

The Irish Catholic

MARY KENNY

Abuse and cultural assimilation not the same thing Page 5



POPE IN CANADA

A penitential pilgrimage Pages 26-27



BREDA O'BRIEN

Meditating on death is freeing Page 7



Thursday, July 28, 2022

€2.50 (Stg £2.20)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

Hopes 'heroic' Irish martyrs can renew faith as cause goes to Rome



Fr Anthony Collier



Bishop Patrick James Byrne



Fr Francis Canavan



Fr John O'Brien



Fr James McGinn



Msgr Patrick Brennan



Fr Patrick Reilly



Fr Thomas Cusack

Ruadhán Jones

The example of Irish missionaries martyred by communist forces during the Korean war could help renew the Faith in Ireland, a priest working on their cause has said.

Six Irish Columban fathers and two missionaries of Irish descent died as "witnesses

of modern and contemporary faith" during the conflict in Korea which lasted from 1950-1953. The case to have them canonised and declared as saints has now gone to the Vatican for approval.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Donal O'Keeffe SSC, an Irish Columban based in Korea, said they "certainly will be inspira-

tional" to the Ireland of today where faith is in decline.

"Their lives will stand on their own for being very great men," Fr O'Keeffe predicted saying he hopes Irish people could draw strength from their example.

However, he said that current anger against the Church will make that difficult. Ireland

"has to work itself through where it is right now".

Because of the "hurt and pain and baggage...we aren't able to see clearly a lot of the good", said Fr O'Keeffe.

But once Ireland begins to evaluate "the positive side as well as the negative side, that

» Continued on Page 2

KNOCK HOUSE HOTEL

A Haven of Peace and Tranquillity
Located on the Grounds of Knock Shrine

Enjoy a relaxing break at
Knock House Hotel
BOOK NOW...

Call us today. B&B rates from ONLY
€79 per person sharing per night

Tel: 094 938 8088 | Email: info@knockhousehotel.ie
www.knockhousehotel.ie



Inside this week

David Quinn

TDs push to further weaken the family

Page 10



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Why is there something instead of nothing?

Page 35



Charlotte Vard

Summer offers time for reflection

Page 31



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Deputy Editor: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

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

Multimedia Journalists: Ruadhán Jones, ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Jason Osborne, jason@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

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

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,

Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford,

Dublin 18, D18 K277.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie



Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return in the autumn

Archbishop Eamon: Synod can't undermine Pope or bishops

Jason Osborne

The Synodal discussions can't undermine the authority of the Pope or the bishops' contrary to popular misunderstanding, Archbishop Eamon Martin said in a homily Saturday.

This comes after the Vatican warned July 21 that the synodal process in Germany cannot adopt new approaches to the Church's teaching on doctrines and morals.

This was seen by observers as a shot across the bow of other synodal processes insisting that they not veer from traditional Catholic understandings.

The Archbishop of Armagh said that synodality is sometimes misunderstood to mean a kind of "parliamentary, voting system where majority opinions might overturn longstanding Church tradition or core teaching".

"Synodality should not diminish the teaching authority of the Pope and the bish-

ops, but rather affirms and enhances it, by calling the Magisterium, in communion with Christ, to deep listening with discernment and in humble service," Dr Martin said, adding that the synodal way should always remember that it is Christ's Church, "not ours to create at will to our specifications".

The synodal conversation in the Church in Ireland has just begun, Dr Martin said, with many who feel confident that it's already on the right track, while others will disagree with what has been said so far, and warn that it is already going astray.

To guard against a Church where "majority opinions might overturn longstanding Church tradition or core teaching", Archbishop Eamon quoted Pope Francis' *Let Us Dream*, in which he states "What is under discussion at Synodal gatherings are not traditional truths of Christian doctrine.

"The Synod is concerned mainly with how teaching can be lived and applied in the changing contexts of our time... What characterises as a Synodal path is the role of the Holy Spirit," the archbishop

said, quoting the Pope.

He added that it is of vital importance that the Church does not devolve into a "them and us" adversarial process, avoiding divisiveness and a polarisation of views.

David Trimble remembered as a man of peace

Staff reporter

Tributes has been led to Nobel peace prize laureate David Trimble who died on Monday after a short illness.

Mr Trimble – then the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party – was a key player in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and was later awarded the prize along with John Hume.

Martina Purdy – now a Poor Clare sister but who saw the peace process up close as a journalist with the BBC at the time – paid tribute to the late peer.

"David Trimble was a far from perfect peacemaker," she said on social media, "but he had a lot of courage, and determination and took risks in dif-

ficult circumstances.

"May God reward and bless him for his efforts to make peace alongside Martin McGuinness," she said on Twitter.

Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin also joined in the tributes.

"Remembering #DavidTrimble's wife and family in prayer," he said on Twitter.

"Whilst a strong representative of his party, he had courage to lead, and to persuade others to take historic steps forward for #peace and reconciliation.

"For this we owe him a sincere debt of gratitude," the Primate said.

Lord Trimble (77) is survived by his wife Daphne and children Richard, Victoria, Sarah, and Nicholas.

70 years in the Lord's vineyard



Fr Finian Lynch OP prepares to cut the cake to mark the 70th anniversary of his priestly ordination, joined by family, friends and the Dominican community in St Mary's, Cork.

Hopes 'heroic' Irish martyrs can renew faith as cause goes to Rome

» **Continued from Page 1**
people like this then will stand out as heroic examples" he predicted.

"You could declare them [saints] in the morning," added Fr O'Keefe, who helped translate the documents relating to their cause from Korean to English.

Meanwhile, the niece of one of the martyrs Fr Tommie Cusack told *The Irish Catholic* that the men are "local legends" in Korea, adding that it's "terribly sad" they aren't well known in Ireland.

Stephanie McNamara said that: "The way they're remembered in Korea is just a totally different thing altogether".

"But here, there's not that many people that want to know about them or that are interested in them."

She hopes that, regardless of whether they are beatified or not, that they "would be

known and remembered in Ireland".

"All of us all our lives prayed to Tommie, but just because he was Tommie, not because he might be a saint," Mrs McNamara continued.

"But we knew there was a fair sure chance that the man was in Heaven."

The eight men – already named Servants of God, the first step on the path to sainthood – are: Fr Jim Maginn, Fr Paddy Reilly, Fr Tony Collier, Fr Tommie Cusack, Fr Jack O'Brien, Fr Frank Cavanaugh, Msgr Tom Brennan from Chicago and Bishop Patrick J. Byrne MM.

Their causes were forwarded to Rome last month by the South Korean bishops, along with 73 other men and women who died during the conflict between North and South Korea which saw between two to three million killed.

The South Korean's Special Episcopal Commission to Promote Beatification and Canonisation submitted the data and documents it has

gathered to the Vatican's Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, which will investigate their cause for canonisation.

The Marian Movement of Priests



National Cenacle For Priests, Religious & Laity

Will be held on
Saturday 6th August, 2022
at Knock Shrine
12pm ~ 5pm
Please bring a packed Lunch
All Welcome

**LET'S WORK FOR A BETTER
SOCIETY FOR OUR CHILDREN
AND GRANDCHILDREN.
LEAVE A LEGACY FOR LIFE.**

Support the Pro Life Campaign in your will.

The Pro Life Campaign promotes pro-life education and defends human life at all stages.

For more info visit www.prolifecampaign.ie
Contact us today to order a copy of our Wills leaflet.

prolife
campaign



Pro Life Campaign, 24 Mount Street Upper, Dublin 2
info@prolifecampaign.ie | 01 6629275



Campaigner fails in bid to silence popular Christmas carols

Jason Osborne

A disgruntled listener to RTÉ has failed in his bid to silence Christmas carols on the national broadcaster.

Eoghan Ua Conaill, who described himself as non-Christian, complained to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) that he felt "stigmatised" by the popular Christmas carol *O Holy Night* being played on the station last Christmas.

His complaint against *The Ronan Collins Show* was rejected as part of the latest list of complaints

published late last week.

"The complainant believes that the broadcast of this hymn stigmatised him and other non-Christians, inappropriately and unjustifiably, on the basis of religion," the BAI's complaint summary stated.

"The complainant is of the view that this stigmatisation prejudices respect for human dignity and is harmful to him and to others in society."

References

Mr Ua Conaill claimed the references to people pining

in "sin and error" in the song's lyrics are "stigmatised, grievous insults and egregious religious taunts" that disparage people and groups in society on the basis of religion.

He felt that the repeated airing of *O Holy Night* damages his "good standing" and that of all non-Christians in society, condoning discrimination against them.

The complainant also took issue with the lyric "fall on your knees", which he felt is "disrespectful to human dignity because it

is a posture of humiliation and to order someone to their knees is an abuse of power".

Examples

Mr Ua Conaill cited historical examples of oppression carried out in the name of Christianity in order to debate the hymn's claim that "in his name all oppression shall cease", saying that broadcasting the hymn repeatedly is "actively condoning and sponsoring the lies, false promises, stigmatisation and abuse of power contained in the lyrics".

The BAI didn't accept that the broadcasting of *O Holy Night* inflicts the harm the complainant believed, saying in its response summary that this hymn is "well embedded in popular culture over many decades as evidenced by the many artists from diverse genres who have recorded a version of it."

"The broadcaster notes that it is mindful of its responsibility to serve the interests and concerns of a diverse audience and that Christianity is a predominant part of Irish culture," it said.



Angels surround Mary and Jesus in *Holy Night* by Italian Baroque painter Carlo Maratta. Photo: CNS

RTÉ presenter was left 'rattled' by faith challenge



Staff reporter

Brendan O'Connor has been wrestling with religion after a Harvard scientist told him that the best way to be happy is to have faith.

Speaking on his *Brendan O'Connor* show on Saturday morning, Mr O'Connor recalled recent guest, Professor Arthur Brooks', advice to "go back" to Catholicism if he wanted to be happy.

"Remember Arthur Brooks there about a month ago, who is a happiness expert and everything, who I think a lot of people got a lot out of? So I said to him afterwards, 'What's the secret? What's the one thing?' And he said, 'Are you a Catholic?' And I said, 'In name and everything,' and he said, 'Go

back,' Mr O'Connor told his listeners.

"And I said, 'Seriously?', and he said, 'Go back,' he said, 'Everything that all the science shows us, that the one thing that people who are truly happy have is faith/religion.'"

Speaking to this paper in June, Prof. Brooks said that faith plays a crucial role in living a happy life.

There's a lot of research on the main happiness habits but faith and life philosophy are the first factors to be considered, Professor Brooks told *The Irish Catholic* newspaper then.

"I was rattled by it, to be honest," Mr O'Connor said.

"I've been wrestling since with it, but anyway, that was his, as a scientist, that was his one big thing."

All our services are available to patients and their families at no charge.



St. Francis Hospice Dublin

**We depend on your generosity.
Please donate if you can.**

**Call 01 - 832 7535 / 01 - 829 4000
or online www.sfh.ie**

Scan code with phone to donate



St Francis Hospice, Station Road, Raheny, Dublin 5
St Francis Hospice, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
CHY 10568 CRA 20027193



Priest shortage means change coming soon, says Archbishop O'Reilly

Ruadhán Jones

"Change is coming soon" to the diocese of Cashel and Emly, Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly has warned, with 16 priests hitting retirement age in the next five years.

In a pastoral letter accompanying the diocese's clerical appointments, Archbishop O'Reilly said there will be a maximum of 35 priests under the age of 75 in five years' time.

With the diocese having just one candidate for the priesthood in seminary, the archbishop said "change is coming soon in how we organise parish life in the archdiocese".

"These changes will concern all parishes and the way in which pastoral ministry is undertaken in the future," Dr O'Reilly said.

There are currently 68 diocesan priests serving the 46 parishes and 84 churches in the diocese, with

priests resident in the diocese also assisting.

"It is clear that this staffing level will not continue," the Archbishop of Cashel and Emly said in his July 23 letter.

"As with other dioceses in Ireland we are moving into a new way of being Church in our country."

“These changes will concern all parishes and the way in which pastoral ministry is undertaken in the future”

According to Dr O'Reilly, the future organisation of the diocese will see different pastoral units encompassing several parishes working together "to serve the pastoral needs of their communities".

"The organisation of these units will involve priests and lay people working together in a spirit of co-responsibility," he added.

One important aspect of this development highlighted in the archbishop's letter will be the rearranging of Mass times, in particular Sunday Mass times, which will be organised in coordination with other parishes.

"The model of Church that we have known is being replaced by a new reality," Archbishop O'Reilly continued.

"In future, it will be essential to have lay people more involved and engaged with their priests and with one another in building witnessing communities of faith.

"I invite you over the coming weeks to engage in the discussions about future pastoral units in our diocese, together," he said.

It is planned that the archdiocese will inaugurate these new pastoral units at the beginning of Advent 2022.

Prayer is the key for Gilbert O'Sullivan

Staff reporter

Irish-born singer-songwriter Gilbert O'Sullivan has revealed that his Catholic Faith has been a constant support in his life.

The writer of hit *Alone Again* – which spent six months as number one in the US charts – said that Mass is still a vital part of the practise of his faith.

"Because I like doing it [going to Mass]. I'm Catholic, and a regular churchgoer. Why do I like church? I always say to people 'it's the only place you go where there is no first class or business class - you can sit anywhere'. That's a good thing," Mr O'Sullivan (75) told BBC *Sunday Morning Live*.

He also said that prayer has helped him through life.

"My mother died in 2017, and I talk to her regularly. I say prayers to my mother and relatives - prayer is important to me. I believe in the power of prayer, I really do. It doesn't cure everything, but it's helpful," he said.

Asked if *Alone Again* was borne out of a sense that God had left him in difficult times, he insisted: "no, but I understand it's difficult when



a tragedy happens. The first thing you say is 'why would God allow this to happen?'

"My feeling is, perhaps, that God puts us on the earth and says 'right it's up to you to let things develop good or bad, I can't interfere you've got to sort this out yourself'," he said.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the release of *Alone Again*.

Taoiseach makes 'emotional' visit to Singapore POW chapel



Taoiseach visiting the chapel at Changi Museum Singapore



PORTIUNCULA INDULGENCE

FRANCISCAN ABBEY, MULTYFARNHAM, CO WESTMEATH
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, AUGUST 1 AND 2.

The Plenary Indulgence is linked to the feast of the Dedication of the Church of Our Lady of the Angels in Assisi, a place close to the heart of St Francis.

* Masses to mark the Feast will be at noon, 4:00pm, and 8:00pm each day.

* Confessions from 10:00am thru noon and 2:00pm until 8:00pm (except during the celebration of Mass).

* Stations of the Cross after each Mass (and other times if numbers require it.)

* Friary Office will be open for Mass Cards and intentions from 10:00am until 1:00pm, 2:00pm until 5:00pm, and before the 8:00pm Mass.

For more information, please see our website
www.theabbeymultyfarnham.ie

Staff reporter

On his state visit to Singapore, An Taoiseach Micheál Martin paid an "emotional" visit to a chapel built by prisoners-of-war during WWII.

Mr Martin went to Changi Chapel and Museum to pay tribute to his uncle Philip, one of the POW's interred at Changi camp and whose name is displayed on the chapel wall.

"To be here and to see his name on the wall is quite an emotional experience," Mr Martin said after visiting the chapel. While there, he also saw the brass

Changi Cross, constructed from a 45mm shell by one of the prisoners.

More than 83,000 people, soldiers and civilians, women and children, were interned in the camp and subjected to hard labour on meagre rations.

A number of chapels were built and rebuilt within the prison walls, including St George's Church and Our Lady of Christians Catholic Chapel.

Our Lady of Christians was dismantled after the war and moved to Australia, where it was reconstructed and unveiled in 1988.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oireachtas committee on assisted suicide expected in October

A special committee to examine legalising assisted suicide is expected to begin in October according to People before Profit TD Gino Kenny.

The committee was recommended in July, following the passage of the so-called Dying with Dignity Bill in the Dáil last year.

The bill would give a medical practitioner the legal right to assist a terminally-ill person to end their life.

The Oireachtas Justice Committee recommended the formation of a committee on the issue earlier this year after finding that the proposed legislation had "serious technical issues" and required more detailed examination.

Pope modifies Opus Dei's relationship to Curia

Pope Francis has said that Opus Dei will now work with and answer to the Dicastery for Clergy, rather than the Dicastery for Bishops, adding that he wanted to highlight the spiritual gifts of Opus Dei and its contributions to the Catholic Church's evangelising activities.

In the apostolic letter *Ad Charisma Tuendum* ("For the protection of the charism"), released by the Vatican July 22, Pope Francis also said the head of the personal prelature of Opus Dei "will not be made, nor will he be able to be made" a bishop.

Cork cathedral begins fundraiser for church bells

The Cathedral of St Mary and St Anne in Co. Cork is running a fundraising campaign to restore church bells that have not been operational for "a long, long time".

The cathedral aims to raise the €170,000 needed to restore the bells and repair the belltower's timber support structure through a parish lotto, personal donations, donation boxes, a second collection for the bells once a month, and letters to companies.

"We look forward to hearing the nine great bells of the Cathedral of St Mary and St Anne being heard again throughout our parish, city and diocese," a call to donate on the cathedral website stated.

Abuse and cultural assimilation are not the same thing

Pope Francis is absolutely right to carry out his 'penitential pilgrimage' to Canada and unreservedly apologise for abuse, cruelty and mistreatment which First Nation children suffered in Canadian government institutions run by the Catholic Church.

Wherever abuse, whether sexual or physical, has occurred, it should be named, investigated and the victims given full entitlements to redress, as well as to compassion and understanding.

Yet I think a distinction should be made between specific acts of assault or abuse, and the more general field of colonisation or deprivation of Indigenous culture. The first is a crime to be punished, if committed, and deterred by stiff sanctions. The second is a much more complex area involving educational theory, ideas about development, and social and political history.

Condemning past practice in official policy isn't enough. We must try to understand the context of why such practice occurred.

Theories

Pope Francis has said that 'assimilationist' theories were evil and wrong. Separating children from their roots and culture was 'diabolical', and Christian support for the 'colonial-



Mary Kenny

ising mentality' calls for a serious investigation.

Indeed it does: and that investigation should be complex and far-reaching, embracing social history and anthropology as well as wider colonial history.

"I think a distinction should be made between specific acts of assault or abuse"

The Victorians, who introduced education for the masses, were firm believers in 'progress', and that meant literacy and numeracy, social development and the advance of science and technology. Many thought, as did their successors into the 20th Century, that they were doing 'backward' people a favour by trying to assimilate them into Western society.

You only have to watch a cowboy movie from the 1950s to grasp that the 'Red Indians' were seen as primitive tribal peoples with bows and arrows, feathered, and half-naked.

The most enlightened of liberals, such as John Stuart Mill, revered for his great tract *On Liberty* believed

that all 'backward' people – which included the Bretons or the Welsh – should be taught to be modernised, to drop their minority languages for more advanced languages like French or English – and assimilated into 'great' cultures.

Mainstream

Until the 1960s, the French government still had this attitude towards Breton culture – quaint but backward: it should be mainstream French.

All over the western world, 'assimilation' was regarded as helpful and progressive by policy-makers. When I once suggested to a British official that tribal African culture had its own values worthy of respect, he replied: "Do you want the electric light, or not?" Britain had brought the electric light.

Many Catholic educationalists also absorbed the notion that 'progress' meant Europeanisation and westernisation and they didn't always have 'evil' intent. We now think they were wrong. But we must understand the context – and separate theories of assimilation from the specific crimes of abuse and assault.

"Wherever abuse, whether sexual or physical, has occurred, it should be named, investigated and the victims given full entitlements to redress"

● In Ireland, there was always empathy for the Native Americans – the Choctaw people had sent a generous contribution of relief for Famine victims. At the 1932 Eucharistic Congress, G.K. Chesterton reported the presence of American Indians, in full headdress – and Éamon de Valera himself had himself photographed as such a chieftain.

Irish devotional literature also continually venerated St Kateri Tekakwitha, the 'Mohawk Lily' who died a Christian martyr. A sense of respect for First Nation North Americans did exist.

Sussexes v Supreme Court

Prince Harry's recent address to the United Nations – ostensibly to honour Nelson Mandela – made a clear reference to the reversal of *Roe vs Wade* by the Supreme Court. He referred with concern to the growth of "global uncertainty and division", and went on to lament the "rolling back of Constitutional rights here in the United States".

Constitutionalists thought it a surprising meddling in US politics by a British royal: some Americans were apt to recall that King George III was kicked out of American affairs for that very reason!

It was also a sensitive subject to venture into; and it wouldn't be unreasonable to suppose that the Duke of Sussex is under the tutelage of his wife, Meghan, in this, as in so much else.

Meghan has evidently formed a close friendship, in recent times, with the veteran feminist Gloria Steinem, who is a fierce campaigner for abortion rights. I interviewed Gloria twice, back in the day, and she was certainly a beguiling young woman, who exposed the exploitative practices of Hugh Hefner's 'Bunny Girl' casinos.

But as she grew older, Ms Steinem's focus narrowed from a wider agenda of women's rights to the field of reproductive control, almost to the point of obsession. *Vogue* magazine disclosed last month that Gloria Steinem had had held many conversations with Meghan Markle about abortion rights, and it's evident that Meghan regards her as a mentor. The message has been transmitted to Harry, and will no doubt feature ever more strongly in the Sussexes 'values', in franchise to Netflix.



Pope Francis wears a traditional Indigenous headdress during a meeting with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities at Maskwacis, Alberta in Canada on Monday. Photo: CNS

"A unique blend of Traditional Irish Music with real life stories of Faith"

The New CD by
**Fr Colm Mannion OP
& Trián O'Riordan**

Tradoration
...with a Father's Heart

Available at St Martins Apostolate,
42 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1.

Order by phone: (01) 874 5465 or on-line: www.stmartin.ie

School offering classical Catholic education to open in Limerick

Jason Osborne

An independent school offering a classical Catholic education is set to open its doors in Limerick City this September, and is seeking support from religious orders, communities and lay organisations.

Stella Maris School will be seeking to offer "classical education principles, centred ultimately on the person of Jesus Christ" at the primary level, a statement from the school's board of directors states.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Principal of Stella Maris, Richard Casey, said that inspiration had been sought in America, where classical education has been "very successful" in recent years.

"Education is such a major impact on the formation of people that if you want to have an impact on the culture and most importantly of all, if you want to help to save souls, then you want to make sure that they've got a good education," Mr Casey told this paper, adding that he

thought it's "very much needed in Ireland".

Wisdom

The school will teach grammar and logic in order to form children in "wisdom and virtue," Mr Casey said.

"The formation of the child is of paramount importance in classical education, forming them in virtue and in wisdom...In order for people to be saints, we need people to be wise and to be virtuous and that's exactly what a classical education will help them to be."

Mr Casey said that the reaction has been "very positive" from parents around the country, with many having expressed a need for such education in the past.

"The reaction has been very positive. I've been involved in Catholic groups for a number of years myself and so I've built up good links and a network throughout the country, so really throughout the country there's been a great, positive reaction to the news of this school starting off," he said.

The school aims to have religious organisations involved in a volun-

teering capacity, Mr Casey said.

"Different religious communities that are linked with classical education will be, please God, a great help to us," he said.

A number of religious orders, communities and a lay Catholic organisation have expressed their interest at providing support.

"That's really been a great help to the start of the school, to have those religious organisations willing to help us and to support us and to give us whatever guidance and help that they can," Mr Casey said.

Majority of rent increase notices invalid, housing charity warns

Liam Fitzpatrick

Six in ten rent increase notices brought to a housing charity between April and June 2022 were invalid under rent control legislation, according to the organisation's report.

Threshold, a charity whose aim is to secure a right to housing, particularly for households experiencing the problems of poverty and exclusion, analysed 364 requests from private renters to review whether or not increases from their landlords were permitted. The charity found that 60% of renters did not have to pay the increase.

"The legislation regulating rent increases has undergone numerous changes and can be difficult to understand and navigate," according to the report.

"A tenant should always check that the rent they are paying has been set in accordance with the law. If it hasn't, then Threshold can help."

Almost half of Threshold's clients are wage/salary earners as their main source of income, with 26% accepting social welfare payments. Most clients that reach out to Threshold for help are between 25 and 44, and 40% live in a single person household.

The report also reviewed other concerns like deposit retention, the accrual of rent arrears and difficulties with their Housing Assistance Payments (HAP).

