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The Irish Catholic



LOCKDOWN?
LOCKOUT

Irish people are being denied their constitutional right Page 8

NUALA O'LOAN

'Dignity' bill contains little protection for the vulnerable Page 9



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Govt urged to heed public frustration over Mass ban

Ruadhán Jones and Jason Osborne

Bishops have warned that they "won't be able to bring people with us" unless the Government heeds the calls of the faithful for a return of public worship.

All public worship is banned under levels 3 to 5 – as it stands, following the six-week lockdown the country is expected to return to level 3 which means Masses will still not restart.

Bishop Kevin Doran criticised the lack of serious consideration given by the Government to the rights and needs of the Faithful.

"There seems to be no awareness that people are not just material organisms, that we are also spiritual and our spiritual health also needs to be nourished and for most practicing Catholics that comes from gathering together to listen to the word of God and to take part in Communion," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

Bishop Doran questioned why there is no "graduated approach" to public worship, in line with the five levels proposed by Government.

"We can accept that the churches can be closed for public worship in extreme circumstances such as level 5," Dr Doran said. "But why does that same level of closure apply at level 3? The point that we made as bishops when we met together was that our coming together isn't simply a gathering, it's a part of actually what constitutes us as the People of God."

'Dismissive'

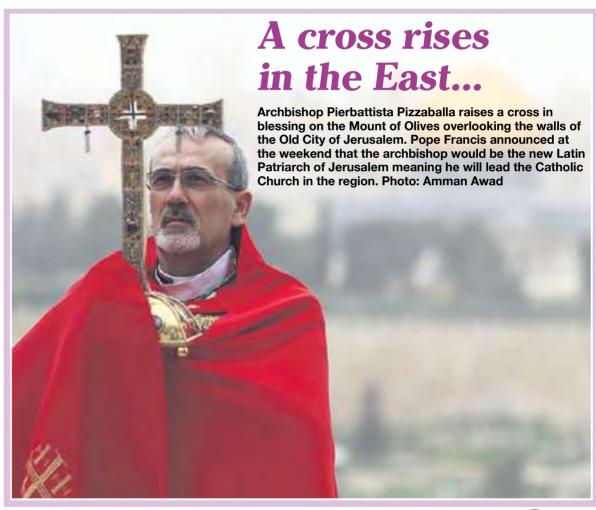
Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan has also been critical of the Government's approach to public worship, describing it as "dismissive".

"After trojan work on behalf of priests and people to make our church buildings ultra-safe with regard to Covid-19, the Faithful are again prevented from going to Mass," the bishop of Waterford and Lismore said. "The reasoning for this has not been given in any adequate way. A dismissive one-liner is not good enough."

Bishop Cullinan said that the restrictions are causing "huge frustration among people of faith because they feel prevented from worshipping as they need to".

He added that while the Government has a very difficult job, "it must hear the message loud and clear that lockdown is crushing many people including people of faith who believe that the practice of one's faith in public is an essential service". "I believe that we in the Church, have taken these restrictions far too easily

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Pope Francis steers towards middle ground PAGES 16 & 17



ON THE RIGHT WAVELENGTH

Carrying out the maternal mission of Radio Maria PAGE 34



DAVID QUINN

It's time Christians began to talk about sex PAGE 10



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Fr Ron Rolheiser

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Niamh Uí Bhriain

Shocking truth about euthanasia in Holland





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WHATEVER
IT TAKES

Government should do the decent thing and let people gather for Mass

Editor's Comment

Michael Kelly

efore Covid-19, about a third of Irish people reported that they attended a religious ceremony at least once a week. Some 100,000 people went to Mass every single day before the pandemic restrictions were imposed.

When we entered level three, all public worship was banned – the only country in Europe to do so (Wales has since imposed such a ban but only for two weeks). Now that we're at level five with a hoped-for return to level three in early December the prospects for midnight Mass this year look particularly bleak.

Not since penal times did Irish Catholics face the prospect of being unable to celebrate the birth of Christ in their churches.

Many priests and parishioners I have spoken to are bewildered and increasingly angry. They know that thousands of volunteers moved heaven and earth to ensure that there could be a safe return to public Masses.

Frustration

The sense of frustration increases when we look at believers in countries all across Europe – many with much higher rates of transmission than here – attending religious ceremonies in small numbers while wearing masks and keeping their distance and wonder why the ban here.

In the North, First Minister Arlene Foster has insisted that public worship should continue. "There is no evidence that there is transmission of the virus in places of worship," she said told BBC Radio Ulster. "Freedom of worship is a fundamental right that we all want to protect...in terms of going to church, people are very responsible: wearing masks, social distancing, abiding by all the regulations – that is why we are not interfering with basic

People say, but surely Mass is on the television...but it is a very poor substitute for meeting in person"

right of freedom of worship,"

she said.

Neither the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) nor the Government have indicated that places of worship are a problem in the Republic. Neither have they indicated what (if any) epidemiological evidence they have that has led to the restriction of worship here that experts all across Europe have felt unnecessary.

People say, but surely Mass is on the television? This is true, and welcome solace for many people. But, much like a Zoom call can help keep us in contact with our families – it is a very poor substitute for meeting in person.

Church leaders are due to meet Taoiseach Micheál

Martin to discuss their concerns. They have been much more robust than at the time of the first lockdown and this is because they saw the effects of that on their communities. When the meeting goes ahead, they need to bring the concerns of ordinary priests and parishioners to the Government. It's a disenchantment felt by many religious people who, as a demographic, are fairly compliant and law-abiding people. The continued ban on public worship, without any evidence being presented to support such a ban, risks undermining the

confidence of such people

in the broader restrictions being rolled out to try to slow the spread of the virus.

The Republic is an outlier and along with Wales remains the only part of Europe where religious ceremonies are banned. Practice is not what it was, but faith makes a huge impact on the lives of so many people in this country. The Government should do the decent thing and let people of faith do as they were doing - gathering safely in their holy places to worship their God together.

(1) To join Friends of The Irish Catholic and support Catholic journalism, please fill in the form on page 11. You can also phone 01 6874094 for more information or to make a contribution



Mark McDonnell presented a cheque for £700 on behalf of the Catholic Knights at Queen's University Belfast to Kate Meenagh from Ask Majella Pregnancy Support Service at their Belfast office on Wellington Park.



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Catholic group expresses desire to be patron of new secondary schools

Ruadhán Jones

CEIST, a Catholic patron body that includes Mercy and Presentation schools, are looking to provide "highquality Catholic education" for two new schools in Meath and Wexford.

The Department for Education are currently seeking patrons for schools in Gorey, Co. Wexford, and Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath, to be opened

The Department have asked parents to vote for their preference online, with CEIST, Educate Together

Fr John Carroll, spokesperson for the Diocese of Ferns which includes Gorey, said that he was delighted CEIST have expressed their interest.

"We hope they're successful with their bid, really," he said. "They have a good record, they stand for values and a Faith outlook that not only do we support but that we promote as well.

Respected

'Whatever people can say about Catholicism, when it comes to education or healthcare, Catholicism is not only a major provider, but an inter-

nationally well respected provider. Catholic education is a very sought after product throughout the world. We're lucky to have so much of it in abundance locally.'

Tradition

CEIST CEO Clare Ryan said they expressed interest following calls from parents, and have committed to continuing "a very long tradition of providing really high-quality Catholic education in Ireland".

'We're interested in setting up a school in Gorey because parents have asked us to," Ms Ryan said. "We're tradition of education that is provided through the joint patrons of the Community School.

'Parents want more of that – they want the kind of education that a Catholic Trust such as our own can provide. Catholic education is a global brand with the highest of reputa-

Although CEIST is a relatively new body. Ms Ryan is confident that they can continue to meet the high standards expected of Catholic education.

'We're tried, tested and trusted." she said.

'Heed public'

» Continued from Page 1

and have not paid sufficient attention to the huge cost of these restrictions for ordinary people in different ways - spiritually, mentally and economically.

Meanwhile, the homily of an Irish priest has gone viral after he decried the denial of the Irish people's right to worship.

"With the stroke of a pen, the Government can abolish that [right to worship]," Fr Seán Mulligan of Carrickmacross, Co. Monagahan told The Irish Catholic.

"A lot of people have been expressing concern for what's happening. Many people have their whole life centred around the sacraments, and that's been taken from them.'

Attention

Though Fr Mulligan's homily has spread widely, he says that ultimately it will be down to the work of the bishops to bring this to the Government's attention.

"They're not going to listen to me, a priest in Carrickmac-

"We need that voice coming from the bishops, the authority in the Church," he said. "They are the shepherds.'

Faith helped me deal with false allegations, says Cliff Richard I don't know how to get out of this pit', he said. Staff reporter "And suddenly my legs just wobbled, went wobbly and I went to the floor. Sir Cliff Richard said his faith sustained him After being found by his close friend Fr after being "in a pit" of despair following a John McElynn, Sir Cliff came to understand claim in 2014 of historical sexual assault. that God believed in him and his innocence. Sir Cliff appeared on Piers Morgan's Life Sir Cliff said: "And he [Fr McElvnn] - he Stories and opened up on the devastation just said to me, 'did you do this?' And I said, caused by the incident, recalling how he was 'of course not'. He said, 'then I believe you, left crumpled and sobbing on the kitchen floor. God believes you, stand up. You can do

'I had fallen down because what I had thought was, 'oh my God I'm in a, in a pit, and

Priest behind viral homily asks bishops to speak up

Jason Osborne

A priest whose homily went viral this week has asked the bishops to speak up about the restriction to public worship currently in place in Ireland.

Fr Seán Mulligan of Carrickmacross Parish gave a homily last Sunday which unexpectedly went viral overnight in Catholic internet circles. In it, he criticised the extent to which the Covid-19 measures restrict freedom of worship, even when it is done as safely as possible in the midst of the current pan-

Speaking to The Irish Catholic, Fr Mulligan expressed his

surprise at the distances his homily has reached. "I'm not on social media, so I haven't seen the reaction to it," he said, continuing, "the homily was intended for the parishioners, those tuning into the Mass."

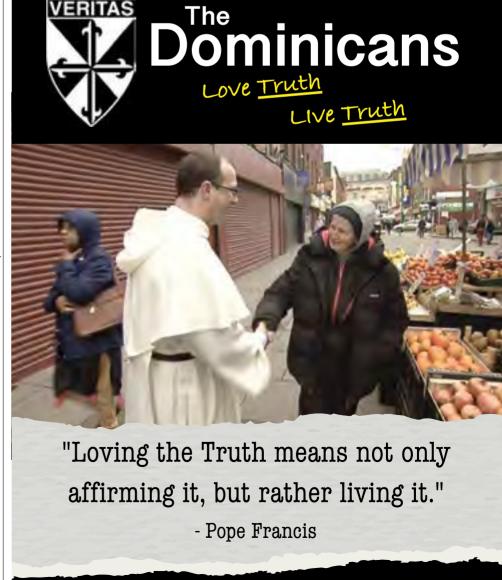
However, the message resonated with many of the Faithful in Ireland, with a video of the homily shared widely on Facebook and Twitter. "A lot of people have been expressing concern for what's happening," Fr Mulligan shared. "Many people have their whole life centred around the sacraments, and that's been taken from them."

He explained that he couldn't remain silent on the issue of religious restrictions, especially when the religious persecution in the country's past is considered: "I don't want to dishonour the memory of the men, women, and children who died for freedom from religious persecution by remaining silent. "With the stroke of a pen, the Government can abolish that [right to worship]," he said. Turning to the bishops, he

said "They're not going to listen to me, a priest in Carrickmacross. We need that voice coming from the bishops, the authority in the Church.'

"They're the shepherds," he said.

See page 8.



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4 News

Bishop Brennan exhorts Faithful to 'keep heart, be heart, give heart!'

Jason Osborne

Bishop Denis Brennan has said that the "continued existence of church closures" needs to be "revisited and amended" in his letter encouraging solidarity in the "age of coronavirus" for the month of November.

The Bishop of Ferns asked that people do more than "what is simply right at present", saying "Let us as Church go the second mile."

Homing in on the continued closure of churches, he said, "One thing that has become abundantly clear in recent times, is the need to revisit and amend the continued existence of church closures for public worship, as implemented from level 3. Being the only place in Europe where church closure exists in this instance, is clearly sufficient reason

to revisit the matter, to reassess its necessity and to re-examine its appropriateness, and to consider the positive benefits of its being lifted."

Advice

In the meantime, his advice to the Faithful was not to lose heart and to stand together in solidarity. He applauded those whose efforts to this point have continued to hold communities together, such as volunteers, good neighbours, priests and parish councils.

Bishop Brennan also highlighted the special role the month of November must play this year as those who died of the coronavirus and their families are remembered, encouraging the laity to join him online as he leads a service of remembrance at the Enniscorthy Cathedral at 3pm on November 1.

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Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Joe Kavanagh as he placed a wreath in memory of Terence MacSwiney and Joseph Murphy in St Finbarr's Cemetery, Cork, accompanied by Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin and Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson.

Just six outbreaks connected with religious ceremonies

Chai Brady

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has said he will challenge authorities to provide evidence that attendance at religious ceremonies is linked to the spread of coronavirus.

It comes as data reveals that since the beginning of the pandemic there have been just six outbreaks of the virus connected with what the Government describes as 'religious/other' ceremonies. The revelation comes from the Department of Health despite the fact that tens of thousands of Masses including weddings, funeral and first Holy Communion ceremonies have taken place since churches reopened at the end of June.

The low number connected with such ceremonies

The Poor Clares of Arundel,

Sussex have hit No.1 in the

official UK classical album

charts following the release

World, was released last

week on Decca Records and

stormed up the iTunes and

Amazon UK albums charts,

peaking at #1 and #2 respec-

The album has also taken

the No.1 position in both the

Classical Artist Album Chart

and Classical Specialist Album

reaction has come of some-

thing as a surprise to Sr

Gabriel Davison of the Poor

Clares. She said: "We are

thrilled that our music has

The overwhelming public

tively earlier this week.

The album, Light for the

Ruadhán Jones

of their debut album.

is likely to put further pressure on the Government to relax the strict restrictions imposed on faith communities at level three and above. No other country in Europe except Wales has moved to ban religious ceremonies in response to a fresh upsurge in the pandemic and restrictions in Wales are due to last for only two weeks.

Minister Donnelly told

Minister Donnelly told the Dáil that he would "challenge NPHET to provide the evidence again [for the ban on public worship] because I agree that this is a major imposition".

Outbreaks

Poor Clare nuns making a habit of

Data released by the department in the Republic reveals that outbreaks traced back to religious ceremonies are lower than the vast majority of other locations and events

listed. There were five open outbreaks and one with a closure status at the time. The department does not release data on which religious denomination the ceremonies that led to outbreaks are connected with. It also does not list what the so-called 'other' ceremonies refer to.

The data reveals that the largest number of outbreaks were recorded as originating from a private house, with 3,982 outbreaks in total.

Other locations with high numbers include nursing homes, in which there were 311 outbreaks in total, 229 in residential institutions, 198 in workplaces, 118 community outbreaks, 133 related to extended family and 137 in hospitals.

Overall, across all outbreak locations, there were 5,590 Covid-19 outbreaks.

chart success

NEWS IN BRIEF

Death of Presentation Sisters' Provincial Sr Anne Coffey mourned

The Presentation Sisters in the Cork area and beyond are mourning the death of one of their leadership team, Sr Anne Coffey. She was a native of Enniskeane Parish and is also mourned by her three brothers and their extended families.

