

# The Irish Catholic

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# Church collection may be diverted to aid pastoral worker funding fears

**EXCLUSIVE**  
Greg Daly

Dublin diocese looks set to divert funds previously reserved for future priestly training to pay lay pastoral parish workers instead.

It is believed this initiative comes straight from Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and is to be debated this week by the Dublin priests' council.

The move comes as the shortage of trainee priests continues and the worry among pastoral workers that funding for their jobs might dry up.

Dublin projects that there will be just 111 priests serving the 199 parishes by the year 2030.

Under the plan, money raised on Vocations Sunday would be used for the first time to cover the salaries of the 32 lay pastoral workers spread across the diocese.

### Apprenticeships

Meanwhile a former professor at Maynooth said the Church should consider abandoning the national seminary in favour of parish-based

apprenticeships for seminarians in Dublin.

Fr Oliver Rafferty SJ – now based in Boston College – told *The Irish Catholic* “it’s clear that the bishops want to move away from the old idea of seminary formation, and once they do that, if that is what they have decided, then obviously the consequence that flows from that is abandoning Maynooth as a seminary,” he said. (See page 3.)

Fr John Gilligan – Chairman of the Council of Priests – told *The Irish Catholic* that the issue of funding is now critical since money put in place in 2007 for the pastoral workers is now coming to an end.

Describing the pastoral workers as “invaluable”, Fr Gilligan said “one of the possibilities is that – as we’ve only three seminarians at the moment, two in Rome and one here – we have enough funding for them for the next number of years, so we could put some of the money from Good Shepherd Sunday towards pastoral ministry in the diocese, which would

» Continued on Page 2

## ‘The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice...’



Grace McCann, left and Emma Brady, two young postulants in the enclosed monastery at Glencairn Abbey, Co Waterford, carrying out daily work on the farm. The Abbey is the only Cistercian monastery for women in Ireland. Photo: Valerie O’Sullivan

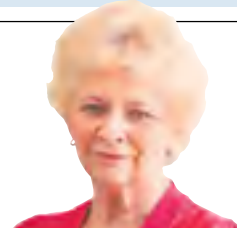
**DAVID QUINN**

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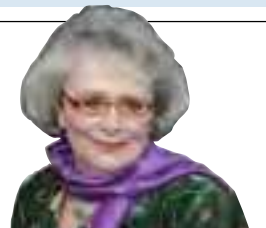
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Dr Noel Keating

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# What the Church with nothing to hide would look like

A man recently came up to me after an event in which I was participating in a neighbouring parish to his own. A hugely-committed man with a background in accounting, he recounted to me his not-so-happy brief membership of the finance council of his own parish.

He had been approached to join the council by his parish priest and readily accepted with a desire to serve the local Faith community.

Interestingly, Church law requires every parish to have a finance council whereas a parish pastoral council is optional, such is the weight to which the Church rightly gives to good stewardship of parish resources.

The man told me of the infrequent and hastily-arranged meetings of the council with very scant detail about the actual finances of the parish. Such was the vagueness of the reports presented that he told me it was impossible to make head of tail of exactly what was going on.

When he raised his concerns with the parish priest about the need to know exactly what the financial position is, the parish priest reportedly replied "why do you need to know?" The man didn't for one second suspect that there was anything untoward with the finances, but merely a stubborn resistance to appropriate accountability and transparency on the part of the priest in question.

## Transparency

Shortly after this, the gentleman – like many others before him in many parishes – quietly left the committee. While many parishes – and indeed dioceses – do provide very detailed and transparent accounts and financial reports, this man's experience is surely not an isolated case.

The truth is that the cover-up of abuse is hardly the only example of the abuse of secrecy in the Church.

Russell Shaw is an American Catholic journalist who has written extensively on this subject and he



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

notes that a kind of inverted logic often enters into the discussion of these questions in Catholicism. The Church is a communion, not a political democracy, it is said; therefore, openness and accountability do not count for much in the Church. But, Dr Shaw insists, the argument should actually go the other way around: The Church is a communion, not a political democracy; therefore, openness and accountability to the members who are co-responsible for the Body of Christ are even more important in the Church than they are in a democracy.

## “People in leadership in the Church should learn the lesson of the past”

It's a convincing argument but one that too often gets short shrift in the Church. Take Ireland, for example, where recent years have seen vast swathes of property in parochial and religious stewardship disposed of. More often than not, questions to the religious congregations involved about what the proceeds will be used for – even from the Catholic media – are deflected and referred instead to spin doctors.

Much in the way that bishops and religious superiors of the past relied on the advice of lawyers in dealing with abuse allegations, public relations firms are now often the gatekeeper between people raised up to govern the Church and the People of God.

Often, where congregations and orders are selling property it is often accompanied by vague talk about preparing for a lay-led future or embracing a new model of co-responsibility within the Church. Fine words, but when those in

leadership are asked to put flesh on these bones the shutters come down and queries are again referred to the PR-men.

The sad irony is that many of those in leadership who turn to the experts rather than the people, verbalise great values about lay participation in the Church. But the fine words are sometimes not followed by actions.

## Assets

Is it the reality that they're just shutting up shop and making the most of assets while they can? If so, they should say so. Many of the congregations and orders have sick and elderly members who need to be looked after, which is no easy – or cheap – task.

But, if they're serious about a Church that is the pilgrim people of God walking together, they shouldn't be afraid to say this and should set aside the spin and talk openly and honestly about the future.

People in leadership in the Church should learn the lesson of the past that hiding behind advisers had disastrous consequences for the Church's credibility and moral authority. Openness, transparency and accountability are what Catholics expect from the Church. We live in a much more participatory society where people are not content to pray, pay and obey. Silence and obfuscation only wound our communion and damage our common witness to the Gospel.

Michael Kelly is co-author of a new book with Austen Ivereigh *How to Defend the Faith – Without Raising Your Voice – it is available from Columba Books* [www.columbapbooks.com](http://www.columbapbooks.com)



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# Church collection may be diverted

» Continued from Page 1 help fund parish pastoral ministers,” he continued, adding that the priests’ council would be discussing the idea in a meeting this week.

Redemptorist Fr Gerry O'Connor, a member of the Association of Catholic Priests leadership team and former Dublin parish priest, said it can often be hard for parishioners to understand how full-time pastoral workers need to be paid.

## Easter dues

“Sometimes it's very difficult for lay people to get their heads around it because they're used to the model of a priest, and know that a priest has to be paid

for in terms of collections and in terms of Christmas and Easter dues, but they don't have the same sense of responsibility for a lay person,” he said.

Claiming the Church is facing “a crisis of human resources,” he said many clergy are elderly, tired, and demoralised.

Dr Fainche Ryan, Director of Trinity's Loyola Institute, told this newspaper that such workers are essential for the Church, but need to be “used correctly”.

“I think the idea of properly-funding people to work in parishes has to be the way forward,” she said.

“The people have to be properly formed and trained, it's very impor-

tant that they be theologically literate, and they very importantly have to be paid correctly and given proper job conditions.”

## Experience

Insisting that pastoral workers should not be treated simply as parish administrators, she said “parish pastoral workers in my experience are normally very well-trained, very well-formed theologically, and they need to be given the opportunity to use that theological training to actually impact on what's happening in parishes and in dioceses,” she said.



# Former Maynooth Prof. in call to 'abandon' seminary to train priests in parishes

Greg Daly

Moves towards a parish-based 'apprenticeship' model of priestly formation would mean the end of the national seminary at Maynooth, a former professor at the college has said.

Calling for prospective clergy to study theology in Trinity College Dublin rather than at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Boston College's Prof. Oliver Rafferty SJ told *The Irish Catholic* that any parish-based formation model in Ireland would "almost inevitably" have to be focused on Dublin.

"It seems to me that the

hierarchy ought to make arrangements with the Department of Theology at Trinity College," he said. "I know that will strike terror into the hearts of some, but there is a vibrant theological faculty at Trinity, augmented a number of years ago by the Loyola Institute, which specifically aimed to bring Catholic theology into the department at Trinity."

Fr Rafferty – a former Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Maynooth – comments come following observations from Killaloe's Bishop Fintan Monahan that parish-based formation could be more practical than current formation methods and would

give student priests valuable experience of working side-by-side with laypeople and experienced clergy. Such a model is one possibility up for consideration by a committee tasked with revising the programme of priestly formation in Ireland.

If Ireland's bishops seriously want to try a parish-based model of priestly formation, it would inevitably mean that Maynooth would effectively "be finished as a training centre for parish seminarians", Prof. Rafferty said.

"It's clear that the bishops want to move away from the old idea of seminary formation, and once they do that,

if that is what they have decided, then obviously the consequence that flows from that is abandoning Maynooth as a seminary," he said, adding that while seminaries have worked well in the past as a way of training priests they may not be well-suited to contemporary challenges.

"As an institution for forming priests, I think seminaries may have seen their day," he said.

Cautioning against emphasising pastoral formation to the detriment of academic formation, however, he said that seminarians need "rigorous exposure" to the academic aspects of theology.

"Apart from anything else, in a society where the laity are increasingly educated, it would be a paradox to say the least if you had in general laity who were better educated than the clergy," he said.

1 See Page 13.

## School patronage must be matter for parents – EU minister

Staff reporter

The patronage and ethos of Ireland's schools should be determined at a local level by parents and communities, Minister for European Affairs Helen McEntee has said.

While paying tribute to the Church and to the role of Church teachings in educating generations of Irish people, Ms McEntee stressed that not all children had positive experiences of Catholic education.

"The Catholic Church and its teachings have played an important role in providing education to children in Ireland for many generations," she told *The Irish Catholic*. "They filled a key role in Irish society when others didn't, however for some their experiences were not positive and as a country we are still trying to heal the deep wounds inflicted on helpless and

vulnerable children."

Ms McEntee also said that parental and local choices of school patron are the best approach for diverse modern societies.

### Ethos

"Today, ethos and patronage of schools is determined by parents and local communities," she said, continuing, "this is in my opinion the correct approach that is reflective of a modern, diverse and multicultural society".

Ms McEntee was responding to questions put to her following EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's call for the European Union to do more to apply Catholic Social Teaching and to rediscover the Catholic values and guiding principles that motivate and underpin the European project.



Kenyan teacher Peter Tabichi, right, reacts with actor Hugh Jackman after winning the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Photo: AP

## Kenyan hero friar scoops \$1m teaching award

Staff reporter

A Franciscan science teacher from rural Kenya who donates most of his salary to help poorer students has been crowned the world's best teacher.

Beating 10,000 nominations from 179 countries Peter Tabichi (36) was awarded \$1 million (€886,185).

The maths and physics teacher at Keriko secondary

school in Pwani Village won the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2019 on March 24.

Mr Tabichi received his prize at a ceremony in Dubai hosted by actor Hugh Jackman.

The friar gives 80% of his income to help the poorest students at the poorly-equipped and overcrowded school. The students could not otherwise afford uniforms and books.

More than 90% of his

pupils are from poor families and almost a third are orphans or have only one parent.

Teenage pregnancies, stopping education, drug abuse, young marriages and suicide are common.

Many students walk 7km along roads that can become impassable in the rainy season to reach the school.

The area has also been affected by drought and famine.



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# Charity appeals for Irish Muslims to rally for Asia Bibi

Colm Fitzpatrick

Irish Muslims should be "advocating far more loudly" for the rights of persecuted Christian Asia Bibi, who continues to be prevented from leaving Pakistan after blasphemy charges were dropped against her, a prominent Christian rights charity has said.

National director of the organisation Aid to the Church in Need, Dr Michael Kinsella, has urged Muslims in Ireland to speak out against the injustices the mother of four has been subject to, and rally for her release.

"Muslims in Ireland, particularly Pakistani Muslims, should be advocating far more loudly, far more vociferously and forcefully about the rights of Asia Bibi, because a huge number of Pakistanis seek asylum in Ireland and in many other countries around the world, and Muslims as well," Dr Kinsella told *The Irish Catholic*.

"So, I would have thought it would be morally incumbent upon them to advocate for the same rights that they so earnestly sought and were entitled to themselves."

## Innocent

Ms Bibi was sentenced to hang for blasphemy in 2010, and remained in solitary confinement for eight years. Last year she was declared innocent by the highest court in Pakistan, and following the dismissal of a petition for the judicial body to review its acquittal, was legally free to leave the country.

Despite this, it is under-

stood that the Pakistani army are actively involved in preventing her from leaving.

## Denial

Commenting on the continued denial of Ms Bibi's rights, Chair of the Irish Muslim Peace and Integration Coun-

cil Dr Umar Al-Qadri told this newspaper that Irish Muslims have been very vocal in supporting "victims of religious extremism", and condemn any injustice carried out in the name of Islam.

"As Muslims, we feel very

saddened at how [Ms Bibi] has been treated because our Islamic teaching does not in any way inspire or motivate to treat non-Muslims, and particularly Christians in this way," Dr Al-Qadri said, adding that he hopes that she is released and welcomed

warmly into another country.

"I would advocate that the government grant her freedom, and that she is then embraced and accepted in any part of the world, and we'd be happy in Ireland to welcome her."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Marriage counsellors wanted as Accord launches recruitment drive

Accord, the Catholic Marriage Care Service, has urged counsellors to enrol in their Certificate in Counselling. The course will run from October 2019 through June 2020 and will be run in conjunction with the Pontifical University in Maynooth.

Executive administrator Harry Casey said marriage counsellors are in demand more than ever. "Marriage and families today are experiencing new and more complex challenges than ever before."

Founded in 1962, Accord currently operates 55 counselling centres in Ireland and has more than 800 trained members. Further information and application forms can be found on the Accord website. The closing date for applications is Friday, May 31.

### Church ban for man bailed on theft charges

A 62-year-old man was ordered to stay out of churches at Cork District Court on Sunday, March 24 after being arrested and charged with multiple counts of thefts from a church.

He was released on bail, but is required not to go to any church in Cork City between now and his adjournment date, April 15, and to sign on three times a week at Anglesea Street Garda station.

The most recent charge relates to an incident on March 4 at Holy Trinity church on Fr Matthew Quay, where he is charged with attempting to steal four €20 notes from a collection box. Four other charges extend back to May 3, 2018, amounting to €325 stolen from the same church.

### SVP call for more volunteers

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP), which has a network of almost 230 shops throughout Ireland, are urging for people to volunteer. Volunteers would be helping with customer care, general housekeeping, sorting and other shop-related tasks.

Dermot McGilloway, SVP national retail development manager, said volunteering in SVP shops is a great benefit to volunteers' life experiences.

They have asked that people interested call either their local Vincent's shop, telephone 01 884 8217 or visit [svp.ie/shops](http://svp.ie/shops).

## Armagh Cornerstone conference tackles youth ministry



Michaela Foundation volunteers Sian, Roisin, Orla and Clare, take part at the Cornerstone Catholic Youth Conference in Portadown, Co. Armagh.

Bringing leaders of youth initiatives together the Archdiocese of Armagh aim

to revamp youth ministry and promote the idea of listening and learning from young people and each other.

The Cornerstone Catholic Youth Conference took place over the weekend and is a new venture being spearheaded by the Armagh Diocesan Youth Commission (ADYC).

The aims were to listen, value and respond to those

working with young people. It was also an opportunity to learn and network, and to resource youth leaders in parishes.

Leaders from almost a dozen groups attended and engaged in workshops and discussions on what they can bring back to their communities.

There were several actions different groups decided on after taking part.

The Killeavey youth group aspire to help others establish youth groups in their parish, while the Michela Foundation, who are school-based, want to reach out into parishes and youth centres and collaborate with other organisations.

Several others said they would start Youth Alpha courses.

— Chai Brady

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## Journalist recalls clash with Bishop Casey

Staff reporter

The former religious affairs correspondent at RTE has told how Bishop Eamonn Casey tried to put pressure on him in the 1980s by urging other bishops not to talk to him.

Kieron Wood – who was religious affairs correspondent for the national broadcaster from 1987-1990 – told *The Irish Catholic* this week that Dr Casey wanted members of the hierarchy to refuse to do interviews with him in a bid to make his role more difficult.

It comes as it was revealed this week that Bishop Casey – who stepped down as Bishop of Galway in 1992 after it was revealed he secretly fathered a child and used Church funds to sup-

port his son – stood accused of three allegations of child abuse at the time of his death in 2017.

Mr Wood recalled this week how "Bishop Casey told the bishops' meeting in 1987 that he had Cardinal [Tomás Ó Fiaich's] support in suggesting that all the bishops henceforth refuse to do interviews with me".

Mr Wood said that the cardinal corrected Dr Casey saying he had permission to raise the matter at the bishops' meeting, but not Dr Ó Fiaich's support.

According to Mr Wood the members of the hierarchy "voted to continue to do interviews with me, and to send Dr [Brendan] Comiskey [of Ferns] to invite me to dinner to investigate me!"



# Watch the growth of biology deniers

**W**e are all aware of the phrase 'climate change denier' – Mary Robinson said this week it was "evil" to deny the reality of climate change. We know, too, about 'Holocaust deniers' – ignoramuses, or worse, who claim that the crimes of the Third Reich did not occur, or that the numbers murdered were exaggerated.

Now I would like to introduce another category of 'denier': the 'biology denier'.

The biology denier is now ubiquitous: he and she – for they come in all genders – deny that there is any difference between men and women. Or that the only difference that exists is one that is 'socially constructed' – that is, invented by society, not ordered by biology.

## Pregnancy

Biology deniers speak of 'pregnant people', rather than 'pregnant women', since they deny the fact that pregnancy is biologically female. When



**Mary Kenny**

it comes to parenthood, biology deniers affirm that fathers and mothers are exactly the same, so each parent should have the same

amount of parental leave, denying the fact that women need more physical recovery time from childbirth and more time, too, for breast-



**Cardinal Basil Hume.**

● There was some comment on Pope Francis being disinclined to have his Papal ring kissed – it's not a custom that he likes. Maybe this is a reaction against over-deferential practices of past time, when there was perhaps too much kissing of ecclesiastical rings.

But one must be sensitive to what the faithful wants. I remember Cardinal Basil Hume of Westminster talking about visiting Ethiopia: he dressed in simple black and asked Ethiopians to call him "Fr Basil", rather than "My Lord". But the people he visited were deeply disappointed.

They wanted to see a proper Prince of the Church, and dressing in all his splendid canonicals would have pleased his hosts much more.

feeding.

In the British police service now, female police officers in an advanced state of pregnancy have won the right to do 'front-line policing' – i.e. tackling offenders carrying guns and knives – because biology denial is now official policy.

In the fire service, the same principle applies: no discrimination is allowed between a 15-stone, 6-foot male, and an 8 stone, 5-foot female, because biology is deemed irrelevant.

**“In sport, the biology deniers are working on the project to make sport and athletics gender-neutral”**

Some biology deniers have claimed that boys have menstrual periods, like girls, since there cannot be any difference between the genders, can there?

Equal pay is a just and fair principle we should all uphold, but the biological deniers omit any aspect of biological choice from the

vocational equation.

Fewer women choose to be steeplejacks, oil-rig workers and deep-bore tunnel engineers largely because their brains and bodies seldom find these physically rougher callings attractive, but the biology deniers say this is pure gender discrimination.

Every neurological study that emerges showing that the brains of males and females are wired up differently – female infants, from birth, show more interest in people while male infants, from birth, show more interest in objects – is vociferously denied.

In sport, the biology deniers are working on the project to make sport and athletics gender-neutral.

What was once called 'the natural law' – or even the deliberations of science – make no impact on the biology deniers who continue, regardless of all nostrums, with their propaganda that biology is irrelevant. Watch their power and influence grow and grow.

## The sad demise of hotel Bibles

Many Irish hotels that I have frequented still have a copy of the Bible in the bedroom drawer, placed there by those American distributors of scripture, the Gideons.

There is a helpful guide at the beginning of the book directing the reader to passages: "For Loneliness... For Sorrow... For Suffering... For Comfort." (Suffering points to 2 Corinthians 12, where St Paul talks about his "thorn in the flesh", which deterred him from getting above himself.)

## Equality

Gideon Bibles are now disappearing from British hotels, presumably because they don't meet criteria for 'equality and diversity': a Koran, a Hindu Vedas text, a Tibetan Book of the Dead and presumably some secularist text would have to be given equal positioning.

Sad.

## Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre 2019 PROGRAMME

### SILENT PREACHED RETREATS

**10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>  
MAY**

**Martina Lehan Sheehan and Patrick Sheehan**

10am-2pm

**Awareness and Mindful Living.** Through input, guided meditation, reflective music, gentle scriptural reflection and healing rituals, this retreat will provide us with ways of releasing stress, helping us to let go of self-judgement and unhelpful comparisons, and allowing us to live fully in the present.

**27<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup>  
MAY-JUN**

**Fr Denis McBride, CSsR**

**Where does the Jesus story begin?**

The preaching of the early Church began the story of Jesus with his death and resurrection. In this retreat Fr. Denis looks at the beginning of the Jesus story in the Gospels of Luke and John, seeing how they may relate to the beginning of our own stories. He will conclude with reflections on the spirituality of John's Gospel.

**10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>  
JUNE**

**Fr. Brendan Comerford, SJ**

**"Mystics, martyrs and poets"** – This retreat will present the lives and thought of such Christian witnesses as Edith Stein, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Brother Roger of Taizé and Jean Vanier.

**2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>  
SEPT**

**Fr. Mike Serrage, MSC**

**"The One who has Compassion on them will guide them to Springs of Water: (Is 49:10)"** This will be a quiet reflective time, and includes, poetry, meditations and ritual.

**4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>  
OCT**

**Fr. Gerard McCarthy, SVD**

**Parables to Ponder and Practise.** At some point in his ministry Jesus began to speak in parables. Read wisely, these stories lead us to a vision of God, ourselves and others that enriches our lives as disciples.

### 6 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**JUNE 10<sup>TH</sup> - JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> @2PM**

**Frank Downes, OP and Mary Connellan, SSL**

**SEPT. 2<sup>ND</sup> – SEPT 8<sup>TH</sup> @2PM**

**Dermot Mansfield, SJ and Des Corrigan, SMA**

### 4 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**SEPT. 2<sup>ND</sup> - SEPT 6<sup>TH</sup>**

**Dermot Mansfield, SJ and Des Corrigan, SMA**

### LENTEN RETREAT DAYS

**MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup> - Fr Damian Bresnahan, SMA**

**MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> - Fr John Gallagher, SMA**

### HOLY WEEK RETREAT

**WED APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup> – SUN 21<sup>ST</sup>**

The Dromantine community invites you to join in reflectively celebrating the Easter Triduum, beginning with the Seder meal.

### DEVELOPING PRAYER THROUGH CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Facilitated by Florence Heyhoe (textile artist and spiritual director)

**9<sup>th</sup> March** Contemplative Collage

**21<sup>st</sup> May** Slow Stitch

**25<sup>th</sup> Sept.** Weaving

**SAT JUNE 22<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Des Corrigan, SMA**

**Forgiveness; The journey from hurt to healing, freedom and peace.** This retreat will give participants a deeper understanding of the nature and importance of forgiveness, so that we can let go, move on and find peace and happiness.

**SAT SEPT 28<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Joseph Ralph, OP**

**Lectio Divina.** An introduction to the ancient practice of Lectio Divina: Together we will Read, Recognize, Respond, Rest In and Reflect on the Sunday Gospel, culminating in a celebration of the Eucharist.

**SAT OCT 19<sup>TH</sup> Mr. Declan Coyle**

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# Catholic schools top NI leader board with 'body, mind, soul' focus

Chai Brady

Catholic education has built a "reputation of success" because of its ethos and sense of belonging, an academic has said after Catholic schools topped Northern Ireland's leader board.

A performance guide which focused on the amount of top marks students received for the 2017/18 academic year found nine out of the top 10 schools were Catholic.