Threshold prevented over 1,100 households from entering homelessness between April and June, according to the report.

Russell Crowe goes Catholic as famed exorcist

Staff reporter

Hollywood star Russell Crowe is set to star as the late Fr Gabriel Amorth, widely known as 'The Vatican's Chief Exorcist', in upcoming movie *The Pope's Exorcist*.

Mr Crowe hit the headlines recently as he took in Rome on a holiday with family, including a trip to the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel.

"I'm not sure there's a more special privilege in the world than to hold the key for the Sistine Chapel and to experience its glory in silence."



Russell Crowe at the Colosseum. Photo: Twitter.

"So grateful," Mr Crowe tweeted.

With filming expected to begin this August in Ireland, *The Pope's Exorcist* is to be directed by Julius Avery, an Australian director and screenwriter.

The Hollywood Reporter said the movie will be based on Fr Amorth's books, which "detail his experiences battling demons that had clutched people in their evil".

The movie is scheduled to hit theatres September 2023.

With the Holy Spirit as your guide...



Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Alphonsus Cullinan is pictured with guides and scouts of Europe after they finished their camp in Waterford. They attended Mass in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, July 24, the Feast of St Declan of Ardmore.

Breda O'Brien

The View



Meditating on death is not morbid but freeing

Funeral after funeral. That is how this summer has been for me — sudden deaths, accidents, and deaths that were a long time in coming but shocking, nonetheless. There were funerals of young people or young at heart people, interspersed with anniversary masses.

Oddly, perhaps the most difficult funeral was the one I could not attend, because I had Covid-19. It was the funeral of my dear friend, Sr Norah O'Connor OP, who went to bed one Saturday evening and never woke up.

Sr Norah gave me my first job and was a supportive, wise and kind presence ever since in my life. She had been a teacher, a principal, a chaplain, a formator of those in religious life, a lecturer in pastoral theology and the backbone of an active retired association. None of that captures her personal qualities, of which the most striking was an ability to listen in a way that helped you make sense of the thorniest problems.

I was heartbroken that I could not attend her funeral Mass. Friends texted me photos of teenagers arriving in their school uniforms at the heart of summer, standing in the heat to bear witness to their affection for her.

I watched the funeral liturgy hungrily on the webcam, then friends returned to texting me photos of people who had met for lunch afterwards. I was thankful for both the photos and the kindness. I was thankful for the livestream of the funeral Mass. Nonetheless, I was still heartbroken because I could not be there either for her wake or the final liturgy.

I cannot believe that I will never speak to her again in this life. I want to look at videos she recorded for the school during the lockdowns and can't bear to.

I worry that I never told her how much she meant to me, and to so many.

Tragic

Some of the other funerals were desperately tragic — an only son who died in a car accident: a beautiful, vivacious mum of 50 who had the energy of twenty people but accepted with grace the numbing news that she had inoperable brain cancer.

Every funeral is unique and yet has two common elements, grief and love, whether it is a humanist funeral at a crematorium or a celebrated Mass.



A worshipper prays on the Stone of Unction, where tradition holds that Jesus was laid out after his death, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City. Photo: CNS

Or at least it should have the twin elements of grief and love. The saddest funerals are those of the forgotten, whom no one seems to grieve or remember. From time to time, I have had calls from priest friends asking me to come and pray at the funeral of someone who died completely alone.

Local authorities, in my experience, are very good about organising such funerals so that there is a sense of dignity at the end.

“Every funeral is unique and yet has two common elements, grief and love”

I have also attended funerals in the past where grief is complex — like the funeral of a spouse who had abandoned a marriage, or where relationships had soured to the extent that there was more anger than grief, but there still was grief.

There is a myth that Christians are somehow immured against grief, that their belief in everlasting life gives perspective and meaning to death. It is true on one level that we have hope that is not available to those without belief, but hope and grief do not cancel each other out. They co-exist.

At one of the anniversary Masses this summer, my daughter read an extract from CS Lewis, from *A Grief Observed*.

“Talk to me about the truth of religion and I’ll listen gladly. Talk to me about the duty of religion and I’ll listen submissively. But don’t come talking to me about the consolations of religion or I shall suspect that you don’t understand.”

Brief

CS Lewis’ classic text concerns the death of his wife, Joy. It is a powerful, raw account of devastation and grief that has brought comfort to many simply because it does not sugar-coat the reality of pain and loss.

Death and funerals may seem a grim topic. Our world was not always so uncomfortable with ultimate realities. The old-time Jesuits apparently had human skulls on their desks to remind them of their mortality. *Memento Mori* — remember that you must die. A religious sister, Sr Theresa Alethia, has revived the tradition using social media. (See @pursuedbytruth)

Meditating on death is not morbid but freeing. It allows us to discover what is truly important and lasting. If we dispense with the illusion that we have endless time, we may become more careful about how we use our time, and more likely to tell people how much they mean to us while they are still with us.

Clichés and platitudes do little to comfort but the truth, no matter how painful, no matter how we resist it, is still ultimately all that will set us free.

AVAILABLE NOW

MARY KENNY’S LATEST BOOK

The way we were

Catholic Ireland since 1922



“Mary Kenny provides the most balanced perspective on the Catholic Ireland of the past up to our own time of any writer I know.”

— Charles Lysaght
Author, Historian, Biographer

Price:
€19.99
+ €4.50P&P

At a time when the values of Catholic Ireland are so often viewed in a negative, even hostile light, Mary Kenny’s approach is a balanced and measured recollection of Ireland over the past hundred years. By interweaving stories from personalities involved in social history and some of her own life experiences, she provides a complex portrait of Irish life making for a stimulating and enjoyable read.

Order Today 01 6874025 | www.columbabooks.com

New Holy Land knights installed



Helena Margaret Sheridan (new Dame) having a sword placed on her shoulder by Cardinal Sean Brady, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for Ireland of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre during the investiture ceremony on Saturday in St Patrick's College chapel Maynooth, July 23. Photos: John McElroy



Joe Tiernan and John McCaffrey at the investiture ceremony.

Ruadhán Jones

Four men and women were invested as Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem last Saturday, July 23.

Cardinal Seán Brady, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for Ireland of the Order, led the investiture ceremony in the chapel of St Patrick's College Maynooth.

Fiona Maire Kane, Helena Margaret Sheridan, Dermot Peter Brennan and Derek Gerard Leonard were all invested as Knights and Dames, with one further Knight-to-be absent, Gary Brian Sullivan.

The order was founded in the 12th century to guard the holy places in Jerusalem. Its modern purpose is the support of the 350,000 remaining Christians (of all denominations) in the Holy Land.



Jim and Veronica Holohan at the investiture ceremony on Saturday in St Patrick's College chapel Maynooth.



Malta's Ambassador to Ireland Giovanni Buttigieg with his partner Anusha Madhusudan at the investiture ceremony on Saturday in St Patrick's College chapel Maynooth.



Anthony Harbinson and Mairead Walls.



Four of the five Dames and Knights Fiona Maire Kane, Helena Margaret Sheridan, Dermot Peter Brennan and Derek Gerard Leonard (Gary Brian Sullivan was absent on the day) receive applause from the congregation at the investiture ceremony.



Fr Bill O'Shaughnessy, Fran and Eleanor Hurl with Sean Kenna at the investiture ceremony on Saturday in St Patrick's College chapel Maynooth.

KNOCK

NOVENA

A Journey in Hope



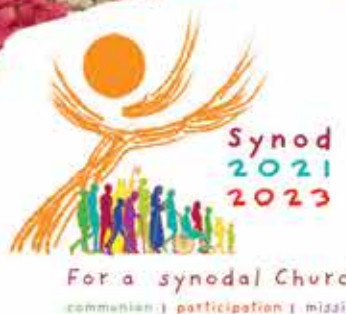
14-22 August

Ceremonies:
3.00pm & 8.00pm Daily

Evening Candlelight Procession will take place after the 8pm ceremony (weather permitting).

The National Novena to Our Lady of Knock offers nine days of reflection and prayer and a chance to reconnect with your faith in the unique and sacred space of Knock Shrine.

The purpose of the Novena is to recognise the unique role that Knock, as an International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine, has to play in the life of the Irish Church and to honour Our Lady.



Novena Speakers

Sunday 14 August

3pm Most Rev Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath
What is Christian Hope?

8pm Cormac Henry, former Youth Volunteer at Knock Shrine
What Gives me Hope Today?

Monday 15 August

3pm & 8pm Roseanna Ruane, mother of Saoirse Ruane
The Power of Prayer in Difficult Times

Tuesday 16 August - A Day of Thanksgiving for the Irish Contribution to the Universal Synod

3pm & 8pm Dr Nicola Brady, Chair of the Synodal Steering Group
The Synodal Pathway: What have we learned and what will we do?

Wednesday 17 August

3pm & 8pm Fr Terence Harrington: *How Can I Have Hope in my Brokenness?*

Thursday 18 August

3pm & 8pm Halyna Teslyuk: *A Hope that Inspires*

Friday 19 August

3pm & 8pm Lauren Conroy, Student: *My Faith Story*

Saturday 20 August

3pm Fr Michael McKeever, Parish of Gartan & Termon, Diocese of Raphoe
Eucharist: A Sign of Hope

8pm Professor John Feehan, Geologists, Botanists, Author and Broadcaster
God in Everything that Lives: A Reflection on Laudato Si

Sunday 21 August - the Anniversary of the Apparition

3pm Most Rev Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin
They will take their Place at the Feast

8pm Fr Richard Gibbons, PP and Rector, Knock Shrine
Knock - the Vision of Hope

Monday 22 August

3pm & 8pm Most Rev Francis Duffy, Archbishop of Tuam: *The Call of the Lord*

FAMILY DAY - Sunday 21st August @ 3pm & 8pm

Our Family Day is a lovely opportunity for families to get together to enjoy a range of fun activities. All events and activities are free of charge and take place on the beautiful grounds of Knock Shrine, close to the award-winning Knock Museum and Café.

There will be outdoor activities taking place on the green (weather permitting) & marquees with indoor workshops, games and more. Don't miss this special day of memory making and fun for everyone to enjoy.

'A Day of Prayer for Peace in Ukraine' - Thursday 18th August

We are inviting people from the Ukrainian community in Ireland and host families to join us for ceremonies at 3pm and 8pm.

Engaging on the Synod

A unique feature of this year's Novena will be the 'Synod Tent', where members of the public will be invited to learn more about the Synod and what it means for all of us.

It will also provide an opportunity for us to listen to what you think Knock Shrine has to offer you and the Church in Ireland at this critical juncture in our history. Daily Sessions will take place in the Synod Tent at 12 noon with a facilitator present each day to provide structure and facilitate questions and group discussion.

Find out more: www.knockshrine.ie/novena-speakers-2022

T. 094 93 88100 | E. info@knockshrine.ie

TDs push to further weaken the family



For those who believe strongly in the importance of marriage, is it even worth fighting for anymore asks **David Quinn**

It seems we might have another referendum on the family next year. That's if the Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality has its way. The committee has in its sights the sections of the Constitution that deal with fundamental rights and with the family. It is responding to recommendations from the citizens' assembly earlier this year.

You might have thought that the passage of same-sex marriage had already 'modernised' the Constitution in respect of the family, but not so. In fact, and as I have argued numerous times down the years, the ultimate logic of the 'marriage equality' slogan was 'family equality'.

If 'equality' is the goal, then why should the Constitution pledge the State to guard marriage of any kind with "special care"? Surely that discriminates against non-marital family forms, not least single-parent families and those where the parents cohabit rather than marry?

Both the citizens' assembly and the committee also recommend that the section which says no mother should be forced out of the home due to economic necessity be replaced by one that refers to carers in general.

They also object to Article 41.1 which says that, "The State recognises the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law."

Dislike

In particular, they dislike the second part of the sentence because of words like "inalienable", "imprescriptible" and "antecedent" because they smack of natural law thinking and therefore of Catholic influence.

Finally, they want changes to Article 40.1, which says, "All citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law." You might believe this is clear enough, but the committee and the assembly want it changed to include a reference to gender, or else to gender and multiple other categories like racial and sexual minorities in order to offer supposedly better protection against discrimination.

If all the recommendations are accepted, then next year will see one of the most far-reaching referendums about the Constitution ever, one that goes to the heart of the document,



Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin leads Irish participants at the World Meeting of Families in Rome last month. Photo: CNS

the section dealing with fundamental rights.

But for those who believe strongly in the importance of marriage, is it even worth fighting? During the marriage referendum of 2015, our basic argument was that the family of mother, father and child is of special importance to society and therefore deserves special protection and recognition. That was nothing discriminatory about this, in the way that word is commonly used. It should be obvious to any society with eyes to see, that we have a special interest in persuading mothers and fathers to bring up together the children they have brought into the world.

“Liberals now want to double-down on this process and destroy the special standing of marriage once and for all”

But now this argument is gone. Marriage has been redefined. The relevant section of the Constitution no longer recognises the family of mother, father and child as having any special importance. Therefore, if there is a referendum next year about

the family, what exactly would we be defending?

In fact, it will be very interesting to see if any liberals emerge to defend the present constitutional position whereby the State is pledged to guard marriage in its new form with special care. In the 2015 referendum, we heard continually from proponents of change that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry because marriage is so important. If that, in fact, was what they really believed, then they should be opposed to marriage losing its special protection.

Prominent liberals

But I doubt very much if any prominent liberals will defend the special status of marriage, even in its new form. I suspect that will strongly favour moving on from 'marriage equality' to 'family equality' because they never really believed in the special importance of marriage to society in the first place. I can't remember a single proposal ever from liberals aimed at strengthening marriage in society. Everything has been aimed at weakening it.

The result has been what is euphemistically called 'family diversity'. As marriage has weakened as a social institution, fewer people have bothered marrying at all, more separate

or divorce, cohabitation is commonplace, and many children now grow up without the benefit of both a loving mother and a loving father. It is hard to see how any of those is progress, by any objective measure.

Liberals now want to double-down on this process and destroy the special standing of marriage once and for all. It will simply become one family form among others, of no more benefit to society or to children than all the alternatives despite the abundant evidence showing that children, on average, fare best when raised by a mother and a father in a low-conflict marriage.

But they seem to want to go even further, in that they no longer want to see the family, in any form, as "possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law."

"Inalienable and imprescriptible" essentially means rights that cannot be taken or given away. "Antecedent" means they come before anything else, including the State, and "superior to all positive law" means the rights of the family transcend man-made law.

References

The Gender Equality Committee (which was chaired by Labour leader, Ivana Bacik) wants all these refer-

ences removed. If the referendum succeeds, from then on, the State would simply recognise the right to a family life. The family would no longer come before the State or have inalienable rights of its own. If anything, the State would become superior in law to it.

The proposed change would also expand the grounds under which the State could interfere with the privacy of the family. Under one of the committee's proposals, it could do so for "the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

“‘Inalienable and imprescriptible’ essentially means rights that cannot be taken or given away”

What does this even mean? Certainly, the proposed provision seems much weaker than the protection currently offered by Article 41.2. Under it, could we imagine a scenario whereby the State interferes in the rights of a family because it doesn't like what the parents are teaching their children?

How are 'health' and 'morals' to be defined?

Such wording would need to be extremely closely examined once it comes out officially, and how similar laws work in other countries also carefully studied.

If the proposed wording was to weaken the family too much, then it would need to be opposed, even if we have already wandered far from the original meaning of marriage.

“The committee has in its sights the sections of the Constitution that deal with fundamental rights and with the family”

"Today the visibility of faith has for all intents and purposes vanished" – Archbishop Dermot Farrell

Keep the flame of Faith alive in modern Ireland.

Subscribe to *The Irish Catholic* today.

Featuring news and analyses that represent your voice on the national stage, regular contributors who provide commentary on hot button issues and local voices highlighting the ongoing work of parishes and communities throughout the country.

Special Offer for New Subscribers

3 MONTH SUBSCRIPTION

€45

Down from €55



To subscribe to *The Irish Catholic*, please fill in the form below and post it to us:

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Eircode: _____

Print Subscription

- ☐ 3 Months for €55
☐ 6 Months for €85
☐ 1 Year for €165

Digital Subscription

- ☐ 3 Months for €20
☐ 1 Year for €60

Credit Card payment details

Name on the card: _____
Credit card number: ____ / ____ / ____ / ____
Expiration date: ____ / ____ / ____ CW: ____

You can also send us a cheque/postal order to:

The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277

For more information, please visit
www.irishcatholic.com/shop
or call on 01 687 4028

The Irish Catholic



Those in solitary confinement face higher risk of depression, anxiety and self-harm according to a new study from Queen's University Belfast, writes **Liam Fitzpatrick**

For a British prisoner in solitary confinement to have the same freedom of movement in his cell as a British mouse does in his cage, he would have to be two feet tall.

Trapped in his meagre 12' x 8' cell for months on end, that convict has little more than a bed, toilet, television, and a dystopic-sounding 'distraction pack' (often just a colouring book) to entertain himself. At least the mouse might get a wheel or ramp.

But, even without the wheel, convicts placed in solitary confinement felt they were getting nowhere.

This month, a Queen's University Belfast study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council analysed Covid-19's impact on prisoners' mental health, concluding that the increase in solitary confinement of prisoners directly led to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"At first it was a couple weeks," one prisoner said in the report. "Then, it just became endless. Every day was the same. Groundhog day."

The study included testimony gathered by User Voice, a charity founded and run by former prisoners, and found that the prison system not only failed to consider the mental health of its incarcerated persons, but preferred callous, torturous isolation and harassment to compassion.

Findings

"The accounts that we received from prisoners...some of them were very, very harrowing," said Nina O'Neill, research fellow at the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast and one of the researchers in the study. "The results speak for themselves."

Because of User Voice's peer-research model, a model that trained current prisoners to survey their fellow inmates, the study was able to collect lived-experience interviews from over 1,600 prisoners. Researchers assessed these interviews across nine prisons in England and Wales, where 85% of prisoners were (and in some cases still are) confined to their cells for 23 hours or more each day.

The United Nations' Nelson Mandela rule deems periods of solitary confinement longer than 15 days torture—some convicts in the British

prison system have remained in confinement for years.

"We do know that Covid and particularly being locked up in your cell without access to fresh air sometimes or access to out-of-cell time... that would have had a really detrimental impact on people," said Saoirse Brady, executive director of the Irish Penal Reform Trust. "It really did create more issues for them."

“Ms Brady remarked that by all current guidelines, prisoners should have unwavering access to faith services”

As the pandemic raged on, respondents spoke out about the conditions they faced, with one convict saying that a prison's attempts to mark Covid-positive cells with stickers made them “think about the plague” and being treated as animals.

Another respondent likened the conditions to Nazi Germany: “The sound of the stickers going on the doors, it sounded like the doors were being taped up and we were just being left to die, we even said to them, ‘Prove to us that if you were told to leave us in these cells to starve to death you would do it. You’ve done this, you’ve treated us like that.’

“They’re the same as the SS in my eyes. Some of them might be good people but if they were told to gas us

or leave us locked in our cells would they do it?”

These prolonged periods of isolation have negative effects on prisoners, with 29% of prisoners showing signs of ‘severe’ depression and 35% displaying symptoms of ‘severe’ anxiety at rates almost five times higher than the general population.

Faith and family

Overwhelmingly, the study included testimony of people who felt isolated from their faith and family.

Respondents noted that their ability to practise their religion was limited by the lockdown, with 59% believing that their access to religious services became worse or much worse during the lockdown period.

“In such an uncertain time like the pandemic, we know that people often turn to religion for some sense of security,” Dr O'Neill said. “So not having the ability to participate in religious activity had an effect on some participants' mental health and wellbeing.”

“For anybody, faith can be very important,” said Ms Brady. “But for people in prison, that access to chaplains or religious representatives is crucial.”

For many prisoners, practising their religion was necessary to cope with their confinement—yet, like many other necessities, they did not have access to faith services.

“Sometimes, when you get that feeling that you just need to get into church, and there's no real access to

support or religious visits,” one prisoner said. “When they come in here, they don't really judge you, you could be a murderer or in for robbery, they do not really care, because of forgiveness and all that... sometimes you need it, for the sake of interacting with someone and it calms me.”

“When we think even about peer support that one would receive at group prayer meetings as well, those in prison at that time weren't really getting the opportunity to mix and speak with each other that they would have normally gotten during recreation or association time,” said Dr O'Neill. “So, a lot of that peer support mechanism was removed.”

“‘At first it was a couple weeks,’ one prisoner said in the report. ‘Then, it just became endless. Every day was the same’”

Ms Brady remarked that by all current guidelines, prisoners should have unwavering access to faith services.

“If you look at the Mandela rules around prisons, if you look at the European prison rules, prisons should be helping people or assisting people who practice their faith to do that,” Ms Brady said. “For those people of faith, it probably did have another added layer for their mental health, because it is a lifeline for people, it is a source of comfort for people.”

In some cases, prisons used a lottery system to choose those who could worship that week: “I think they might select five people per week, per wing, but that has just happened,” one prisoner said.

Another prisoner said that services felt unfulfilling: “Even when you go to chapel, it's a rush, they just get you out. They don't even do the full prayer, they do half a prayer and a little bit of a speech and say go back to your wing and do it there, and you think, ‘Well, that's not complete.’”

Connections

A lack of family connections also negatively impacted the survey respondents' mental health. Almost 60% of survey respondents had received no visits since the pandemic began, and almost 80% said they had gone at least six months without a visit from anyone outside the prison.

“As well as the 23-hour solitary confinement, you're dealing with those in prison not being able to speak with family and friends,” Dr O'Neill said. “Visitation was suspended so they're not seeing their loved ones... you know, we had reports of individuals who had children during the height of the lockdown not being able to see their children.”

Molly Corlett, Policy and Public Affairs officer at the UK-based Howard League for Penal Reform—the oldest penal reform organisation in the world—led a similar study where she found similar drawbacks of isolation from family. One respondent to her survey called isolation from family “a living nightmare” and “inhumane” before lockdown had even begun.

“People spoke about the loss of visits,” Ms Corlett said. “Somebody described it [visitation] as a ‘window to reality’ which had now been taken away from them due to the pandemic.”

“For many prisoners, practising their religion was necessary to cope with their confinement”





To alleviate the isolation, some prisons tried to implement in-cell telephones where convicts could call relatives and friends. One prisoner called the phone's impact on his mental health "massive" and shared how having an in-unit phone made him feel free to express his frustrations.

"Because we are single cells, there are times when something has happened at home, and you need to break down," he said. "And you don't get the chance on the landing using the phone. Every man needs to cry, but you're not gonna [sic] on the landing, so it gets held in."

However, most prisons surveyed did not adopt the in-cell phone policy, and 40% of convicts said their ability to access phones during lockdown was worse than it was pre-pandemic.

Institutional issues

Many survey respondents also reported that their mental health crises resulting from isolation were dismissed by officers who didn't know how to properly deal with them, with one saying that the officers "have no respect" for inmates.

"They use their middle fingers and use the 'f word' around us," a prisoner said. "When the wardens tell us to go back to their rooms, they never say please or thank you. They'll use the f word. I don't deserve to be treated like this."

“Even when you go to chapel, it's a rush, they just get you out. They don't even do the full prayer”

"Officers try to bully people as well," another convict said. "Officers come into showers and get in people's faces saying things like: 'You're a f***** p***, you're nothing'. They do it because they know people can't react. What are you going to do in that situation when you're in a shower? Are you going to fight and get overpowered by the officers when it gets down to it? It's b*****."

In one instance, guards refused to feed one inmate for being disruptive during a mental health crisis: "They stopped feeding him. ... Cos' he was constantly banging and shouting out the door ... I get mad, that's still a human being, man."

The study also found that prisoners faced low self-esteem and self-worth leading to thoughts of self-inflicted violence after extended periods of solitary confinement. Some 40% reported that they felt they "would be better off dead" in the past two weeks, with 18% experiencing those thoughts of hopelessness every day.

"I told them I was suicidal," one convict said. "The senior officer stood there when I slit myself, and instead of helping me, ran to get healthcare for himself because I had hepatitis at the time."

"This guy – mental health issue, self-harm... cuts through all his body, cuts his arm – what did they do? Chucked him in the shower, that's all they do, give him prison issue clothes, and said 'Have a shower, clean yourself up' back in the same pad, which is dirty," another prisoner said.

Prison guards often exacerbated these feelings through exceptional cruelty, even laughing at inmates facing mental health crises and threatening to harm themselves.