Sr Anne answered that call as an educator and was a member of the Presentation Sisters community in Crosshaven. In more recent years, as well as serving in a number of roles in leadership in her community, Sr Anne served the parish community of Carrigaline where she lived.

Sr Anne died on Sunday at Marymount Hospice.

'Medjugorje visionaries' former spiritual director excommunicated

A dismissed Franciscan priest who had been the spiritual director to six people who said they experienced visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Medjugorje has been excommunicated.

Tomislav Vlasic, who was dismissed from the priesthood in 2009, was excommunicated on July 15 by a decree of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican. It was announced this week by the Diocese of Brescia, Italy, where he lives.

The diocese said that since his dismissal, Mr Vlasic "has continued to carry out apostolic activities with individuals and groups, through conferences and online; he has continued to present himself as a religious and priest of the Catholic Church, simulating the celebration of sacraments".

'Pain and anguish' after sealing of Mother and Baby Homes records

The bishop of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore has said the decision to seal the records of the Commission of Investigation into the Mother and Baby Homes for 30 years "has caused a lot of pain and anguish". Bishop Phonsie Cullinan said it "is a very serious matter" and the "full truth needs to come out".

"We must not be afraid of the truth. Where wrong has occurred, this must be fully acknowledged," he said.

"The recent decision to seal the records for 30 years has caused a lot of pain and anguish. I hope that the full truth will emerge from this investigation and due care be given to all the facts so that the past can be acknowledged, and hope given for the future."

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The Poor Clares of Arundel listening back to their work.

touched the hearts of the public and has reached No.1 in the Classical Chart.

"We hope Light for the

World will bring you peace, joy and a sense of calm as you cope during these difficult times of isolation and stress."

Comment | 5

She is everything we aspired to



Judge Amy Coney Barrett.

ver since I became interested in feminism - it was back in 1967, while in New York - I've observed that feminists have been concerned with one prevailing issue.

This was sometimes defined as 'having it all' - the founder-editor of modern Cosmopolitan magazine Helen Gurley Brown coined that phrase. The British author Shirley Conran called the syndrome 'Superwoman'. Hundreds of books have been written about the issue - including one I wrote myself (which wasn't very good, but it articulated the

And the question was this: how can a woman achieve the goal of a fulfilling career, even a top-ranking career, while also being a mother and a spouse? How can she juggle that difficult

Motherhood

Previous generations of women told me that they were often forced to choose between a career and motherhood. Back in the 40s and 50s, there were quite a few women in important and fulfilling jobs, but they were nearly always single. And they were scarcely ever mothers. Occasionally, there

Mary Kenny

business endeavour, but she would usually be older with the children off her hands.

We looked for rolemodels everywhere, and we found a few. We also found that sometimes there was a cost. The marriage went bust. The kids were in trouble. 'Juggling' became an obsession for women of my generation, and younger, in our quest to 'have it all'. And we greatly admired women who got it right. In time, this was canonised into official language as 'work-life balance'.

Where is the applause for this woman who has achieved this flawless 'Superwoman' goal?"

And now, in the world's most influential nation, we have at last a perfect role-

model for 'Superwoman'. Amy Coney Barrett could have been invented by a utopian writer to represent the ideal of 'Superwoman': a brilliant education, a stellar legal career, an apparently successful marriage and seven children, including two adopted orphans from Haiti. One of her children also has special needs. And, although it shouldn't matter, but in a visual age it does, she also looks attractive and well-presented.

Feminists

She has now attained one of the great offices of the US, as a Justice of the US Supreme

But where is the applause for this woman who has achieved this flawless 'Superwoman' goal? Nowhere, that I can find, among feminists in general. Nowhere, that I can find, among the mainstream media. Reportage of her achievements has focused,

almost obsessively, on carping about her religious faith (as a Catholic), and warnings that she will undo Roe vs Wade, the federal abortion ruling introduced

ACB has stated that she will act entirely in accordance with the law and the constitution, but she herself has been judged before she has even taken her seat. She is an emblem of the 'Superwoman' we strove to see, but she has also become an exemplar of a one-sided, mean-spirited, and bigoted narrative in the public realm.



How an eye op opened up a new way of thinking

It often happens that a minor ordeal opens our imaginations to the challenges, even suffering, that other people face.

I was apprehensive about having an eye cataract operation last weekend. The thought of a surgeon extracting a part of one's eye, and then replacing it with

a plastic lens, can be a mite scary. But as I checked into the clinic, I heard my mother's words of long ago: "Be grateful that you can have a cataract operation. Wouldn't it be worse if it wasn't available?

Indeed so: my left eye has been blurry all year.

growing increasingly

Pressure

The op was managed very well, and so much is going on during the procedure, you don't really know what's happening: it's all bright lights and a strange feeling of optical

The challenges came afterwards. For two weeks I mustn't bend down, and for four weeks I mustn't do anything strenuous (like using the vacuum cleaner), or lift any heavy

objects. Everyday tasks such as taking out the garbage can't be undertaken. Feeding the cat was a problem - not bending to the floor to fill her food dish. Loading the washing machine needed careful movement. Even opening the low-level fridge door required planning.

Obstacle race

Able-bodied people take for granted that we can easily perform ordinary tasks. But what an obstacle race so many of those ordinary tasks must be for the disabled.

Being barred from doing these things easily truly opens your eyes. I also reflected on the difficulties of those who went blind in later life - including Eamon de Valera and James Joyce [pictured].

Yet, we develop coping strategies: in reaching lower cupboards, I've managed something between a curtsy and a ballet plié in carefully bending my knees while keeping the torso upright.

I've learned to feed the cat by sitting down and delivering the food in a backwards manoeuvre.

But I'm still aware that I have to think, think, think before I make a move - and that's been the real insight.





The Vigils will be live-streamed at: www.knockshrine.ie

'The Boss' praises Catholic upbringing on Late Late

Chai Brady

Music legend Bruce Springsteen [pictured] who was brought up a Catholic said he "wouldn't change anything about the way I grew up" when asked about his Faith.

'The Boss' also said he has faith and the Bible has been



"incorporated into so much" of his music, in an appearance on *The Late Late Show* last week.

Speaking via Zoom, presenter Ryan Tubridy

asked Springsteen about a statement he made previously, in which he said "once a Catholic, always a Catholic".

Answering he said that he has faith but he isn't religious, and that "you can get away from your religion but you cannot get away from your faith, that's my observation over the years".

"There's a little bit of truth in that once you are part of the team, once they nail you those first six years of your schooling, they got you for good in some way or another," he continued.

"I've incorporated into so much of my music Biblical language and spiritual concerns are in so many of my songs that I live with it very easily now. I wouldn't change anything about the way I grew up."

Pope's words on civil-unions don't conflict with Church teaching, theologian says

Jason Osborne

The Pope's words on same-sex civil-unions aren't a departure from Church teaching, a leading theologian has said.

In a statement, Fr Eamonn Conway of Mary Immaculate College said: "The Church's stance towards civil unions is a matter of prudential judgement and not one of dogma.

"This recent statement by Pope Francis is not to be misunderstood as a change in the Church's teaching on homosexuality or on marriage. Pope Francis teaches consistently that marriage can only be validly contracted between a man and a woman," he added.

Partnerships

He raised the point that Pope Francis has departed from his immediate predecessors in his approach towards civil unions and partnerships, as he believes civil legal protections ought to be afforded to same-sex unions.

Pope Francis first voiced support for legal recognition of civil unions in 2010.

"He urged his fellow bishops in

Argentina to join with him in an effort to prevent the introduction of samesex marriage," Dr Conway explained.

Having seen the social isolation and familial exclusion that gay people were subjected to in Argentina, "Pope Francis developed his reasons for recognising civil unions when he stated that the Church 'needs to acknowledge the great variety of family situations that can offer a certain stability'," Dr Conway said.

"His remarks this week are consistent with this view. Life partners, whether in a sexual relationship or not, will often have supported each other intensely and may well have made profound sacrifices for one another throughout their lives.

"They have earned the right to some level of recognition and civil protection of their relationship when it comes to important decisions, for instance, such as deciding important matters like medical intervention, inheritance and so on."

Pope Francis comments were pastorally motivated by what he calls "the logic of the Gospel", Fr Conway concluded.



True love can take its time...

Offaly couple John Bermingham (86) and his now-wife, Mary Long (83) exchanged vows amid the pandemic more than 40 years after they first met. Asked about a happy future together, Mary joked, "I said to him yesterday: 'John, I think we'll have to start saying our prayers properly

Catholic NI schools must stay open says CCSM

Staff reporter

Everything must be done to make sure that schools in the North reopen next week to avoid "repercussions for years to come" according to the Chief Executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCSM).

Writing in *The Irish News*, Gerry Campbell said the CCSM is "extremely concerned" about the immediate impact on young people but also the

longer-term effects of the pandemic on the current cohort of pupils.

"The impact on the economy, communities and wider society is likely to have repercussions for years to come and education, in particular, faces significant obstacles and difficulties," he said.

"The road ahead will continue to present many challenges and it is clear that we must all pull together to support our leaders and staff in schools so that they can do their utmost to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and continue to provide the best possible start in life for all of our children and young people."

Mr Campbell said that Catholic maintained schools have been "very successful in providing a balanced and holistic education to thousands of young people", adding this has continued throughout the pandemic despite the changed circumstances.

The efforts of schools have been "phenomenal" to tackle Covid-19 challenges, he said.

"As we progress into the coming months, the challenges for our schools will become more complex. Our schools need a clear pathway that will support them to minimise the longerterm impacts on the educational progression and wellbeing of our young people as we all work through the remainder of this pandemic."

Light for November: a time to remember loved ones

Many of us will be familiar with the opening lines of Thomas Hood's delightful poem...

"I remember, I remember the house where I was born, The little window where the sun peeped in at morn."

Less familiar and less cheerful are his lines about November...

"No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,

No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds – November."

November in the northern hemisphere is the sombre month when nature enters its winter sleep and summer's vigorous sap returns to the roots in the earth.

In the old Celtic calendar there were two gates of the year. The first day of May was called Bealtaine, a festival of fire, frolics and fun to celebrate entering into the bright half of the year. Six months later, the first day of November, Samhain, opened the gate into the dark and cold side of life. It was thought that the dividing threshold between our physical world and the invisible world of the spirits was suspended



on that night called Oiche Samhna, the night of darkness. It was a night when pranks were done to frighten people, suggesting that unseen, malevolent spirits were at work. It was a scary night.

Christian light

This dark November, greatly restricted as we are under the regulations of level five, we need a ray of good news. The Good News came to Ireland in the Christian message which brought a more cheerful message of love and hope to replace the terrors of the dark unknown. I feel disappointed at the way the commercialisation of the yearly feasts has brought back the scary witches and broomsticks. Hallowe'en has lost its meaning as the Eve of All Saints.

Our Celtic ancestors, by and large, were immediately attracted

to the beautiful story of the incarnation, culminating in Christ's resurrection opening up the gate of heaven. The terror of Samhain was replaced by the hope of heaven. On the Feast of All Saints I hope you can listen to a streamed Mass and take to heart these words of St John: "Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children, and that is what we are. We are already the children of God but what we are in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.'

Theologians call this the beatific vision. So, on the first day of November we celebrate All Saints, those people canonised or uncanonised, who have been taken to the loving arms of God. Life is changed, not ended. The saints are signs of hope for us and the good example of their lives can inspire us to a better life.

Stained-glass windows

I like to think of the saints as stained-glass windows. An

ordinary window lets in the sunlight but the stained-glass window gives colour, shape and story to the light.

The saints in their various ways show us how to live the Christian life. Pope St John Paul II took great delight in declaring new saints and blessed because, at a time when scandals are rampant, the saints manifest the holiness of the Church. He often spoke of the lived theology of the saints. They gave human shape, story and colour to the light of God.

The words of the poet Longfellow can be applied to the

"Lives of great men all remind us We can make our lives sublime, And, departing, leave behind us, Footprints on the sands of time."

They inspire us by their holy lives, instruct us by their teaching and give us their protection in answer to our prayers. St Thérèse of Lisieux promised: "I want to spend my heaven doing good on

This November let us forget the scary witches and recall the light of our beautiful Christian faith. "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered our imagination all that God has prepared for those who love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

Prayer of the Alexian Brothers

In the comfort of your love, I pour out to you, my Saviour, the memories that haunt me, the anxieties that perplex me, the fears that stifle me, the sickness that prevails upon me, and the frustration of all the pain that weaves about within me.

Lord, help me to see your peace in my turmoil. Your compassion in my sorrow, your forgiveness in my weakness, and your love in my need. Touch me, O Lord, with your healing power and strength. Amen (Written by Dr Jerry Loch for the Alexian Brothers, a Congregation founded in the 12th Century to minister to people during a plague).

(1) Extract from Silvester O'Flynn, Gospel Reflections and Prayers, Columba Books.



ACN IRELAND

WEEKOFWITNESS

FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

25 November - 1 December (Red Wednesday)

very year, from November 25th to **December 1st**, ACN Ireland invites parishes across the country to join us in holding a Week of Witness for suffering and persecuted Christians.

This special week in the life of the Church involves important talks and exhibitions throughout the island of Ireland on the theme of Christian persecution.

This year, we invite you to join us online as we, both as a Church and as a Nation, together face the challenges of COVID-19. This year, we pray especially for religious freedom - in Ireland as well as abroad. The inviolable right to religious liberty is increasingly taken for granted and suppressed across the world, especially against Christians.

During the Week of Witness, ACN Ireland will also hold the Red Wednesday Prayer Vigil with the prayerful assistance of dioceses and parishes

throughout the country, from which many services will be livestreamed. Though we cannot do so in person, this Red Wednesday is still an opportunity for the faithful to gather together online as a community of worshippers to publicly affirm their thanks to God, their spiritual union with persecuted Christians and to pray for those who persecute the Church and Her faithful.

PLEASE JOIN US AT ACNIRELAND.ORG FOR THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEWS:

- Red Wednesday, November 25th, 8pm -**Livestream interview with George Weigel** hosted by Maria Steen.
- Thursday, November 26th, 8pm Livestream interview with Fr. Peter Johnson hosted by David Quinn.
- Friday, November 27th, 8pm Livestream interview with Lord David Alton hosted by Wendy Grace.

For more details on other events visit acnireland.org/witness

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8 | Comment The Irish Catholic, October 29, 2020



We are gradually moving towards a totalitarian approach to government where our freedom is slowly being stripped away from us, writes Fr Seán Mulligan

t's a short Gospel today with a very powerful message: the great commandment of love. irst of all, love of God and, secondly, love of neighbour.

We read that one of the scribes puts a question to Jesus. He asks him: "Master, which is the greatest commandment of the law?" The Jews followed strict observance to a series of commandments laid out in the Torah, which is the first five books of the Bible. In fact, there are 613 laws listed in the Torah, including the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments.

But Jesus doesn't list any of these in his answer. Instead, he responds by reciting the Shema, which is a prayer from Chapter Six of the Book of Deuteronomy, which devout Jews recited several times each day. It was a kind of creed for them, the defining belief that must never be forgotten. "Shema, Yisrael. Listen, O Israel. The Lord, our God, is one Lord. You must love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.

Then Jesus adds an additional commandment - "you must love your neighbour as yourself" - which he takes from Chapter 19 of the Book of Leviticus. He says that on these two commandments hang the whole

So Jesus is clearly stating that all law, human and divine, must be centred on these two great commandments: first of all, love of God and, secondly, love of neighbour. If we neglect the first and greatest of these commandments, namely love of God. then all subsequent laws are open to error because they're not founded on the source of all truth and love, namely Jesus Christ.

