

The Irish Catholic

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Poverty follows people to the grave as families rely on handouts

€8m a year spent helping grieving relatives

Colm Fitzpatrick

Rising funeral costs are forcing some families to face the heartache of choosing to bury relatives long distances from their loved ones, *The Irish Catholic* can reveal.

This newspaper has also obtained figures which show that more and more people are also being forced to rely on government handouts to cover costs when a loved one dies with more than €8million in grants given last year alone.

Homelessness charity Focus Ireland confirmed to *The Irish Catholic* that they too were being called on to help grieving families. Spokesperson for the charity Roughan McNamara, told this newspaper that it often receives calls from struggling families pleading for help to cover funeral costs.

"It is something that we've

found...families of tenants or people using our services have had difficulties with it [funeral costs].

"It is something everyone has noticed and Focus has in the past had to contribute to the cost of family funerals," he said adding that worries over affordability can "add to the grief" that families are experiencing.

Distress

While funeral costs have remained static in recent years, the costs of graves – particularly in Dublin – is causing distress for some families.

One Dublin priest who works in a disadvantaged community on the capital's northside but asked not to be identified, confirmed that in his experience parishioners often find it difficult to make ends meet when it comes to

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Fancy footwork from Sr Máiréad



Sr Máiréad Ní Fhearáin shows off her football skills after the All-Ireland Schools Camogie semi-final at Ballinascreen over the weekend. Photo: Margaret McLaughlin

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Be realistic about our health system PAGE 9



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A step forward? PAGES 10-11



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In a way, every time someone is talking about clerical sexual abuse the Church is losing. Few things convulse people with anger and dismay as much as revelations that those charged with leading people to God betray that trust and instead inflict the most appalling harm.

Perhaps, the only thing to come close is when people hear that those raised up to lead the Church – bishops and religious superiors – sometimes chose to turn a blind eye and often preferred to put the avoidance of scandal and the reputation of the Church or an accused cleric ahead of the pain of a child.

As Benedict XVI noted in his letter to the Catholics of Ireland, the scandals loom large and have obscured the light of the Gospel “to a degree that not even centuries of persecution succeeded in doing”.

It is a painful legacy, and for all that the Church in Ireland has made huge strides forward to ensure that ecclesial life is as safe as possible for children and vulnerable adults.

Lessons learned

We can't say it often enough that heart-wrenching lessons have been learned and that while no system will be perfect, the Church here now has hard-won policies and procedures in place that represent the gold standard. The army of thousands of volunteers who give of their time, talent and energy to work in child safeguarding across the Church really do represent a revolution.

More than this, at a time when the reality of fewer and fewer priests is becoming more apparent, it is also a shining example of how laypeople,

The Church can humbly act as a mirror to help people confront this virus in our midst



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

religious and priests can work together to share co-responsibility for the life of the Church.

None of the huge strides that have been taken in countries like Ireland can diminish the immense damage that has been done, nor can it make us complacent that this is now perfect and something that can be consigned to the past. As is becoming more and more evident in every walk of life, constant vigilance is the only stance when it comes to safeguarding. In other words, safeguarding has to be seen as a culture rather than in isolation.

“Some will say ‘too little, too late’”

The abuse summit in Rome which concluded at the weekend focused primarily on responsibility, accountability and transparency. These are all vital components for a comprehensive safeguarding strategy.

The fact that the Holy See is preparing a guidebook for every bishop in the world to know how

to handle these cases supported by a new task force is good news. Some victims and survivors will – understandably – say ‘too little, too late’. And for them, that is tragically true. But, the real fruit of the Rome meeting must be that the lessons learned in countries like Ireland must be applied globally.

No family or society ever wants to confront an issue like the abuse of children. In the Church we have been forced to confront this. We have been held to the standard of the Gospel and found wanting, but if we can truly face the inadequacies and wrongdoing in a courageous fashion the Church can, please God, help serve as a mirror to wider society all across the globe to confront the virus of abuse that infects everything it touches.

Michael Kelly is co-author of a new book with Austen Ivereigh How to Defend the Faith – Without Raising Your Voice – it is available from Columba Books www.columbabooks.com



€8m a year spent helping grieving relatives

» Continued from Page 1

paying for funerals. He said that the cost of a grave is a major issue and in some circumstances that he is aware

of, families in Dublin cannot afford to bury their deceased loved ones in a local graveyard and must choose a grave outside the capital. This adds

to the difficulty in family members being able to visit the grave on a regular basis – a source of comfort to many grieving families.

Figures released to this paper from the Department of Social Protection show that the State provided some 2,900 grants to assist with funerals at a cost of €5.46million last year – an increase from 2017 when it spent just over €5million.

Over the financial year 2016-2017, figures from the North released to *The Irish Catholic* reveal that 2,176 grants were made for funerals costing £2.29million (€2.66million).

Cheaper option

Describing the cost of funerals as “crazy stuff”, Fr Joe McDonald of Ballyfermot parish said that he is aware of some families choosing cremation over burial because it is a cheaper option. The well-known parish priest added that he is also

aware that some people are also taking out loans to help with the costs.

“It’s an awful situation where someone in a family is dying and the question comes up ‘have we the money to bury her?’”

“It’s an awful question: Mum is dying of cancer, her battle has been going on for years – she’s in the hospice now. Time is short and that’s one of the questions,” Fr McDonald said.

Fr Seamus Ahearne of Rivermount parish in Dublin said that while in his experience, finances are not the primary concern of a mourning family, he does go out of his way to try to help people think economically.

“Obviously people need help etc., but this is not very central. It is more difficult to persuade people to limit cars; to limit flowers; to limit the expense of a coffin etc.,” he said.

Discover the Path for Healing and Hope

This revised edition includes Mary Redmond Ussher's spiritual journey through cancer and a new introduction written by her son Patrick after her death in 2015. It also contains testimonies from the many people who were touched by Mary's legacy, Miriam O'Callaghan and Mary McAleese.

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Fr Purcell questions fairness of Cardinal Pell trial

Colm Fitzpatrick

A popular Sydney-based Irish priest has said he has serious doubts about the conviction of Cardinal George Pell for sexual abuse.

Fr Brendan Purcell, who has known Cardinal Pell for more than 20 years insisted that there are serious questions about the fairness of the trial in which the cardinal was found guilty of abusing two altar servers in the 1990s.

There had originally been a gag order on the trial, however that was lifted this week. Fr Purcell told RTÉ Radio on Tuesday that he felt that the fact that Dr Pell is a divisive figure in Australia made it hard for him to get a just hearing.

"All I want is for the law to be fair...there are people here who are non-believers and they're shocked" by the treatment of Cardinal Pell.

View

Fr Purcell said: "I would have to say if he is guilty, I want the same for him as everyone else - he should serve prison time". However, he said that "Cardinal Pell is easily the best known clergyman in Australia.

"Everyone has a view on him, some people like him and some people don't...how did he get a fair trial?" Fr Purcell asked.

He cited the fact that the cardinal had been pre-judged in the media ahead of the trial and questioned what effect this had on a jury.

See Page 20.

Tipperary council silent over 'blasphemous' video

Staff reporter

A local authority is remaining tight-lipped after a blasphemous video it funded and originally defended was apparently removed from a popular media-sharing website this week.

Tipperary County Council confirmed to *The Irish Catholic* that it gave a local artist what it described as a "small grant" to develop the project which depicted the title character 'Bootleg Jesus' coming to terms with his role as the so-called less successful son of God.

The ten-episode show depicted dialogue between two foul-mouthed characters

and contained references to scenes from the Bible including walking on water.

It was originally advertised as being available every Monday on YouTube.

When asked about the appropriateness of the council funding potentially offensive material, a spokesperson for the local authority said she believed there was nothing potentially offensive to anybody in the application for the grant, and that she believed the video itself shouldn't cause offense.

"I don't really see anything in it. I think it's a light entertainment piece. I don't see anything that should cause offense in it," the arts officer

for the council Melanie Scott told *The Irish Catholic* on Monday. However, by the following day the video appeared to have been removed.

Despite repeated attempts for clarification about the removal of the video, Ms Scott did not return calls as this newspaper went to print despite originally standing over the video.

Material

Commenting on the animated series, theologian Dr Tom Finnegan of Mary Immaculate College expressed concern about a local authority funding such material.

While he said that freedom of speech is legitimate, "a

complicating factor is when a public authority publicises or endorses blasphemous material".

He said his own initial view "is that such an action by the public authority may be difficult to square with its duty to non-coercively respect the religious good of its citizens."

In her original comments, Ms Scott said that the council has "no involvement" once the grant is given.

"We gave a local artist a small grant support to develop a project but we have no editorial control over the artist's work.

"The artist's work is their own work," she said.

Vandalism of historic crypt 'attacks Christian communities'

Greg Daly

The ransacking of a historic Church of Ireland church crypt is a "desecration" and an "attack on Christian communities", a prominent inner-city priest has said.

The raid on the crypt of St Michan's Church on Dublin's Church Street was discovered at 1pm on Monday, February 25, when a tour guide was preparing to open the church for visitors. A steel internal gate had been removed, and several mummies had been damaged. Among these were the 400-year-old remains of a nun and an 800-year-old 'crusader', whose head had been severed and stolen.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Bryan Shortall, parish priest of St Michan's Church on nearby Halston Street, said the attack had shocked locals.

"It's a real shame, a real shock, and an attack on Christian communities," he said. "Are we now fearful of the remains of our loved ones? Why do people want to desecrate places where we bury our dead?"

The Capuchin friar said he had been in contact with Archdeacon David Pierrepoint and Rev. Ross Styles at the Church of Ireland church, which had been part of the Dublin Camino in last year's World Meeting of Families.

"Our ecumenism isn't just for one week in January - we try to make prayerful links with them all year round," Fr Shortall said, predicting that his Church of Ireland neighbours would get over the attack. "They'll rise above this," he said.

'Both Lives Matter' message brought to Westminster



Women from pro-life group 'Both Lives Matter' organise a demonstration at Westminster to show that 100,000 people are alive today because of Northern Ireland's abortion laws on February 26.

Bishop Pat Buckley



Bishop Pat Buckley.

In the edition of February 14, 2019, it was wrongly reported in an article that Bishop Pat Buckley has been removed from the list of those authorised to solemnise marriages on behalf of the State. This was incorrect and Bishop Buckley remains on the list of solemnisers.

We would like to apologise to Bishop Buckley for this mistake and make it clear that marriages presided over by Bishop Buckley were and are validly solemnised.

It is the policy of *The Irish Catholic* to correct errors when they occur.

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



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Cautious optimism as abuse survivors react to Vatican summit

Chai Brady

Despite an “enormous amount of urgent work” still needed to protect vulnerable children according to some Irish abuse survivors, they feel the Vatican abuse summit was a worthwhile endeavour.

Dublin councillor Damian O’Farrell said he felt positive about the openness and honesty of many cardinals as well as the Pope during the four-day meeting which ended on Sunday.

Having met Pope Francis along with other victims of abuse in August during his visit to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families, Cllr O’Farrell said Francis spoke of the need to end clericalism, and that the power and authority endowed to clergy was the root of much of the evils in Church.

He said: “I feel that the summit was called in part to bring his cardinals and religious order leaders together to put them into the service mode that he spoke about and this was positive.”

Adversarial

However, certain religious orders are still “excessively adversarial” in dealing with survivors and the mentality of Church prelates in some countries are still endangering children, he warned.

“I do believe that Pope Francis and the likes of Dublin’s Archbishop Diarmuid Martin have a genuine desire to rid the Church of the scourge of clerical sexual abusers and the members of the hierarchy that have covered up and protected them,” said Cllr O’Farrell.

“While progress is to be welcomed, unfortunately on a worldwide scale I don’t believe there is the necessary urgency within the Roman Curia, College of Cardinals, and the hierarchy to effect the changes required immediately and many, many children will have their lives destroyed.”

Alarming

It was “alarming”, he said, to hear an African cardinal during the opening address say the incidence of sexual abuse of children in Africa is minimal.

“I believe that this type of thinking is putting children’s lives at risk and needs to be addressed by Pope Francis today and not tomorrow.”

Denis Cairns, an abuse survivor from Derry, was “optimistic” after the summit, despite feeling Pope Francis didn’t go “far enough” in apologising to abuse victims during the summit.

Speaking about institutional abuse, and the struc-

tures that facilitated it, he said: “I think it’s going to be nipped in the bud, any allegation even if it’s false if credible has to be dealt with straight away with. It’s to help our future generation of children, I don’t want children to suffer what I’ve suffered for the years to come.”

He added that although safeguarding policy in Ireland is “good”, follow-up with abuse survivors to check their wellbeing must happen at least once or twice a year.

Diamond jubilee celebrations



Bishop Emeritus Willie Walsh and Fr Cletus Noone at the Ennis Franciscan Fraternity celebrate 60 years of service in the priesthood, after being ordained in different ceremonies on February 21, 1959.

Outrage over R-rating pro-life movie

Filmmakers of a new movie which depicts the reality of abortion in America have expressed outrage over the decision that it be R-rated.

Anti-abortion movie, *Unplanned*, which is set for a March 29 release received an R-rating from the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). This would be the first R-rated movie from distributor Pure Flix Entertainment known for faith-based and family-friendly films such as *God’s Not Dead*.

An R-rating means those under 17 years of age can’t watch the movie without a parent or adult guardian. The filmmakers Pure Flix told *The Hollywood Reporter* that there’s no profanity, nudity, violence, drug abuse or anything typically associated with an R-rating.

Supervision

“A 15-year old girl can get an abortion without her parent’s permission, but she can’t see this movie without adult supervision? That’s sad,” Ken Rather, Pure Flix executive vice president, told the outlet.

Meanwhile, pro-life group ‘Precious Life’ has criticised actresses from the hit TV show *Derry Girls* for using their success as a platform to promote abortion.

Jewish reps ‘horrified’ at antisemitism upsurge in France

Chai Brady

Following a huge increase in anti-Semitic attacks in France and Britain’s Labour Party embroilment in anti-Semitism, Ireland’s Jewish community are “horrified” but relieved this is not the case here, but warn criticism of Israel can shadow or morph into racism.

A February government report in France revealed a 74% rise in anti-Semitic incidents, increasing from 311 in 2017 to 541 in 2018. The report sparked tens of thousands of people to march in

protest last week in the country. This comes as the ninth member of the Labour Party in Britain quit this week over the party’s failure to handle anti-Semitism.

Chairperson of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, Maurice Cohen, told *The Irish Catholic*: “We are horrified at the upsurge in the anti-Semitism reports coming out of France and the UK and the circumstances that are going on there and in other parts of Europe”.

Mr Cohen said the massive increase in France has to be evaluated, being “a huge cause for worry”, but in Ire-

land the “right of the right wing thankfully” doesn’t exist.

Speaking of the Israel-Palestine conflict, he admitted there is a huge debate on criticism or “demonology” of Israel and anti-Semitism.

“Criticism isn’t anti-Semitism but demonology is, and we do find that’s happening more and more and even here in Ireland and that is cause for concern because we know that’s sometimes the way anti-Semitism starts in other European countries, but so far thankfully we’ve seen absolutely no rise in anti-Semitism,” Mr Cohen added.

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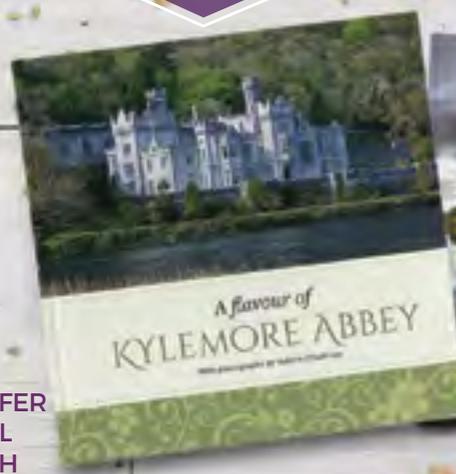
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When justice must be done

Everything must be experienced – and understood – in context. And the context in which I remember the Birmingham bombings – when 21 mostly young people died in two Birmingham pubs targeted by the Provisional IRA in 1974 – is personal. I had just had a baby who wasn't, in the first weeks, very well and was being kept in intensive care.

This makes a new mother feel so vulnerable, and, at the same time, so full of awe and wonder at the miracle of new life. I remember looking at the infant in the hospital cot and thinking of Shakespeare's words: "What a piece of work is man."

Soon afterwards came the news of the Birmingham atrocity. Almost for the first time, the meaning of human life hit home to me: life is so precious, love and care of life matter so much. So awful that people go off and kill other sons and daughters deliberately.

Background

The political background of the Troubles in Northern Ireland is, as everyone knows, complicated. There were many injustices, a pressing need for change, and atrocities on all sides. Activists can sometimes



Mary Kenny



Julie Hambleton, who lost her sister Maxine in the Birmingham bombing in 1974.

feel driven to take up arms. All this is factually part of the story: but sometimes one particular event just becomes a kind of epiphany for us, personally, because it occurs within a particular context. One event can turn around our ideas where many previous facts have been viewed with some detachment.

All through these last 44 years I have hoped to see some kind of justice for the families of

those 21 Birmingham victims, which included two Irish brothers who had arranged to meet one another for a drink that November evening.

It was, of course, appalling that the 'Birmingham Six' were wrongly convicted – due to the incompetence and perhaps prejudices of the West Midlands police – and admirable to campaign

for the correction of that miscarriage of justice. But still, the Birmingham families felt, for many years afterwards that their case for justice had been neglected or ignored. Julie Hambleton, who lost her sister Maxine in the blast, has been the most persistent voice in campaigning for a proper investigation and an answer. Her loving dedication to her sister's memory is deeply affecting.

“Life is so precious, love and care of life matter so much”

And now, this week, an official inquest has at last opened which will examine the circumstances of the bombings – and whether opportunities were missed to halt them. The coroner at Birmingham's Civil Justice Centre, Sir Peter Thornton opened the session by reading out the names of the 21 and asking for a minute's silence to respect the dead – and the bereaved.

This is, surely, the right thing to do.



● The film director Stanley Donen died recently and to mark his passing came a burst of *Singin' in the Rain* – from the movie he directed – over the radio waves. Spontaneously, almost involuntarily, I found myself dancing around the kitchen and joining in, karaoke-style.

Gene Kelly's famous rendering of this wonderful song [pictured] was – and remains – such a pure expression of infectiously musical *joie de vivre* it would be hard not to sing along.

It is optimism in a nutshell – a tuneful, uplifting affirmation of life. "Let the stormy clouds chase/Everyone from the place/C'mon with the rain/I've a smile on my face!"

At a time when gloom looms almost everywhere we look, we need a dose of *Singin' in the Rain* every day.

Perhaps Portugal has learned the hard way

It's unsurprising that Portugal has emerged as the least racist EU society (in a survey about race relations across the EU). Measuring discrimination against immigrants of African heritage, Portugal had a low score of 2%. Finland (14%) and Ireland (13%) regrettably came out with the highest rates.

Portugal has always had a track-record of racial tolerance and integration. Even as colonialists in Mozambique and Brazil the Portuguese inter-married more with host populations than the British, Dutch or Belgians.

History books sometimes castigate

Portugal for its period of dictatorship under Salazar, but they seldom praise Portugal for its practice of racial harmony and genuinely Christian attitudes of integration.

Finland has a tradition of 'Finns first' and for many years it was closed to incomers. Last time I was in Helsinki, our guide expressed satisfaction that the Finnish language was so linguistically isolated it was especially difficult for foreigners to learn – and that deterred incomers, in the first place!

Perhaps others can elucidate why Ireland was so high on the list of this official EU survey ('Being Black in the EU').

NEWS IN BRIEF

Penal Times bishop voted Laois 'all time great'

An 18th-Century bishop has been voted the greatest Laois person of all time.

Bishop Daniel Delany won 89% of the final vote in the *Leinster Express* poll.

Born in 1747, Fr Delaney trained for the priesthood in France where he was ordained in 1770. Returning to Ireland in 1776, he began Sunday schools the help of lay adults. He was ordained a bishop in 1783, becoming Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin in 1786.

To ensure a steady supply of catechists, he started the Brigidine Sisters in 1807 and the Patrician Brothers in 1808. He died in 1814.

Low collections points to disapproval – poll

A narrow majority of voters in a Facebook poll for *The Irish Catholic* believes declining Church collection figures around the country are due to parishioners voting with their wallets rather than simply failing to carry suitable amounts of cash.

At close of polling, 52% of 147 voters said they believed that – leaving aside the effects of smaller congregations – lower collection totals were due to parishioners not contributing due to disagreement with Church teaching or practice, while 48% said those attending Mass were simply not carrying enough cash.

Short film depicts reality of homelessness

A homeless charity has launched a behind-the-scenes short film to show the human reality of Ireland's homeless and addiction crisis this week.

Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) works with people who are homeless, in addiction, or suffering from mental health difficulties. With at least 10,000 people homeless and an ongoing drugs epidemic, the film depicts a front-line organisation responding to some of Ireland's most urgent social problems.

CEO Paula Byrne said: "Our hope for this film is to make their voices heard, so we can deepen understanding of what it means to be in addiction and homeless..."



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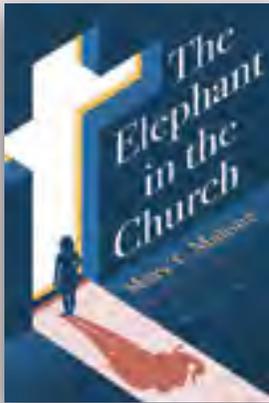
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Vatican must open up justice and resource tribunals



Pope Francis kisses the altar during a Mass with the heads of bishops' conferences from around the world on the last day of the four-day meeting on the protection of minors in the church at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

The recent four-day meeting on child protection in Rome raised very high hopes. It was almost inevitable that some of those hopes would be dashed. The Pope had articulated clearly what he wanted to do. The three themes of responsibility, accountability, and transparency were well chosen – they are key for any organisation seeking to address wrongdoing in its midst – in this case clerical sexual abuse and the failure to deal with it properly.

There already exists an obligation on bishops and religious superiors to investigate allegations of child sexual abuse, and to cooperate with civil (non-Church) authorities. Few countries actually require mandatory reporting of any crime, even murder. In the North, the law requires a person who has information which is not known to law enforcement officers about a crime which has been committed to convey that information to the police. Failure to do so carries a heavy penalty. The Republic, England, Scotland and Wales have no such law.

Legal systems

Every man, woman, priest, bishop, archbishop, cardinal, religious superior in our Church must understand that the first obligation is to report allegations of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults to the statutory authorities, and then to leave individual countries – through their criminal legal systems – to prosecute where it is justified to do so, and

Nuala O'Loan The View



to impose any relevant penalty. There must be full cooperation with the State. Prosecutorial authorities must act properly, treating these cases with the seriousness which is necessary, appropriating the necessary resources to each case.

“Reform must be done with care, to ensure that it is capable of delivering justice transparently”

After those proceedings, or in the absence of such proceedings (for there are still countries which do not prosecute such allegations or which do not have the judicial systems capable of dealing with all the varied cases which present for trial) the local Church must act in accordance with Canon Law. Its systems, too, must be properly resourced.

Little has been published about the working of Church tribunals locally, or of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. It is time for this to change. The evidence is that the CDF is understaffed for the work which it must do, and that the relevant parts of Canon Law require development.

The summit in Rome

represent the victim and the accused, but this is not consistent with modern transparent accountable legal proceedings. It is not calculated to achieve trust in the proceedings.

Justice must be seen to be done in a timely and proper way.