"There are people who are, people who are cutting themselves and hanging themselves and the officers are going to the cells and laughing at them saying 's***** b*****' ... and then shutting the door and I'm going what the f***? ... That person could hang himself later on, like what the f***? Like what are [you] taking the p** out of him for, it's madness," one prisoner said.

"They open your door and then lock it again and walk down the landing laughing saying, 'Did you see that, he's got a tiny little cut' and those are the first calls for help, so to ignore them..." another convict said.

Poor training

The survey also found that understaffing and poor training (one inmate likened it to "babies teaching babies") destroyed prisoners' ability to maintain a sense of normalcy.

"Often the staff in prison were the only other person that an inmate was seeing that day," Dr O'Neill said. "When there was such a strained relationship, it was difficult for them."

"Two members of staff to look after 90 men, that's 90 men with 90 problems," a prisoner said. "They've only been signed in a month before. They don't have a f***** clue they're asking us.

Someone once asked me "What time are you banged up [supposed to return to confinement]?"

A general lack of expertise and motivation also strained inmate-guard relationships during lockdown.

"Prison officers – it is a difficult job," Ms Brady said. "It is already challenging, and if you don't have the medical expertise or experience to deal with people with mental health challenges, and sometimes they can be quite severe... that can exacerbate things."

"There's a general shift people have talked about in the morale or energy of the wings that they're being held in," Ms Corlett said. "Someone told us that everyone's in a bad state in terms of mindset, so I think that's definitely affected things in terms of relationships."

Abuse

That lack of accountability emboldened guards to abuse their position above the inmates, with multiple claims of deleted evidence and unfair collusion against prisoners appearing in the study.

“Often the staff in prison were the only other person that an inmate was seeing that day”

"This lad, when he got attacked, he asked for the video footage of the cameras, and they just come back to him on the opposite, we've forgot to turn this video on," one prisoner recalled. "Now, if he had attacked a member of staff, I guarantee you they wouldn't have forgotten, they would have had the footage there. So, they covered each other up as well."

"It feels like you're dealing with criminals, you know, where we're supposed to be the criminals, you know, the way they work together and back each other up and all the rest of it," another inmate said.

"If I was to get punched by an officer and go to the police to say I want to press charges, 9 times out of 10 nothing would get done about it," another convict agreed. "This society isn't governed by the law out there."

The British government maintains the opinion that their policies, as disastrous as the evidence demonstrates they were for inmates' mental health,

were justified by the extremely low death toll of 200 prisoners – far fewer than the 2,700 victims anticipated by Public Health England.

The UK Department of Justice declined a request for an interview. In an emailed statement, a Prison Service spokesperson wrote:

"Our tough but necessary action during the pandemic saved the lives of many staff and prisoners – and we quickly rolled out measures such as video calls and in-cell education in recognition of the impact.

"We continue to increase mental health support and improve training for staff, and our prisons strategy sets a clear vision to provide all offenders with the education, skills and support they need to get back on the straight and narrow."

Dr O'Neill argued that the study proved that the "question" of prison reform cannot be easily answered in an email.

“That lack of accountability emboldened guards to abuse their position above the inmates, with multiple claims of deleted evidence and unfair collusion against prisoners”

"It does set out and challenge the narrative around prison, around rehabilitative function," she said. "It really does draw on those questions of 'what is the purpose of prison if they're not rehabilitating those who are imprisoned?'"

Ms Corlett was forthright in her organisation's position that "you just need to be imprisoning fewer people" to alleviate many of the problems rooted in understaffing.

"Shoving more people into overcrowded prisons, as our government is planning to do in the next five years, does not solve any of the problems and is only going to make them worse," she said.

Empathy

Dr O'Neill hopes the study will encourage people to think critically and compassionately when understanding the struggles of those in prison during lockdown.

"The research really shows the importance of listening to those in prison," she said. "Their voices were largely unheard in the discourse through the course of the pandemic. Moving forward, it's going to be very important to support that population, especially considering the extent of mental health fallout as a result of the pandemic."

In a final attempt to increase empathy for the plight of prisoners, one convict issued a message to the broader community.

"To people outside. Consider the fact that you have suffered over the last 18 months and are still doing. Many people have died, many people have lost relatives, and that sense of being helpless and hopeless.

"A lot of people are saying they have mental health problems. We're saying consider that, and then consider being in that position all the time, and then on top of that you've got no control over the regime that you are living in.

"You've gone through a lot, you know what it is like not to be working, not to be able to see your friends, not to hug them, not to kiss them, you've seen your loved ones die. We're seeing that all the time anyway.

"Add to that, the fact that we're here ... what we would say is, help us to get back into at least the minimum-work, education, worship."



Pope Francis washes the feet of an inmate during a Holy Thursday celebration at Velletri Correctional Facility in Italy. Photo: CNS

Radical renewal: how Dublin Archdiocese is 'Building Hope'



Now is the time for priests and people to plan creatively for a future together, writes **Fr Gareth Byrne**

Unprecedented change is coming in the Archdiocese of Dublin. In April 2021, Archbishop Dermot Farrell formed a taskforce under the title *Building Hope*. The archbishop asked the *Building Hope* taskforce to assess the needs of the people of the archdiocese emerging from Covid-19 and to work to support parish communities as they undertake a radical renewal, locally, of the mission handed on by Jesus Christ. The purpose was to look to the future with creativity, enabling the archdiocese and its parishes to act now to give effective witness and service in the years ahead.

Renewal

As confirmed by the 3,000 consultation responses referenced in the *Building Hope* taskforce report, published in November 2021, there is a heartfelt desire for renewal and plenty of ideas among those committed to the Catholic faith in the Dublin Archdiocese. In February 2022 the archbishop, as requested by the taskforce, provided a 'Statement of Mission for the Archdiocese'. With an Easter pastoral letter, *Living the Hope of Easter*, he then initiated a *Building Hope* strategic planning process, taking the key elements of the taskforce report as a foundation for renewal in the Archdiocese. In his pastoral letter Archbishop Farrell says: "Truly, we need to be courageous in moving beyond ways that no longer work in the Ireland of today. We need each other on this road: that means all the baptised, working closely together, with their gifts and talents, sharing their resources and wisdom, in the service of our parishes, and the one mission entrusted to us all by Christ".

In this way, Archbishop Farrell launched a process of



A 'Building Hope' parish gathering.

reflection in parishes, using the synodal listening method priests and parishioners have become familiar with earlier in the year. This time the conversation, in parishes from Dublin city to Kildare, from Fingal to Wicklow and north Wexford, concentrated on parish strengths, on what might be in need of development, and on the partnership of parishes in the local area that would best allow scarce resources to be concentrated in new ways. The *Building Hope* prayer, invoking the patrons of the archdiocese and a week of prayer from Ascension through Pentecost to the feast of Mary, Mother of the Church, have underpinned this time of reflection.

“There is a heartfelt desire for renewal and plenty of ideas among those committed to the Catholic faith in the Dublin Archdiocese”

Commentary in the media thus far has focused on the declining number of priests – a reality for sure. Deacons, parish pastoral workers and trained lay leaders have important roles to play too. All the signs indicate that parishes will need to work more formally in partnership with other parishes, planning carefully, investigating new models of pastoral ministry, and learning to share

resources, so that everything doesn't fall on the shoulders of smaller numbers of priests. They, rather, with a team alongside them, should be engaged in bringing the healing words and work of Jesus to all, inspiring the Christian community to act decisively in living and sharing the Gospel.

New reality

Many will ask, are parishes and parishioners ready for this new reality? Indeed, are priests ready for it? Without doubt, rather than simply seeking to maintain present outlooks and structures, “new thinking and a shift of mindset in everyone” are essential, as the statement of mission puts it. Things are moving ahead. As well as parish partnerships, the consultation process has helped parishes focus on four areas for pastoral development defined as essential in the taskforce report:

- building up faith-filled communities;
- co-responsibility and servant leadership;
- an invitation to and welcome for all; and
- a central focus on social justice.

Training and resources for holding the parish *Building Hope* gathering were provided, as was the case previously for the synodal pathway discussions. Reflecting prayerfully together on the taskforce report, and on the statement of mission, parish leaders and people have been asked to review parish statistics pro-

vided for each parish by the archdiocese as well as questions posed about parish life and parish partnerships into the future. They were asked too to share the parish profile material widely and at a parish gathering, encouraging as many parishioners as would wish to join in the dialogue and discernment. Parishes have been encouraged to think of creative ways of engaging with parishioners on the margins too, and of drawing them into further conversation over the coming months.

“The challenges that emerged during the Covid-19 crisis have taught us that when change is required new ways can be found”

The consultation is already bearing fruit. At the time of writing, 123 parishes have already made their views known to the archbishop and others are finalising their report. This is an exciting time in the archdiocese. The unfolding process is encouraging active engagement and focused reflection. The question being posed is whether parish communities in the archdiocese have the energy to reinvent themselves and develop a contemporary way of formulating their core mission for a world in need of hope.

What about next stages in the conversation? Already we can notice some direction. Meetings have discussed building a good partnership of local parishes, new ways of thinking about the role of the parish pastoral councils, ongoing adult religious education and faith development, training for lay involvement, and the formal adoption of the ministries of catechist, acolyte and lector, promoted by Pope Francis. There will likely be fewer Masses in a local area, carefully scheduled between parishes and with a focus on quality celebrations. Greater lay leadership in other prayer moments including at funerals, as well as lay-led outreach to families, youth and young adults. Further reflection, planning and training, based on the responses from parishes, will take place in autumn 2022 and spring 2023.

Challenges

The challenges that emerged during the Covid-19 crisis have taught us that when change is required new ways can be found, more than we dare to imagine. Now is the time for priests and people, for the whole faith community, to plan creatively for a future together. The Christian community believes, confidently, as Archbishop Farrell stated in his Easter pastoral letter, that: “the risen Lord is always at work among us, bringing something new to be experienced, embraced, and lived.” The *Building Hope* process is

one founded on the principle of co-responsibility – priests and people working together, each in their role, and guided by the Holy Spirit, bringing their skills and talents to bear. The Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin is readying herself to embrace a new way of being Church at the service of the mission handed on, and forever new.

“Many will ask, are parishes and parishioners ready for this new reality? Indeed, are priests ready for it?”

At the end of the day the Church is an Easter people, the risen Lord walking with us on the journey of life. Led by his Spirit, Christians accompany each other, seeking to build up the community of those who have encountered and choose to follow the Christ, recognising their need for his healing and saving love, and reaching out to others to include them in his embrace. As Pope Francis writes in his new letter on the liturgy, “Christian faith is either an encounter with him alive, or it does not exist...We need him.”

Fr Gareth Byrne is the Moderator of the Dublin Diocesan Curia and Chair of the Building Hope Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group. For further details see www.dublindiocese.ie/buildinghope

Modern Irish martyrs in Korea

The six Irishmen and two of Irish descent whose cause for beatification has gone to Rome

Servant of God Fr Patrick Reilly

Priest of the Missionary Society of St Columban.
Born: October 21, 1915, Drumraney, Co. Westmeath.
Died: August 29, 1950, Gangneung, Gangwon, South Korea.

Fr Patrick 'Paddy' Reilly was killed by North Korean soldiers on August 29, 1950, near Mukho, his parish, not far south of the border. He had gone to hide in the house of a catechist on June 28 or 29, when the North Korean army occupied Mukho. After 26 days the North Koreans discovered Fr Reilly's whereabouts. He was arrested and taken to the police station in Mukho.

His body was found on a mountain path by an old man gathering wood. He had been shot through the chest. Fr Reilly was 35 years old. Born in Drumraney, Co. Westmeath in 1915, Fr Reilly went to Dalgan in 1934 and was ordained there 1940. He did pastoral work in the diocese of Clifton, England 1941-1946, before going to Korea in 1947.



Servant of God Fr Francis Canavan

Priest of the Missionary Society of St Columban.
Born: February 15, 1915, Headford, Co. Galway.
Died: December 6, 1950, Chunggang, Chagang, North Korea.

Fr Francis 'Frank' Canavan died in a North Korean prison camp on December 6, 1950 as a direct result of hardships experienced on the notorious 'Death March' of prisoners. After Fr Collier was killed, Fr Canavan, Msgr Quinlan (survived) and later Phil Crosbie (survived) were taken into custody and the three of them took part in the 'Death March' to the far north of Korea.

Along with them were many US POWs and some civilians (many of them missionaries); the death rate from the hardships of the march was appallingly high. He was born in Headford, Co. Galway in 1915 and went to Dalgan in 1934, being ordained there 1940. He served in Galway diocese 1941-1948 and went to Korea in 1949.



Servant of God Bishop Patrick James Byrne

Priest of the Maryknoll Missionary Society
Apostolic Delegate to Korea, Titular Bishop of Gazera.
Born: October 26, 1888, Washington DC, USA.
Died: November 25, 1950, Chunggang, Chagang, North Korea.

Bishop Patrick Byrne, MM was an American-born Catholic missionary and bishop of Irish descent. As a member of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) he was assigned to missions in Korea and Japan.

He served as the Prefect Apostolic of Pyongyang from 1927 to 1929, Prefect Apostolic of Kyoto from 1937 to 1940, Apostolic Visitor to Korea from 1947 to 1949, and the Apostolic Delegate to Korea from 1949 to 1950. He died in the custody of the Communists in Korea, having been forced to walk one of the 'Death Marches'.



Servant of God Fr James McGinn

Priest of the Missionary Society of St Columban.
Born: November 15, 1911, Butte, Montana, USA.
Died: July 4, 1950, Samcheok, Gangwon, South Korea.

Fr James 'Jim' McGinn was killed in Korea July 4, 1950, two days after North Korean troops occupied Samchok, his parish on the east coast, about 50 miles south of the border between North and South Korea. In the week between the outbreak of war and the occupation of his parish he had been urged by his people to leave but he refused to do so. He was 38 years old.

It was not until March 1952 that his grave and body were located by Fr Brian Geraghty. Fr McGinn was born in Butte, Montana, USA on 15 November 1911, but his family moved back to Co. Down while he was still young. He went to Dalgan in 1929 and was ordained 1935. He went to Korea 1936.



Servant of God Fr Anthony Collier

Priest of the Missionary Society of St Columban.
Born: June 20 1913, Clogherhead, Co. Louth.
Died: June 27 1950, Chuncheon, Gangwon, South Korea.

Fr Anthony 'Tony' Collier was killed by North Korean soldiers on June 27 1950. North Korean forces had crossed the 38th Parallel, the dividing line between North and South Korea, on June 25. Fr Collier was in charge of the second Columban parish in Chuncheon city, not many miles south of the 38th Parallel. He, Msgr Tom Quinlan and Fr Frank Canavan had been urged by a US Army officer to leave Chuncheon on 26 June, but they decided to stay.

Fr Collier was taken into custody, briefly interrogated and then shot dead. He was 37 years old. Fr Collier was born in Clogherhead, Co. Louth in 1913. He went to Dalgan in 1931 and was ordained there 1938. He went to Korea 1939.



Servant of God Fr Thomas Cusack

Priest of the Missionary Society of St Columban.
Born: October 23, 1910, Ballycotton, Liscannor, Co. Clare.
Died: September 24, 1950, Daejeon, South Korea.

Fr Thomas 'Tommie' Cusack was killed during the Korean War in Daejeon on September 24, 1950. He was taken into custody, along with Msgr Patrick Brennan and Jack O'Brien, by North Korean troops on July 24, 1950. They were attached to the Columban Mission in Mokpo, in the south of the country.

They were taken to Daejeon prison and are presumed to have perished in the general massacre of prisoners there on the night of September 24, 1950. Their bodies were never found. He was 40 years old. Born in Co. Clare in 1910, he went to Dalgan in 1928 and was ordained there 1934. He went to Korea in 1935.



Servant of God Msgr Patrick Brennan

Priest of the Missionary Society of St Columban.
Apostolic Vicar of Gwangju.
Born: March 13, 1901, Chicago, Illinois, USA.
Died: September 24, 1950, Daejeon, South Korea.

Msgr Patrick Brennan, an American of Irish descent and Prefect Apostolic of Gwangju/Kwangju, Korea, was taken into custody, along with Fr Cusack and Fr O'Brien, by North Korean troops on July 24, 1950. (See Thomas Cusack). Msgr Brennan was 49 years old.

Born in Chicago in 1901 and ordained for the archdiocese of Chicago in 1928, he joined the Columbans in 1936 and went to Korea in 1937. He was repatriated to USA as an enemy alien (by the Japanese) in 1942, but in 1948, the Holy See appointed him Prefect Apostolic of Gwangju, Korea.



Servant of God Fr John O'Brien

Priest of the Missionary Society of St Columban.
Born: December 1, 1918, Dunamon, Co. Roscommon.
Died: September 24, 1950, Daejeon, South Korea.

Fr John 'Jack' O'Brien was killed during the Korean War in Daejeon on September 24, 1950. (See Fr Thomas Cusack.) He was 31 years old. Born in Donamon, Co. Roscommon (Elphin diocese) on December 1, 1918, he went to Dalgan and was ordained in 1942. He served as British Army chaplain from 1943-1948 and went to Korea in 1949.





Seven Irish Columbans in Korea were martyred having stayed with their flock, **Ruadhán Jones** hears

When we think of martyrs, our minds tend to reach far back into history. We think of the persecution of the Church under the Roman Empire, right at the beginnings of our faith. Or perhaps, closer to home, we think of the men and women killed during the Penal times, dying for the love of the Faith.

We're unlikely to think of the 1950s – and yet, in June of this year, the bishops of South Korea announced that the causes for beatification of 81 modern martyrs had been sent to Rome. All of these 74 men and seven women were killed in the Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953, many of them martyred by communist forces from the North.

Among the 81 were seven Columban missionaries, six of whom were Irish and two American of Irish descent: Servants of God Fr Jim Maginn, Fr Paddy Reilly, Fr Tony Collier, Fr Tommie Cusack, Fr Jack O'Brien, Fr Frank Canavan and Msgr Tom Brennan from Chicago. Another man of Irish descent, Maryknoll Missionary Bishop James Patrick Byrne, was also martyred. None of them were older than 50, with the youngest barely 32 years old.

"Each of them had the opportunity, when the war broke out, to leave and that's documented. Everyone of them said they'd stay," says Fr Donal O'Keeffe, an Irish Columban who helped translate into English the documents relating to their cause.

Examination

The South Korean's Special Episcopal Commission to Promote Beatification and Canonisation held its closing session June 7 for preliminary

'You could canonise them in the morning'



Doves are released during a ceremony commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Korean War, near the demilitarised zone separating the two Koreas, in Cheorwon, South Korea, June 25, 2020. Photo: CNS.

examination of the 81 Servants of God, the title accorded to individuals at the first step toward canonisation.

The bishops agreed that the candidates were "witnesses of modern and contemporary faith" of the Korean Church, ucanews.com reported.

“The Irish Columbans who travelled to Korea knew that they were facing a difficult political landscape”

The committee will submit the data and documents it has gathered to the Vatican's Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, which will investigate

their cause for canonisation.

Fr O'Keeffe expects that this process will take four or five years, but having read the documentation himself he believes "you could declare them [saints] in the morning". They had showed bravery, faith, humour and heroism, Fr O'Keeffe tells me.

"For example there's one guy, Thomas Cusack, who comes from Co. Clare. We're very lucky in that he wrote a lot of letters to his mother... Just as he was being captured, Fr Cusack sent a note through a friend and basically said, 'Tell my mother that if I left the people here now, I'd never be able to live if something happened to them and I lived on,'" Fr O'Keeffe says.

He cites the letters of Fr Frank Canavan as well, who also wrote to his mother back in Ireland. He arrived in Korea



A Japanese propaganda photograph of priests of the Prefecture of Chuncheon interned in 1942. Front row: Brian Geraghty, Thomas Quinlan, Pat Brennan (one of the seven martyrs). Second row: James Maginn (martyr), Frank McGann, Tony Collier (martyr, giving the victory sign). Third row: Pat McGowan, Phil Crosbie, Tom Neligan. Fourth Row: Paddy Deery, Frank Herlihy, James Doyle, Frank Gallagher, Hubert Hayward.

in 1949 aged 34 and by 1950 was dead at the hands of Communist forces. Knowing that death may be just around the corner, the young Galway man maintained his humour.

"He wrote home to his mother – we have this letter too – that 'it looks like there's going to be conflict, but the decision is made that we would stay in the parishes and that's the way it should be,'" Fr O'Keeffe says.

"And then he kind of half jokes, 'by the way there's an old coat of mine at home, you

could cut it into small pieces and if I'm killed you could sell it as relics'. He advised his mother to put a particular one of his sisters in charge as she had a great head for business!"

Humour

"They had humour and everything," Fr O'Keeffe continues. "The three priests in the south, when they were in jail, an American soldier wrote an account – he was also captured but because he was an American he was let

go – and said that the lads used to sing and cheer everyone up in jail. John O'Brien, he had a fantastic singing voice and kept the spirits of everyone up."

The Irish Columbans who travelled to Korea knew that they were facing a difficult political landscape. For the majority of the 20th century, Korea was a colony of Japan. Some of the missionaries, Frs Cusack, Collier and Maginn, served there during WWII and the Japanese – allies of Nazi

“In June of this year, the bishops of South Korea announced that the causes for beatification of 81 modern martyrs had been sent to Rome”



Germany – gave them a hard time. But after the war, the tensions within the country increased further.

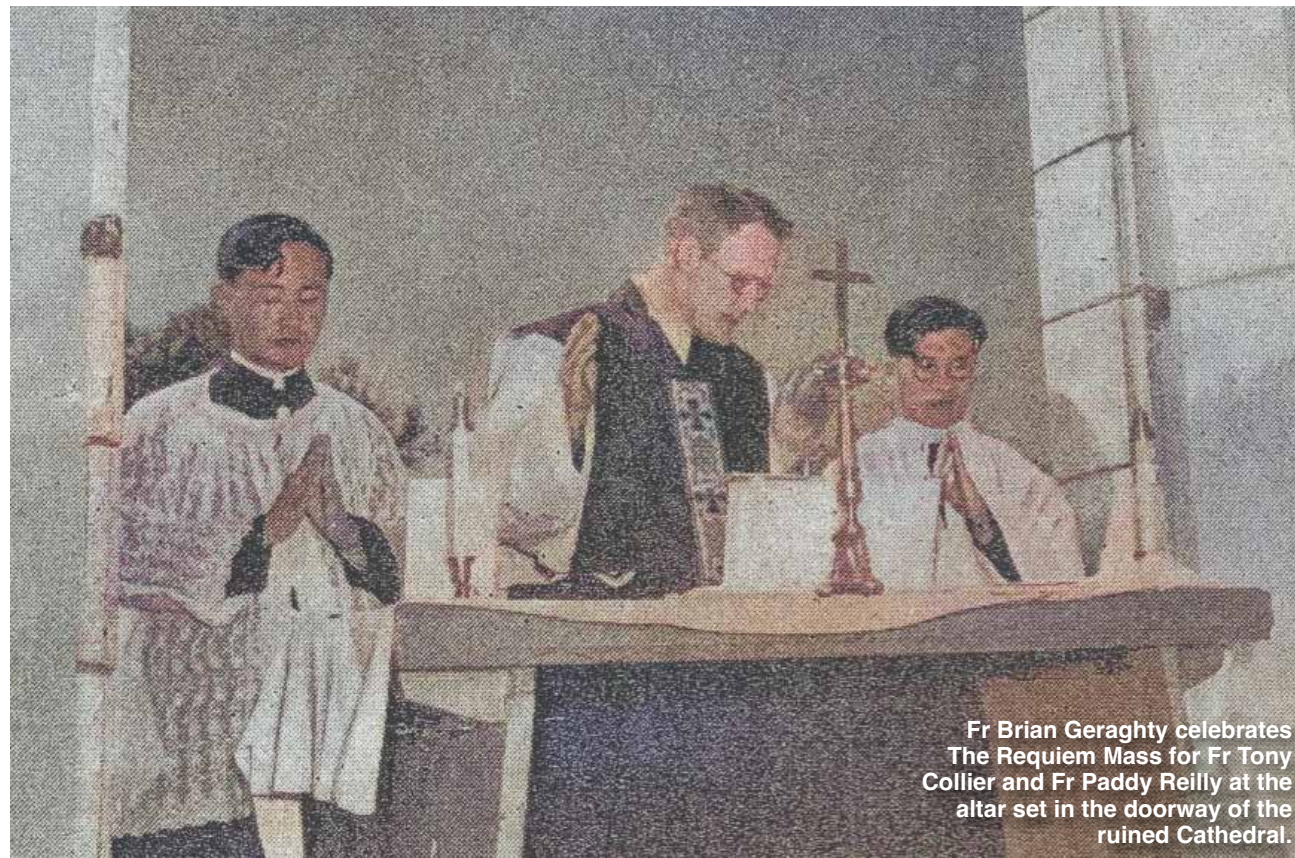
“The context [of their martyrdom] was the outbreak of the conflict, the Korean War,” Fr O’Keeffe explains, who has been living in Korea since 1976. “After their liberation from Japan, Korea was arbitrarily divided north and south along the 38th parallel by Russia and the US.

