American state that has taken over Montana, in part (7)  
 5 Purchase all available stock (3,2)  
 6 Perches (6)  
 7 The host drops a pole because it is very warm (3)  
 12 Blood constituent seen in a certain healing boom (11)  
 13 Part of Wales involved in a sturdy federation (5)  
 14 Age, era (5)  
 17 Item of street furniture almost scattered around the parish priest (8)  
 18 Neptune's three-pronged spear (7)  
 19 Resentment causes one to write a note to Dickens' Barnaby (6)  
 22 La Boheme, perhaps (5)  
 23 & 2d Cheap, sensational tale that deems little Penelope awful? (5,8)  
 24 Poisonous snake (3)

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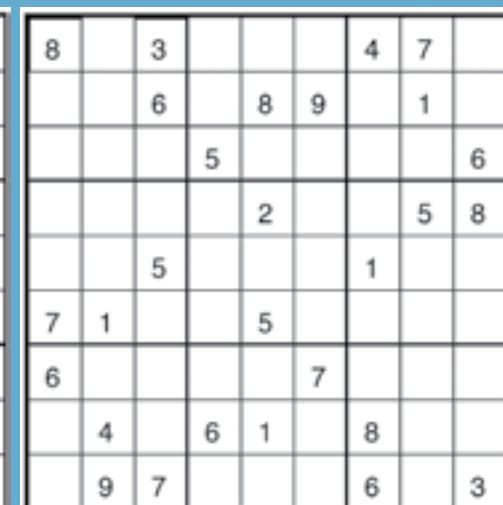
## Sudoku Corner

251

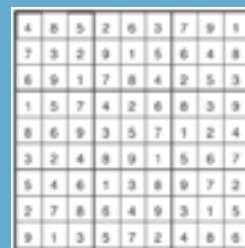
### Easy



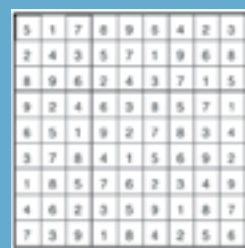
### Hard



### Last week's Easy 250



### Last week's Hard 250



Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



# Is it really unacceptable to label suicide as ‘wrong’?

**DURING A TWO-WEEK** period in July our parish was faced with the reality of suicide three times. The magnificent summer sunshine somehow jarred with the dark clouds of sadness and despair which hovered over our frightened community.

Two single men, one 58 the other 26, and then a young mother of four children whose youngest had just received First Holy Communion in June. Three families who did not see this coming had their world turned upside down in an instant and for some of them, particularly for surviving parents, their lives will never be the same again.

Those deaths left me frightened. Firstly I am frightened that there is so much silent pain in the hearts of those we share our lives with. I am frightened too that for an increasing number of people, ending their lives is the only way they can see out of their pain.

## Silent pain

I call it silent pain because no matter how much awareness of mental and emotional illness there is, and the availability of services, there are many people who just seem to be unable to reach out



for help. One of my closest friends describes that very dark space she sometimes finds herself in as being in a dark deep hole surrounded on every side by walls. She looks up and sees a light but is unable to reach it.

I was also frightened at the effect that three deaths by suicide

in such a short time had on our community. We all feel more vulnerable and our grasp on life seems more tenuous than before.

A few people who have loved ones struggling have spoken of their fear that recent events could somehow ‘lead’ to more tragedy within their own families.

There is also the fear that when a number of deaths by suicide occur it somehow makes it more ‘normal’. As we waited for one of the funerals to arrive at the church door I heard a man say to another: “ah isn’t it the pattern of life these days”. I am very uncomfortable that death by suicide would in any way become normal in our society but I’m genuinely scared that we are heading that way.

## Language

The language used around deaths by suicide is also extremely sensitive. There is still something in our collective memory about how suicide was viewed and treated in the past and so we have banned any words which attach any sense of judgement, shame or responsibility to the person who

has died. Those words have been replaced by compassion, empathy and understanding.

However, I have to acknowledge that within the families of those who have died and within the community there is often a level of anger towards the deceased which is now confined to private conversation. I wonder if there is any space where death by suicide can anymore be described as wrong without that being interpreted as a judgement or criticism of the person who has died?

I apologise if the very posing of this question causes hurt or pain but having witnessed the lifelong devastation which suicide causes I believe all of the emotions and reactions must be part of the public conversation about this most difficult of subjects.

**● A PRAYER FOR ONE IN DESPAIR:**  
God our strength and our redeemer: you do not leave us in this life nor abandon us in death. Hear our prayer for those in despair, when days are full of darkness and the future empty of hope. Renew in them your

sustaining strength for we believe that there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.  
...and for loved ones touched by suicide  
God of peace, govern their hearts in this time

of great confusion. Help them to take their thousand questions and “what ifs,” which swirl furiously in their minds, to Jesus, the Prince of Peace who has the power to calm the storm. As the Holy Spirit helps them take their anxieties to you in prayer, flood their

souls with the peace that passes all understanding. When they cannot pray – when their hearts and minds are so overtaken by grief that they cannot find a word – remind them that the Holy Spirit prays for true believers when they do not know how to pray.



## KERALA FLOODS: FATHER SILVESTER CALLS FOR HELP

Reverend Father Silvester Cottage, Little Way Association Director for India, has managed to contact us after several days during which he was stranded on the top floor of our Little Way Centre in the Diocese of Alleppy, Kerala, without food or clean drinking water and with no means of reaching safety or calling for assistance. Fortunately, his Little Way volunteers were eventually able to reach him, and the flood waters are slowly receding, but almost everyone in the area has lost their home and essential possessions in the floods, or in landslides caused by torrential rain and rivers bursting their banks. Father Silvester praised his volunteers who have been giving practical assistance to the flood victims, despite themselves being in desperate circumstances. But financial help is urgently needed, now and for rebuilding in the months ahead.

### Can you spare a donation to help Fr Silvester and the flood victims in Kerala?

The whole of the State of Kerala has been seriously affected by these floods and The Little Way Association is in contact with other missionary Societies, too, who are also helping the needy in affected areas. Your donation, large or small, will be sent direct, without deduction.



*“I will spend my heaven doing good on earth. I will let fall a shower of roses.”*  
- St Therese

**Feast Day: 1st October**  
**WE WISH ALL OUR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS A VERY HAPPY FEAST DAY**

In gratitude for all your kindnesses a Novena of Masses is being offered for your intentions from 23rd September to 1st October

**MAY ST THERESE OBTAIN FOR YOU ALL A SPECIAL BLESSING FROM HEAVEN**

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:  
€..... **KERALA FLOODS APPEAL**  
€..... **WHEREVER THE NEED IS GREATEST**  
€..... **HOLY OFFERINGS**  
(Please state number \_\_\_\_\_)  
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

**Name** (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss) (Block letters please)  
.....  
**Address**  
.....  
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To donate online go to  
[tinyurl.com/lwadonations](http://tinyurl.com/lwadonations)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**

IC/09/27