“The first obligation is to report allegations of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults to the statutory authorities”

Surely it is now time for the Holy See to dedicate much increased resources to the work of the CDF, and to bring in many more people to assist in the work. If there is a dearth of sufficient, competent – qualified Canon lawyers – then appropriately-trained civil lawyers should be able to become competent to act with the Canon lawyers. This must be an absolute priority for the Church.

The CDF of the future is pivotal to how the Church delivers accountability with transparency, so that it can discharge fully the responsibilities which derive from its very existence, from its Divine Creator.

If there is a shortage of money to fund the work of the CDF, then Vatican assets must be sold to provide the necessary resources. It will not be easy. Yet, challenging though it may seem, we have to find a way.

was never going to be a meeting which re-drafted Canon Law, that will require rather longer than four days. No matter how urgent the need for such reform it must be done with care, to ensure that it is capable of delivering justice transparently through an accountable system.

The hardest cases are those in which the civil authorities do not prosecute, because the evidence does not meet the required threshold for prosecution. In those cases, the State will not, cannot act.

The Church then has a duty to apply its own law, Canon Law, in an attempt to do what the State has been unable to do: to find a way forward in justice. There should be no cover-ups. There should be no finding of guilt in the absence of proper evidence.

The Church must ensure that both local and CDF proceedings are fair. At present CDF proceedings are private. Whilst testimony may be taken from victims, witnesses and the accused, neither the accused nor the victim has the right to be present at proceedings and to hear what is said and to see their lawyers intervene and challenge, so that they can understand what is happening. It is true that separate Canon lawyers

Catholic recruitment to PSNI 'reversed' says new party

Chai Brady

Ireland's newest political party has called for the return of the 50/50 recruitment policy in the PSNI, saying the drive to attract Catholics has "reversed".

Currently only one in five Catholics are successful in merit-based competitions and over 80% of officers above superintendent rank are Protestant.

This comes as the Ulster Unionists rejected calls for its return, with the DUP dubbing the quota system "institutionalised sectarian discrimination".

The policy ended in 2011. Former Sinn Féin TD Peadar Tóibín, who left and established his own party Aontú, said that some within the Catholic community "expect that that rate could drop to 25% due to a Catholic reluctance to sign up".

History

"Due to the history of the North of Ireland, policing has been an extremely controversial issue. Many within the nationalist community still see policing in this manner," Mr Tóibín said.

"PSNI links to MI5 do not help matters in this regard.

Many amongst the nationalist communities are concerned with the manner in which stop and search operations and house searches are carried out. The resolution of these issues is important steps in building confidence."

Government Workforce Composition Statistics for this month, show less than a third (32%) of current officers come from a Catholic background. Mr Tóibín said: "The drive to attract more Catholics into the PSNI has lost momentum, and may even have reversed."

His party are calling for all links with British intelligence organisations to be brought

fully to an end, saying this would be of significant benefit to more representative recruitment proportions in the police force, with Mr Tóibín saying: "Aontú seeks that there is affirmative action at recruitment in the interim period."

Criminals

He added that integrating the PSNI with An Garda Síochána "would positively encourage recruitment from the nationalist community" and that disjointed police forces across Ireland "only benefit criminals".

Faith schools urged to engage in climate strike

Chai Brady

Catholic schools have a responsibility to empower pupils with the confidence to get involved in climate action, according to a Dublin teacher involved in an upcoming 'climate strike'.

Thousands of children across Ireland will be skipping school on Friday, March 15, as part of a global day of action pressuring governments to act against climate change.

Peter Fitzpatrick from St Joseph's College in Lucan says school management fully supports the initiative, and with permission slips signed by parents, the students are now gearing up to strike outside Leinster house.

The business, accounting, economics and LCVP teacher said he is encouraging other schools to get involved. "As a teacher it is wonderful to see the students enthusiastic and engaged with real world issues that will impact their future," he said.

"As a Catholic school it is vitally important that we encourage students to look after the planet that we have been given."

Europe has been flooded by the new youth movement popularised by Greta Thunberg (16), a Swedish activist who made waves after speaking at the UN Climate Change COP24 conference, and staged a lone climate action protest at the Swedish parliament during school hours.

Protection

Mr Fitzpatrick said his school has always been "very proactive" in relation to the environment with students taking a lead role in initiatives such as protecting the Irish Bogslands, The Bees Need Trees, or the Green Schools Committee.

He advises contacting schoolstrike4climateireland@gmail.com or visiting the Facebook page [SchoolStrike-4ClimateIreland](https://www.facebook.com/SchoolStrike-4ClimateIreland) for more information.

Christian theology and bearing witness could help eating disorder sufferers

Staff reporter

Christian communities and the theology of bearing witness may help those struggling with eating disorders, an Irish academic has said.

With Eating Disorder Awareness Week taking place from February 25 to March 3, Assistant Professor of Theological Ethics in Trinity's Loyola

Institute Jacob Erickson said: "Quite oftentimes with eating disorders there's so much stigma and shame both self-imposed and culturally that it's really difficult for people to tell their own stories. "Christian theology I think has this tremendous resources in the language of bearing witness to stories and hearing those stories."

Getting help from a community

that's "bigger than yourself" may be intimidating, but could also be helpful he added.

"Somehow talking more openly about that and being welcoming to having those conversations and even just talking about the ways in which Christianity affirms bodiliness, it helps people feel more comfortable in telling their stories honestly."

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How medicine became a modern quasi-religion

It's time to place realistic expectations on doctors and the health system, writes **David Quinn**

The Irish health budget comes to some €17 billion per annum. That is an astounding sum of money. We believe we have an underfunded health system, but actually, compared with the size of our population, we spend more on health than most industrialised countries. This is despite the fact that our population is younger on average as well.

Very few people seem to know this and so the demand is for ever more spending. The reality is that we often seem to receive poor value for money. Look at the huge cost-overrun for the planned new National Children's Hospital, for example.

But another part of the problem, and this is not limited to Ireland by any means, is the huge expectation we place upon the health system. We expect it to cure us of all our ills, and today, not tomorrow.

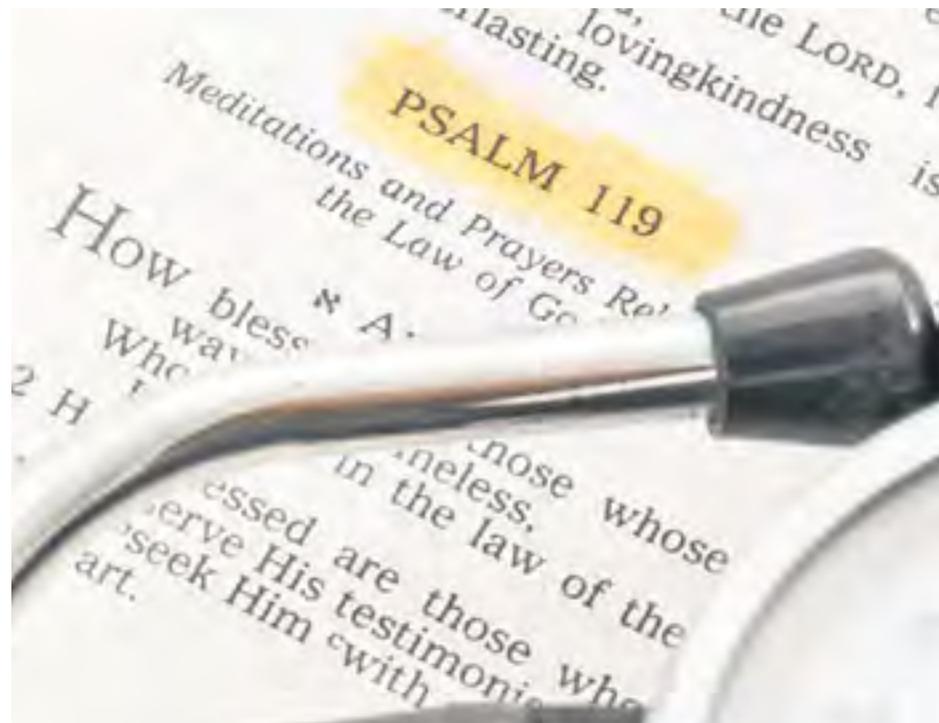
The World Health Organisation (WHO) contributes to this sort of hyper-expectation. Its definition of health is incredibly all-encompassing. It describes health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Frankly, this is both utopian and quasi-religious. In fact, few religions have ever promised such a state of mind in the here and now. What is being described is actually the perfect peace found only in Heaven or in brief, fleeting moments in this life.

Attention

In his new book, *Can Medicine Be Cured?*, Seamus O'Mahony, a Cork-based doctor devotes a lot of attention to the inflated expectations we place on medicine.

Towards the end of his book, he drily observes:



"Neither religion nor philosophy claims that life should be happy, but the WHO does."

He points out that more than 40 years ago, in 1975, Dr Halfdan Mahler, then director-general of the WHO, promised health for all by 2000. That is to say, 19 years ago we should have already reached "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being".

Some of the biggest advances in health didn't come from doctors at all, but from engineers"

Let's be clear: this is never going to happen so long as we are actually human beings. In *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley imagines a future in which we are all genetically bred and socially conditioned in order to be happy and content with whatever role in life our betters have assigned to us. Whenever we are feeling low, we can take a drug called Soma which will pick us up again.

Huxley's imagined world is completely totalitarian and entails becoming less than fully human. This is the only way suffering can be finally eradicated.

Short of going down this road of transhuman humans (and who can rule anything out these days?), there is no possibility of the WHO's vision being achieved, but along the way its mentality can actually add to the sum

total of human misery as all utopian schemes do.

Utopian schemes always promise perfection, but humans are imperfectible. Communism is the classic example of a utopian vision that went very badly wrong.

The WHO and its vision cannot go off the rails like that, but in promising happiness at the level it has in mind, it can only end up tormenting us because the very attempt to achieve total happiness always means it is out of reach. You will always fall short and will berate yourself or someone else for the failure.

Dr O'Mahony says that medicine did, in fact, have a golden age, from roughly the 1930s until the 1980s. In this 50-year timespan, scientists developed numerous vaccines and anti-biotics that cured or kept at bay many of the dread diseases that have haunted us for aeons, such as cholera, TB, smallpox, typhoid and so on.

But he also points out that some of the biggest advances in health didn't come from doctors at all, but from engineers and others who gave us good housing, clean water and improved nutrition. Countless numbers of people have died down the centuries from infected water, poor nutrition that depletes the immune system, and living close to each other in cold, damp and unhygienic conditions.

O'Mahony now believes we have reached the point of diminishing returns with medicine. Gigantic

invested in them.

He says that a great deal of this money could instead be put into (say) palliative care which accepts the inevitability of death but is dedicated to ensuring we die in as much comfort and with as much dignity as possible.

"We now have a view of public health that will place endless demands on it"

Basically, we now have a view of public health that will place endless demands on it, and which can never actually be met, so causing more anger and resentment and yet more public money being spent that could be better used elsewhere. It is a vicious circle.

Instead, we need to adjust our expectations of medicine, and of life as well. Yes, the job of medicine is to try and heal us, and where

that can't be done, manage our ailments as best it can, and then offer us comfort-care at the end of life.

But it cannot ever relieve us of all suffering and misery. This is built-into the human condition which is why all of the great religions and philosophies tell us to temper our expectations and limit what we can expect of life. We should never expect perfection.

Religion is often accused of offering 'pie-in-the-sky', but arguably the wrong view of medicine does the exact same thing. The pie will always be out of reach, but the promise that one day we will have our pie (and eat it) guarantees we will never have the perfect peace and health it promises.

The message of Dr O'Mahony's book is, essentially, that we need to place realistic expectations on doctors and the health system, and doctors in turn need to be realistic about what they can do for us.

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A seismic shift...but concrete

As a decisive move towards a unified approach to the cancer of abuse, Rome's unprecedented summit is a step forward, but the proof will be in the detail, writes **Michael Kelly**



In his closing remarks to the summit on the protection of minors at the weekend, Pope Francis summoned the bishops and religious superiors with somewhat of a battle cry. The time has come, the Pontiff said, for an "all-out battle" against the abuse, erasing this abominable crime from the face of the earth.

Since the problem is present on every continent, the Pope said he called leaders of the world's bishops and religious superiors to Rome because "I wanted us to face it together in a co-responsible and collegial way", he said.

"We listened to the voice of victims, we prayed and asked for forgiveness from God and the people hurt, we took stock of our responsibility, and our duty to bring justice through truth and to radically reject every form" of sexual abuse and the abuse of power and conscience, he said.

"We want every activity and every place in the Church to be completely safe for minors," he said, which means taking every possible measure so that such crimes never happen again.

If the main purpose of the summit was to ensure that every part of the Church is on the same page on the issue of abuse, it seems safe to cautiously hail the gathering as a success. Some victims and survivors expressed disappointment

over what they perceived as a lack of concrete action, but organisers were keen to ask people to wait just a little bit longer for such progress.

What Francis did make clear is that never again will a religious leader be able to say they were unaware of the issue of abuse. Speaking in the Sala Regia, the Pope told some 190 cardinals, bishops and religious superiors from around the world, "the time has come, then, to work together to eradicate this evil from the body of our humanity by adopting every necessary measure already in force on the international level and ecclesial levels".

"I make a heartfelt appeal for an all-out battle against the abuse of minors both sexually and in other areas, on the part of all authorities and individuals, for we are dealing with abominable crimes that must be erased from the face of the earth," he said.

Concrete actions

Fr Federico Lombardi, who was moderator of the four-day gathering told reporters after the conclusion that the work to ensure that laws and concrete actions are in place is just beginning.

According to Fr Lombardi, the Pope will soon publish a new set of laws and guidelines concerning child protection for Vatican City State.

The measures, he said, will be issued 'motu proprio',



on the Pope's own accord, and will be "presented and published in the near future".

Another initiative that will be available in "a few

weeks or a month or two" is a handbook or *vademecum* for bishops, prepared by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Fr Lombardi insisted that the handbook will list a set of guidelines and "will help bishops around the world clearly understand their

Pope Francis

1. To prepare a practical handbook indicating the steps to be taken by authorities at key moments when a case emerges.
2. To equip oneself with listening structures that include trained and expert people who can initially discern the cases of the alleged victims.
3. Establish the criteria for the direct involvement of the bishop or of the religious superior.
4. Implement shared procedures for the examination of the charges, the protection of the victims and the right of defence of the accused.
5. Inform the civil authorities and the higher ecclesiastical authorities in compliance with civil and canonical norms.
6. Make a periodic review of protocols and norms to safeguard a protected environment for minors in all pastoral structures: protocols and norms based on the integrated principles of justice and charity so that the action of the Church in this matter is in conformity with her mission.
7. Establish specific protocols for handling accusations against bishops.
8. Accompany, protect and treat victims, offering them all the necessary support for a complete recovery.
9. Increase awareness of the causes and consequences of sexual abuse through ongoing formation initiatives of bishops, religious superiors,

duties and tasks" when handling cases of abuse. He said the Pope also wants to amend the current law concerning the crime of a cleric acquir-



Valentina Alazraki.

Bishops must see press 'as allies not enemies'

Junno Arocho Esteves

If they are truly serious about fighting clerical sex abuse, bishops must join forces with journalists and not view them as enemies plotting against the Catholic Church, Mexican journalist Valentina Alazraki said.

Ms Alazraki, who has covered the Vatican for over four decades, told bishops at the Vatican summit on abuse that journalists can help them root out the "rotten apples" and to overcome resistance in order to separate them from the healthy

ones".

"But if you do not decide in a radical way to be on the side of the children, mothers, families, civil society, you are right to be afraid of us, because we journalists - who seek the common good - will be your worst enemies," she warned.

The veteran journalist was invited to speak at the summit about the importance of transparency with journalists and media outlets.

Ms Alazraki, who began covering the Vatican in the final years of St Paul VI's pontificate, said Church leaders too often blamed

journalists' coverage of the abuse scandal as a plot "to put an end to this institution".

"If the one stealing is a police officer it seems more serious to us"

"We journalists know that there are reporters who are more thorough than others and that there are media outlets more or less dependent on political, ideological or economic interests," she said. "But I believe that in no case can the mass media be blamed for having

uncovered or reported on abuses."

Recalling the words of Pope Benedict XVI, Ms Alazraki told bishops that clerical sex abuse is neither a rumour or a gossip but a crime that "comes not from external enemies but arises from sins within" the Church.

Addressing the accusation that reporters are often harsher on the Church than on other institutions when it comes to sex abuse, the Mexican journalist said that is natural "by virtue of your moral role".

"Stealing, for example, is wrong, but if the one stealing is a police

action is the next step

proposed 21 'reflection points' for the key meeting



Archbishop Eamon Martin (left) of Armagh talks with Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster during the third day of the meeting on the protection of minors in the church at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

clerics and pastoral workers.

10. Prepare pathways of pastoral care for communities injured by abuses and penitential and recovery routes for the perpetrators.

11. To consolidate the collaboration with all people of good will and with the operators of mass media in order to recognise and discern real cases from false ones and accusations of slander, avoiding rancour and insinuations, rumours and

defamation (cf. Pope Francis' address to the Roman Curia, 21 December 2018).

12. To raise the minimum age for marriage to 16 years.

13. Establish provisions that regulate and facilitate the participation of lay experts in investigations and in the different degrees of judgment of canonical processes concerning sexual and / or power abuse.

14. The right to defence: the principle of natural and

canon law of presumption of innocence must also be safeguarded until the guilt of the accused is proven. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent the lists of the accused being published, even by the dioceses, before the preliminary investigation and the definitive condemnation.

15. Observe the traditional principle of proportionality of punishment with respect to the crime committed. To decide that priests and

bishops guilty of sexual abuse of minors leave the public ministry.

16. Introduce rules concerning seminarians and candidates for the priesthood or religious life. Be sure that there are programmes of initial and ongoing formation to help them develop their human, spiritual and psychosexual maturity, as well as their interpersonal relationships and their behaviour.

17. Be sure to have

psychological evaluations by qualified and accredited experts for candidates for the priesthood and consecrated life.

18. Establish norms governing the transfer of a seminarian or religious aspirant from one seminary to another; as well as a priest or religious from one diocese or congregation to another.

19. Formulate mandatory codes of conduct for all clerics, religious, service personnel and volunteers to outline appropriate boundaries in personal relationships. Be specific about the necessary requirements for staff and volunteers and check their criminal record.

20. Explain all information and data on the dangers of abuse and its effects, how to recognise signs of abuse and how to report suspected sexual abuse. All this must take place in collaboration with parents, teachers, professionals and civil authorities.

21. Where it has not yet been in place, establish a group easily accessible for victims who want to report any crimes. Such an organisation should have a certain autonomy with respect to the local ecclesiastical authority and include expert persons (clerics and laity) who know how to express the Church's attention to those who have been offended by improper attitudes on the part of clerics.

known as 'zero tolerance'.

He insisted that the "default position" should be that abusive priests "will not minister in any capacity, but also that you will be monitored very closely, both in the Church and by civil authorities."

"In the case of someone who has abused a child, I don't think there's any way they can return to pastoral ministry," according to Archbishop Eamon.

He said: "I think there is now a very strong realisation of the heinous nature of the sinful and criminal act" of abuse.

“All representatives at the summit must be ‘committed to go home with actions’”

He said that he felt there was a very clear sense at the gathering that transparency was key to restoring confidence. "Secrecy must go out the window," when it comes to the abuse of children, he said. "Secrecy has been one of the root causes of the problem we are in today."

He said that all representatives at the summit must be "committed to go home with actions," and he said for him, the issue of accountability would serve as his homework, particularly when it comes to overseeing bishops.

He also said that the task of protecting children must be first and foremost a local response. "I'm always frightened of the note that safeguarding can be commanded from Rome...really, safeguarding happens on the ground," he said, adding that the Holy See must also evidence a "collective commitment to accountability," as well.

"I think it's very important that we see this issue of accountability at all levels," he added.

ing, possessing or distributing pornographic images of minors by extending the age from 14 years old to include young people under the age of 18.

Lastly, Pope Francis has also expressed his intention to establish task forces "made up of competent persons" that will assist dioceses and epis-

copal conferences "that find it difficult to confront the problems and produce initiatives for the protection of minors," especially when they lack the

needed resources and skilled personnel.

According to Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, the summit showed that the

universal Church is moving "much closer" to a worldwide policy of permanently removing priests from ministry after a single case of abuse – often

and in the future they must actively seek out journalists

officer it seems more serious to us, because it is the opposite of what he or she should do, which is to protect the community from thieves," she explained. "If doctors or nurses poison their patients rather than take care of them, the act draws even more of our attention because it goes against their ethics, their professional code."

Corrupt communication

She also warned bishops on the dangers of concealing the truth, citing the case of Marcial Maciel, the founder of the Legionaries

of Christ, as the Church's "most emblematic case of unhealthy, corrupt communication".

The case, she said, involved not only ignorance, lack of preparation and disbelief on the part of Church officials, but also corruption.

"Behind the silence, the lack of healthy, transparent communication, quite often there is not only the fear of scandal, concern for the institution's good name, but also money, compensation, gifts, construction permits for schools and universities perhaps in areas where construction was not permitted," she said. "I am speaking of

what I have seen and thoroughly investigated."

“The Pope has told us that he meets survivors regularly, at Santa Marta, that he considers them one of his priorities”

Journalists, she said, do not expect bishops to inform them of every accusation against a priest. Nevertheless, information pertaining to priests that have abused should be released as

quickly as possible and "with clarity".

Offering advice to the bishops on how they can foster transparency when communicating, Ms Alazraki stressed the need for bishops to meet with survivors which helps them not only in confronting the issue of abuse but "also in the way in which you communicate and resolve it."

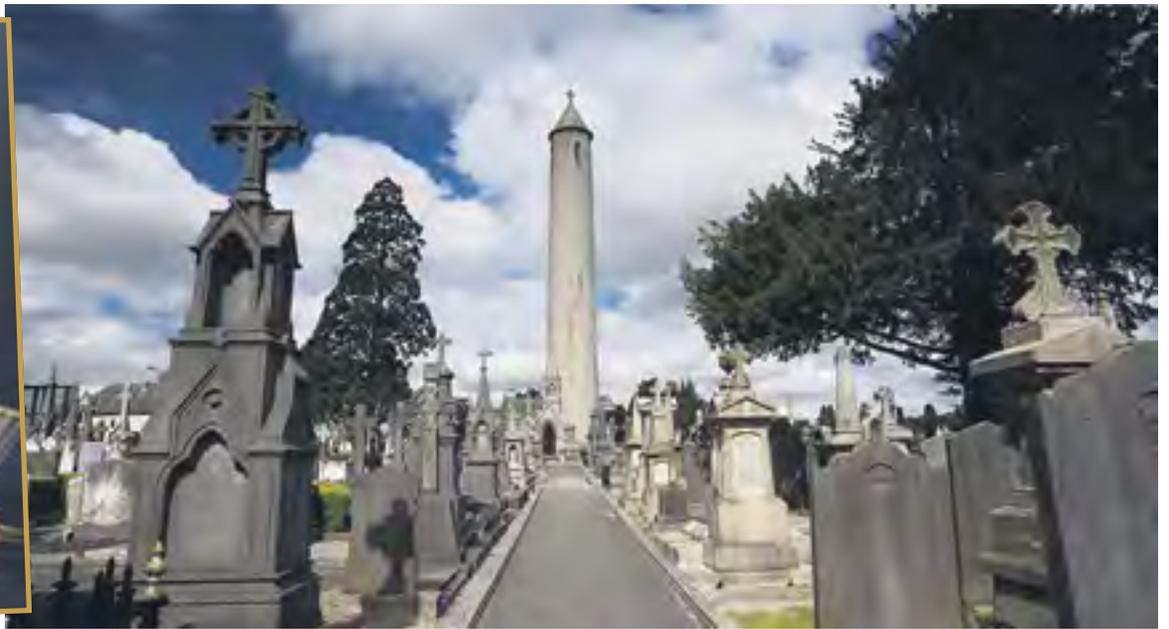
"The Pope has told us that he meets them regularly, at Santa Marta, that he considers them one of his priorities," she said. "You should do the same; I do not

believe you have less time than the Pope."