“Up to WWII, Korea had been a colony of Japan, so when they were accepting the surrender of Japan in 1945, both countries decided, arbitrarily, they never consulted the Koreans, to divide Korea in two.”

Civil war

This division led to a deadly civil war, in which between two to three million people were killed. Soviet Russia, which controlled the North, installed a pro-Russian elite, with the support of Communist China, while the Americans installed a pro-Japanese group in the south, Fr O’Keeffe says.

“So the two countries were beginning to go in diverse



Fr Brian Geraghty celebrates The Requiem Mass for Fr Tony Collier and Fr Paddy Reilly at the altar set in the doorway of the ruined Cathedral.

“Each of them had the opportunity, when the war broke out, to leave and that’s documented. Everyone of them said they’d stay”

directions. Most people at that stage didn’t believe the country would ever be divided as it is, so there was a lot of clashes around the 38th parallel,” he continues.

“Then the word came – when the North started to come South, there was documented evidence that they didn’t have much time for the believers. They didn’t want people who had an alternative vision of life from the one they were promoting.

“So Christians, who have their own perspective for judging reality and human rights, weren’t being tolerated. This was happening in North Korea when they had taken over in 1945 up to ‘50.

“The South Korean bishops began examining their causes in detail following their 2008 Spring Meeting”

“They [the Columban martyrs] knew ahead of time what would happen if they stayed on because the word was coming through from the North. The diocese where the Columbans worked, it covered parts of North Korea so there were priests the Columbans knew up there. In the northern diocese, there were four who were killed and in the southern, there were three more.”

The seven martyrs met their deaths in a number of

different circumstances. Frs Cusack and O’Brien, along with Msgr Brennan, died in a prisoner-of-war camp and their bodies were dumped in a mass grave. Fr Maginn was killed by North Korean troops after his town was occupied, while Fr Canavan died on the ‘Death Marches’, a forced march on which prisoners were left to die.

Killed

Fr Paddy Reilly was killed by North Korean soldiers in 1950, having hidden for a time with a local parishioner – the exact account of his death is unknown. Finally, Fr Tony Collier was tied to a catechist that he was working with and shot to death. The catechist survived, Fr O’Keeffe says, and his testimony was part of the documentation being sent to Rome.

“Tony, he was with his catechist and they tied the two of them together and shot them,” he continues. “As they were being shot, he kind of pushed your man to the ground and fell on top of him. And they left the two of them there for dead, they thought they were dead – that guy’s name was Gabriel Kim.

“Some hours later he woke up and untied himself and escaped. And he has written the account verbatim of what happened. We have documented cases of each of them, witnesses with them in those last days, pointing to the fact that they did make decisions in faith, that was the only thing that kept them going,” Fr O’Keeffe finishes.

The Columbans are not the ones, as it were, pushing the martyrs’ causes, Fr O’Keeffe tells me. This work is being entirely done in their adopted homeland, South Korea.

“It’s the local dioceses, because they find them inspirational. When they went into their lives in detail they found them inspirational witnesses to the Faith,” he explains, before

adding that a number of memorials built in their honour have now become places of pilgrimage.

The South Korean bishops began examining their causes in detail following their 2008 Spring Meeting, with the process getting off the ground in 2009. In 2013, Korean bishops entrusted Seoul Archdiocese with the jurisdiction for preliminary investigation. In 2014, the martyrs were declared Servants of God, marking the official beginning of diocesan and national phases of the canonisation process.

“It was very detailed research,” Fr O’Keeffe says. “For example, when they started

that, Chuncheon [diocese] contacted the Columbans asking for information about the men. You know, copies of their Baptism and Confirmation certs, their oaths of membership to the society, the ordination register. Anything relating to their lives, articles from Columban magazines or publications and then if possible contact was made with families to get a more detailed picture of their lives.”

Witnesses

Their official title is modern day witnesses to the Faith, Fr O’Keeffe explains adding that the renewed interest in their causes stem from a call from the Vatican in the 1990s to gather material on modern martyrs.

When I ask if he hopes that their example might lead to renewed Irish interest in missionary life and vocations, Fr O’Keeffe is circumspect. “I would say probably not immediately,” he begins in reply.

“I think Ireland has to work itself through where it’s at right now... they certainly will be inspirational, but I wouldn’t expect immediate results. I think once people settle down again and they decide on the form that the Church is to take in Ireland and then begin to look at our history and evaluate the positive side as well as the negative side, that people like this then will stand out as heroic examples.

“When people get beyond where we’re at right now with hurt and pain and baggage – perhaps because of that we aren’t able to see clearly a lot of the good. I think then they will certainly because their lives will stand on their own for being very great men,” the Irish Columban suggests.



Susanna Kim (second from right), the sister of Fr Tony Collier’s catechist Gabriel, is pictured at the martyrs memorial along with Columban missionaries Fr Liam O’Keeffe, Fr Thomas Nan and Fr Julio Kim.

'If the reds get control,



Irish martyr Fr Tommie Cusack's letters reveal his bravery and humour, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

"I have a boy," Fr Tommie Cusack's mother (Delia) begins a letter to Dalgan park, home of the Missionary Society of St Columban, "who is anxious to go to Dalgan park next September."

The letter is dated February 8, 1928, when Tommie was just 17. But even at that early time he knew what he wanted – and his mother knew what it might entail.

"For some years he has set his heart on going to China... When he was home at Xmas I spoke of all the

dangers attached to the mission but nothing would change him," Mrs Cusack writes less than two weeks later, February 20, 1928.

'Mammie', as Fr Cusack would call her affectionately throughout his life, was right to be worried, as it turned out. In 1950, while Mrs Cusack and her family were sitting listening to the evening news, the presenter began to read out the names of those dead in the Korean war.

"I remember, when we were down in Tramore and every night the rosary was said and then the news – I don't

know if it was 10 o'clock on the radio at that time – and in 1950 when the war began, they used to call out the names," recalls Stephanie McNamara, Tommie's niece.

Seven

"There were only seven Columbans, but they called out their names on the news and that's how my granny and my mother as well, heard that they were killed – their names came out at the end of the news.

"From that day until she died, my grandmother (Tommie's mother) sat listening to the news and nobody could speak until the news was over because she wondered if any of her other children's names were going to come out.

"There's no sense or logic to that, it's just grief is the only way you can explain it. But dare you utter a word until the news was finished and then she got back to normal again," Mrs McNamara finishes.

But though the grief of Fr Cusack's death hit the family hard, Mrs McNamara recalls that from early on, they knew he was watching over them in heaven.

"They all prayed to Tommie," she says. "My grandmother lived on her own and she was a really strong woman. But she was always afraid of lightning. And she prayed to Tommie every night that she would never see lightning when she was on her own in the house and she never did.

"All of us all our lives prayed to Tommie, but just because he was Tommie, not because he might be a saint. But there was a fair sure chance that the man was in Heaven."

Fr Cusack, born to Michael and Delia in Liscannor, Co. Clare, in 1910, was just 24 when he was ordained to the priesthood in 1934. The following year, he was sent to Korea.

His letters are scarce for the first 10 years or so of his mission, with no doubt the outbreak of WWII in 1939 having a significant effect. Msgr Owen McPolin recalled in a report written in 1959 that Tommie made phenomenal progress very quickly: "From the outset, therefore, Father Cusack had the temperament of a good missionary. His subsequent success simply confirmed this," Msgr McPolin wrote.

During WWII, all the priests were interned "for their safety", the Japanese claimed, an experience which Tommie reports in a letter written May 26, 1946. Initially, the "lock up", as he calls it, wasn't too bad, as the black market meant they had access to food, and the priests could see the war was going against the Japanese.

However, "the last three months

of the war were our worst, as they moved us into the mountains about 500 miles from where we had been. It was bad there and none of us wants to remember it. We had three fistfuls of rice a day and no chance of getting anything else... if the war had gone another month most of us would have died," Fr Tommie wrote to Madeline, his sister-in-law.

“They called out their names on the news and that's how my granny and my mother as well, heard that they were killed”

But despite this experience, he carried on his mission undeterred. At the end of the same letter, he talks about repairing the damage of the war years, of a new parish he has been moved to, and the number of converts to be looked after.

Reading through the letters, it is very clear that Tommie's two great loves were his family in Ireland and the flock entrusted to him in Korea. Despite the difficulties in communication – most of his letters reference letters that were lost or undelivered, as well as apologies for delays in getting in touch – he was kept apprised of family deaths and developments. Nothing was too small for his interest.

"I am glad to hear that M. Dunican's tummy has got mannerly," he jokes in one letter (August 23, 1946), while he regularly encourages his sister-in-law Madeline to send on pictures of her and his brother Joe's children.

our goose is cooked'



The class of 1934 who were ordained December 21, 1934, in Dalgan Park. Fr Tommie Cusack is in the centre of the second row from the back.

"Somehow, I always imagine you, Joe, with the girl on one knee & the boys between your feet, I just have to laugh when I think of you as a sedate father of a family," Fr Cusack writes.

References

Throughout his letters of late 1946 and into 1947, he references the longing he had to be home, and his hopes for making it back somehow. "There seems to be no hope of getting out of here for ages yet," he complains in a letter (May 19, 1947). But in October of that year, he finally got permission to return home and he was back by December.

Mary Anne Costello, whose family lived across the road from Tommie's, wrote in a letter to Mrs McNamara about her memories of meeting Fr Cusack on his return home.

"He visited all the neighbours that afternoon and he was still visiting our home when P.J. and I got in from school that afternoon," Mrs Costello wrote April 14, 2020. He was sitting in my grandmother's armchair beside a big open fire holding our three yr. old sister.

"He then took the two of us on his knee and began telling us stories of growing up in Ballycotton. Going to school with our uncles and coming home with them, having dinner with them and going out and about in the field after the cattle and cows.

"He told us about the poverty in Korea. The children being left at his doorstep screaming with hunger as there was no milk to be got for them. However his housekeeper took them in and he managed to get milk for them. Sometimes he had them for

two or three days at a time. This went on for some time with him feeding them."

Mrs Costello's letter continues, saying: "I think he wanted to let us know how well off we were, having plenty of food and milk in our own homes despite shortages of certain things during the war years. He also told us then of his period in jail. How starved and cold he was there. The great trouble he had trying to celebrate Mass when he was allowed. He prayed and prayed so hard while he was there and he felt the power of prayer helped release him from prison eventually.

"The gentleness, the warmth and the kindness in his voice will stay with me forever."

"I always imagine you, Joe, with the girl on one knee & the boys between your feet"

There must have been a degree of temptation for Tommie to stay in Ireland. A joke among the missionaries was that "Korea is a great country to be out of" and the image of domestic bliss, of the kind described by Mrs Costello, was one referenced by Tommie frequently in his letters.

Equally, the news from Korea was bleak. Even before he left in 1947, things had taken a turn for the worse. "If the Americans ever leave, it will not be a nice country to live in... the native communists are much worse than the Russians and the Russians are drastic enough," he wrote in a letter, July 14, 1947.

"A few days ago in a town where the Russians are, there was a rightist demonstration; the Russians just turned machine guns on the crowd. Killed over 200 and wounded 1,000."

The Koreans had "politics on the brain", he complained to his family, while 'the Reds' – meaning the Communist forces – were an ever-present threat: "if the red lads ever get control here our goose is cooked," he wrote, November 27, 1949.

"He told us about the poverty in Korea. The children being left at his doorstep screaming with hunger"

And his prediction came true in July, 1950. On July 17, a man from the US embassy came to Fr Cusack and his brother priests, warning them that the North Koreans were on their way. He told them to get out, but Msgr Brennan, Fr O'Brien (see pages 15 & 16) and Fr Cusack refused.

One of the priests who did leave, Fr Michael O'Connor, was entrusted by Tommie with a final message to his mother: "Fr Tom was free to leave with us who were studying the language there but he told me to tell you he would never again be happy if he left his parish when his people needed him most," Fr O'Connor wrote in a letter to Mrs Cusack, September 5, 1950.

"It breaks his heart to cause you such worry, but he was very happy and I leaving him. He knows that deep down in your heart you are happy with him and proud of him."

Tommie was still alive when Fr O'Connor sent this note, but on the night of September 24, a general massacre of prisoners took place in Daejeon as Red troops prepared to hurry north so as not to be cut off by advancing United Nations troops. Between 5,000 and 6,000 people died. This included prisoners from the Franciscan Monastery and the jail in Daejeon. Among them were Fr Jack O'Brien, Msgr Patrick Brennan and Fr Tommie Cusack.

But while that was the end of Tommie's life on earth, it was not the end of his legacy in Korea. I said earlier that he had two great loves: I have already spoken of his family, but said nothing of the love he showed for the Koreans, who have done so much for his memory.

Stories

In all of his letters home, Tommie relayed stories that showed his attentiveness to the needs of his flock, and his zeal for their souls.

It was difficult to get new priests over to Korea, so he worked from sunup until sundown to make up the difference, travelling all around the parish to say Mass and visit the sick and dying. In one touching story, he recounts how a Catholic who hadn't been to the sacraments for years was dying.

"I went to the house and asked to see her but she refused to let me in," he writes July 4, 1949. "... I had just got a glimpse of her lying on the floor & it was terrible to think of

having to leave her die like that, but there seemed no getting in.

"During dinner something put it into my head to go back there and ask her if she wanted medicine... I got her husband's permission and got into the room... I asked her about Confession & she said she had forgotten how to make a Confession, but we got over that and I left with a promise that she would prepare tonight & I am to give her all the last sacraments tomorrow."

Sacraments

In a note at the top of the same letter dated the following day (July 5), Tommie reports simply "I was at that woman's house today & gave her all the sacraments".

He regularly reported back to his family with pride the number of converts in his parish, the number of children learning their catechism and of the men and women received into the Church every Easter. Only months before his death, as the Korean war was set to begin and danger lurked round every corner, he wished he could do more for the towns around him yet to receive the Faith.

In his final letter, written July 6, 1950, Tommie wrote about his frustrations at the war which had just begun: "The thing should happen just as everything was beginning to go so well here – it has been the best year since we came to Korea. In Mokpo too the Cathedral just started and sites for two new churches just bought; I suppose it is God's way to show us that he has a hand in things too.

"Just ten days ago I got word of a family of tepids who had been here for ten years and nobody knew they were in existence – it was just by pure accident I happened to hear of them – they are from another parish, a daughter who married a pagan was sick in hospital & I went down, fixed up the marriage & gave her all the sacraments, she died last night a lucky girl."

"In all of his letters home, Tommie relayed stories that showed his attentiveness to the needs of his flock"

This was Fr Tommie Cusack, a man who inspired love and loyalty through the affection and mercy he himself showed. After his death, his close friend and brother Columban Fr Tom Foy wrote to Mrs Cusack, which began "Will this letter be sympathy or congratulation?". I will leave the last word to him.

"Please take it as both," he continues. "A mother's heart will grieve for her absent child; a noble Catholic mother will have joy and pride that her son has lived for the gospel. And live for it alone..."

"For me it was an honour to have known him, a privilege to have had him as a friend; my friend he will always be. I suppose your heart is torn with grief; bear up dear Mrs Cusack, you have a son in ten thousand," Fr Foy wrote December 10, 1950, the same year that Tommie died.



Fr Tommie Cusack's niece Stephanie McNamara (far left) and Columban Fr Donal O'Keeffe stand at Tommie's grave in Korea in 2013.

Cemetery Mass returns to Rath



Bishop Ray Browne is pictured with priests of the diocese of Kerry who attended the cemetery Mass in Rath cemetery, Tralee, Co. Kerry, July 17. Photos: John Cleary.

Ruadhán Jones

After two years without, the Mass was celebrated in Rath cemetery, Co. Kerry, with Bishop of Kerry Ray Browne in attendance.

The cemetery Mass was an annual event, but the Covid-19 pandemic put a halt to proceedings temporarily.

The crowds turned up for the procession and social afterwards, enjoying the summer sun.



Fr Tadhg Fitzgerald celebrates Mass in Rath cemetery, Co. Kerry.



The crowds turned out for the first cemetery Mass at Rath cemetery in two years.



The procession through Rath cemetery ahead of Mass.

Out&About

Summer fun



DUBLIN: Minister for Education Norma Foley is pictured on a visit to St Brigid's GNS Cabinteely, July 13, where she saw the school's summer programme.



KILDARE: Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey joins Fr Michael Troy, Carmelite Provincial, and the Carmelite community in Kildare for the final night of their novena on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16.



LOUTH: Holy Family Parish, Drogheda, marked the vigil of Our Lady of Mt Carmel with a blessing of relics from St John of the Cross, St Teresa of Avila and St Thérèse, July 15.

IN SHORT

Charities disappointed by Syria border decision

Irish charities, including Trócaire and Goal, expressed disappointment at the UN's decision to keep the "vital" Syria-Turkey border open for just six more months.

The charities warned that the fact the agreement was only to keep the border crossing open for six months makes it difficult to plan for the level of critical aid that is now required.

"This still means huge uncertainty for the 4.1 million people trapped in northwest

Syria already living in appalling misery and dependent on food, medical care and shelter, delivered by way of the border crossing," the agencies said in a joint statement.

The aid agencies appreciated the diplomacy shown by the Irish Government to seek an extension of the border mechanism for a further 12 months, which would have provided a more stable solution.

"While we welcome the fact that for now vital humanitarian aid can still be delivered through the one remaining border crossing at Bab al-Hawa, a more long-term solution is required," the statement said.

Social Justice Ireland launches rural 'just transition' survey

Social Justice Ireland (SJI), in collaboration with Irish Rural Link, have launched a joint research project examining rural communities, wellbeing and a just transition.

As part of this project, the agencies have developed a survey to capture the views of rural dwellers and rural communities on how a just transition to a climate neutral environment can be achieved, and how the wellbeing of rural communities can be improved.

"At this very important juncture in Irish life, as we begin to implement the policies to meet our national climate goals by 2030, your views and the views of your wider network are vital to developing a clear picture of the potential impact on rural communities across Ireland," SJI said in a statement.

The survey seeks to gauge the level of job satisfaction rural dwellers experience and the degree of concern they may feel about the impact of climate policies.

This survey will remain open until July 31, 2022. To take part in the survey, visit <https://www.socialjustice.ie/article/rural-communities-and-just-transition>.



MAYO: Fr Steve Gibson (far right) of the Peyton Centre, Attymass, brought Fr Pinto Paul (centre right), international director of Holy Cross Family Ministries (HCFM), and his niece Alphie James to Balintubber Abbey, where they were welcomed by Fr Fahey, July 13.



KILDARE: Members of the Rotary Club of Newbridge, who recently provided 18 bikes to Peter McVerry Trust for the Ukrainian residents in the Newbridge service, are pictured with some of the bikes, July 19.



DUBLIN: Archbishop-emeritus of Pretoria, South Africa, Liam Slattery OFM is shown the inner workings of Radio Maria's studio by Fr Eamonn McCarthy.



MONAGHAN: Bernie Smith makes a presentation for the missions to Fr Rueben Padilla of the Comboni Fathers when he recently visited Bawn. Also pictured is Kevin Gartlan.



DERRY: Mayor of Derry and Strabane Cllr Sandra Duffy (right) presents a commemorative trophy to Mrs Martina McCarron to mark her retirement as Principal of St Joseph's Boys School Derry.



KILDARE: Dr John O'Keeffe, Director of Sacred Music at St Patrick's Pontifical University conducts members of the ICMA summer school, held in Maynooth.



MAYO: Breege Heneghan, a volunteer with SVP Vincent's Claremorris is pictured receiving her Volunteer of the Year in the West region award from Dermot McGilloway, SVP National Retail Development manager and Caroline McGrath, SVP West Region Retail Manager, July 18.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



▲▼ ROSCOMMON: Leitrim manager and Mayo star Andy Moran shares his faith story with the young people of Achonry who gathered together July 17.



GALWAY: Sr Brenda Coyne RJM, Galway and Kilmacduagh Diocesan Advisor (Primary), Mr P.J. Callanan, Diocesan Education Officer and Bishop-emeritus Brendan Kelly cut into a celebratory cake as they mark their retirements, July 16.



CARLOW: Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty welcomes Sr Maria, Sr Ijuma and their European leader Sr Mary Colette to Bishop's House, July 18.

ANTRIM

Youth 2000 prayer retreats for young Catholics aged 18-35 take place in St Comgall's Church, Castle Street, on Sundays at 7pm. Contact: Fr. James O'Reilly – 00442894429103.

CLARE

Ennis Cathedral and Kilmaloe diocesan pilgrimage to Lough Derg will take place from Monday August 1 to Wednesday 3. The bus will leave from the Cathedral at 7am sharp. Total cost €130. Early booking is recommended to secure a place.

CORK

The annual concelebrated Mass commemorating the day of Padre Pio's ordination to the priesthood will take place on Sunday August 7 from 2.30pm, in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Dennehy's Cross. Confessions will be available from 1.30pm. There will also be the anointing of the sick, benediction, and blessing with First Class Padre Pio relics.

DERRY

Exhibition on the life of Bishop Edward Daly, 'A Man for All Seasons' (Monday August 8-Sunday August 14) in St Eugene's Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road. This exhibition has been compiled to celebrate the life, influence, work and legacy of Bishop Edward Daly. For more information, please visit www.steugenes cathedral.com

Termonbacca to host 'Captivating – Beauty of a Woman' ladies' retreat August 12-14. The retreat experience is based on the book Captivating by John and Stasi Eldredge. Contact termonbaccaderry@gmail.com for more information.

DONEGAL

A relic of St Peregrine, patron saint of cancer sufferers and life threatening illnesses, has been gifted to the Franciscan Friary Rosnowlagh. Individual blessings and anointing of the sick will take place each Wednesday. You must

book for your 10 minute slot. Telephone 0044 719852035 on Monday and Tuesday only.

GALWAY

A Youth 2000 prayer gathering for young Catholics (aged 18-35) takes place in the Church of St Oliver Plunkett, Renmore on Fridays at 8:15pm. For more information, contact Maire on 0851482076

KILDARE

Youth 2000 summer festival takes place August 11-14 at Clongowes Wood College, Clane. The Youth 2000 Summer Festival is a fourday Catholic event run by young people for young people from all across Ireland. For more information visit youth2000.ie

KILKENNY

The Mass at Foulkstown Cemetery, St Patrick's Parish, will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday, July 28. The parish asks that parishioners inform relatives and friends, especially those who are away from home.

LONGFORD

The diocesan pilgrimage to Knock takes place Sunday September 4 with ceremonies beginning at 2.30pm.

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Mel's Cathedral from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 8pm to 12 midnight Monday to Saturday in the Oratory at the side of the Presbytery.

LOUTH

Irish men's rosary rally to take place August 6 in Carlingford, opposite the village green and outside the coastal wall.

MAYO

The annual Reek Sunday pilgrimage takes place on Sunday July 31 at Croagh Patrick. Confessions on the summit 7:30am-2pm. Mass hourly from 8am-2pm.

Knock International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine will host a family day on Sunday August 21, where children and families can join in a range of fun activities in

the beautiful grounds of Knock Shrine.

MONAGHAN

The blessing of the graves ceremony for Monaghan and Rackwallace cemetery takes place Sunday September 4 at 3pm.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois cemetery Mass takes place Saturday July 30 at 3pm. Mass offered from Papal Mass shelter on monastic site.

ROSCOMMON

The annual cemetery Mass in St Coman's cemetery will take place on Sunday August 6, beginning at 7pm.

TIPPERARY

Mary's Meals' 'Step By Step' walk from Thurles to Knock Shrine led by Fr Eamonn Kelly PP, Raphoe begins on Sunday August 7 and passes through Templemore, Roscrea, Birr, Fermoy, Athlone, Roscommon, Ballymoe and Ballyhaunis reaching Knock Shrine on Monday August 15.