Relevant

That's what's happening in our world today. God is no longer seen as relevant and is increasingly being eliminated from civilisation with the end result of immoral and unjust laws in our society. We are gradually moving towards a totalitarian approach to government where our freedom is slowly being stripped away from us, our freedom to travel, to come and go as we please, our freedom to come together as a family with friends in our own home, our freedom to peaceful protest and even our freedom to practice our Faith in public.

So what has happened to Catholic Ireland? If we look at the pream-

The Irish people are being denied their constitutional right to practice their Faith in public



"In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, from whom is all authority and to whom as our final end, all actions, both of man and states, must be referred, we, the people of Éire, humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our divine Lord, Jesus Christ, who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial, gratefully remembering the heroic and unremitting struggle to regain the rightful independence of our nation and seeking to promote the common good with due observance of prudence, justice and charity, so that the dignity and freedom of the individual may be assured, true social order attained, the unity of our country restored and concord established with other nations, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution." Preamble to Bunreacht na hÉireann

ble to the 1937 Constitution, which states as follows: "In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, from whom is all authority and to whom as our final end, all actions, both of man and states, must be referred, we, the people of Éire, humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our divine Lord, Jesus Christ, who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial, gratefully remembering the heroic and unremitting struggle to regain the rightful independence of our nation and seeking to promote the common good with due observance of prudence, justice and charity, so that the dignity and freedom of the individual may be assured, true social order attained, the unity of our country restored and concord established with other nations, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution.'

In Article 44 of that same Constitution, we read: "The State acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to almighty God. It shall hold His name in reverence and shall respect and honour religion."

So what has happened to our country in the intervening 80-plus years since that constitution was promulgated? A constitution founded on and written in the blood of countless Irish men, women and children who gave their lives for freedom from tyranny and religious

We now face a new type of tyranny and persecution from within, whereby the Irish people are being denied their constitutional right to practice their Faith in public. As of Friday, a priest can be jailed for celebrating the Mass in public for the first time since the repeal of the penal laws in 1829. That was during a time of persecution under British rule. Today it's our own Government who are orchestrating this attack on our Faith and on our right to practice it in public.

At a time when hairdressers were still open to the public, our Government decided to close our churches to public worship"

But unless the Government is planning and holding a referendum to remove Article 44 from our Constitution, then nothing has changed, and what the Government are imposing on us as Christians is a violation of our Constitutional rights.

When Ireland moved to level three a few weeks ago, we became the only country in Europe where public worship was prohibited as part of the Government's Covid-19 restrictions. No other country in Europe at that time was adopting this extreme measure of denying the people their right to practice their Faith in public, or preventing us in

our duty to give public worship to Almighty God. Since then, only Wales in recent

years has followed suit by taking the decision to close their churches for a two-week period in what they refer to as a firebreak.

The Church went way beyond what was basically required in an effort to ensure the safety of parishioners with the result that there was no evidence of any cases of Covid-19 linked to attending Mass. The Church was the safest place you could be outside of your own home, and what happened? The Government closed down our churches anyway. At a time when hairdressers and beauty salons were still open to the public, our Government decided to close our churches to public worship.

Then, as you know, on Wednesday night, we moved to level five, and so we're now faced with another six weeks of the Faithful being denied the sacraments of the Church, at the end of which there's a possibility of a return to level three, which in theory means our churches will still be closed for public worship.

There's something gravely wrong with a society where God is not seen as essential but off-licenses and abortion clinics are, or where a hundred people can freely mix and walk through a supermarket, but parishioners cannot sit two meters apart in a church and participate in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

We now live in the most anti-Christian, atheistic country in Europe. The land of saints and scholars is long since gone and has been replaced with the land of apostates and unbelievers. When do you ever hear our political leaders speak of God? Never. God is a forbidden subject, a name only to be spoken within the confines of a church building or in the privacy of your own home. He's certainly not welcome in the chambers of Dáil Éireann.

But Jesus says: "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my father who is in heaven." We must not allow what's happening in our country to alter our relationship with God. We must listen to the words of Jesus in today's Gospel and place God first in our lives.

Follower

Love is always self-giving, never self-seeking. So if we truly love God, then we must give our whole lives to him without expecting anything in return. For those who love God, Jesus doesn't say we never have to suffer in this life. In fact, he says that if we want to be a follower of his, we must pick up our cross every day and follow him.

But if we follow these two simple commandments of love, if we do that, no matter what cross we have to carry in this life, whether it be the cross of illness or suffering or rejection and persecution or any other cross, we'll always experience a true peace, which can only come from knowing and loving God.

Fr Seán Mulligan is a priest of Carrickmacross parish in the diocese of

66 What the Government are imposing on us as Christians is a violation of our Constitutional rights"

Nuala O'Loan

The View



Hopefully you have never known these feelings, never experienced such fears and emotions. Yet many people have, including some people who suffer from terminal and serious illnesses, people with life limiting disabilities, people who are moving into the nightmare of dementia in its various forms, and those who are simply growing too old to be able to care for themselves as they would wish to do.

As a caring society, surely compassion, empathy and humanity demand that we do all we can to support such people: to provide adequate, focused medical and therapeutic support; to ensure appropriate forms of living respecting the dignity of each individual; to make available hospice, residential or nursing care to those who need it. Yet we know that appropriate care is not available to all who need it. It costs money, sometimes a lot of money – a problem in a world of competing needs.

Lethal drugs

At the moment the Dying with Dignity Bill is going through the Dáil. It provides that doctors will be licensed to supply or administer lethal drugs to terminally ill people who ask for them and who meet certain conditions. Both euthanasia and assisted suicide are provided for in this very short bill; they are described as "assisted dying".

The people of Ireland need to know what is contained in this bill so that they can speak up against it.

Terminal illness is defined as "an incurable and progressive illness which cannot be permanently reversed by treatment, and the person is likely to die as a result of that illness or complications arising' from it. It is not limited to terminal cancers, but would also include conditions such as some types of muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's disease, MS, some forms of diabetes and some heart disease (which can often be so managed and treated that

The Dying with Dignity bill contains little protection for the vulnerable



people can live for years, even decades), and some forms of dementia. This is a huge range of conditions, many of which are not normally understood to be "terminal".

All that would be required to enable someone to ask for assisted suicide or euthanasia is that the person is terminally ill as described in the previous paragraph, is over 18, has been resident in Ireland for one year and has made a declaration of a clear and settled intention to end their own life.

To sign a declaration a person must have capacity, which is to be assessed on the basis of his or her ability to understand the nature and consequences of such a decision in the context of the available choices at the time the decision is made. If necessary, the bill says an explanation can be given "in a way that is appropriate to his or her circumstances (whether using simple language, visual aids or any other means)".

This debate is about public safety, not about personal morality..."

The reality of course is that prolonged illness, pain and loss of dignity can weaken people, sap their strength and their zest for life for a while, but not people sage in permanently.

necessarily permanently.
It may well diminish their ability to make an informed decision, as may learning difficulties. It will be very difficult under this proposed law to protect people from making such decisions in moments of depression, for example. Whilst such decisions can be changed, that does not always happen.

In one recent case in the

Netherlands, a woman had made such a declaration and subsequently when the time came for her to be euthanised, appeared to understand what was happening to her and struggled against it. She was held down and killed. The doctor was prosecuted but acquitted.

Baroness Ilora Finlay, an international expert in palliative medicine, opposes legal change such as Ireland's new bill: "This is not, as some allege, about religion. While many people with religious beliefs oppose legalisation of assisted suicide, so do many with no such beliefs. This debate is about public safety, not about personal morality."

I, too, oppose assisted suicide and euthanasia on grounds of public safety. l also oppose it because I believe that God made each of us and loves each of us, and that each person makes a unique and often changing contribution to the lives of others, sometimes unknowingly. I oppose it because it is not inevitable that people should die in great pain: proper palliative care, which seeks, "neither to hasten nor to postpone death" and is about care at the end of life, not about ending life, can, in most cases manage pain now.

People have many reasons for seeking assisted suicide: on average more than half of those seeking assisted suicide do so because they fear becoming a burden; they may be pressurised by relatives who do not want money spent on care and their fears may be heightened by the suggestion of pain and lack of dignity; they may be suffering from serious depression; they may have an illness which is treatable, but fear that the treatment will not work. They may not know how much they

are loved and cherished and how important they really are.

The doctor does not need to know the patient"

People have expectations that assisted death will be immediate and peaceful, but the reality is that this is not always the case. It was reported in the journal, Anaesthesia, in 2019 that for all forms of assisted dying, "there appears to be a relatively high incidence of vomiting (up to 10%) prolongation of death (up to seven days) and reawakening from coma (up to 4%), constituting failure of unconsciousness". Such a death will not, therefore

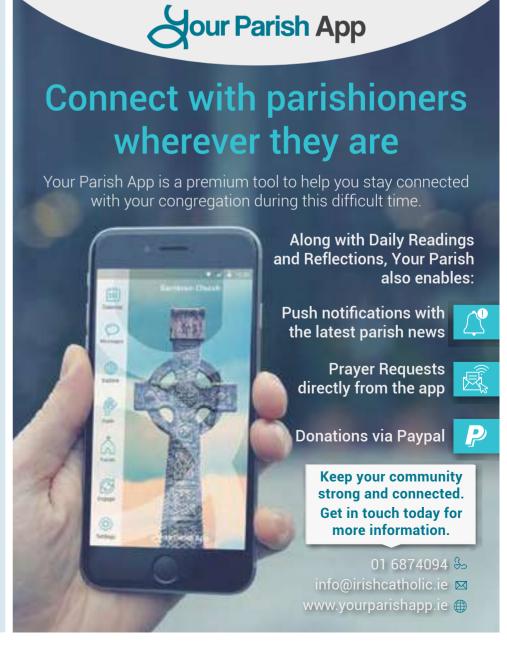
always be simple and pain free.

Ireland's bill contains little protection for the vulnerable. The doctor does not need to know the patient; the patient could come from Northern Ireland where these processes are illegal; there is no requirement for psychiatric or other assessment to determine capacity to make the decision; the fact that the person can retain information only for a short period is not a bar to making such a decision. It is not clear how doctors will ensure that there has been no undue pressure put on the person.

There is no requirement that the two doctors who must sign the declaration are present when it is signed by the person. There is no proper protection for doctors who have a conscientious objection to ending a life – they must refer the person to a doctor who will help them to end their lives.

The doctor only has to stay until the drug has been administered, only has to be "in close proximity but not necessarily in the same room" as a person who is ending their own life, and does not even have to stay until death occurs, whenever that may be.

Those who believe in life and the need to protect the vulnerable must surely speak with compassion and urgency to prevent the passing of this bill, and to keep Ireland a safe place for all her people.







Few things cause Christianity more trouble in the Western world than what it has to say about sexual morality, writes **David Quinn**

ope Francis knows that the gulf between the Church and secular society when it comes to sex is massive and is trying to address it by softening the edges and presentation of that teaching. This partly explains why he supports civil unions for same-sex couples (and anyone else in a caring, dependent relationship), and also why he supports giving Holy Communion in limited circumstances to divorced and remarried Catholics.

We now live in extremely liberal societies, meaning ones that place enormous emphasis on the idea of personal autonomy and choice, including in the sexual arena.

Clash

Many of the clashes between the Church and liberalism have involved laws intended to curb sexual and personal freedom, whether it be the right to divorce, use contraception or have an

When the Church is accused of being against personal autonomy in these specific areas, it is true. It is also accused of being cruel to those who may find themselves trapped in an extremely unhappy marriage, or to a woman who wants to have an abortion because she feels now is not the right time to have a baby.

The Church has lost all these debates because personal freedom is so valued today and because people want to be compassionate, as they see it

as they see it.

The Church also stands accused of being unchristian. Jesus told us to love our neighbours as ourselves but repeatedly the Church has appeared to be on the side of cruelty and oppression.

We now live in extremely liberal societies, meaning ones that place enormous emphasis on the idea of personal autonomy and choice"

These are heavy charges and, unfortunately, they have sometimes been true, because the Church became the enforcer of moral rules, harshly applied.

But does this mean we must give up on the Christian view of sexual morality and simply concede the argument to liberalism, to admit that they have been right all along? Not so fast, because we must first understand what Christian sexual morality is all about, and how liberalism's extreme individualism can have extremely harmful and often cruel effects of its own which must be rigorously scrutinised and critiqued.

Liberalism

Liberalism as applied to sexual morality seeks to maximise personal freedom. That is why it is pro-divorce, pro-contraception, pro-abortion, pro-same-sex marriage. In fact, the only rule liberalism really applies to sex is that it must take place between consenting adults.

What is at the heart of Christian sexual morality isn't really sex at all, but the family, and especially the welfare of children.

When Jesus says we must love our neighbour as ourselves, that means we must sometimes be willing to sacrifice our own immediate interests and desires and freedoms for them. At all times we must never use others as a means to our own ends.

In the sphere of sexual relations that means never using another person, ever, even if they consent to that. We must never objectify another person, or ourselves.

That way, someone is much less likely to feel used or devalued after a sexual encounter. They are far more likely to feel valued.

Enormous female anger at men emerged in the 'Me Too' movement as countless women came forward to speak of being sexually harassed, and worse, by men, who saw them only as objects.

But even when a man does not engage in sexual harassment and does not put a woman under any pressure at all to have sex, how valued is she going to feel the next day if he 'ghosts' her, which is the term for ignoring all attempts to contact someone?

Liberal sexual morality has little to say in response when it teaches that anything goes between consenting adults. It says nothing about the necessity of making the other person feel valued, never mind loving, much less marrying them.

Unfortunately, most people fail to see the deep connection between liberal sexual morality and the way it can makes lots of people, especially women, feel devalued.

It is also self-evident that even in an age of contraception, sex will still often lead to pregnancy. What happens when the pregnancy is unplanned?

If the man doesn't want the baby, he can easily take off. He can 'ghost' the woman. This happens constantly. She then feels unsupported and, in many cases, will opt for abortion. In other cases, she will have the baby, but raising a child on your own is much more challenging than doing so with someone else.

So, once again we see the cruel effects of liberal sexual morality. Freedom and autonomy often lead to many people, women especially, being abandoned when they most need support.

It can also be very cruel towards children. Huge numbers are aborted. Huge numbers never get to know their fathers. Huge numbers experience divorce. Liberalism seems to look at all this as the acceptable price of personal autonomy.

We should not lose confidence in the Christian view of sexual morality because it is needed as much as ever"

But Christianity knows the costs. It knows what happens when sex is detached from a relational context, and it knows the price is paid chiefly by women and children because men can easily walk away from both.

Therefore, Christianity has always placed marriage at the centre of its sexual morality. It wants men and women in sexual relationships to marry, because this greatly increases the odds of them staying together, even today with high divorce rates, and it also greatly increases the odds of a chid being raised by their mother and father under the same roof.

Christianity often imposed its view of sexual morality too harshly, but liberal sexual morality has very cruel effects which are all around us.

We should not lose confidence in the Christian view of sexual morality because it is needed as much as ever. What we need to do instead is understand it much better and become more expert at communicating it. Giving up on our view of sexual morality would, in fact, be a terrible dereliction of duty, and true compassion.