Open communication with journalists and media outlets will be an opportunity for the Church to take the initiative in denouncing abuses and will allow the bishops "to play offense and not defence," Ms Alazraki said.

"I hope that after this meeting you will return home and not avoid us, but instead seek us out," she said. "That you will return to your dioceses thinking that we are not vicious wolves, but, on the contrary, that we can join our forces against the real wolves."

Too expensive to die?



Everyone has heard the expression that “nothing in life is free”, but as it turns out, even death can be a pricey affair. With the costs of some funerals toppling into the tens of thousands, it's no wonder that life expectancy is increasing, in an avid but ultimately futile bid to avoid the expense of dying.

Death is a reality that everyone faces, but while we all die, it's rare to be in a situation where we are arranging a funeral – this prospect only comes around following the death of a closed loved one like a family member, or perhaps, a friend. Given the infrequent nature of owning responsibility for organising a burial, learning about the costs of funerals can be a gut-wrenching experience.

Basic cost

A basic Irish funeral can range from anywhere between €2,950 to €7,500, excluding burial plot, and according to insurance group Royal London, the average funeral in Belfast costs approximately £3,000. It can be an overwhelming time trying to juggle the cost of a funeral while also grieving the loss of a loved one, so it's helpful to become aware of the price of funerals now rather than learning about it during the unstable mourning period.

For former Fine Gael MEP Gay Mitchell, the most cost-efficient way of planning a funeral is to explore multiple arrangement options before

Colm Fitzpatrick explores the price of Irish funerals and how to curb the costs



honing in on a final decision. Over the past few decades, he has been highlighting the significant costs of funerals in Ireland in an attempt to make them more affordable.

“The thing has changed quite a bit. But, when I was campaigning about it, there were very few new entrants to the market – now this goes way back; I was canvassing about this in the 1980's and 1990's. The problem was that there was very little competition at the time, it's a bit improved now,” Mr Mitchell told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that it was often the case that apparently independent funeral directories were in common ownership, leading to a false sense of competition.

This lack of rivalry between businesses, he says, meant some undertakers would sign people into funeral deals which they would have serious difficulty in paying off.

While this may have been one possible reason for the expense of funerals in the past, Mr Mitchell says that nowadays there are plenty of directors, leading to better, more competitive rates. Indeed, a quick glance of the Irish Association of Funeral Directors webpage shows countless independent funeral businesses operating throughout Ireland.

“There is plenty of competition

and people tend to use that now and they'll ring around looking for the best price they can get for the funeral arrangements they're looking for,” says Jonathan Stafford, of the well-known firm Staffords, which has been serving the Dublin community for the last four generations. This is especially the case, he points out, for prospective customers who have no loyalty to a particular director and are trying to vie for the best price.

“To say that everyone can afford to pay for a funeral with ease would grossly caricature the reality of the situation”

While the accusation is made that some funeral directors may charge customers more than they can afford, Mr Stafford says that it's not in the interest of an undertaker to have clients overspend, because they simply won't be able to pay it back.

“To be honest, that's a scenario we would like to hear more of, not that they don't have any money, but the fact that they're very up front with us. And the reason for that is that you don't have to spend a fortune to have a very dignified

and high-quality funeral.

“Some people have the opposite approach, where they will come in, and in their mind, they want to give their mother, father, loved one, whatever, the funeral they think they deserve and, in their mind, that's spending the most amount of money, but they don't always necessarily have that to spend,” Mr Stafford explains.

One reason, then, why prices now vary in extremity is because of the additions that customers might ask for or be persuaded into purchasing. Individual funeral arrangements vary widely and depend on factors like where the funeral is taking place, the type of coffin you choose, and whether or not you intend to hire funeral cars. Combined with other provisions like church offerings, music at the ceremony, and catering, the costs soon add up.

Needs

Most customers are able to find a suitable funeral director to accommodate their needs. Firms usually offer a low-cost dignified funeral, with problems only beginning to arise when clients want more than they can afford. For Mr Stafford, there is no such thing as a “normal funeral”, as the service depends entirely on the desires of the clientele.

“People sometimes have the idea of a normal funeral, there is no such thing because every funeral is different because it would depend on whether the person is going directly to the crematorium without a church service and if there are limousines or not...,” he says.

The role of the funeral director is not to exploit customers, but

to advise them accordingly about what best suits, and try to keep the costs down if that's a sentiment they've expressed.

“We will work with a family, in that we are not looking for payment at any particular time,” Mr Stafford explains, pointing out that some families choose to use a direct debit system where payments are made every month.

“We don't say to the family ‘we have to be paid in 30 days’. We talk to the family and see what works for them, how can we best serve them, and then how can we support them after the funeral has taken place.”

* * * * *

However, to say that everyone can afford to pay for a funeral with ease would grossly caricature the reality of the situation. In fact, thousands of people rely on Government aid to help curb the cost of funeral expenses yearly.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection told this newspaper that it provided some 2,900 exceptional needs payment (ENP) in assistance with funerals and burials, at a cost of €5.46 million in 2018, an increase from 2017 where there were some 2,000 of these ENPs at a cost of €5.07 million.

This one-off payment can help with funeral costs if you are on a low income. Each case is decided on its merits and the Community Welfare Service prefers if you apply before the funeral takes place, but in practice, most people apply afterwards.

While bursaries like these go a long way in helping alleviate some of the financial pressures of funeral arrangements, there might still

“Most customers are able to find a suitable funeral director to accommodate their needs. Firms usually offer a low-cost dignified funeral, with problems only beginning to arise when clients want more than they can afford”

be a hefty bill at the end after the funeral is done and dusted. This is usually a result of, not funeral directors quoting too high a price for their service, but the inordinate expense of burial plots.

The cost of plots varies depending on location and availability, with the burial ground becoming much more accessible and affordable in rural areas rather than in the city. For example, a plot in Glasnevin cemetery can reach heights of €16,000 whereas in Clare or Wexford, plots average out at around €600.

"If you look at the costs of funerals in adjacent counties, they are just so much cheaper than in Dublin, but some of that is to do with the fact that opening up a grave is so expensive and there aren't many graveyards available in Dublin. That's one of the difficulties," said Mr Mitchell, adding that he even tried to persuade the archdiocese of Dublin to open a diocesan graveyard for people who were involved in their parish.

“I would say to people that if you have a funeral to arrange, get somebody who is detached and who is not as emotionally involved who will talk to the family about what they need”

Purchasing a burial plot is where most people run into problems, and oftentimes the price of this forces clients to take another option. Rather than be buried bodily, some opt for cremation which radically



cuts the price of a funeral, whereas others choose to be buried in a 'gone over' grave, which has the remains of someone else.

With plenty of options and different services available, Mr Mitchell says that during this time, it's vital not to be taken advantage of, and carefully plan your moves.

"My view of it is this – if you want to spend €20,000 or €25,000 or whatever, on your

funeral and somebody's funeral that's your business and you're quite entitled to do it. But I don't think you should be led to the most expensive funeral; options should be explained to you, the implications of what your signing up to should be explained to you because the guy who sits down beside you might have a very nice bedside manner, and would be very sympathetic and very empathetic

but the bill will come in," Mr Mitchell explains, adding that in fairness, many funeral directors tailor their costs to a modest price.

On top of this advice, he recommends that a third-party deal with funeral arrangements as they are much more detached from the bereavement process and so more likely to make lucid decisions.

"The most important thing about a funeral is to get somebody

else to arrange it. If you have somebody near to you who dies, always get someone you trust but who is a little bit detached, a family friend, maybe a brother in law, or something like that, because what happens with people is that they want to give 'the best' to their loved one, and they don't realise that you can give them the best without having to go for five star costs," he says.

"So, I would say to people that if you have a funeral to arrange, get somebody who is detached and who is not as emotionally involved who will talk to the family about what they need and suggest to them how to do that and then maybe asked one or two undertakers, but make sure they are independent."

* * * * *

With more demand for burial plots in city areas, Mr Mitchell believes that it's time we reimagine what it means to grieve and to reconsider what a graveyard is and could be.

"The other thing I had in mind, the city could plan a new park or the county plan a new park that would have as part of it a new graveyard, and a sort of a place of respectful meditation," he says, suggesting that the headstones could be laid flat and visitors could have a cup of tea, pray and talk to the departed one.

"Graveyards could become sort of meditative parks, so that you could develop a new park and have a graveyard as part of it and it could be very respectfully incorporated."



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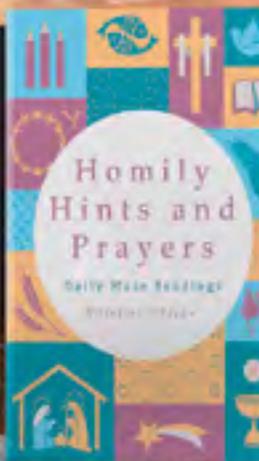
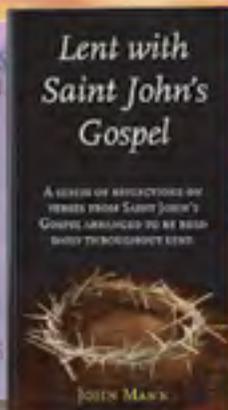
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Chai Brady discusses addiction, mental health, evil spirits and exorcism with Fr Pat Collins

“Who do you think you are, do you think you have any control over me?”

Those were the demonic words spoken by a woman in a “gruff raspy voice” alien to her normal inflection, according to Ireland’s most renowned exorcist when he had started praying to expel an evil spirit from her body.

Fr Pat Collins says he has had several encounters with entities many would believe to be the works of superstition or filmmakers’ imaginations.

Despite disbelief and even outrage from many, the priest has held to his guns about the increasing need for exorcism and what’s known as ‘deliverance ministry’ in Ireland, so much so that he has started training teams of people from around Ireland to combat evil spirits.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* Fr Pat said: “This area has been totally neglected. I’ve been appealing for years to the bishops to really take this seriously because there’s a tsunami of need emerging and there are very few people who are competent to respond to that and I think it’s so unfair for the people suffering.”

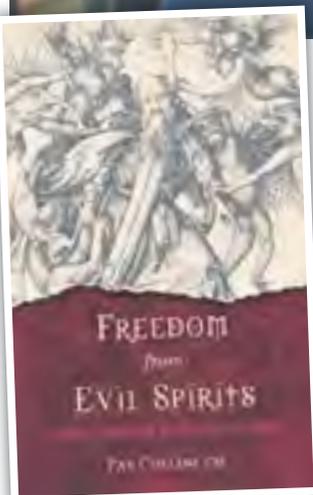
“I don’t know how many official exorcists there are in the country, maybe two or three, every diocese should have one. In fact, I think every diocese should have two or three and furthermore I think they should be trained, you’re not going to be let loose as a counsellor or a therapist, or any other form of ministry, unless you’ve got thorough training, unless there are protocols and so on.”

There are many ways to leave yourself open to oppression by evil spirits, he says, and because of “ignorance really, or naivety” people are being infected.

Inundated with calls, almost two or three a day, the



Where angels fear to tread



priest often comes into contact with people who have dabbled in the occult. Many have used Ouija boards, took part in a séance or even went to fortune tellers, apparently all of which “open the door to the dark side”.

He recalls one situation in which a woman who was “really badly afflicted” called him requesting help. Asking if she had done anything unusual recently, the woman replied she’d gone to a workshop about the lost city of Atlantis and had prayed to the ‘Goddess of Atlantis’.

This particular myth was taken up by some of the Nazis who believed the German

people, the ‘Aryan’ race, were descendants from the population of Atlantis.

He told her: “In praying to that God you are making a contract to a false god and the evil spirits operate through those things, and that’s why you’ve got your problems.”

Fr Pat added that this was like going into a village where there’s Ebola, the fact a person may be unaware they could contract it doesn’t mean they won’t.

Those affected by evil spirits generally show several symptoms, he says, they may know a person’s past and be able to read minds. This can be counteracted if the exorcist or deliverance minister goes to Confession beforehand, “because strangely enough the devil can’t quote anything that’s been forgiven in the Sacrament”.

“Sometimes they will have unnatural strength physically and they might speak in languages they don’t know. The most common is the strange voice. Frothing at the mouth, and kind of violent, so sometimes you have to have some-one restrain the person.”

“I remember a woman who was very agitated physically and her husband would restrain her when we were doing the prayer,” Fr Pat says.

Over time he realised he should never pray alone and should always have a team with him. Apparently, if he is ministering to a woman, he would bring a woman with him, which would be part of protocols.

This is due to an idea in psychotherapy and psychiatry called transference and counter-transference, which

Fr Pat says is “an unconscious thing between a male and a female, instead of lover symbolism, man-woman, if I as a man bring in a woman it’s mother-father symbolism, and it changes it completely and that transference is much less likely”.

“Sometimes they will have unnatural strength physically and they might speak in languages they don’t know. The most common is the strange voice”

There are many people, including priests and nuns he says, that see themselves as practicing Catholics but try and unite bits and pieces from pagan religions, esoteric

philosophy and more and mix it in with Christian beliefs.

Fr Pat says: “They feel it’s Christian because they’re using Christian terminology, like Reiki would be an example, in fact the origin of these things aren’t Christian at all.

“I have found in doing this, although as I say they’re well intentioned, often they’re going where angels would fear to tread.”

“So, what I would train people to do now if they get someone coming to them asking for help, the first thing you do is give them quite a long questionnaire, and they have to give hopefully honest answers to all the questions, and it’s asking about all these things,” says Fr Pat.

Twenty-five people from across Ireland recently attended a 13-week course on deliverance ministry in Dub-

“People feel it’s Christian because they’re using Christian terminology, like Reiki would be an example, in fact the origin of these things aren’t Christian at all”

“I’ve had a great life and I’ve really enjoyed it and fortunately I’ve had tolerant superiors who let me follow where I think the Spirit is leading and it’s led me into all these strange areas and I am so grateful”

spirits but aren’t possessed by them, that’s the area that I think some bishops don’t appreciate the distinction, that they see exorcism only as solemn exorcism,” he says.

“And then they’d say there’s very little demand for that, but there’s a huge demand for deliverance and you’re not satisfying that need at all, you’re not training anyone to deal with it and lay people are able to do that kind of ministry, it’s part of our baptismal inheritance: that we have a right to pray against evil spirits.”

Fr Pat’s course can only cater for about 25 people, and with another session taking place in August he says, “we’ll keep doing it year by year and try and satisfy the growing demand for training”. He adds there will be a one-week crash course in Cork next year, despite its brevity he says it’s “better than nothing”.

Many viewers would have seen Fr Pat on the *Late Late Show* on February 15, although wanting to highlight the importance of the issue, he says for him it was like “going to crucifixion”.

“I know I’ll be inundated as I’m the only one in the country who can deal with all these problems and of course it’s totally beyond my competence.”

Although he is Ireland’s most well-known exorcist, Fr Pat admits that he is no expert on the subject. Years ago, he believed the sense of the supernatural was dying in the Western world, and wondered how he could argue against it, so he focused on: does the Devil exist? Writing about it from a theological point of view he saw there was a strong response.

“The Devil can get a foothold in a person through addiction and all its consequences, because it will lead to an awful lot of irresponsible behaviour”

Released this month, *Freedom from Evil Spirits: Released from Fear, Addiction and the Devil* is his 25th book, but he began writing about the subject long before this, and people were drawn to him for support.

“So then people thought I must be an exorcist so they

would ask me to pray for them and very reluctantly I got into doing that, then bishops would call me and I would deal with more difficult cases,” he says.

“Bit by bit my theoretical knowledge and my practical knowledge grew, now if someone said to me: do you see yourself as an exorcist? I would emphatically say no, that’s not how I see myself. There are many things I am that I would identify with, evangelist would be the main one, a teacher, writer.”

Quoting Mark 16:17-18 in which Jesus says to his apostles “these are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils”, Fr Pat says the modern-day Church has almost totally abandoned the notion of exorcism despite its significance in the Gospels.

Fr Pat admits he needs to do more training himself and that his knowledge of spirituality and psychology – as well as practical circumstances – helped him learn on the job.

Assembling a crack team of exorcists and deliverance ministers is one of his future goals. “There’s a course on in Rome that lasts three weeks, you would never get a counselling qualification in three weeks,” he says.

“So, what I’m going to try and do is develop a holistic team with people who are good at psychology, psychotherapy and ministering to people with the power of the Holy Spirit and initiate training in Ireland.”

One of the major parts of deliverance from evil spirits is assessing whether the issue is purely psychological, whether there’s an identifiable mental health problem, Fr Pat says, “I think in almost the majority of cases it is psychological and praying against evil spirits won’t be appropriate”.

“Sometimes, yes there will be psychological problems there, but that’s not all that’s there; there’s also spiritual oppression. Indeed, I’ve found that if a person needs psychotherapy it usually will get nowhere until you deal with the spiritual oppression, you’ve to get rid of the spirits first and then send people for psychotherapy.”

Many of these issues are dealt with in his book, which not only focuses on freedom from oppression by evil spirits, but extensively looks at addiction and mental health issues.

Not all fears are related to the



devil, neither is addiction as it’s a form of illness, he says, but they can leave you very vulnerable to the influence of evil spirits and suppress a person’s freedom. The purpose of the Good News is to emancipate people from whatever oppresses them.

“The devil can get a foothold in a person through addiction and all its consequences, because it will lead to an awful lot of irresponsible behaviour, the devil can exploit that,” Fr Pat explains.

“An analogy would be that stress can make you more vulnerable to illness, but if you ask the question ‘is the stress causing the illness?’, in most cases it’s not, but it has an indirect causation. It’s lowering the efficiency of your immune system and that’s leaving you more vulnerable to illness. So, it’s not directly causing it, but it’s certainly indirectly causing it or influencing it.”

Self-acceptance

Mentioning one of the theories propagated by renowned psychologist Carl Jung, and echoed by many psychologists, Fr Pat says the basic problem with human beings is a lack of self-acceptance.

“Consequently, there’s a lack of self-esteem, some people have said that’s a toothache of the heart, and that

it’s very painful emotionally because it will lead you to be insecure, anxious, lacking in confidence, not feeling that you belong fully.”

This leads to reliance on alcohol and other drugs to assuage an inner pain, he says, but once it becomes a problem in itself and there’s a loss of control it leads to feelings of shame and more which end up compounding the issue.

In a large section of the book, Fr Pat looks at the Christian origins of AA and how these steps successfully lead to freedom from addiction.

He also discusses mental health and his own anxiety which he is now able to manage, saying that he’s a “different person today”.

Looking into the future of Ireland, Fr Pat says that an “infallible prediction” for him is that the more the sense of absolute meaning declines in society, the greater there will be a tendency to addiction, mental ill health and suicide.

“Because people have lost sense of the ‘why’ of living, Carl Jung made a very interesting point, he never came across a single person who was neurotic – of course he would have thought every person who was addicted was neurotic – who was able to recover until they got an experiential sense of absolute

meaning,” he says.

Fr Pat comes from Dublin and it was at a young age he felt the “absoluteness of God”, and knew He would make absolute demands of him.

It was when he was passing through Kinsale while hiking across Ireland – his friends had gone to the cinema and he was writing a letter to his parents sitting on a wall overlooking the sea – that he looked out at the town of Kinsale and saw the world, and for him the sea became symbolic of the absoluteness of God. “I thought I’m caught between the world and the absolute, which way do I go? It has to be the absolute,” he says.

“What I’m going to try and do is develop a holistic team with people who are good at psychology, psychotherapy and ministering to people with the power of the Holy Spirit and initiate training in Ireland”

Four days later he began studying in the Vincentian seminary in Blackrock. From there he taught history and religion for 10 years in a grammar school in the North of Ireland, received training as a spiritual director and achieved a qualification in counselling and trained with the Jesuits in the US.

Returning to Ireland he was on parish missions for nine years, moved to All Hallows College’s spirituality department, taught psychology of religion in St Patricks College, Maynooth, taught spiritual development in Milltown Institute and then spent 30 years travelling across 28 countries after requests to go abroad.

“I don’t know what other priests would say about whether they enjoyed their priesthood and enjoyed their ministry, but I’ve had a great life and I’ve really enjoyed it and fortunately I’ve had tolerant superiors who let me follow where I think the Spirit is leading and it’s led me into all these strange areas and I am so grateful,” he says.

“I never get up in the morning wonder what life is about, it’s full of purpose and worthwhileness.”

lin given by Fr Pat and sponsored by the New Springtime Community. Attendees came from “far and wide” including the North of Ireland, Cavan, Newry and Carlow.

Any lay Catholic can engage in deliverance ministry, which involves saying certain prayers and deals with oppression rather than possession of evil spirits. However, only a priest can perform a solemn exorcism, which is needed in extreme and rare cases according to Fr Pat.

There was only two occasions Fr Pat thought a solemn exorcism might be necessary. In one instance there was “so much disturbance” it was difficult for him to say the prayers. “The person was so agitated and jumping around the place, rolling on the floor and screaming and all this sort of stuff so it was very hard.”

He didn’t believe that exorcism was successful, saying that many people seem to believe it takes one session, adding that a single case takes a lot of time and repeated periods of prayer.

“Where a person is certainly being afflicted by evil

rl

Thousands flock to the Divine Mercy Conference in Dublin

The annual Divine Mercy Conference once again proved a huge success with large attendances for all three days of its run (February 22-24) in the RDS, Dublin. Guest speakers included Dr Diarmuid Martin DD, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Fr Eunan McDonnell and Niamh Uí Bhráin.



Amanda Devine, Danijela Susac, Mary Murphy and Mary Field at the Marian Pilgrimages stand at the Divine Mercy Conference. Photos: John McElroy



Srs Paul and Judith of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim.



Nancy McCormack and Sr Crescentia at the Action Centre for Ireland of the Lady and Mother of all Nations stand.



Gemma and Triona King.



Michael Johnson and Rekina Browatzke at the Net Ministries stand.



Megan Warren and Elizabeth Quinn.



Siobhan Hall, Denise Kelly and Clare Regan at the Pro-life campaign stand.



Godelieve As and Dave Hunt at the Pure in Heart stand.



Sr Peter and Maire Donohoe OFS at the St Clares Mission in El Salvador stand.



Mairead Fleming, Maura Murphy and Elaine Patton at the Holy Family Mission stand.



Fr Hayden Williams speaking at the Divine Mercy Conference.



Mikolaj Stepien, Annaline Stepien, Laice Rech, Erika Cavalcante, Herick Conceicao, Diego Xavier and Frei Severino.



Out&About

Students Confirmed in Doora-Barefield



CLARE: Confirmation students of Knockanean NS in Doora-Barefield, Bishop Fintan Monahan with parish priest Fr Jerry Carey and teachers Jim Curran and John Corbett.



DERRY: Year 7 pupils of Sacred Heart Primary School donating some of their Confirmation money to the Foyle Hospice.