WATERFORD

Four-day Medjugorje-style retreat at Glencomeragh Retreat Centre, with Fr Patrick Cahill. Full board accommodation, but spaces are limited so book now. Takes place August 18-21/ September 1-4. Cost: €260. Full Medjugorje-like spiritual programme. For more information or to book contact info@holyfamilymission.ie or (052) 6133181.

WESTMEATH

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Cathedral of Christ the King from 2:30pm-7pm Monday-Friday.

WEXFORD

St Aidan's Cathedral Enniscorthy's parish pilgrimage to Our Lady's Island takes place Monday August 29 at 8pm. The bus is subsidised by the parish so the cost is €5 per person.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Pope calls for 'covenant' between humanity and environment

● Humanity can no longer ignore the cries of the earth that is suffering due to greed and the excessive consumption of its resources, Pope Francis said.

In his message for the World Day of Prayer for Creation, the Pope said the current climate crisis is a call for men and women, especially Christians, to "repent and modify our lifestyles and destructive systems".

"The present state of decay of our common home merits the same attention as other global challenges such as grave health crises and wars. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience," he wrote in his message, which was released by the Vatican July 21.

Casualties after attack on church inauguration in Syria

● At least one person was killed and several were injured Sunday in an attack on the inauguration of a Greek Orthodox church in Syria's Hama Governorate.

There are reports of one or two deaths from the attack, and as many as 12 wounded.

The July 24 attack targeted Hagia Sophia Church in Al-Suqaylabiyah, about 30 miles northwest of Hama. The church was

being built as a replica of Istanbul's Hagia Sophia by the governments of Bashar al-Assad and Vladimir Putin in response to the Turkish government's converting that building to a mosque.

The attack has been variously attributed to rockets, missiles, or armed drones.

The Syrian Arab News Agency, the country's state media, attributed the attack to "terrorist organisations".

'Red-tagging' threat fails to frighten Filipino religious

● Religious superiors in the Philippines have vowed not to back down from taking a strong stance against government mismanagement and corruption despite a political threat of being labelled "communists".

The religious superiors said in a statement July 17 that "red-tagging" would not deter them from criticising the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on issues such as graft, ucanews.com reported.

"Some among our ranks were red-tagged; irresponsible labels and name-calling will not cow us. To serve the people of God is never wrong. To be in solidarity with the struggles, dreams and hopes of our people is demanded by our life of consecration to God and his people," the group said.

Red-tagging is the malicious labelling of individuals or groups as "terrorists" or "communists" for criticising the government.

Prayer 'is what will save Nicaragua,' bishop says

● During a recent pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Divine Child in the Diocese of Matagalpa, Nicaragua, Bishop Rolando Álvarez said that prayer "is what will save Nicaragua" and called for a "crusade" in the coming months.

The country has been embroiled in a political and economic crisis since 2018, when demonstrations broke out and then were put down by police and paramilitaries, resulting in more than 400 deaths.

"On behalf of all my brother priests of our blessed and beloved diocese of Matagalpa, I want to call each and every one of you to (join in) a crusade of prayer and adoration for our Church, our priests, and our beloved Nicaragua," the prelate said July 17 during the pilgrimage's closing Mass.

'Astonished' German leaders take issue with Holy See's latest warning

The latest warning by the Holy See about the risk of a new schism from Germany arising from the "Synodal Way" has been rejected and met with "astonishment" by its organisers, who in turn accused Rome of not acting like a synodal Church.

However, at least one German bishop and a reform group welcomed the new intervention from the Vatican, reported CNA Deutsch.

Following the statement by the Holy See July 21, the presidents of the German Bishops' Conference and the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) said they were stunned by the intervention.

"In our understanding, a synodal Church is something else!" Bishop Georg Bätzing of Limburg and Irme Stetter-Karp declared in response to the Vatican's intervention. "This also applies to the way today's communication has been handled, which has been a source of astonishment for us."

They added, "It is not a good example of communication within the Church, if statements are published which are not signed by name."

While one German prelate, Bishop Bertram Meier of Augsburg, welcomed the statement from Rome, writing the concern for unity was clearly "virulent," CNA Deutsch reported, the "Synodal Way" organisers accused the Vatican of a lack



Bishop Georg Bätzing, president of the German bishops' conference, celebrates Mass during the third Synodal Assembly in Frankfurt in this 2021 photo. Photo: CNS

of willingness to communicate: "Unfortunately, the Synodal Committee has not been invited to a discussion [with Vatican bodies] to date."

In its statement July 21, the Holy See said: "The 'Synodal Way' in Germany does not have the power to compel bishops and the Faithful to adopt new forms of governance and new orientations of doctrine and morals."

The Vatican's note said it seemed "necessary to clarify" this, in order to "safeguard the freedom of the People of God and the exercise of the episcopal ministry".

The statement warned: "It would not be permissible to introduce new official struc-

tures or doctrines in dioceses before an agreement had been reached at the level of the universal Church, which would constitute a violation of ecclesial communion and a threat to the unity of the Church."

In reaction to Bishop Bätzing's and Ms Stetter-Karp's response, the secretary-general of the Nordic Bishops' Conference, herself a German religious, raised the question whether the controversial process itself suffered from a "communication problem."

Sr Anna Mirijam Kaschner pointed to an apparent perception that the process was seeking to change — or depart, on its own "separate way" — from the Church's teaching

on a number of issues, including celibacy, the ordination of women, and sexual morality.

Concerns over the risk of a departure from the universal Church's teaching on the "Synodal Way" — a *Sonderweg* in German — were first raised in 2019, when Cardinal Reinhard Marx initiated the process.

In their most recent statement, such concerns were again rejected by Bishop Bätzing and Ms Irme Stetter-Karp: "We never tire of underlining that the Church in Germany will not follow a 'special German path,'" they said. "Nevertheless, we see it as our duty to clearly state where we believe changes are necessary."

Portuguese Inquisition documents to become available online

Rare documentation of the Portuguese Inquisition with detailed information about the sentencing trials which took place 500 years ago have been digitised for the first time in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People Jerusalem's National Library of Israel.

The documents include printed versions of sermons preached by two priests at the end of the trials they presided over and a bound 60-page manuscript from the 18th Century that documents the first 130 years of the Portuguese Inquisition tribunal's activities.

The trials mainly occurred in Lisbon, with a brief mention of trials in Tomar.

Written in Portuguese, the manuscript holds information about trials conducted by inquisitors from 1540 to 1669 against Jews newly converted to Catholicism who were accused of continuing to secretly practice Judaism.

Included are details of the trials including dates, names of priests who participated and numbers of victims sentenced in each one. The document is known in English as *An Accounting*

of *All the Autos-da-Fé that Took Place in Lisbon*.

Autos-da-fé, or acts of faith, were public spectacles in which the sentences of Inquisition victims were read and executed by the authorities.

The summaries were written at a time when the inquisitors, or someone who took part in the trials, felt the need to keep a record of the work of the Inquisition as a positive thing, noted archivist Pnina Younger. Based on the handwriting, all of the summaries were written by one person, she said.

Lack of upkeep poses danger to historic churches in France

French parliamentarians warned that thousands of historic churches, many dating from the Middle Ages, will have to be sold or demolished unless government officials allocate resources to maintain them.

"Like other Western countries, France faces questions over the future of its religious heritage given society's growing secularisation," a report

for the French Senate said.

"As true common goods, these buildings have not just spiritual, but also historical, cultural, artistic and architectural value. They structure landscapes, define territorial identities, and provide vectors for transmitting local and national memory, as well as contributing to the quality of the living environment," it said.

The authors, Senators Pierre Ouzoulias and Anne Ventalon, said they were tasked with recommending ways to save France's 100,000 religious sites, following "pleas from distraught mayors" unable to meet upkeep obligations under the country's 1905 Church-state separation law.

Catholic churches in France were legally declared

state property more than a century ago, requiring local governments to maintain them at public expense while allowing their use for Masses.

The report said more than 40,000 sites predate the 20th Century, with 15,000 protected as historic monuments, but that many lacked proper maintenance, especially in rural areas.



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

Preparing for the Pope



Workers prepare signage at the former site of the Ermineskin Residential School ahead of the visit of Pope Francis in Maskwacis, Alberta, Canada. Photo: CNS

Lithuanian archbishop urges firmer Church stance on war in Ukraine

The top representative of Europe's Catholic bishops said the Vatican is changing its approach to the war in Ukraine because of the unlikelihood of a mediated settlement.

He also praised the resilience of Ukrainians in withstanding Russian aggression.

"Certain cultural ambiguities can make us less sensitive to how things are seen in Ukraine. I myself have received many negative responses to statements by the Pope," said Archbishop Gintaras Grušas of Vilnius, Lithuania, president of the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe.

"But I think we're seeing a change in the Vatican's position and the words used to describe the situation. They are naming the aggressor and calling this a war. I think Ukrainians are thankful for that," he told Catholic News Service July 21 following a five-day tour of Ukraine as a guest of Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Catholic Church leaders.

The archbishop said Vatican officials had hoped to offer mediation after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the February 24 invasion of Ukraine, but they had now gained "a better idea of what's going on and the dif-

ficulties people are facing".

"Although the possibility of mediating doesn't have to be given up, priority clearly needs to go to supporting the victim," Archbishop Grušas said, adding that he does not believe Putin wants to negotiate an end to the war.

The archbishop addressed a Ukrainian Catholic bishops' synod July 15, convened in Przemyśl, Poland, near the border with Ukraine. The meeting had been scheduled to take place in Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, but was moved to Poland because of the danger of Russian shelling.

The archbishop told CNS

that during his trip, he visited a village near Kyiv where its 300 inhabitants had been locked in cellars for a month by Russian troops with no food or toilet facilities. He said he witnessed a "strong faith" and "firm commitment to freedom" among local people, as well as among refugees and internally displaced people, currently numbering more than 12 million, according to the United Nations.

Archbishop Grušas said he had also been struck by the "high spirits" of gravely wounded soldiers who still hoped to return to the front line when he visited a Kyiv military hospital.

Maronite Catholic officials denounce detention of archbishop

Maronite Catholic officials in Lebanon have denounced the detention of one of its bishops on the country's southern border with Israel.

The July 18 incident occurred at the border post of Lebanon's General Security in the village of Ras Naqoura, at which Maronite Archbishop Moussa El-Hage of Haifa and the Holy Land was detained for more than 12 hours.

Archbishop El-Hage, also the patriarchal exarch of Jerusalem and Palestine and Jordan, was traveling by road from his episcopal seat in Haifa, Israel, when he was taken into custody by security officers at a crossing that is reserved for religious and the diplomatic corps.

Maronite officials said the archbishop was transporting aid, food and cash from his archdiocese intended for needy in

Lebanon, amid the country's catastrophic economic collapse that has pushed nearly 80% of the population into poverty.

Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of Maronite Catholics, convened a meeting July 20 of the permanent council, a patriarchal authority composed of four bishops that meets in "emergency and serious cases". Archbishop El-Hage was present.

Vatican roundup

Pope meets with Monaco royalty at Vatican

● Pope Francis interrupted his traditional July break to meet with Prince Albert II of Monaco and his wife, Princess Charlene, at the Vatican.

According to the Vatican press office, the Pope met with the royal couple July 20 and spoke privately for 25 minutes. After their meeting, the Pope presented the royal couple with a bronze depiction of a child helping another child get up from the ground; the words "love" and "help" are etched on either side of the figures.

A document included with the bronze statue stated that the image was inspired by the parable of the good Samaritan and serves as a reminder that "the call to accompany, care for and support the most vulnerable invites us to rekindle our vocation as citizens of the world to build a new bond, to look within ourselves and to develop a 'social love'".

Pope has made College of Cardinals 'less European,' analysis shows

● Pope Francis' picks for the College of Cardinals have made the body "less European," giving a greater voice to developing nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, a new analysis shows.

The Pew Research Centre report focused on the 83 cardinals appointed by the Argentinian Pope now under the age of 80 who are eligible to vote in a papal conclave.

Those appointees, 16 of whom won't be installed until August 27, currently make up a majority (63%) of the 132 voting-age cardinals. Francis' predecessors, Pope St John Paul II and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, appointed the remaining cardinals.

Europeans account for the plurality of Francis' voting-age appointees — 28, or 34% of the total, the most of any region. But once the latest batch of appointees is installed, Europe will have seen its share shrink to 40%, down from 52% in 2013 when Francis was elected.

Meanwhile, other parts of the world have gained ground, led by the Asia-Pacific region, whose overall representation of voting-age cardinals has risen from 9% in 2013 to 17% in 2022, the analysis shows.

Sub-Saharan Africa is on the upswing, as well, rising from 9% to 12%. Latin America and the Caribbean has had a more modest gain, rising from 16% to 18%.

Holy See enacts new investment policy

● A new unitary policy for the financial investments of the Holy See and the Vatican City State will go into effect September 1, which will be governed by an investment policy.

This is what the Secretariat for the Economy (SPE) announced in a press release published July 19 by the Holy See Press Office.

The document from the Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy, Fr Juan Antonio Guerrero Alves, had been discussed in the Council for the Economy and with specialists in the sector. The text was addressed to the heads of dicasteries in the Curia and heads of institutions and entities connected to the Holy See.

"The new Investment Policy," the statement reads, "intends to ensure that investments are aimed at contributing to a more just and sustainable world; preserve the real value of the Holy See's net worth, generating sufficient return to contribute in a sustainable way to financing its activities; are aligned with the teachings of the Catholic Church, with specific exclusions of financial investments that contradict its fundamental principles, such as the sanctity of life or the dignity of the human being or the common good."

Pope apologises for Church role

MASKWACIS, Alberta – the first step of Pope Francis' "penitential pilgrimage" to Canada involved him returning two pairs of children's moccasins.

The little shoes were not among the Indigenous artifacts held in the Vatican Museums, but rather reminders that Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier of the Okanese First Nation in Saskatchewan had left with Pope Francis in March so he would think and pray about the children who went to residential schools and, especially, about those who never returned home.

On the treaty land of the Ermineskin Cree Nation, Samson Cree Nation, Louis Bull Tribe and the Montana First Nation, near the former site of one of Canada's largest residential schools, Pope Francis said, "I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed by so many Christians against the Indigenous peoples".

"The first step of my penitential pilgrimage among you is that of again asking forgiveness, of telling you once more that I am deeply sorry," the Pope said July 25.

"I am sorry," he said again. "I ask forgiveness, in particular, for the ways in which many members of the Church and of religious communities cooperated, not least through their indifference, in projects of cultural destruction and forced assimilation promoted by the governments of that time, which culminated in the system of residential schools."

Words

The Pope spoke in Spanish. When his words of apology were read in English, the crowd responded with applause.

Pope Francis' meeting with more than 2,000 residential school survivors, community elders and knowledge keepers, their family members and mental and emotional support staff was held at the Muskwa, or Bear Park, Powwow Grounds under a persistent drizzle.

Canada's governor general, Mary Simon, and prime minister, Justin Trudeau, were in attendance. But the dignitaries were the Pope and Indigenous chiefs from across Canada who made a grand entrance, carrying staffs decorated with eagle feathers and wearing "war bonnets".

The local master of ceremonies explained that the chiefs must be warriors who defend the Indigenous people, language, customs and children.

Before the Pope arrived, Ruby Rose Henry of the Tla'amin Nation warmed up her drum and voice by a fire. She hoped to sing the "Wild Flower Song" for the Pope.

When government officials would come into the village to



Pope Francis visits with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Mary Simon, governor general, after a welcoming ceremony at Edmonton International Airport July 24.

take children to the residential school, she said, "the children would run and hide". When the officials would leave, "the children would sing this song so the parents would know they were not kidnapped".

The Pope had begun his visit meeting the pastoral staff and a few parishioners at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Church before stopping to pray in the Ermineskin Cree Nation Cemetery and then going, by wheelchair, to the site of the former Ermineskin Indian Residential School.

“As the meeting with the Pope began, dozens of people carried a long red banner through the crowd”

Five teepees were erected on the site – four of them to represent each of the nations that call Maskwacis home, and the fifth to mark the school.

Pope Francis had described his visit to Canada July 24-29 as a "penitential pilgrimage" to ask forgiveness for the trauma inflicted on Indigenous children by too many of the priests and nuns who ran about 60% of the schools for the Canadian government.

The government now estimates at least 150,000 First Nation, Inuit and Métis children were taken from their families and communities and forced to attend the schools between the 1870 and 1997. At least 4,120 children died at the schools, and several thousand others vanished without a trace.



Pope Francis greets Grand Chief George Arcand of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations as he arrives at Edmonton International Airport July 24. Looking on is Mary Simon, governor general of Canada.

As the meeting with the Pope began, dozens of people carried a long red banner through the crowd. The banner bore the names of each of the 4,120 deceased children and the school where they died.

Students at the schools were forbidden to speak their native languages or practice their traditions. The government provided so little financing that the students often were malnourished. And many were emotionally, physically or even sexually abused.

Graves

The discovery of unmarked graves and of possible burial grounds at several sites across Canada in 2021 increased attention on the residential-school legacy and increased pressure on Pope Francis to

apologise on Canadian soil for what members of the Church had done.

Ernest Durocher, a member of the Métis Nation Saskatchewan and a survivor of the Ile-a-la-Crosse Residential School, travelled to Maskwacis with his wife, also a survivor. He sat alone outside the powwow grounds for a while, just thinking, he said.

"I hope to hear an apology from the Pope," he said.

Emily McKinney, 21, a member of the Swan Lake First Nation, travelled to Maskwacis from the Treaty 1 territory in Manitoba, where she is chair of the Treaty 1 Youth Council.

"I hope to hear a sincere, genuine apology for those who need it to heal from intergenerational trauma," she said.

The schools' policy sepa-

rated parents and children, she said. "It wasn't natural, but by force, and for seven generations! There are huge, traumatic effects."

"These kids were raised in institutions. How were they supposed to know how to raise their families with love and kindness and our teachings?" she asked.

Complicity

At the powwow grounds, Pope Francis acknowledged the Church's complicity in the "deplorable evil" of suppressing native languages and cultures, the destruction of family and community bonds and the trauma endured by the children at the schools and often passed on to their children and grandchildren in the form of a lack of affection or actual abuse.



Members of the Indigenous community perform during a welcoming ceremony for Pope Francis hosted by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Mary Simon, Canadian governor general, at Edmonton International Airport July 24.

Cree Chief Wilton Littlechild, 78, an Ermineskin residential school survivor who had travelled to Rome in March to meet Pope Francis, welcomed the Pope to his home.

Littlechild, a lawyer and politician, told the Pope that as a member of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he had heard "nearly 7,000 testimonies from former students of residential schools" across Canada. The people gathered at Maskwacis, he said, represented all of them.

After Pope Francis spoke, Gerry Saddleback offered an "honour song" in Cree. The Canadian organisers said the song is a way of showing "openness and, for some, acceptance of the Holy Father's apology and (is) an invitation to all those present, in their

in Canada's residential schools



Pope Francis prays at the Ermineskin Cree Nation Cemetery before meeting with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities at Maskwacis, Alberta, July 25. Photos: CNS



Pope Francis kisses the hand of residential school survivor Alma Desjarlais of the Frog Lake First Nation during a welcoming ceremony at Edmonton International Airport July 24. The Pope was beginning a six-day visit to Canada.



Ruby Rose Henry, a member of the Tla'amin Nation, warms up by a fire before Pope Francis arrives at the Muskwa, or Bear Park, Powwow Grounds in Maskwacis, Alberta, July 25.



As the meeting with Pope Francis begins in Maskwacis, Alberta, July 25, dozens of people carry a long red banner through the crowd. The banner bears the names of each of the 4,120 Indigenous children and the residential school where they died.



An Indigenous leader greets a woman as he arrives for a meeting with Pope Francis and First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities at Maskwacis, Alberta, July 25.

own way and according to their own personal timeline, to seek to accept that same invitation toward forgiveness."

Promised

The Pope promised the Church's cooperation in further investigating what occurred at the schools and to walk alongside survivors in their journey toward healing.

"On this first step of my journey," the Pope said, "I have wanted to make space for memory. Here, today, I am with you to recall the past, to grieve with you, to bow our heads together in silence and to pray before the graves."

"In the face of evil, we pray to the Lord of goodness," he said. "In the face of death, we pray to the God of life."



Pope Francis wears a traditional Indigenous headdress during a meeting with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities at Maskwacis, Alberta, July 25.



Indigenous dancers perform as Pope Francis meets with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities at Maskwacis, Alberta, July 25.

Letters

Letter of the week

Gradual process needed for sustainability progress

Dear Editor, Ten dioceses have divested from fossil fuel [The Irish Catholic – July 14, 2022] but we need to see the rest up their game and do the same. In Europe we are facing a huge energy crisis due to our reliance on fossil fuels. It is easy to point the finger and say sustainable methods of harvesting energy are not as effective as the sources of energy we currently have, but that is because the technology is still developing and the more resources put into the sector the more

likely we'll be able to develop much more effective methods.

It has to be a gradual process. In Sri Lanka we see the impact of moving too quickly and hazardously to more sustainable agricultural practices. Their ban of synthetic fertiliser and pesticide imports happened basically overnight, hugely impacting farmers' ability to deliver the same amount of produce. Of course, this led to smaller yields, higher food costs and subsequently – and rightly so – a furious

population (not to mention all the other terrible decisions the Sri Lankan authorities have made).

No one is asking for a cessation of all unsustainable practices overnight, and anyone who does is not worth listening to. It must be done smartly, looking at as many eventualities and pitfalls as possible: future generations will thank us.

Yours etc.,
Roisin McGrath
Dublin 6W, Dublin

A perverse use of the facts regarding Pelosi story

Dear Editor, The piece by John L. Allen, about Speaker Pelosi receiving Holy Communion at a Mass celebrated by the Pope, relies heavily on a perverse deployment of the facts.

Speaker Pelosi flew to Rome within a week of Roe vs Wade's recall by the Supreme Court, a decision which she vehemently condemned.

She could have received Holy Communion in many places nearer home, and anonymously. Instead she compromised her archbishop whom Mr Allen considers to be less than 'moderate'.

The Mayor of Rome's case is hardly comparable. Did he promote abortion with every fibre of his being and bring his religion into disrepute? I don't think so.

And, in regard to the Church weaponising the Eucharist if it bans



Speaker Pelosi or President Biden from receiving, surely if anybody is doing this it is they and not the Church. What an insulting and perverse use of the facts in order

to justify a line of argument, and a pompous line at that.

Yours etc.,
Gerald O'Carroll
Ballylongford, Co. Kerry.

Robust training needed for laity leading funerals

Dear Editor, Lay-led funerals have been an inevitability for some time so it was unsurprising to see Bishop Brendan Leahy readying people for this change [The Irish Catholic – July 14, 2022].

While he says there is no immediate shortage in his diocese of Limerick, I'm sure it won't be much longer

before we begin to see the first laypeople presiding at a funeral liturgy and the burial, with a priest offering Mass at a later date.

This gives laypeople a chance to really step up and take on this very serious and important role. Many people have asked, through the synodal process, to be

more involved in the Church and parish community – this is happening and more and more will be asked of them. There must be very robust training for people taking on funerals as the pastoral requirements are immense – priests of course are well able for this.

I know there are already

teams of people offering pastoral care to people who are suffering bereavement in parishes, this is excellent and should continue to be built on, priests can not be expected to act alone in doing this.

Yours etc.,
Anthony O'Neil
Limerick City, Limerick

Sense of mystery in today's world is diluted

Dear Editor, The plumber phoned to say that he would come tomorrow to fix the leaking tap. Alas, he did not come as promised. So, believing something does not mean that it is true.

Thus, the interesting question arises, "What do I mean when I say I believe in God?"

It is interesting to note that belief is both a noun and a verb, faith is only a noun. Nobody says "I faith" but simply says "I have faith". Edward Campbell Tansh, the Victorian novelist, explained this very well when he wrote: "But because 'faith' has no related verb as 'belief' has, we are almost driven to throw what would be the work of that verb on to the verb of

'belief'. This transference of the work of the faith verb on to the belief verb would be a small matter if the belief verb could do the work imposed upon it. But if belief is a matter mainly intellectual, while faith is, in many cases, a complex act or state answering to the whole spiritual nature of man, then the transference tends to confuse and degrade the idea of faith as we find it so perpetually confused and degraded in ordinary religious teaching."