Dr Niall Coll of St Mary's University in Belfast said that Catholic schools have a long experience of providing for the needs of a population who have "generally not been privileged socially and politically".

He said the style of education has brought about "tranches of well-educated, confident and articulate Catholics".

"Catholic schools have built up a reputation for academic success because of an ethos and sense of belonging which in turn leads many young people of the second and third generations to attend particular schools or colleges."

## Confident

He continued saying that the schools are confident in their high academic standards "and ability to form well-rounded young people".

The guide was published last week by the *Belfast Telegraph* and focused on every post-secondary school in which pupils undertake A-levels.

Coming in first place was St Louis Grammar School in Bal-

lymena, a voluntary grammar school, in which 95.4% of pupils achieved three or more A-levels at grades A\*-C.

St Brigid's College in Derry came third. It achieved the best results of a non-grammar school with 92.3% of pupils obtaining three or more top grades. Last year the school came 43rd in the ranking. Two-thirds of students in the school are entitled to free school meals.

Dr Coll said that there is a strong commitment in the North's Catholic schools to tackle disadvantage. The focus on Catholic social teaching, with "its emphasis on the dignity of each person and insistence on the importance of community and solidarity", he said, informs the life and curriculum of the schools.

"The 30 years of the Troubles in the North meant that Catholic schools, especially in disadvantaged areas, were oases of order and calm in the lives of many young people who otherwise encountered violence on the streets and chaos at home."

He added that in an increasingly secular society there is a growing realisation that the spiritual dimension of education can't be taken for granted.

"My work in teacher training at St Mary's University College, Belfast, brings me into many schools, both primary and post-primary throughout the North, and I'm always delighted to meet teachers who are committed to the education of the whole person: mind, body and spirit."



Fr Seán Kelly, OFM Cap., Guardian of the Capuchin Friary, Kilkenny, visits the Cheshire Home in Mongu, Zambia, run by the Presentation Sisters, two of whom are Irish. The home looks after and schools children with physical disabilities.

## TV watchdog rejects complaints of pro-choice bias

Staff Reporter

The broadcasting regulator has rejected multiple complaints that programmes broadcast leading up to last year's referendum on the removal of the Eighth Amendment failed to be fair, objective and impartial.

Two of the complaints to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) were made against *The Tonight Show*, hosted by Matt Cooper and Ivan Yates, and the third was against *The Pat Kenny Show Referendum Special*, all of which were broadcast last

May. The three complaints were all made by Brendan O'Regan, a columnist in this newspaper.

The complainant expressed the view that on *The Tonight Show*, the presenters put more challenging questions to panellists advocating a 'No' vote, and that the fact-checkers did not remain impartial. He argued a similar complaint against Pat Kenny's show, suggesting that the presenter was rude to pro-life panellists.

The BAI's Compliance Committee unanimously rejected all the complaints.

## Islam not exempt from Irish blasphemy laws – councillor

Colm Fitzpatrick

A Dublin councillor has said that Ireland's blasphemy laws apply to all minority groups, and that Muslims shouldn't receive "special provisions" that make their religion exempt from criticism.

Keith Redmond, an independent councillor for Howth-Malahide told *The Irish Catholic* that last year's referendum results shows the "vast majority" of people in the country don't believe that blasphemy should be protected.

His comments come after calls to ban rhetoric in Ireland that dehumanises Muslims, following the terrorist attacks at mosques in New Zealand's Christchurch earlier this month.

"Now I think people misunderstand free speech in that free to speak your mind doesn't mean there can't be ramifications for you – so you know you're responsible for what you say."

## Incitement

"As you know, we have defamation laws, we have incitement to violence laws, those things protect people, their good name and obviously their safety. But the rest of it is free for the public square and debate," the councillor said, adding that the State shouldn't be "stepping in" to prevent offence taken by other people.

"Speech does correct itself. This is the problem – when you try to stifle free speech, all you do is create martyrs. And if anything, you bring sympathy to the people who least deserve it," Mr Redmond said.

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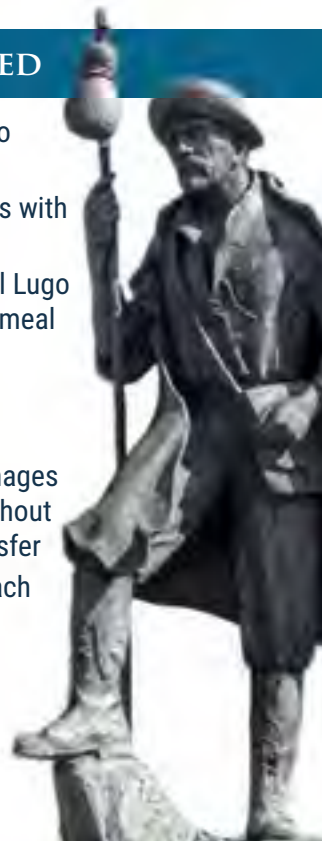
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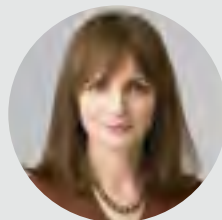
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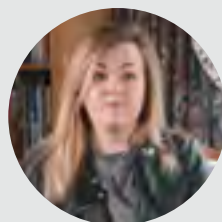
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## Irish missionaries are 'very concerned' for sisters and people after Mozambique cyclone

Chai Brady and  
Hannah Harn

Missionary sisters in Ireland have said they are "very concerned" about members of their religious order in Mozambique after a cyclone devastated the country.

The death toll of the natural disaster has risen to over 750 in three countries in the south of Africa. In Mozambique the fatalities are believed to be about 450, with the president saying it could rise to 1,000. The tropical cyclone reached peak intensity on March 14.

Sr Sheila Callanan, a Franciscan Missionary of Mary (FMM), said there are 80 members of her order operating in the country. The Limerick-based nun added that they have not yet heard from them.

"Of course we are very concerned, but so far we haven't heard any information, now it would have come from Rome if there had been something serious. I imagine the sisters are helping with the flooding and with the people who are

homeless," she said.

Sr Callanan spent almost 50 years in South Africa, where she worked on the border for 10 years and assisted refugees fleeing the Mozambican civil war.

"It will have an affect [on the sisters] but normally we would be with the people, helping the people, helping the people find a place to stay, offering the shelter of the churches or whatever the church has, helping with food, all of that yes, we would be involved in all of that," she said.

With aid agencies from around the world responding to the crisis Sr Callanan added: "Maybe for long term the Church is very important because the aid agencies, they will come in now and they will help now, but eventually the aid agencies will go probably and then the long term support will probably come through the churches and organisations like that on the ground."

The Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development sent €150,000 to the three countries

affected, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, on behalf of Pope Francis.

### Sorrow

The Pope expressed his sorrow and closeness to the afflicted populations in his general audience on March 20, entrusting "the many victims and their families to God's mercy" and implored "comfort and support for those afflicted by this disaster".

A spokesperson for the FMM's generalate in Rome confirmed on Monday that the sisters based in Mozambique are currently helping those affected by the crisis.

One of the communities is based in the central Mozambican city of Beira which was hit severely by Cyclone Idai, which has been regarded as one of the most devastating tropical cyclones on record to affect the southern hemisphere.

Some 228,000 displaced people are in camps across the vast flooded area of Mozambique.

### Bishop Crean urges support for cyclone relief efforts in Africa

The Bishop of Cloyne has urged people to support Trócaire's Lenten campaign to bring aid to those affected by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe.

"Trócaire is responding to this crisis in all three countries," said Bishop William Crean of Cloyne, who is Chair of Trócaire, the overseas development agency of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. "The immediate needs are huge, but the long-term implications of this disaster are very worrying."

"Lent is a time for giving and sacrifice," Bishop Crean added. "The terrible suffering of our brothers and sisters in southern Africa as a result of Cyclone Idai cries out for a generous response on our part."

## Protestors march to save Donegal hospital

Staff reporter

More than 1,000 people marched to "save" a Donegal hospital over the weekend, with a local priest saying "we were on fire".

The march on March 23 was the second organised after plans were announced in 2016 to build a new 130 bed centre in Letterkenny.

Fr John Joe Duffy, Chairperson of the Save our Hospitals campaign, says this means if there isn't enough action taken the beds in St Joseph's Hospital will be removed and it will just be used as a day hospital.

Some patients would therefore have to go to Letterkenny.



Fr John Joe Duffy leads at the Save St Joseph's Hospital march in Ballybofey and Stranorlar. Photo: Gerard McHugh

"I believe first of all there's is no political will to save St Joseph's Hospital and to keep elderly people in their community. Despite the fact that the Government said that that is their commitment to do so," Fr Duffy said.

### Support

There was "huge support" from the community at the march, with people of all ages, over 30 businesses and sport clubs weighing in.

The Save Our Hospitals

campaign are seeking an independent politician in the upcoming local elections in May who will fight to retain the bed capacity of St Joseph's Hospital.

They are also planning more protests.

"What is going to happen is that we are resolute in our commitment to St Joseph's and keeping people in our community and we will be seeking a meeting with the Minister for Health, with the junior Minister if Health and with the department secretary general, and with all the officials around the table so that one can't be contradicting the other because that's what we have witnessed," Fr Duffy added.

## First beatified Trinity graduate honoured

Colm Fitzpatrick

A recently commissioned painting of Trinity College graduate Blessed John Sullivan SJ was unveiled in the university yesterday, to mark his beatification.

John Sullivan, who was beatified in 2017 in Dublin, grew up in the Church of Ireland, and was a graduate and gold medallist in Classics. While studying Law in London subsequently he became Catholic and later

joined the Jesuits. In his ministry after ordination he became known and revered for his care of the sick and poor for many years in the environs of Clongowes Wood in Clane, Co. Kildare, and died on February 19, 1933.

Commenting on the unveiling, Trinity Catholic chaplain Peter Sexton SJ said: "This is the first Trinity graduate that has been beatified, and this is the first beatification that has taken



place in Ireland, which happened of course last year. "It's very significant for

Trinity chaplains, Fr Peter Sexton SJ and Fr Alan O'Sullivan OP, pictured with the recently commissioned painting of Blessed John Sullivan SJ.

Trinity because of the values that John Sullivan stood for, the kind of person he was."



# Muted challenges to our modern corrosive world



Archbishop Martin would have nothing to lose by speaking up, writes **David Quinn**

**I**n an address last week, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin criticised the “euphoria” that greeted the fall of communism in Europe some 30 years ago. He was quoting the recently deceased Belgian cardinal, Godfried Danneels.

Archbishop Martin said Cardinal Danneels had been troubled “by the superficial euphoria that spread within Europe after the fall of communism and the attempts to view it as simply a victory of belief over materialist communism and the emergence of a mono-polar ‘end of history’”.

The fall of European communism was actually one of the greatest moments in recent world history. Hundreds of millions of people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were liberated from a totalitarian nightmare that had claimed countless lives, imprisoned many more and crushed the freedom of everyone else.

## Silence

St John Paul II played a not inconsiderable role in the fall of communism in Europe. It was most certainly a moment worth greeting with euphoria, unlike say, the repeal of the Eighth Amendment, which was greeted by scenes of total ecstasy in Dublin Castle last May.

But Archbishop Martin has been mostly silent about both the referendum and its aftermath, even though it is a topic worthy of extensive public analysis by the leader of the biggest Catholic diocese in the country.

The address by Archbishop Martin was called ‘The Church of the Future’ and it was delivered



The late Cardinal Godfried Danneels.

at St Michael’s Church in Limerick on the occasion of its 175th anniversary.

Archbishop Martin, as is his wont, spent some of this time criticising those in the Church who have a “fear of change” and “seek to find comfort zones where they can feel the support of the likeminded and not open themselves to the challenge of change”.

They try to “build firewalls between their belief and the world in which they live”, he said.

Maybe he has in mind people who want to find some kind of ‘Benedict Option’, to borrow the words of American author and journalist Rod Dreher. That is, those who are seeking ways of preserving and handing on the faith in a culture that is often very hostile to it.

When using that term, Dreher is referring to St Benedict, not Pope Benedict XVI. But he might as well be referring to the Pope of that name because Benedict XVI often called upon Christians to form ‘creative minorities’ which would preserve the Faith and also act as a leaven to the wider society.

It would be good if Archbishop Martin would expand on what he sees as the differences between

seeking out ‘comfort zones’ and building up creative minorities of the sort Pope Benedict discussed. This would be of genuine pastoral assistance to the Catholics of Dublin, who he has led for the past 15 years.

**“Critics felt the cardinal offered only muted opposition at best to what was unfolding in his country”**

In any case, having dealt with the ‘fearful’ in the Church, he then turned his critical attention to modernity. As we have seen, one of the sharpest criticisms he made was of the ‘euphoria’ which greeted the fall of communism in Europe.

Cardinal Danneels was a strange person for Archbishop Martin to be quoting. Unlike the Archbishop of Dublin, Danneels’s record on the child protection issue was highly tainted. As the *New York Times* described it last week, “Cardinal Danneels’s reputation was badly hurt shortly after he retired in 2010, when Belgian newspapers released recordings of a secretly

taped conversation in which he was heard urging a victim of serial sexual abuse by a bishop to say nothing about it for a year, until the bishop – the victim’s own uncle – could retire.”

On another level, however, Cardinal Danneels was the right person to be quoting because he and Archbishop Martin would have similar views of Church and society. Cardinal Danneels was archbishop of Brussels-Mechelen for three decades during which time the radical secularisation of Belgium continued, much as is happening in Ireland now.

Critics felt the cardinal offered only muted opposition at best to what was unfolding in his country. He could not have stopped it, of course, but sometimes there is a time to give witness, and Cardinal Danneels was only rarely willing to criticise what was happening in Belgium, which now permits same-sex marriage, abortion and assisted suicide. Ireland has ticked two out of three of those boxes. Can the third be far ahead?

But what the Belgian cardinal’s example also tells us is that the softly-softly approach to liberal, secular individualistic cultures does not win them over. On the contrary, it confirms to them that they are on the right course, while discouraging those who are trying to offer some opposition to it, and paying severe reputational damage for doing so.

Archbishop Martin would agree that communism was on the negative side of modernity’s ledger, as is a sort of untamed, ruthless,

individualism is also enormously damaging. On the plus side of the ledger it promotes personal freedom, but it also tells us that in the name of choice we have a right to dispose of all unwanted burdens in our lives, whether that be a crisis pregnancy, our marriage, or the old and infirm.

Archbishop Martin would agree that all of this is bad, but he says so only rarely and quietly. He is now barely a year away from his official retirement age. At this stage he has nothing to lose by using his platform as the Archbishop of Dublin to hold a mirror up to society and to try and jolt people into examining some of the corrosive effects of making personal choice into a version of God.

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# Brexit calls for cool offer hope for future

**A**s I sit to write, I am conscious that Brexit in all its manifestations is causing increasing concern across Ireland – north and south. It was all due to come to some sort of fruition on Friday March 29, but now it seems that fruition may occur on April 12, May 22 or some other indeterminate date. Or it may not occur at all.

So how did we get to this place?

In the Brexit referendum, 46,501,241 people were entitled to vote. On the day, 72.2% of them did so. Of those, 51.9% voted to leave, some 17,410,742 people. On the other hand, 48.1% voted to remain, some 16,141,241 people. By any standard it was a big turnout and a clear majority voted to leave.

That was over 1,000 days ago. Since then a lot of people have been trying to work out what it will all mean for the future. The problem is that nobody quite seems to have known what was expected. More importantly, the scope and extent of what is involved clearly was not understood by everyone.

## Contribution

The way it has evolved is that a two-stage process for the UK to leave was insisted upon by the European Union – the first stage, the Withdrawal Agreement, and the second stage, the Trade Agreement. So far, all we have managed to negotiate is the Withdrawal Agreement (which is a very lengthy and complex document,) and a 'divorce payment' of £39billion (€45.5billion). Britain is currently a net subsidiser of the EU – it contributes about £13billion (€15.2billion) annually and gets back about £4billion (€4.66billion) in payments to farmers, deprived areas etc.

Ireland contributed £1.77billion (€2.06) in 2017 and received back £1.82billion (€2.12billion). Ireland is a net beneficiary, the UK a net contributor – of about £9billion a year.

So far the British government has spent about £4 billion on its Brexit processes and parliament has rejected the Withdrawal Agreement twice.

I wonder how many MPs and Peers have read the Withdrawal Agreement, and what they actually object to in it? It provides a structure for residence rights, rights of equality of treatment,

## Nuala O'Loan The View



Prime Minister Theresa May.

transitional arrangements for patents, trademarks, ongoing judicial co-operation in criminal matters, ongoing law enforcement co-operation proceedings, police co-operation and exchange of information, security and so many other things. It says that it exists to "ensure an orderly withdrawal...to prevent disruption and to provide legal certainty to citizens

and economic operators as well as to judicial and administrative authorities in the [European] Union and in the UK whilst not excluding the possibility of relevant separation provisions being superseded by agreements on the future relationship".

It has 599 pages – it is a big document, and it is complex, but so are the myriad issues with which it deals.

**“What will happen at the border on April 12 if all the current arrangements legalising and enabling and protecting goods moving across borders from the UK to Ireland cease to apply?”**

It really is necessary. So is some form of protocol, but not one which ties the UK into Europe indefinitely. We do need to ensure that there is no physical border between the north and south of Ireland. We must protect our hard-won peace.

If the deal passes by April 12, the UK will leave on May 22. If the deal does not pass by April 12 under the latest agreement Britain could leave without a deal, revoke Article 50 or create a new plan to take to Brussels.

**“I remember why the EU was created: the destruction and devastation of World War II, the hunger, the atrocities”**

I do not believe there can be a new plan by April 12. It is all just too complex. Such is the chaos in British politics, I do not believe that there is currently a sufficient consensus to abandon the referendum result and vote for the UK to remain in the EU. That leaves the very bleak prospect of 'no deal.'

No deal would produce chaos – we are intricately involved in a thousand different ways in the EU. Our arrangements for the movement of buses, trucks and people across borders (without rapid legislative intervention there would be no right for ordinary buses to cross borders from the UK to the EU [Ireland]). Our regulatory processes, our protections of goods, medical products, patents, trademarks, extradition arrangements, co-operation in criminal investigations across borders and so many other arrangements, will all cease having effect.

What will happen at the border on April 12 if all the current arrangements legalising and enabling and protecting goods moving across borders from the UK to Ireland cease to apply?

One thing we can be fairly sure of is that there can be no reason to believe that the EU would not insist that



# heads...and prayer to generations

Ireland create some form of border arrangements, just as it has border arrangements with other non-EU countries. It has interests to protect.

So we are in a perilous position. It is in the interests of the 27 remaining EU states and Britain to resolve the way in which it withdraws. Nobody has produced an alternative Withdrawal Agreement. Despite all the criticism of Theresa May, nobody else has even offered a structure which approaches the complexity and reach of the deal currently on offer. There is no clarity as to what those who reject this deal want.

It is a very difficult situation – the greatest constitutional crisis in the UK in my lifetime. I remember why the EU was created: the destruction and devastation of World War II, the hunger, the atrocities, the estimated 35 million people who died, the 20 million disabled. The European

Communities came into existence to prevent any recurrence of those terrible days. We have not seen such days since.

**“It is in the interests of the 27 remaining EU states and Britain to resolve the way in which it withdraws”**

Remembering that, and accepting that the people of the UK called for Brexit, that political parties committed to give effect to the will of the people, they are in a position in which they either give effect to a managed Brexit – the May Deal – or they risk a general election, something none of the parties want at the moment.

This is surely a time for prayer for cool heads, for a recognition of the need to do all we can to ensure the



Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

common good. It is about our people, north and south and about the people of the rest of the UK. It is about the peoples of Europe.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, speaking on the occasion of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to England in 2010 said: “We value people not for what

they earn or what they buy or how they vote but for what they are, every one of them a fragment of the Divine presence. We hold life

holily...each of us is lifted by the knowledge that we are part of something greater than all of us, that created us in forgiveness and love, and asks us to create in forgiveness and love.

**“This is surely a time for a recognition of the need to do all we can to ensure the common good”**

“Each of us in our own way is a guardian of values that are in danger of being lost, in our short-attention-span, hyperactive, information-saturated, wisdom-starved age,” he said.

As we contemplate Brexit, north and south of our common border, we must reach beyond the name-calling, abusive, chaotic present to a future predicated upon our acknowledgement of the value of all our people, and try and create a future which will give hope to the generations to come.

# Freedom from Evil Spirits

## Exclusive extract



Fr Pat Collins

I was born in 1945 at the end of World War II. As I grew up, I heard about the Holocaust. Descriptions of the greatest crime in history disturbed me deeply during my teenage and college years. I was ordained a priest in 1971. At that time, I suspected that references to the Devil were a metaphorical way of speaking about the dark side of the unconscious mind and the systemic evils inherent in the unjust and oppressive structures of society. I tended to understand the evil of the Holocaust in those reductionist and rationalistic terms.

In 1972, I went to Germany on holidays with a priest friend of mine. We mainly got around by hitching lifts. On one occasion we were dropped off outside Dachau concentration camp, which is on the outskirts of Munich. Having visited the museum, we went to see the gas chambers and crematoria. Not only did they resurrect my troubled, adolescent feelings about the Holocaust, I seemed to have a direct, gut level sense of the mystery of evil I stood there. At that moment I spontaneously felt that the Holocaust was demonic in origin, and that my sense of God was inadequate in comparison to such a horror.

Some time later in 1974 I had a Pentecostal type experience when the God I had desired for two years became the God I experienced through an unmerited outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There was a great paradox implicit in that anointing. The more I became consciously aware of the incomprehensible love of God, the more I became aware of the insidious existence and activity of the Devil.

Besides suffering from psychological and physical problems, some people suffer from spiritual oppression and even possession

by evil spirits. When people are oppressed, they suffer from a kind of spiritual neurosis where only part of their personality is subject to demonic influence. When people are possessed, and I have to say it is a very rare occurrence, they suffer from a form of spiritual psychosis because the devil seems to take over their entire personalities.

**“The more I became consciously aware of the incomprehensible love of God, the more I became aware of the insidious existence and activity of the Devil.”**

Oppression can be overcome by means of:

- **Self-deliverance** (which can be engaged in by any oppressed person)
- **Simple exorcism** (which can be performed by lay people)

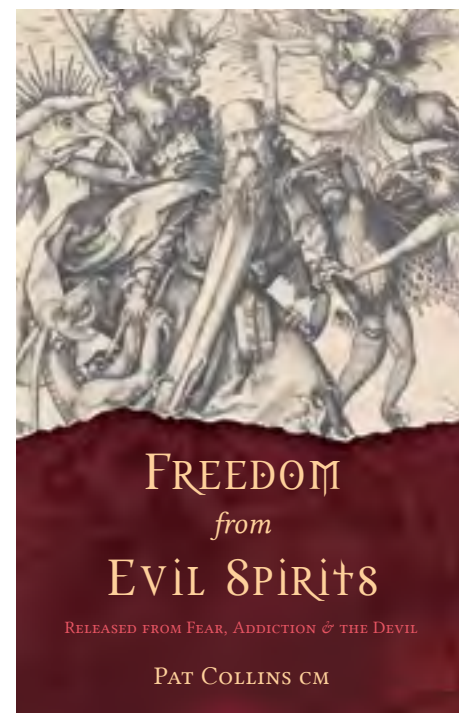
Possession can be overcome by means of:

- **Solemn exorcism** (which can only be performed by a priest appointed by the bishop)

People who no longer believe in a supernatural dimension to life often will explain demonic activity

in purely psychological terms. It would probably be true to say that many troubled people mistakenly attribute their afflictions to the activity of evil spirits when in fact they are psychological in origin.