DUBLIN: Organisers and speakers at the recent Loyola Institute event at Trinity College, titled 'The Camino – A Spiritual Shortcut?' (l-r) Prof. Piotr Roszak, Faculty of Theology of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland; Dr Bernadette Cunningham, deputy librarian of the Royal Irish Academy; Dr Fáinche Ryan, Director of Loyola Institute; Turlough O'Donnell SC, Chair of the Irish Society of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

INSHORT

Stay Awake in Derry

Helping to alleviate the homeless epidemic across Ireland, the Diocese of Derry will be running an all-night vigil in St Eugene's Cathedral from 8pm-8am. Taking place on March 8, the event is in solidarity with the homeless in the local community and will raise funds for four local charities who work with the homeless.

Young people are invited to stay awake for at least some of the night and to stay outside for one hour during the night. Booking is essential. Parents/Guardians can download the parental consent form at <http://www.derrydiocese.org/images/Sleep-Out-2019-Parental-Consent-Form-.pdf>.

Please complete and return before Monday, March 4, to: Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre, The Gate Lodge, 2 Francis Street, Derry, BT48 7DS. If you have any further questions about the event,

contact Pdraig Delargy at pdraig.delargy@derrydiocese.org or 028 71264087.

Irish conference to explore human trafficking

An anti-human trafficking conference exploring its causes and impact on victims, their families and society is to take place in Dublin, and hopes to shine a light on the grim realities of this form of human slavery.

The organisers of the conference, The Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT), have welcomed keynote speaker Kevin Hyland, former UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner, to address this serious issue.

He was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2015, acknowledging his service in tackling human trafficking throughout his career, including as head of the Human Trafficking Unit of the London Metropolitan Police. He spoke at the World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin.

The theme of the conference – Human Trafficking: Hidden in Plain Sight – will cover both the Irish and international dimension of slavery, and hear how addressing roots causes, gender inequality, education, secure employment and human rights provide long term solutions.

Other speakers include: Noelene Blackwell, CEO Dublin Rape Crisis Centre; Sheila Crowley, Service Manager RUHAMA; JP O'Sullivan, MECPATHS Ireland; students' perspectives on Human Trafficking as a curricular theme at Post-Primary school senior levels.

All are welcome to attend APT's one-day conference at The Atrium, Dept. of Justice & Equality, 51 St Stephen's Green, Dublin, commencing on March 1, at 9.30am.

Being lent a hand at Lent

As part of the Lenten fast this year the Diocesan Commission for Liturgical

Formation will be sharing weekly homily notes, handouts and a short weekly video from *iCatholic.ie*. Beginning on March 6 and ending on April 18, the fasting regulation applies to all Catholics aged 18 to 59 while those aged 14 and above are asked to abstain from meat.

Some people are not required to fast; these include those who are sick, pregnant or nursing women and manual labourers according to need.

While fasting, Catholics can eat one full meatless meal in the day.

Two other meatless meals may be taken to maintain strength but together they should not exceed one full meal. Liquids, including milk and fruit juice, may be taken between meals.

To offer understanding, support and encouragement during Lent, *iCatholic.ie* will be issuing content that explores this religious observance and why it matters.

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



KERRY: Caroline Crowley, Rebecca Stapleton, Chloe Dalton, Máire Fitzgerald and Johnny Mulvihill, at the teachers' in-service day.



KERRY: Tomás Kenny, Ailis Travers and Sr Frances at a Post-Primary Religious Education teachers' in-service day in the St John Paul II Pastoral Centre. Up to thirty RE teachers from schools throughout the diocese were in attendance. The speakers included Sr. Frances Day, Dr. Ailish Travers from the JCT and Stephen Farley from Trócaire.

CAVAN: The Brady family at a special St Valentine's Mass for married couples in Kingscourt.



LAOIS: Shalana, Fr Princl, Sebastian, Tinku, Sr Juli UMI and Sogi with Msgr John Byrne carrying out the Awake programme in Portlaoise, which aims for parishes to wake up to the need for God's love in our life.



MAYO: Over 100 people attend a Mass in Kilmovee, Achonry, to celebrate those involved in various ministries of the parish.

ARMAGH

Sr Mary Roe, RSCJ will offer six sessions once per week of Lectio Divina in The Synod Hall, Armagh. The fourth session takes place on Monday, March 4.

Lenten talks to take place in St Malachy's Church each Monday of Lent at 7.30pm beginning March 11.

Armagh Parish Holy Spirit Prayer Group are hosting the Life in the Spirit Seminars in The St Vincent de Paul Centre, Chapel Lane, Armagh. March 5: Fr Owen Gorman on 'Salvation'; March 12: Sr Josephine Walsh will speak 'New Life'; March 19: Fr Peter McAnenly on 'Receiving Gods gifts'; March 26: Fr Gerry Campbell on 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'; April 2: Patricia Kelly on 'Growth in the Spirit'; April 9: Archbishop Eamon Martin will speak on 'Transformation in Christ'.

CLARE

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

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

CORK

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

Healing Weekend: A weekend of Praise Worship and Healing in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, Cork on March 9-10. Mass and Confessions on both days. Speakers include Maria Vadia Florida, Fr John Keane Macroom, Fr Tony Emeka Nigeria, Canon Michael Fitzgerald Mitchelstown. Mir Music Ministry. Begins at 9am on both days. Enquires to Celia 087 2405568.

DERRY

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

DUBLIN

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

Ewe Thina We Walk God's Way: Join other young adults aged in their 20s and 30s for reflective hikes around the Dublin Area. Monthly event. Email: st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie and https://www.facebook.com/wewalkgodsway

Lecture titled 'Does Creation Need God' to be given by Mr Joe Drew from The Kolbe Institute of Creation on Wednesday, March 20, at 1pm at Central Catholic Library, 74 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

FERMANAGH

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

Mass in the Extraordinary Form in St Patrick's Church (opposite St Kieran's College) every Sunday at 5pm.

KILKENNY

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

LIMERICK

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

St Saviour's Dominican Church will be offering Bishop Barron's *Catholicism* Series at the Church on Thursday at 1.30pm and Fridays at 7:30pm weekly. Free of charge and all welcome.

LOUTH

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

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

MEATH

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

Charismatic Prayer Group: Every Thursday, 8pm, in the Boardroom, Parish Centre of the parish of Trim and Boardsmill. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Tuesdays 2-9pm, Wednesdays 10.30am-8pm, and Fridays 10.30am-9pm. Adoration is held in the Side Chapel in St Patrick's Church.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085 7746763.

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.

TIPPERARY

Adoration to the Holy Face - St John the Baptist Church, Cashel on March 5 at 10.30am. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament continues until 6pm. The day will include direct Holy Hours, stations of the Cross and prayers to the Holy Face.

WICKLOW

The Glencree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glencree on the first Saturday of the month. St Patrick's Prayer Group, Wicklow town, meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm in The de la Salle Pastoral Care Centre.

World Report

IN BRIEF

Taiwan introduces gay marriage bill

● Taiwan's government has introduced Asia's first gay marriage bill that would grant "permanent unions" to same-sex couples and give them limited adoption rights.

The move immediately met opposition from conservative groups opposed to gay marriage and from rights groups who felt the bill did not go far enough.

The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) under President Tsai Ing-wen is looking to deliver on a 2016 election pledge to grant same-sex couples equal marriage rights.

However, its moves to do so have suffered setbacks such as a November 2018 referendum that was won by conservatives looking to prevent a change in the Civil Code to allow gay marriage.

The referendum followed a Constitutional Court ruling to legalise gay marriage in 2017.

Filipino bishop condemns church shooting

● A Catholic bishop in the central Philippines has condemned the killing of a businessman inside a church compound in the city of Bacolod on last week.

Gunmen shot and killed Filipino-Chinese businessman Alex Yao (54), inside the compound of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine in Bacolod City. Yao's wife, Maria Theresa, survived the shooting, which occurred while the couple were leaving the church after attending a prayer meeting.

Police said the gunmen shot the victim several times.

Bishop Patricio Buzon of Bacolod called the murder a "deplorable act...that has no place in Christian communities, more so in a society that upholds the principles of law and order."

Indian minorities suffering at hands of Hindu groups

● Religious and ethnic minorities in India continue to face violence at the hands of Hindu groups that support the federal government led by the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), according to a new report by Human Rights Watch.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has failed to prevent or credibly investigate growing mob attacks on religious

minorities and marginalised communities, said the new report released in New Delhi.

Some critics have even accused Mr Modi of turning India into "a republic of hate".

The BJP's political leaders, since forming the federal government in May 2014, "have increasingly used communal rhetoric" that spurred violence from vigilante groups, it said.

Victims of land grabbing demand justice

● Victims of alleged land-grabbing in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City have taken their fight to the national capital and are demanding the government punish local officials, who they say are illegally destroyed their properties. They also demanded that land seized from them be returned.

Representatives acting for more than 100 households, who claim their land was illegally seized last month by Ho Chi Minh City authorities, presented their petition to the Government Inspectorate Committee on Receiving Citizens Complaints based in Hanoi.

Catholic farmers gather to halt power plant project

● Around 1,000 Catholic farmers on Flores Island in Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province have called on the government to halt a geothermal power plant project, saying it will damage the environment and likely drive them away from their homes. They have also enlisted the help of the local Church in their fight.

Farmers' representatives from Wae Sano in West Manggarai district made their demand to district head Agustinus Dula during a meeting last week and called for an immediate stop to drilling being carried out in various locations.

Cardinal George Pell to appeal sex abuse conviction

An Australian court has found Cardinal George Pell guilty on five charges related to the sexual abuse of two 13-year-old boys; sentencing is expected in early March, but the cardinal's lawyer already has announced plans to appeal the conviction.

The jury's verdict that Cardinal Pell, shortly after being named archbishop of Melbourne in 1996, sexually assaulted the two boys was handed down in December, but the court demanded the verdict and details about it not be reported until after a second trial on allegations that he abused several boys in the 1970s.

The verdict came after a five-week retrial, after a jury in an earlier trial failed to reach a unanimous verdict. In October 2018, multiple sources said that the first trial had ended with the jury deadlocked 10-2 in favour of Cardinal Pell.

The defence's legal team produced records that showed that during the period between August and December 1996, when the abuse was alleged to have taken place, Pell only cele-



Cardinal George Pell.

brated the cathedral's 10.30am Sunday Mass twice.

The court also heard witness testimony that Pell had been with guests immediately following Mass on one of the two Sundays.

Choristers

The second jury took three days to find Cardinal Pell guilty of sexually abusing two choristers in the Melbourne cathedral sacristy on an unspecified date in the

second half of 1996.

The judge lifted the reporting ban on February 26 after prosecutors announced they would not proceed with the second trial against the 77-year-old cardinal.

While professing his innocence, Cardinal Pell took a leave of absence from his post as prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy in June 2017 to return to Australia to face the charges.

His first trial in Melbourne

ended without a verdict in September.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, president of the Australian bishops' conference, said in a statement on February 26 that "the news of Cardinal George Pell's conviction on historical child sexual abuse charges has shocked many across Australia and around the world, including the Catholic bishops of Australia".

"The bishops agree that everyone should be equal under the law, and we respect the Australian legal system," the archbishop said. "The same legal system that delivered the verdict will consider the appeal that the cardinal's legal team has lodged."

"Our hope, at all times, is that through this process, justice will be served," he said. "In the meantime, we pray for all those who have been abused and their loved ones, and we commit ourselves anew to doing everything possible to ensure that the Church is a safe place for all, especially the young and the vulnerable."

French bishops condemn violence as anti-Semitic attacks increase

The French bishops' conference has condemned rising anti-Semitism in the country, as official data showed a massive increase of attacks, prompting new government measures.

The conference president, Archbishop Georges Pontier of Marseille, wrote to France's chief rabbi, Haim Korsia. "Attacks from seemingly religious motives on our fellow citizens are unacceptable; we stand beside you in struggling against every manifestation of hatred," Archbishop Pontier said in his letter.

"Our society cannot find peace unless it supports a constructive dialogue among all its members. May we never resign ourselves to the growth of intol-

erance and rejection," he said.

In Paris on February 19, some 20,000 people rallied against anti-Semitism, prompting President Emmanuel Macron to announce new measures against extremism.

Msgr Olivier Dumas, conference secretary-general, called on all political parties and faith groups to "show solidarity with Jews" and condemn attacks on religious targets.

Struggle

"This climate of violence and hatred must end," he told Vatican Radio. "We must wage a struggle against anti-Semitism with fierce determination, knowing

where hatred of Jews led in our history, and do everything to ensure powerful impulses for such unimaginable violence never arise again."

He said fighting anti-Semitism was a responsibility "not just for institutions and religious leaders, but for all French citizens", who should mobilise through education and "a permanent re-reading of history".

Interior Ministry figures released in earlier this month showed a 74% increase in anti-Semitic attacks in 2018, with 541 documented. Most involved physical violence and abuse, the daubing of shops and desecration of monuments and cemeteries.

Francis prays for Bangladeshi fire victims

Pope Francis has offered his solidarity and prayers to victims of a massive fire in the centre of the Bangladeshi capital, which has reportedly claimed well over 70 lives, at time of writing.

"His Holiness Pope Francis was saddened to learn of the loss of life and of the injuries caused by the conflagration

in the centre of Dhaka," said Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State.

"He extends his solidarity to all affected, and prays especially for the repose of the deceased and for the healing of those injured."

The fast-moving fire swept through a densely populated historic district of Dhaka.

Many residents were trapped, including, reportedly, a bridal party. Many are still missing and the death toll is expected to rise.

Blaze

The blaze reportedly began in a chemical warehouse on the ground floor of a residential building.

The Pope also offered his encouragement to the Bangladeshi emergency personnel as they assist victims, and upon all he invoked "the divine blessings of consolation and strength". Emergency crews reportedly battled the blaze for five hours but were hindered by narrow streets and a lack of access to water.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick
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Praying for aid to get beyond Venezuelan border



A priest prays beside supporters of Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó holding flags and signs backing the importation of humanitarian aid, at the port in Willemstad, Curacao. Photo: CNS

Overwhelming Democrat shift on abortion stance – new poll

Americans have shifted toward a pro-life stance in recent weeks during a period when some states are considering legislation that would legalise abortion up until birth, according to a new poll.

The Marist Poll at Marist College conducted in mid-February found that equal numbers of Americans – 47% – identified themselves as pro-life and as those who support abortion.

The findings reflect a dramatic shift from a similar poll in early January that found respondents supporting abortion by 55% to 38%. “Current proposals that promote late-

term abortion have reset the landscape and language on abortion in a pronounced, and very measurable, way,” Barbara Carvalho, poll director, said in media release from the Knights of Columbus, the poll sponsor.

The largest swing in responses came from self-identified Democrats and people younger than 45, poll officials said. The poll reported that among Democrats, the gap between people who identify as pro-life and those who support abortion was cut in half from 55% to 27%.

The number of Democrats who identify as pro-life stood

at 34%, up from 20% in January. Similarly, the number of Democrats who said they support abortion fell to 61% from 75%.

Shift

Young respondents in February were almost evenly divided with 47% identifying as pro-life and 48% as supporting abortion. The figures represent a dramatic shift from January’s poll in which 28% of young people said they were pro-life and 65% supported abortion.

Ms Carvalho attributed the wide swing to legislative attempts to allow later-term abortions. “In just one

month, there has been a significant increase in the number of Americans who see themselves as pro-life and an equally notable decline in those who describe themselves as pro-choice,” she said in the media release.

Also commenting on the poll results, Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, said in the media release: “If anything, since these proposals have been unveiled, people are moving noticeably in the pro-life direction. It is now clear these radical policies are being pursued despite opposition of the majority of Americans of both parties.”

Growth emerges from crisis, priest tells Church

The Catholic Church should not be afraid of crisis; through crisis, it will grow and spring new life, according to Dominican Fr Timothy Radcliffe.

“If you look at human beings, we grow up through crisis,” said the 73-year-old English theologian. “It’s our way. And so, we believe, I

believe, it’s the fate of the Church...we do not have to be afraid of crisis.”

The former head of the Order of Preachers spoke about hope at conferences in Montreal and Quebec City in mid-February. He cited the sex abuse crisis, but also the crisis of authority, as Pope

Francis has had to face much opposition within the Church.

In addressing these issues, Fr Radcliffe pointed toward the “biggest crisis”, the Last Supper. The apostles “had abandoned Jesus. Judas had sold him. Peter was about to betray him. There was no future. And then in that dark-

est moment, Jesus did this extraordinary thing. He said, ‘This is my body, and I give it to you’.

“So, I think that when there are moments of crisis in the Church, we should not be afraid. We should ask what new thing will come to be,” Fr Radcliffe said.

Vatican roundup

Plagiarism priest submits teaching resignation to college

A long-time Vatican spokesman who apologised last week for plagiarism has resigned from the governing board of a Catholic college affiliated with the University of Toronto.

“As a sign of contrition and acknowledgement of the error, I freely submitted my resignation (February 24) to the Collegium of the University of St Michael’s College,” Fr Thomas Rosica said.

“It has been a privilege for me to serve that excellent university for many years in various capacities. I did not want my errors to cloud over the university governance and offer a bad example to students, educators and staff. We know that plagiarism is wrong, especially when it is practised deliberately. Please note that my actions were never deliberate. Nevertheless, they were wrong.”

Reports

Fr Rosica, a long-serving English language press aide at the Vatican Press Office, and the CEO of Canada’s Salt+Light Television network, was reported by *Life Site News* on February 15 to have plagiarised sections of text in several lectures and op-eds from a variety of writers, among them priests, theologians, journalists and at least two cardinals.

Subsequent reports found widespread plagiarism in essays, speeches, and op-eds by Fr Rosica, dating back more than a decade. Plagiarised sections in some texts ran beyond even one paragraph.

God’s love never falls short – Pope

Despite the best efforts of human beings, it is only God the Father who will never fall short in loving his children, Pope Francis said last week.

“No one must doubt that he is the recipient of [the Father’s] love,” the Pope said. “He loves us, he loves me, we can say. He loves us even if our father and our mother have not loved us, there is a God in Heaven who loves us as nobody on this Earth has ever done and will ever do.”

At his weekly general audience, Pope Francis continued his catechesis on the ‘Our Father,’ focusing on the start of the prayer and the words:

“Our Father, who art in Heaven...”

This means, he said, that though it is impossible to find perfect love on earth, among imperfect creatures, “there is another love, that of the Father ‘who is in Heaven’.”

“This is a perfect love,” he commented. “If all our Earthly loves also crumble, and there remains nothing but dust, there is always for all of us, burning, the unique love of God.”

This expression of a Father “in Heaven” is meant to express a difference, not a distance, he explained. It is a tireless love that never ends and is always within reach.

Vatican guilty of sexual hypocrisy, new book alleges

A new book has accused the Vatican of hypocrisy, claiming that the majority of prelates working within its walls live active homosexual lifestyles.

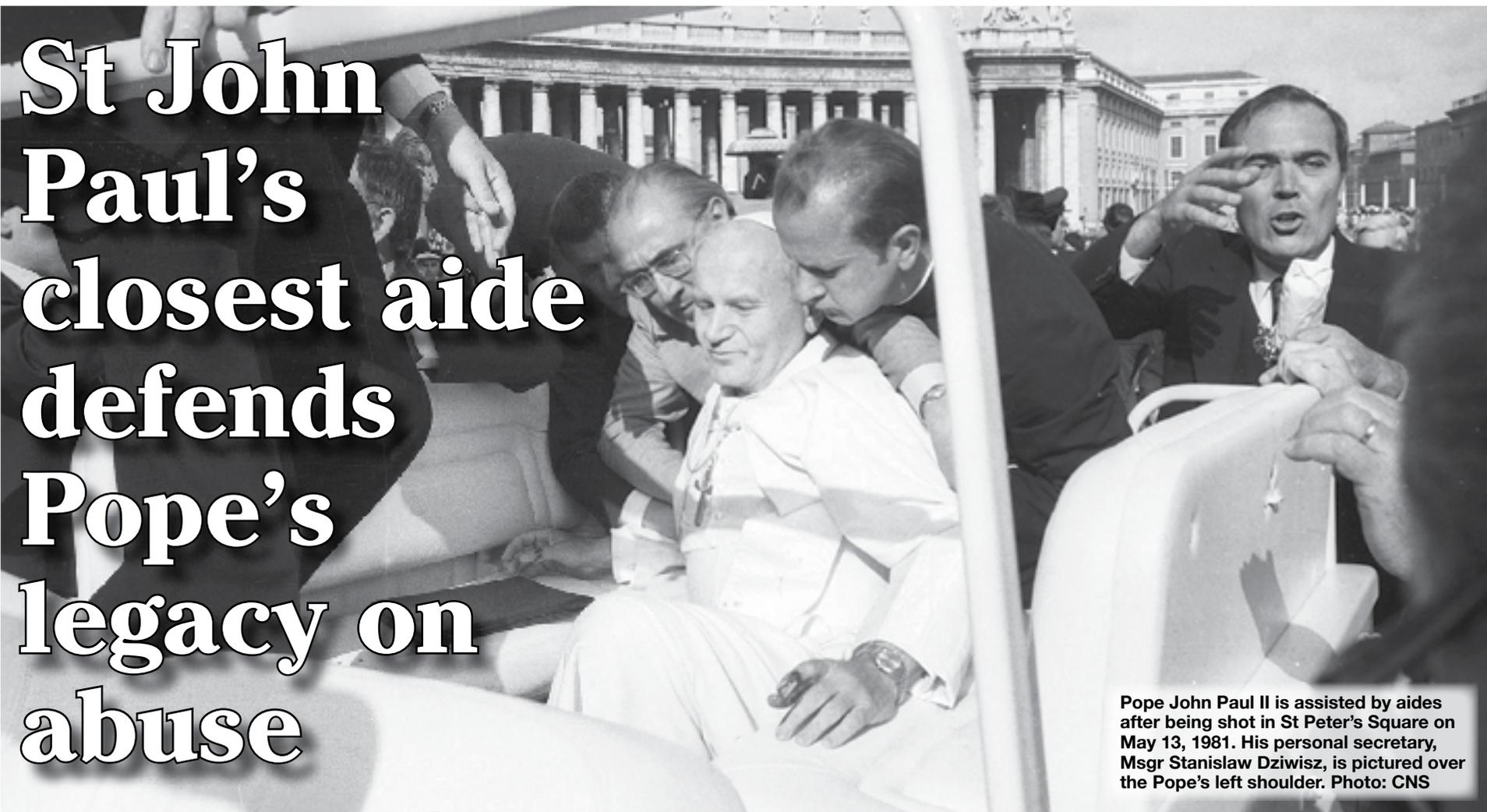
The book, titled *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy*, by French author and journalist Frederic Martel, was scheduled for publication in eight languages on February 21, the same day leaders of the world’s bishops’ conference convened in Rome to reflect on the abuse crisis that has rocked the Catholic Church.

The author, who is openly gay, said he spent four years of “authoritative research” interviewing current and former Vatican officials, including priests, bishops and cardinals.

He also claimed that Pope Francis’ homilies on those in the Church who lead “double lives” refer to “the dizzying hypocrisy of those who advocate a rigid morality while at the same time having a companion, affairs and sometimes escorts”.

Letter from Poland

St John Paul's closest aide defends Pope's legacy on abuse



Pope John Paul II is assisted by aides after being shot in St Peter's Square on May 13, 1981. His personal secretary, Msgr Stanislaw Dziwisz, is pictured over the Pope's left shoulder. Photo: CNS

During a high-profile summit on clerical sexual abuse that wrapped up at the Vatican at the weekend, the late Pope John Paul II's response to the scandals has been cited more than once – a surprise for many, perhaps, who thought the Church began taking the issue seriously only under Benedict XVI.