So, we need to know more about Faith. In the Catechism (CTS, 1971) we read, "Faith is a supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed". The Catechism of the Catho-

lic Church (Veritas, 1994) describes this gift of faith by God as man completely submitting his intellect and his will to God.

The sense of mystery in today's world is diluted or even entirely missing. To deal with the mysteries in our lives, especially the religious ones, the gift of faith is essential.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says 'seek and you will find' (Mt 7: 7-8). Sincere seeking and believing leads to receiving the gift of faith from God.

Yours etc.,
Daithi O'Muirneachain,
Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

facebook community

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

European Parliament calls on Vatican to support Cardinal Zen

You can't make this stuff up. A secular union calls on the Vatican to support one of its own cardinals! Of course, the Vatican's stupid decision to allow a Communist state to cherry-pick candidates for vacant Sees has not been a wise move. – **Christopher Griffin**

Cardinal Zen is my hero, he is a man of conviction and the Vatican's silence has been deafening. Their deal with China is shameful, as they say "if you sup with the devil use a long spoon". – **Marion Smith**

What is going on with the EU? This is a very strange request. – **Mary Duggan Murphy**

Christian mechanic sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan

No mention of this in mainstream media. If this was about anything else it would be all over the news! – **Catherine Rose**

Pro-abortion activism picking up at European Parliament

I was so surprised and disappointed that local MEP Sean Kelly voted that abortion be a human right: how inhumane! I have written to him and told him so. – **Alan Whelan**

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

Dangers of teaching children about pornography

Dear Editor, Day in and day out we see more and more evidence of the harm that pornography does. And yet, now we have a proposal from the Department of Education to teach vulnerable young people in schools about pornography.

Of course, if this is to warn them about the dangers of pornography this is a very good thing. Too often young people find their lives polluted by pornography before they even know what is going on.

But, on the other hand if pornography is going to be treated in a neutral fashion or – even worse – treated as a normal and healthy part of sexuality then this will lead to even more destruction ahead.

The problem arises when sexuality education is viewed merely as passing on objective facts. We need to help young people to understand their unique human dignity and the human dignity of their friends and colleagues. Building on that culture of respect is the only way to help people understand the truth and beauty of their sexuality.

Yours etc.,
Mary McDonnell
Drogheda, Co. Louth

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, July 28, 2022

Personal Profile

Finding a new perspective on faith in an unfamiliar place

Page 32



Discerning decision-making

It seems a cliché to say that life is full of choices, but it's true. Whether big or small, we're choosing our way through life one decision at a time. If I choose to repeatedly get up early, pray, exercise and work, my life goes one way, and if I choose repeatedly to turn off the alarm and roll out of bed only when I absolutely have to, my life goes another.

These days in Ireland, if we're lucky, the first "big" decision we have to make is what we're going to study at third-level, or if we're going to go to college at all. While there are certainly many choices to be made along the way, at least to my teenaged mind, this was



Life is full of choices and learning how to make them is a valuable skill, writes Jason Osborne

the first, life-altering decision I had to grapple with. It seemed to me that I could clearly see my life branching off in a number of different directions, depending on which course of action I chose.

Whether that's your first big decision or not, it's certainly not the last. What you're going to work as, who you're going to marry and where you're going

to live are all questions awaiting most of us, and it behoves us to figure out how to deal with them such that we don't end up making the wrong choice or crippled by indecision.

How does one do this? How is a person supposed to make heavy decisions with the full weight of them sitting upon their shoulders? While in my experi-

ence it's never easy, it is possible to approach these moments with structures in place that enable you to move boldly into the future in faith, while acknowledging that you'll probably make a mistake or two along the way.

The goal

The first essential step in discerning your path through life is identifying your goal. It's remarkable how many of us experience intense desires in different directions, and yet if asked to clarify what exactly it is that we want, we're unable to do so.

This is often the case when my wife and I are thinking over a potential decision. She asks me

what it is that I want, and despite feeling very strongly about the situation we find ourselves in, I'm often unable to put to words what exactly it is that I want to come of it.

Figuring out what it is that you want, what's most important to you, is absolutely essential if you're going to go forth and do anything of value. Whatever decision you're facing, ask yourself what it is that you're looking for, and which choice brings you closer to it or pushes you further from it on the whole. Once you know what exactly it is that you want, it makes it easier to recognise

» Continued on Page 31

Family News



AND EVENTS

NASA'S NEW MOON ROCKET TO LAUNCH AS SOON AS AUGUST

NASA's mission to return to the Moon, the Artemis programme, could launch its first uncrewed test flight as soon as August 29, the space agency said July 20.

Artemis-1 is the first in a series of missions as the United States seeks to return humans to the Moon, build up a sustained presence there, and use the lessons learned to plan a trip to Mars in the 2030s.

NASA associate administrator Jim Free told reporters the first window of possible launch dates for the enormous Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion crew capsule were 29 August, 2 September, and 5 September.

BAPTISM BAN AT LAKE GENEVA STOKES TENSIONS

The Swiss canton of Geneva has banned baptisms in Lake Geneva organised by evangelical Churches.

The Churches have decried the decision as a "witch hunt".

The canton – comprising the city of Geneva and its surrounding environ that forms the western end of the lake – took the step on July 8 as a backdrop of debates around secularism take place in the country.

"It's an abuse of authority," AFP were told by Jean-Francois Bussy, president of the Evangelical Federation of the neighbouring canton of Vaud.

"We have had no complaints in the canton of Vaud, which is much more liberal at this level than Geneva, which in my opinion applies fundamentalist secularism and a quite detestable witch hunt," Mr Bussy said.

My Bussy heads the Vaud branch of the Swiss Evangelical Network in French-speaking western Switzerland that has around 40,000 members.

Baptisms in Lake Geneva are permitted in Vaud, which covers the rest of the lake's northern shore. Among Switzerland's 26 cantons, Geneva and Neuchatel are the only secular ones.

Separation of Church and state has been enshrined in Geneva's law for over a century.

ANTIBIOTICS AFFECT MALE AND FEMALE GUT MICROBIOMES DIFFERENTLY

A new study has found that antibiotics have sex-specific effects on the gut microbiome makeup of male and female laboratory rats.

The researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre in the US published the findings in the journal *Frontiers in Microbiology*, and they could have implications for using antibiotics in humans to prevent or treat bacterial infection.

"We found that giving the rats a multidrug antibiotic cocktail resulted in significant and sex-specific changes in both the stool, or large intestine, and the small bowel. For example, greater loss of the diversity of the microbes in both stool and small bowel was observed in the male rodents than in the females," said Ruchi Mathur, MD, the study's principal investigator.

"Changes in the diversity of the gut microbiome could have a negative impact. Previous studies of intestinal health have demonstrated that overall microbial diversity promotes vitality and resilience, often making for a healthier gut," Dr Mathur said.

The need to doubt our doubts



Philosophy is having a bit of a moment in Ireland. It became a Junior Certificate short course in 2016, and there are moves afoot to make it a Leaving Certificate subject. The Philosophy Ireland organisation is running more workshops every year, in schools, workplaces and prisons.

Our president made the promotion of philosophy a key part of his first term. And every so often the papers will run a think-piece about how philosophy and 'learning how to think' will help us avoid the next housing crash, or compete with China, or fill the void in the national soul.

“The bold questioner is what happens when ‘thinking person’ becomes an ideology”

As a bona fide philosophy nerd (I did a weekend course in it when I was eight, which tells you all you need to know), this is all great as far as it goes. The love and pursuit of truth – what's not to like? At the same time though, I worry. An education in philosophy is great if people are actually thinking, actually learning, actually dedicating themselves to the pursuit of the truth. But it's completely possible to identify as a thinking person without ever having to do any thinking.

In fact, it's easy. Boosting philosophy will help no-one if all it does is produce a legion of what I think of as 'bold questioners'.

What is a bold questioner? First, think of his nemesis, the genuinely uncritical person – call him the common-sense thinker. The common-sense thinker is the archetypal man on the street. He lives what Socrates would call the



Everyday philosophy
Ben Conroy

unexamined life. He is a faithful disciple of the conventional wisdom.

The bold questioner defines himself in opposition to this apostle of the ordinary. He challenges orthodoxies, is sceptical of authority, and is not going to be hoodwinked. He is a great believer in expertise, and reckons he's got a decent amount of the stuff. He's armed with philosophical knowledge, and he knows how to use it. He's a level above.

The trouble is that the bold questioner is only one level above. He's questioned the views of the common-sense thinker, and he's not wrong to do so, but he's stopped right there, content to swap the settled views of the masses for the set of views of the people who question the masses.

Versions

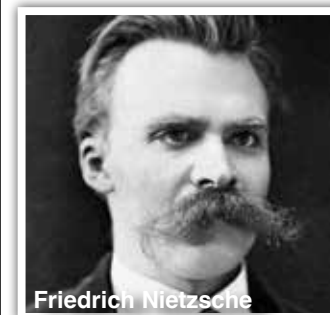
There are different versions of these: less sophisticated bold questioners tend to like Daniel Dennett or Neil DeGrasse Tyson, while the more sophisticated ones prefer Hume or Nietzsche.

But the bold questioner is what happens when 'thinking person' becomes an ideology rather than a practice. The dangerous thing about the Bold Questioner ideology is that unlike Marxists, monarchists, or Mennonites, BQs don't know they've adopted an ideological position: they have 'disinterested, empirical pursuer of truth' baked into their self-conception.

And this is fatal to real thinking and real philosophy. Let me illustrate.

I was vaguely involved in an argument with a writer on Twitter – a blue-checkmark verified account who had bylines in *Salon* and *Rolling Stone* – who was accusing someone else of trying to "impose parochial stigmatisation of harmless behaviours as prior to crucial categorical imperatives and rule utilitarian principles". What?

First of all, rule utilitarianism is a consequentialist ethical theory. As the name suggests, consequentialists think that the morally best action is always the one that produces the best overall outcomes.



Imperative

By contrast, the categorical imperative is from Kantian philosophy, a generally non-consequentialist school of ethics. Non-consequentialists think that ethics is about more than just consequences: an action – say torture – could be intrinsically wrong regardless of what outcomes it leads to.

I'm massively oversimplifying here, and it's more than possible that my verified friend subscribes to one of the galaxy-brained ethical systems that in some way combines the two schools.

But if he does, I have no idea what it is, because during the entire interaction he never once explained what his imperatives and principles actually were. Instead, he just kept repeating the phrase "categorical imperatives and rule utilitarian principles" in tweet after tweet, as though he expected their mere invocation to cast out all ethical error.

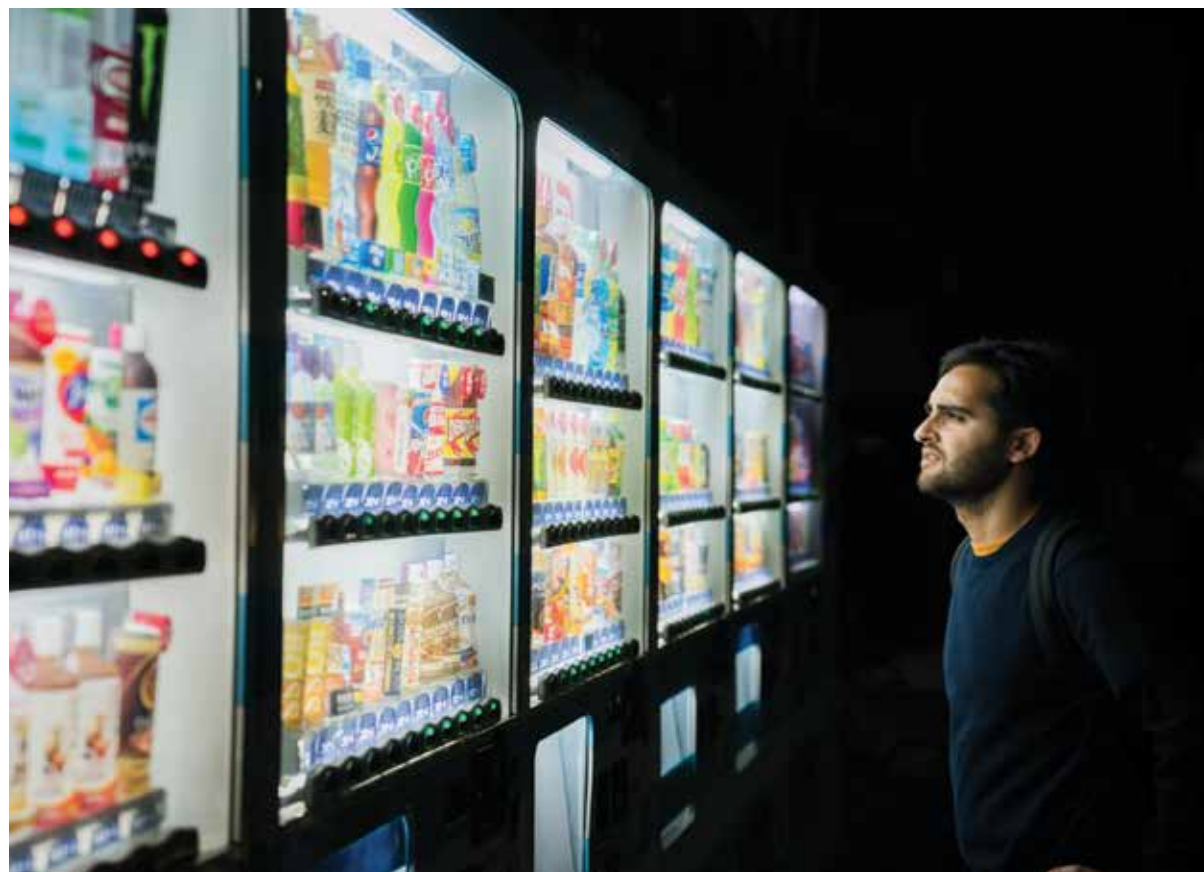
“The bold questioner defines himself in opposition to this apostle of the ordinary”

What resulted was less of an argument and more of a Gilbert and Sullivan musical. (Utilitarian maxims! im-pe-ratives categorical! I am the very model of a modern major general!) Philosophy in the hands of a bold questioner becomes a club to beat down the BQ's ignorant opponents rather than a shovel with which to unearth the truth. And the worst part is, they don't even know it: they genuinely think they're being brilliant.

I know this particular habit of thought because in many ways I was this guy (but with Keith Ward and Thomas Aquinas instead of Dawkins or Hume). And there's more than a bit of the bold questioner inside me still, and I wager inside anyone who fancies themselves a philosopher.

But if we're to get serious about real thinking and real philosophy, we owe it to ourselves to kill it with fire.

» Continued from Page 29



the opportunities and threats surrounding it, to take advantage of or avoid as you see fit.

Gather data

There is only so much use in introspection when it comes to weighing a decision. I remember watching a video featuring Fr Mike Schmitz (of 'Bible in a Year' podcast fame), in which he spoke about the value of gathering data during discernment.

A joking adage has it that since discernment was popularised, nothing has been done, and while it's obviously not discarding the value of grounded discernment, there is some truth in it. To offer an example, if a young man is wondering whether God is calling him to enter the seminary, there's only so much good in sitting at home, thinking and praying about it.

“I often think that these days the biggest barrier to making good decisions is an inability to decide”

This young man would be well-served in attending a retreat with a religious order, or even taking a stab at seminary and finding out whether it's for him if he can't let the idea go. Similarly, he should go and talk to the people who've been in the situation he's currently in, but who have come out the other side – be they religious or married men.

The point is, when seeking to make a good decision, it's worthwhile gathering information or experience that's directly applicable to the choice at hand. It'll leave you with much more realistic ideas about which path to take.

The consequences

It should go without saying, but before making the decision, you should think it through in terms of the consequences – not just for yourself, but for others.

To take another example, if you're a parent and considering relocating the family to another country because your job is asking you to, it's not only your career prospects that are at stake. Would staying where you are be better for your children in terms of their schooling, their socialising or their standard of life? Or would the move contain a multitude of possibilities for them that aren't accessible where you are currently?

Try, as far as the limited human mind is able, to map the consequences of your decisions out a couple of years into the future. You can't factor everything in, but playing different scenarios out in your mind's eye has tremendous value as it allows you to survey the range of pros and cons that you've hopefully been mulling over as you went through the earlier steps.

Be decisive

I often think that these days the biggest barrier to making good decisions is an inability to decide. In our globalised, hyper-connected world full of choice, the sky really is the limit. With billions of people to meet, hundreds of countries but a flight away and more jobs than ever before to slot into, how does one choose anyone or anything?



This is where, partly at least, my understanding of God's mercy comes into play. "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot," God tells us in Revelation 3:15. I've always read this, again at least partially, as being a statement that it's better to be one way or another than nothing at all.

God can work with our successes and with our failures – what he can't work with is our inability to decide.

Pray

A point that's worth ending on no matter the topic, all of your decisions, big and small, are of interest to God. Proverbs says "A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (Proverbs 16:9). Asking God for wisdom and praying he directs your steps to good places are perfectly sensible ways to conduct yourself when making a decision, but prayer also serves good psychological purposes too.

“If a young man is wondering whether God is calling him to enter the seminary, there's only so much good in sitting at home, thinking and praying about it”

Turning a decision over in your mind, in the presence of God, may well bring to light aspects of it you've neglected thus far, or ways of seeing and thinking that you haven't yet entertained. My wife and I prayed a novena recently as we discerned a major choice, and the grace-filled nature of the prayer aside, the psychological effect of being mentally and spiritually present to this decision more frequently was of great help to us.

At the end of the day, once you've mulled it over, gathered your data and acted, all that's left to be done is "pray, hope and don't worry".

Young Church



Charlotte Vard

As the summer months continue, it has been a time to reflect, pause and even plan for the year ahead. For any of us linked to the school year – we are in the privileged position of having two new years to consider – both January and September. It always gets me thinking about what I want to achieve, how do I want my time to be, what would I like to learn.

As I sit and write this article, I am coming to the end of my two weeks of annual leave. I feel refreshed to get back to it. Prayer has been on my mind and in my heart recently.

“Slowly, though, you began to realise that maybe these difficult moments weren't so difficult at all”

I have had to face some health issues over the past number of months. Prayer has become a central part of my own coping mechanism. In a strange and beautiful way, it has reminded me just how important prayer truly is. Over the past six or seven months I have consistently used two apps called 'Pray As You Go' and 'Hallow' both of which I talk about frequently with the young people I work with. These apps rightly or wrongly I tended to use when I am working out. They have been most helpful, and I really enjoy using them. More recently, however, I have allowed myself the silence of prayer, the stillness of prayer and I have also journaled more in times of prayer. Being able to sit in the stillness of prayer takes practice. It isn't always easy but I have grown into it now I think.

Discussions

I have had many discussions with young people over prayer when they say "it does not work" or "I didn't get what I want". We aren't ordering from McDonalds or any other fast-food restaurant when we

pray. It isn't as simple as that (if only it was, I have a long list I'd like sorted at the moment!) I wrote the piece below during a journaling moment of prayer over the last couple of

weeks. However, I don't think any of us haven't asked the question – where is God in this? – as we grapple with challenges, turn to him in prayer and look for peace.

At first, life was something that

happened to you. When something undesired happened in your other world, you perhaps thought you were being punished. And when you turned to prayer you receive no clear response. So, you started to believe that you had been abandoned. Forgotten. Unseen. Slowly, though, you began to realise that maybe these difficult moments weren't so difficult at all.

With each challenge you faced, you learned you could tap into an endless reservoir of inner strength and resilience that gave you more confidence as you moved forward. And sometimes, these hardships led you to something that was even better than what you had originally hoped for. And you realised, maybe life wasn't something that happened to you. Maybe it was all happening for you. And in time your trust deepened.

Challenge

With each challenge, your faith was only reinforced and then, one day something changed – not in one single moment but in a series of moments, some would say in a series of prayers. The realisation hits you – Life wasn't just happening to you or even for you anymore. Your purpose is so much greater than you ever believed. And maybe, just maybe you were created exactly as you are because who you are is who he wanted you to be and who he created you to be. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." – Jeremiah 1:5.



Finding a new perspective on faith in an unfamiliar place

Personal Profile



Liam Fitzpatrick

Irish weather gets a bad rap. Rainy and gloomy with some very short days, Irish people take pride in complaining about the climate.

Father Donal O'Keeffe begs to differ. Amid the culture shock of assimilation to Korean life after living in Ireland for his younger years, he noticed one aspect of Korea right away: the chilly winters.

"First of all, oh, the severe winters!" he recalled. "I had never seen such cold or experienced such cold or freezing weather in my life!"

Fr O'Keeffe has lived in Korea since 1976, working as a missionary priest in a completely unfamiliar culture. He believes that living in a new environment has given him a unique perspective on the Gospel and Catholic teachings, and that, with strong international communication and a healthy respect for other cultures, everyone can expand their understanding of Christ.

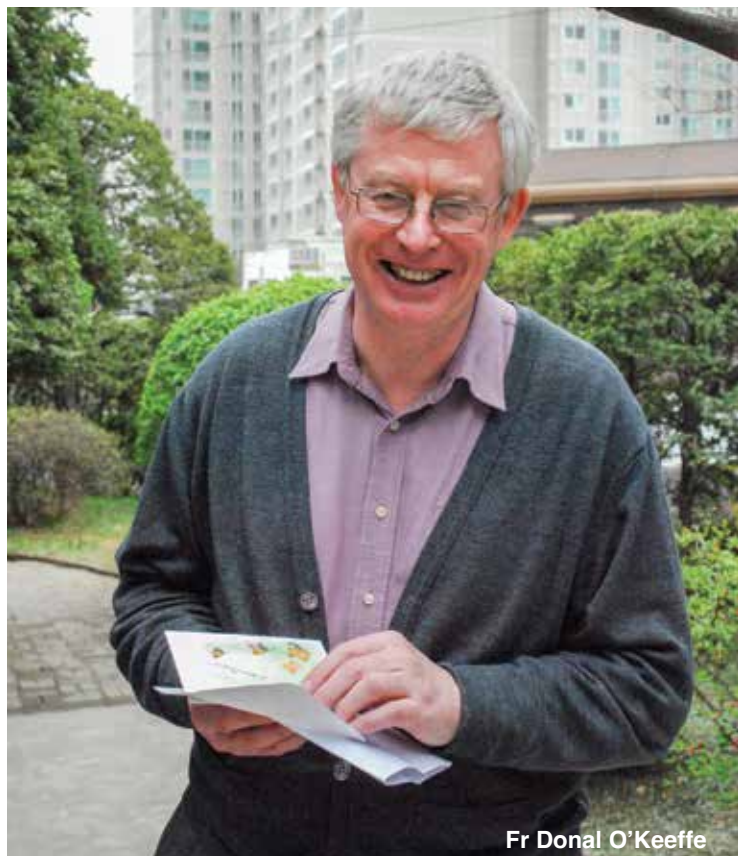
Missionary mind

Hailing from Bantry, Co. Cork, Fr O'Keeffe said he grew up in a very traditional Catholic family, one that exposed him to the Faith early on.

"For example, [we prayed] the rosary every evening in the house, and of course Mass would be very important," he said. "I was on the altar with my brother."

His education had a strong "Catholic ethos" that encouraged him to pursue the Faith further.

"The initial years were with the Sisters of Mercy, at that stage in



Fr Donal O'Keeffe

Ireland all the national schools were Catholic – the manager was the parish priest," he said. "So there was very much a Catholic ethos... the secondary school was set up by the diocese in Bantry."

After college at University College Cork, where he earned an arts degree, Fr O'Keeffe joined the Columbans. He noted that growing up in the 60s in Ireland offered him plenty of exposure to the priesthood.

"I think most young guys would have thought about it," he said. "I mean, when we were in secondary school, especially in our senior years, priests from different congregations or dioceses visited."

"At that time in Ireland, that was considered normal."

In his home parish, Fr O'Keeffe saw young men travelling abroad

with their congregations that informed his decision to become a Columban missionary. He also had a missionary uncle in the family that normalised preaching outside of Ireland in Fr O'Keeffe's eyes.

"There were quite a number of young guys, interestingly enough, not interested in going to the diocese, but going for congregations that worked overseas," he said. "Doing missionary work."

He eventually decided on the Missionary Society of St Columban because the order offered him the best opportunity to work in Latin America, an area he learned about after a fateful visit from another missionary. That visit gave Fr O'Keeffe the spark he needed to pursue missionary work as a career.