Up to half of *Freedom from Evil Spirits* focuses on how to be delivered from the malevolent influence of the devil. As a pastoral guide it is relatively brief. It does not pretend to be comprehensive or exhaustive. Although I know a certain amount about deliverance, I am painfully aware of how much I don't know, not only in a theoretical way, but more importantly at a practical, experiential level. I am also aware how true it is that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Because I do really care, I felt that I should share what I already know in the hope that it might prove to be helpful to those who know even less than I do.



Fr Pat Collins will give a lecture based on his new book *Freedom From Evil Spirits* (Columba Books) on **Wednesday, April 17th from 7-8.30pm in Newman University Church** (87A St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2). Tickets €10. Includes refreshments and book signing.

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Young pilgrims are the 'lifeblood' of an ancient Irish site, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**

**T**here aren't many Irish historical events or places that elicit more of a reaction or moment of nostalgia than the Lough Derg pilgrimage; the mere mention of this 5th Century island usually evokes memories of fatigue and hunger, but also respite and thanksgiving.

Over many centuries, pilgrims have ventured from the four corners of Ireland to pray and support one another on this ancient land, seemingly isolated from the rest of the world. Indeed, it's this remoteness that has allowed the island to garner an aura of mystery – what happens there, why do pilgrims go, and why do they return?

Hoping to offer an insight into this Irish enigma, a new documentary about the pilgrimage is uncovering what motivates people to travel there, and why the legacy of the island remains strong after all these years. Airing earlier this week (March 25) on BBC2 NI, the first episode of a three-part series, *Oilithreacht*, gives viewers a chance to share in the experiences of pilgrims who descended on the tiny Station island last summer, and listen to why it holds meaning for them today.

### Resonance

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about what motivated the series' creation, producer Órfhlaith Ní Chearnaigh said that there's never been a "comprehensive look" at Lough Derg, which covers the history of the island, and why people decide to go.

It was on this basis, that the film crew chose to stay on the island for a week last year to record first-hand why the area resonates with so many people. Pilgrims were informed beforehand of the media's presence, and the crew focused on remaining discreet and at a distance, so that the experience of the pilgrimage wasn't compromised.

"I think they realised where we were coming from that we just wanted to por-



# Lough Derg gets the TV treatment



tray Lough Derg accurately and in a way that was in keeping with the atmosphere on the island and even our plan for the documentary was that it would be slow paced, and reflective and it would breathe like the island breathed. It's not going to be jam-packed with people talking. You know, it would have these long periods of just people in prayer, in vigil," Órfhlaith explains.

The pilgrimage has St Patrick as its patron because of his association with the monastery founded at the lake a few decades after the

arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and survives today as a living remnant of the early Irish Church. While today it's commonly thought that only the older generation frequent the pilgrimage, Órfhlaith says that this outlook couldn't be further from the truth.

### Seasonal workers

"There were a lot of young people both in attendance as pilgrims, and then also the lifeblood of the island were so many young seasonal workers who are local or who have come from as far away as Kildare, Wexford and Wicklow, who were there to be cantors

or to work in the kitchen or do first aid, as well as local people."

Órfhlaith adds that there's an assumption in Ireland that religiosity among the youth is dying as the country becomes more secular, but the exuberance of faith she witnessed in Lough Derg suggests otherwise.

"It's not young people being forced to go either by their mothers or their elders, its young people going on their own or bringing their parents and I found that really refreshing," she explains, adding that some girls told her that summer wasn't complete

without the pilgrimage.

Whether young or old, there's no single reason why people choose the pilgrimage. Some come to reflect on life-changing decisions, to come to terms with where they are at, to give thanks to God for joy in their lives, to overcome loss, to pray for themselves or a loved one. In this way, the island isn't just an historical area, but a living, breathing place, where its contours are shaped by the sounds and stories of the pilgrims who venture there.

**“Beyond the hunger is a camaraderie where pilgrims are always looking out for one another”**

"I think it's lovely to have that unbroken lineage and it's undeniable the comfort that so many people get from the pilgrimage. So, while some people think it's not for me, you cannot deny that the people who do go get so much from it," Órfhlaith says.

"And people go for so many different reasons as well. People go not just because they're worried about something, or they've got something particular to pray for, a particular intention, but also to give thanks and that would have been the major reasons for people going, for giving thanks for some blessing in their life which again was very uplifting."

Among the many stories that stood out to Órfhlaith

was that of a young girl with her father, who had 18 years previous come to the island when his wife was pregnant with her. He initially came to the island in preparation of being a father for the first time, and returned in thanksgiving for the children God had given him.

"We heard a lot of stories, which we found by the end, had really affected us," Órfhlaith says, pointing out that on the island, the "full gamut" of people's worries and gratitude are present.

While the pilgrimage is often associated with suffering and restlessness, the film crew soon realised that "there's a real convivial atmosphere", and that beyond the hunger is a camaraderie where pilgrims are always looking out for one another.

It's these types of striking but true moments that the documentary wishes to portray, where the humanity and rawness of the island is brought to light.

"I would love people who have been to Lough Derg to recognise that we've captured the essence of Lough Derg, that it feels true to them, and to their experience, and for people who haven't been to Lough Derg, that they would maybe have some of their preconceptions challenged about what it is, and what kind of people go there."

**●** The next episode of *Oilithreacht* airs on BBC2 NI at 10pm on April 1. It will also air as a two-part documentary on RTE on Easter Monday, April 22.

**“It's not young people being forced to go either by their mothers or their elders, its young people going on their own or bringing their parents and I found that really refreshing”**



# Time to look beyond Maynooth?



## Parish-based formation could have academic advantages, Greg Daly is told

**E**very cloud, as the saying goes, has a silver lining, and if there's an unlikely advantage to Ireland's currently tiny numbers of seminarians it's that it's giving hierarchy an opportunity to transform priestly formation in the country.

For Fr Eamonn Fitzgibbon of Limerick's Mary Immaculate College, part of a working group convened by the Bishops' Conference with a view to looking into how priestly formation might be reformed in Ireland, the training of priests needs considering in terms of the needs both of parishioners and seminarians.

"The profile of seminarians has changed a lot in the last number of years," he tells *The Irish Catholic*. "Generally they're older now, they have life experience, they're men who've been to college," he says. "It's not a case anymore of 17- or 18-year-olds coming straight from school. The older model that was there back then probably suited that profile of seminarian, it was kind of a bridge, but I think the needs are different now."

### Candidates

Maintaining that strong pastoral formation is essential, he says it's clear that plucking candidates for priesthood out of the world and keeping them largely separate from it during formation isn't wise.

"You can't lift people out of the reality they're living in in Ireland and then think that after seven years kind of in a very sanitised world they can go back into that reality and minister without being some way prepared for it," he says.

One scenario that has been mooted, as reported in *The Irish Catholic* last week, is a parish-based model of formation that might almost be described as an apprenticeship model, with seminarians living in parishes under the direct day-to-day guidance of



experienced priests, a model that Prof. Vincent Twomey SVD says appears to be modelled on the *École Cathédrale* model pioneered by Paris's Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger in the 1980s.

### Contradiction

"There shouldn't be any contradiction between studies and pastoral activity – they should mutually complement each other," he says, adding that he would personally favour a parish-based formation model. "I think on the whole in principle I would say that model of the *École Cathédrale* should not in any way take away from the need for a solid academic training."

One might wonder how much serious academic training priests working on the coalface of parish life need, and Prof. Twomey says that that probably depends on the abilities of individual priests.

"There is a minimum they have to have – if you're a doctor you have to have proved you know certain things about medicine, otherwise you won't be allowed to practice as a GP or go on for special studies. It's the same for priests in the parish. There is a certain basic knowledge of the faith and morals and canon law and history you have to know and prove before you are allowed to operate independently as a pastor," he says.

There's definitely a lot to be said for this model, according to Jesuit Fr Mike Drennan, former spiritual director at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, who says: "I think it could work – pastorally you'd be more grounded in the practical."

Contrasting pastorally immersive formation with more "isolating" models, he says the spiritual side of it could still continue, with suitable accompaniment and other supports.

"Seminary gives a structure with prayer in the morn-

ing, Mass, and all of these things, and they have spiritual directors there, which is absolutely vital, but it could still be dealt with," he says. "It would mean you'd need a parish that is understanding of where the guy was at, and also supports around him. The challenge they would have is to find the type of parishes that would be accepting of it and supporting of it, but the thing could be adapted."

This, he says, is the hardest part of formation. "The academic part of it is only one part and it can be the easy part," he says. "Individual accompaniment and the pastoral side always remains the challenging bit. That depends on the individual and that depends on the parish structure, but I'm sure that can be adapted."

**"I think if this is going to work in Ireland it will have to be done in Dublin"**

If parish-based formation is to be introduced in Ireland, according to Boston College's Prof. Oliver Rafferty SJ, it would almost inevitably have to be focused on Dublin.

"I think if this is going to work in Ireland it will have to be done in Dublin – I can't see how it can work elsewhere," he says. "It seems to me that the hierarchy ought to make arrangements with the department of Theology at Trinity College. I know that will strike terror into the hearts of some, but there is a vibrant theological faculty at Trinity, augmented a number of years ago by the Loyola Institute, which specifically aimed to bring Catholic theology into the department at Trinity."

Acknowledging that not everything could be taught at Trinity, and that the Irish Church would need to make arrangements for such things as Catholic canon law and

want to move away from the old idea of seminary formation," he stresses, "and once they do that, if that is what they have decided, then obviously the consequence that flows from that is abandoning Maynooth as a seminary."

The Church isn't bound to forming priests in seminaries, he points out.

**"Generally seminarians are older now, they have life experience"**

"Don't forget that seminaries as such were simply invented by the Council of Trent," he says, "I think seminaries were good in the 16th Century, but I'm not so sure they're good in the 20th and the 21st Centuries. As an institution for forming priests, I think seminaries may have seen their day."

A key part of the problem, he says, is that it's difficult for seminaries to equip priests for their actual lives. Parish-based formation could address this, but he cautions against placing too much emphasis on pastoral work at a cost to academic formation.

"Seminarians need rigorous exposure to the academic aspects of theology," he says. "Apart from anything else, in a society where the laity are increasingly educated, it would be a paradox to say the least if you had in general laity who were better educated than the clergy. Obviously you'd want to avoid that. In a situation where people are thinking for themselves you'd want a highly educated clergy, who could bring some answers to questions."

Pointing out that Church of Ireland candidates for ministry attend classes in Trinity College, Prof. Rafferty says that the college could play a key role in preparing priests for the realities of ministry in a rapidly changing Ireland.

"Given the increasing advancement of secularism in Ireland, one advantage again of Trinity is that here you'd have clergy – of two different denominations, of course – addressing similar issues about the role of religion in Irish society, and therefore solidarity between Catholic and Protestant in the face of a society for which religion is felt to be increasingly irrelevant."

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The Church may hold the keys to reviving civic society, a top Anglican theologian tells **Greg Daly**



**C**atholic social teaching," wrote the Guardian columnist Andrew Brown some years ago, in a column otherwise largely critical of the Church, "and the attempts to produce an economics centred around the needs of humans, rather than of money, look like the only thought-through alternatives to unbridled market capitalism – and certainly the only ones which have a chance of widespread popular support."

It's an observation with which the Anglican theologian John Milbank would be very much in sympathy.

"I think both the strong state and the strong market are very modern phenomena, and they ignore the primacy of society," he tells *The Irish Catholic*. "Human relationship is the important thing, and the idea that we need communities of reciprocity that involve both democracy and a certain kind of formation and leadership, rather than the sort of alien and automatic structures of the market and the state."

"I've learned also from a lot of Anglican social teaching, which I think is very, very similar – back in the 30s there was so much interaction, but I tend to stress Catholic Social Teaching because it's more well known, and has more reach and more resonance," he adds.

President of the University of Nottingham's Centre of Theology and Philosophy, Prof. Milbank's work has long crossed the boundaries between theology, philosophy, social science and political theory. Chair of the board of Res Publica, the thinktank headed by philosopher Philip Blond, author of *Red Tory: How Left and Right have broken Britain and how we can fix it*, he has been prominently linked in recent years with the 'Blue Labour' attempt at a spiritual renewal of the British Labour Party.

#### Democracy

"I think that in many ways subsidiarity, participatory democracy, these things are important, but also I think a recovery of a wider sense of citizenship," he explains. "I think what we need to resist is what I call the *bourgeois* individual, in other words

the person who says 'I'm not political, I just do my job and do my best'. It sounds a bit cruel to say this, but I think this idea is completely wrong, I think that if you're running a business or doing a public function you're a political actor."

This is an idea that goes back to ancient Athens, it was said that a man who takes no affairs in politics isn't a man who minds his own business, but a man who has no business being there at all – the Greek word for a private person is, after all, the origin of our word 'idiot'. Prof. Milbank says that he's talking about a Christian and more democratic version of that classical idea, one that includes all citizens.

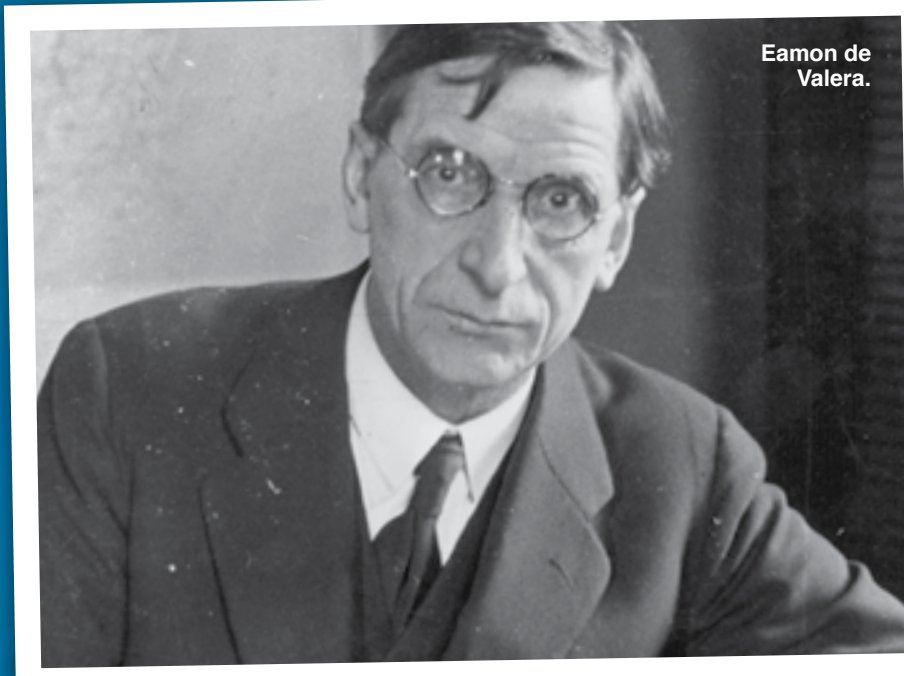
**“Businesses must exercise a social function which is not just about making profit. Legitimate profit, yes, and this is where Catholic social teaching is moderate”**

"Catholic Social Teaching is right to resist this idea of a separation between the political and the economic, and this is where – and I'm prepared to be controversial – corporatism is the right idea," he says.

"What I mean by that is that we have to demand that businessmen and people running corporations run them like citizens," he explains. "In other words that businesses exercise a social function which is not just about making profit. Legitimate profit, yes, and this is where Catholic social teaching is moderate: it talks about just prices, just wages, just amounts of profit. And also I think we need to get rid of most limited liability – shareholders and managers have to take responsibility for what they're doing."

In return, he says, publicly significant bodies like businesses and universities could have political roles at local and central levels, as appropriate. In Britain he thinks the House of Lords could effectively facilitate this, while he points out that Ireland's Seanad at least in principle already allows for this to

# Rebuilding a world of relationships



Eamon de Valera.

some degree.

"What I'm saying should not sound strange because de Valera, whom I've got an awful lot of time for, had a moderated form of corporatism in mind, and it was linked also to vocationalism and so on. In many ways, people have said, de Valera is almost the first person to have arrived at a mode of Christian Democracy."

De Valera was working at a time when countries faced challenges of resisting the political lures of fascism, communism, and extreme modes of liberalism, Prof. Milbank points out.

"And I think we are seeing now is that once you get that kind of politics – we thought it was all over – we realise that we need an alternative

to globalised liberalism or to national populism," he says.

In some ways it sounds as though he is describing a kind of relationship between politics and economics not unlike the so-called 'Rhenish' or 'Rhine' capitalism that has flourished in the Netherlands, parts of Belgium, Austria, and most famously Germany, entailing a decentralised state, consensual labour relations, and stakeholder rather than shareholder models of ownership.

"If we're being technical I tend to say that I'm not a capitalist, but I do believe in markets," he says. "I think of capitalism very simply as a system where capital has the dominance, and making a profit moves the whole system. If you have more a

balance of interests between shareholders, managers, workers, and consumers, then to my mind it's not really capitalism, it's something more like social markets."

"But yes, many things in German capitalism are much better than in ours, though I would probably want to take it a bit further. I think to my mind Catholic Social Teaching is very suspicious of usury, but it accepts share ownership as long as share ownership takes responsibility. The trouble about a moneylender is that he's taking no responsibility for the money he's lending and what's being done with it."

Overall, he thinks, a shift away from finance capitalism to systems of responsible share ownership is a good

idea, adding that this idea resonates with Islamic social teaching too, allowing for joint work with Muslims in this area.

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One obvious problem with these kinds of stakeholder systems is that they can too easily become cases of 'snouts at the trough', as Ireland's partnership systems were often seen as having become ahead of the national crash. Is it the case that rather than seeking to change systems, we should be trying to change mindsets and convert hearts as well as minds?

"It has to be about culture, it has to be something much more intangible," he agrees, "because the problem is that human beings seek respect, and in our culture you get respect if you make a load of money and if you're very famous and if you make a kind of spectacle of yourself".

It doesn't have to be this way, he says, pointing out that even in the recent past people have been respected for other things. "In a word what we need is honour: we need to revive the sense of honour, and then people don't want to have no respect, they don't want to be dishonoured, they

**“I think of capitalism very simply as a system where capital has the dominance, and making a profit moves the whole system. If you have more a balance of interests between shareholders, managers, workers, and consumers, then to my mind it's not really capitalism, it's something more like social markets”**





John Milbank.

**“Even someone like Will Hutton is now saying ...that unions would be respected if they took more concern for vocational training, standards of work, standards of what’s produced, and if they’d be prepared to sit on boards and get rid of this oppositional culture”**

‘invisible hand’ that helps society in a broader sense.

“We think, because we’re too much in awe of Adam Smith, when we negotiate prices it’s simply about two completely separate interests coming together,” Prof. Milbank says, “but why shouldn’t the interests of the community that they both share or even a set of mutual concerns, why shouldn’t that come into the negotiation?”

\* \* \* \* \*

Significant work has been done in this area by the Italian economists Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zemagni, Prof. Milbank says, identifying the two as probably the main authors under Pope Benedict XVI of the 2009 social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. “They have revived the ideas of so-called Italian civil economy which stretches back to a contemporary of Smith, Antonio Genovesi in Naples,” he says.

“There’s a very different kind of south European tradition of these things, where you’re much more thinking in interpersonal terms,” he says. “I’ve got a Hungarian friend who’s working in Granada in Spain. He’d sent his car to be repaired and after weeks and weeks it hadn’t been repaired. He said to the mechanic, ‘why have you repaired all the cars of your friends before mine?’ and the mechanic said ‘All those people needed their cars more than you did.’”

The episode struck the Hungarian as almost like a Gospel parable, where he had assumed a corrupt favouritism was driving things, when in reality the priorities were based on knowledge and real need. “The mechanic was thinking ‘I know these people, and I know you, and I know who needs their car more’. I think this is a very interesting illustration of a gulf in mentality between the North and the South in Europe,” he says.

An interpersonal approach based on genuinely knowing people has underpinned cooperative movements and credit unions throughout the world, of course, but as people seem to have less and less time in their communities and with less energy or interest in volunteering, a sense of ownership of local communities is threatened.

“I think this is what we need to recover, and I think a lot of populism is about peo-

ple wanting to take control over their lives,” Prof. Milbank says. “They don’t want the state to do it for them, they don’t want necessarily everybody to be the same, but they do want to be able to live decent lives and be involved in their own lives.”

Expressing concerns about huge divisions between rich and poor today, and a growing sense of alienation in working class and even middle class families, he stresses: “Somehow we’ve got to encourage a return to mutual and cooperative ventures of all kinds.”

“We need to focus on the fact that most people are living in normal marriages and relationships and having children and families, and the conditions for those people aren’t very good,” he says, adding that support for women, children, and family life is an important reason for the political success of Viktor Orban in Hungary.

“We’ve got to enable families, but we can do it in a modern way that allows the family and work, for both men and women, to mix. It’s possible, I think, for the Catholic Church to sort of seize the high ground on that.”

### Encouraging

Similarly, he says, it is worth encouraging trade unions to be more robust and in some ways more like guilds, noting that the English economist and journalist Will Hutton has taken the line that they need to do more than simply represent workers against managers. “Even someone like Will Hutton is now saying this, that unions would be respected if they took more concern for vocational training, standards of work, standards of what’s produced, and if they’d be prepared to sit on boards and get rid of this oppositional culture.”

**“I think probably you have to challenge people to think about the morality of their life and their job”**

Part of the equation, he says, is rethinking the idea of vocation for a modern world where flexibility is necessary.

“I don’t know completely how to do that, though I think it’s allied to the question of what jobs are worth doing

anyway,” he says, adding that people thinking about the basic meaning of what they’re doing is vital.

“I think probably you have to challenge people to think about the morality of their life and their job. This is very difficult because most of the time people are just up against hard necessity, basically,” he says, though opportunities to take part in things or work for organisations that have a moral purpose or even act in line with Christian norms should be encouraged.

“All I can say is that as far as possible you have to craft that kind of activity, and I think there are quite an increasing number of hybrids, things that are for profit and also for non-profit as well, and have that kind of aspect to them,” he says.

“It’s hard to get beyond mere virtue signalling, but in some ways I think perhaps the ecological issue can be the hinge of a change. When the damage becomes so palpably material, then maybe you can get people to think that we can only change that if we have a different set of social and spiritual priorities. And so trying to act in a more ecological way can often involve rethinking how we do things in other ways.”

\* \* \* \* \*

He points out that as Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si’*, “everything is interrelated”, and says that at the most basic level being proud of the beauty of where we live can change how we act in a political way.

“Maybe one of the keys for our future politics is trying to marry this populist concern for local places, identity, and keeping local culture going with this more universal concern for ecology and so on,” he continues.

“Instead of ecological concerns being sort of very remote and technical, if people thought what can I do in my neighbourhood to preserve the community not just with humans but with nature, how can we be proud of the beauty of our area? It’s almost like a politics of beauty could start to kick in. You can see with schoolchildren being concerned at these issues that there is scope for this to happen. You can’t just wait for the Government to do things.”



Things like lack of corporate responsibility, not paying your workers enough, all that sort of thing should be within the remit of courts, and adjudication about prices as well,” he says.

“People say that can’t work, that’s just hopeless state control, but that’s not true, because there existed pre-capitalist market economies in late medieval Europe that were incredibly successful: they were more guild-based, and more came within the scope of regulation of prices.”

**“We’ve got to enable families, but we can do it in a modern way that allows the family and work, for both men and women, to mix”**

The trick, he says, is to rethink the whole idea of exchanges and transactions, so they’re about justice and what’s fair. It’s about as far away as one can imagine from the dictums of Adam Smith, the Scottish Enlightenment ‘father of economics’, who argued that self-interested commerce creates a kind of

don’t want to be ashamed, so in a sense we need more of an honour-shame culture.”

In some ways the desire for such a culture is built into us, he says, though it is currently manifesting itself in a distorted and unhealthy fashion.

“At the present it’s as if we know we need that, and it’s coming out in a really negative way,” he says. “Everybody’s trying to expose everybody else for something they’ve done wrong at some point in their private lives, and as everybody has done something wrong at some

point this is a terrible game to play.”