The Polish Pope's closest aide, now-Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow has now opened up on the Pontiff's approach to clerical abuse, with Dr Dziwisz strongly defending his mentor's legacy.

When John Paul II found out about the truth behind the accusations on sexual abuse "he was deeply horrified", said Cardinal Dziwisz, who was in the background of every picture of the Pope, his shadow and, by the end, his human cane; when John Paul II was unable to walk on his own.

"He always lived very intensely the affairs of the Church: he enjoyed the good things about the Church and felt saddened by all manifestations of evil. The news that priests and religious, whose vocation is to help people in meeting God, were the cause of so much suffering to young people and scandal for everybody, hurt him very much," Cardinal Dziwisz said.

'Don Stanislaw' was Karol Wojtyła's personal secretary for 12 years in Krakow before accompanying him to the Vatican for the 27 years of his pontificate. Of the summit, Cardinal Dziwisz



Paulina Guzik

said: "This event stands in the line of the actions of John Paul II."

Despite the fact that John Paul II gave Theodore McCarrick, the disgraced ex-cardinal who was recently dismissed from the clerical state, all three of his episcopal assignments in the US – Metuchen, New Jersey, in 1981; Newark in 1986; and Washington, D.C. in 2000 – as well as making him a cardinal in 2001, Dr Dziwisz also insisted that defrocking McCarrick is consistent with John Paul's own approach.

Direction

"I see the recent decision to remove McCarrick from the College of Cardinals and from the priesthood as completely in line with the direction John Paul II designated," Cardinal Dziwisz said.

"Throughout his pontificate, John Paul II was close to those who suffer, standing in their defence. It includes those who were hurt by the people of the Church," Dr Dziwisz said.

John Paul's former aide admitted

it pleases him that the organising committee of the summit quoted documents presented during his pontificate as "an important point of reference", and praised Cardinal Seán O'Malley of Boston and Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta, both seen as leading reformers, for "recalling the words of John Paul II that there is no place in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young."

Over the years, critics often accused John Paul of trying to create an "imperial papacy", centralising power around himself. Cardinal Dziwisz, however, insisted that wasn't the case.

"John Paul II was a man of the [Second Vatican] Council," he said. "Collegiality for him was a basic rule in the Church. His collaborators, especially those who were leading Vatican dicasteries, had a personal contact with the Pope and could always talk to him. Important matters were decided jointly at the meetings of superiors of dicasteries."

Dr Dziwisz also denied wielding untoward power himself, especially as John Paul aged.

"The personal secretary of the Holy Father never substituted the dicasteries of the Roman Curia," he said.

The first abuse scandals covered intensely by the media exploded in Canada and Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s, followed by the great American storm in the early 2000s. Dr Dziwisz admits that the Vatican at the time was only starting to

discover the gravity of the issue.

"We were not aware of the whole scale of this phenomenon of sexual abuse or its global nature, as we clearly see these matters today," the cardinal said.

Nonetheless, Cardinal Dziwisz said, John Paul II strove to do the right thing. "The Pope saw that the problem was not only the human drama of the victims, but also the wrong reactions of the superiors," he said. "He saw that although there were Church laws and procedures, they were not always applied by bishops," he said.

There was no conscious compromise with any evil"

It was John Paul II, Cardinal Dziwisz said, who imposed an obligation to report each case of clerical abuse directly to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, run by then-cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict, "in whom John Paul II had the utmost confidence".

The move, Dr Dziwisz said, was meant to "prevent the temptation to sweep these painful matters under the carpet".

Asked whether there was a culture of silence in John Paul's Vatican, Cardinal Dziwisz said it didn't come from the Pope: "He was a very clear and unambiguous person. Whoever met and collaborated with him knows well that in him there was no conscious

acceptance or compromise with any evil," Dr Dziwisz said.

"John Paul II believed that the Church needs transparency, but also responsibility in treating every human person in respect of his or her dignity," the cardinal said.

"He said that in our time the Church has to make every effort to be like a 'glass house,' and that this is the right action," he said.

Dr Dziwisz said John Paul had a broad view of the abuse crisis.

"He was clearly aware that the crisis affects not only the Church but also the entire society, and that it is related to the deep disorder in the area of sexual morality," he said. "He diagnosed this problem very early in his pontificate."

Cardinal Dziwisz said John Paul's conclusion was clear: "The only way to face this crisis and its causes is fostering a mature and responsible experience of human love and sexuality," he said.

The cardinal is hopeful that the rough waters of the Church now will bear fruit.

"Pope John Paul II saw evil, but never lost hope," he said. "He looked at everything with a strong faith that God, from the greatest evil, can bring good. He believed that where sin increased, grace might flow more abundantly."

More than once, Cardinal Dziwisz recalled, John Paul said the crisis could help the Church purify herself and strengthen her in holiness.

Paulina Guzik is a writer with CruXnow.com



Claire Giangrave

Post-Charlie Gard, experts want sick infants to speak for themselves

Charlie Gard and Alfie Evans, two infants with degenerative diseases who died once life support was withdrawn, became global cause celebres largely due to outspoken parents raising their voice for what they perceived as the best interest of their child, demanding that every possible avenue be explored to save their lives.

But a conference in Rome earlier this month attempted to highlight the best medical and ethical practices in such cases, in order to allow infants to speak for themselves.

Paediatricians, medical researchers and health experts suggested that being able to evaluate the pain a child is feeling may provide an essential tool to delivering the best possible care.

"In the case of Charley and Alfie, the child was suspended between a desire to live – represented by their families – and a technical and scientific perspective that puts an emphasis on the uselessness of treatment," said Paola Binetti, a neuropsychiatrist and Italian Senator.

"This focus on the sustainability of treatment", she added, can obscure another and even more important theme: The suffering of the child.

The conference was titled, 'When Pain becomes the Voice of the Child: Interpreting the Suffering of the Child to Protect its Life and Dignity', and it took place at the Institute of Santa Maria in Aquiro in Rome earlier this month. It was organised by the Italian association Science&Life, a group aimed at encouraging pro-life debates.

According to Italian neonatologist Carlo Bellieni, professor of neonatal therapy at the University of Siena, there's a disconnect between the treatment of infants, especially when born premature, and the treatment of older children capable of expressing their will. His research attempts to remove infants from being caught between the desires of others.

"The ethical criteria used to revive an infant are much less evident than in the treatment of older children," Prof. Bellieni said.

Considerations

In a study he conducted examining the cases of dozens of infants and medical personnel, doctors in Italy are less likely to reanimate an infant born prematurely at 24 weeks than a child who had already spent time living and growing at home.

"The considerations for the reanimation of a premature child tend to be more statistical and based on the probability that he will survive and not have a serious disability," he said.

It's difficult, the doctor acknowledged, to determine what



Pope Francis kisses a baby girl as he arrives to lead his general audience in St Peter's Square at the Vatican.

“Doctors in Italy are less likely to reanimate an infant born prematurely at 24 weeks than a child who had already spent time living and growing at home”

an infant is feeling because not only do children at that age cry all the time, but it's also difficult to know why since they're unable to voice their opinions.

"Let's let the child speak," Prof. Bellieni said, presenting studies

and technologies that allow doctors to determine the pain a patient is feeling starting from stress levels and cries. Such findings become, he said, a compass pointing to better treatment.

"When pain tolerance levels

escalate, it's appropriate to desist from invasive treatments," he said, and "if pain tolerance levels remain stable it opens the door to further care and treatment".

Bioethicist Maria Teresa Iannone presented cases of parents who

Charlie Gard, born in England with mitochondrial DNA depletion syndrome, was at the center of a legal battle that captured the world's attention. He died on July 28, 2017, just over a week before his first birthday. Photo: CNS

struggle to put the best interests of their children ahead of their own self-interest or cultural background.

Other experts said that sometimes it's the State that overrides the life and wellbeing of the infant. Citing the British court that decided the Charlie Gard case, Alberto Villani, head physician at the papal-sponsored Pediatric Hospital Bambino Gesù, said questions regarding budgetary concerns were a determining factor in the decision.

"In the UK, the health system is collapsing," he said, adding that financial considerations should not impact the treatment of a patient.

Bambino Gesù offered to treat both Gard and Evans. Pope Francis also has often spoken against euthanasia and insisted on the importance of protecting life from conception to natural death.

"We know well that the threshold for the fundamental respect of human life is today violated in brutal ways, not only by individual behaviours but also by the effect of structural choices and assets," the Pope wrote in a January 15 letter to the Pontifical Academy for Life.

“When pain tolerance levels escalate, it's appropriate to desist from invasive treatments”

"The organisation of profit and the rate of technological development offer unprecedented possibilities to influence biomedical research, educational focus, the selection of needs, the human quality of connections," Francis wrote.

The moderator of the event, Alberto Gambino, a lawyer and president of Science&Life, expressed hope that by evaluating pain tolerance levels of children – including those still in the womb – they will not be subject to the "evanescent" decisions of judges or "efficiency-based approaches".

"Pain treatment is not only an ethical duty," Iannone concluded, "but also an example of good clinical practice that keeps up with the times."

📍 Claire Giangrave is Faith and Culture Correspondent of Cruxnow.com

Letters

Letter of the week

Archbishop needs to be listened to

Dear Editor, Archbishop Eamon Martin's appeal that the issue of abuse not be treated as a political football within the Church (IC 21/2/2019) is a powerful and wise call, and one that urgently needs to be heard.

Too often over recent decades have advocates of married and women priests treated the abuse crisis as an opportunity to push their causes, while at the other extreme those who have long believed the Second Vatican Council a catastrophic misstep have taken to claiming the abuse crisis is

simply another fruit of the council, one that could be undone by turning the clock back to 1952 or thereabouts. And that's without looking at those factions who see the case of erstwhile cardinal Theodore McCarrick as a convenient stick with which to hit a Pope they dislike anyway.

It's not really the case that the Church can't be trusted to reform and police itself, but surely it must be recognised that the clergy, at any rate, have failed in this, and that it's time for God's ordinary faithful people

to take the lead in battling abuse. Denying this would, surely, be the essence of clericalism.

For all that abuse in the US tends to dominate global headlines, it looks as though our own Irish experience in suffering from and fighting against abuse are ones the Church should look to more.

We really have an important story to tell.

*Yours etc.,
Maura Fitzgerald,
Belfast, Co. Antrim.*

Articles on other denominations are most welcome

Dear Editor, I wish to congratulate you on the article by Colm Fitzpatrick 'Is there any mission to the Jewish people?' (IC 14/2/2019). Indeed, I have also appreciated many articles of recent times which you have published coming from other denominations than our own. I believe that represents a refreshing and hopeful sign that affects us all. Thank you.

Perhaps you would be interested in the following quotes from a booklet I picked up in the Catholic Patriarchate in Jerusalem in October 2017:

From Cardinal Martini, Archbishop of Milan (July 9, 1984)

"If the Christian Church feels called to be a critical conscience, especially in Europe, to warn of the tragic events and questions which beset all of us, then in this mission it will find the strength of the religious and moral doctrine of Judaism at its side [...]"

"I am convinced that a profound knowledge of Judaism is vital for the Church, not only to overcome the longstanding ignorance and to favour a fruitful dialogue, but also to deepen

its self-understanding[...]"

Every schism and division in the history of the Christianity deprives the Church of possible precious contributions, and this produces a certain deficiency in the vital balance of the Christian community. If this is true for every great division in Church history, it is especially true of the first great schism which deprived the Church of the aid which would have come from the Jewish traditions."

He then cites some deficiencies or weaknesses in Christian practice which are the consequences of

this absence...In 1993 he continued his thought, concluding: "We have lost our Jewish roots, and this wound is still open. It is only by returning to Jerusalem that the Church will be healed."

That same year the Pontifical Biblical Conference expressed the same idea. "The wealth of Jewish learning placed at the service of the Bible, from its earliest origins until the present day, is an aid of vital importance."

*Yours etc.,
Ena Gray,
Enniscorthy,
Co. Wexford.*

Claiming to be Catholic

Dear Editor, I would like to commend you for your excellent column in *The Irish Catholic* of February 14. It is tiresome listening to the hypocrisy of those who refuse to accept basic teachings of the Catholic Church and still insist on calling themselves Catholic.

As you stated, Ms Josepha Madigan "launched a broadside against the Catholic Church and expressed the view that Catholics need to speak up for the values that they expect the Church to uphold". That is certainly rich coming from her when

she presided over the Fine Gael campaign to legalise unrestricted abortion here and still claims she is a Catholic.

What unashamed hypocrisy. I agree with you that "real bravery is displayed by those Catholics who stand by their faith and speak up for inalienable values like the right to life regardless of the risks", and not by those like Ms Madigan who claim they are still Catholic while opposing its *raison d'être*.

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

Read St Paul

Dear Editor, Those priests who sexually abused people probably should never have been priests at all. Furthermore, St Paul in Titus 1: 5-7 does not demand that presbyters be celibate. It only came in later for some reason.

Finally, I do not believe seminaries are necessary at all. Those who are being trained to be priests could just go for three nights a week to an educational college to learn biblical studies and liturgy.

*Yours etc.,
Colm O Connor,
Goatstown, Dublin 14.*

The evil will triumph when the good do nothing

Dear Editor, Because Jesus told us in Garden of Gethsemane, all who draw the sword will die by the sword, is the introduction of abortion causing our country's logjam? All sin is self-destructive and we can't bargain with God. We must reap what we sow as the Gospel tells us.

At 80 years of age and after a long life of work and prayer that sustain me, it makes me feel very forlorn to have abortion hanging over our country or

any country, because when blood flows from abortion Satan will have his day and evil will triumph when the good do nothing.

But, le cúnamh dé – repentance will save the unborn, save ourselves and save our country. Ag criost an síol, ag Críost an fómhar, in iothlainn Dé go dtugtar sinn.

*Yours etc.,
Bridget Sherlock,
Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.*



facebook community

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

Some decline in collections is due to lower Mass attendance, but is the rest due to people not carrying enough cash or voting with their wallets?

If the parishioners don't support their parishes they may have to be amalgamated and the parish church closed down, the sad reality whatever the reasons for the decline. In the Diocese of Utrecht recently 90% of the parish churches were closed, if the equivalent happened in Dublin there would be 20 Churches left open. – **Peter O'Reilly**

Struggling with the high cost of living i.e poverty. – **Mary Murphy**

Voting with their wallets? Why even go in the first place? When one goes, they go because they are faithful. – **Jim Ryan**

Supporting the local parish is different than showing the diocese a lesson. – **Seán Kane**

Church dogma isn't meant to be democratic, so as many have been saying, just don't go. Which still means the Church is failing naturally. I honestly don't see a solution there tbh. – **Edward Brophy**

'Pro-choice only' doctors rule could hurt conscience rights

They are heading exactly where they want to be...a sordid little tyranny that they will proclaim a 'paradise' to the rest of the world. – **Charles Glenn**

This is totalitarianism. There is no democracy in Ireland if this is allowed. Freedom of conscience is at the heart of democracy. This goes far beyond the great evil of abortion. – **Pamela Ryan**

Accord is set to play a more important role in the Irish Church

From a Catholic point of view I can't say I found the pre marriage course very supportive at all. Facilitators seemed to be apologetic if any mention of God, Jesus, Church etc. I found it very much aimed at non-practicing attendees. While I'm all for inclusivity, I found it unjust that I actually support the running of this service with my weekly contributions at mass and it wasn't aimed at supporting practicing Catholics who want to enter into married life. – **Joanna Marie Burke**

Perhaps it may be more interesting to see the statistics on how attending the mandatory course impacted on their marriage, i.e. the effectiveness of the course, rather than simply 'how many people' sat the mandatory course. Surely the Catholic Church is in the 'business' of building 'domestic churches' rather than 'registering' Catholic marriages? – **Seamus Dunphy**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

📷 Around the world



▲ **USA:** A statue of St Anthony of Padua holding the Christ Child is seen during a snowstorm on the grounds of the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington.
◀ **HAITI:** A man holds a weapon next to burning barricades during anti-government protests taking place this month in Port-au-Prince. Photos: CNS



PHILIPPINES: Nuns and other worshippers pray during a Mass in solidarity against human rights abuses in Quezon City.



USA: Abbot Nicholas Zachariadis, founding abbot of Holy Resurrection Monastery in St Nazianz, Wisconsin, uses scissors to cut the hair of Deacon Paiisi during a tonsure ceremony at St Gregory Church in St Nazianz.



FRANCE: People attend a national gathering in Paris to protest against the rise of anti-Semitic attacks. The placards read: "No to the trivialisation of hatred."



USA: Fr Scott Gratton, parochial vicar of St Francis Xavier Church in Winooski, Vermont, his brother Nathan and their father, Peter, give attention to some of the sled dogs that provided rides for a parish fundraiser in the northern Vermont town of Derby Line earlier this month.



I've been both blessed and cursed by a congenital restlessness that hasn't always made my life easy. I remember as a young boy restlessly wandering the house, the yard, and then the open pastures of my family's farm on the prairies. Our family was close, my life was protected and secure and I was raised in a solid religious faith. That should have made for a peaceful and stable childhood and, for the most part, it did. I count myself lucky.

But all of this stability, at least for me, didn't preclude an unsettling restlessness. More superficially, I felt this in the isolation of growing up in a rural community that seemed far removed from life in the big cities. The lives I saw on TV and read about in the newspapers and magazines appeared to me to be much bigger, more exciting and more significant than my own. My life, by comparison, paled, seemed small, insignificant, and second-best. I longed to live in a big city, away from what I felt to be the deprivations of rural life. My life, it seemed, was always away from everything that was important.

Household words

Beyond that, I tormented myself by comparing my life, my body, and my anonymity to the grace, attractiveness and fame of the professional athletes, movie stars, and other celebrities I admired and whose names were household words. For me, they had real lives, ones I could only envy.

Moreover, I felt a deeper restlessness that had to do with my soul. Despite the genuine intimacy of a close family and a close-knit community within which I had dozens of friends and relatives, I ached for a

Struggling inside our own skin



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

singular, erotic intimacy with a soulmate. Finally, I lived with an inchoate anxiety that I didn't understand and which mostly translated itself into fear, fear of not measuring up and fear of how I was living life in face of the eternal.

That was the cursed part, but all of this also brought a blessing. Inside the cauldron of that disquiet I discerned (heard) a call to religious life which I fought for a long time because it seemed the antithesis of everything I longed for. How can a burning restlessness, filled with eros, be a call to celibacy? How can an egotistical desire for fame, fortune and recognition be an invitation to join a religious order whose charism is to live with the poor?

It didn't make sense, and, paradoxically, that's why, finally, it was the only thing that *did* make sense. I gave in to its nudging and it was right for me.

It landed me inside religious life and what I've lived and learned there has helped me, slowly through the years, to process my own restlessness and begin

“Virtually all of us believe that the good life is had only by those who live elsewhere, away from our own limited, ordinary, insignificant and small-town lives”

to live inside my own skin. Beyond prayer and spiritual guidance, two intellectual giants in particular helped me.

As a student, aged 19, I began to study Ss Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. My mind was still young and unformed but I grasped enough of what I was reading to begin to befriend the restless complexities inside my own soul – and inside the human soul in general. Even at age 19 (maybe particularly at 19) one can existentially understand Augustine's dictum: You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

And then there was Thomas Aquinas who asked: what is the adequate object of the human intellect and will? In short, what would we have to know and be in love with in order to satisfy every flame of restlessness within us? His answer: everything! The adequate object of the human intellect and will is Being as such – God, all people, all nature. Only that would satisfy us.

Except...that's not what we mostly think. The particular restlessness that I experienced in my youth is today in fact a near-universal disease. Virtually all of us believe that the good life is had only by those who live elsewhere, away from our own limited, ordinary, insignificant and small-town lives. Our culture has colonised us to believe that wealth, celebrity, and comfort are the adequate object of the human intellect and will. They are, for us: “Being as such.”

“I was reading to begin to befriend the restless complexities inside my own soul”

In our culture's current perception, we look at the beautiful bodies, celebrity status, and wealth of our athletes, movie stars, TV hosts and successful entrepreneurs and believe that they have the good life and we don't. We're on the outside, looking in. We're now, in effect, all farm kids in the outback envying life in the big city, a life accessible only to a highly select few, while we're crucified by the false belief that life is only exciting elsewhere, not where we live.

But our problem is, as Rainer Marie Rilke once pointed out to an aspiring young poet who believed that his own humble surroundings didn't provide him with the inspiration he needed for poetry, that if we can't see the richness in the life we're actually living then we aren't poets.

QUESTIONS of faith

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

Are science and religion enemies?

One common argument presented against religious people is that faith is completely incompatible with science and the empirical method. The sentence might go something like this: “I only believe in what we can see, analyse and prove, whereas religion says we should believe ideas based solely on faith. They're completely contradictory.”

Discussions like these are all too frequent, and although may be phrased in different and more complicated ways, portray the view that religion is anti-science, and that the scientific method alone should be the driving force of all inquiry.

The belief that only science can teach about the external world became known as ‘positivism’ and was very popular in the middle of the 20th Century. This position recognised true only that which could be scientifically verified or that which was capable of logical or mathematical proof. However, most philosophers came to reject this outlook, namely because the position couldn't be proved empirically, and so was self-contradictory.

The almost ubiquitous rejection of positivism showed that there are discoveries to be made in life about the universe and ourselves that precluded the scientific method.

Gravity

The philosopher Stephen J Gould, for example, proposed a popular theory about science and religion, referring to them as non-overlapping magisteria. He suggested that science explores facts whereas religion explores values. So, while science might be able to tell us about how gravity works, religion explains concepts like morality and beauty. It's not that each

field are enemies of one another, but that they simply don't overlap.

In opposition to Gould's hypothesis, the Church teaches that science and religion go hand in hand with one another – they are friends and should be integrated. This is because science cannot explain fully the true picture of our world, and this struggle can be illuminated by a philosophical and theological perspective.

So, when scientists say the world ‘popped into being’ out of nothing, a different perspective allows us to explore the concept of nothing and whether that scientific claim is coherent.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes it best: “Though Faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between Faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses Faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth.”

“Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God.

“The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conservator of all things, who made them what they are.”

Condensed to one sentence, Catholics believe that God has made the external world accessible to us in all of its complexity, and through reason complimented with faith we can learn more about it and ourselves.

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

Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today



Lent
Journey
through the
liturgical year

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Dare to say yes!

Ameera Ahmed

“Christianity is not a collection of truths to be believed, or rules to be followed, or of prohibitions. Seen that way, it puts us off. Christianity is a person who loved me immensely, who demands and asks for my love. Christianity is Christ” (cf. St Oscar Romero, Homily, 6 November 1977). It means pursuing the dream for which he gave his life: loving with the same love with which he loved us. These words – originally spoken by St Oscar Romero at a homily in 1977, and quoted by Pope Francis during his welcoming speech in World Youth Day (WYD) Panama on the January 24, 2019 – have stayed with me ever since I heard them and continue to shape every aspect of my thoughts, actions and behaviour. Even as I start to write this article – it is St Valentine’s day, and I am conscious again of the word love, and how I continue to encounter it in different aspects of my day, as though God is constantly whispering to me, reminding me how much I am loved, and encouraging me to continue to express His love in all things. This is the power of WYD: to encounter God in places, things and words unexpected, and to be completely and utterly changed by it.