We see the cruel effects of liberal sexual morality. Freedom and autonomy often lead to many people, women especially, being abandoned when they most need support"

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In spite of this time of hardship prayer in the home has been rekindled



Purposeful meetings are life-giving and this is the reason the Northern Pastoral Network continues to meet, writes **Paula McKeown**

n Church circles there are many phrases being bounced around that can leave nothing but negativity ringing between the ears: "The accelerator has been pressed on secularisation."

"The few families that were coming haven't come back."

"We needn't have worried about too few seats."

"People prefer to sit in their pyjamas and watch Mass with a cup of tea."

And so it could continue, if we let it.

Group

However a discerning group, such as the Northern Pastoral Network will not want to tend to the bad spirit alone but seek to find the good spirit and ways to identify the hope and the consolation.

When groups take the time to work on their core purpose they begin their work with commitment and energy"

What is the Northern Pastoral Network? Established in 2009 by the Irish Bishops' Conference it comprises of laypeople, religious and clergy with pastoral responsibilities from the dioceses of Armagh, Clogher, Derry, Down and Connor, Dromore, Kilmore and Raphoe. The Northern Pastoral Network (NPN) spent time in discernment last year to refocus its energy and to identify its purpose for the years ahead. The period of discernment identified three key purposes for the NPN:

- nourishment for ministry;
- opportunities for collaboration;
- and to be a collective voice of hope:

Jim Deeds, from the Diocese of Down and Connor who led the discernment process noted that: "When groups take the time to work on their core purpose



they begin their work with commitment and energy. Taking time to invest in the formation of a group pays dividends; relationships are stronger, there is clarity of purpose and the work is focused and meaningful."

Gathering back together in September the NPN members reflected on the lock-down experience. What were we learning about the Church? Where are the opportunities and potential for growth? Where are the needs?

Support

One clear need that was identified was the need to provide support to those who were bereaved. In March 2020 the traditions upon which we drew solace at the time of a death were snatched from us. We sought to keep our communities safe in the midst of a pandemic. There are many families who by necessity had to relinquish the opportunity to be

with their loved one in their final moments of this life, to hear the stories and words of sympathy at the wake house and to experience the gathering of the community at a Requiem Mass.

Family life is challenged by the death of a loved one, the challenge can feel all the greater when we cannot access support in the usual way.

A second resource is for use on social media, particularly Facebook which connects with so many people"

The NPN members in their reflections on activity in their diocese knew that in spite of this time of hardship prayer in the home has been rekindled. Families are gathering together for prayer

in renewed ways and this is a sign of great hope. When the People of God cannot gather in the parish the deep desire for prayer and connection does not disappear. And so prayer and connection are to be found around the kitchen table, on a facetime call with granny at bedtime or on a family walk surrounded by the grandeur of God.

Resources

And so, this November the NPN has prepared two simple resources for prayer at home. Firstly, a short booklet highlights the month of November as a time to pray for our dearly departed. It marks out our feast days, provides a family prayer service and some additional prayers for this time.

A second resource is for use on social media, particularly Facebook which connects with so many people. Each day in November a prayer will be posted at 8am allowing us to pray for the deceased and the bereaved. The

prayers take on many different themes and as the days grow darker we hope that the prayers will bring consolation and the light of Christ into each of our days.

One clear need that was identified was the need to provide support to those who were bereaved"

Bishop Micheal Router welcomed the publication of this booklet: "The resources included in this booklet are simple and easy to follow and I would encourage all households to mark this special month of remembrance with some time for prayer together. May it bring comfort and solace to many people during the coming days and weeks".

Paula McKeown is Director of Living Church for the Diocese of Down and Connor. This is the first project for the newly constituted group but certainly not the last. If any readers would like to avail of the resources they can connect to www. northernpastoral.network and like on Facebook www.facebook.com/ northernpastoralnetwork

66 A discerning group, such at the Northern Pastoral Network will not want to tend to the bad spirit alone but seek to find the good spirit"





The sense of Sunday still resonates deeply with Christians throughout this country and throughout the world, writes Julie Kavanagh

s a parish cantor. I have been one of the privileged few able to attend Mass on a Sunday throughout this pandemic. I don't take that privilege lightly. I have experienced first-hand the loneliness of joining with a priest celebrant, reader, organist and sacristan to pray the Mass in the virtual company of those with us on webcam. I have witnessed both the huge effort made by parishes to ensure safe public worship and the joy of people when they finally could come to the church, however tentatively, to celebrate Mass together.

When public worship did return it was clear that the Sunday Mass stood out from all the others as the one that parishioners wanted to attend. Parishes who put on extra weekday liturgies and encouraged parishioners to spread the Sunday congregation throughout the week quickly discovered that Sunday was the day people wanted to and needed to celebrate. As Christians,

as Catholics we should not be surprised by this. Indeed, we should be glad that the place of Sunday in the Christian tradition still holds firm among the people.

The power of the final line in the ever-popular Austin Clarke poem, *The Planter's Daughter*, lies in a religious imagination that understands the place of Sunday in people's lives. "As a bell that is rung or a wonder told shyly, and O she was the Sunday in every week." This is the day of worship and rest, the day of dressing in your Sunday best, the day of companionship and ease.

While this sense of Sunday may not be shared universally in the Ireland of today, it still resonates deeply with Christians throughout this country and throughout the world. And with just cause, for Sunday goes to the very core of our Christian DNA. Sunday is the day of the Lord. It is the day when we remember and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, the fundamental event of our Christian Faith. It is the day of Eucharist and of gathering, the day of resting in thankful contemplation of what God has done and continues to do for us.

When public worship did return it was clear that the Sunday Mass stood out from all the others as the one that parishioners wanted to attend"

St John Paul II wrote in his great letter on Sunday in 1998 that "More than a precept, the observance [of Sunday] should be seen as a need rising from the depths of Christian life." As Christians we need to keep Sunday holy. The most obvious and primary way we do this is through our attendance at Mass. But our keeping of Sunday is not limited to or exhausted by Mass. This may be helpful to remember as we find ourselves once more in the painful place of being unable to physically gather for Eucharist on a Sunday. In these circumstances we might ask: What are we to do? What can we do?

Well, the first thing we can do is to remind ourselves that even now we can still keep Sunday holy. We can make decisions and choices about how we keep Sunday, alone or as a family. The Sunday routines we shape for ourselves can continue to nourish us, even as so many of us grieve the loss of receiving the Body of Christ. What might these routines include? Here are a few suggestions to help keep Sunday holy:

- If you can, continue to join with your local parish for Mass via webcam or livestreaming. Alternatively, join in praying the Mass broadcast from another parish or on Television or radio.
- Make an act of spiritual Communion, welcoming Jesus into your very being.
- Take some time to read and reflect on the Sunday readings,

alone or as a family. What is God saying to you today?

- Set this day apart with rest and relaxation. Avoid those chores that can wait for Monday!
- As a day of charity, mark Sunday by reaching out to those who may need you, for example the sick or an elderly neighbour, a parent raising children alone. Remember to support your parish, if you can, by donating online or by other means.
- Visit with family and friends by phone or get to see one another via technologies like Zoom or facetime
- Enjoy the beauty of God's creation with a Sunday walk or spend time in your garden.
- Share family time together.
 Dress your table and share a
 Sunday dinner together, play
 board games, do fun crafts or get out in the garden together.
- Pray a family rosary.
- Visit your parish church to pray privately and to make a connection with the parish.
- Create a personal or family Sunday tradition.

The Sunday routines we shape for ourselves can continue to nourish us, even as so many of us grieve the loss of receiving the Body of Christ"

As so many parishioners are joining in live broadcasts of Sunday, and weekday, Mass it might be helpful to consciously think about how we go about participating in them. These suggestions for praying the Mass via technology may be helpful:

- Dress as you would for Mass.
- Have your technology ready and be on time.
- Turn off any technology that might distract you during the Mass.
- If possible, join in the Mass as a family and have a member light a candle before Mass begins, perhaps beside a cross or another sacred image.
- Share in the responses, prayers and gestures of the Mass.
- Stand for the Gospel and Our Father; kneel as appropriate if you can; share some sign of peace if you are with others.
- Join in the singing.
- At the time of Holy Communion, make an act of spiritual communion.
- And finally, when Mass is ended go in peace from this prayer to live what you have prayed.

In these darkest of days, our keeping of Sunday can give us exactly the light, sustenance and grace we need to carry us through the rest of our week. Sunday is God's gift to us. It's up to us to do the unwrapping.

Julie Kavanagh is a pastoral resource person with the faith development service of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.

66 St John Paul II wrote in his great letter on Sunday in 1998 that "More than a precept, the observance [of Sunday] should be seen as a need rising from the depths of Christian life."

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Assisted suicides present an unhelpful and dubious choice of relief or continuous pain, writes Fr Seán MacGiollarnáth, O. Carm.

he Hippocratic tradition in medicine is under threat through the removal of traditional protections at the beginning and the end of human life. Law and medicine both reflect dominant tendencies and practices in culture and politics which place a high priority on the desire for individual choice. This has been characterised as expressive individualism, and it understands the individual, in the words of Carter Snead, as "atomised, solitary and defined by his capacity to formulate and pursue future plans of his own invention". Prof. Snead and others, like Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor, have shown this portrait of the human being lacks an awareness of our vulnerability and fragility, and the natural tendency of humans to seek friendship and to act socially and politically.

Response

Consider the effects of Covid-19 on our plans, great and small. The response has taught us that we are social and political creatures. We have seen a capacity to act together

for the good of others and to take into account guidance from others. The pandemic has also unveiled our vulnerability. Our public health system, our economy, sports, weddings, holidays, education, even the celebration of the sacraments and our life of worship; no area of human life went untouched and without experiencing some pressure from the pandemic. A virus has put a halt to everything it seems and introduced a radical uncertainty.

Often families may share their concern through prayers in the local church, or through invoking the prayers of their favourite saints"

Illness too tends to stop us in our tracks and confuse our plans. It has been said, there is never a good time to get sick. And yet there is, for Christians, the belief and knowledge that God is looking after us. St John Henry Newman observes that "God has determined, unless I interfere with His plan, that I should reach that which will be my greatest happiness". Happiness is our goal.

Such a goal appears to include some suffering on the way. What does Job intend to convey when he tells God: "I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath. What are human beings, that you make so much of them, that you set your mind on them, visit them every morning, test them every moment?" (Job 7:16-18) According to St Thomas Aguinas, "Job is not to be understood as expressing contempt for the divine concern for men, but as investigating and wondering". The purpose of this interrogation of reality is, for St Thomas "to show that God would not have such great care for man unless he should have something hidden which makes him capable of perpetual existence. Therefore the very care which God has especially for man demonstrates that there is another life of man after the death of the body". It seems reasonable to suppose that Job was also in pain and quite frustrated.

Frustration

The frustration we feel is generally first shared with those close to us. Our family, the domestic Church, and our friends are those we first share the burden of our illness with. Pope Francis points out that the family has always been the nearest 'hospital'. Still today, in so many parts of the world, a hospital is for the privileged few, and is often far away. It is the mother, the father, brother, sisters and godparents who guarantee care and help one to heal. It isn't always so however, and that is why there is a need to be quietly attentive to the needs of others.

Often families may share their concern through prayers in the local church, or through invoking the prayers of their favourite saints. Family doctors and nurses are part of the chain of solidarity with the sick. The Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Sick are also part of the journey. It is a reminder that there is real practical help from our neighbours and also from Jesus Christ, the Good Samari-

tan, who walks with us in our joys and sorrows. I believe that priests and the sick can testify to the power which the Sacrament of the Sick offers. It can give both physical and spiritual support to the sick. It sometimes assists in the recovery and healing of the sick, even apparently terminal illness. After all, in each and every sacrament Jesus Christ is the principal actor who always gives generously and without reserve.

Pope

Both Pope Francis in his encyclical Fratelli Tutti and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in their recent instruction Samaritanus bonus consider the parable of the Good Samaritan. In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis notes, Cain is asked "Where is your brother Abel?" (Genesis 4:9). His evasive response, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is not adequate. Pope Francis points out that by the very question he asks, "God leaves no room for an appeal to determinism or fatalism as a justification for our own indifference. Instead, he encourages us to create a different culture, in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one another". Parables are said to be "like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word?". The Good Samaritan interrogates us personally and as a community. Pope Francis points out that at different points in our life, we may be different characters in the penetrating story which Jesus gives us in the Gospel of Luke. He is also fully aware of the only superficially paradoxical possibility that "those who claim to be unbelievers can sometimes put God's will into practice better than believers" (FT 74).

The brutal experience of the man who was unfortunate enough to fall the victim of is a reminder of the human condition, and in particular human waywardness. The effects of original sin, that cluster of weaknesses in our condition, namely a darkened intellect, wayward desires, weakened moral strength and selfcentred wills, can wreak havoc, Such a view is not confined to Christians or religious people. Philippa Foot recalled when she returned to Oxford just after the Second World War asking herself how such horrors as the concentration camps could have occurred.

stop us in our tracks and confuse our plans. It has been said, there is never a good time to get sick"

I mention this because such weakness can lead us from what is good towards what is only apparently good. One of the difficulties with the Dying With Dignity Bill, is that it provides little or no context for our life, and all its aspects: spiritual, moral, intellectual, friendships and family. There is a risk that the focus may come to rest entirely on those moments of anguish or pain in which there is allegedly no relief, and present an unhelpful and dubious choice of relief or continuous pain. There is a wider context in which God is looking after us through palliative care, our family and friends and offering us the gift of grace. Christ is present in the one who is sick. those who care for them, and in the power of His grace which reminds us, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

66 We have seen a capacity to act together for the good of others and to take into account guidance from others"

Euthanasia will kill the same number of people as coronavirus in the Netherlands this year



It beggars belief that the same people who insist they want to protect vulnerable people from Covid-19 are now pushing assisted suicide, writes **Niamh Uí Bhriain**

hile everyone is distracted by the ongoing coronavirus crisis, Dáil deputies have moved forward a bill which would make it legal for doctors to help a person who is terminallyill kill themselves. Gino Kenny, the People Before Profit TD who proposed the legislation, insists that he wants to assist people who are in "unbearable pain" at the end of life. But his bill doesn't mention pain or suffering. Instead it would make it legal to help people die by suicide if they are "terminally-ill".

A terminally-ill person is defined as "having an incurable and progressive illness which cannot be reversed by treatment, and the person is likely to die as a result of that illness or complications". This broad definition could include Parkinson's, heart disease, dementia and many other conditions. There is no requirement that the person be at the end of life - once a diagnosis is received assisted suicide can be requested.

A terminally-ill person is defined as "having an incurable and progressive illness which cannot be reversed by treatment"

Bil

The bill has been widely hailed by the media as another important step towards a more progressive Ireland where the solution to every societal problem can be met with a law that allows vulnerable people to be killed. But the same media has paid almost no attention to the most important voices in this debate: those of medical doctors and of people endangered by the bill.



66 The bill has been widely hailed by the media as another important step towards a more progressive Ireland where the solution to every societal problem can be met with a law that allows vulnerable people to be killed"

Medical experts, especially those who care for people at the end of their lives, remain strongly opposed to assisted suicide. A 2019 survey by the Royal College of Physicians in London confirmed that 84% of palliative medicine physicians took this position.

The Irish Palliative Medicine Consultants' Association (IPMCA) - experts who focus on managing and relieving pain - have written to TDs saying, with palliative care, even severe physical or psychological distress can be managed. They have warned that the "intended and inevitable unintended consequences of the proposed legislation are stark and unthinkable".