Rather, he says, the demand should be that people live honourable lives on the whole, and not be judged for one-off foolish statements, he says, adding “But some people deserve to be ashamed – like Trump!”

Changes in culture are vital, he says, though the law has a role to play in this.

“If I’m saying we shouldn’t have this artificial separation of politics and law, a lot of things do need to be brought more within the scope of law.



# Fond farewell from Kilmore to Dr Leo O'Reilly



Bishop Leo O'Reilly says his last Mass in the Conaty Chapel as bishop on March 8 as St Patrick's College held a Mass and celebration for his retirement. Photos: Lorraine Teevan



Students Gavin Brady and Naoise McKenna present Bishop Leo O'Reilly with a thank you gift of a beautiful drawing by student Caelan Ghofrani which depicts a student and the college.



Front from left: Bishop Leo O'Reilly, Geraldine Smith, secretary of St Patrick's College and Fr John McTiernan, past president of St Patrick's College. Back from left: Dr Liam McNiffe, retired principal of St Patrick's College, Mr Christopher Rowley, principal St Patrick's College and Mr Patsy Lee, retired principal of St Patrick's College.



Bernard Donohoe, Board of Management, St Patrick's College, makes a presentation to Bishop Leo for his hard work and commitment to the school.

Staff and students of St Patrick's College, Cavan, gathered earlier this month to thank Dr Leo O'Reilly, former Bishop of Kilmore, for his much-appreciated work in the diocese on the occasion of his retirement.

Bishop O'Reilly said his last Mass in Kilmore Diocesan Pastoral Centre's Conaty Chapel on March 8 in the presence of the school's representatives and pupils, of which he is the patron, as well as a former student and teacher.

After over 50 years of dedicated ministry, last December Pope Francis accepted Dr

O'Reilly's resignation as Bishop of Kilmore which was offered ahead of his 75th birthday on health grounds. Bishop Francis Duffy of Ardagh and Clonmacnois said he had brought "exemplary leadership to the people, priests, deacons and religious of the Diocese of Kilmore", and that his approach "generated a sense of care, direction and stability".

Msgr Liam Kelly, diocesan administrator of Kilmore, will be responsible for leading the diocese until the appointment of a new bishop by Pope Francis.



Eileen Burke Smyth, chairperson of the Parents Association, St Patrick's College, presents Bishop Leo O'Reilly with a thank you gift. The locally crafted pen was made from the leg of an old snooker table at the college, maintaining a connection for the beloved patron of the school.



Celebrating the last Mass were from left: Fr John McTiernan, Fr Kevin Fay, Fr John Murphy, Bishop Leo O'Reilly, Fr Andrew Tully, Fr John Gilhooly and Fr Donal Kilduff.



# Out&About

Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication

## Confirmation in Limerick



◀ **LIMERICK:** Pupils from Scoil Iosagain CBS, who were confirmed by Bishop Brendan Leahy at St Michaels Church, pictured with Mr Denis Barry, school principal, and teachers Mary Claire Hayes and Clodagh Walsh.

▼ **ARMAGH:** Some pupils of Lismore Comprehensive, Craigavon, get ready to break the Guinness World Record of forming the largest human Pi symbol. Over 1170 students and staff gathered to create the famous mathematical symbol.



**ROSCOMMON:** Pupils from Glanduff National School, Athlone, receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from Elphin's Bishop Kevin Doran.



**ARMAGH:** The Catholic and Church of Ireland Primates of All Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin and Archbishop Richard Clarke deliver the St Patrick's Lecture – A Role Model for Youth, compered by Sarah Clarke at Market Place Theatre, Armagh. (l-r) Sarah Clarke; Archbishop Richard Clarke; Archbishop Eamon Martin and Lord Mayor of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Julie Flaherty.



**WESTMEATH:** Peter McCrum, Treasurer for the Diocesan Pioneers, is presented with a cake for his birthday and as a token of gratitude for his hard work and dedication to the Mullingar Pioneer Deanery.



# Out&About



**ARMAGH:** Church of Ireland Archbishop Richard Clarke and Archbishop Eamon Martin with the choir Cór Gaelach, Domhnach Mór on St Patrick's Day in Armagh. Photo: Liam McArdle



▲ **KERRY:** Local clergy and friends give thanks for the work of Fr Piotr Delimat (centre), who was a curate in St John's parish, Tralee, and has now taken up an appointment as Chaplain to the Defence Forces at Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick.

◀ **DUBLIN:** Archbishop Diarmuid Martin blessing a bowl of shamrock during St Patrick's Day Mass in the Pro Cathedral Dublin. Photo: John McElroy



**KILDARE:** Eilis O'Malley celebrates with her family after being presented with Maynooth's Community Person of the Year Award.



**LOUTH:** Michael McGlynn is presented with the Benemerenti Medal by Archbishop Eamonn Martin and Fr Malachy Conlon at the Mass of Thanksgiving in Church of St Anne Mullaghbuoy, Cooley.





**CAVAN:** Students from Ballyconnell NS and Shillelagh NS, with 6th class teachers Shane Byrne and Kate McCaul, celebrate their Confirmation presided by Bishop Denis Nulty and Fr John O'Brien.



**CLARE:** Students and staff of Coláiste Muire, Ennis, come together with Mayor Clare Colleran Molloy and Cllr Mary Howard to raise awareness about climate change.



**TIPPERARY:** Students of Lismacken NS, Bournea parish, receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in Curragunee Church, presided by Killaloe's Bishop Fintan Monahan.



**SLIGO:** The local community celebrate the opening of a Year of Faith Renewal at Teampall Naofa in Strandhill with live coverage on RTÉ of the St Patrick's day Mass. Photo: Peter Wilcock/Redback Photography

## ARMAGH

St Paul's Church, Lurgan, to host '24 Hours for the Lord', an opportunity for adoration, reflection and an invitation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Available continuously for 24 hours beginning 7pm on March 29.

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

Armagh Parish Holy Spirit Prayer Group are hosting the Life in the Spirit Seminars in The St Vincent de Paul Centre, Chapel Lane, Armagh. April 2: Patricia Kelly on "Growth in the Spirit", April 9: Archbishop Eamon Martin will speak on "Transformation in Christ".

## CLARE

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

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

## CORK

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

## DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Monday to Friday, 8-12pm and 3-9pm.

## DUBLIN

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

Holy Hour of Adoration for Healing at St Laurence O'Toole Church, Seville Place, every Tuesday evening during Lent at 8pm.

Divine Mercy Sunday on April 28 at the Church of St Vincent de Paul, Marino. Holy hour and Confession at 3-4pm and Mass at 4-5pm. The celebrant is Fr Conor McDonough.

Life to Full Book Club. Join other young adults (20's and 30's) on April 4 from 7.00-8.30pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay. Reflection on Bear Gryll's autobiography, *Mud, Sweat and Tears*. E-mail: st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie

## FERMANAGH

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

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

## GALWAY

Day of Prayer, Reflection and Healing Service at Emmanuel House, Clonfert led by Eddie

Stones. Saturday, April 6 at 10.30am. Please bring packed lunch.

## KERRY

Saving the planet for our children is the subject of Dr Lorna Gold's presentation in St John's Parish Centre, Tralee on Wednesday April 10 at 8pm. The evening is hosted by Tralee Pastoral Area.

## KILKENNY

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

## LIMERICK

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

St Saviour's Dominican Church will be offering Bishop Barron's *Catholicism* Series at the Church on Thursday at 1.30pm and Fridays at 7.30pm weekly. Free of charge.

## LOUTH

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

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

Holy Hour with music and reflections to be held in St Mary's Church, James Street, Drogheda, on April 10 at 8pm.

## MEATH

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

## OFFALY

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

## ROSCOMMON

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

## WICKLOW

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

St Patrick's Prayer Group, Wicklow town, meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm in The de la Salle Pastoral Care Centre.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### American priest to be sued over abuse allegations

● A group of children in the central Philippines who claim an American priest sexually abused them are set to sue the alleged perpetrator and a diocese in the US for damages.

McDonald Worley, a lawyer from Texas who represents the victims, said that testimonies and evidence are being gathered for the filing of a civil suit against Fr Kenneth Hendricks and a "Catholic church in Ohio".

The lawyer did not specify which diocese or archdiocese in the state would be sued.

Philippine police, immigration officials and US Homeland Security agents arrested Fr Hendricks in the central Philippine province of Biliran on December 5, last year, over the alleged abuse of at least seven children over the past 40 years.

### Seoul archbishop reaffirms Church's pro-life stance

● The archbishop of Seoul has reaffirmed the Catholic Church's pro-life stance as South Korean lawmakers prepare to make crucial decisions on abortion and the death penalty.

Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung told the Youth Pro-Life Rally in Seoul on March earlier this month that human life is noble, honourable and dignified from the moment of conception.

"What we should do is to accept every life as it is from the moment of conception under the responsibility of both father and mother at the same time. Moreover, given that every life is under the common responsibility of our society, we should try to improve overall social welfare systems to support parents to give birth and raise their children."

### Indians and Christians join to fight hate ahead of election

● Groups of Indians including Christians are on a campaign to popularise a "manifesto against hate" aiming to block political efforts to garner votes by dividing citizens on religious lines through hate speeches.

Indians are set to elect members to their 543-seat national parliament in a seven-phase election from April 11 to May 19.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP), which won the 2014 election primarily on a plank of pro-Hindu promises, is seeking a second term covertly campaigning for majority Hindu votes.

"This election is not about a minority or majority. It is about ensuring the basic rights of every Indian irrespective of religion," said Christian leader A.C. Michael, who has joined the campaign.

### Indian priest granted bail after 'out of proportion' case

● A court in India's Meghalaya state has granted bail to a Catholic priest three days after he was arrested on charges of molesting a woman by touching her hand on a crowded moving bus. The additional judicial district magistrate in Garo Hills on March 19 granted bail to Fr Biju Joseph, a member of the St Francis de Sales (MSFS) congregation.

"Now we are all convinced that this is a typical case of exaggerations and inconsistencies of statements and a case blown out of proportion," said Fr Shibu Poovathunkal, spokesman for the congregation.

### Police on 'high alert' after New Zealand mosque attack

● Malaysia faces a heightened terror alert following the deadly attack on two mosques in New Zealand last week.

Local police announced on March 19 that they have increased vigilance at churches and temples around the country as they evaluate risks of retaliatory attacks on non-Muslim places of worship in one of the most multicultural nations in southeast Asia.

"Immediately after the shooting (in New Zealand), I instructed all police chiefs to inform their ground officers to be on high alert and to monitor churches and temples," national police chief Mohamad Fuzi Harun told the media.

"Action has been taken. Don't worry, we are always on high alert," he added.

## Two million turn out for Argentine pro-life march

Nearly two million people marched on Saturday last in Pope Francis's native land of Argentina in pro-life demonstrations dedicated to defending the life of the unborn, and offering solutions to mothers in crisis pregnancies.

The rally was organised by Argentina's March for Life, a lay-led organisation. Although Catholic bishops, evangelical pastors, and Jewish and Islamic leaders participated, they were not involved in the organisation of the March 23 event, which took place in more than 200 locations across the country.

The movement doesn't have a political affiliation, either. In fact, the only political message issued from the stage was a warning to Argentine politicians: abortion will be an issue in the upcoming presidential elections, and those who were out in the streets won't vote for candidates who support overturning Argentina's pro-life laws.

Buenos Aires drew the largest crowd, with more than 300,000 people marching across the capital. Aerial footage showed that at one point, the column of people was more than one mile long.

Though the rally had been planned well in advance, the city government provided no security for the event, and



A pro-life rally in Argentina, where abortion is illegal.

neither did the national government.

The city of Buenos Aires is governed by Horacio Larreta, who belongs to the party of President Mauricio Macri, who last year allowed Congress to debate the legalisation of abortion for the first time in a decade.

According to Carolina Brown, one of the organisers of Saturday's rally, there was a "palpable spirit of celebration, of joy, with families rallying together, as well as an overwhelming presence of young people".

The latter, she said, wasn't the case last year, but "seeing that young people are the ones who will have to continue fighting, seeing them come out in numbers, joining friends, is a reason for hope".

### Support

During 'march season', Ms Brown has a key role: making sure that the people in the street find out about the event, as they have little support from Argentina's major media outlets, and not everyone has access to social media.

In different shapes and forms, the rally has been taking place every year since 1998, when the country declared March 25 to be the Day of the Unborn Child, but the participation and visibility has grown exponentially in the past two years, after the strong effort to legalise abortion.

Abortion today is illegal in Argentina, though there's a protocol adopted by some states that allows for the practice when the pregnancy is the result of rape, or the life of the mother is at risk.

## Restrain from using lethal force, Cardinal urges Venezuelan security

A Venezuelan cardinal has called on state security forces to exercise civil disobedience when given orders to use lethal force against citizens.

"State security agencies exist not to take care of the government but to take care of the citizens," said Cardinal Baltazar Porras, at a press conference last week.

"Therefore, every order that is given that goes against the lives of the citizenry is an order to kill, it is an order which there is no duty to carry out nor heed,

because civil disobedience is also a fundamental right," the cardinal stressed.

Cdl. Porras, who serves as archbishop of Merida and apostolic administrator of Caracas, stressed the disobeying of unjust orders is both a right and a duty for members of the security forces.

Since Nicolas Maduro succeeded Hugo Chávez as president of Venezuela in 2013, the country has been marred by violence and social upheaval.

Under the socialist government, the country has seen hyperinflation and

severe shortages of food, medicine, and other necessities, and millions have emigrated.

Amid the protests that have taken place throughout the country, dozens of people have been killed by security forces.

Cardinal Porras stressed that "it's a citizen's right, a right in any democracy to be able to hold demonstrations and to say what [you think] will solve the problems".

## Priests granted permission to absolve abortion sin

A bishop in the central Philippines has allowed priests in his diocese "to absolve the grave sin of abortion" during the Lenten season. Bishop Crispin Varquez of Borongan from Eastern Samar province made the announcement in a bulletin released on March 21. Newly ordained

priests, however, cannot do so.

In the Catholic Church, women who have abortion are automatically excommunicated except if a bishop gives absolution.

"This penalty of excommunication means that those who undergo an abortion,

together with whoever plays an active role in allowing an abortion to take place, are separated from the prayers of the Church the world over," said Archbishop Oscar Cruz, an expert in canon law.

The prelate, however, said a bishop can delegate to his priests the ability to absolve

those who committed the sin from excommunication for a given number of times.

Archbishop Cruz warned that granting this ability to priests is not a license to commit abortion. "It is only meant to say that the mercy of God is bigger than the sin of abortion," said the prelate.





Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
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## St Oscar Romero's light still shines brightly



A woman holds a candle during a procession to commemorate the 39th anniversary of the murder of St Oscar Romero in San Salvador, El Salvador. The Salvadoran saint was shot and killed on March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass. Photo: CNS

# Help persecuted Christians through prayer – new poll

More than half of US Catholics say they are very concerned about the persecution of Christians around the world, with this 58% figure up by 17% from a similar poll a year ago.

When asked to rank their concerns about global issues, respondents considered persecution of Christians as a slightly more important problem than climate change (57%), but less important than human trafficking (82%), poverty (74%) and the refugee crisis (60%).

US Catholics were asked for their views on Christian persecution in a survey conducted by Aid to the Church in Need-USA, a pontifical foundation based in New York, and McLaughlin & Associates, a national survey research company.

The nationwide poll of 1,000 Catholic adults was conducted online with survey invitations distributed randomly within predetermined geographic units.

46% of respondents said the global persecution of Christians is "very severe", an increase of 16% compared to the 2018 poll. They ranked Iran as the country where Christians are most severely persecuted.

Next were Iraq, Syria, China, North Korea, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

### Persecuted

According to Aid to the Church in Need-USA, the survey aimed to measure how aware US Catholics are of Christian persecution, the countries and regions where they consider Christians the most severely persecuted, and specific measures and policies they want the US and other Western governments to pursue to combat it.

Respondents were also asked to what extent they feel Pope Francis, the US bishops and their own parishes are mak-

ing the issue of Christian persecution a priority and what actions they believe they can and should take themselves.

While only 19% of respondents said their parish is very involved with the issue of global persecution of Christians, more than half (51%) said Pope Francis is "very engaged" with the issue. Almost one in every four of US Catholics said their bishop is very engaged in this, and 27% were unsure about their bishop's involvement.

When asked what they should do to help persecuted Christians around the world, the respondents ranked prayer highest, followed by raising awareness at the parish level, donating to agencies that work to support persecuted Christians and contacting their members of Congress.

## Medical body adopts neutral position on 'mercy killing'

The professional body for doctors in the UK dropped its traditional opposition to assisted suicide, despite a poll that found a majority of its members remain opposed to the practice.

The Royal College of Physicians declared it has adopted a policy of neutrality, although a majority of doctors said they were against assisted suicide. In a March 21 statement pub-

lished on the college's website, Andrew Goddard, college president, said: "Adopting a neutral position will mean that we can reflect the differing opinions among our membership. Neutral means the RCP neither supports nor opposes a change in the law."

A poll of members conducted between February 5 and March 1 found that 31.6% were in favour of the college

adopting a pro-assisted suicide policy, while 43.4% were opposed and 25% were neutral.

A question asking doctors if they would also like to see British law changed to allow assisted suicide was answered affirmatively by 40.5%, while 49.1% opposed a law change and 10.4% were undecided.

The college decided in

advance that it would adopt a neutral policy unless a supra-majority of more than 60% of doctors voted for or against assisted suicide.

Four doctors, including two Catholics, had applied to Britain's High Court for a judicial review of the way the poll was conducted but were told on March 21 that their legal challenge would not be accepted.

## Vatican roundup

### 'Special attention' for migrants at Francis' Morocco visit

Pope Francis wanted to go to Morocco in December to draw attention to the need for international cooperation in assisting migrants and in alleviating the situations that force people to seek a better life outside their homeland.

Protocol dictated that he could not fly to Marrakech just for the United Nations meeting on migration, so instead migrants will be one group that receives his special attention during a more formal visit to Morocco on March 30-31.

His meeting on March 30 with migrants at the Rabat archdiocesan Caritas centre will also highlight the very practical form Catholic-Muslim relations take in the country of more than 35 million people, almost all of whom are Muslim.

"This is the dialogue of solidarity," said Fr Daniel Nourissat, spokesman for the Archdiocese of Rabat. Christians and Muslims work together to assist the migrants both at Caritas' Migrant Reception Center, which the Pope will visit, as well as in the neighbourhoods and informal settlements where many migrants live.

Perhaps 80,000 migrants are currently in Morocco, Fr Nourissat said. The numbers have been increasing steadily since 2017 when Italy and Libya began cooperating to prevent migrants from setting off from Libya to cross the Mediterranean and reach Europe.

### Vatican declares martyrdom of seven Greek bishops

The Vatican declared last week the martyrdom of seven Greek-Catholic bishops killed by the communist regime in Romania in the mid-20th Century.

Bishops Valeriu Traian Frentiu, Vasile Aftenie, Ioan Suciu, Tito Livio Chinezu, Ioan Balan, Alexandru Rusu, and Iuliu Hossu were declared to have been killed "in hatred of the faith" between 1950 and 1970, during the Soviet occupation of Romania and the rule of Nicolae Ceausescu.

Each of the bishops was arrested and held in

prisons and camps until he died, often from isolation, cold, hunger, disease, or hard manual labour. Most were never tried or convicted and were buried in unmarked graves, without religious services.

A year before his death, Bishop Iuliu Hossu was named a cardinal "in pectore". After spending years in isolation, he died in a hospital in Bucharest in 1970. His last words were: "My struggle is over, yours continues."

Bishop Vasile Aftenie was tortured at the Interior Ministry, later dying from his wounds May 10, 1950.

### Create culture of health, Pontiff tells paediatricians

Meeting with paediatricians at the Vatican on March 21, Pope Francis encouraged the medical professionals to be "promoters of a culture of solidarity and inclusive health".

"In our time, in fact, increasingly often prevention and treatment become the prerogative of those who enjoy a certain standard of living, and therefore can afford it," he told members of the Italian Federation of Primary Care Paediatricians during a papal audience.

"I encourage you to work to ensure that this inequality is not added to the many others that already afflict the weakest, but rather that the health system assure assistance and preventative care to all, as rights of the person."

The Pope met with the group, which has been active in the country for some 40 years and offers support to over 5,500 family paediatricians.

Noting the range of talent and training required to care for children from birth through adolescence, Pope Francis praised those present for their commitment to remain constantly up-to-date with developments in the medical field, while also promoting "a culture more capable of protecting the health of people, especially little ones".





# Letter from Rome



Elise Harris

**B**y the time he died at the age of 50, Greek Catholic Bishop Vasile Aftenie was crippled, maimed and, according to accounts of those who knew him, out of his mind due to torture endured while imprisoned by Romania's communist regime.

When he finally succumbed in 1950, Bishop Aftenie was too tall to fit into a makeshift coffin provided by the prison where he was being held, so his legs were cut off and thrown on top of his corpse before burial – a final gesture of disdain from a regime whose hostility to religion, and to Catholicism in particular, had already become the stuff of legend.

On March 19, ahead of a late May/early June trip by Pope Francis to Romania, Bishop Aftenie and six of his fellow bishops who died under the Romanian communists have been officially recognised as “martyrs” by the Pontiff.

Born in the Lodroman village in Alba County in June 1899, Bishop Aftenie was a member of the Greek Catholic Church, the largest of the 23 Eastern churches in full communion with the Pope. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1926, he was named auxiliary Bishop of Bucharest in 1940, seven years before the country was officially declared the “Soviet Republic of Romania”.

Before long, Bishop Aftenie was arrested and imprisoned by the communist government for refusing to convert to Orthodoxy, which, at the time, had formed close ties to those in leadership of the Romanian communist party.