So – what is WYD? It is a special appointment set by St Pope John Paul II, to gather young people from all over the world to celebrate faith. Contrary to its name – World Youth Day actually runs over five days which usually goes in the order of an Opening ceremony, Welcoming of the Pope, Stations of the Cross, Vigil with Adoration, and concludes with a Closing Mass, where the location of the next WYD is announced. Each WYD event usually has a theme around which all the events are focussed – this year’s theme was ‘Dare to say yes!’ (Luke 1:38).

» Continued on Page 28

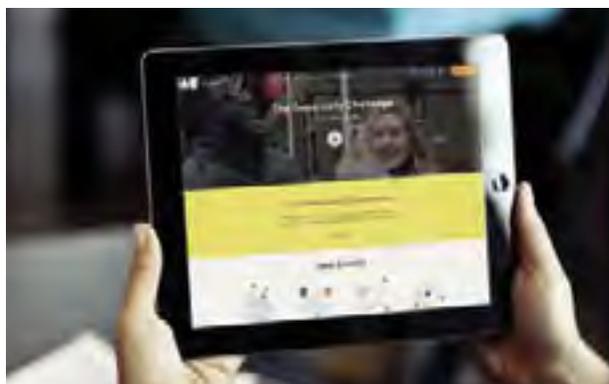


Welcome to this week’s Cornerstone

Scripture:

This week’s reading is from St Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians

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Breaking the Word together

David Walsh applies *Dei Verbum* to the parish setting, encouraging group study of Scripture.

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Fish & Tips:

The ‘40 acts’ generosity challenge for Lent this year.

Page 29



Please spread the word and join us on the journey of the building tomorrow’s parish today – a familial community of faith, fostering authentic, intentional discipleship. If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on eoin@irishcatholic.com.

Dare to say yes!

» Continued from Page 27

Ameera Ahmed recounts her experience at World Youth Day in Panama, January 2019.

I am blessed to have attended two World Youth Days so far – Krakow in 2016, and Panama 2019 – and I still remember to this day how I felt when I first heard about WYD from our Pastoral Worker. A gathering of lots of young people who are all there purposely to celebrate their faith? I was so there! Up to that point, I had been walking a lonely road, as I was one of the few young people in my parish who were still actively practising their faith. But even with my enthusiasm, my first experience of Krakow completely exceeded my expectations. And even more, opened my eyes to the fact that there was a larger youth community here in Dublin who also still had a strong and vibrant faith. I was not a dying breed.

“So fast-forward now to 2018 – and I was approached to see if I was interested in attending WYD Panama as a volunteer leader.”

So fast-forward now to 2018 – and I was approached to see if I was interested in attending WYD Panama as a volunteer leader. My first instinct was YES, and then the doubts started flooding in. It was very far away. We were

going to be away for longer this time. The cost, would I be able to get time off work, so many doubts. But once I reflected on the experience I had in Krakow, all my doubts faded away. I said YES, and just like that, I found myself in the Airport at 5am on a cold wet Friday January morning starting to embark on a once in a lifetime experience with at least 25 other pilgrims!

We arrived in Panama almost 24 hours later to a very warm humid climate. It was evening in Panama when we arrived, but was still very hot! We were welcomed by a very colourful poster from our host parish, and were driven on a bus to the church that would become our focal point for the rest of our stay in Panama: Parroquia Santiago De Apostol. Once we arrived at the Parish, we received a welcome even Beyoncé would be envious of. We had local Panamanians, as well as Latvian and New Zealand pilgrims who had arrived earlier in the day lined to the left and right of us cheering and clapping us into the church with flashing lights from the camera. It was like a red-carpet welcome and for me a demonstration of how much our arrival had been anticipated and embraced by the local community. We were led to the back of the church for some food, music, and lots of dancing! The biggest shock of the night was fireworks! At almost 10pm Panama time –



which for our body clocks was 3am! We were then coupled with families who had prepared to host us for the length of our stay in Panama, and set off to bed!

The next day (Saturday) we spent some time getting to know our fellow pilgrims from Latvia and New Zealand. Well we were supposed to go for a walk to the old city of Panama – but it was far too hot to walk. Panama was very, very hot. Sometimes almost unbearably so. Even the locals felt it. It was an excel-

lent time because we were mixed into groups and got a chance to hear about other young people's experience of faith in other countries, and what brought them to attend WYD. It was so comforting to hear other people my age talk about their journey and struggles of faith in such a real way that I could relate to. We ended by celebrating Mass with the local community in both English and Spanish – we were very lucky that our host parish priest, Fr Rolando, was fluent in English. It was

great to celebrate Mass with so many young people, and to see the effect that it was having on the Panamanians as well who were just attending their usual Vigil Mass.

“It was such a joyous occasion, and one that still stays with me in fond memories as I ponder how I can try to bring back some of that energy and life back here to my local parish in Dublin.”

Sunday started with another multilingual Mass. Now, this Mass was much livelier than the Vigil Mass. There was a group of Panamanians who lead most of

the music for the ceremony, and got people clapping and singing along with enthusiasm that was very contagious! The different pilgrim groups were invited to lead different aspects of music – with the Irish group chosen to sing the Gloria and Alleluia. We held hands when we prayed the “Our Father”. We hugged each other for La Pas, the sign of peace. It felt more like we were a true family and not just individuals attending Mass separately. It was such a joyous occasion, and one that still stays with me in fond memories as I ponder how I can try to bring back some of that energy and life back here to my local parish in Dublin.

To be continued – Ameera concludes her account of WYD 2019 in next week's Cornerstone.

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 Reading from the coming Sunday's Mass. While originally written to the early Church communities, Scripture is the living Word of God, so each week we can read what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today.

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture will come true: Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? Now the sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.

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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.



Breaking the Word together



David Walsh applies *Dei Verbum* to the parish setting, encouraging group study of Scripture.

On November 18, 1965, the Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*), one of the four foundational documents of the Second Vatican Council, drew attention to the primary importance of Bible study in the life of the Church and, indeed, in the life of all baptised Catholics. The document “forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful” to undertake the study of “the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ”, by reading the Sacred Scriptures. “For such is the force,” continues the text, “and power of the Word of God, that it can serve the Church as her support and vigour, and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of the spiritual life” and so access to Sacred Scripture should be open wide to everyone.

“And since all interpretations of the Word the God are based on the literal sense, this is always a secure and authentic point of departure.”

Arising from these important guidelines, one of the most basic initiatives that could be part of the pastoral and catechetical landscape in the life of every Catholic community is parish based scriptural study. Having visited the Holy Land four times and followed in the footsteps of St Paul in Greece twice, studying and praying

with the Gospels and the Letters of St Paul, one has the distinct advantage of appreciating the historicity of sacred texts and truth of Jesus Christ, in the cultural and geographical context that God was pleased to reveal Himself. And since all interpretations of the Word the God are based on the literal sense, this is always a secure and authentic point of departure.

“There are some excellent resources to facilitate a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scripture in small and large parish group settings.”

There are some excellent resources to facilitate a deeper understanding of the sacred Scripture in small and large parish group settings. For example, with simple resources, in a weekly Bible Study one can easily demonstrate the connection between the Old Testament Reading with the Gospel for the following Sunday. In our weekly Bible Study in Portmarnock, (taking place now for over 10 years) we always make use of the very excellent non-technical commentaries which seek to explain the Word of God according the accumulated wisdom of the Church Fathers and Doctors of the Church. The Navarre Bible, or the Ignatius Catholic Bible Study by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch are effective and clear commentaries replete with positive references to help us to approach the Word of God with

humility and reverence. So, the scope to nourish the interior life and deepen our personal relationship with Jesus is grounded. Group discussion and personal reflection within a shared context can be part of these study groups, as good resources shed light on the liturgical providence of cycle of readings, especially focused through the readings on Sundays. Since Scripture is given to us, moreover, not to produce academics but Christians, third level learning may be helpful but not essential to make intentional disciples of “the Word of God, made flesh”.

Embarking on serious Biblical studies, however, does necessitate a number of ground rules that are absolutely foundational to avoid pitfalls, veering off course and turning into cul-de-sacs. We need to develop a proper understanding of the inspiration and inerrancy of sacred Scripture, the senses of Scripture, biblical authority and the criteria for biblical interpretation. Ultimately, any study of the sacred texts should lead to deepening of our devotional life, stemming from our personal love of the Lord and our desire to discern His will for our lives.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). What St Paul says is as true today as it was for the first century Christians. The Word of God is a pre-eminent light for the moral life, and so as St John Damascus wrote, the text is extremely profitable for the soul. Like a tree planted near a stream, the soul that is watered by sacred Scripture develops heartily and bears fruit in due season. It is with adorned leaves that are always green, with actions pleasing to God.

Fish & Tips

Daily Ideas for Disciples



40 ACTS FOR LENT

40acts is the generosity challenge for Lent, created by UK Christian charity, Stewardship. For eight years, 40acts has asked a question: what if Lent could be about more than just giving stuff up? What if it could be a time of radical generosity as

well as spiritual discipline? Over the years, 40acts has become a movement of over 100,000 people on a mission to impact their communities with generosity – during Lent and beyond.



How can 40acts help me during Lent?

Lent is one of the most important times of year for many Christians around the world, particularly those within the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox traditions, held at a similar level of importance to Advent – the build up to Christmas. Different people observe Lent in different ways, though by and large most people do this by giving something up for Lent. Whether you’re intending to give up chocolate, fast food, alcohol, or the Internet, 40acts encourages you to do something generous during Lent, too. You can sign up for take the challenge at <https://40acts.org.uk>.

40acts for individuals

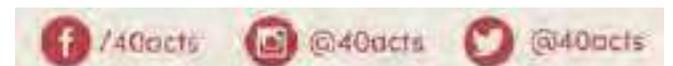
Every day throughout Lent (not including Sundays), wake up to a new generosity challenge and short Bible-based blog straight to your inbox. Each act is designed to sharpen your awareness and give you practical ways to stretch your faith as well as your generosity, with three challenge levels.

40acts for groups

Want to do 40acts as part of a team with others? 40acts Together was created especially for groups. Whether you’re a church, small group, youth group, school, student body or family, 40acts for Groups

provides you with online and printable resources to guide you through a generous Lent as a community. Head to the ‘Resources’ area to download your resources. In 2019, the theme for the church resources is ‘40acts in Acts’ – examining the generosity of the early church via the book of Acts. There are also resources available for schools and small groups! All of the 40acts resources are designed to help you to journey through Lent generously together as a group. As well as our group resources for families, churches, small groups, schools and youth groups, we also have a whole host of prayers for Lent that you can read, as well as a list of Lent prayers for children. In order to help your children better understand this wholly significant time of year we also have a section of our website entirely dedicated to facts about Lent, from the different days of Lent to what days like Ash Wednesday mean to the wider community. If you need any help or guidance through Lent this year, sign up for 40acts, and do Lent generously.

[#40acts on social media](#)



SURVEY ON SACRAMENTS

A reminder that the Archdiocese of Dublin is seeking the views of parents, teachers, priests and parish personnel and the wider faith community on how we might improve the way we prepare and celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation. As many people as possible are invited to take part in this online survey so as to get a wide range of views. Links for

the survey and a short explainer video is available at www.dublindiocese.ie. While the initiative is in the Archdiocese of Dublin, the idea and the survey questions could be used in other dioceses and parishes to aid fruitful discussion and much needed action across the country. A significant element of building tomorrow’s parish today is shifting from being reactive to being proactive.

EVANGELISATION

Say yes, rather than no, this Lent

Natalie Doherty returns for 'Journey through the liturgical year' for Lent

In February, the green of Ordinary Time took on a whole new meaning for many people in parish. We can't escape the encouragement to think green, act green, be green and live green. There are almost daily reports on the news about some issue surrounding climate and our earth, or, every so often, a breakthrough on how to recycle plastic into something useful. There is also a large number of students taking the climate challenge into their own hands with their weekly protest outside the Dáil on Fridays under their #FridaysForFuture campaign. We can't escape, but nor should we want to escape.

In January, I had the privilege to travel with an amazing group of pilgrims from the Dublin Diocese to Panama for World Youth Day. It was a transforming experience in such an exotic location. The people were truly living the Gospel and Pope Francis was highly encouraging to those with the deepest of faith, and those who were on the edge

of faith. It struck me that he had quite a bit of nature images in his speeches, where he spoke of roots and planting the future opportunities for our young people. World Youth Day began with a congress day based on *Laudato Si'* and how young people can rise up to the challenge and need to care for our common home. I began to see *Laudato Si'* around, particularly the rubbish system that was adopted all over the city, including our host parish. It was a simple recycling structure that is easily adaptable and will make the difference needed. The trip and what I saw gave me much to think about on the green of our life and parish. Our slogan for the trip that we wore on our t-shirts and in our hearts, was "Dare to Say Yes!" and we each made a commitment to say "Yes!" to do something so that Panama wasn't just a wonderful trip, but rather an important step on our faith journey.

Our liturgical space will now change over the coming



week and purple will draw us back into our time of preparation. Just because we don't see the green, it doesn't mean that it isn't or can't be present. Lent is primarily a time of penance that prepares us to celebrate the Paschal Mystery, the highpoint of our liturgical year in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Lent is always a test of willpower, but what if you could put that energy to good use and do something selfless for our world now and for future generations?

This Lent, we in the parish are encouraging everyone to turn Lenten preparation on its head and to say "Yes!" rather than to say "No!". To take up a new green habit that may possibly become a new lifestyle choice. We have a number of suggestions that

are being added to the eco-parish space and each suggestion can become a new habit for young to the not so young. Some might say that the essence of what Lent is about can be lost in this new challenge, but as one suggestion is giving up electricity for an hour each day, for many that could be the worst imaginable penance!

Some of our "Say Yes to..." options are the following but are not limited and you may well have a great option yourself. We're encouraging all parishioners to pick one and make a pledge in the eco-space to commit to their action during Lent.

1. Eco Team: sign up to be part of the parish eco team that will begin meeting and planning the path forward, link with Eco Congregation

Ireland and working towards achieving the Eco Awards available for the parish.

2. 40 Days, 40 Items: from Ash Wednesday onwards remove one item of clothing from your wardrobe that you don't wear or no longer need and put in a bag to be donated to the local SVP or other charity body at the end of Lent. Avoid buying anything new either!

3. Transport: can you leave the car at home and take public transport, cycle or walk somewhere at least one day a week? Walk on Wednesday is a great habit for going to school.

4. Plastic: can you eliminate or significantly reduce the amount of single use plastic used throughout Lent?

5. Shop local: shop as local as possible, particularly for fruit and vegetables.

6. Politicians: local elections are coming up and make a conscious decision to keep it top of your list for canvassers and read up on current County Council plans for Climate Action.

7. Electricity: could you give up electricity for an hour each day?

8. Planting: include some wild flowers, leave the grass from being cut, grow your own items and, reduce and eliminate pesticide use in your garden.

9. Water: become more conscious of the water being used in everyday ways in the house and commit to using less each day.

10. Meat: give up meat at least one day a week during Lent.

Back to the Light

Fr. Joe McDonald

I have come to realise that inner darkness is quite common. I am not talking about being in grief. I am not talking about having received bad news. In fact, one of the core characteristics of the darkness that I am speaking of, is the problem of not really knowing where the feeling has come from. I want to be equally clear I am not speaking of clinical depression. This is a serious condition beyond my remit. In addition to this I would like to add that nothing written here should be heard in any way to minimize the seriousness of this condition. Please do not cut down, or worse still, stop taking any prescribed medication you may be on. No what I am speaking of, is something different. Maybe the blues. A little dip – maybe a little too often for comfort's sake. Maybe melancholia. In any case it is not a nice feeling and it can be triggered off very easily. Once it sets in, it can be difficult enough to shift. With this in mind I scribbled these few lines:

DID YOU EVER FALL DOWN A BLACK HOLE?

Sunday Afternoon
Mooching mode.
Cold in the bones
Cold in the heart.
Here it comes again
Bluer than before.

Beyond tears
Beyond nausea.
Triggered by old faces
Old places
Different me
Same me
Renders me sick,
Stuck.

Happily for me
I know Jesus
Without whom
I'm lost.



It might be helpful to remember that we are not the first to be regularly fighting with darkness and we will certainly not be the last to do so. To tell ourselves that we will definitely beat darkness is to set ourselves up for disappointment. Is the restlessness that is in all of us, not actually part of how we are made? Yes of course there are many things that make our wrestling with the darkness more manageable, ranging from drinking water, fresh air, exercise to a good

book or movie, to a good laugh or cry! However, in my experience good friendship, sacred silence, good quality conversation, music and time alone with the Lord are amongst the best weapons in our armoury on the days of darkness. Sometimes it is important to remind ourselves, and each other, that Jesus is the Great Healer, the Light of the World, the one that not only does not want us to be sick, but in fact wants us to walk in the Light.

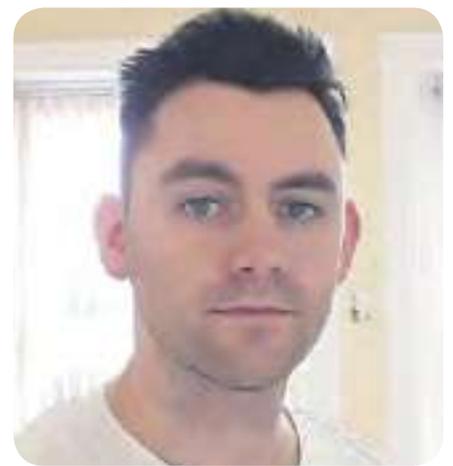
Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 28, 2019

Personal Profile

Giving youth
a reason to stay
with the Faith

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Disordered eating

Body image is a huge issue for many, especially with the concept of a 'perfect' body being perpetuated in much social media which nowadays permeates everyone's reality, but that may be a small, even non-existent factor in the reasons someone develops an eating disorder.

A range of disorders characterised by abnormal or disturbed eating habits is how it's defined, although this may not seem like it would be tough to notice, a person can hide it from their family and friends for so long that it becomes an emergency situation.

For mother-of-three Cora McEvoy (40) from Drogheda, she



Chai Brady focuses on the challenges of eating disorders

was on death's door before being admitted to St Vincent's Hospital for three months to regain her health.

Food started becoming an issue for Cora when she was a teenager, but it was between her Leaving Cert and college that the problem accelerated at an alarming rate.

"I was admitted because I was at such a low weight. It had started a year and half before

that, it was Leaving Cert year and I was really feeling the pressure and it was my way of coping with this transition in life from secondary school into college – into the next phase of my life," Cora says.

"I'm grateful I was admitted at the time, I really was on death's door. I don't think I would be here if I wasn't admitted. My heart went really, really weak and was failing."

After spending three months in hospital with bedrest, her mental health had improved, particularly because her body was getting the nutrition it needed.

Big shift

However the issues reared their ugly head on and off until she was 26 years old and pregnant with her first child. Cora says: "When my son came along life was different for me, there was a big shift and I didn't have the relationship with food that I used to have.

"Don't get me wrong I still have issues, not so much with food, but my eating issue started with anxiety, down deeper to depression, then my coping

mechanism was food. I still tend to, from time to time, suffer bouts of depression, life can throw a lot at you. But I now know the things that I need to do when these feelings come."

From February 25 to March 3 it's Eating Disorders Awareness Week and Bodywhys – the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland – have organised events to heighten knowledge among professionals, volunteers and more.

With several events including an eating disorders conference and a workshop for families/ carers and a programme for parents, carers and family members – there's no doubt the severity of the issue has been and

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Family News



AND EVENTS

You'd be mad not to trad!

For those in the family who like dance and music, check out the Kilkenny Tradfest which will see some of the country's world-famous acts taking to the stage while also showcasing the best of local talent in the city's theatres, pubs and public spaces.

The highlights include the first Tradfest appearance by Donegal's finest and one of Ireland's true supergroups, Altan, in St Canice's Cathedral and the first concert performance by the Banner county's national and world champion Kilfenora Céilí Band in the Watergate Theatre.

Others returning include Inistioge resident and Gloaming lead singer Iarla Ó Lionáird with his long-time collaborator Steve Cooney and Téada with West Kerry's finest Séamus Begley leading the young and energetic band who appeared at the very first Tradfest.

With an all-in festival ticket available for only €90, this March 15-18 event is one worth seeing.

PUSHING IT TO THE LIMIT: Push-ups are an essential exercise for anyone trying to build a stronger chest, but a new study has shown that men who are able to do more than 40 push-ups may have a lower cardiovascular disease risk than peers who can complete fewer push-ups.

"Our findings provide evidence that push-up capacity could be an easy, no-cost method to help assess cardiovascular disease risk in almost any setting," says first author of the study Justin Yang, MD, published in *Jama Network Open*. The investigators' analysis revealed that participants who had been able to complete over 40 push-ups to begin with had a 96% lower cardiovascular risk than men who had completed 10 or fewer push-ups.

However, the researchers warn that because their cohort of participants was made up of individuals in a specific group – active men in their 30s and 40s – the findings may not apply to other groups.



The bees-knees wraps

Plastic has become such an integrated part of our everyday lives that it's hard to even remember how much we rely on it. From toothbrushes and throwaway cutlery, to toys and electronic devices, plastic is just part and parcel of our functionality in the world. Given how prevalent it has become, and the damage it causes, it's wise to try and replace plastic with less environmentally damaging products.

One option is to swap out your cling film with Bee Wraps. The eco-friendly alternatives to plastic work just as effectively as cling film, if not better, as they are reusable. They're versatile, mouldable, strong and water resistant, keeping your food fresh all day.

The wraps are made from beeswax, organic jojoba oil, tree resin and cotton, meaning they can be used for up to one year before being thrown into the compost bin.

Sitting in God's presence



Meditation is the practice of being still in body and mind. When practiced from a secular perspective – for example, in the world of medicine – the intention is often focused on practical benefits for the individual who has taken up the practice. Meditation is enormously beneficial and, over time, we will examine these pragmatic benefits.

Many others who take up the practice of meditation do so from a spiritual perspective. They are aware that many religious, spiritual and wisdom traditions speak of the deeper fruits of meditation: these traditions say that meditation leads to human flourishing and well-being at a very deep level.

And many, including within the Christian tradition, understand meditation as a spiritual path that transfigures the person. The intention in Christian meditation is to be still and silent in the presence of God, so that his grace can flood our hearts. This, in turn, leads us to respond to situations in our lives with love and compassion. In later articles I will describe how children describe these fruits with great beauty and simplicity in their own words.

Perseverance

Meditation can be practiced anywhere, at any time, by anyone – on one's own or as part of a group. For those who take up the practice and persevere with it, it becomes the centre of gravity of their day, the time when they tune in to what is most essential in life.

Meditation can be practiced as a family activity, becoming a centre of gravity for the family and each member of it. St Pope John Paul II spoke of the need to develop in children an attitude of attention and an

Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



experience "a real and profound interior silence". In the recent booklet on mindfulness and Christian meditation from the Irish Bishops Conference it is suggested that schools may wish "to consider introducing a form of Christian meditation on a whole-school basis". I suggest that families too might consider adopting Christian meditation as a family practice.

“It is part of our human nature that when we aim to be still in mind thoughts inevitably arise”

However, some immediate challenges present themselves. For example, it requires in the first instance that at least one member of the family has experience of some form of meditation in the Christian tradition. The good news is that there are many opportunities to learn these practices. Both Christian Meditation Ireland and Contemplative Outreach Ireland have websites which list groups all over Ireland where meditators meet once a week and where beginners are always welcome.