The IPMCA say they are "opposed to any form of legislation for assisted dying, assisted suicide or euthanasia in Ireland" and that "compassion, advocacy and support are at the heart of the palliative care that is delivered across Ireland to those who are suffering as a result of advanced illness".

The view of the leading medical experts caring for terminally-ill and elderly patients could be summarised in the words of Prof.

Tony O'Brien who told the High Court in the Fleming case that doctors should not seek to "kill pain by killing patients".

Jurisdictions

Neither has sufficient attention been paid to the experience of other countries. Only a handful of jurisdictions have legalised euthanasia or assisted suicide, but even in that limited number, what has emerged is alarming.

In Canada, the number of people availing of assisted suicide has increased five-fold in just four years since 2015. In Belgium, euthanasia cases have increased by a factor of ten since 2003, while the Netherlands has seen an almost five-fold increas in deaths since 2002. Belgium has allowed children to be euthanised since 2014. The Netherlands is headed in the same direction.

Prof. Theo Boer, who once supported the legalisation of euthanasia and who served on state review boards for the procedure, now says that the safeguards didn't work. He estimates that one in five patients who sought euthanasia came under pressure to end their

lives. Similarly, in Washington state in the US, a 2017 review found that 56% of those who died by assisted suicide felt they were a burden. What a heartbreaking statistic. No human being should ever feel a burden - it is a symptom of society's failure to care, not of any disease afflicting the person.

The number of other suicides has increased by almost 34% in the Netherlands in the last decade, at a time when rates decreased in neighbouring countries"

Prof. Boer also points to the effect euthanasia has on 'normalising' suicide. The number of other suicides has increased by almost 34% in the Netherlands in the last decade, at a time when rates decreased in neighbouring countries who don't have assisted suicide. Certainly, the message becomes mixed: when is suicide a 'right' and when is it something to be avoided?

Assisted suicide dangerously blurs distinctions.

Pandemic

In this unprecedented year of pandemic and lockdowns, 6,751 people have died with Covid-19 in the Netherlands. In 2018, more than 6,000 people died by euthanasia, but some clinics are reporting a jump of up to 22% for 2019. It's reasonable to expect then that the same number of people may be killed by euthanasia as with coronavirus in 2020. Why, at a time when we are shutting the country down to protect lives, would our TDs vote to make a lifeending procedure available here?

Of course, TDs are ignoring medical experts and people with disabilities because the public are not aware of how assisted suicide actually endangers vulnerable people. That's why The Life Institute has launched a 'Don't Assist Suicide' campaign to make the facts known. We need to protect lives, not encourage or assist suicide.

Niamh Uí Bhriain is a spokesperson for The Life Institute www. thelifeinstitute.net 16 | Analysis | The Irish Catholic, October 29, 2020

In Buenos Aires, the future Pope Francis saw same-sex marriage as an attack on children but he did think that gay people should be included in civil unions, writes **Austen Ivereigh**

n Argentina, there was one issue over which a direct confrontation with the government was inevitable. Although Cristina Kirchner was president, it was Néstor Kirchner — then a national deputy — who drove the government's out-of-the-blue same-sex marriage bill in 2010, inspired by the Spanish socialist measure five years earlier.

Although he had never shown the least interest in gay rights or gay people, the policy was perfect tinder for Mr Kirchner's polarising strategy. By positing same-sex marriage as a minority civil rights issue, he could frame the defenders of the traditional understanding of marriage as opponents of equality and the Church as seeking to impose its morality on the law. It was the kind of fight he relished: one that would galvanise the Kirchner political base while throwing his opponents into confusion.

Cardinal Bergoglio knew many gay people and had spiritually accompanied a number of them. He knew their stories of rejection by their families and what it was like to live in fear of being singled out and beaten up. He told a Catholic gay activist, a former theology professor named Marcelo Márquez, that he favoured gay rights as well as legal recognition for civil unions, which gay couples could also access. But he was utterly opposed to any attempt to redefine marriage in law. "He wanted to defend marriage but without wounding anybody's dignity or reinforcing their exclusion," says a close collaborator of the cardinal's.

"He favoured the greatest possible legal inclusion of gay people and their human rights expressed in law, but would never compromise the uniqueness of marriage as being between a man and a woman for the good of children."

'Purely civic'

Cardinal Bergoglio had not raised strong objections to a 2002 civil unions law that applied only to Buenos Aires and that granted rights to any two people cohabiting for more than two years, independent of their gender or sexual orientation. He regarded it as a purely civic, legal arrangement that left marriage unaffected; it granted some privileges but not the right to adopt or any automatic right to inheritance.

Yet Cardinal Bergoglio was criticised from Rome for failing to oppose it when, the following year, the Vatican issued a document binding bishops and politicians to give "clear and emphatic opposition" to any legal recognition of homosexual unions.

At the same time, Cardinal Bergoglio was quick to react to any attempt to undermine the law's conjugal understanding of marriage. In 2009 he wrote an emphatic letter to the head of the Buenos Aires city government, Mauricio Macri, when he did not immediately strike down an attempt by a judge to authorise – contrary to the law – the 'marriage' of a same-sex couple. It was the first time in his 18 years as a bishop that he openly criticised a public official by name.

* * * * * * *

Federico Wals, who had been Cardinal Bergoglio's head of press since 2007, explained in early April 2010 that the cardinal's position was resolutely in favour of the existing law upholding marriage as a union of a man and a woman, and that a same-sex 'marriage' was an impossibility. But this did not prevent, he said, revising and extending the concept of civil unions, as long as this left marriage intact.

At the plenary meeting of the 100 Argentine bishops a few weeks later, this was the position that Cardinal Bergoglio, as their president, urged them to adopt as both right and strategically intelligent, warning them that if they opted simply to oppose the bill (without proposing an alternative that advanced civil rights for gay people), they would play into Kirchner's hands and make a same-sex marriage law more likely.

That is precisely what happened.

It was easy for Archbishop Aguer to claim that any endorsement of civil unions was against the Pope's wishes..."

It was the only occasion during his six-year presidency of the Argentine bishops' conference that Cardinal Bergoglio lost a vote, albeit narrowly (60 to 40). The *rigoristi*, led by Archbishop Héctor Aguer of La Plata, urged simple opposition on the grounds that the 2003 Vatican document prohibited legal recognition of same-sex unions in any form.

Whether the document referred

Whether the document referred to civil union laws that gave rights to all cohabiting couples, not just same-sex ones, was not clear; but because the document had been signed by the man who was now Benedict XVI, it was easy for Archbishop Aguer to claim that any endorsement of civil unions was against the Pope's wishes and amounted to formal cooperation in what the document called "gravely unjust laws".

The Vatican document was a classic example of what the St Gallen group of cardinals had long criticised as Roman overreach: the document's detailed prescriptiveness tied the hands of local bishops, depriving them of the room to manoeuvre in any battle to preserve a greater good.

The agreed bishops' declaration,

The agreed bishops' declaration, which made no mention of civil unions, was a vigorous defence of marriage as rooted in the complementary sexuality of man and woman, vital to society and to children, whose essential properties were key to their upbringing. The bishops rejected the idea that such a concept was discriminatory, while arguing that a same- sex marriage law would reduce the legal understanding of marriage to a mere partnership, thereby weakening it in the eyes of future generations.

The bill was narrowly passed (126 to 110) by the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, on May 5, redefining marriage as a partnership between any two people, with full rights to adopt children.

Statement

The bill then went for endorsement from the upper chamber, where there was strong opposition from most of the seventy-two senators, especially those representing interior provinces. In the run-up to the Senate debate in mid-July, Cardinal Bergoglio mobilised the diocese, urging Catholics to make their views known and asking for the bishops' statement to be read out in all of the churches on July 8.

But that day another, private

letter that Cardinal Bergoglio had sent a fortnight earlier to the four Carmelite monasteries of Buenos Aires was leaked — how and why is not known. Its dramatic language ensured that it dominated the headlines and eclipsed the public statement. The letter to the nuns has been described as a "dangerous tactic" that backfired. But it wasn't a tactic at all. It formed no part of any political or internal Church strategy, and was never intended to be made public.

At the heart of the bill was a lie: same-sex marriage claimed to add to conjugal marriage"

Cardinal Bergoglio had an intense devotion to the Carmelite St Thérèse of Lisieux and was close to the Carmelite nuns in Buenos Aires. He had great confidence in their power of prayer, and had often over the years sent the nuns letters asking for their prayers for this or that intention, especially when he was under pressure. This was no exception. "It was a letter in which he was sharing what was in his heart with his intimates, intercessors, in the language of spiritual people," says Cardinal Bergoglio's close collaborator.

The cardinal told the Carmelites what he discerned at stake in the same-sex marriage legislation: a serious threat to the family that would lead to children being deprived of a father and a mother.

He had often over the years sent the nuns letters asking for their prayers for this or that intention, especially when he was under pressure" It was "a frontal attack on God's law": not simply a political battle but "a bid by the father of lies seeking to confuse and deceive the children of God".

He went on to ask for the nuns' prayers for the assistance of the

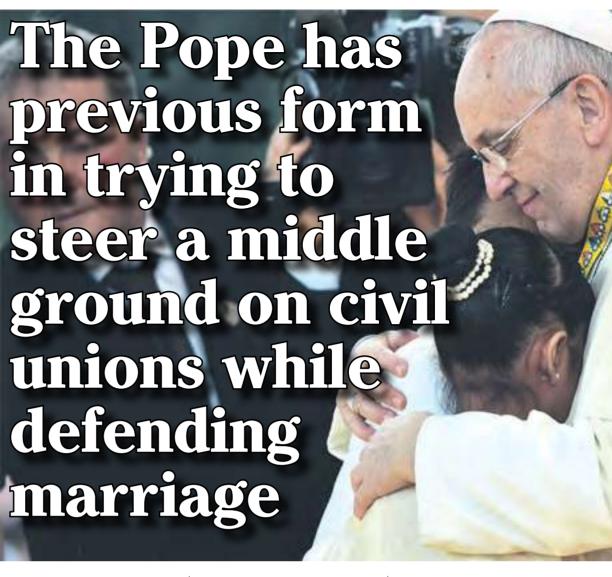
He went on to ask for the nuns' prayers for the assistance of the Holy Spirit "to protect us from the spell of so much sophistry of those who favour this law, which has confused and deceived even those of goodwill". He had spotted the serpent's tail, with all its usual telltale signs: hysteria, division, confusion, envy. This was "God's war", as he put it later in his letter.

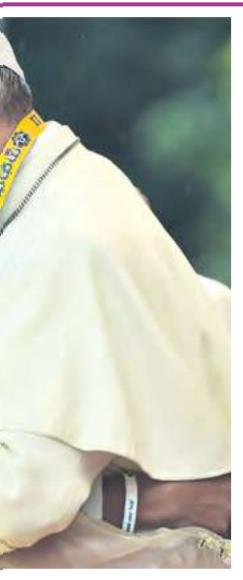
To anyone who knows his spiritual writings, this was vintage Jorge Bergoglio. It was the language he had used with the Jesuits, language that is common among contemplatives, on retreats, or in spiritual direction.

He saw behind the political battle another, spiritual contest, in which the devil, driven by and provoking a sense of rivalry (gay people suddenly discovering a resentment at being disqualified from marriage), appeared, as usual, *sub angelo lucis*, in the guise of light (equality, justice, and civil rights – all good things), and thereby deceiving people of goodwill.

At the heart of the bill was a lie: same-sex marriage claimed to add to conjugal marriage or to exist alongside it, while in reality dismantling it.

Allowing gay people to marry required that the ancient, natural, God- given institution of matrimony be stripped of the very thing that made it a reflection of the divine plan: the bonding of man and woman, and the begetting and raising of children by their natural parents in a relationship of perma-





nence and sexual exclusivity.

As Cardinal Bergoglio put
it in his official, public letter, a
law that recognised marriage as
male-female did not discriminate
but appropriately differentiated
– appropriately, because a manwoman bond, like a child's need of
a father and a mother, were core
human realities. To try to make
marriage something else was "a
real and serious anthropological
step backward".

The things I heard about the cardinal during those 24 hours we were in session are unrepeatable..."

Taken out of its context of spiritual discernment, and without this accompanying explanation, the letter was a firebomb. It sparked outrage from the *kirchneristas* and considerable discomfort in the Church, where many lamented its language. Because the bishops had vetoed Cardinal Bergoglio's bid to advance the social inclusion of gay people, Kirchner had been handed a huge target.

As he triumphantly declared that it was time for Argentina "definitively to leave behind these obscurantist and discriminatory views", the government-funded Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo dutifully declared that the Church's complicity with dictatorship meant it "lacked the moral authority" to argue on the issue. From China, Cristina Kirchner adopted a presidential pose of regret at the tone of the opposition to the bill. It was a shame, she said, that "equal

marriage" was being seen as a question of "religious morality" when "all we're doing is looking at reality as it is".

* * * * * * *

All eyes were now on the Senate. As Catholics and evangelicals demonstrated outside on July 15, the senators divided into three groupings: those favouring the government bill redefining marriage as genderneutral, those opposing, and those proposing a French-type pacte civil (but which also included the right to adopt). With Cardinal Bergoglio's backing, the Federal Peronist (anti-Kirchner) senator of San Luis, Liliana Negre de Alonso, brokered an agreement between the second two groups to reject the government bill in favour of an expanded civil unions bill but without the right to adopt children.

At the end of the debate...arbitrarily nullified the compromise solution, forcing senators to vote yes or no on the Government bill"

"The fact that Cardinal Bergoglio understood the need for an alternative proposal and supported us was a huge comfort," recalls Mrs Negre, a member of the Catholic organisation Opus Dei. "With great effort we managed to get agreement for a civil union bill that offered practical benefits [to gay people] but left marriage law intact. I sought the advice of many people at that time, among them the cardinal. He called me at home and said, 'You're on the right track'."

Scornful attack

Heading into the debate, the Negre proposal had the support of a clear majority of the senate. But over the next 20 hours, the *kirchnerista* senators used the cardinal's leaked letter to mount a ferocious, scornful attack in the tradition of fanatical anticlericalism. "The things I heard about the cardinal during those 24 hours we were in session are unrepeatable," Mrs Negre recalls. She was herself reduced to tears with accusations that she was a Nazi who wanted to do to gay people what Hitler did to the Jews.

At the end of the debate, the Senate president, under pressure from the leader of the pro-government bloc, arbitrarily nullified the compromise solution, forcing senators to vote yes or no on the Government bill. In the midst of confusion and angry scenes, during which a number of senators walked out in protest at the government's steamrollering, the bill passed by just six votes. "We beat Bergoglio!"

Negre remembers the head of the *kirchnerista* bloc crowing, "as if the whole debate had been between them and him."

1 This is an extract from The Great Reformer (2015) by Austen Ivereigh.

The Pope's vision of the Church is a big tent

he Pope's backing for legislation for civil unions for gay couples is a big deal. It's also a significant shift away from the policy of his immediate predecessors who warned Catholics that opposing such unions was an obligation.

It's important to understand that Francis sees it solely in the context of the civil realm and his previous support in Argentina was that such unions open to anyone living together (such as siblings or a mother and son) should also be open to gay couples.

The Pope is nuanced in his stance and draws a radical distinction between the idea of legal protection for gay couples - such as inheritance or the right to be at a hospital bedside - and marriage which he insists can only be between one man and one woman. During his time in Argentina, he led the Church's opposition to gay marriage while arguing that civil partnerships represented a good way forward.