"When I was in college, I was studying Spanish, and the chaplain had worked in Peru also with Cork diocese and I remember there was a very severe earthquake in the early 70s in Peru," he said. "And the geographical society – I was [also] studying geography – invited him in because we were studying South America at the time."

“There were quite a number of young guys, interestingly enough, not interested in going to the diocese, but going for congregations that worked overseas”

"His focus was on the utter destruction in Peru at that time," Fr O'Keeffe said. "But he also talked about why he was there and what the priests were doing."

He chose the Columbans because "they were the only group around" that gave him a chance to work in Peru – but that didn't end up working out.

"Well, the irony of the whole thing is I was not assigned to Peru!"

Korea

Instead, after his ordination in 1975, Fr O'Keeffe found himself assigned to Korea after choosing between Japan, Fiji, and the Philippines, among others. While there, he experienced a bit of culture shock.

"The way I was thinking is I know so little about any of them in practice," he said. "It wouldn't make a real difference because wherever I went would be so new to me."

He said that he remembers "sticking out like a sore thumb in [his] own mind" after arriving.

"I was white Caucasian, and you were in a country at that stage where the only foreign communities there were the US military, or

some tourists perhaps, or a small business community," he said. "No one spoke English."

"The de facto language of everyday life was Korean," Fr O'Keeffe said. "So, overnight becoming, so to speak, a baby, not being able to say anything, – not knowing what other people were saying."

But after his language studies, he worked in a Korean parish until the 1980s, after which he left parish ministry to work full-time with Korean factory workers. Then, in the 90s, he focused on the urban poor in Korea, this time working with persons facing evictions.

Lesson

He said that the biggest lesson he has learned (and continues to learn every day) is that Catholicism is bigger than just him, and if one wants to truly appreciate the Word of God, they have to expose themselves to other people and other walks of life.

"The real big takeaway was a new insight or appreciation of the Gospel," he said. "Being in a Catholic country where, you know, most everyone is Catholic, you don't – it's very difficult, I suppose, to appreciate it really."

"But being in another country where there is a diversity of traditions and faiths... seeing how people are living according to their own traditions and beliefs, living very, very good and human lives. The challenge of that to my own faith gave me an appreciation that God is much bigger than our Church, so to speak."

"The problem with any religious tradition or faith, including our own Catholic one, is we like to say 'We know it all!' I remember someone said to me, the reason you're invited on missions is not just to spread the Good News, but God invites you to show how much he's doing outside you! Outside the tradition."

"So I suppose that would be the big thing, that all people have insights into the truth."

Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Love Notes



Helen Vysotska

Travelling together while waiting for marriage

Can I share a hotel room with my boyfriend?

Sharing a hotel room with your boyfriend/girlfriend is not the same as sharing a bed with them on holidays. If it is the latter then you are committing sin and lying with your bodies that you are both married and you are not. Even the most pure and chaste couples can not share the same bed together.

Why? The bed in *Theology of the Body* by St John Paul II is explained as the marriage bed of the cross. Christ died on a Cross and that Cross is where Christ's consecration happened, where he died for our sins so that we can have eternal life through him and him alone. The greatest act of love is taken place on Christ's Cross. The greatest act of love between a wife and a husband takes place on their marriage bed.

The bed in marriage is very significant and is where the consummation of marriage takes place, where the husband gives all of himself unreservedly and his wife receives him freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully.

Therefore, sharing a bed with someone who is not your spouse is very sacramental and something that is reserved rightly for a spousal relationship.

What alternatives can you do on holidays, and should you even go on holidays?

Yes of course you can go on holidays, however it depends on where you are at with your journey with chastity and purity in your relationship. If you both struggle being alone together chastely then maybe going on holidays with some friends is best and more prudent.

If you are both practising Catholics and both know your boundaries and triggers in intimacy, then you both could be fine to share a twin room (two single beds in one room).

However, there are so many great cheaper alternatives like looking up religious communities in the area where you will be staying and trying to find accommodation with them. There are so many religious communities that have guest rooms and dormitories for short and long time stayers, and they are so much more affordable and cheaper, and you also are helping their missionary work and the

local Church community.

Similarly, there are many good hostels that have a separate female and male dorms that are very cheap however be careful what hostel it is and how clean and safe. So do your research in advance!

Another option is staying with or going away with relatives, that is another good option to start off with especially if it is your first time going away because your relatives can get to know you both as a couple and will be able to accommodate you both in separate rooms and that way you definitely will think twice before doing anything alone.

When in the relationship is it ok to travel?

Traveling just the two of you alone when you just started dating a few weeks ago is not very prudent and is sign that you might be too emotionally and physically invested into the relationship than you should be.

Seek counsel from your parents and ask for opinion of good, virtue-striving friends and a spiritual director to help you make a good fair decision on the state and level of your relationship. Don't rush it but also know that there are so many things you can do together that are fun and life giving before you leave the country.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



A welcome focus on the US Eucharistic Revival

In the worst of pandemic times many people got comfortable with online Masses and for sure they were a brilliant opportunity to engage, but some got to like it so much that they didn't return to in-person Masses when they could, finding it more meaningful at home. But that deprives them of community and the nourishment of the Eucharist.

News in Depth (EWTN, Sunday) covered a timely three-year initiative in the US Catholic Church – a Eucharistic revival culminating in a Eucharistic congress in 2024. Contributors described the Eucharist as “the greatest gift”, “his continued presence”, “the source and summit of our faith”. St Mother Teresa was quoted: “if you really want to grow in love, come back to the Eucharist”. Figures (by the Pew Research Centre) were referenced, suggesting a lack of belief in the real presence, even among Catholics – in 2019, 43% thought it was symbolic – but whether this was equivalent to ‘just symbolic’ wasn't clear. I was impressed by Sr Alicia Torres, an executive team member for this venture. She stressed that Eucharist involves relationship.

Process

I was glad to see Bishop Andrew Cozzens emphasising the importance of invi-



Blessed Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006, is the patron for the US Eucharistic Revival. Photo: CNS

tation in this process. He advised people to start with Eucharistic adoration, as it was an issue of heart as well as head. Further, he hoped the initiative would draw back “the disaffiliated” and help renew the Church. Blessed Carlo Acutis had been chosen as a patron – he had a great devotion to the Eucharist and had set up a website dedicated to Eucharistic miracles. These figured strongly in the programme – described as bolstering the Faith and

drawing non-believers. We heard from Michael O'Neill who has written a book on the subject – *Science and the Miraculous*. He instanced miracles in Buenos Aires, where it fell to Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, to investigate. He sent the evidence to atheistic scientists – Mr O'Neill said that was always preferable, presumably for credibility. Whatever you make of them, the studies of the Eucharistic hosts that transform seem

to show a common thread – the presence of actual heart tissue and real blood of the same blood type.

There was a segment on preparation for Eucharist by both priest and congregation, and some impressive artwork by Polish artisan Mariusz Drapikowski who was inspired, and possibly cured of sight loss, by St Pope John Paul II. He creates amazing altars and monstrances designed for perpetual adoration around the world, often tapping into elements of local art and culture.

Positive aspects

Respect for the positive aspects of local culture is a prominent element of this week's visit to Canada by Pope Francis – evident in the art and garments on view in the coverage. On **Vaticano** (EWTN, Sunday) Irish reporter Colm Flynn chatted with First Nation Canadian Fernie Marty, who spoke of “the roots of our people's own story”. He appreciated the apology given in Rome previously but thought it was important for the apology to be made on Canadian soil.

We saw a Catholic church adorned with indigenous art near the site of a former residential school, with its memorial to the survivors of that institution. Karen Wildcat had a good experience of a residential school but was concerned about what hap-

PICK OF THE WEEK

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC Two Sunday July 31, 1.15 pm

A visit to the Springfields Festival Gardens in Lincolnshire to discover the healing power of faith, flowers and trees and to explore the prominence plants have in the Bible.

The MEANING of Life

RTÉ One Monday August 1, midnight

Another chance to see Joe Duffy at the Poor Clare Convent in Galway speaking to the community's Mother Abbess, Sr Colette.

FAITH AND LIFE

EWTN Wednesday August 3, 10.30am and Friday August 5, 9.30pm

Join Campbell Miller for a conversation with Fr Pat Collins – Vincentian priest in Dublin, author and exorcist.

pened to her brothers in the boys' section. She hoped the Pope's visit would lead to healing and reconciliation.

On **Pope Francis in Canada** (EWTN, Sunday) nicely low-key presenter Kevin Dunn referenced an address by Pope Francis on July 17, where the Holy Father saw the event as a “penitential pilgrimage...to contribute to the journey of healing and reconciliation”. This is worth keeping in mind when we are understandably sad that so many papal visits are filtered through the lens of abuse. Similar ground was covered on the **Nine O' Clock News** (RTÉ One, Sunday) which gave some background and coverage of the arrival. Bruce Cutknife, an indigenous survivor of

institutional abuse, said “to have somebody come and express sincere apologies is quite meaningful”. Fr Cristino Bouvette spoke of his grandmother, also a survivor – though “she carried a lot of pain from that experience”, he was impressed by her capacity to forgive.

Finally, on **Sunday Morning Live** (BBC One, Sunday) it was good to hear singer-songwriter Gilbert O'Sullivan speaking openly about his Catholic Faith, his belief in the power of prayer, his regular churchgoing and thankfully his ongoing passion for song writing.

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



Pat O'Kelly



Music

Ralph Vaughan Williams gets the 'Proms' treatment

Looking at a BBC Proms TV transmission recently I was reminded of this year being the sesquicentennial anniversary of the birth of English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (VW) on October 12, 1872. The broadcast included one of VW's best-loved works – *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* – expressively played by the Sinfonia di London under John Wilson.

Wonderful

First heard in 1910 at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, VW's home shire, the piece was described as “wonderful because it seems to lift one into some unknown region of musical thought and feeling...One is



Ralph Vaughan Williams.

never sure whether one is listening to something very old or very new”.

The composer came from Down Ampney in

the Cotswolds where his father, Arthur, was vicar. His mother, Margaret, was a niece of Charles Darwin. VW was taught piano from the age of five but he much preferred his violin lessons. Musically precocious, he undertook a correspondence course with Edinburgh University, passing its associate examinations when he was eight!

College

Following his time at the prestigious Charterhouse School in Surrey, VW enrolled at London's Royal College of Music (RCM) in 1890 having Hubert Parry as his composition teacher. He temporally left the RCM to study music and history

at Cambridge where he met his first wife, Adeline Fisher. They married in 1897 and following her death in 1951, after a protracted illness, VW married long-standing friend, Ursula Wood.

Returning to the RCM, with his BA and BMus degrees under his belt, VW found a new professor of music – Dublin-born Charles Villiers Stanford – installed. Their relationship was occasionally fractious as their views often clashed, with VW not wishing to follow the traditions of Brahms and Wagner so idolised by Stanford.

During his second period at the RCM he came to know fellow student Gustav Holst. They remained close friends

as well as one another's valued critics. VW later wrote, “Holst declared that his music was influenced by that of his friend; the converse is certainly true”. VW was deeply affected by Holst's death in 1934.

Folk songs

Around 1903 VW began collecting English folk songs in field trips preserving many that would otherwise have vanished as oral traditions died out. He incorporated some into his compositions and these, as well as his love for music from Tudor and Stuart periods, helped shape his compositional style.

For a short while VW also studied with Maurice Ravel in Paris. It bore its own fruit,

particularly in matters of orchestration. Ravel was noted as a difficult taskmaster but referring to VW's individuality he wrote, “he is my only pupil who does **not** write my music”. VW himself considered Ravel to have helped him escape the trappings of the “heavy contrapuntal Teutonic manner”.

VW's significant legacy lies undoubtedly in his nine symphonies of which more anon. The first – the extended choral *A Sea Symphony* – dates from 1910 with the last premiered a few months before his sudden death on August 26, 1958. VW's ashes are interred in Westminster Abbey close to the tombs of Purcell and Stanford.

The charter for Christian living

A man in the crowd asked Jesus to plead with his brother over sharing an inheritance. Jesus replied, "my friend, who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?" (Luke 12:13). Jesus heard not only his plea but also the inner voice of a soul too concerned about material possessions. "Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than what he needs." In today's second reading, Paul says that greed is the same thing as worshipping a false god.

Jesus then followed up with his favourite way of teaching, telling a story, the parable of a rich farmer who could think of nothing else but further expansion. He went so far as to say to his soul: "My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time."

There is a unique feature in this parable as it is the only parable in which God speaks. And what is the first word from God? "Fool!" In those times, calling a person a fool referred to more than low intelligence. It meant a denial of God. "The fool has said in his heart there is no God."

St Paul reminded the people of Corinth of the example of Jesus: "Although he was rich, he became poor for your sake, so that you should become rich through his poverty" (II Cor. 8:9). He was born in a borrowed stable. The offering at his presentation in the temple was that of the poor, two turtle doves rather than a lamb. As a baby he suffered the poverty of enforced exile. In his public mission he depended on the support of kind people and sometimes had no bed for the night. He suffered the poverty of an unjust trial and was buried in a tomb donated by a friend. The earliest followers were noted for pooling their possessions in a spirit of Christian communism.

Ministry

At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus proclaimed that his mission was the establishment of the reign of God in our lives. The great sermon of Jesus on the mountain sets out the charter of Christian life. It begins with the eight beatitudes, the first being, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

There is a story in the Gospel about a rich young man who asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life. He was a religious man who observed the command-

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn
OFM Cap.



ments. Jesus challenged him to share his possessions with the poor. At this, his face fell, and he went away sad because he was very rich. "How hard it is for those who are rich to enter the kingdom of heaven." This man wanted to enter heaven but he was reluctant to allow the ideals of the kingdom of heaven to enter his life.

Misleading

There is a form of Christianity misleading people by claiming that prosperity and success are signs that one is specially blessed by God. This prosperity Gospel, sometimes called Cadillac Christianity, is a complete reversal of the example and teaching of Jesus.

“Many of the wealthiest people in the world are very insecure and always want more”

Nine years ago, the newly-elected Pope chose to be known as Francis, a clear indication that his inspiration was Francis of Assisi who set out to observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He brought to the papacy, not only book knowledge, but vast pastoral experience. As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he spent whatever time he could afford visiting the people who lived in the surrounding shanty towns. "This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor." He marvelled at the depth of faith in many of these poor people, how in their difficulties they knew the suffering Christ. Their faith is not book knowledge but it is a knowing that enables them to say, "Christ in his poverty is one with us and we are one with him". This is a religion of intimacy. Pope Francis urges us to embrace "the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them" (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 198).

There is a difference between what we want and what we need. We need enough to pay the bills, have food on the table, a roof over our head, proper care of the family and sensible provision for the future. But many of the things we want go far beyond what we need. It often happens that once we get what we have wanted, another want takes over. It's like the story of this man who knew that his wife had her eye on a fashion-

able handbag, so he bought it for her birthday. "Are you happy now, dear", he asked. "No", she replied, "I need matching shoes." Ladies, no offence intended!

Insecure

Many of the wealthiest people in the world are very insecure and always want more, while many who have simple, uncomplicated lives enjoy great peace and serenity. Be on your guard against any kind of avarice. The most valuable things in life are beyond the power of money.

Prayer

O God, the giver of every good gift, I thank you for the gift of life and all that comes with it.

Open my eyes to appreciate the ordinary gifts I take for granted.

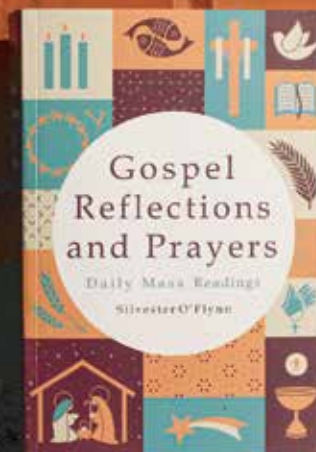
Cleanse my heart of all jealousy and avarice.

Inspire me to be more generous for it is in giving that we receive.



More of Fr Silvester's Gospel Reflections

ARE AVAILABLE



**ORDER
Gospel
Reflections
and Prayers
TODAY**

€19.99
+€4.50 P&P

columba BOOKS

Phone 01 6874096 | Visit www.columbabooks.com



Why is there something instead of nothing?

The Belgian theologian Jan Walgrave, who directed my doctoral thesis, was a true intellectual and a rare one. True, in that his thought naturally, instinctually gravitated towards the huge philosophical questions of essence and existence. Why are we here? Who are we really? Moreover, he was also a rare intellectual in that he was an uncommon mixture of hard intellectual scrutiny and childlike piety. He could be equally disarming both in his intellectual sophistication and in his childlikeness.

In one of our meetings he asked me this, "Do you ever sit on a park bench and ask yourself, why is there something instead of nothing?" I answered honestly, "In truth, I can't ever remember doing that very explicitly. Like everyone else, I often wonder where we came from and how there is a God behind all of this, but I have never very explicitly contemplated your question."

"Well," he replied, "then you are not a philosopher!" He went on, "I think about this question all the time; it is the most important of all questions." (He consoled me for the fact that I could never be a true philosopher by telling me that I had a "fertile mind", which he told me is its own gift.)

Ultimate question

Why is there something instead of nothing? Surely, that is the ultimate question. How did it all begin? Who or what was there at



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

the beginning and started it all? Moreover, where did this who or what come from, who gave it a beginning?

“Do you ever sit on a park bench and ask yourself, why is there something instead of nothing?”

Contemporary science cannot answer that question. It can tell us what happened at the origins of our universe, the Big Bang, but that doesn't get us any nearer answering the bigger question, namely, who or what gave origin to that initial explosion nearly 15 million years ago that lies at the origins of our universe and gave birth to billions of galaxies? How was this force itself in existence?

As people of faith, we believe it was God and believe that God had no beginning. However, that can neither be conceptualised nor imagined. What gave birth to God? No matter whether we believe in God or not, we are all still left with the question, Walgrave's question, "why is there something instead of nothing?" Moreover, that question is complicated further by the fact that creation, at least vast segments of it, have a clear intelligent design. Given that fact, the most credible postulate vis-à-vis who or what lies at the origins of everything, demands that this something or someone (from which everything takes its origins) is not some blind, brute force but one that is highly intelligent and personal.

Philosophical mind

Thomas Aquinas, who did have a true philosophical mind, once

proposed a number of logical arguments to try to 'prove' that God exists. Among his arguments, we find this one: Imagine walking down a road and finding stone on the ground and asking yourself, "who put that stone there?" You could simply conclude that it has always been there and think no further about it.

“Today most people might consider that logic a bit naive, but perhaps the naiveté is on their part”

However, imagine walking down a road and finding a clock that is still keeping time, and asking yourself, "who put that clock there?" In this case, you could not simply say it has always been there and leave it at that. Why? Because the clock has a clear intelligent design that demands that some intelligence designed it. As well, it is still keeping time, which means that it could not always have been there. Someone put it there, and at some clear point in time. Thus, Aquinas concluded that since many things in the

universe have an intelligent design, there must be an intelligent designer at its origins.

Today most people might consider that logic a bit naive, but perhaps the naiveté is on their part. Someone no less than Albert Einstein affirmed this: the harmony of natural law reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is utterly insignificant reflection.

He is right, and the harmony he speaks of is not just the unfathomable ecological harmony that the various elements of the physical world appear to have with each other and how nature continues to regenerate itself despite everything we do to destroy its ecology. Further still, that harmony of natural law (as Einstein calls it) also includes an undeniable oneness between the laws of nature and the moral order. The law of karma and the law of nature are one and same thing, all of one piece, as is the law of gravity and the Holy Spirit. The physical and the moral are part of a single symphony. The air we breathe out into the universe is the air we are going to inhale – physically and morally.

Rarely do I sit on a park bench and ask myself, "why is there something instead of nothing?" But then as Jan Walgrave said, I'm not a philosopher. My hope is that this little excursion into philosophy isn't proof of that!

“As people of faith, we believe it was God and believe that God had no beginning”

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Lincoln's assassin and his exceptional family



Booth
by Karen Joy Fowler
(Serpent's Tail, £14.99)

Felix Larkin

Booth, by the American author Karen Joy Fowler, is a novel about the family of actor Junius Brutus Booth. The most famous – or infamous – of his children was John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln. Booth père (1796-1852) was an Englishman who abandoned a wife and child, and eloped to America with a beautiful young girl who sold flowers in Drury Lane in London where he had been performing. They had a total of 10 children, of whom two girls and four boys survived into adulthood. Three of their sons – Junius junior, Edwin and John Wilkes – became actors. Edwin (1833-93), the most talented of the three, was a notable exponent of Shakespeare's plays – as his father too had been.

Charismatic

John Wilkes Booth was five years younger than Edwin, and Fowler portrays him as the most adventurous and charismatic of the siblings. He grew up in Maryland, a slave state which, however, did not join the Confederacy in the 1860s. His family was sympathetic to abolitionism, but he did not share that sentiment. In a letter he left with one of his sisters to be read after his death (and quoted by Fowler), he stated that slavery "is one of the greatest blessings, both for themselves [that is, the slaves] and for us, that God ever bestowed upon a favoured nation".

John Wilkes Booth acted as a spy for the Confederacy during the Civil War as he travelled throughout the cit-

ies of the North as a journeyman-actor. He also plotted to kidnap Lincoln and exchange him for Confederate prisoners, but this came to nothing. Then, after Lincoln's re-election in 1864, he resolved to kill him. Lincoln was the first president to be re-elected since Andrew Jackson in 1832, and this led Booth to fantasise that Lincoln would turn the presidency into a monarchy. He regarded Lincoln as a tyrant because, in words Fowler attributes to him, of "the wrongs being done by the North to the South".

“John Wilkes Booth acted as a spy for the Confederacy during the Civil War”

As a well-known actor, Booth had easy access to Ford's Theatre in Washington when Lincoln attended a performance of *Our American Cousin* there on April 14th, 1865. The Civil War had just ended, with General Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 9. Booth shot Lincoln at close range in Ford's Theatre and escaped via the stage, from which he dramatically exclaimed "*sic semper tyrannis*" – "thus always to tyrants". This, of course, was Brutus's cry when he murders Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play.

Died

Lincoln died some hours later, and Booth was eventually tracked down to a barn near Bowling Green, Virginia, where he was hiding out, and shot dead as he exited the barn.

Fowler tells us in an afterword to her book that what prompted her to write it was the "spates of horrific mass shootings" in America. She wondered about the families of the shooters: how did they deal with the circumstances in which, through no fault of their own, they found themselves. Regarding the Booth family after Lincoln's assassination, she asks: "What is it like to love the most hated man in the country?" Her novel is an utterly brilliant attempt to answer that question.

The natural world under our feet



Portal: Otherworldly Wonders of Ireland's Bogs, Wetlands and Eskers
text and photographs by Tina Claffey, foreword by Matthijs Schouten
(Currach Books, €29.99/£25.99)

Peter Costello

This book came in hand during weeks in which California, the south of France, Spain, London and other places are being ravaged by fires, fires which are directly attributable to climate change promoted by industrial interests and short term local government politics.

This is an extraordinarily beautiful volume, in which the eye and the imagination can become engaged, quite lost in awed astonishment.

The subtitle refers to "otherworldly wonders"; but these sights are not from another world at all. We are seeing in Tina Claffey's images not Mars or Venus or some distant galactic planet. They belong completely and foundationally to *our world*, the only physical one we have.

“The eye and the imagination can become engaged, quite lost in awed astonishment”

Her images and the descriptive text that goes with them are seasonally arranged from spring to winter. Her camera works at such extreme closeness that the lens sees and records elements that we simply cannot see. As so often the artist is able to bring things we would, in our vainly self-centred ways, not see or care

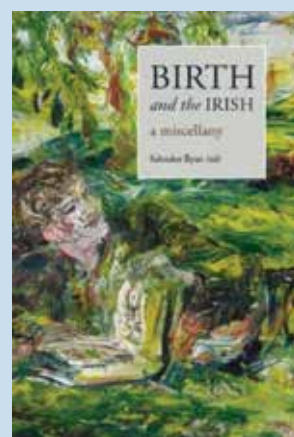
about at all. All quite wonderful. The book will lay wide open a world we have never imagined.

Soul

Dutch scientist Matthijs Schouten, who is Professor of Restorative Ecology at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, writes in his foreword: "She brings us to the soul of that enigmatic, fragile and ancient ecosystem that we call a bog. Her work is a true portal to reconnection with the natural world and evokes a deep sense of wonder that can only bring profound respect for it. I am convinced that this book will contribute significantly to our re-enchantment with the natural world."