Meditation is very simple to describe but because our minds are such a dominant part of our

humanity, many find it very difficult to let go of thought even for a short while. What would happen if you stopped right now, with the intention of being still in body and mind? Try it for just 30 seconds.

Most people find that while it is relatively easy to be still in body, it is very difficult to be still in mind.

It is part of our human nature that when we aim to be still in mind thoughts inevitably arise. They just appear – before we know it our attention is drawn to a sensation, a feeling or a thought and we begin to reflect on it. It is more that the thought captures our attention rather than we bring our attention deliberately to the thought. But



once caught, the thought takes over and we are not even aware of it.

In a little while the awareness will dawn that we are caught up in the thought, despite our desire to be free of thought. When that happens,

we let go of the thought and return again to our desire to be still in mind.

It helps if we give ourselves something else to focus on. Some traditions focus on the breath, others on a word; in Christian meditation we focus on a sacred word. It doesn't matter what the word is, as long as it doesn't bring thoughts to mind. Using a sacred word is a gentle reminder of our intention to simply be in God's presence; not saying mental prayers, not thinking about God, simply turning the mind toward God.

One might use the word 'Abba' or 'Jesus' or, as John Main recommended, the word 'Maranatha' which is an Aramaic word meaning 'Come, Lord' or 'The Lord has come'.

“It helps if we give ourselves something else to focus on. Some traditions focus on the breath, others on a word”

John Main summarised the instructions for meditation as follows: "Sit down. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly begin to say a single word. We recommend the prayer-phrase 'Maranatha'. Recite it as four syllables of equal length. Listen to it as you say it, gently but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything – spiritual or otherwise. If thoughts and images come, these are distractions at the time of meditation, so keep returning to simply saying the word."

Why not try to meditate once a day for the coming week for five or 10 minutes?

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will be further highlighted.

Founded in 1995 the core of what Bodywhys does is provide support, information, listening and understanding to people affected by eating disorders as well as family members and friends. This is done through helplines, online services, support groups and programmes for families. They are also involved in body positive talks in schools, awareness talks and more.

"I think really there's more awareness than there is understanding," says Barry Murphy of Bodywhys.

"I think people have a very brief understanding, maybe they've heard a couple of terms but don't understand the day to day reality of it. There's obviously a lot more to eating disorders than the actual signs and symptoms as such, it's important to get the message across that it's not ultimately about food.



"An eating disorder is a serious psychological illness with many different layers and complexities. It can unfortunately lead to a person in some circumstances dying or taking their own life as well."

According to HSE statistics, 188,895 people in Ireland will experience an eating disorder at some point in their lives and approximately 1,757 new cases occur in the country each year in the 10-49 age group.

The Health and Research Board found that 14% of admissions to psychiatric units and hospitals in 2017 were children and adolescents with eating disorders. The findings show a stark gender divide with the issue, as females accounted for 89% of eating disorder admissions.

"There's a sense of compulsion that comes into the picture as well, the feeling they have to engage in these behaviours to be in control,

to punish themselves, to feel okay," says Barry, adding that this is connected to the 'eating disorder voice'.

The voice, or inner critic, can be driven or maintained by the eating disorder. It creates a feeling of helplessness, undermines a person's confidence and makes it difficult for them to trust their own decisions and abilities.

“I think really there's more awareness than there is understanding”

Part of what it can do is create certain rules in relation to food, weight, body behaviours and distort logic that conflicts with a person's rational thoughts – contributing to emotional stress.

A good first port of call to get help is to go to a GP, and they may refer a person on to a psychiatrist or specialised service according to Barry. Those suffering or believe they may have issue could also be assisted by dieticians or counsellors.

Recognising the signs of an eating disorder can be extremely difficult, particularly for family members as they may not notice gradual changes in weight or eating habits.

For Cora, her mother and father would have noticed changes in her habits. She wanted to take up swimming and instead of getting a lift Cora wanted to walk to school. On Saturday the family would normally have "a big fry" and she wouldn't eat it, she says: "It affected them a little bit, but they thought nothing of it.

"Then my friends stepped in, they would have noticed my lunch would be half eaten or not at all, or a change in my eating pattern that I wouldn't eat junk food I would have brought in fruit. Then obviously losing weight then too," she says.

"My friends brought it to the attention of my teachers and they brought it to the attention of my parents.

"Living with family, they don't notice it, if you see someone all the time you don't notice the weight loss, at the time I was saying it wasn't an issue and I'm eating fine – and I was managing fine.

The closer it got to her Leaving Cert her parents focused on trying to

encourage her to get through it, but it was after that Cora "drastically" lost weight, which led to the hospital admission.

Cora described her eating disorder as her "little crutch in life", and just like an alcoholic or someone addicted to drugs, you don't want that taken away. "You try and give every excuse underneath the sun to keep your behaviour going so that was, in my head, my way of life – this is how I want to live.

"But then it got too addictive, I did understand, when I did get very low in weight and then exercising got really addictive as well, I knew this wasn't right – I knew this wasn't the proper behaviour. I put my friends out of my life.

"I couldn't get myself out of that hole, thinking back now I would have died – hand on my heart – I couldn't change my behaviour I couldn't change how I thought about things. I wasn't getting help at all."

Cora says that 20 years ago many people didn't recognise the seriousness of the condition and would say "she's just looking for attention".

“Your head is just pounding because you literally cannot cope with the thoughts that are coming in”

"They don't see the bigger picture, they don't see how uncomfortable you can feel in your body, how crazy you feel. Your head is just pounding because you literally cannot cope with the thoughts that are coming in, you can't process them and you just feel awful within yourself."

However, now the mother of Jack (12), Jessica (8) and Joey (4), Cora is in a much better place with her mental health, saying that yoga, walking, meditation and mindfulness have helped her get to where she is now. Despite still battling mental health issues from time to time, she's much better equipped to control them, rather than them controlling her.

📌 Those affected or seeking assistance regarding eating disorders can contact Bodywhys at 1890 200 444.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



One of the great contradictions of parenthood is that you, at once, want your children to acquire knowledge, and you want to protect them from knowledge. After all, protecting children's innocence means deliberately keeping certain types of knowledge from them.

Ever since the Garden of Eden, we have equated increased knowledge with paradise lost. We protect our kids' innocence to protect the paradise of their childhoods.

I love seeing my children happy to revert to playing babyish games, without embarrassment. I love it that they do not know about the prevalence of crime, or about wars, lies and greed, except in a very abstract, even jocular, ways. Even though the eldest are critical thinkers, and old enough to doubt, the tooth fairy and Santa remain unquestioned.

Innocence is central to childhood. Its loss represents the loss of childhood itself. Of course, we want our children to grow to fully understand the world, including its shadows. They will learn of crime, corruption and lies. They will learn the horrors of history, such as the Holocaust. They will come away thinking less of our species. Yet we want them to gain such knowledge at the right time, in the right way. For now, when they are small, the world must remain for them a beautiful and safe place, full of goodness.

Settings

For the modern parent, the protection of innocence often involves tweaking the settings of computers and tablets to the most child-friendly options. It is done by limiting screen time, by not having the news on and by not speaking about last week's break-in down the road when they are in the room.

As children grow, parents have less control over what they know. They learn more and more from their friends and peer group. The school they go to and the neighbourhood they grow up in will dictate the friends they have. Choosing a school with the right ethos is important. Indeed, many parents spend thousands to send their

children to private schools, often as much to protect their innocence as for academic reasons. Parents who can afford it typically move out of cities into leafy middle-class suburbs once children arrive. It is a tragedy that – in urban environments, at least – childhood innocence is often a commodity that only parents with money can afford.

In the countryside, innocence is far more commonplace for children. Its retention doesn't usually depend on a parent's bank balance, since everyone tends to go along to the local school together. Most parents agree that country kids have more freedom, yet learn of adult things later, and so remain children for longer.

Pleasant area

I grew up in a pleasant area on the outskirts of a large country village. I vividly recall entering another, darker, world when playing with the children in a less than salubrious part of our nearby city. I encountered terms I had never heard and saw a reveling in detailed knowledge of sexual acts. I remember violence and bullying that still shocks me when I think back. Such experiences, along with a love of nature, made me determined to raise my children in the countryside. I love cities, and we spent some very happy years in Dublin with the kids, but that's what feels right for me.

Our kids go to a small village school. Yet as kids grow up, dysfunction inevitably rears its head. The loss of innocence is contagious. One kid with a horrible home life, with negligent parents, or older siblings amused to teach them things they should not know, can disrupt many others. An erosion of innocence occurs, as children realise from bitter experience a sad truth about humanity: some people – even children – enjoy inflicting pain, and humiliating others.

And so innocence is eroded, and kids become, sadly, wiser as to the nature of humanity. Yet if the foundation of their lives is in goodness, and kindness, they will have the resilience to overcome.

Giving youth a reason to stay with the Faith

Personal Profile



Chai Brady

Kilmore's new Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry has his fair share of challenges in a world in which many young people are increasingly moving away from the Church, but he is determined to give them a reason to stay.

Francis Keaney (29) will be spearheading initiatives that aim to encourage the youth of the diocese to use their talents to help and inspire others.

"We do a lot of work with the John Paul II Awards, which works great for the year or the two years that they're involved in it but I suppose the biggest challenge is trying to hold on to them and giving them projects after that," he says.

"I know for myself one of the best things I've done over the last few years is getting involved in charities like the Special Olympics and the Irish Pilgrimage Trust. It's just a way of introducing young people into thinking: 'How I can help other people? What can I do to make a difference in other people's lives? How can my own talents inspire other people?'"

Community

Supporting young people who leave school and want to proceed to university and their careers is "absolutely our job", he says, but trying to keep them involved in their parish and community is also important – even if that's just on a weekend when they return home if they've moved away.

"So I think it's just a matter of giving them the opportunity to do



that," he adds.

A native of Glenfarne parish in Leitrim, where he was an altar server when he was younger, Francis has two siblings, a brother and a sister and grew up in a family who have "a strong faith".

“Over the last few years, I have worked away from home a lot so I never really got the chance to work within my own diocese before”

Throughout the years Francis says Fr John Quinn of his home parish "has kept in contact over the years" and has been a huge support. One of his earliest memories was of his "very good" primary school teacher in St Michael's NS in Glenfarne who used to read parables from the Bible.

Francis later went into teaching

himself, he studied Theology and Philosophy at All Hallows College where he graduated with a BA degree in 2013.

"It really nurtured my faith more than anything else," Francis says. "I suppose the biggest challenge in first and second year was trying to separate the subject of theology from my own personal belief, to an academic belief."

He says despite this in third and fourth year, "I really got to grips with it and really started enjoying it".

From there it was on to Trinity College Dublin where he received a Higher Diploma in Education and then earned a Master's degree in NUI Galway.

Since then he has taught in a number of schools including St Clare's Comprehensive in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, St Louis' Community School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo and



Pupils from Bailborough in Kilmore diocese receive their Pope John Paul II awards in 2017.

most recently in Roscommon Community College.

Teaching religion in secondary schools, he says his students "reacted to the subject really, really well".

"Which was surprising because I thought in this day and age they might reject it, but if you make the classes interesting and make it relevant to their lives they really rolled with it which is very encouraging indeed."

Thinking about faith and what it means to them in their own lives is really what it's about, he says, "I always say to them, 'your opinion matters as long as you can back it up with reason or logic'".

“It's our job to provide opportunities for young people to develop personally, spiritually and professionally”

"If you can support your opinion, than absolutely express it, whether you agree with me or not, or agree with the Catholic Church or not, but there has to be a reason behind your opinion."

With a plethora of practical knowledge of working with teenagers and young adults it's no wonder he was chosen for the role.

Francis says about his appointment: "I am very much

looking forward to the next few months. Getting to work with young people in any way is great opportunity; but to have the advantage of putting the structures in place to help young people develop their faith is a massive bonus. Over the last few years, I have worked away from home a lot so I never really got the chance to work within my own diocese before.

"It will be an amazing to go around the parishes and schools and see a few familiar faces now and then. I have been to a number of secondary schools already and the enthusiasm and ambition is infectious."

His skills and interests aren't solely focused on education and youth ministry, he currently plays an active role in his local parish community of Glenfarne where he is a Minister of the Word in his local church, St Mary's, and is an avid fan of GAA.

His hobbies include musical theatre and acting. He loves all kinds of music and takes part in local productions as often as possible.

"In my experience, young people are always willing to take on new challenges; so it's our job to provide opportunities for them to develop personally, spiritually and professionally. I can't wait for the year ahead and to put my stamp on the Kilmore diocese," he adds.



Green Fingers

Paul Gargan

March is the month for rose pruning in your garden

March – this month – has a very appropriate name, growth in the garden goes from an almost stand still to quick march now that spring is here.

March in the garden is the month for rose pruning. Weather dependant mid-March is ideal but if it is very cold, leave it until later in the month. If you leave it until next month, the plants will still flower, just later than usual. The reason for not pruning earlier is new growth may be damaged by frost.

There are some types of roses you don't prune now, old fashioned roses, climbers and ramblers are pruned after they finish blooming (late summer). Shrub and species grown for their flowers also after flowering finishes (mid summer), those varieties grown for their hips such as rosa rugosa cannot be pruned now, lightly trim them in late winter.

Types that need pruning now are patio and ground cover roses. These just need a tidy up.

Using sharp secateurs, cut out any weak, broken or overcrowded stems and lightly cut off the end of stems that have died back.

Modern bush roses (hybrid teas and floribundas) are the ones that are most important to prune.

They flower on the tips of their stems and if left unpruned you will need a ladder to see the flowers. Using secateurs, they should always be sharp and clean, start by taking out any dead, diseased or damaged shoots. Then remove any that are weak and feeble or crossing the centre of the bush, causing congestion.

At this point have a good look all around the plant at what stems are left. Think about what you should do next. The shape at the finished rose bush should be like a wine glass with four to five good healthy stems. Pick the ones you are to keep. They should be the thickest,

strongest, healthiest looking ones. Take out the rest. With the four to five you are keeping, select an outward facing bud approx 50cm/20in above ground level.

Compost

Make your cut sloping away from the bud about 1cm/0.5in above the bud. When you are finished, give your roses a generous helping of homemade garden compost as a mulch, be careful to leave a small area clear around the stem.

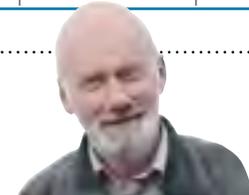
Prune dogwoods and willows, grown for their coloured winter stems, by cutting the oldest stems 15cm/6in from ground level. This encourages the growth of new stems which have the brightest colour. Prune Buddleia and elders by cutting last year's growth to 15cm/6in from the main framework. Buddleia flowers at the tip of the stem, won't be visible if left unpruned.

Elders if hard pruned produce bigger, more spectacular foliage. If you grow elders for their flowers rather than for their foliage, prune them lightly as hard pruning favours foliage over flowers.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Events at Vatican summit intrigue media

The most prominent religious affairs story in the media last week was the child abuse summit in Rome. Commentary varied from optimistic to cynical and all shades between.

Some Catholics called for a review of Catholic teaching on sexuality, but I felt they needed to be more specific. That position could mean anything from scrapping the Church's teaching to explaining and promoting it better. If the abusers had been following Church teaching, the abuse would not have happened and there would have been no victims. The abusers knew well it was wrong, hence the manipulative secrecy.

Last Friday night's **Leap of Faith** (RTÉ Radio 1) was one of the more insightful programmes on the matter. It was a wise move to include Prof. Donald Palmer in the deliberations as he was an expert on the behaviour of institutions. He was hopeful the Church could be reformed but found "a tremendous amount of inertia". He found the leadership too insulated and thought the entire organisation should be involved in policy formation on the issue.

Abuse survivor Marie Collins was right to draw attention to abuses of power, which, she thought gave rise



RTÉ presenter Marian Finucane.

to a sense of moral superiority and perhaps a sense of license. She could well have added arrogance to the mix. She thought the summit was "a sincere effort", however late it was to be doing this. Chris White of the *Crux* website found the narrative dominated by abuse survivors who were holding press conferences, and he referenced Pope Francis' call for the bishops to listen to the cries of survivors.

Fr Joe McDonald had an admirable commitment to the Church and saw drastic solutions coming in the workings of the Holy Spirit ("when she dances her creative dance"). Mind you, I don't know if characterising the Holy Spirit as female is any more helpful than characterising the Holy Spirit as male!

It seemed he wanted to see

the existing "abusive institution" converted to a smaller (why?) more humble, more inclusive community. Whatever the nuances all contributors seemed hopeful to varying degrees, without being ecstatically optimistic. Fr McDonald also wanted Church teaching on sexuality to be examined, but wasn't clear on what direction this might take.

Dark ages

Likewise with ethics lecturer Gina Menzies in discussion with Michael Kelly, Managing Editor of *The Irish Catholic*, on **Today With Sean O'Rourke** (RTÉ Radio 1) earlier last Friday. Though also vague on the changes needed, she however was much more negative about it, suggesting its teaching on these matters was 'in

the dark ages'.

She thought the Church didn't understand that we were sexual beings, though I'd suggest it was well understood and that was precisely why there were so many prescriptions and obsessions about it, at least until the mid-60s, when they seemed to back off and left a vacuum in which attitudes to sex swung to the other extreme. Kelly pointed out a key irony at the end of the interview – in an effort to protect the institution and avoid scandal, misguided clerics caused the Church to lose its moral authority in many corners of the world.

I kept up to date with developments at the summit through **News Nightly** (EWTN) which was well worth a look for a Catholic perspective, not just on Church matters but on US politics as well. The show



Gina Menzies.

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTÉ Radio 1, Sunday, March 3, 11am

Sunday Mass is with the Carrigaline Singers and a gathered congregation from Carrigaline, Co. Cork. The celebrant is Fr Sean Healy SMA.

FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

EWTN, Wednesday March 6, 11am

Dr Michael Waldstein, English translator of *Theology of the Body* revisits Pope St Paul VI's prophetic encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*.

VOGUE: TRIAL BY SOCIAL MEDIA

RTÉ1, Wednesday night, March 6, 1.35am

Vogue Williams explores the power that online platforms have to bring about the downfall of anyone in a matter of hours.

is accessible on satellite, on piped TV and on the EWTN App for Apple and Android devices.

Last Friday's episode featured an interview with our own Archbishop Eamon Martin, who spoke of the moving testimony of abuse survivors, the "heinous crimes" of the perpetrators, the importance of accountability and his hope that the bishops will leave Rome with a commitment to concrete actions, the latter a sentiment expressed by many commentators. We also heard from abuse survivor Shaun Dougherty who was one of those giving testimony. He felt progress was always made when meetings with survivors took place, but more was needed.

Reaction to the outcome of the summit varied from disappointment to cautious optimism – a range of views evident on **Marian Finucane** (RTÉ Radio 1) last Sunday, with contributions from journalists Paddy Agnew, David Quinn and Marian herself. Marian thought the 21 reflection points of the summit were strong, Agnew felt it was important the summit had happened at all, and Quinn thought it gave developing world bishops an opportunity to be pro-active before a huge local crisis struck their countries. We know all about that.

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Pat O'Kelly

Music

Daring tintinnabulations on display for all to savour

Besides organising its touring programme, Music Network, which stemmed from the now defunct Music Association of Ireland's 'Country Tours', also administers the government-sponsored Music Capital Scheme.

The recently announced 2019 fund of €270,250 will be dispensed towards "the purchase of musical instruments to both non-professional performing groups and to individual performing musicians".

Since its establishment in 2008, the Music Capital Scheme has assisted almost 350 individual musicians, groups and organisations and has benefited some 35,000 people throughout Ireland. Applications for funding for 2019 should be made to Music Network before the 2pm



Claire Duff.

Thursday, March 21 deadline.

Further information about the Scheme is available by contacting programmes' administrator Sarah Cunningham on 01 4750224 or

at capitalscheme@musicnetwork.ie.

Earlier this month Music Network's latest tour showcased the commanding musicianship of Claire Duff, one of the country's foremost baroque violinists. Recitals in Birr, Clifden, Dun Laoghaire, and Listowel followed the initial Dublin event in St Finian's Lutheran Church on Adelaide Road.

Accompanied by Dieppe-born harpsichordist Benjamin Alard, Claire Duff's programme was devoted mainly to Bach, although she began with a sonata by Corelli – the Italian composer much admired by JSB. Exceptionally stylish, Ms Duff's colourful playing also caressed darker viola hues in moments of tender deliberation.

On his own, Benjamin

Alard offered a Bach *Adagio* and *Fugue*, the latter on a theme of Corelli, and the ever-popular Italian *Concerto*. If I considered his playing a little precious, he still elicited an unusual range of tone from the Gannon instrument used on this tour. One could be excused for mistaking it, at times, for an 18th Century fortepiano.

But in between these Baroque gems emerged something of a present-day jewel in its own right – the Music Network commissioned *Fantasia* (homage to JS Bach) by Jane O'Leary. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Dr O'Leary has been living in Galway since 1972.

Doctorate

A founder member of Aosdána, she is a graduate of New

York's Vassar College; holds a composition PhD from New Jersey's Princeton University and has been conferred with an honorary doctorate of music from NUI. Jane O'Leary is also artistic director of *Concorde* – an ensemble with a penchant towards contemporary music that she helped found in 1976. The extensive range of Dr O'Leary's own compositions has brought considerable performances abroad.

Her *Fantasia* fitted agreeably into Music Network's tour programme. As the composer pointed out in her introduction, the term *Fantasia* implies "freedom, unpredictability [and] an element of surprise" – components ingeniously expressed in her commissioned piece.

She mentioned as well

that while writing the work she "tried to follow the style of Bach's period and the particular qualities of sound inherent in these [violin and harpsichord] instruments from another era".

But this *Fantasia* is also an imaginative excursion into virtuosic violin writing, reminding me, here and there, of Paganini's flamboyant *Caprices*. Certainly Claire Duff responded to the music with a contrasting combination of uninhibited élan and discreet sensitivity.

The harpsichord's contribution seemed more restrained but it also made significant 'sharp incisions' particularly in two cadenzalike incursions where glittering tintinnabulations displayed their own daring involvement.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Thomas Cromwell: an ill-fated power in the land

Thomas Cromwell: A Life

by Diarmaid MacCulloch
(Allen Lane, €35)

Robert Marshall

The evil that men do lives after them, / the good is oft interred with their bones... This apposite quotation from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* comes to mind when reflecting on this magisterial book written by Diarmaid MacCulloch about the life of Thomas Cromwell (1485 c.-1540).

MacCulloch is professor of the History of the Church at Oxford University and the author of a biography of Cromwell's friend Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) first published in 1996 (revised 2016).

This book seeks to answer the question 'how did a brewer's son come to transform England in the 1530's?' It is a chronological biography of a controversial figure and not a thematic approach.

Following an apprenticeship served under Thomas Cardinal Wolsey in the 1520's, Cromwell for nine years (1531-1540) was a servant of Henry VIII (1491-1547). Cromwell had been born in Putney of parents whose social ranking MacCulloch places between yeoman and minor gentry. MacCulloch does not accept Hilary Mantel's view of the brushes Cromwell's father had with the law. Instead he sees the fines paid by Walter Cromwell as a licence fee paid in connection with Cromwell senior's business selling ale.

MacCulloch is too much of a gentleman to unpick the detail of Hilary Mantel's novels. Indeed he pays her the complement that they are "novels set in the 16th Century with a profound knowledge of how that era functioned".

Licence

This endorsement raises the question of how historians should communicate the fruits of their research to the public, which funds that research, and what licence the historian will allow the novelist: a debate which will not be settled here.