Favour

From the moment of his election in 2013, Francis signalled that mercy would be at the heart of his papacy. That's why, for example, he is in favour of giving Holy Communion to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics in certain limited circumstances. It's also why he favours a Church that can also be a home for people who cannot reach the moral standard expected of Catholics.

He has sought to soften the official pronouncements on many issues because he knows that language matters. Generations of gay Catholics have spoken out about how they have felt hurt and alienation not so much because the Church doesn't approve of gay sex, but because it has been

Francis is willing to risk confusion for the sake of inclusion, writes **Michael Kelly**

described as 'intrinsically evil' or 'objectively disordered'. Such terminology made sense to medieval scholastics in the context of natural law, the reality today is that while theologians and philosophers might try to explain the deeper meaning of such words they strike most people as callous.

Francis learned in his native Argentina the cruel reality faced by many young gay people who found themselves rejected by their families as a result of a toxic mix of machismo and Catholicism. He worked with them and learned to understand that their hopes and dreams were the same as everyone else's. That's why he insisted that "homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God."

Lots of people both inside and outside the Church will wonder what the fuss is all about"

"You can't kick someone out of a family, nor make their life miserable for this. What we have to have is a civil union law; that way they are legally covered," the Pope said in his latest intervention.

You can't please everyone as Pope John Paul II didn't, Benedict XVI certainly didn't and Francis doesn't either. His words will bring comfort to many, disillusion others and perplex some.

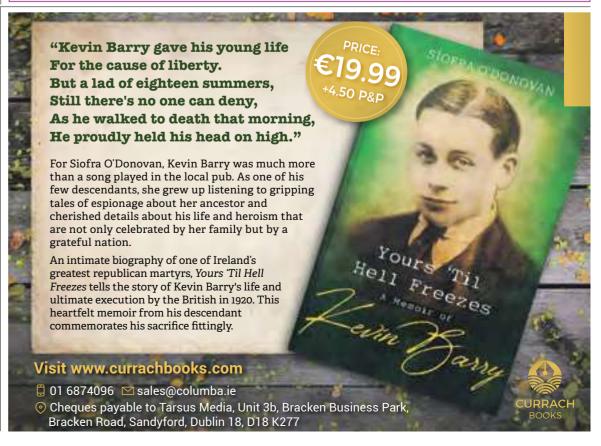
Francis' diagnosis of the paralysis in the Church is that the language no longer speaks to many people. What's more, when the

Church does pronounce on issues like homosexuality the language is often strident and grates with contemporary culture. The Pope thinks and acts like the Church can do better: that it can teach that homosexual acts are a sin while believing that a loving couple should be protected; that it can teach that marriage is for life while not punishing people whose marriages have broken down.

It's a high wire act and he risks upsetting both conservatives who think he's giving away the shop and liberals who think he is full of bluster.

Of course, lots of people both inside and outside the Church will wonder what the fuss is all about. Many practising Catholics voted for same-sex marriage here in 2015 without a second thought. Polls from abroad indicate that Catholics in other countries are likewise equally unperturbed. But, make no mistake: in a Church that thinks in centuries, Francis is sending an important message of inclusion. Crucially at a time when some legislators in Uganda and Nigeria are citing the Bible in their campaign to punish homosexual acts with the death penalty, Francis is saying a definitive 'no' to victimisation and discrimination.

At the end of the day in a world that loves black and white, Francis sees life in the grey areas. Those who see it as a watershed moment in Church teaching on human sexuality will be disappointed. Equally those who charge Francis with crossing a theological or moral line are also wrong.



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Operation Smile was founded by husband and wife, Bill and Kathy Magee, in 1982, and has increased the number of smiles to be found in the world steadily since then, writes **Jason Osborne**

ollowing a trip to the Philippines to provide surgery for children born with a cleft lip, a distinct need was seen and so Operation Smile was born. Since then, the organisation has provided hundreds of thousands of surgeries for those born with cleft lip and cleft palate. They don't limit themselves to transformative surgeries, however.

Speaking to The Irish Catholic, Jessica Nazzari of Operation Smile explained the nature of the work that the organisation carries out

"Around the world, there are millions of people living with this condition, which is not just aesthetic, which is probably the main thing that people don't realise. That people living with cleft can have trouble eating, breathing, and they can even die because they can't be fed properly. We also provide a lot of malnutrition support. In a lot of countries, like in Ghana or in Madagascar, just make sure the children are fit for surgery, but also that we support parents. Because as you can imagine, in countries like Ireland or the U.K., the national health system can provide surgery and we don't realise that cleft is a problem."

However, the material and logistical needs are just one side of the problems that people with a cleft lip or palate suffer from





Operation Smile co-founder Kathleen Magee meets Pope St John Paul II.

Stigma

"Basically, what we do is we provide comprehensive care, which also includes fighting the social stigma, for example. But also providing psychological support. In some of the countries we work in, like, for example, in Columbia, we also have some local cleft centres so as soon as a mother gets the diagnosis that she'll have a baby with a cleft, they will be put in touch with our centres and we will have psychologists who will explain what it is like, what's going to happen to them and their children, and they will prepare them for all the different surgeries that maybe their children will have to do.'

thing that people don't

realise"

One such example of a life changed by Operation Smile's work is Faustina Tsifokor. For 17 years, she lived with the burden of a cleft lip in Ghana; a condition which resulted in extreme social isolation.

"I can't go anywhere because of my cleft," she said. "I can't attend school. I just spend my days helping my mother at home. I

have my family, my siblings and parents, but I have no friends and I feel sad.'

Measure

Her parents understood the nature of the society they lived in and took the protective measure of separating their daughter from the public, for fear of the emotional and physical abuse she'd likely face.

Unable to avail of surgery because of the cost and a lack of opportunity, Faustina resigned herself to the cold existence that people born with cleft lip and palate are subjected to in many parts of the world – until a neighbour passed along Operation Smile Ghana's number.

The surgery was performed by Operation Smile medical volunteers, who give their time for free to run medical missions to more than 32 countries, including Ghana.

Faustina now finds herself at

the centre of a group of friends, a sewing apprentice with plans for her life like the other young women around her.

Ms Nazzari explained that the surgery is merely one part of the work to be done, with Operation Smile providing many of the structures and services needed post-surgery.

There is a huge stigma - people even think that they are not human, just because they are born with a cleft"

We try to assess what the need is and then we can help. We also work with local people because we want to empower them and we want to make sure they will be able to provide all the surgeries

they will need and also all the different services like speech therapy. Because often children with cleft palette...it can have a huge impact on how children speak. That's why they need a lot of speech therapy, to improve how they speak.'

Cora O'Leary is a nurse and she's been involved with Operation Smile since 2010. She has travelled to 12 medical missions, in countries like Ghana and Malawi, and has seen first-hand the difference a cleft surgery can make for children and young adults like Faustina.

"When I started volunteering with Operation Smile in 2010, it was because I wanted to make a difference. It takes as little as 45 minutes to transform a life and the impact goes far beyond the child... Their parents, their family and even their community will benefit from it.'

'Life Chains' commemorate 664 babies aborted in NI



Ruadhán Jones

ro-life group Precious Life held a series of gatherings across Northern Ireland to mark one year since abortion was controversially decriminalised in the North.

On October 21, 2019, Westminster's Section 9 of the NI (Executive Formation) Act removed the laws that had protected unborn children in Northern Ireland.

Department of Health (DoH) figures released at the start of October 2020 revealed that 664 abortions were carried out in Northern Ireland since Section 9 was introduced.

Speaking outside Stormont, director of Precious Life Bernadette Smyth said that "we held these Life Chains also in remembrance of the 664 babies killed in Northern Ireland since abortion was legalised. The DoH figures expose the hypocrisy of the Government and pro-abortion MLAs in our Assembly.

"The theme of our Life Chains today is Restore Personhood for Northern Ireland's unborn babies," Ms Smyth continued: "We mark the first year anniversary of one of the darkest days in Northern Ireland history, when the Westminster Parliament forced abortion on Northern Ireland, aided and abetted by pro-abortion MLAs in our Assembly."

As part of the protest, hundreds of baby shoes, each with a boy or girls name pinned on them, were laid out on the ground in the shape of the figures '664'.

Mrs Smyth concluded the event, saying: "As long as a single precious unborn baby is in danger, then our work is not yet finished. Our Life Chain events today sent out a clear message to our Assembly – Repeal Section 9 and Restore Personhood for Northern Ireland's unborn children."

Life Chains were held in
17 locations across Northern
Ireland, including North and
West Belfast, Derry City, Armagh
City, Newry, Antrim, Ballymena,
Coleraine, Keady, Lurgan,
Limavady, Magherafelt, Holywood,
Downpatrick, Enniskillen,
Dungannon, and Omagh.

Each individual Life Chain adhered to government social distancing regulations allowing outdoor events of up to 15 people.













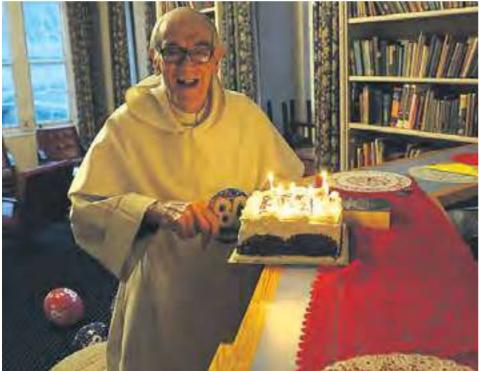
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Out&About

Before the Queen of Heaven



FERMANAGH: Students of St Fanchea's College, Enniskillen, pray a decade of the rosary in their school's oratory.



CORK: Fr Brendan Clifford celebrates his 80th birthday in St Mary's Dominican Priory.



CAVAN: Kit and Philomena Finnegan of Kingscourt are pictured on the occasion of their golden jubilee of marriage.

INSHORT

MS Ireland's READaTHON goes virtual for 2020

Multiple Sclerosis organisation MS Ireland is taking its annual Readathon online for the first time in its 33-year history.

The MS Readathon is set to begin on November 1 and last the entirety of the month of November. Thousands of readers are expected to take part, with the awareness and funds raised going towards the support of the 9,000 MS sufferers in Ireland.

Multiple Sclerosis means 'many scars' and is the most common debilitating neurological condition affecting young adults in Ireland. Normally diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40, it affects the motor, sensory, and cognitive functioning of the body. Three times more women than men are diagnosed with MS, with no known cause, and no cure

available.

The MS Readathon is Ireland's largest sponsored reading initiative and was originally launched by Roald Dahl in 1988.

MS Ireland are expecting a 38% decrease in fundraising intake this year in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Ava Battles, CEO of MS Ireland spoke about the move online this year: "We are delighted that the MS Readathon will go ahead again this year, its 33rd year. Young readers, parents, teachers and schools have continued to support the MS community, reading and raising funds to help people living with MS and their families.

"This is greatly appreciated and as each annual MS Readathon comes around, we want to acknowledge their efforts and we look forward readers young and old rediscovering their love of reading."

She also drew attention to the shadow cast over proceedings by the Covid-19 crisis,

saying: "The MS Readathon is our biggest fundraising campaign and we simply cannot keep our services running without it.

"This year, it takes on a whole new level of importance as we hope to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and expected fundraising losses of over €1 million.

"This year is different for everyone as we adjust to our 'new normal'. We've all had to adapt to our new reality and change how we live, socialise and work, however, out of adversity is born innovation. This year MS Ireland is embracing the challenges that face us by making the Readathon a virtual campaign where we will be launching a new interactive website that we hope will be a tremendous success."

The Readathon has historically been aimed at students, but people of all ages are being encouraged to take part this year. The largest change between this year's

campaign and those that came before is in the addition of MS Ireland's new MS Readthon website, which can be visited at www.msreadathon.ie.

The website will allow readers to earn virtual reward badges and stars for the goals they achieve, as well as allowing them to build an avatar, share their campaign on social media, and rate and review the books they've read.

Taking the campaign online was not a reaction to Covid-19, but took into account a number of factors the organisation had highlighted in previous years. These included an excess of physical touchpoints, such as the sponsorship kit, teacher's time constraints, and environmental concerns, with the MS Readathon always necessitating large paper usage, 2019 having seen 45,000 sponsorship packs sent out

Edited by Jason Osborne jason@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



KILDARE: Clane parishioner Mick Gill is presented his Benemerenti medal by Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty and is pictured alongside Frs Paul O' Boyle and Denis Harrington.



DUBLIN: Dominican College's transition year students took part in pumpkin carving as part of their horticulture class.





KERRY: Adam Quill is pictured with his mother, Erika, alongside Fr Francis Nolan of St John's Parish, Tralee. Adam and Erika were representing the students and families of Gaelscoil Mhic Easmainn by their presence at a First Communion/First Reconciliation service.



ROME: The Irish Ambassador to the Holy See Derek Hannon welcomed Sr Anne Lyons, Postulator for the Cause of Venerable Nano Nagle, founder of the Presentation order, to the Irish Embassy.

Events

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

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IN BRIEF

Catholic Coney Barrett sworn in as US Supreme Court justice

• US President Donald Trump has sworn in his latest nominee to the Supreme Court. The White House ceremony took place on Monday night after Amy Coney Barrett's [pictured] nomination was approved by congress.

She will be the 115th justice in US history and the fifth woman to serve on the high court.

At 48, she would be the youngest. A committed Catholic. Justice

Coney Barrett won praise for her appearance before the judiciary committee after some lawmakers tried to make an issue of her religious faith.

Brazilian archdiocese joins plastic recycling program to reduce waste

● The Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro has launched a partnership with a Canadian company to reduce plastic disposal into the oceans. Church officials said the venture with Plastic Bank offers a more sustainable way to rid the oceans of dangerous plastic waste and falls in line with Pope Francis' plea to protect the earth in his encyclical, Laudato Si'.

on Care for Our Common Home.

"This year in which we celebrate the fifth anniversary of the publication of Laudato Si', we are happy to announce this partnership, which is yet another concrete gesture from our archdiocese that engages in the care of the common home," said Cardinal Orani Joao Tempesta of Rio de Janeiro.

JRS reports successful fundraising campaign for refugee education

 Hundreds of thousands of refugees and forcibly displaced people received support, education and training last year through Jesuit Refugee Service's (JRS) on-the-ground initiatives and programs, its international director has said.

With the generous help of many donors, JRS also was able to reach fundraising goals one year early and help an additional 100,000 people through the JRS Global Education Initiative, Jesuit Fr Thomas Smolich said in the organisation's 2019 annual report, distributed in mid-October.

"Through your assistance, we developed innovative solutions to the realities of forced displacement, from training refugees for online employment to girls' clubs that keep young women in school," he said in the report.

Indian opposition parties, UN official protest elderly Jesuit's arrest

 Major opposition parties in India and a United Nations (UN) official backed an octogenarian Jesuit priest who was jailed for alleged charges of sedition and links with Maoist rebels and demanded his immediate release.

The leaders of the opposition Congress, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Communist Party of India, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam criticised the arrest of 83-year-old activist Fr Stan Swamy.

The party leaders also expressed solidarity with the "genuine" work the priest had done among tribal people and other marginalised groups.

The ailing priest was arrested at his residence in Ranchi, capital of eastern Jharkhand state, the night of October 8. Authorities said he was connected to a conspiracy that led to violence at Bhima Koregaon in the western state of Maharashtra on January 1, 2018, in which one person was killed and several others injured. The priest denied the allegation and said he never has visited Bhima Koregaon.

Pope Francis announces new cardinals

Pope Francis has announced he will create 13 new cardinals November 28.