False readings of their sacred texts has led many Christians to imagine that humans are intended to be the apex of the natural world: observation of the cosmos suggests that whatever its essential purpose is, it does not in any way depend on humanity. Our only real harvest these days is destruction, and ultimately self-destruction.

The changing natal mores of the Irish nation over the centuries



Birth and the Irish: a miscellany
edited by Salvador Ryan
(Worldwell, €25.00/£22.00)

Peter Costello

Salvador Ryan is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St Patrick's College, Maynooth. This new book completes

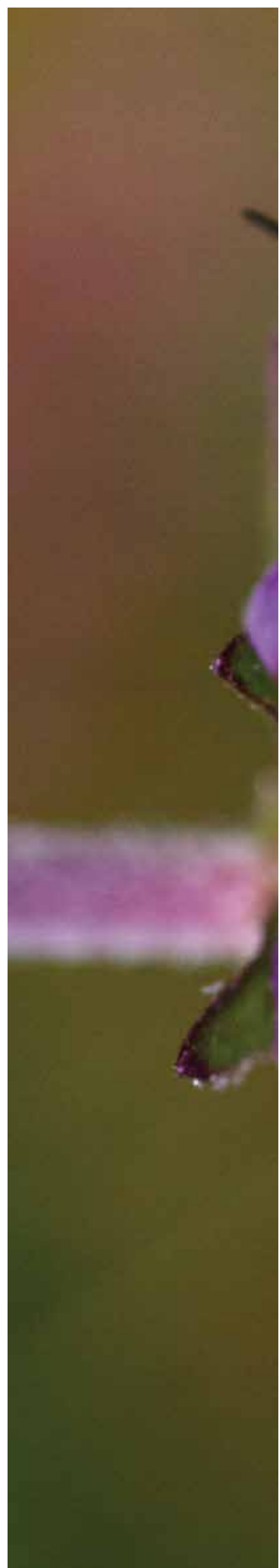
a trilogy begun with *Death and the Irish*, (published in 2016 by Wordwell Books). The sequel, *Marriage and the Irish*, appeared in summer 2019. And now we are given *Birth and the Irish*, running to nearly 400 pages, into which he has gathered together some 78 contributions, of the most wonderful variety, celebrating and also exploring some darker corners too, among the customs and attitudes and beliefs of the Irish nation over some 1,500 years.

Marriage

When the book on marriage was complete, he realised there was a perfectly natural sequel. Realising he had to complete the trilogy he sent out an appeal for contributions. Of the 78 articles, the last discusses the *Mother and Baby Home Report* of 2021.

This very essential piece rounds out the spectrum where Denis Casey provides an imaginative exploration of a short entry about the living birth of four calves to a cow in 657 in the *Annals of Ulster*. The beginning and end are wrapped around a most varied and insightful collection of essays. They head in many directions, and will provide stimulating encounters for many students, academics and indeed ordinary readers.

It would be both unfair and impossible to single out any particular one. A reviewer can only heartily commend the book to readers with interests in many topics. It is a vivid demonstration of just how vital the subjects of social, psychological and historical inquiry have become in Ireland.

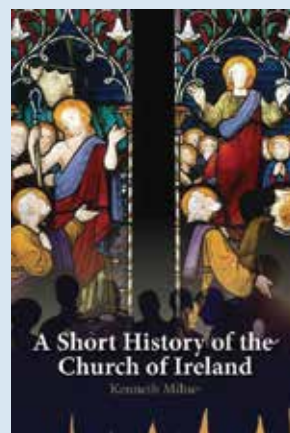


Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.



In closeup, a Birch Sheildbug, a creature of our autumn bog lands.

How a synodal path helped the Church of Ireland survive and flourish in changing days



A Short History of the Church of Ireland
by Kenneth Milne
(Messenger Publications,
€12.95/£11.50)

Peter Costello

Dr Milne is well known to all those working in the areas of Church history in Ireland. This book at hand is the fifth edition of a book which has already served its purpose well by providing a little manual with all the essential facts and ideas for both Church of Ireland students at all levels, and those outside that community who feel the need to know something about a Church that many once harboured great doubts.

It has served its purpose well, but at this moment in time it has a social interest for Catholics (or perhaps I should in this context say Roman Catholics, for me members of the Church of Ireland describe themselves as following Catholic tradition too, right back through St Patrick to the Apostles. Dr Milne, indeed is the historian of St Bartholomew's, the High Church parish church nearby where I write, whose bells measure off the hours for me now, much as the broken bell of the Carmelite nuns in Ranelagh sounded over a school boy toiling at his Greek and Latin. Associated with St Bartholomew's was a community of Anglican nuns whose distinctive habits were once a striking feature of Clyde Road. The church today is renowned for its music.

Benefit

I think that all readers of this paper would benefit from reading this book, for its informative value alone. It has no bibliography as such, but what Dr Milne does is refer his readers to standard histories and reference works, so that views of the past most widely accepted by all historians in Ireland support the text. So while expressing a distinctive point of view it is not partisan. This is all excellent, making this an essential book for all school and public libraries.

But at this moment in time, one section deserves

special attention from Roman Catholic readers: what happened to the community after the Church of Ireland was dis-established.

From being the state religion it had to find and develop a new role, one which would look to the future rather than hark back endless to the way things once were. This is all in chapter nine.

Central to this was a synodal form of governance. It was shaped as an assembly of two houses, much like the parliamentary form followed in the nations of these islands. But central to the signal was the election of lay members, and as a result the empowering of the laity as a whole. The nature of the Church Representative Body is outlined – though as I say further reading is well indicated.

“Roll on an elective synod, many will say after reading Dr Milne’s sober but reflective little book”

The Roman Catholic Church was effectively a state Church down to recent changes in the constitution. Both Churches have had to find not a new role in society, but new ways of carrying out their mission. The Church of Ireland has been, in the view of this outsider, very successful. Observation reveals that in South Dublin, Wicklow and Meath it seems to be thriving in its own special way.

It has been especially successful in its community integration. An attendance at the summer parish fair of say Stillorgan or Dalkey is very revealing. These are well attended, indeed over attended by the surrounding community, whatever

their *religious* views or lack of them. They are a day out for family activities, hot dogs, and the possibility of finding a real treasure or two among the books, the pre-loved clothes, the plants and even the electronic junk. (The screen I am writing on came from one, perfect for €5.)

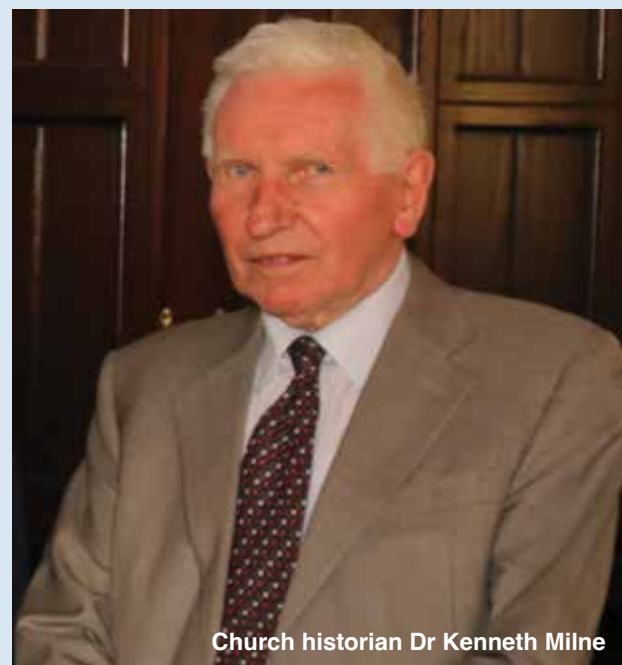
They succeed so well simply because they are fun. But also many of the Church of Ireland national schools have grown and are attended by every kind of culture living in the neighbourhood

Events

The RC schools never have these events. The Catholic Church seems to have quite lost its sense of fun. The Church of Ireland has maintained a sense of family fun, but also of active lay participation that involves the exercise of real power. They have adopted not only female clergy, but also female bishops – and these gracious, generous ladies are always very nice to meet with, as they happily engage both with their parishioners and with the local community.

There are real lessons to be learned in Armagh and Maynooth in the months to come from how the Church of Ireland, as the author suggests against all odds defied the dire expectations of Dis-establishment. Roll on an elective synod, many will say after reading Dr Milne’s sober but reflective little book, published by what many people think of still as “a Catholic publisher”, but is in fact a pan-Christian outlet.

I merely point to the pages, what people think and do in the light of them remains to be seen. But I came away thinking there are lessons to be learned here for the Roman Catholics in search of relevance and survival.



Church historian Dr Kenneth Milne

Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.



To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact cian.dikker@focusireland.ie or phone 01 881 5962

FOCUS
Ireland

Operation Smile

Charity Regulatory Authority No. 20054588 Revenue Number: CHY 15661

By remembering Operation Smile in your Will, you are leaving the gift of a lasting smile for a child born with a cleft condition.

Operation Smile envisions a future where health and dignity are championed through safe surgery.

Get in touch with Kristen Bell, Legacy & Fundraising Manager, on

01 667 6659 or kristen@operationsmile.ie or visit operationsmile.ie/LastingSmile

SERVICES

ALL UNWANTED home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS

PADRAIG, 66, single, leaving cert, Longford, non smoker, social drinker, happy, glass half full guy. Wishes to meet female for dating, romance, view to RC wedding. Please note I am not covid vaccinated. Please reply to Box #5071 or splitcans@yahoo.com.

3 DAY PILGRIMAGE TO LOUGH DERG

ST OLIVER PLUNKETT Lough Derg 2022 3 day pilgrimage from Dublin. August 12 - 14. Cost €120 / Pensioners and Students €110. Phone 086 3853027 or 01 4941171 for booking form.

PILGRIMAGE TO GLENDALOUGH AUGUST 15

ASSEMBLE 12.45PM At God's Cottage for a Scripture based pilgrimage to the Seven Churches with time for private prayer, followed by Holy Hour. Contact 0872860101

Remembering
**MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS**

Samples / Information
KENNEDY PRINTERS
BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND
Tel. 027 50102
www.kennedyprinters.ie
email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

**We will
pass on
the flame
of faith.**

For over 130 years, *The Irish Catholic* has been a voice of hope and inspiration for Catholics in Ireland. Help us pass on the flame of faith by remembering us in your Will.

Phone 01 6874028
info@irishcatholic.ie

The Irish Catholic

Hoping...
to be in a relationship?

Seeking...

someone who shares your faith?

Finding...

it difficult to meet the right person?

Then call Heavenly Partners on 01 568 6568

[heavenlypartners](http://heavenlypartners.com) | www.heavenlypartners.ie

GOAL

Please remember GOAL in your Will

42 years on we continue to deliver lifesaving support to the most vulnerable people in our world. Leaving a gift in your Will is priceless.

Contact Courtenay on
01 2809779 or via email at cpollard@goal.ie

Registered Charity No. 20010980; CHY 6271



A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER

A gift in your Will is an act of kindness that has the power to help end hunger and extreme poverty for generations to come.

Your legacy could help families overcome the life-threatening challenges caused by climate change and the devastating effects of poverty and hunger, by providing the tools needed to support themselves long into the future.

Your compassion today could change the future.

For more information, please request your free copy of Concern's legacy guide. Contact Siobhán on 01 417 8020, email siobhan.oconnor@concern.net or visit www.concern.net/legacy - finding out more does not, of course, oblige you to leave a gift.

Concern Worldwide, a company limited by guarantee. Registered Company Number: 39647, Registered Revenue Number: CHY 5745, Registered Charity Number: 20009090, Registered in Ireland, Registered address is 52-55 Lower Camden St, Dublin 2
Image: Roga Wavio (29) of Kalacha, Marsabit, Kenya holds produce she has grown with support from Concern. Photographer: Jennifer Nolan / Concern Worldwide

Support Irish Missionaries



'NET helped me make my faith SO much stronger than it's ever been, and it's really helped me improve as a man of God.' - Michael (19), Dublin

Please help support young NET missionaries like Michael to minister to the youth of Ireland.

Phone 074 919 0606 to make a donation today.

The Irish Catholic PREPAID CLASSIFIED AD COUPON

Please print your advertisement in the coupon, placing ONE word in each space. Below, please print your name and address. Do you require a Box Number? YES ☐ NO ☐ (Please tick ✓) Box Number €6 extra.

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--------|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | €24.60 |
| 7 | | | | | €29.52 |
| | | | | | €34.44 |

Name and contact detail form MUST be filled out

Name

Address

Landline Mobile

The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.

I enclose Cheque/PO: €..... I wish to pay by Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Laser ☐

My Visa/Mastercard/Lasercard number is:

.....

Expiry Date: Signature

Phone: 01 687 4094



By choosing to leave a gift or a donation at any time, you are choosing to share God's love with those who need it most.

To learn more about the Holy Father's official charity for overseas mission, call Fiona on 01 497 2035 or visit www.missio.ie

MISSIO
IRELAND



**Follow The Irish
Catholic on Twitter**

IrishCathNews

Classifieds: 01 687 4094

Leisure time

The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Clare Martin at
clare.martin@hospicefoundation.ie
or call 01 679 3188



Irish
Hospice
Foundation

www.hospicefoundation.ie

MQI

Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Your heart for the homeless



Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering

Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email emma.murphy@mqi.ie

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

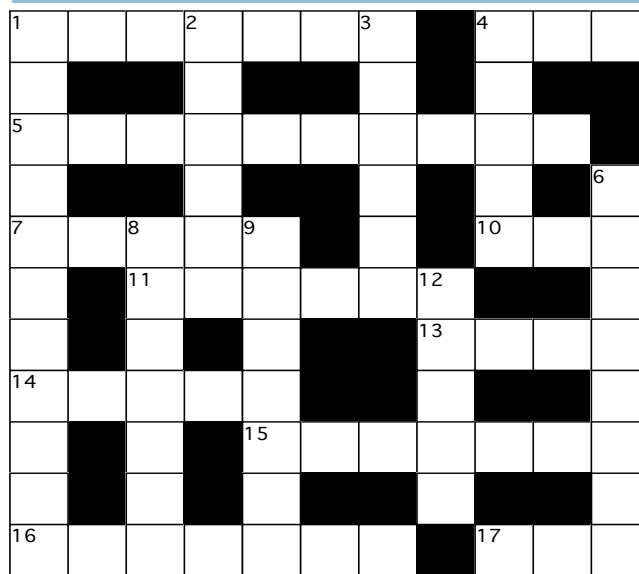
Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Children's 443



Across

- 1 Window in the top of the car you can slide back (7)
4 Large (3)
5 A piano is a musical _____ (10)
7 Striped animal like a horse (5)
10 Farmyard bird (3)
11 You should stand when you sing the national _____ (6)
13 Comfort or convenience (4)
14 Lawful (5)
15 This shape has eight sides (7)
16 You might have ice-cream at this part of the meal (7)
17 Pet which purrs (3)

Down

- 2 Come back (6)
3 Many died of hunger in the 1840's during the Great _____ (6)
4 Long seat (5)
6 Where addresses begin with www (8)
8 You'll know these black animals by their broad white stripe (7)
9 Town in Westmeath on the Shannon (7)
12 You might get this award for bravery, or for winning a competition (5)

SOLUTIONS, JULY 21

GORDIUS NO. 568

Across — 1 Gas 3 Killer whale 8 Adults 9 Obliging 10 North 11 Threw 13 Larch 15 Malaria 16 Lily pad 20 Story 21 Havoc 23 Plane 24 Buddhism 25 Sextet 26 Disentangle 27 Car

Down — 1 Granny Smith 2 Squirrel 3 Ketch 4 Leonard Cohen 5 Wrist 6 Avary 7 Erg 12 Windcheater 13 Lairs 14 Hair 17 Pedantic 18 Solomon 19 Evades 23 Piece 24 Bed

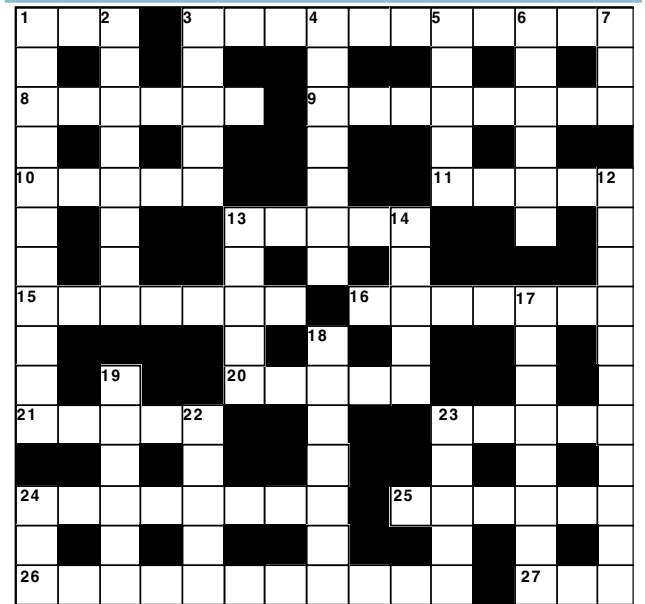
CHILDREN'S No. 442

Across — 1 Rapunzel 6 Exam 7 Pigeon 8 Again 9 Lovely 12 Eagerly 13 Salt 15 Cowslip 20 Plate 21 Lettuce 22 Troll

Down — 1 Ripples 2 Peg 3 Noodle 4 League 5 Vanilla 10 Volcano 11 Yaps 14 Tot 16 Well 17 Late 18 Pour 19 Grey 20 Pet

Crossword

Gordius 569



Across

- 1 Hip-hop music (3)
3 One clan's sin is different? How meaningless is that! (11)
8 A puzzle or riddle (6)
9 Remorseful (8)
10 & 14d One who gives a pint of the red stuff (5,5)
11 Failing, imperfection (5)
13 Principally located; founded (5)
15 Young frog (7)
16 Asks to come - to a party, for example (7)
20 Thin biscuit you might have with ice-cream (5)
21 Protect and defend (5)
23 Dreadful (5)
24 The executive head of one of the United States (8)
25 Colourful tropical bird (6)
26 Horrid chaps move for a musical instrument (11)
27 Possesses (3)

Down

- 1 This common bird can make a tiger unbend (4,7)
2 Given arsenic, for example

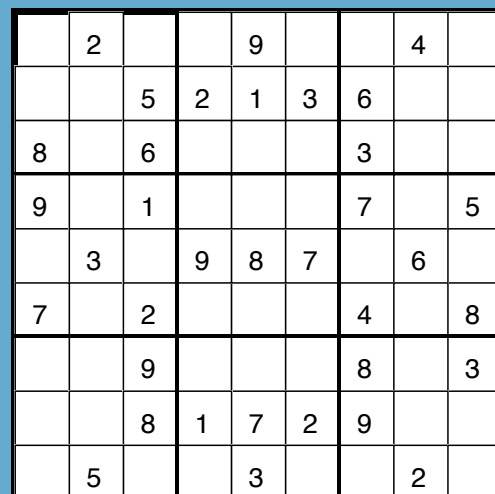
(8)

- 3 Identified (5)
4 Surmise, assume (7)
5 Small, light boat (5)
6 Money order (6)
7 Allow, permit (3)
12 Inflammation affecting the throat (11)
13 Statute enacted by a local authority (5)
14 See 10 across
17 & 18 Wide estuary beside Edinburgh (3,5,2,5)
19 A document declining one's possible entitlements (6)
22 Indoor sport, often played in pubs (5)
23 Honourable prize (5)
24 Violent crime known by initials (1,1,1)

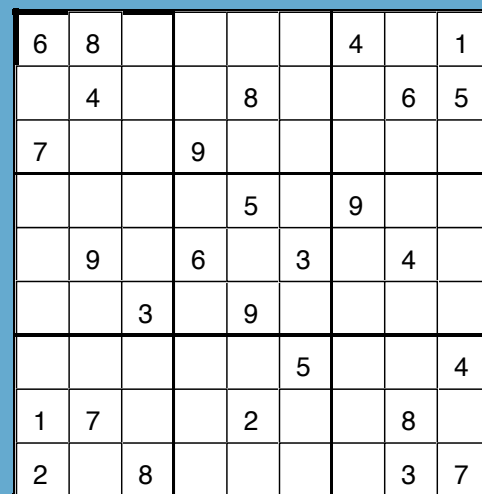
Sudoku Corner

443

Easy



Hard



Last week's Easy 442

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| 8 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 9 |
| 1 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| 7 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 4 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| 5 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 4 |

Last week's Hard 442

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| 6 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 5 |
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 2 |
| 7 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 4 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 9 |
| 9 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| 2 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 7 |
| 5 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 8 |

Notebook

Fr Billy Swan



There is also a vocations crisis when it comes to marriage

'FAMILY LOVE - a Vocation and a Path to Holiness' was the theme of the Tenth World Meeting of Families that took place in Rome recently from June 22 to 26. Here I would like to reflect on one aspect of this theme, namely the family as both having a vocation but also being the seedbed for vocations, not just to priesthood and religious life but for all Christian vocations.

In his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of Love* published in 2016, Pope Francis dedicates an entire chapter to 'The Vocation of the Family' (chapter 3). It sets out the role of the family in God's plan for the salvation of all peoples. It begins with Jesus' own birth into a human family and his affirmation of the institution of marriage and its dignity (cf. Matt 19:3-8). It then proceeds to teach that the wellbeing of society is directly linked to the health of the family unit: "The family lives its spirituality precisely by being at one and the same time a domestic Church and a vital cell for transforming the world" (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 324).

Vocation

Here Francis spells out the vocation of the family that is directed outwards towards the world. However, it is also true that the family



Pope Francis blesses a newly married couple. Photo: CNS

has a vocation to help its members discover their own vocation. First a word about the parents of a family. In my ministry as a priest, I am increasingly conscious of marriage being a vocation between the spouses. For both parties, the desire to get married is not so much a decision between themselves as it is a response by both of them to a call from God. It is their 'yes' to God's 'yes' that comes first. Catechesis on the vocation of marriage is vitally important in order that parents awaken the concept of a vocation in

their children. The more aware both spouses are of living out their own vocation of marriage within the family, the more convincing they will be in reminding their children that they too have a vocation.

Freedom

This is all the more important today when young people are immersed in a culture that prizes absolute freedom as the highest good and tells them to 'be who you want to be'. Being reminded by their parents that the God who created them has a bigger plan for their lives is a refreshing message of hope and meaning.

This sacred task of parents is not just important but an urgent necessity for the future of the Church. We are all painfully aware of the declining numbers

of priests and religious in our time. People talk of the 'vocations crisis' when referring to this problem. But the problem is wider and deeper. While there is a lack of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, there is also a lack of vocations to marriage, the single life and other vocations too.

The people with the greatest influence in this area are Christian parents. They are the ones who have unique access to their children to explore with them what God might call them to be and the gifts he has given them to that end.

Therefore, to all parents - don't be afraid to explore the concept of a vocation with your children. They will thank you for it in the future for God's plans for our lives are greater than our own.

● I have just returned from a staycation around Ireland where the weather was glorious and the beauty of our landscape breathtaking. In our Catholic tradition, the natural world is a kind of sacrament - a sign that leads and points to what it signifies - namely God and his creative love. For St Francis of Assisi, contemplating the beauty of creation lifts us towards the One responsible for it all. St Bonaventure wrote of Francis that "in beautiful things he contemplated beauty itself...out of them making for himself a ladder through which he could climb and lay hold of him who is utterly desirable" (*The Major Legend of St Francis*). Here is the way of beauty that leads us to faith in the God of beauty.

The democracy of the dead

G.K. Chesterton once wrote that "Tradition is the democracy of the dead. It means giving a vote to the most obscure of all classes: our ancestors" (*Orthodoxy*, chapter 4). This great quote came to mind with Pope Francis' prayer intention for the elderly in July, that they "who represent the roots and memory of a people...might help young people look towards the future with hope and responsibility". How often does our generation approach questions and problems as if we were the first to face them? Finding hope for the future requires dialogue with the wisdom of the past and, in the words of poet Patrick Kavanagh, avoids "laughing at villages of ancient holiness".



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU

Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass



Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU**

€..... **UKRAINE APPEAL**

€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**

€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state no. of Masses _____)

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to
www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.