Cromwell masterminded the implementation of Henry's policies. These stemmed



Thomas Cromwell.

from a quest for the stability of the realm through the provision of a male heir. The possession of the throne by Henry Tudor rested upon his father's victory at Bosworth Field (1484), but the fragile dynasty was threatened by potential claimants of Plantagenet stock, some from time to time plotting treason.

“More, like Cromwell, knew just how difficult it was to head off King Henry's destructive whims”

Cromwell often acted on his own initiative pursuing his own evangelical policies and building considerable personal landholdings. Cromwell proclaimed his loyalty to Wolsey his fallen master by taking the chief on Wolsey's heraldic shield for the fesse on his own: a point that cannot have been lost on the King and others who could read heraldry as we now read corporate logos.

In taxation of the clergy and the dissolution of the

monasteries, Cromwell expanded a process of reform begun by Wolsey. In Henry's quest for a male heir, Cromwell oiled the process of the divorce of Catherine of Aragon to facilitate the Boleyn marriage, but never forgave her role in the downfall of Wolsey. They may both have been religious radicals: never friends, nor Anne his patron, Cromwell seized the opportunity to destroy her in 1536.

As a servant of the King, Cromwell cannot escape moral responsibility in implementing his monarch's often violent decisions. He sought to persuade St Thomas More (1478-1535) and the ailing Bishop John Fisher of Rochester (1469-1535) to accommodate themselves to the Act of Supremacy. He failed, but in doing so made it clear to More, with whom a mutual respect continued to the end, that old friendships counted for nothing against the Minister's loyalty to the King.

More, like Cromwell, knew just how difficult it was to head off King Henry's destructive whims. It was not made easier by Queen Anne nerving the King against compromise

by her impertinent clamour. In this, it was only the King and his estranged queen who would die in their beds.

Cromwell held a variety of state offices (such as Master of the Rolls, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Privy Seal), and made a lot of money during his years of service to Henry. His favourite forum was parliament and his hand is to be seen in the annotation of draft bills as he pondered their detail; his legacy is significant and MacCulloch impliedly points to the need for legal historians to assess that further.

This book is well illustrated. Surviving portraits of Cromwell are reproduced, including the title page (now attributed to Holbein) of the *Great Bible*. This shows the King delivering the Bible in English to Cromwell and Cranmer for distribution to Church and populace. It began the process of shaping modern English, and in opening the Bible to the common reader, was probably Cromwell's greatest and lasting achievement.

MacCulloch stakes out his purpose clearly. It is to provide a biography of Thomas Cromwell, but not a history of England at the time. He fulfils his task admirably, gainsaying the Tudor historian Geoffrey Elton's opinion that no biography of Cromwell could be written.

In doing so a vast array of minor players are assembled in this work of great learning. MacCulloch often cross references their appearances in the text, but the general reader (who may balk at its length) would be greatly aided by short biographical footnotes.

Mantel saw Cromwell as an observer, well highlighted in the BBC series of her book *Wolf Hall*: a stateable view given the apparent destruction of the 'out tray' of Cromwell's correspondence noted by MacCulloch.

Energy

MacCulloch laments this loss but has uncovered a personality of immense administrative ability and indefatigable energy. That perhaps is to be expected of a man to whom MacCulloch credits the setting of the compass for the modern English state and by extrapolation the USA.

What is unexpected is the private man who, following the death of his wife and two daughters in 1529, never re-married, but supported an illegitimate daughter. He distanced his son from the pestilence of London and the viperous Tudor court by arranging his education in Cambridge, and Ludlow on the Marches of Wales, with summers spent in East Anglian parsonages. The private and the public persona interacted as that son married a Seymour 'of Wolfe Hall', and so became the King's brother in law.

Cromwell courted Catherine's daughter, the Lady Mary in the aftermath of the execution of Anne Boleyn. His purpose was not amorous but to secure her acquiescence in the succession. Here MacCulloch notes the growing ties between the Tudors, Seymors and Cromwells as the Lady Mary and Queen Jane acted as godparents to Cromwell's grandchildren.

Cromwell was building up animosities on the conserva-

tive side of Henrican politics which lead to his fall in 1540.

Appointed the King's vicegerent (not regent) in ecclesiastical matters in the wake of the Act of Supremacy (1534), MacCulloch points out that Cromwell sat in the House of Lords above the two archbishops and opposite his nemesis the Third Duke of Norfolk also Earl Marshall of England. Norfolk seized the opportunity to strike when Cromwell's ambition (like MacBeth's) "o're leaped itself".

The parvenue privy councillor, recently created Earl of Essex, returned from the House of Lords to the council board on Thursday, June 10, 1540. Norfolk dramatically tore the collar of St George from Cromwell's neck. He was conveyed to the Tower to await his fate. Cromwell's associates deserted him. Save Cranmer, Cromwell had neither friends nor access to the King to preserve him.

His execution followed quickly on the dissolution of the King's marriage to Anne of Cleves: a disastrous initiative in foreign affairs for which Cromwell bore the King's ire. The processes used against him were precisely those he had masterminded against others.

This is a sympathetic biography whose copious detail is skilfully and stylishly presented. It is an essential companion to the reader who wants to understand the background to Tudor policy in Ireland. The serious reader of novels which explore the emotions and dilemmas of the time will also enjoy cross checking their detail.

MacCulloch's finely produced book is worth every cent of its cover price. It brings a sense of balance to an enigmatic personality, suggesting solutions where motives and emotions can often only be implied. In doing so it will provoke further thought and indeed argument about 480 year old matters that remain relevant to our times, as England pursues another Brexit from a different Treaty of Rome.

† Rev. Robert Marshall, a priest ordained in the Church of Ireland, is Deputy Diocesan Registrar of the Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough.

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.

New paths to higher things – as seen by a scientist



Ways to go Beyond and why they Work
by Rupert Sheldrake (Coronet, £20.00/€23.00)
Christopher Moriarty

In his preface, Rupert Sheldrake introduces himself as a research worker who is making a substantial contribution to the human knowledge that he calls “mundane”. He means the facts relating to our material world, which can be ascertained by controlled physical experiments and by mathematics.

According to at least one survey, quoted here, about half the scientists in the world are materialists, believing that ultimately everything in the universe will be explained according to the laws of physics. The other half believe that, along with Hamlet, that “there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy”.

In his very successful career as a scientist, Sheldrake looked far beyond the confines of the field of studies that respond to meticulous observation, experiment and incontrovertible facts.

Reading

His reading embraces an array of philosophical and religious works and his experience includes sojourns with communities of Christian and other faiths. His skills as a communicator have resulted in the publication of eight books in addi-

tion to numerous papers and contributions to shared works.

Brought up as a believing Christian, he went through some years of atheism before returning to life as a church-going Christian with a generous belief in the spiritual acceptability of many other faiths.

The sub-title of this, his ninth book, ‘Spiritual practices in a scientific age’ continues on from previous works in which he advances three important observations.

The first is the degree to which even the most painstaking of scientists are influenced by sentiment as well as by their results.

“What makes humans unique in this sense is their ability to talk and to record their thoughts”

The second is the scientifically demonstrable prevalence of phenomena which do not conform to any known laws of physics.

The third is the probability of the existence of the spirit world, forces which influence human beings and the entire material universe but are not physically part of them.

He very rightly notes that atheism and materialism, however sophisticated the thinking behind them, are alternative belief systems

as incapable of proof as any spiritual concept.

He discusses examples supporting his theme under seven headings: the spiritual side of sport, learning from animals, fasting, psychedelics, prayer, holy days, love of neighbours, and a final question: why do spiritual practices work?

There is a limit to what can be said on these topics within a readable book. So the treatment is frequently brief – but supported by a very comprehensive bibliography.

For as long as knowledge of the human mind has been possible – about 40,000 years – there has been evidence of a spiritual element to thought.

Careful observation of animals, above all of domestic pets, hints strongly that they too have an element of spirituality. Something similar in plants and even in non-living objects are no longer disparaged by all rational thinkers.

What makes humans unique in this sense is their ability to talk and to record their thoughts in writing. This theme is skilfully illustrated by the author in the form of quotations from the greatest philosophers and teachers, from scientifically controlled studies, and from his own personal encounters. While embracing the great concept of humanity and its place in the universe, the book is easy reading, as delightful as it is mentally stimulating.

Mainly about Books

By the books editor

Darwin and the wonders of Creation

It has long amazed me the amount of abuse that creationists and many evangelicals heap upon the head of Charles Darwin.

Much of what is said is simply wrongheaded, or relies on over simplistic interpretations of the Book of Genesis (one of the most challenging books of the Bible in terms of sources, content and ancient editing). These critics, however, seem themselves to have little experience of academic life, or even exposure to academics. The professor in his ivy covered tower is some sort of bogey man.

A period of enforced idleness recently due to illness found me reading Darwin’s *Voyage of the Beagle* (1839) in a copy I was given in my teens. I had not looked into it for a very long time, but for those wishing to understand something of Darwin’s experiences and how they led him to his later theories it is worth reading, at least in part.

The young Darwin then in his 20s, was a favourite student of the professor of geology in Oxford, Charles Lyell, who recommended him as the naturalist for an official voyage of exploration and mapping around the coasts of southern South America.

This youthful Darwin was then intent on a career as a vicar in the Church of England. He was then a theist at least but he must also have carried with him the Unitarian views of his family – Christians who did not accept the divinity of Christ. His religious views (whatever they were) do not intrude into the pages of the book.

On the voyage he was exposed to geological scenes which confirmed in him the ideas of Lyell that the world he saw around him was the result of long ages of change.

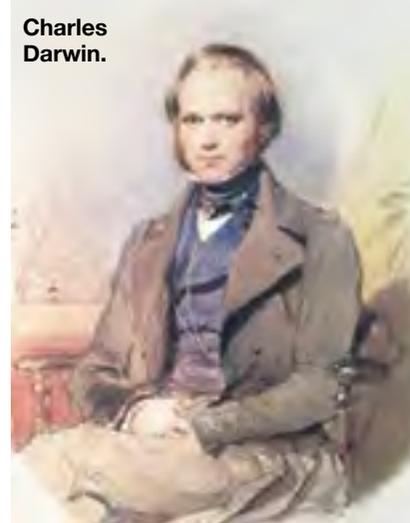
On reaching the Galapagos Islands however he gained another insight into the nature of change. He observed that the finches on the various islands were all slightly different. Isolated from each other, they had developed slightly different characteristics.

Changes

These small biological changes, if extended over the aeons of geological time, he had already observed in Argentina and Chile would produce in the end very different creatures from those of which they started out with.

The basic ideas of the *Origin of Species* were in place. But that book did not appear until the end of 1859, but it, and the *Descent of Man* (1871), proved both popular and controversial.

The idea that the Christian clergy were wholly against him is a mistaken one. Many Presbyterians (perhaps because of the strong opposition in the Anglican churches), were more accepting.



Charles Darwin.

This is the Darwin who still proves controversial. But this is not the only Darwin. In the decades of a very long life he studied flowers and their changes, and also the nature and activities of the common earth worm. His studies of worms – he is the organ of the wormerys that one now finds in so many school – reveals an astonishing side to nature, how everything is connected.

The lowly worm far from being insignificant was one of the most important creatures on earth, because quite simply the action of the worms was what creates and maintains the health of the very soil we walk on, and from which we take so much of our food.

“It is this later Darwin... who seems never to be read by creationists”

To some minds Darwin’s work with worms revealed the real glory of creation, the interdependence of all living things, indeed all things, animal and mineral on the earth.

Yet very strangely it is this later Darwin, the bearded sage whose photograph is so familiar from articles and books, who seems never to be read by creationists. Many of them might well be surprised by what they read.

The Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms, with Observations on their Habits (London, 1881) may not seem to be the most exciting kind of reading; but these ideas expressed in this book go to the very heart of the modern ecological movement.

Before taking Darwin to task about his monkey uncle, perhaps some of his critics should acquaint themselves with a wider range of his ideas, and try themselves to understand what doubtless they would call ‘God’s Creation’ a little better in detail.



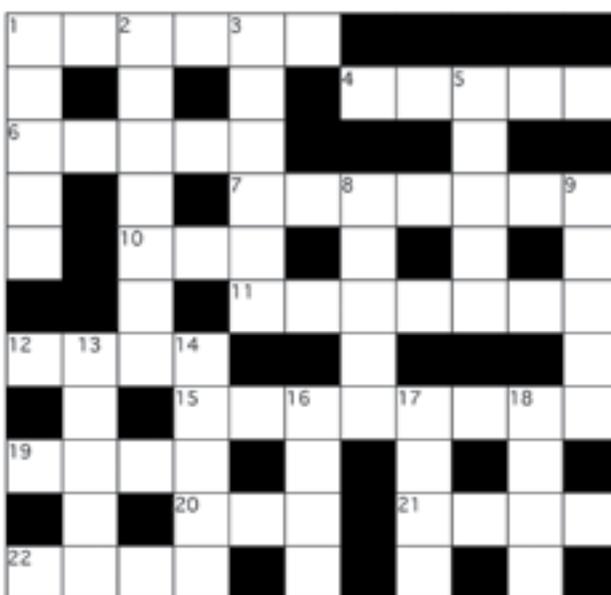
Charles Darwin’s ship, the HMS Beagle.

“The idea that the Christian clergy were wholly against him is a mistaken one. Many Presbyterians were more accepting”

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 271



ACROSS

- 1 Putting money aside for later (6)
- 4 Heroic (5)
- 6 The brother of your mother or father (5)
- 7 Caused harm to (7)
- 10 Black liquid you put in an engine (3)
- 11 Had fun, was entertained (7)
- 12 Hands over money (4)
- 15 Terry Deary wrote the _____ History books (8)
- 19 Light around a saint's head (4)
- 20 Take something by force (3)
- 21 You might say this if you were hurt (4)

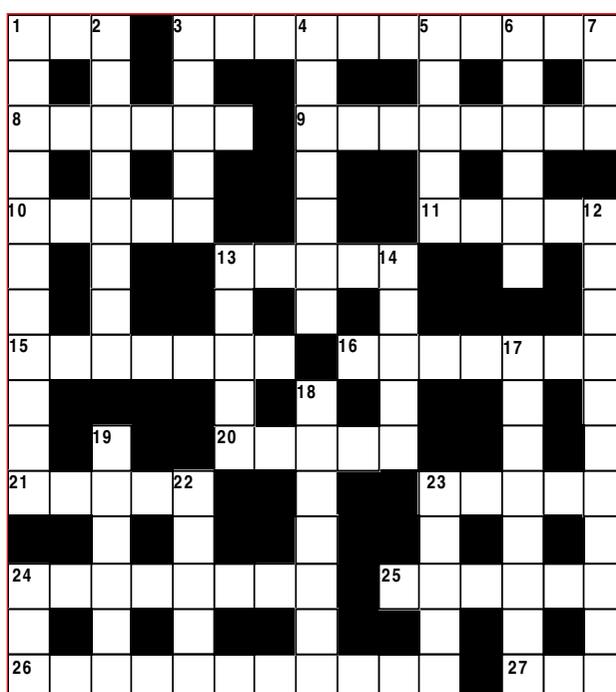
- 22 You tie it with string or rope (4)

DOWN

- 1 Sea creature that looks a bit like an octopus (5)
- 2 A great win (7)
- 3 You use it when sewing (6)
- 5 Cross, very annoyed (5)
- 8 One rank of army officer (5)
- 9 Avoid (5)
- 13 Once more (5)
- 14 Not long (5)
- 16 Red jewel (4)
- 17 Type of metal (4)
- 18 You need a key to open it (4)

Crossword

Gordius 392



ACROSS

- 1 It's unclear which dunderhead I'm to follow (3)
- 3 The clergyman is not tight, by the sound of it, but an unpredictable type nonetheless! (5,6)
- 8 Apply a sanction (6)
- 9 When to mark the calendar in red, using a fast dye (5,3)
- 10 It looks like Mr Wilde had no blemish (5)
- 11 Grades flour with damaged fists (5)
- 13 Will the flowers that grow from these light up the garden? (5)
- 15 Sewing implements (7)
- 16 It's good for Baseball when Mr Simpson finds one of the French (4,3)
- 20 Waste water channel (5)
- 21 Seat (5)
- 23 St Anthony's city is found partially atop a dual carriageway (5)
- 24 Practise this and you'll have lots of mates! (8)
- 25 Write in a careless way (6)
- 26 Angry Don can create quite a schism in the USA! (5,6)
- 27 Find Ms Herzigova

- somewhere in Nevada (3)

DOWN

- 1 Cops, I'm Diana, the confused alcoholic (11)
- 2 Just by looking after hands, it seems it's the entire male I heal! (8)
- 3 One doesn't succeed when roles are reassigned (5)
- 4 Ipswich is in this East Anglian county (7)
- 5 Church recesses made from some scraps, essentially (5)
- 6 Fall asleep with only Wynken and Blynken left on? (3,3)
- 7 Vote of 'No', the opposite of 'Aye' (3)
- 12 Give an epistolist one article - an African Violet (11)
- 13 'The Staff of Life' (5)
- 14 This stirred it up by absconding with a dish (5)
- 17 It's rare, a dog being upset by drivers' anger (4,4)
- 18 Perhaps only the holy can, literally, find a kingfisher (7)
- 19 Brightly-coloured flower (6)
- 22 Initially rubber in Germany is dipped, making it stiff (5)
- 23 An accountant embraced by writer? What a nut! (5)
- 24 Curly-tailed creature (3)

SOLUTIONS, FEBRUARY 21

GORDIUS No.391

Across - 1 Sap 3 Springboard 8 Cayman Islands 9 Largesse 10 Above 11 Throw 13 Codes 15 Scholar 16 Rosebud 20 Durer 21 Group 23 Cater 24 Pories 25 Quarto 26 Assassinate 27 Nap

Down - 1 Socialising 2 Plymouth Brethren 3 Spare parts 5 Bight 6 Assert 7 Dee 12 Windsor soup 13 Chard 14 Scour 18 Treason 19 Movies 23 Crude 24 Pea

CHILDREN'S No.270

Across - 1 Olympics 7 Key 8 Ireland 9 Scarves 12 Elves 15 Small 16 Ash 18 Animal 19 Cellar 20 Pieman

Down - 1 Oak tree 2 Yo-yo 3 Princess 4 Cheer 5 Code 6 Cave 10 Vampire 11 Sultana 13 Later 14 Eagle 17 Harp

Sudoku Corner

270

Easy



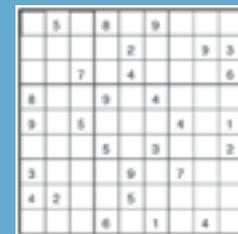
Hard



Last week's Easy 269



Last week's Hard 269



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Notebook

Fr Bernard Healy



An attitude of understanding

“THERE ARE HUNDREDS of churches in Rome, why on earth would you want to visit a Mormon temple?” A fair question from a fellow-priest, but the consecration of a Mormon temple on the outskirts of Rome offered a rare opportunity, because once a temple is consecrated, only Mormons in good standing may enter. Only in the weeks beforehand can outsiders like myself see what’s inside.

A temple isn’t exactly like a church. Mormons meet for their weekly Sunday worship and perform their regular liturgies in their local meeting-houses. They have about 30,000 local congregations worldwide, whereas there are only about 150 temples.

The temple is only for the most sacred of rites – for marriages (sealings), for a form of baptism intended to benefit ancestors and when Mormons wish to draw closer to God by entering into a particular covenant with him.

Mormonism began with the teachings of one Joseph Smith, who in a period of religious revival in 19th-Century America claimed to have received a revelation in order to correct traditional Christianity. He taught that after his Ascension, Our Lord brought the Gospel to the native Americans. From this grew a faith that diverged so much from



The Mormon temple in Rome. Despite its grandeur, it reminded me more of a classy hotel than a place of worship.

house’. Everyone there was imbued with the friendly courtesy which is almost a stereotype. My American Catholic friends have a strong respect for the kindness, integrity and upright behaviour of the Mormons they know.

It was striking how the Temple in its decoration was filled with reminders of Christ and His ministry. Whilst not a Christian piety and devotion is fascinated by the figure of Jesus Christ.

And yet, despite those positive impressions, something about the temple missed the mark for me. Despite its grandeur, the richness of its fittings, and the obvious devotion surrounding it, I was reminded more of a classy hotel than a place of worship. The richly appointed rooms for the temple ceremonies lacked that opening to the infinite that’s a feature of Christian sacred architecture.

It seemed too human in scale. Despite subtle nods to Italian design, I thought it was designed for American tastes and seemed like something lifted out of the States and transported to Rome.

One striking feature of the adjacent visitor centre is a massive series of statues of Christ and

the Apostles. They are made of marble from the same quarry that Michelangelo used. However, they are reproductions of the famous Christus statue and apostles by the great Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen. The originals were digitally scanned and special machines carved the marble producing millimetre-perfect facsimiles.

Impressive as they are, I’m afraid they left me cold. I couldn’t help contrasting these computer-generated statues to the way Michelangelo described his artistic process: “Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.”

Whether we’re talking about art or life, the task is not to mechanically impose another’s design on what we have been given, but rather to approach what we have with understanding and respect; and with insight to bring out the unique beauty as willed and desired by God.

orthodox Christian teaching that even the baptism administered by Mormons is not recognised by the Catholic Church. They hold that God the Father is, in some sense, material rather than purely spirit, and therefore part of this universe rather than above it as transcendent creator as we Catholics believe.

A consequence of this is that the Mormon afterlife – their idea of heaven – is understood as being a direct continuation of the family life lived here and now.

This means a huge emphasis on marriage, not only as vocation, but as the literal beginning of a family relationship that lasts into eternity.

Trip

My trip to the temple strongly reinforced many of the impressions I previously had about the faith. There was a strong missionary dimension with volunteers from Italy and (especially) America present in force to help with the ‘open

● Pope Francis’ recent visit to the United Arab Emirates has brought renewed attention to the Church’s opportunities for respectful collaboration with non-Christian religions. As Fr Luis Ladaria (now Cardinal and Prefect of the CDF) wrote back in 2001: “Catholics and Mormons often find themselves working together on a range of problems regarding the common good of the entire human race. It can be hoped therefore that through further studies, dialogue and good will, there can be progress in reciprocal understanding and mutual respect.”



Photo: Water from the lake being brought to the health centre by use of hired donkey carts.



A CATHOLIC HEALTH CENTRE IN TANZANIA NEEDS CLEAN WATER

The Sisters of the Incarnate Word administer a mission health centre, primary school and school hostel in the Catholic Diocese of Musoma, Tanzania. Sister Irene recently contacted The Little Way Association for financial help to install a desperately needed new water system for the health centre. “Water supply has been an issue since the mission started to expand”, she wrote. “Initially the water supplied by water mills was enough to serve the small community, but now we are experiencing great water shortage to the point of hiring donkey carts to fetch water from the lake. This is very expensive and unhygienic. With a solar powered water supply system our health centre patients will get constant, clean water for their use, and the whole community will benefit.”

Can you help the Sisters in their life-saving work for disadvantaged mothers, babies and the sick?

A reliable supply of clean water will make such a difference. Every donation that we receive in response to this Appeal will be sent, without deduction, to this project or a project in similar need.



“True glory is that which will last eternally, and to reach it, it isn’t necessary to perform striking works but to hide oneself and practice virtue in such a way that the left hand knows not what the right is doing.” - St Therese

In our modern age of materialism and selfishness, when so many are searching for an authentic spirituality, Therese’s little way of simple love for God and others has a powerful appeal. Perhaps we too can join her on the ‘little way’.

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