## Pressure

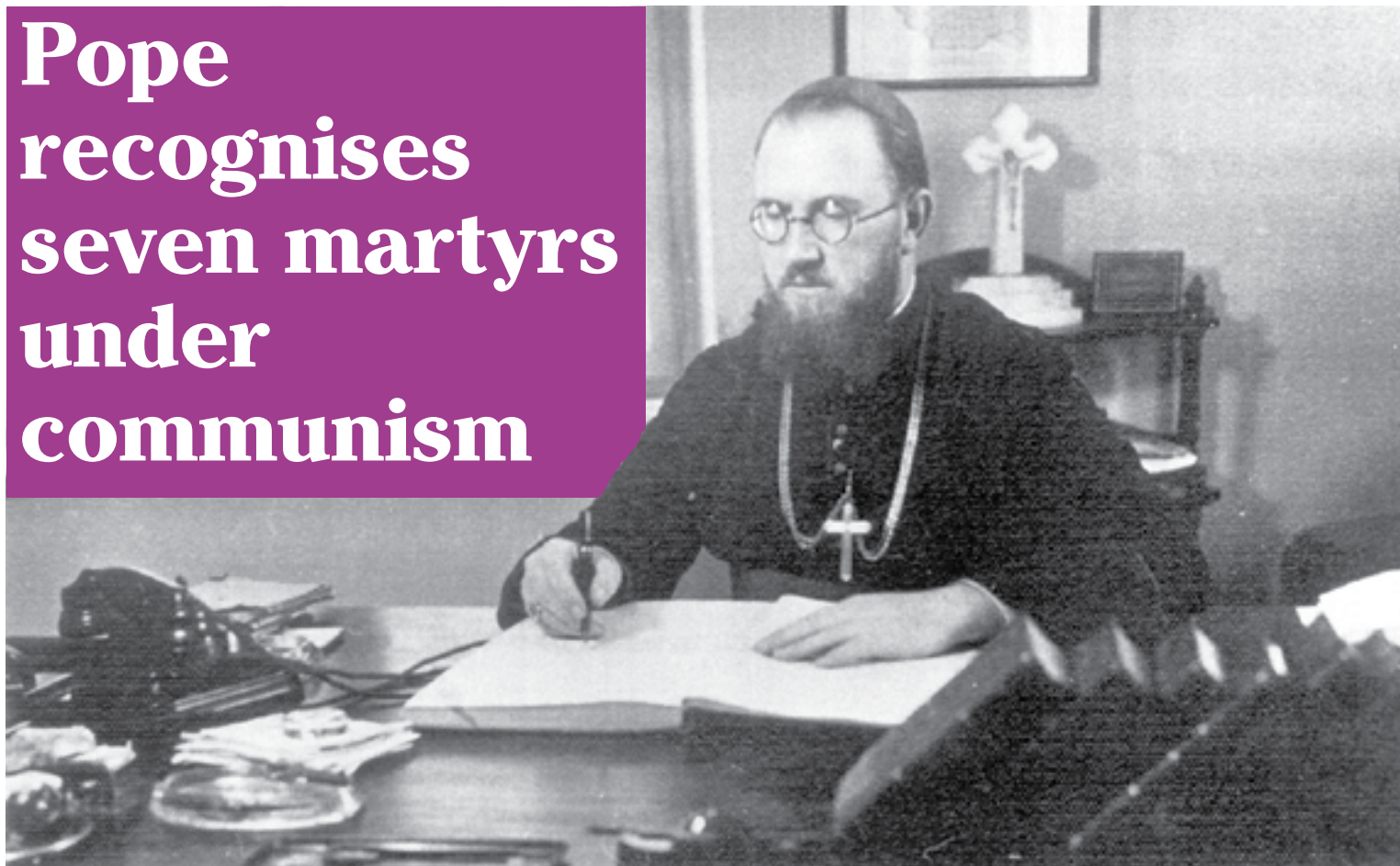
After chastising fellow Greek Catholic bishops for joining the Orthodox church under pressure, in 1949 Bishop Aftenie was sent to Romania's Caldarusani Monastery, which had been converted into a prison. A few months later he was put into isolation, tortured, and eventually died.

Bishop Aftenie is just one of thousands of Catholic faithful and clergy who faced a similar fate in the Socialist Republic of Romania, which existed from 1947-1989 and was led by the Romanian Communist Party.

Francis also recognised the martyrdom of bishops Ioan Suciu, Tito Livio Chinezu, Ioan Balan, Alexandru Rusu, Iuliu Hossu and Valerio Traiano Frentiu, all of whom, like Bishop Aftenie, were killed “in hatred of the faith” between 1950-1970 without a trial or proper burial.

Soviet Romania is widely considered to have been among

## Pope recognises seven martyrs under communism



Greek Catholic Bishop Vasile Aftenie, killed in Romania in 1950 and declared a martyr by Pope Francis along with six other bishops on March 19.

the most brutal countries in terms of the persecution of Christians during the Communist Party's anti-religion campaign.

According to some accounts, around 80,000 people were arrested in Romania between 1945-1952, 30,000 of whom were imprisoned. Of these, around 5,000 are believed to have been Orthodox priests, while some 400 priests from Eastern Catholic rites are believed to have been killed by the state.

After the Soviet Union occupied Romania in the aftermath of World War II, authorities took a hostile approach to religion, portraying it largely as an ideology of society's elite upper crust and imprisoning anyone who spoke out against the regime or refused to cooperate with rules they put into place for churches.

Despite the suffering of many Orthodox, the Communist government and authorities from the Orthodox church found allies in one another – a relationship the Orthodox used in order to gain wiggle room, and one the government used as a means of exercising greater control over the population.

When Communism in Romania fell in 1989, the Romanian Orthodox Church apologised for those who did not have the

“courage” to be martyrs and who instead aligned with the regime.

In 1948 the government suppressed the Eastern Catholic churches, which had represented the second largest religious grouping in Romania, accounting for some 1.5 million people as of 1948.

Members of Eastern churches were forcibly integrated into the Romanian Orthodox Church under pain of imprisonment should they refuse to comply. Many, including the seven bishops whose martyrdom Francis has recognised, were jailed or died.

In the first week alone after the restructuring, some six Eastern Catholic bishops and 25 priests were arrested, with 11 of these bishops eventually dying while in prison. Others who maintained adherence to the Eastern rites either continued to practice in the underground or joined the Latin rite, which was still legal at the time.

Many monasteries were suppressed in the late 1950s in addition to the outlawing of institutes of religious education, and seminaries were also closed, with an estimated 4,000 monks and nuns either jailed or forcibly “returned to the world”.

Under the rule of Nicolae Ceausescu, Romania's de facto

dictator from 1965 to 1989, some 22 churches and monasteries were demolished and 14 others were closed or moved to remote locations. Romanian Orthodox priests living outside of Romania who criticised the regime were defrocked.

**“Francis’ decision can also be seen as a support for Eastern Catholic Churches, particularly the Greek Catholic Church”**

Like Bishop Aftenie, the other six bishops whose martyrdom Francis recognised died in prison either for refusing to convert to Orthodoxy, or for speaking out against the Communist government.

Valerio Traiano Frentiu, who had been the Bishop of the Diocese of Oradea Mare, was arrested in October 1948 and imprisoned at the Caldarusani monastery. After being transferred to Sighet prison in 1950, he died just two years later due to the harshness of the conditions.

Similarly, Bishop Ioan Suciu, who was an auxiliary in the Oradea diocese and who had studied at Rome's Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas, was arrested in

1948 and died of illness in Sighet prison shortly after.

Bishop Iuliu Hossu died in a hospital in Bucharest after spending several years in isolation. Alexandru Rusu, who had been named Major Archbishop of Fagaras and Alba Iulia in 1946, was imprisoned in 1948 and found guilty of “instigation and high treason” by a military tribunal in 1957. He eventually died of illness behind bars.

Ioan Balan, who had been the bishop of Lugoj, was also among those arrested in 1948 and after being transferred to four different prisons in five years, he was taken to Samurcesesti Monastery, where he remained in isolation until he grew ill and was taken to a Bucharest hospital, where he later died.

Francis' decision to recognise the martyrdom of the seven bishops shortly ahead of his May 31-June 2 visit is not only a sign of the Pope's attention to modern martyrs, but it can also be seen as a support for Eastern Catholic Churches, particularly the Greek Catholic Church, which has its primary footprint in Ukraine.

When Francis sets foot in Romania, Bishop Aftenie's grave, one of the few to have been marked and preserved and which has become a pilgrimage site, could be a stop along the way. Whether it's on his official itinerary or not, such a gesture would likely be seen as a sign of respect for the suffering that his flock in Romania endured.

**📍** Elise Harris is Senior Correspondent of Cruxnow.com

**“According to some accounts, around 80,000 people were arrested in Romania between 1945-1952, 30,000 of whom were imprisoned. Of these, around 5,000 are believed to have been Orthodox priests”**





Inés San Martín

**D**uring a visit to the Italian city of Loreto on Monday past, Pope Francis signed a new document dedicated to youth and called on people to remember the importance of the family for society.

According to tradition, the Nazareth home of the Holy Family was transported to the city of Loreto in the late 13th Century.

"God, through Mary, entrusts a mission in our time: to bring the Gospel of peace and life to our contemporaries, often distracted, taken by earthly interests or immersed in a climate of spiritual dryness," Francis said during his day trip.

According to the Pope, there's a need for "simple and wise people, humble and courageous, poor and generous", people who "at the school of Mary, accept the Gospel without reserve in their own lives".

"Thus, through the holiness of the people of God, from this place they will continue to spread in Italy, in Europe and in the world testimonies of holiness in every state of life, to renew the Church and animate society with the leaven of the Kingdom of God," Francis said.

He also said that seeing the world's "delicate situation", the family "founded on marriage between a man and a woman assumes an essential importance and mission".

"It's necessary to rediscover the plan drawn by God for the family, to reaffirm its greatness and irreplaceability at the service of life and society," Francis said, to the cheering of those gathered.

Although the Pope celebrated Mass in the Holy House – the first Pope to do so in over 150 years, since Pope Pius IX – he delivered no homily, instead addressing the thousands gathered for the occasion outside the shrine after celebrating the liturgy.

### Current site

The document the Pontiff signed after the Mass is called *Christus vivit*, or 'Christ Lives', and follows the Synod of Bishops on young people, that took place in Rome last October.

According to tradition, the house of the Holy Family was flown over by four Angelic beings from Nazareth to Tersatto, Croatia, then to Recanati, before arriving at the current site, where it's been a pilgrimage site for Catholics since the 14th Century.

(Scholars attest that the Angeli family had the house, already a shrine in the Holy Land, deconstructed and the bricks sent to Italy to be rebuilt.)

As Francis said during his remarks, it's inside these four walls that Mary allegedly gave



Pope Francis receives a poster from a child during a visit to the Sanctuary of the Holy House on the feast of the Annunciation in Loreto, Italy, on March 25. Photos: CNS

# Pope Francis calls on world to 'rediscover' God's plan for family

her "yes" to the angel when it was announced to her that she'd been chosen as the mother of Christ. It's no coincidence that the Pontiff decided to go to this Marian shrine on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation.

"The Holy House is the home of the young, because here the Virgin Mary, the young woman full of grace, continues to speak to new generations, accompanying each one in the search for their own

vocation," Francis said. "This is why I wanted to sign here the Apostolic Exhortation that is the fruit of the Synod dedicated to young people."

### Moments

In the Annunciation, the Pontiff said, the dynamic of vocation is expressed in the three moments that were then marked during last October's Synod of Bishops: "listening to the Word-proposal of God, discernment, decision".

Mary's home, the Pope said, is the house of young people, as they can come here to discern their vocation; the house of families, as every family finds here "welcoming, inspiration to live their own identity"; and the home of the infirm, many of whom had VIP seating during the Mass.

In the Holy House those who suffer in body or spirit are comforted by the Mother, the Pope said, "who brings to all the mercy

of the Lord from generation to generation".

Illness, the Pontiff said, hurts the family, but the sick must be welcomed into the family.

Speaking off the cuff, he said that "we mustn't fall into the throwaway culture proposed by the multiple ideological colonisations that attack us today".

**“Your suffering can become a decisive collaboration in the coming of the Kingdom of God”**

"Home and family are the patient's first care in loving him [or her], supporting him, encouraging him and caring for him," Francis said. "The Holy House is the symbol of every welcoming house and sanctuary of the sick. From here, I send an affectionate thought to all of them, all over the world, and I tell them: you are at the center of the work of Christ, because each of you more concretely share and carry the cross behind him."

"Your suffering can become a decisive collaboration in the coming of the Kingdom of God," the Pope added.

During his visit to Loreto, Pope Francis spent over an hour greeting people in wheelchairs, the members of the pastoral for the hearing impaired and the Capuchin community that runs the shrine. He also asked them to change the opening hours, so that more people can visit the shrine during the day.



Young people sit near Pope Francis as he speaks to pilgrims during a visit to the Sanctuary of the Holy House on the feast of the Annunciation in Loreto.



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### EU President's important reminder

**Dear Editor,** It was refreshing to read how President Jean-Claude Juncker has spoken to the bishops of Europe about the role of Catholic Social Teaching in the European Union (IC 21/3/2019). Although Pontiff after Pontiff has spoken of this over the decades, including Pope Francis when addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg a few years ago, it is something too often forgotten by Christians and atheists alike.

For atheists and secularists who want a technocratic Europe, the fact that the Union's founders and founding documents are profoundly Christian would appear to be an inconvenience at least as

embarrassing and awkward as how Ireland's 1916 Proclamation is made in the name of God and how the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil is in many ways a testimony to the Catholic Social Teaching so decisively codified by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*.

Unfortunately, there are too many Catholics today who have swallowed the secularist narratives that seek to suppress the roots of both our State and our Union, and we would do well to pay attention to Bishop Trecarroll's comments about Mr Juncker's address.

Sure, there's a constant danger that acknowledgements of Europe's Christian roots and essential identity

– we're a cultural continent, after all, not a geographic one, and what is that culture if not essentially Christian? – can be simply lip service. All the more important, then, for us to listen to what Mr Juncker says and treat his words as an invitation for us all to play our part and bring our Christian beliefs to bear in our political lives as European citizens.

It's time, surely, to live out our Church's social teaching in the societies in which we live.

*Yours etc.,  
Gabriel Kelly,  
Drogheda,  
Co. Louth.*

### Nothing but doubt about Cardinal Pell's conviction

**Dear Editor,** The recent conviction of Cardinal George Pell, in Australia, in a sexual assault case relating to two 13-year-old choir boys in late 1990s, is as worrying as it is astonishing.

To begin with, it would have been physically impossible for the offence to have been committed in the manner described by the accuser.

In addition, the assault is said to have happened in a semi-public area, but with

no witnesses. Those working in that area have testified that nothing of the sort occurred.

Unfortunately the other choir boy's life, spun out of control and he died from a heroin overdose in 2014. However, his mother says that she asked him if he had ever been abused and he answered 'no'.

Unusually the police opened an investigation into Cardinal Pell – a thoroughly outspoken, yet reforming,

and go-ahead prelate – without any accusation having been made against him. Twelve accusations were brought forward, however all but this one were considered to be too implausible to proceed with.

We are all too aware that miscarriages of justice were meted out to Irishmen in Britain during 'the Troubles', and that there have been numerous convictions of innocent Afro-Americans in the US.

In the absence of corroborating evidence, i.e. where the accuser's word against the defendant's word is considered sufficient to lead to a conviction 'beyond reasonable doubt', any related 'trial by media' causing public hysteria – as happened in the Cardinal Pell case – must surely prejudice any parallel 'trial by jury'.

*Yours etc.,  
Gearóid Duffy,  
Lee Road, Cork.*

### Shepherds call it right

**Dear Editor,** Bishop Kevin Doran is to be applauded for speaking out against cheap anti-Muslim rhetoric in the Ireland of today, especially among those who identify as serious Catholics (IC 21/3/2019). Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has, of course, made similar points lately too in his criticism of Muslim-baiting and anti-immigrant comments in so-called Catholic media.

Some, of course, might respond to this with anger and indignation at the notion of our bishops saying such things, but I think that in doing so they're probably simply revealing the guilt that must lie in their hearts. Anyone who has a clear conscience in this area should surely agree with our shepherds.

*Yours etc.,  
Lisa Flynn,  
Lucan, Co. Dublin.*



### Perhaps St Patrick needs his own feast day?

**Dear Editor,** Greg Daly's article 'The Legacy of St Patrick' (IC 14/3/2019) is a worthwhile laborious work. However the article indirectly suggests that Prof. Kevin Whelan's book exhibits little of 'The Legacy of St Patrick'.

Legacy means a gift of something, of something personal, handed down by will. The Catholic mode of living that St Patrick wished to bequeath is reflected especially in his spiritually enriched manuscript *Confession* (not mentioned in the article).

In a different sense of legacy, current events can be seen as a legacy of previous events. St Patrick's

evangelisation nurtured and influenced future recurrent patterns of pastoral activity that changed over time. By the 12th Century his personal legacy had been compromised.

Instead of flourishing on foot of an "accommodation with the local culture" as Prof. Whelan asserts, it had deteriorated. Lanfranc and Anselm, two Archbishops of Canterbury, identified specific abuses in Ireland, including simony, maladministration of the sacraments, and serious abuses of marriage. At the Council of Cashel in 1172, the Bishops of Ireland acknowledged before Henry II that

sweeping reforms were needed.

Then as now, the legacy of Patrick became detached from his *Confession*. St Patrick's Day worldwide has become a druid-driven advertisement for substitutes contemptuous of his personal legacy. Its Irish manifestation is primarily an impoverished political and ethnic sentiment. Should he be assigned a new religious feast day to focus attention on – just him?

*Yours etc.,  
Cornelius Bray,  
Cappamore,  
Co. Limerick.*

## facebook community

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

### Lessons in love our children deserve

It is disgraceful that the emphasis is on birth control and abortion instead of being on relationships and love and respect. We are failing our young people. – **Mary Murphy**

It's scandalous that our bishops allow this in our Catholic schools – **Peter Killeen**

### Movement leader says Christ is key to recovery from abuse scandals

I don't doubt that many of those implicated in the cover-ups of abuse had an internal commitment to Christ. I don't doubt that St John Paul II had an internal commitment to Christ while also protecting Marcial Maciel or giving Bernard Law a plum job in exile. Of course we all need a renewed internal commitment to Christ, but Savorana's statement serves to deflect from questions of why people with an evident internal commitment to Christ nevertheless failed the victims of abuse so badly. – **Günther Simmermacher**

### Should priests spend more time doing practical work in parishes and less time in seminary?

I do have a real concern that the academic training of priests, which was never that great anyway, will be worsened by this move. Where are they to study philosophy and theology? – **Christopher McCamley**

Also it will very much depend on which parishes they would go to. – **Brian Cassidy**

It is a marvellous idea, the Church in Ireland has led the way in safeguarding and now they emerge in a new light, pioneering new considerations toward ministry training. – **Ó Dubhghaill Uinsionn**

Pastoral experience would enable those in formation to learn more about the world and themselves that can ground them in reality. – **Gracia Kibad**

The pastoral instruction for diocesan seminarians here is terrible, leaps and bounds behind some orders. The proposal is great for human and spiritual formation but if it affects academic training, which in my opinion is very possible, a lot more harm than good will prevail. – **Carl O Lonagain**

This suggested 'new' model has been in place in the Archdiocese of Paris for over 25 years and works amazingly well...this type of system grounds the seminarian in the realities of future independent living and it gives them ample opportunity to decide whether it's the right path for them or not as the case may be. – **Garrett J. Roche**

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

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



▲ **LIBYA:** A migrant lies at a hospital bed after being rescued by the Libyan coast guard in Sabratha .

◀ **MOZAMBIQUE:** Survivors of Cyclone Idai arrive at an evacuation center in Beira. Hundreds were feared dead in Mozambique four days after a cyclone slammed into the country, submerging entire villages and leaving bodies floating in the floodwaters, the nation's president said. Photos: CNS



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis admires gifts given to him by members of the parliaments of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The legislators were in Rome as part of their celebrations of the 1,150th anniversary of the death of St Cyril, who with his brother, St Methodius, evangelised Eastern Europe in the ninth century.



**NIGERIA:** A woman casts her vote during Nigeria's governorship and state assembly election in Karu, earlier this month.



**USA:** Nebraska Army National Guard soldiers in Richland use a helicopter to load multiple bales of hay for cattle isolated by flooding.



**MEXICO:** Honduran Ariel, 19, prays at a shelter in Tijuana. He is among dozens of migrants seeking asylum in the US who are awaiting a court hearing on their request for asylum after having been returned to Mexico under a new federal policy.



**M**ost of us have been raised to believe that we have right to possess whatever comes to us honestly, either through our own work or through legitimate inheritance. No matter how large that wealth might be, it's ours, as long as we didn't cheat anyone along the way. By and large, this belief has been enshrined in the laws of our democratic countries and we generally believe that it is morally sanctioned by Christianity. That's partially true, but a lot needs to be nuanced here.

This is not really the view of our Christian scriptures, nor of the social teachings of the Catholic Church. Not everything we acquire honestly through our own hard work is simply ours to have. We're not islands and we don't walk through life alone, as if being solicitous for the welfare of others is something that's morally optional.

The French poet and essayist, Charles Peguy, once suggested that when we come to the gates of heaven we will all be asked: "*Mais ou sont les autres?*" ("But where are the others?") That question issues forth both from our humanity and our faith. But what about the others? It's an illusion and a fault in our discipleship to think that everything we can possess by our own hard work is ours by right. To think this way is to live the partially examined life.

**“By insisting that we consider public policy from the perspective of the most-advantaged, the veil of opulence obscures the vagaries of brute luck”**

Bill Gates Sr., writing in *Sojourners* some 15 years ago, challenges not only his famous son but the rest of us too with these words: "Society has an enormous claim upon the fortunes of the wealthy. This is rooted not only in most religious traditions, but also in an honest accounting of society's substantial investment in creating fertile ground for wealth-creation.

"Judaism, Christianity and Islam all affirm the right of individual ownership and private property, but there are moral limits imposed on absolute private ownership of wealth and property. Each tradition affirms that we are not individuals alone but exist in community – a community that makes claims on us.

# But where are the others?



**Fr Rolheiser**

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

"The notion that 'it is all mine' is a violation of these teachings and traditions."

Society's claim on individual accumulated wealth "is rooted in the recognition of society's direct and indirect investment in the individual's success. In other words, we didn't get there on our own" (*Sojourners*, January-February, 2003).

Nobody gets there on his own and so, once there, he needs to recognise that what he has accumulated is the result not just of his own work but also of the infrastructure of the whole society within which he lives. Accordingly, what he has accumulated is not fully his, as if his own hard work alone had brought this about.

## Opulence

Beyond that, there's something else which Benjamin Hales calls "the veil of opulence" which lets us naively believe that each of us deserves everything we get. No so, says Hales. A lot of blind luck is involved in determining who gets to possess what: "The veil of opulence", he says, "insists

that people imagine that resources and opportunities and talents are freely available to all, that such goods are widely abundant, that there is no element of randomness or chance that may negatively impact those who struggle to succeed but sadly fail through no fault of their own...it turns a blind eye to the adversity that some people, let's face it, are born into.

**“Wealth and possessions must be understood as ours to steward rather than to possess absolutely”**

"By insisting that we consider public policy from the perspective of the most-advantaged, the veil of opulence obscures the vagaries of brute luck. But wait, you may be thinking, what of merit? What of all those who have labored and toiled and pulled themselves up by their bootstraps to make their lives better for themselves and their families? This is an important question indeed.

Many people work hard for their money and deserve to keep what they earn. An answer is offered by both doctrines of fairness. The veil of opulence assumes that the playing field is level, that all gains are fairly gotten, that there is no cosmic adversity. In doing so, it is partial to the fortunate...it is an illusion of prosperity to believe that each of us deserves everything we get." (*New York Times*, August 12, 2012)

Scripture and the Catholic social teaching would summarise it this way: God intended the earth and everything in it for the sake of all human beings. Thus, in justice, created goods should flow fairly to all. All other rights are subordinated to this principle. We do have a right to private ownership and no one may ever deny us of this right but that right is subordinated to the common good, to the fact that goods are intended for everyone.

Wealth and possessions must be understood as ours to steward rather than to possess absolutely. Finally, perhaps most challenging of all, no person may have surplus if others do not have the basic necessities.

In any accumulation of wealth and possessions we have to perennially face the question: "*Mais ou sont les autres?*"



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

## Is it time to leave the Church?

One of the most common reasons people decide to leave the Church is because of the internal corruption that runs to even the upper echelons of the hierarchy. The decision to leave for this particular reason is one that everybody can sympathise with, even the most ardent and devout believers.

All too often, we have or hear conversations about the Church's financial corruption or the clerical abuse scandals, the latter of which has a particularly dark resonance in Ireland. These forms of exploitation have led to many Catholics leaving the Church, while still trying to practice their faith in a personal, albeit hampered way.

Indeed, the well-known Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson said recently that the levels of corruption in the Vatican are almost beyond corruption that "maybe believing Catholics should go on strike [and] stop attending Church". While I'm a big fan of Dr Peterson, I think in this case, he's off the mark.

**“Rather than leaving, Catholics should be striving to make the Church more perfect”**

It's perfectly understandable, for example, to retract membership from a political party if one no longer supports it for moral reasons, but the difference between institutions like these, and the Church, is that Catholics believe that the visible Church was founded by Christ himself – and so is not man-made.

This includes a visible membership as well as a visible leadership structure, based on the idea of apostolic succession. In the Church, Catholics also receive the Sacraments – an outward sign of an invisible, inward grace – which

provide spiritual sustenance. As a result, the Church is the place where God's love is on full offer, and where Catholics can worship and pray together in communion. These visible aspects are fundamental to the Church, as well as indispensable.