The Pope made the announcement at the end of his Angelus address October 25, telling the crowd in St Peter's Square the names of the nine cardinals under the age of 80, who will be eligible to vote in a conclave, and the names of four elderly churchmen whose red hats are a sign of esteem and honour.

In addition to Cardinaldesignate Wilton Gregory, who will be the first African American cardinal from the US, the Pope chose as cardinal electors two officials of the Roman Curia and bishops from Italy, Rwanda, the Philippines, Chile and Brunei.

Once the consistory is held in late November, there will be 128 cardinals under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave. Pope Francis will have created just over 57% of them.

Electors

Sixteen of the cardinals created by St John Paul II will still be under 80 as will 39 of the cardinals created by Pope Benedict XVI; Pope Francis will have created 73 of the electors.

US Cardinal Donald W.

Wuerl, retired archbishop of Washington, will celebrate his 80th birthday on November 12, before the consistory. Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu, whom the Pope dismissed as prefect of the congregation for saints in late September, is 72 but renounced the rights of a cardinal, including the right to enter a conclave to elect a new Pope.

Italians will continue to have an outsized portion of the electors, rising to 22 of the 128; the US will stay at nine voters with Cardinal-designate Gregory taking Cardinal Wuerl's place.

Full list

Here is the full list of the new cardinals, in the order named by the Pope:

- Maltese Bishop Mario Grech, 63, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops;
- Italian Bishop Marcello Semeraro, 72, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes:
- Archbishop Antoine Kambanda of Kigali, Rwanda, who will turn 62 on November 10;
- Archbishop Gregory, 72;
- Archbishop Jose F. Advincula of Capiz, Philippines, 68;
- Archbishop Celestino Aos
- Braco of Santiago, Chile, 75;
 Bishop Cornelius Sim, apos-

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Washington was one of 13 new cardinals named by Pope Francis. He is pictured at Our

Lady of the Wayside Church in Chaptico in this file photo.

tolic vicar of Brunei, 69;

- Italian Archbishop Paolo Lojudice of Siena, 56;
- Franciscan Fr Mauro Gambetti, custos of the Sacred Convent of Assisi in Assisi, who was to celebrate his 55th birthday on October 27;
- Retired Bishop Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel of San Cristo-

bal de las Casas, Mexico, 80;

- Retired Italian Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, a former nuncio, 80;
- Italian Capuchin Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the papal household, 86;
- Italian Fr Enrico Feroci, 80, former director of Rome's Caritas.

Planned Parenthood is now getting more US government funding, despite defunding efforts

Recent annual reports show that federal funding to Planned Parenthood has increased, despite efforts by the Trump administration to eliminate federal funding for the abortion provider over the last four years. One healthcare funding expert told *CNA* that without congressional action, new avenues of federal funding for abortion providers could soon be made available by prochoice policy makers.

While campaigning for president, Donald Trump made a series of commitments to pro-lifers in September 2016 that included "defunding Planned Parenthood as long as they continue to perform abortions".

Planned Parenthood is barred by law from using federal funds – largely in the form of Medicaid reimbursements for services – to cover elective abortions.

However, pro-life critics of the organisation claim that federal dollars still allow the abortion provider to free up other resources for abortions.

Revenue

Planned Parenthood's overall revenue

has gone up in recent years, from nearly \$1.3 billion in 2014-15 to more than \$1.6 billion in 2017-18 and again in 2018-19, largely through increased government funding and donations from the private sector.

"Private contributions and bequests" have increased from \$353.5 million in FY 2015 to its peak of \$630.8 million in FY 2018, before dipping slightly to \$591.3 million for FY 2019.

Federal funding of Planned Parenthood affiliates increased from the 2018 fiscal year to the 2019 fiscal year and has gone up overall since FY 2015.

Belarusian archbishop says Vatican doing all it can to secure his return

A Belarusian archbishop who has been denied entry back into his own country said the Vatican was doing everything in its power to resolve the situation and help him return.

To live in "forced exile" is difficult, Archbishop Tadeusz

Kondrusiewicz of Minsk told SIR, the news agency of the Italian bishops' conference. "I can only live in spiritual unity with my people in prayer. I can always repeat, 'Thy will be done,'" he said during a brief stay in Rome. Archbishop

Kondrusiewicz, president of the Belarusian bishops' conference, was barred from re-entering his country from Poland on August 31. The previous weekend, he had a statement read in Belarusian churches warning that the country

could be on the brink of civil war because of violence and demonstrations protesting the August 9 presidential election. President Alexander Lukashenko declared himself the winner for a sixth term in the widely disputed election.

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Edited by Jason Osborne iason@irishcatholic.ie

Vietnam dioceses battle to aid thousands of flood victims

Two dioceses in central Vietnam hit by some of the worst floods in the country's history are struggling to provide emergency aid for hundreds of thousands of victims, church officials said.

The devastating floods caused by heavy rain that began two weeks ago and made worse by Tropical Storm Nangka last week have reportedly killed 102 people.

Among the dead were 22 soldiers buried by landslides that struck while they slept in their barracks in Quang Tri province on October 18.

Another 26 people have been reported missing and 240,000 households affected, with the flooding having inundated 212 villages, damaged 107,000 hectares of farmlands, and killed 531,000 cattle and poultry in several provinces.

Hue Archdiocese spokesman, Fr

Joseph Nguyen Van Vien, said churches and other facilities in dozens of local parishes were sheltering people whose houses were inundated by the storm.

He said Catholic volunteers were using boats to distribute food and drinking water to victims or evacuate others forced onto the roof of their homes to avoid rising floodwater.

The archdiocese serves Thua Thien Hue and Quang Tri provinces, two of the worst-hit by the floods.

Shelter

Daughters of Our Lady of the Visitation nun, Sr Catherine Nguyen Thi Ngoi, who heads the congregation's aid efforts, said they were sheltering 100 people brought by boat from the villages of Huong Vinh and Quang Thanh at their day-care centre.

"We are offering them accom-

modation, food and drinking water," the nun said.

Fr Batholomew Hoang Quang Hung, Kim Doi parish priest in Hue city, said he and other Catholics used boats to distribute food to 150 stranded families.

Fr Hung said people still cut off by the floodwater measuring one metre high in some places were now going hungry.

Elderly

Sr Mary Nguyen Thu Hien said nuns were providing food and bottled water for thousands of elderly people, women, children, people with HIV/Aids and physical disabilities from A Luoi, Huong Tra, Phong Dien and Hai Lang districts.

Many survivors said they saw much of their belongings washed away by the floods.



Local residents and volunteers deliver aid packages to residents affected by flooding in Thua Thien Hue province, Vietnam. Photo: CNS

Church group brands Philippine budget as anti-poor

A Catholic Church labour group in the Philippines has accused lawmakers of ignoring the poor, as well as the health and labour sectors with its budget for 2021 by not allocating a "sufficient amount" to cushion the effect of the coronavirus on hard-hit Filipinos.

The Church People-Solidarity Group, an organisation composed of clergymen and churchgoers advocating

for the protection of workers' rights, said lawmakers promoted social exclusion instead of social justice.

"The budget approved by Congress fails to address the needs of those who are affected by the coronavirus pandemic, especially the workers. There was very little reserved for social amelioration of retrenched workers and the poor. A huge chunk of the budget was for infrastructure, which we think, is nonpriority given the pandemic," the group said in a statement.

Philippine lawmakers approved on a 4.5 trillionpeso (€78.4 billion) budget for 2021.

Under Philippine law, Congress has the "power of the purse" or the authority to approve and allocate the country's annual budget.

The group's chairman, Bishop Gerardo Alminaza, however, said Congress had intensified inequality by being anti-poor for its meagre allocation to the health and labour departments.

"The 2021 national budget intensifies social exclusion because it would show that the poor who cannot afford to go to hospitals or take swab tests would die due to lack of money in the health sector," Bishop Alminaza told report-



Pope names new archbishop of Lyon after resignation of Cardinal Barbarin

 Pope Francis has named Bishop Olivier de Germay of Ajaccio, Corsica, to be the new archbishop of Lyon, France, succeeding a cardinal whose conviction on charges of failing to report clerical sex abuse was overturned.

Cardinal Philippe Barbarin's conviction was overturned in January, but he said he asked the Pope to allow him to resign for the good of the archdiocese. The Pope accepted his resignation in March, seven months before the cardinal's 70th birthday.

Archbishop de Germay was born on Septeber 18, 1960, in Tours. He studied at a French military high school and military academy, earning a degree in engineering and reaching the rank of captain.

He began his seminary studies in France in 1991 and later was sent to the Pontifical French Seminary in Rome. He earned a license in moral theology from the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences

Ordained to the priesthood on May 17, 1998, for the Archdiocese of Toulouse, he served in a variety of parishes and taught sacramental theology and the theology of marriage at the Institut Catholique de Toulouse.

In February 2012, Pope Benedict XVI named him bishop of Ajaccio, the capital of Corsica, a Mediterranean island that is a region of France.

Decree extends indulgence for the Faithful departed throughout November

 Many of the Church's pastors have requested an adaptation to the requirements to obtain the Plenary Indulgence for the deceased in the month of November.

Thus, "by the special mandate of His Holiness Pope Francis", the Apostolic Penitentiary released on Friday some changes to the normal practice. The Decree containing these modifications was signed on 22 October, the liturgical memorial of Pope St John Paul II.

Due to the coronavirus

pandemic and the need to avoid large groups from forming where prohibited, the Plenary Indulgence applicable to the deceased by those who visit a cemetery has been extended beyond the normal dates of 1 to 8 November.

This year, the indulgence can be obtained by anyone who visits a cemetery, even if only mentally, on any day in November, and devoutly prays for the faithful departed.

Pope at audience: psalms lead us to adore God and see his 'very eyes'

 Pope Francis began Wednesday's audience taking into account the rising numbers of Covid-19 infections worldwide, including in Italy, keeping his distance from the gathered congregation.

Pope Francis began the second and final catechesis on the Psalms in his series on prayer. The Psalms, he says, "help us not to fall into the temptation of the 'wicked', that is, of living, and perhaps also of praying, as if God does not exist, and as if the poor do not exist".

Instead, the Pope explains, the prayer of the Psalms are a fundamental reality of life, because the reference to the absolute, the transcendent, which the spiritual masters call the "holy fear of God", makes us completely human. Prayer, he says, prevents us from venturing into life in a "predatory and voracious manner".

However, the Pope warns against "false prayer" which calls for the admiration of others or to show off the latest fashion, which Jesus himself admonishes against. Rather, the true spirit of prayer in the heart "allows us to contemplate reality with God's very eyes".

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IN BRIEF

Cardinal Dolan calls for 'the shield of faith' to protect Armenian Christians

 Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York called for "the shield of faith" to protect Armenian Christians caught in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Speaking at an evening prayer service on October 21 at St Vartan Armenian Cathedral, Cardinal Dolan referenced a recent *New York Times* article in which Manushak Titanyan, an architect, spoke of her fears for her three sons at the front lines. She said of war: "All the most horrible things that man ever created rear their heads in their most horrible manifestation.

"Your Faith and your lamentation are marked on our hearts. Sometimes we believers are dismissed as naive and idealistic and unrealistic dreamers. Nonsense," Cardinal Dolan said.

"The shield of Faith. The artillery of the spirit. That's our strategy. Jesus whispers to us this evening, 'Take courage. I conquered the world'," the cardinal added during the service, which was livestreamed.

CRS fires Sudan country rep. after allegations of verbal abuse, racism

Catholic Relief
 Services fired its country
 representative in Sudan after allegations of verbal abuse and racism.

The New Humanitarian, an independent, nonprofit news agency, detailed the allegations October 22 in the main story on its website, thenewhumanitarian.org.

The agency said the former country representative, Driss Moumane, had complaints against him dating back to 2018. The country representative leads the CRS team in a country. In a statement released to *Catholic News Service*, CRS, the US bishops' international relief and development agency, said it "conducted a thorough investigation of the claims levelled against the leadership in Sudan, and as a result, terminated employment with the former Sudan country representative on October 18, 2020.

"CRS is in the process of transitioning to new leadership."

St Jude Thaddeus draws devotion from Mexico's downtrodden

• Arturo Rodríguez has asked St Jude Thaddeus "for a big favour". A chauffeur in Mexico City, Mr Rodríguez said a relative was robbed and slashed with a knife almost a decade ago, but made a miraculous recovery after the chauffeur prayed to St Jude Thaddeus, whom he learned about through friends.

Mr Rodríguez, 31, confessed he does not attend his local parish all that often.

"But I'm here every 28th," he said from the St Hippolytus Church in central Mexico City, where St Jude is celebrated on the 28th of every month, not just on his official feast day of October 28

St Jude is known as the patron saint of difficult and desperate causes. It's a devotion that's found fertile ground in Mexico, where millions confront seemingly difficult and desperate problems in their daily lives.

Latin American bishops express solidarity with Chile after church burnings

• Following recent attacks on three churches in Chile, the bishops of Paraguay, Brazil, Spain, Mexico, and Argentina expressed their closeness to and support of the Church in Chile

The Church of the Assumption and St Francis Borgia church in Santiago were destroyed by arson on October 18. Vandals smashed windows, tagged, and tried to burn down Saint Francis of Assisi Church in La Serena on October 19.

The attacks came as demonstrators across the country marked the one-year anniversary of large anti-government protests that took place across Chile last year.

US hosts signing of declaration rejecting 'human right' to abortion

The United States hosted the signing ceremony of the Geneva Consensus Declaration on Thursday last (October 22). The document rejects the claim that abortion is an international human right.

"Today we put down a clear marker; no longer can UN agencies reinterpret and misinterpret agreed-upon language without accountability," said Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar during the ceremony.

"Without apology we affirm that governments have the sovereign right to make their own laws to protect innocent life and write their regulations on abortion," Mr Azar said.

"In signing the declaration today, the US is honoured to stand alongside Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia and Uganda, the cross-regional co-sponsors for the declaration," he said.

A total of 32 countries have signed onto the declaration.

Mr Azar called the signing the "high point" of his time leading the department, and noted that countries who have not yet signed the document can still do so.

"The Geneva Consensus Declaration is a historic document, stating clearly

where we as nations stand on women's health, the family, honouring life, and defending national sovereignty," said Mr Azar, calling it "much more than a statement of beliefs".

"It is a critical and useful tool to defend these principles across all United Nations (UN) bodies and in every multilateral setting, using language previously agreed to by member states of those bodies," he explained.

Declaration

The declaration was written partially in response to a "disturbing trend" in the UN, he said.

"With increasing frequency, some rich nations and UN agencies beholden to them are wrongly asserting [that] abortion is a universal

human right."

Mr Azar said that these policies have the effect of forcing countries to implement "progressive" abortion laws or face the loss of funding or international standing. He accused some nations of having a "myopic focus on a radical agenda that is offensive to many cultures, and derails agreement on women's health priorities".

The coalition of signing countries "will hold multilateral organisations accountable", he explained, by denouncing these organisations for "promoting positions that can never gain consensus".

"We will unequivocally declare that there is no international right to abortion. We will proudly put women's health first at every stage of life," he said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also spoke at the signing ceremony, calling the declaration a "deep and personal commitment to protect human dignity" and "the culmination of lots of hard work".

Mr Pompeo highlighted the Trump administration's "unprecedented defence of the unborn abroad", and said that "the US has defended the dignity of human life everywhere and always" over the last four years.

"It's historic to be here," he said. "It's the first time that a multilateral coalition has been built around the issue of defending life."