This, of course, doesn't mean that the divinely ordained Church is filled with perfect people that always operate with the best intentions. The Church – laity, priests and bishops – is composed of people who not only do great good, but also horrendous evils. Sin and grace percolate within it.

This notion goes right back to the Church's origins when the first Vicar of Christ, Peter, denied Jesus three times. Those within the Church – especially clergy and prelates – are not flawless and often fail to live up to the standard their Faith calls of them. While it's tempting to leave the Church on this basis, to do so would mean departing from an institution of truth and love based on the failings of those who work within it.

This perspective doesn't for one second mean that people cannot be unhappy and protest about how the Church is run, or what it teaches on certain matters. Rather than leaving, Catholics should be striving to make the Church more perfect, by gathering in community, praying, and holding those in positions of power accountable.

The religious author Carlo Carretto best summarises this struggle between staying and leaving when he writes: "Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, more false, yet never have I touched anything more pure, more generous or more beautiful. Countless times I have felt like slamming the door of my soul in your face – and yet, every night, I have prayed that I might die in your sure arms!"

**Got a question or comment?  
Email [colm@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:colm@irishcatholic.ie)**



# Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today

**Natalie Doherty**  
Journey through the  
liturgical year

Page 29

## A toolkit for life?

**T**he Backpack is a spiritual and science based curriculum which promotes resilience and confidence and also provides a bridge back into Sacramental life for many who may have left their faith practice after Confirmation. In early November, 2018, The Backpack-Essential Tools for Life, received a formal Imprimatur from Bishop Leo Reilly of Kilmore Diocese. An Imprimatur is a statement by a Catholic bishop that material is consistent with Catholic teaching. This development made The Backpack especially attractive as a formation program for young people preparing for Confirmation and up.

Available in both digital and hard copy, The Backpack consists of 25

lessons which assist individuals in building healthier relationships with themselves, with others and with God. Attuned carefully to our contemporary climate, with its challenges and opportunities, The Backpack takes participants on a journey to concrete skills such as physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries. This is crucial, given the technology now available to even our youngest children. Catholic Catechism is sprinkled throughout the lessons. The Models of the Church teaching helps all participants to expand their understanding of Church as something that is beyond buildings.

» Continued on Page 28



### Welcome to this week's Cornerstone

#### Fish & Tips:

Lenten calendar for children and music playlists

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#### Scripture:

This week's reading is from St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians

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#### Parish:

Links between family, parish and the Gospel

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Please spread the word and join us on the journey of the building tomorrow's parish today – a familial community of faith, fostering authentic, intentional discipleship. If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on [eoim@irishcatholic](mailto:eoim@irishcatholic).



# A toolkit for life?

» Continued from Page 27

Initially created for teens with the help of an Irish psychotherapist, Margaret McGahey, MIAHIP, The Backpack Program is based on Irish research, which is actually rare for many of the programs used in Ireland. This ensures a good, solid fit for our unique experience of religion and faith, and also our current human experience, with all its ongoing change. Used in parishes, secondary schools and youth groups around Ireland, the program has been run over 26 weeks, used as a weekend retreat, six-week youth initiative and even as a one day retreat. The Emmaus Centre, in Dublin, offers Backpack lessons in one-day experiences, for example. Many parents teach the program to their children in their homes once they, themselves, experience it.

"We have to deal with the reality that many of our young people suffer anxiety and looping thought patterns as a result of the entertainment they're using. Once they understand how to stop the thoughts, their anxiety decreases," said Kathryn Clarke, developer of The Backpack. "When our Catholic faith is presented to them in an attuned way, young people actually have strong opinions about the work we should do. We would want to be curious about their thoughts and allow them to help steer our evangelisation efforts."

Following is a list of contemporary challenges dealt with in the course of the program: gaming addiction, social media addiction/technology addiction, confidence issues, anxiety, sexual boundary awareness, low

self-esteem, unsafe dating relationships, dating/domestic violence, social anxiety, grief, negative or looping thought patterns with catastrophic thinking.

Teens who took the course in Kilmore Diocese said this:

"I found learning about my relationship with God helpful today as I got to learn about God's characteristics. I enjoyed learning about the brain...and our ability to change our own brains. I don't think that I would have otherwise ever learned about the brain."

"I liked learning how to change the way I think about things..."

"Contemplative prayer helped me forget about everything and to just take time for myself."

**“It made me feel brave about my faith, like I felt it was okay to believe in God and didn't feel judged for it.”**

"It made me feel brave about my faith, like I felt it was okay to believe in God and didn't feel judged for it."

"I loved everything and this program has helped me to make better choices."

After the program was run successfully in an Addiction Treatment Centre with an adult male population, Cavan Institute began offering The Backpack Program as a night course for adults in Autumn 2018. Based on demand, another course was added to the Spring semester and is running now. Adults who take the course



experience a desire to spread the skills to young people, friends and family, which helps generate badly needed faith-based adult support for Irish young people.

"We now have 27 adults willing to help us run Backpack youth programs in our diocese," said Fr Darragh

Connolly, Kilmore Diocese. "We are steadily and joyfully building a team. Once adults value the information and receive a little training, they really want to help young people learn how to pray contemplatively and deal with difficult issues. Our problem is often finding

enough leaders to help with the number of teens who want the program."

Now available as a digital education course, interested young people and adults can take The Backpack online, available at the website [www.thebackpack.life](http://www.thebackpack.life). Additionally available is an online training course which helps adults to feel confident in presenting the program.

"It doesn't matter what age you are. The Backpack changes you. The shame and guilt teaching helped me to be less hard on myself...the fact that we are all imperfect, striving for excellence...it's so liberating" (Geraldine, aged 56).

"I've been teaching for 15 years and I've led youth groups for a lot of years. The Backpack is really the best

thing that I have seen by far for giving them the tools and the self-knowledge to handle the struggles and difficulties they all have. I can say, 'I wish I'd had this when I was a kid' (Kevin).

*A residential one week course for teens aged 13-18 is scheduled at The Emmaus Centre ([emmauscentre.ie](http://emmauscentre.ie)) in Dublin from July 28th to August 3rd. If you would like to know more about this residential programme please contact Gerard at the Emmaus Centre at 01 870 0050. If you would like to take the course online, or know more about The Backpack or implementing it in your area, contact us at [www.thebackpack.life](http://www.thebackpack.life) or 083 487 7325.*

## Scripture

Reflecting on Scripture is an important part of the Christian faith. Often, however, we Catholics do not allow ourselves the time to really reflect on the Word of God. This weekly series will explore the Second Reading from the coming Sunday's Mass. While originally written to the early Church communities, Scripture is the living Word of God, so each week we can read what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today.

### 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God.

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

1. Find a quiet place, and give yourself 15 minutes without distractions. Read the section once, and then pause for reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and response to the passage.
2. Read the passage a second time. Ask yourself: What do I find challenging about this reading? Is there anything that I can try to do differently in my life as a response to it? What is the message in this reading for our parish? Write down anything that comes to your head.
3. Pause in silent reflection, and then read the passage a third time.





# Holy Week and Easter



**Natalie Doherty** continues her 'journey through the liturgical year' series providing reflection and ideas in preparation for Holy Week and Easter.

I don't know about you, but the year is running away before our eyes. The dust hasn't settled on the nativity crib and yet, here we are talking about Easter schedules, Stations of the Cross and asking, "what time should the Vigil be at since Easter is later this year?". I'm afraid to blink in case I miss all the important things! Sometimes that's the problem, time moves so fast that everything happens in a split second and then we move on. We don't take the time to let it register with us the enormity of what has happened. This can be for any aspect of life. A great moment of joy or sadness is often quickly dismissed as we try to get back to our day-to-day lives. Our instant and social media world doesn't allow us to stay in that moment for a little while longer. We need to move on to the next thing that our busy lives convince us that we need to do. I know for myself, sometimes I forget to breathe: not just physical breathing, but the breathing needed to give yourself the space to process all that has happened, sit with it, pray about it, register what it means for you, and how to move forward.

**“Our call to begin to slow down and to get ourselves into the frame of mind is with Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion.”**

This all sounds great and that I'm about to launch into a spiel about well-being and self-care, but instead, it's Holy Week that it all brings to mind – I know it sounds crazy, but bear with

me a moment! Many people find that the highpoint in the year, the greatest time for us as Church, is Christmas time. However, the highpoint of the liturgical year for us as Christians is that of the events of Holy Week and Easter. Why? Because it is the greatest example of love and we spend our lives as Christians trying to let the enormity of Jesus' actions sink in. Instead of blinking and Easter being over, we have 40 days of Lent to prepare, but more importantly, we have Holy Week to allow us to really slow down and take it all in, what that love means for us. Our call to begin to slow down and to get ourselves into the frame of mind is with Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. Over the week that follows, there are many gatherings from the Chrism Mass in each cathedral, to celebrations of the Last Supper, the Passion on Good Friday, Stations and Veneration of the Cross, the Vigil and Easter Sunday Mass. It sounds like many things to tick off the list to get to Easter Sunday, but when you stop to think about it, it's very different. From Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday (what is called the Triduum), it is essentially one event that is broken across several days. Broken so that everyone slows down and takes that time to breathe. To take in each day, each act of love and sit with it, pray about it, register what it means for you, and how to move forward. It can be quite a painful time sitting in the darkness of Good Friday, with the empty tabernacle and the sanctuary light extinguished. We need to spend time there and take those moments of pain, so that the true glory of the Resurrection can reach the depths of our hearts.

So, what can be done in parish to try and give a bit of breathing space and deepen our understanding of the vital moments of Holy Week? This goes back to the first article I wrote about people understanding what happens and where in the liturgy it happens, but sometimes not fully understanding why it happens. Moments need to be provided for people to catch their attention and almost force them to stop and pause. Seeds need to be planted or reminders given on the importance of Holy Week. The first thing is to utilise the newsletter and any online resources you may have. This could be a weekly entry focusing on one of the days of the Triduum and having a paragraph to explain its importance, how it connects overall, and why it means something/can help them in their faith. Points of reference throughout the Church on information will help either refresh memories or inform those that have always seen, but don't know why. Questions and answers such as: Why does the priest wash feet on Holy Thursday? Why did they pierce Jesus' side and not break his legs like the others? Why is there incense in the five studs on the Paschal Candle? Why are Stations of the Cross relevant today? Why do we have the fire lit on the Saturday and why does it have to be dark outside? Why are we singing Alleluia again and bells are rung while we proclaim the Gloria? If one question and answer can be posed a day, or even a week, you'd be surprised at the number of people that stop to register it and it then allows them to take on a whole new meaning of what they see happening during the Triduum. It's a little vital moment to breathe, take in the great love for us, sit with it, pray about it, register what it means for you, and how to move forward.

## Fish & Tips

### Daily Ideas for Disciples

#### The Lenten Calendar For Children

This calendar has a little activity for you to do each day of Lent. Besides what you see in the calendar it's good to do one or two things all through Lent. Some people give up things - sweets, chips, xbox or playstation for example... Some people take up something - a good work or a small act of kindness - helping more at home, making your bed each morning, giving some of your pocket money to a good cause for example...

Remember to try and say an extra prayer each day!! As you'll see, the Sundays of Lent don't really count. There are 40 days without Sundays. Each Sunday is like a mini Easter - so you can have a special treat those days!!

#### Fourth Week

##### Sunday

The Scribes and Pharisees were angry at Jesus because he cured a blind man on the Sabbath.

• Take some time to read a book about God or a saint.

##### Monday

The soldiers made a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus.

• Have you ever thought unkindly of others?

23

##### Tuesday

The Scribes mocked Jesus saying, "Thou, Son of the Jews!"

• Have you ever made fun of someone? Maybe it's time to say sorry!

24

##### Wednesday

Jesus' heart was torn with love and grief.

• Say something kind about a person who is made fun of.

25

##### Thursday

Please get Jesus before the people saying, "Behold the Man!"

• Do you see God at work in our world today? In people helping others in various ways? Draw a picture.

26

##### Friday

They shouted, "Crucify Him!"

• Say an Act of Contrition  
O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and not loving you. Help me to love like Jesus and not sin again. Amen

27

##### Saturday

Pray to Our Lady:

Holy Mary, mother fair, filled with love for God, pray for us in all our needs. Pray for us today.

28

This resource is generously shared by Frank Brown of the Combined Parishes of Clondalkin.

**"I will sing to the LORD as long as I live"**

(Psalm 104:33, NRSV).

## Have you checked out the Cornerstone music playlist on Spotify yet?

We've pulled together some of our favourite songs and hymns into a 'Cornerstone: Building Tomorrow's Parish Today' playlist on Spotify which is available for you to access. The playlist is regularly updated with the best of Irish and international Christian music and we would love to receive song suggestions from you via email (eoin@irishcatholic.ie) or on the Cornerstone Facebook page (@Cornerstone-OnlineParish). Why not make a playlist of your favourite hymns or Christian songs? Or a playlist of uplifting songs from your favourite genre?



At any point of the day, you can have your favourite songs ready to go, especially when you need reminding of God's love for you. Why not try it out during breakfast, commuting, out for a walk, having a shower, or reading Cornerstone! Set some time aside this Mother's Day to listen to your mam's favourite songs and hymns.



# Family, parish and Gospel



**Donal Harrington** explores the links between family, parish and the Gospel.

**T**oday, people think about family more in terms of activities than in terms of structure. What are the core activities that go on in a family? What would family members – partners, parents, children – say in answer to that question? Each of us can think of our own words. The words would most likely include love, acceptance, care, security, support, belonging, fun, togetherness, sharing, forgiveness, understanding – and many more. Such words capture that heart of what family is about. A focus on activities links family with the Gospel and links family with the church/parish in ways that will repay exploration.

Jean Vanier said that “the fundamental principle of all education is to open the heart and the mind to the

needs of others”. It consists in “helping people discover all that is positive and beautiful within themselves, and to realise that they can establish relationships with others, that they are loveable and able to love”.

Vanier is expressing very eloquently what being a human being is about, what human becoming is all about. This brings out the deep meaning of the activities that go on in the family. When there are security and belonging, togetherness and care, and so on, that is the environment where people discover their humanity, where they enter into their humanity.

**“Seen in this light, family is perhaps the most person-making environment that there is.”**

This brings to mind a couple of phrases from the documents of Vatican II. There, family is described as ‘the school of human enrichment’ and as ‘the school of social virtues’. ‘Education’ literally means ‘leading out’ and the family is a school in this sense. It draws out what is within the person, so that people are enriched in their humanity. ‘Social virtues’ means that it draws out the capacity and the qualities for relating with others, for thinking ‘we’ and not just ‘me’, for discovering that we are most human when we are other-centred.



Seen in this light, family is perhaps the most person-making environment that there is. So much so that the same documents of Vatican II added that its ‘educational’ function is next to irreplaceable. It is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.

The parish can be understood as a means to ‘earth’ the Gospel, to be the ‘today’ of the activities going on in the Gos-

pel. Now we can add to the picture. It is not only the parish that is meant to earth the Gospel; so is the family. The core activities in all three – family, Gospel, parish – are very similar. This gives a uniquely Christian perspective on the family.

The words ‘welcome’ and ‘compassion’ capture much of what Jesus was about, the core activities he engaged in. Through the experience of his

care and of feeling included, people rediscover their humanity. His understanding, his healing, his forgiveness rekindle hope and release the love locked within.

In this, even more than in his words, Jesus ‘speaks’ of God. Like an artist, he ‘portrays’ God, as the God of welcome and compassion towards each and every one. In the experience of his resurrection, his companions come to see that, in portraying God, he incarnates God.

Parish, the presence of ‘Church’ in a particular place, is meant to earth this for today. The local Christian community is asked to imitate Jesus, through its welcome and inclusion and compassion. As it does, it too ‘portrays’ to people the God of Jesus Christ. It too ‘speaks’ the Good News about God and about ourselves.

Family speaks a very similar

language. It too is meant to be a warm and welcoming space, a place of security and belonging, acceptance and enrichment. Amidst the ups and downs of daily life, the sense of caring and being cared for is fundamental. In this again, people are imitating Jesus; they are portraying the God of Jesus. This is the challenge of being family, the possibility, the deep meaning.

So, what is going on in the family, what is going on in the Gospel and what is going on in the parish are very much along the same lines. We will draw out what this means by proposing, on the one hand, that ‘Church’ is a word for family and, on the other, that ‘family’ is a word for Church or parish.

*For more, see Tomorrow’s Parish by Donal Harrington, available from Columba Books.*

## Opinion

# Beware of snakes

**Fr Joe McDonald** adopts St Patrick’s snake metaphor and suggests ten ‘snakes’ that are alive and active in Ireland today.

**F**ideitrepidus (literally tepid or lukewarm about faith): probably one of the most common of today’s snakes. People are often unaware they have even been bitten and the venom is slow acting. There is generally an increase in negativity and cynicism and an accompanying decrease in joy. It is often accompanied by lines like ‘well I am a good Catholic, I just don’t go to Mass’, or ‘I don’t believe in Confession, I just tell God I’m sorry’.

Episcopithumpodoris (literally ‘bishop basher’): this particular snake is not terribly common

though there is some evidence it is on the increase. Its hallmark is a mixture of frustration and scapegoating.

Malmagnus (literally the worst of badness): this snake is one of the worst. It seeks out prey that are vulnerable or weak and whilst its venom doesn’t kill it stays with its victim for years. Whilst it is relatively rare it’s venom has wreaked havoc in society and Church.

Malmagnusobrina (literally the cousin of the worst of badness): This particular snake went relatively undetected for years. In the main this was because it’s bite

was symptomless until long after the damage was done. Its venom has at times led to despair.

Tumorinterens (literally the tumour within): whilst this specimen is quite common it is at the same time surprising that it can go undetected for many years. It is often gradual in its destruction. Eating away inside like a tumor, the poison here leads to a gradual erosion of inner peace and can manifest itself in great vengeful anger and a desire to blame.

Scatterissimus (literally complete scattering): if there was a watchword for this snake it would be ‘divide and conquer’. It is the enemy of unity and seems to have found its way into the Church.

Inspientes (literally lacking in wisdom): a deadly snake whose venom damages both love of self and love of God. One of the first casualties of this venom is we stop praying.

Regilaretimore (literally religious terrorist): it was thought to be something of a rarity though



there appears to be a sharp increase in recent times of this snakebite in the Church in Ireland.

Vaccasacrateno (literally sacred cow of technology): one of the most common snakes in the country. Once bitten by this the person tends to shun family, friends, exercise and even daylight, literally living instead for technology.

Amicomnibus (literally friend of everyone): unfortunately quite com-

mon and much more dangerous than first thought. It seems to be common among those with responsibility. Difficult to treat.

In short, if St Patrick was to return once again to walk amongst us, he would have his work cut out. Let us pray with renewed vigour through his intercession, for Ireland, and especially the Church.



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, March 28, 2019

## Personal Profile

Reaching the masses over the airwaves

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# Memory Lane



**O**ur life experience can give hope and security, teaching many lessons and offering a chance to reflect and grow, but when memories become fuzzy and things are harder to recall either in the short or long term this can certainly be an intimidating and scary process.

Growing old can be difficult, and dementia and alzheimers are often something many people will have to contend with, but accepting and tackling it will definitely benefit the individual.

Whether you're someone who thinks they may have the disease or perhaps you're a family member who noticed some warning signs, it's not always easy to raise the flag and get help.



## Chai Brady discusses the challenges of memory loss

Many disregard forgetfulness as a sign of old age, and decide to dismiss it, but preparing and keeping a watchful eye over yourself or a loved one may make all the difference.

For those who are already struggling with dementia or Alzheimer's there are plenty of helpful initiatives that can combat the helplessness and isolation that may ensue once the disease progresses.

Sr Bernadette Sweeney, a Religious Sister of Charity and the former school principal of St Agnes' Primary School in Crumlin, Co. Dublin, started the Memory Lane Choir in 2015 to help those suffering from memory loss.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* she says: "I was always committed to those that didn't fit the system, those outside the system in schools and in

communities and I felt that those least catered for today with all that's going on were those with memory loss or maybe mother and baby groups, so that's why I set up a choir for people with memory loss.

"I'm so aware that it's the music memory that's the last memory to go. They can recall the words to so many songs so it's brilliant for them, brilliant for their carers and brilliant for their families.

### Damage

Dementia is a term which describes a range of conditions which cause damage to the brain. This damage affects memory, thinking, language and a person's ability to perform everyday tasks.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.

The choir, which has 50 members, practice songs that may be new to the participants but also those they are more than familiar with.

Gerry Noonan has been director of the choir since its official launch at the start of October in 2015. He is an experienced performer and teaches singing at the Leinster School of Music as well as directing the Crumlin Community Choir.

"It's very important that it isn't a patronising effort, that it's a situation where people are empowered with the very best. So, Gerry does exercises, he

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## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### Human race needs green space

The great outdoors may be one of the cheapest therapies for children, a new study from Denmark shows. Kids who grow up surrounded by nature have up to 55% less risk of developing various mental disorders later in life, according to the paper from Aarhus University in Denmark, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in the US.

The research used satellite data from 1985 to 2013 to map the proximity of green space to the childhood homes of 943,027 Danes, from birth to age 10, for whom they had longitudinal data on mental health outcomes, socioeconomic status, and place of residence.

The study then compared access to green space to data on mental health outcomes for that population, and found that consistent access suggested a big difference when it came to the risk of developing one of 16 different mental disorders later in life.



#### LOVELY STRETCH IN THE MORNING:

Whether you've tried yoga before or not, there's no doubt doing it with your toddler would be oodles of fun.

Run by Harmony Yoga Ireland, a toddler yoga class will take place on Monday, April 29 from 10.30am in Dundrum, Co. Dublin. The session is tailored for toddlers age 18 months or more, babies are also welcome to come in arms at no extra charge.

Each attendee will also get to paint a pottery tile with their baby or toddler's handprint as part of their session. Any mugs painted at this session (optional activity) are discounted to €14 from €19.50.

There is an €8.50 entry fee per participating child. One adult per child. If more than one adult is attending two tickets are required – two adults and one child require two tickets.

It will take place in Giddy Studios, established in 2008, a well-loved Pottery Painting Studios located on Level 2 of the Red Car Park in Dundrum Town Centre.

#### Never mind the whine, manage screen time

It can be difficult for anybody to separate themselves from technology, particularly smartphones. To take control of personal and children's Smartphone use, the TechDen – Screen Time Managing Device may help.

Combining an app parents use to manage screen time with a physical home for devices; this system also functions as a secure charging station. TechDen aims to help families develop healthier screen habits. The TechDen securely houses and charges everything from smartphones to tablets to keep them out of sight and out of mind. In addition, the app sends instant alerts if a device is removed and logs time usage for each device.

The app allows a person to create schedules to remotely lock and unlock both doors on the gadget. Parents get peace of mind and kids are expected to benefit from predictable routines. The TechDen has space for two iOS or Android devices.

# Meditation can be child's play



**M**editation brings considerable practical benefits to those who take up the practice and persist with it. But it also gives rise to deeper, spiritual fruits – it promotes human flourishing and an attitude of compassion and service to one another and to all of creation.

The practical benefits of meditation are very well documented. Meditation gives rise to a sense of calm, peace and balance that benefits both overall health and emotional well-being. Research on adults and children has shown that meditation benefits physical and mental health, enhances emotional well-being and improves how we think.

The positive effects on physical health include reduced blood pressure, a positive impact on cholesterol levels, reduced anxiety, and less stress. Meditation leads to a heightened sense of emotional well-being, enhanced openness, and improved self-esteem. It leads to greater emotional stability and to a reduction in negative emotions.

Meditation also enhances our capacity for attention and problem-solving. It helps to develop improved attention and leads to better reasoning, creativity and insightful problem-solving.

#### Drama

Children I've worked with say that meditation enables them to let go of all the drama; calms and relaxes them and restores them to a sense of well-being; generates energy and confidence in them; and improves their capacity for decision-making.

It was Leanne (9) who said that meditation helps you "let go of all the drama". That phrase

## Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



captures in a very succinct way one of the key benefits experienced by adults and children alike when they take up meditation.

Because he worries about his spelling tests, Frank (9) meditates before school on Friday mornings and others meditate before important competitions. Children say that meditation is very calming; Emelia (9) said: "You can do it at any time so you can feel relaxed and not be angry, or sad, or worried about something."

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Children also say that they feel more energetic, focused and confident when they regularly practiced meditation. For example, Norah (10) said, "Every time I do meditation, I feel I'm more bouncy, like I have more energy inside me". Derek (9) commented that sometimes other boys will taunt him about his ability to do something;



when that happens, "they pretty much dissolve my confidence and stop me from doing it. But when I meditate the confidence rises up inside of me and it helps me. And I go and do it."

Children take very easily to meditation. Madeline Simon says that children take to meditation 'like ducks to water' because "they have not reached the stage of logical thought and are able, in their simplicity, to catch and hold God by love". Because it is such a simple practice, it can be undertaken anywhere – in a bedroom, a living-room or outside under a tree. It does not require any special ability to sit in silence and all children can do it equally well. It is non-competitive and there are no levels of achievement, no tests to measure progress.

**“Kind thoughts or angry thoughts, calm thoughts or worried thoughts, just for now, let them go”**

When you are sufficiently comfortable meditating yourself, you might like to introduce your child(ren) to meditation. It is important that you invite your child to meditate. This is not something you can insist upon – it must be invitational. They will join you when they are ready.

You might start with 30 seconds of being still in body and mind to help them to understand that thoughts inevitably arise when we choose to sit in silence; they arise and easily capture our attention.

Explain that we meditate by giving our mind a special word to focus on and every time we find we are caught up in thought we return gently to our word. Have the word 'Ma-ra-na-tha' written on a page for them. Begin by meditating for just a minute or two and start the meditation with the following words:

"We begin by closing our eyes and placing our feet firmly on the floor. Check that you are sitting up straight in your chair with your hands on your lap or your knees. Become aware of the sounds in the room, then let them go. Become aware of the sounds outside, then let them go."

"Become aware of any thoughts arising in your mind, then let them go. Happy thoughts or sad thoughts, kind thoughts or angry thoughts, calm thoughts or worried thoughts, just for now, let them go. Imagine placing them on a leaf in a stream and let them drift away."

"When you meditate you open your heart to God, who fills you with his love. When the meditation bell rings three times, begin to recite your word. Say the word Ma-ra-na-tha as if it were four short words. Say it silently in your mind so no one else will hear a thing. Say it slowly and lovingly: Ma-ra-na-tha. Keep saying your word until the bell rings again."

Or download one of the sound files at <http://www.christianmeditation.ie/?q=meditationtracks>



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stretches their repertoire a bit and keeps them in their comfort zone at the same time," says Sr Bernadette.

"One of the biggest pluses of the programme for me was when I looked at the faces of the families watching the Memory Lane Choir, the people with dementia singing their hearts out, they saw them in a very happy state whereas at home sometimes they're worried about them, and they're overconcerned. They can sit and they can enjoy, and it's actually extremely moving to see them in their old selves. When they're singing those songs, you would never think there was anything wrong with them, they just looked fully present."

### Benefits

The choir has more benefits than allowing people to be part of something that encourages them to use their talents and remember songs they have cemented into memory, it also helps tackle loneliness according to Sr Bernadette.

"They're meeting like with like, so they're all sitting there, they're all singing, they feel part of a community once again and then their carer is with them and they feel very secure. They know the place where they come week after week.

"The one thing about the choir is it's very important in as much as possible to keep it regular, the same day, same time and they have a little cup of tea in the middle that helps them to socialise and chat."

She says that family members are "absolutely delighted" with the initiative. "People will say to me: 'Before my husband died, I wish I knew about this', because they see the happiness of the people," Sr Bernadette adds.

"It's absolutely wonderful, they're such beautiful people and that's what people forget sometimes, when people have a little part of them suffering from dementia, there's a whole person there that needs to be acknowledged for the person they are and always were."

**“It can be very difficult when someone repeats themselves all the time, it's not their fault”**

Awareness of the issue has increased, with many politicians and other speaking openly on Irish media about loved ones that have been affected by Alzheimer's or dementia.

Despite this Dr Kevin McCarroll, both a contributor to this paper and a physician and geriatrician specialising in osteoporosis and dementia at St James's Hospital, Co. Dublin, says there are still many cases of the disease that go undiagnosed for years.

He says: "We still see patients come into hospital and they have memory problems, and really they have undiagnosed Alzheimers, dementia, but it wasn't causing a massive problem at home because they were being supported by their family..."



With cases like this the disease could slowly become more serious. Perhaps two or three years could go by, with relatives not always being surprised when they hear the diagnosis. According to Dr McCarroll an early diagnosis is "better for everyone in terms of planning".

He says: "You can put people on medication which does work for about 30% of patients. You can support patients and give them strategies to try and help them remember things, writing things down, making contact with the Alzheimer's Society, it's also useful as well if people around the person are aware – maybe close family and friends so they can understand.

"What often happens is the person won't tell close family and friends, and they don't know what to think when they're talking to them, and they realise they have a memory problem – so it's difficult for other people as well as the patient themselves."

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Sometimes family members don't realise what it means to have the condition, which can cause huge amounts of frustration. Those suffering may repeat themselves many times or become confused and upset quickly, but usually there's a "halfway house".

Dr McCarroll says: "There's no point getting frustrated, it can be very difficult when someone repeats themselves all the time, it's not their fault because they can't retain any new information so it's not about trying to correct people but trying to support them."

For people who are trying to come to terms with a loved one who has dementia the Alzheimer Society of Ireland recommends these steps:

■ Accepting your feelings. Don't bottle them up. Let yourself be as sad when you want. Work through your anger and frustration. These



can be healthy emotions. Know that it is common to feel conflicting emotions. It's okay to feel love and anger at the same time.

■ Prepare to experience feelings of loss more than once. As dementia progresses, it is common to go through feelings of grief and loss again. Accept and acknowledge your feelings. They are a normal part of the grieving process.

■ Talk to someone you trust about your feelings.

■ Relieve tension through crying, do some exercise or, perhaps by punching a cushion or a pillow.

■ Seek information and support about dementia for you and the person with dementia as it can be a vital step. Family carer support groups, social clubs, day centres and home care can help you to build a support network for everyone. Find out what services and support are available to you locally: <http://alzheimers.ie/support/services-in-my-county/>

■ Make sure you see your GP if you are feeling very low or anxious or if you are very tired and unable to sleep. It is important to try to prevent your normal feelings of sadness slipping into depression, which is much harder to deal with.

Those who have the condition may not be aware of it themselves, as Dr McCarroll says they may "forget they forget" certain things.

"And very occasionally some patients won't want to know anything about it and they deny there's a problem. But the extent of the problem they may not be aware of because they forget they forget and they don't realise the significance of it and it can be quite problematic.

"Sometimes we've had situations where the husband and wife both have memory problems and neither seem to recognise the significance of it."

Writing a will, telling friends and family and taking steps to help remember things are advised once a person is made known of their diagnosis. Unfortunately, there hasn't been much significant breakthroughs regarding treatment for the disease in the last few decades but with supports and preparation it can be managed.

## Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



**B**ut marshmallows are a St Patrick's Day tradition!" my eldest daughter righteously insisted, aghast at my ignorance on the subject. "Don't you remember, we all had giant marshmallows last year?" she asked in total incredulity.

It was as though I had suddenly announced that I'd never heard that people bring little pine trees indoors and decorate them at Christmas time. The other kids all agreed that, in their experience, marshmallows were indeed a well-known St Patrick's Day staple. I had to bow to the weight of public opinion, and so I bought a bag of giant marshmallows.

I've found that the maxim 'if you can't beat them, join them' is a good one if you want a peaceful family life. I therefore informed my wife of the advent of this new family tradition, explaining that it is widely believed – in our family, at least – that St Patrick himself was sustained largely by marshmallows when he brought the light of Christianity to Ireland.

Children have long memories for such matters, and a keen eye for detail when it comes to confectionary, and so I don't doubt that next St Patrick's Day marshmallows will be once again demanded as a formally-recognised family tradition.

### Anniversary

In our family, St Patrick's day is always a double celebration, since it is also my parents' wedding anniversary. This year was their 47th anniversary and we are already gearing up for the big one, their golden anniversary in three years' time. My parents were staying with us for St Patrick's weekend this year, providing an additional excuse for celebration.

After a hearty meal of traditional St Patrick's day fare – Irish stew and marshmallows – we settled down to look at some old photos of their wedding day, and the years around the beginning of their married life together. It is always extraordinary to think that, but for those happenstance dancehall meetings, and the consequent blossoming of romance which took place back then, neither I nor my children would exist.

The clear colour photographs of those sunny days back in the late 1960s and early 1970s made the past seem alive. Our family photos have been digitally

scanned and so, when shown large and luminous on a screen, they look as though they were taken yesterday. There was my father in his merchant navy officer's uniform, or onboard ships at sea. There was my mother – a primary school teacher – on her wedding day, surrounded by adoring children from her class.

We saw photos of my parents camping in wildest Donegal and Kerry. We saw babies and small children, who now have children and even grandchildren of their own. Poignantly for me, there were also many photos of my own grandparents, and some aunts and uncles, who are now departed. All looked just as I remember them.

Those old photos brought alive many early memories from the late 70s and early 80s. Suddenly, a half century seemed just the blink of an eye – even though I haven't even been around that long. Yet all those vivacious, smiling people, full of life – just as I remember them – are now gone, leaving only echoes behind, amongst those who loved them well.

There is no distance in time between the full technicolour of the prime of our lives and our disappearance into dust. There is hope in this somehow, because this connection through time is so strong that it speaks of infinity. We sense that all of time, all places and all people are somehow connected through that mysterious consciousness, that greater intelligence, who guides those odd happenstances that bring each of us into being. Each day, and every fleeting moment, is subtly connected.

**“Along with taxes, we are truly sure only of death...”**

Those who are gone, never seem to be quite gone. They reverberate within us in this life – and then there is the matter of the afterlife. And who knows, perhaps they have marshmallows there too.

It may be too short, and the few guarantees we have in life are often grim ones: along with taxes, we are truly sure only of death. Yet, the sun always rises and, when we live well, there is a fundamental sweetness to life. Perhaps that is why we traditionally eat marshmallows on St Patrick's Day.



# Reaching the masses over the airwaves

## Personal Profile



Chai Brady

**A**fter years of seeing the goodness of the Franciscans and their work in the community, an 86-year-old radio DJ is delighted he followed the religious path.

Believed to be the oldest man on the radio Fr Cletus Noone, who has a show called *Noone at Night* on Saturdays at 9pm, recently celebrated his Diamond Jubilee.

Coming at the same time as the Eucharistic Congress to Ireland, Fr Cletus was born in 1932. Hailing from Galway he had twin sisters, one of which is still alive.

During his school years he spent a decade as an altar boy in the Franciscan Abbey where he saw the work they were doing, and was very impressed.

"Bit by bit it dawned on me, it was the example of the brothers and the priests who were there and their dealings with the people and so on because we were all in the same neighbourhood there, that's what attracted me. I saw what they were doing and I more or less said if it's God's holy will I'd like to do that," he said.

### Tough days

"There were seven long years after that to see whether it would happen, but thank God it did happen and I'm glad it did because I really enjoyed myself. There were good days, there were tough days at times."

It was after his Leaving Cert he decided to follow a vocation in the priesthood and join the



Fr Cletus Noone on air.

Franciscans. He was sent to Killarney, which is where anyone hoping to join the order was sent at the time, and then studied in Galway for three years in St Anthony's College – which has since closed.

"After that now came the problem, we were to go to Rome then from Galway but there were too many students there was no room," he said – an issue foreign to modern Ireland.

He was subsequently sent to Louvain in Belgium with six others, after a year there they went to Rome to study for a further three years with Fr Cletus being ordained on February 21, 1959.

Returning to Ireland he was sent to Limerick for two years which

he thoroughly enjoyed, describing the people as "lovely", as it was his first posting it holds a special place in his heart but he adds "I must say there was no place I didn't like thank God".

**"I've found on a few occasions people will contact you later on and maybe they might want to go to Confession or something like that"**

After that it was two years in Multyfarnham, back to Killarney for six and once more returned to his beloved Limerick.

Going to Ennis, Co. Clare in 1987, shortly he became involved

with Clare FM. Talking about his show he says: "I enjoy it I really do, and we've good ol' craic, I'll tell a few yarns as well as playing the piece. I'm relying a lot on the prayers on our neighbours next door to me, the Poor Clare Sisters."

"I get to know more people from the radio than I do from the altar," he added.

Asked about the changing landscape in Ireland regarding religion, he said: "It all started in the families. The family were a unit, they came to Church together whether they were young or not. Confessions were more plentiful, we were busier doing Confessions then, than we are now."

"People are lovely but we only

meet so many here", with fewer people coming to Church "it's sad", he says.

"Sometimes, the funny thing about it, you might get a little message across on the radio that you would not get across in the Church because they're not in the Church," he said.

"I've found on a few occasions people will contact you later on and maybe they might want to go to Confession or something like that."

Reaching out to elderly or people suffering from physical disabilities is also another positive about his radio show. "You go to them as it were particularly through the radio, they have Mass on Sunday of course as well naturally, they get the idea that you're chatting with them individually."

"I have found that's a reaction from it anyway, that you'd nearly have phoned them up rather than speaking to many of them over the radio," he says.

### Ordained

Fr Cletus celebrated his diamond jubilee on February 21 with Bishop Willie Walsh who were both ordained on the same day in 1959.

He said: "It was just marvellous. On the day I said Mass in a nursing home out in Oranmore in Galway, I'll tell you why because my sister was out there as a patient."

"I said my Mass there because that sister was the only one I could remember who was at the ordination 60 years ago."

Despite receiving an offer of retirement from his order, Fr Cletus isn't ready to sign off just yet and will continue to grace the airways with his popular Saturday night show.

The hour-long programme, filled with music, chat and reflections from the much-loved priest will continue to delight listeners who look forward to it each week.



## Green Fingers

Paul Gargan

## Consider planting something for endangered pollinators

**I**n April the lion that is March loosens its icy grip on the garden. You need to keep on top of hoeing and weeding. Go through your beds and borders: Remove all the annual weeds now before they get a chance to go to seed. Using a border fork dig up all perennial weeds, making sure to get all the top root. Compost the annual but not the perennials. Do it now, before your plants hide them.

Lift and divide herbaceous perennials that have been growing for three or more years. They grow out from the centre, making a ring. If left, they will soon form a circle with a dead centre. Dig them up, divide into about three pieces. Replant one piece back in the hole and back fill with a mixture of soil and homemade garden compost. Firm down and water well regardless of rainfall.

If you grow acid loving plants such as Camelia, Rhododendrons or Azalias but have lime in your soil, you need to feed them sequestered iron. This lets them access the minerals and nutrients

that's locked up by the lime. You can tell if your acid loving plants need this if its leaves are turning yellow and chlorotic.

Prune hydrangeas by following the stem that has last years faded blooms on them. Cut above a strong healthy side shoot. Don't cut the ones with the fat green shoots on the end, these are this year's flowers.

Deadhead daffodils by pinching all the seed heads between your finger and thumb. Don't do anything with the leaves, they need to be left for six weeks to build up the energy for the next year's flowers. If in your lawn, mow around them until then. When it's time, cut down and compost.

If you have moss in your lawn, April is the time to deal with it.



You can use a three-in-one which will feed the grass, kill the moss and the weeds. If you don't mind the weeds (wildflowers) just kill the moss using a granular iron product. The iron will turn the moss black. Leave it until it is all black and dead. Remove using a springtime rake. You can compost this but not if you used three-in-one.

### Root cutting

If you have space in your garden consider planting something for our endangered pollinators. Comfrey or Borage will provide them with food and you with a steady supply of organic liquid fertiliser. Comfrey can be bought potted or will grow very easily from root cutting.

Grow Borage from seed in April in soil raked to a fine tilt. Plant 1 1/2 cm / 1/2 in deep in a sunny spot. Both will flower until frost and will be a haven for pollinators. If Borage gets tatty after mid-summer, prune it back to 1/2 its size. It will come again.

Comfrey is a perennial so you will always have it. Borage is an annual but will self seed readily.

You can collect the seed and give it to friends to plant. The seed will stay viable for three years.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Peyton's deserved place on primetime TV

Every now and then a programme comes along that you'd like to shower with awards.

And so it is with the provocatively (and inaccurately!) titled **Guns and Rosaries** (RTÉ1, Thursday) – definitely my top religious programme of the year so far. It was a fascinating documentary on the life of Fr Patrick Peyton, known as 'the Rosary Priest', and while there were lots of rosaries, there were very few guns!

Fr Peyton believed he was saved from an early death to tuberculosis by the intercession of Our Lady, and dedicated himself to spreading devotion to her, especially through the Rosary. Born in Mayo, he became a priest in the Holy Cross order in the US and sought to spread the Rosary devotion by canny use of the media.

The networks (radio initially) were reluctant to give him air space without celebrities attached and so began one of the most distinctive and successful aspects of his venture – attracting the Catholic stars of Hollywood to appear with him and endorse the rosary crusade.

It was fun spotting the stars he enlisted – James Stewart, Loretta Young, Maureen O'Hara, Frank Sinatra and many more. One of my favourites was Bob Newhart, one of the few still alive,



Martin Sheen (right), who narrated *Guns and Rosaries* (RTÉ1) with director Peter Kelly.

and it was great to see him in a recent interview talking about the persuasive powers of Fr Peyton. Before his name tag popped up I knew I recognised those sparkling mischievous eyes from somewhere.

All this was fairly well known before, so the more intriguing part of the programme was the exploration of his Fr Peyton's dealings with the CIA. In Cold War times the fight against the threat of Communism was synonymous with the fight to defend country, family and religion. With South

American a fertile ground for evangelisation, but with the poverty being too great to sponsor the Rosary rallies, Fr Peyton was drawn indirectly, through well connected friends, to accept funding from CIA sources – the CIA finding that his cause suited their political agenda in the region, especially in Brazil, where a military coup ensued (hence the guns).

### Crusades

The crusades were something of a one-man show, and there were conflicts when his superiors and also authori-

ties at Notre Dame University (run by the Holy Cross order) showed concern about these political affiliations. As one contributor put it, it was wrong politically and theologically, and also could cause severe embarrassment to the Catholic Church if revealed. Even when the Vatican wanted this to stop Fr Peyton was reluctant.

In a way the programme showed how he was of his time, and with the fading of the Cold War and the revolutions of the 60s (including Vatican II) things, in a sense, moved on without him. However, he got a new lease of life in the 80s in the Reagan era, and we saw one late and gigantic Rosary rally in the Philippines.

I was reminded of World Youth Days and papal visits, and though the programme didn't make the point, the equivalent in the Protestant world were the Billy Graham



Marian Finucane.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MASS

RTÉ1, Sunday, March 31, 11am

From Cashel Community School, Co. Tipperary. The celebrant is Fr Enda Brady, the musical director is John Murray.

#### SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC1, Sunday, March 31, 1.15pm

For Mothering Sunday, Katherine Jenkins finds out more about the history of this Christian festival.

#### FORGOTTEN HERITAGE: EUROPE AND THE EUCHARIST

EWTN, Monday, April 1, 9.30pm

Fr Owen Gorman STL and Fr John Hogan explore the 1879 Marian apparition of Knock and what it tells us about the Eucharistic heritage of Europe.

crusades, happening roughly around the same time, also fed by the same cultural and political context.

Martin Sheen did a fine job with the narration, all the contributors were thoroughly engaging and the archive footage, especially the less familiar material from his Irish visit of 1954, was apt and absorbing. Much credit goes to director and producer Peter Kelly, who was interviewed on the **Ryan Tubridy Show** (RTÉ Radio 1) on Thursday morning. Kelly's enthusiasm and professionalism came across, and as for any new information he said that the influential priest had organised a Rosaries for Russia campaign in 1991, a year before he died. Just one of his many legacies was the slogan 'The family that prays together stays together'.

While I'm on a positive

roll, I have to complement the **Marian Finucane Show** (RTÉ Radio 1) last Saturday morning for the interview with two inspiring religious sisters. Both had interesting vocation stories – in common they had religious parents, fear of telling parents, inspiring role models and a reluctance to enter religious combined with a strong calling towards that life.

Over and above that was the strong spirit of service – Sr Orla Treacy bringing education to young girls in South Sudan, Sr Helen Culhane pioneering the Children's Grief Centre in Limerick.

I'd recommend catching up with all these programmes on RTE's radio and TV players.

[boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com),  
[boreganmedia](http://boreganmedia)



Pat O'Kelly

# Music

## Fresh *Butterfly* with an intriguing history lands in Dublin



Celine Byrne.

Like the first performances of both Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* in Rome on February 20, 1816, and Verdi's *La Traviata* in Venice on March 6, 1853, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* was a flop at its Milan première on February 17, 1904.

The principal problem with the Rossini lay with supporters of rival composer Giovanni Paisiello, whose own *Barber of Seville* was then in vogue, coming out in force to do Rossini down.

The difficulties with the Verdi arose when the tenor singing Alfredo lost his voice; the baritone in the role of Giorgio Germont sulked, considering his role unworthy of him, while the 'troppo prosa' soprano singing Vio-

letta bore little semblance to a courtesan dying of consumption. Later performances of both operas had unqualified successes without a note of their scores being altered. Matters were a little different with *Madama Butterfly*.

At its La Scala première an anti-Puccini faction was there to cause trouble. By the end of Act I it was in an ugly mood with matters no better after the overlong Act II. Having the American characters in contemporary costume didn't go down well either while *Butterfly*'s principal aria, *Un Bel Di* ('One Fine Day'), was heckled without even a single curtain call.

### Disappointed

Hurt and disappointed, Puc-

cini cancelled the remaining performances and set about revising his score. With substantial alterations, the new version had tremendous success at the Teatro Grande in Brescia under Toscanini on May 28, 1904.

Setting the opera in Japan was still something of a novelty although there had been precedents – Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885); André Messager's *Madame Chrysanthème* (1893) and Mascagni's *Iris* (1898). But Japan itself had been more or less in seclusion for a long period prior to the mid-1800s when it opened up to western trade.

The land of cherry blossom, chrysanthemums and geishas became the foci of western writers with Pierre

Loti's colourful 1887 romance *Madame Chrysanthème* having particular appeal. French naval officer Loti had been in Nagasaki for a time in 1885.

The novel influenced a number of writers including American John Luther Long whose resultant short story *Madame Butterfly* found its way on to the stage through compatriot playwright David Belasco. His play, also titled *Madame Butterfly*, was well received in New York before opening in London's Duke of York's Theatre on April 29, 1900. Puccini saw it and was smitten. The seeds of his *Madama Butterfly* were sown and the result, as they say, is history.

A favourite with Irish audiences, a new production,

courtesy of Irish National Opera and directed by Ben Barnes, opened at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre last Sunday. There are further performances this evening (March 28) and on Saturday (March 30). The staging can be seen in Cork's Opera House next Tuesday (April 2) and Friday (April 5).

In Todd Rosenthal's designs and with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra under UK conductor Timothy Redmond, Naas-born soprano Celine Byrne sings the title role with UK tenor Julian Hubbard as Lieutenant BF Pinkerton. Canadian baritone Brett Polegato is US Nagasaki consul Sharpless with Derry-born mezzo Doreen Curran *Butterfly*'s confidante Suzuki.





# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## A reason for Mayo to feel proud

**The Rosary Priest:  
A Biography of Patrick  
Peyton CSC**  
by Tom Mulligan  
(Veritas, €15.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

I had the privilege of meeting Fr Patrick Peyton, CSC. A handsome man, standing at six feet four inches, he was a refreshingly simple person. And yet there was an aura about him. It was the same aura one sensed in the presence of Frank Duff, co-founder of the Legion of Mary.

That aura stemmed from the total commitment each of them had to what they regarded as their life's mission. In the case of Mr Duff it was his promotion of devotion to Mary, in the case of Fr Peyton it was the popularising of prayer and the family rosary.

Fr Peyton was born in Carracastle, near Ballina, Co Mayo, on June 9, 1909. He had six sisters and three brothers. Aged 15, he left school to work on the 15-acre family farm. He was also employed by Mayo County Council repairing the local roads.

At the age of 18 Patrick and his brother Tom joined three of their sisters in Scranton, Pennsylvania. While Tom found employment in a coalmine, Patrick, following a spell working on a building site, became the caretaker in St Peter's Cathedral in Scranton.

When he confided to Msgr Paul Kelly, administrator of the cathedral, that he believed he had a vocation to the priesthood. Msgr Kelly had him and his brother Tom attend a local Christian Brothers School and thereafter enrolled them in the major seminary of the Congregation of the Holy Cross at Notre Dame in Indiana.

### Health

Patrick was just a few years into his studies when he suddenly became gravely ill with "advanced tuberculosis". Just as suddenly and with no scientific explanation he regained his health. Ever afterwards he was convinced that his recovery was due to the intercession of Mary.

Patrick and Tom were ordained at Notre Dame in June 1941. Tom was assigned to parish ministry in New Orleans. Patrick resolved that he would devote his life to promoting the daily recitation of the Rosary in family homes just as his own family

Fr Patrick Peyton addressing a rally and, inset, with American celebrity Loretta Young who worked for his Rosary rally campaign.



Author Fr Tom Mulligan.

had recited it in their home at Carracastle.

He was appointed chaplain to a high-school conducted by the Sisters of Mercy in Albany, New York State, where the Sisters and some of their students helped him to set-up his Family Rosary Crusade in 1943.

With many families in North America having their men-folk in harm's way in various theatres of war it was an opportune time to promote prayer and Patrick received the enthusiastic

support of many bishops in Canada and the US.

Patrick took his crusade to the air-waves in the mid-1940s. At that time also he had an opportunity to present it in the Church of the Good Shepherd in Beverly Hills, where many of Hollywood's stars worshipped. They were impressed by his simplicity and sincerity and subsequently some of Hollywood's best-known actors and actresses participated in his Rosary crusade's radio programmes and later TV presentations.

**“The Rosary rallies were an implicit counterpoint to the atheistic communist propaganda”**

The list of those who were particularly helpful to him included Ethel Barrymore, Ann Blyth, Irene Dunne, Maureen O'Hara, Maureen O'Sullivan, Shirley Temple,

Jane Wyatt, Loretta Young, Don Ameche, Charles Boyer, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Gregory Peck, Ronald Reagan and James Stewart.

For more than 40 years Patrick and his co-workers organised enormous rallies to promote his Rosary crusade. These he held in countries across the world and on all five continents. The size of most of these rallies dwarfed even the large gatherings presided over by Rev. Billy Graham, the legendary Bible evangelist.

\*\*\*\*\*

After World War II came the Cold War, during which there was a titanic struggle for hearts and minds. It was a time when Western democracies were in danger of being overwhelmed by Stalin's Soviet Union and Mao Zedong's Peoples Republic of China.

While Patrick never regarded his rallies to be other than to promote prayer and the family Rosary, they were an implicit counterpoint

to the atheistic communist propaganda of the Cold War period. Their influence in that regard was particularly significant in Latin America and Asia.

In 1963 the Rosary crusade in Brazil was wound up with a rally in Rio de Janeiro, which attracted more than 1.5 million people. Soon afterwards the government, which had lurched to the far left, was swept out of office.

**“The award Patrick cherished most was one he received from Mayo County Council”**

In 1985 the Rosary crusade in the Philippines ended with a rally in Manila which attracted more than two million people. Within a few months Ferdinand Marcos, who had ruled as a dictator since 1965, was ousted in a bloodless coup.

(One is reminded of Pope John Paul II's address at Warsaw in 1983 – one of the

seminal speeches of the 20th Century which heralded the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the end of the Soviet Empire.)

Patrick, it seems, experienced immense satisfaction as he organised the Rosary crusade in the dioceses of Ireland.

When it was concluded the Irish bishops appointed Fr Michael Harty, a Dublin diocesan priest who later became a Dominican, to be national director of the Rosary crusade, a role he carried out until he died in 2009.

Patrick received many awards and honours but the one he cherished most was one he received from Mayo County Council on the occasion of the golden jubilee of his priesthood. He died on June 3, 1992. The process for his canonisation began in 1993. He was named Venerable in 2012.

This is a splendid biography of a distinguished Mayo man, of whom all Irish people can be justly proud.



Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.

## The Border – a necessary evil?



The border crossing at Killeen as it was, and may be again.

### The Border: The legacy of a century of Anglo-Irish politics

by Diarmaid Ferriter  
(Profile Books, €15.99 / £12.99)

Felix M. Larkin

On the very first page of this book, Prof. Ferriter speaks of the Border being “imposed” on the island of Ireland – by implication, against the will of the people of the island.

This reflects what successive Dublin governments had claimed for over 75 years, until the Good Friday agreement of 1998. While the Border was indeed the creation of an act of the Westminster parliament – the Government of Ireland Act 1920 – it was nevertheless a compromise agreed to and accepted by most parties on the island of Ireland in order to resolve the conflicting aspirations of the nationalist majority population and the unionist minority who were overwhelmingly located in the province of Ulster.

**“Prof. Ferriter is at his best in this book in exposing the hollowness of much of the anti-partitionist rhetoric”**

Redmond and Carson had both accepted partition in principle in 1914 and again in 1916, and so did Sinn Féin in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Even those opposed to the Treaty did not make an issue of partition – but based their rejection of the Treaty instead on such matters as the Oath of Allegiance and the primacy of the Crown in the new constitutional arrangements.

Few deputies referred to

partition in the Dáil debates on the Treaty. Most people expected that it would be temporary and that the logic of geography would cause it to wither away – but the logic of sectarianism was stronger.

### Anomalies

The Border inevitably caused anomalies and hampered everyday life, especially in the regions around the Border. Also, the Protestant minority left behind in the new independent Irish state and the more substantial Catholic minority stranded on the other side of the Border undoubtedly suffered discrimination as a result of being cut off from the bulk of their respective communities.

All this was deeply tragic, but the likely alternative to the Border was – as Prof. Ferriter concedes – sectarian civil war.

While nationalists on both sides of the Border paid lip-service to re-unification, nobody had a better – or more realistic – solution to the problem of conflicting nationalist/unionist aspirations. Prof. Ferriter is at his best in this book in exposing the hollowness of much of the anti-partitionist rhetoric.

For independent Ireland, jettisoning the six counties of Northern Ireland liberated the new state from the corrosive effects of what Professor George O'Brien called the “northern disease” which would otherwise have condemned it to unimaginable strife.

O'Brien is quoted as arguing in 1936 that “it would be most regrettable if the sectarian dividing lines between the parties in the North were to spread to the South, and it is hard to see how the infection could be prevented from spreading if the border

barrier were destroyed.

At the present, sectarianism is safely confined in its Ulster quarantine.” Prof. Ferriter dismisses this comment as a “self-satisfied example of the partitionist mindset in the South”, but it seems to me a fair observation and one to which advocates of re-unification should have regard.

**“The likely alternative to the Border was... sectarian civil war”**

Of course, the Northern Ireland state was – and is – a “failed political entity”, to quote Charles J. Haughey. Its failure, however, is a failure of governance within Northern Ireland – not a necessary consequence of the Border.

With wiser, more generous political leadership on both sides in the North, things might have been better – and the disasters of recent years avoided. Direct rule from Westminster would probably have been preferable to the Stormont regime, but in 1920 the British parliament was so thoroughly sick of the Irish question dominating its agenda that it wanted rid of any day-to-day responsibility for Irish affairs, North or South.

Today, the Irish question has once again come to the fore at Westminster in the context of the Brexit negotiations. In this book, Prof. Ferriter has made a useful contribution to our understanding of the historical background to the issues that arise in any debate on the future of the Border in the post-Brexit dispensation – but he fails to recognise that the Irish Border was, and probably still is, a necessary evil.

## Mainly about books

By the books editor

## The many little shrines of Ireland

**W**e are all aware of the major shrines of Ireland, and of the customs associated with them: Knock, Croagh Patrick and Lough Derg are part of Irish culture. Then there are the holy wells, and the little places associated with more local saints, well favoured across a couple of counties.

But below these long established and public shrines, there is another layer, a more private, little noticed layer, of what we might call the private shrines of Ireland. Or perhaps we might call them the personal shrines for they can hardly be called private as they are nearly all in quite public places.

In his recent novel, *Travelling a Strange Land* (Bloomsbury, £12.99), Ulster writer David Park, comes to terms with pain, loss and memory. In this very moving and very human tale, there is a brief evocation of Roselawn Cemetery, the civic graveyard in Belfast opened in 1954.

A young man for a university project has a film to make and wants to shoot it in the cemetery, as he tells his father: “I don’t mean to shock you or anything but yes that’s where. There’s a part of it I saw and it’s a separate section from all the rows of headstones. It’s not like anything I’ve ever seen. I went back on my own and took some photographs. ...it’s a part of the cemetery where people have personalised the burial place of whoever – it’s really weird, with plastic flowers, football scarves and figures, all sort of ornaments and decorations on the branches of trees.

“And there’s lots of wind chimes so I thought I would incorporate them in the music...it’s not a place that feels it’s to do with death, so much as the lives that people once had. It feels like it’s full of their memories.”

### Modern funerals

Just as the Irish bishops seem to deprecate the personalisation of modern funerals, much to the distress of families, so cemetery authorities seem always to want to lay the head stone flat and keep them clear of what they may well see as rubbish in the great cause of propriety and tidiness. On the whole those are not virtues much appreciated by humanity at large.

This set my thinking about other little shrines. One is a site I pass every week on my way into this paper: the doorway in Kildare

Street where a homeless young man died. It faces not only the Dáil, but a popular city hotel. Small items and little cards still decorate it, and are added to from time to time.

In the little park in Ranelagh on the lid of a pump cover in the little lake has been set out a shrine to the memory of a local child who died as a result of an accident in the lake. Recently the winter winds knocked over the little array of items, little statues and so on, all with family associations. Doubtless they will soon be replaced.

Along the banks of the Grand Canal at several of the locks which are used by local children for summer swims there are occasional shrines to those who have drowned: papers tacked to the trees, ribbons, pictures, beads and other things.

**“It’s not a place that feels it’s to do with death, so much as the lives that people once had”**

On the Grand Canal one of those memorials is near to the Patrick Kavanagh seat. But that seat arose from a poem the poet



Token memorial to a homeless death.

wrote about a memorial seat to Mrs Dermot O'Brien. That was swept away by the Board of Works and later a little plaque had to be set there in the ground to rededicate its replacement to Mrs O'Brien.

The poet and the drowned boy are recalled by many and by a few. One cannot go round the country without seeing such things too. Though I never recall seeing anything ever laid for long at any political monument. The little shrines are very different from those often contrived memorials. These little places have real meaning for people, even for complete strangers merely passing by.

One feels human warmth that these other little shrines arise out of our love and a deep human feeling, a feeling that I think is very real to all of us.



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— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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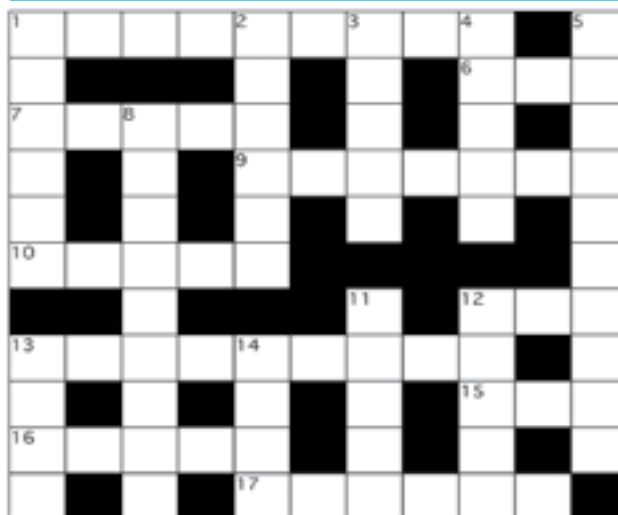
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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 275



### ACROSS

- 1 You'll probably need a sling if you have this injury (6,3)  
 6 The initials of a country across the Atlantic (1.1.1.)  
 7 Break completely (5)  
 9 Sea creature with eight tentacles (7)  
 10 You stay in these when you go camping (5)  
 12 Use it to put a garment on the clothesline, or when you're putting up one of the 10 across (3)  
 13 Use it to check an athlete's time (9)  
 15 Belonging to us (3)  
 16 Make something holy (5)  
 17 A small package of something, like sweets (6)
- the supermarket (6)  
 2 Sounds that bounce back in a cave, for example (6)  
 3 Female relatives (5)  
 4 Disease that's easy to spread, that causes your mouth and throat to swell (5)  
 5 People travelling on a bus or train perhaps (10)  
 8 Left behind, stopped taking care of (9)  
 11 Storeroom in the roof of a house (5)  
 12 Ring someone up with this (5)  
 13 Cries, weeps (4)  
 15 Striped insect that stings (4)

### DOWN

- 1 You might put things in this at

## SOLUTIONS, MARCH 21

GORDIUS No.395

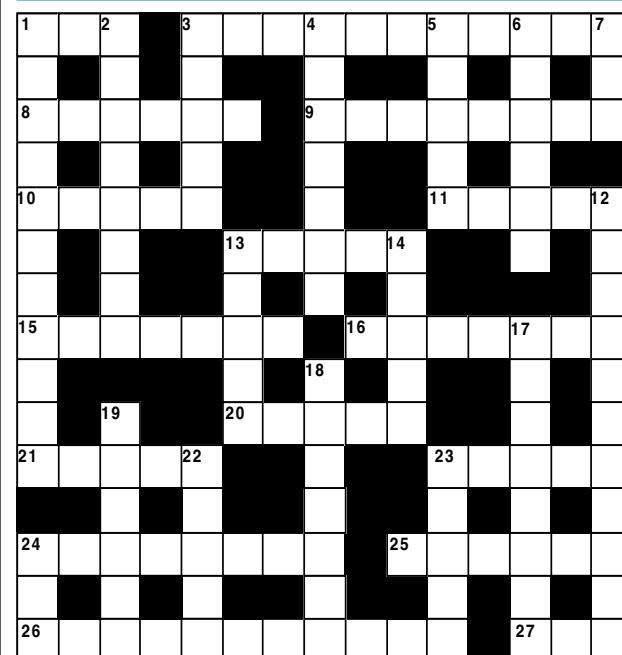
- Across** – 1 Egg 3 Arrivederci 8 Demure 9 Rasputin 10 Resin  
 11 Herod 13 Added 15 Towpath 16 Car pool 20 Rosie Lee  
 21 Ypres 23 Whiff 24 Life peer 25 Rimini 26 Embarrassed 27 Toe
- Down** – 1 Ex-directory 2 Game show 3 Apron 4 Inroads 5 Depth  
 6 Rotary 7 Ion 12 Holy office 13 Attar 14 Drake 17 Optimist  
 18 Aspires 19 Prefab 22 Super 23 Weird

CHILDREN'S No.274

- Across** – 1 Telescope 7 Argue 8 Enter 9 Letters 10 Nun  
 11 Root 12 Cactus 15 Listen 16 Rats 17 Dad 18 Fly 19 Shed
- Down** – 1 Trawler 2 Lighthouse 3 Sweden 4 Opens 5 Extinct  
 6 Parents 12 Candy 13 Cards 14 Untie 15 Log

## Crossword

Gordius 396



### ACROSS

- 1 & 14d State of extreme caution occasioned by communist beer, right? (3,5)  
 3 See the slave facing up to Mendelssohn's 'Hebrides' (7,4)  
 8 A mowed-up pasture (6)  
 9 Unforeseeable event - involving the Creator? (3,2,3)  
 10 Franz, composer of the Merry Widow (5)  
 11 Woody tissue found in some carboxyl emissions (5)  
 13 Japanese graphic novel written by a chap near Georgia (5)  
 15 & 21a By literally popping tin, it created a critical threshold (7,5)  
 16 Former musical group known as the Fab Four (7)  
 20 A Greek character in torrid surroundings? Get away! (3,2)  
 21 See 15 across  
 23 Oval I rearranged - there it is, in France (5)  
 24 Cheating, as in a drama called "Dangerous Tackles"? (4,4)  
 25 Roman writer of the Aeneid (6)  
 26 The ultimate baseball

### DOWN

- competition (5,6)  
 27 Won back - for the present (3)  
 1 Might the plumber stir up what encourages motorists to slow down? (6,5)  
 2 Pat ached awfully after confusing this with a safe, edible mushroom! (5,3)  
 3 Baking ingredient (5)  
 4 Gee - idling in order to install glass! (7)  
 5 That Native American sounds like little Ms Barker! (5)  
 6 A cardinal leaves the gallery relocated to part of Scotland (6)  
 7 Terminate (3)  
 12 A fen? Grand, permit it to be something tasty! (11)  
 13 Chomp noisily (5)  
 14 See 1 across  
 17 & 18 Hoping things work out with a career concerning the Apostles' Creed? (6,2,1,6)  
 19 Alcohol (6)  
 22 Lukewarm regarding some trite, pidgin English (5)  
 23 Blood-vessels (5)  
 24 Not many can use the iron, Cardinal (3)

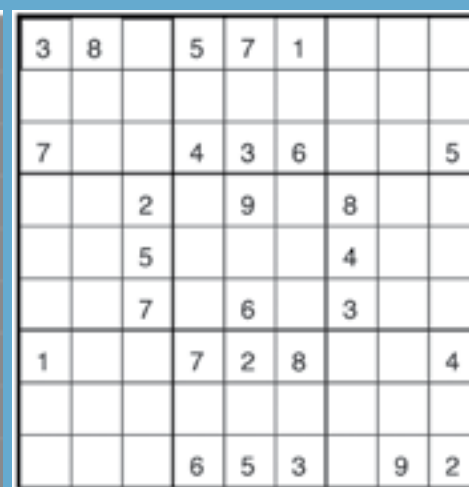
## Sudoku Corner

275

Easy



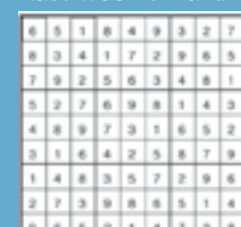
Hard



Last week's Easy 274



Last week's Hard 274



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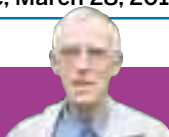
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## Notebook

Donal McMahon



# Secret treasure of a hidden Polish café

**IN ALL FINE OLD CITIES** there are the obligatory sights of the guidebooks and tour buses but also the little discoveries that you make for yourself. The first are always well worth the visit but it's the second unpredictable ones that often linger just as much or even more in the memory afterwards.

My wife Mary and I paid our first visit to Poland last autumn, staying for a week in a small hotel in Kazimierz, the old Jewish area of Krakow. Two days being set aside for the obligatory bus tours (Auschwitz and the Salt Mines), we set out every morning to explore different areas in the nice leisurely fashion that befits a holiday.

Our walks took us to many of the city's lovely churches. A wet afternoon was spent very profitably and enjoyably inside crowded St Mary's Basilica in the Market Square. We went to Mass on Sunday in the medieval church of Corpus Christi in Kazimierz, not able to understand the hymns or the sermon, of course, but interested all the same in comparing the Sunday liturgy there with that of our parish church back home.

Walking up fashionable Grodzka Street on the look-out for a good



Kazimierz.

spot for a light lunch before a visit to the nearby Jesuit church of Ss Peter and Paul, we were met by a young man with a menu in his hand assuring us that, yes indeed, we could have just a sandwich and coffee. So we followed him up a short side street as far as the corner of quiet and imposing Kanonicka Street (occupied in the past by canons from the nearby Cathedral on Wawel Hill) and sat ourselves down outside the unpretentious Pianola Café.

## Pigeons

The pigeons were eager for anything we could spare of our sandwich and apple tart. Everything passed off pleasantly. Coming away, I happened to look

up above the Pianola sign on the door to something that obviously dated from the building's 'canonical' days: a time-worn stone lintel with the heads of two winged angels at either end and, in the middle, a shield with crossed keys. Now what were those faded Latin letters on each side of the shield? *Angeli tui sancti...habitent in ea*. The guide book was of no help here nor the otherwise very helpful waitress.

Back at the hotel in the evening I looked up the words on the internet. What I had deciphered turned out to be a phrase from a 5th-Century prayer later forming part of the conclusion to Compline or Night Prayer.

It is quoted by St Thomas

Aquinas in the section of his *Summa Theologiae* devoted to the topic of angels. "May your holy angels stay here [the words above the door] and guard us in peace, and let your blessing be always upon us."

**“What I will remember above all from that beautiful city will be those barely legible Latin words”**

The splendid churches of Krakow adorned with statues of saints, frescoes of angels and venerable texts from many sources are indeed awe-inspiring.

Yet what I will remember above all from that beautiful city will be those barely legible Latin words above the entrance to a piano bar located up a side street. The good canons may be gone but the hard-working lay residents there now (as well as those who come to their door) are guarded still, we pray, by the same holy angels.

**Donal McMahon taught English in the seminary at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, from 1974-2013.**

## At the end of the day...

My surprise encounter in the most unlikely of settings with a phrase from Compline or Night Prayer made me look up the text of that office and read it now, I admit, with real attention for the first time. Such are the consequences of any little discoveries of our own that we make! Thanks to T.S. Eliot's poem 'A Song for Simeon', I was already familiar with the *Nunc Dimittis*, as I was, of course, with the *Salve Regina* at the end.

My new little Latin phrase from above the door helped to bring home forcefully to me now how much Night Prayer is a recollection of the actions of the day, a solemn moment of retrospection and evaluation.

A foreshadowing, too, of the moment when 'life's little day' from the hymn Abide with Me will itself draw to a close, the moment for saying, from Compline, 'Into your hands' - *In manus tuas*.



Photo: Water from the lake being brought to the health centre by use of hired donkey carts.

## A CATHOLIC HEALTH CENTRE IN TANZANIA NEEDS CLEAN WATER

The Sisters of the Incarnate Word administer a mission health centre, primary school and school hostel in the Catholic Diocese of Musoma, Tanzania. Sister Irene recently contacted The Little Way Association for financial help to install a desperately needed new water system for the health centre. "Water supply has been an issue since the mission started to expand", she wrote. "Initially the water supplied by water mills was enough to serve the small community, but now we are experiencing great water shortage to the point of hiring donkey carts to fetch water from the lake. This is very expensive and unhygienic. With a solar powered water supply system our health centre patients will get constant, clean water for their use, and the whole community will benefit."



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"True glory is that which will last eternally, and to reach it, it isn't necessary to perform striking works but to hide oneself and practice virtue in such a way that the left hand knows not what the right is doing." - *St Therese*

In our modern age of materialism and selfishness, when so many are searching for an authentic spirituality, Therese's little way of simple love for God and others has a powerful appeal. Perhaps we too can join her on the 'little way'.

**All Little Way benefactors share in a daily Mass offered for their intentions in the Missions.**

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