French cases lead Focolare to promise investigation of handling abuse claims

The president of Focolare has accepted the resignations of the lay movement's top leaders in France and announced the group will ask an independent committee to investigate how allegations of the sexual abuse of minors have been handled.

"The task of this body will be to listen to the presumed victims and to gather further testimonies, as well as investigating eventual omissions, cover-ups or silence on the part of those responsible for the movement," said a statement released on October 22 by the Focolare movement, which is headquartered outside of Rome.

"In the interest of the completeness of the investigation and to guarantee full transparency," the statement said, Maria Voce, president of Focolare, accepted the resignations of Bernard Brechet and Claude Goffinet, co-leaders of the Focolare movement in France, and of Henri-Louis Roche, leader of the movement's Western Europe region.

In 2016, the Focolare movement dismissed a consecrated member of

the group, identified only as JMM. A young woman had alleged in 1994 that JMM had raped and sexually molested her in 1981 and 1982 when she was 15 and 16. The Focolare movement said they relieved JMM of his "responsibilities regarding young people" when the allegations were made.

In 1998, in a civil court case, he admitted to molesting her and was ordered to pay damages. He did not admit to raping her.

Catholic teachers 'united in solidarity' after France attack

The president of the French bishops' council for Catholic education expressed solidarity with the country's school community following the beheading of a school teacher in an Islamist terror attack last week.

"In these dark hours, Catholic education feels deeply united in solidarity with the whole school community... and first of all with the teachers," Archbishop Laurent Ulrich of Lille said in a statement. The statement was cosigned by Philippe Delorme, Secretary General of Catholic Education.

"Because it is our *raison*

d'être, we will defend the school (and school community) so that ignorance is fought everywhere," Archbishop Ulrich said.

"Ignorance builds fear," he

Archbishop Ulrich wrote in response to the beheading of Samuel Paty, who was killed

on October 16 in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, a suburb of Paris.

Student Abdoullakh Abouyedovich Anzorov reportedly attacked Mr Paty, a history and geography teacher, after he showed his class a cartoon depicting Muhammad. The Irish Catholic, October 29, 2020 **International news | 25**

Francesco causes ripples



Pope Francis greets filmmaker Evgeny Afineevsky and others involved with the production of the documentary, Francesco, before the Papal general audience at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

Polish archbishop speaks out as protestors disrupt Masses

bishops' conference has urged critics of a landmark abortion ruling to express their opposition "in a socially acceptable way" after protesters disrupted Sunday Masses.

Archbishop Stanisław Gadecki issued the appeal on October 25, after the country's constitutional court ruled that a law permitting abortion for foetal abnormalities was unconstitutional.

In a highly anticipated ruling, the Constitutional Tribunal in Warsaw declared that the law introduced in 1993 was incompatible with Poland's constitution.

The ruling, which cannot be appealed, could lead to a significant reduction in the number of abortions in the country.

Videos on social media showed protesters interrupting Sunday Masses while holding signs supporting abortion.

"Profanity, violence, abusive inscriptions, and the disturbance of services and profanations that have been committed in recent days although they may help some people to defuse their emotions – are not the right way to act in a democratic state," the archbishop of Poznan

express my sadness that in many churches today believers have been prevented from praying and that the right to profess their Faith has been forcibly taken away."

Archbishop Gadecki's own cathedral was among the churches targeted by protest-

Constitution

The archbishop emphasised that it was not the Church that decides whether laws comply with Poland's constitution.

"For her part, the Church cannot cease to defend life, nor can she fail to proclaim that every human being must be protected from conception until natural death. On this point, the Church, as Pope Francis often says, cannot compromise, because it would be guilty of the culture of rejection that is so widespread today, always affecting the most needy and vulnerable," he said.

The constitutional court was asked to examine the law last year by a group of 119 MPs belonging to the ruling Law and Justice Party (PiS), as well as two smaller parties.

Polish president Andrzej Duda, who is associated with PiS, welcomed the court rul-

Abortion will continue to remain legal in cases of rape or incest and risk to the moth-

Congolese bishops call for special court to try war crimes

Catholic bishops in Congo are calling for a special international criminal court to try people suspected of mass killings and human rights abuses in the African country, where thousands of women and girls have been raped by armed

The bishops made the call in a statement released October 19 after their plenary meeting in the capital, Kinshasa. Their voices joined those of local and international human rights groups, which have been demanding

an international criminal tribunal to try the crimes against humanity and to help end impunity.

Responsibility

"We demand the government makes a formal request for the establishment of a special criminal court to initiate proceedings against those - both external and internal - presumed responsible for the death of thousands and massive violation of human rights," said Fr Donatien Nshole, secretary-

general of the Congolese bishops' conference.

The bishops' statement urged people not to let their sovereignty be stolen. The clerics want the court to focus on the 2010 UN Mapping Report, which detailed the mass killings, rapes and displacement in the country.

The report findings indicated that from 1993 to 2003, more than 600 war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide were committed in the country.



Cardinal Parolin: 'All will go well' with the Holy See/China agreement

• "Everything will be fine." Cardinal Pietro Parolin told journalists asking for information regarding the October 2018 Agreement between China and the Holy See regarding the appointment of bishops.

"We have to wait until tomorrow to know when it will expire," he said noting that the Agreement was signed two years ago ad experimentum and that it will possibly be

The Vatican Secretary of State was answering questions posed to him by reporters present at the Pontifical Antonianum University where the Orthodox Patriarch, Bartholomew I, received an Honorary Doctorate.

Cardinal Parolin affirmed that the content of the Agreement between China and the Holy See will remain secret. But it is a "relative secret," he explained, noting that "much of the content is already known", and he revealed that the decision to renew the Agreement was taken in the past days

He observed that the Covid-19 pandemic has complicated things because of travel restrictions but said the two parties have had ongoing contact.

The Cardinal also expressed satisfaction with the results of the Agreement: "We can say we are pleased. We hope that there will be improvements regarding the functioning of the terms of the Agreement."

Pope's charity reaches out to families of shipwrecked crew

Pope Francis has reached out to the families of crewmembers of a cargo ship that capsized over a month ago in the Sea of Japan, the Vatican Dicastery for **Promoting Integral Human Development** said in a statement on Wednesday.

It said that through the Dicastery, the Pope decided to send an economic contribution to all the families of the

crewmembers of the ship, Gulf Livestock 1. The cargo ship sailing from Napier (New Zealand) to Jingtang, Tangshan (China), sank in the Sea of Japan near the island of Amami Ōshima on September 2, after experiencing engine typhoon Maysak.

The beneficiaries of the Pope's charity are the families of 39 Filipinos, two Australians and two New Zealanders.

Francesco: new documentary on the life and teaching of Pope Francis

• The documentary Francesco, by director Evgeny Afineevsky, interweaves voices and stories from past and present. It includes exclusive interviews with Pope Francis himself, with Pope emeritus Benedict XVI, with members of the Pope's family and many others. In it, Mr Afineevsky highlights the challenges of our time, the urgencies that need answering and the mission of the Church in looking to those who suffer injustices.

Mr Afineevsky finished shooting Francesco last June, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. He uses hugely impactful images to recount various themes such as the pandemic, racism and sexual abuse. The film deals with the war in Syria and Ukraine as well as with the persecution of Rohingya Muslims. In the communiqué presenting the work, we read that in the film Pope Francis answers questions "with wisdom and generosity", sharing "moving examples of his life lessons", relaunching ideals that "can help us build a bridge to a better future and grow as a global community".

The film is produced in part with the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. Director Evgeny Afineevsky was nominated for an Oscar and Emmy in 2016 for his film Winter on Fire and in 2018 received three Emmy nominations for Cries from Syria.

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LetterfromRome



John L. Allen Jr

lmost 75 years ago, Arnold Toynbee described what historians are trying to find as they scour the past in his book Civilization on Trial: "The things that make good headlines are on the surface of the stream of life, and they distract us from the slower, impalpable, imponderable movements that work below the surface and penetrate to the depths. But it's really these deeper, slower movements that make history, and it is they that stand out huge in retrospect, when the sensational passing events have dwindled, in perspective, to their true proportions.

If ever there was a week on the Vatican beat to perfectly capture that contrast, this has been it. Two storylines are fighting it out to dominate Vatican coverage, and so far it's no contest: a media frenzy over manipulation and censorship of a few seconds of Papal verbiage on civil unions in a new documentary has overwhelmed the Vatican and China renewing their deal on the appointment

Care to guess,
100 years from now,
which of those two
developments will
seem a "sensational
passing event" and which a
"deeper, slower movement that
makes history"? And the kicker is
that arguably, both stories reflect
the same defining instinct of Pope
Francis.

of bishops for another

two years.

Recognition

As things stand on Moviegate, it's now established that a clip from the documentary Francesco by Russian filmmaker Evgeny Afineevsky in which the Pope talks about legal recognition for "civil co-existence" for gay people actually is drawn from a 2019 interview with Mexican journalist Valentina Alazraki. The relevant portion wasn't released at the time because the Vatican controlled the cameras and the editing of the tape for Ms Alazraki's interview, and when it got back to her, the bit on civil unions was gone.

That discovery has led to a series of headlines in Italian papers about the "censoring" of the Pope by the Vatican, a practice with a long and distinguished history around here – it's enough to recall the way L'Osservatore Romano would either ignore or selectively edit comments by St John XXIII on Vatican II, for instance, to say



A well-wisher is pictured in a file photo kissing the ring of Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin following his episcopal ordination at St Ignatius Cathedral in Shanghai. Photo: CNS

Beyond 'Moviegate', deep questions remain on Vatican's China gamble

66 There's a review underway to deal with the media crisis going on, and a communication from the Press Office hasn't been ruled out"

nothing of the more recent contretemps regarding an effort by the Vatican to pass off part of a letter by Pope Benedict XVI about a new book as the full text.

Obviously, the Vatican is in full damage-control mode. On Thursday the Italian paper II Fatto Quotidiano published an internal memo sent out to all communications staff, which contained these marching orders: "For now we will not come out with ANY news, either on the radio or the web. There will be nothing on the film or the award today in the Vatican. There's a review underway to deal with the media crisis going on, and a communication from the Press Office hasn't been ruled out."

That was mid-week, and, as of this writing, a statement from the Press Office still hasn't appeared.

Yet none of this detail honestly matters a great deal at the big-

picture level, since Francis already was on record saying he's not opposed to civil unions. If he were unhappy with the impression he's now explicitly in favour, he easily could have said so, but his silence is equally eloquent.

On China, on the other hand, the relative lack of reaction probably can be explained by the fact the Vatican has missed no opportunity over the last few weeks to tell us precisely what they wanted, which is a renewal of the deal for two years, and why, including in a recent *Crux* interview with British Archbishop Paul Gallagher, effectively the Vatican's foreign minister.

The pact with Beijing, the terms of which still have never been made public, is by far the development with greater long-term consequence.

First, China is a global superpower, and the Vatican's capacity to influence the global agenda for the rest of the 21st Century will rise or fall, in part, on its ability to engage China effectively. Second, Roman Catholicism has a largely decentralised administrative system in which bishops are invested with tremendous latitude, so nothing any Pope ever does is as important as deciding who gets the job. When the Church gives away a share of its autonomy in making those choices, the ramifications are potentially mammoth.

It's gambling that giving Beijing most of what it wants in this deal means continuing the conversation..."

In effect, the Vatican rolling the historical dice on China. Despite Rome's frustrations with the implementation of the deal, abundantly chronicled in the *Crux* interview with Gallagher, and despite China's dubious record on human rights and religious freedom, the Vatican is banking that in the long run, having a unified corps of bishops in the country recognised by the Pope, over time, will produce a stronger and more stable local church.

At the same time, it's also gambling that giving Beijing most of what it wants in this deal means continuing the conversation, putting Rome in a position to gradually nudge the Chinese authorities on a variety of fronts.

This, in turn, brings us to the scarlet thread running through both storylines: Pope Francis's instinct when it comes to deal with morally flawed actors, whether people or nations, is to meet them halfway, hoping that proximity will bring them further down the path.

Whether that will work, either in terms of attitudes and behaviours within either the LGBTQ community or China's Communist Party, remains to be seen.

What we can say with certainty, however, is that those questions, and not what exactly happened in the cutting room of *Francesco* are the ones future historians are most likely to ponder.

John L. Allen Jr is editor of CruxNow.com



fter almost a year of civil unrest, interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, Chileans overwhelmingly approved a bid to scrap the constitution written under the mandate of General Augusto Pinochet, a dictator who ruled the country until 1990.

The Chilean conference of Catholic bishops called the referendum, where almost 80% of those who cast a vote did so in favour of re-writing the constitution, a "great example of civility and participation", expressing that in the new path now undertaken by the country the citizens will have a fundamental role.

They also called on Catholics to get involved in the process, so that Christian values are reflected in the new constitution.

The bishops urged Chileans to continue on in the path of dialogue, towards the "decision that the voters will have to make to determine in April 2021" who will take part in the drafting of the country's new Magna Carta.

Elections

People had two decisions to make: on re-writing the constitution, and if it were to be re-written, who should do it. The country voted in favour of doing so, and determined that the draft should be written

Inés San Martín

by members elected directly to a constitutional convention. A second vote will be held in April, alongside municipal and gubernatorial elections, to choose who the members of this commission will be

Chileans are expected to vote for a third time regarding the constitution in 2022, accepting or rejecting the draft.

Pandemic

Sunday's vote had originally been scheduled for April 2020, but was postponed due to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. More than 50% of those who could vote did so, which is considered a high-turn out for a country where voting is not mandatory.

After the result of the referendum was announced, thousands flocked to the Plaza Italia in downtown Santiago, the country's capital, to celebrate the end of the last vestige of the former military regime – chanting, dancing, waving flags and setting off fireworks.

"This plebiscite is not the end;

it is the beginning of a path we should all undertake together," said Chile's President Sebastián Piñera after the results were made public.

"Until now, the constitution has divided us," he added, speaking from the Presidential Palace. "As of today, we should all cooperate to make the new constitution become one home

"Today, citizenship and democracy have prevailed, and peace has prevailed over violence," said Mr Piñera. "This is a victory for all Chileans."

* * * * * * *

On the Sunday before the referendum, tens of thousands flocked to the streets of Santiago and in other cities to mark the one-year anniversary of the protests that led to this week's referendum. October 25, 2019, saw some 1.2 million people in downtown Santiago rally for change, and since then, there were several massive protests, many of which ended violently, with protesters and the police

Both last year and last weekend, two Catholic churches were attacked during the protests.

Though violent groups often dominated the headlines, at the core of the protests was a call for sweeping change in the Chilean society, including higher wages and pensions, better health care and education, and generally a better distribution of wealth in one of Latin America's most unequal countries.

Catholics should be interested, concerned and have an active participation in the processes that are coming up to, because nothing that involves the dignity of the person can be foreign to believers"

The fact that the referendum was conducted peacefully was

66 Until now, the constitution has divided us...as of today, we should all cooperate to make the new constitution become one home for all of us"

remarked on by the Chilean bishops: the voting "has been a great show of civility on the part of young people, adults and the elderly. This great participation should call us to reaffirm respect for the decision expressed at the polls."

A church is set on fire during demonstrations against Chile's government in Santiago, on the one-year anniversary of the protests and riots that rocked the capital in 2019. Photo: CNS

"Today the unity of wills is necessary to continue the construction of a better country, because the constituent process that is coming forward needs us all with the best of each one of us," the bishops wrote.

Addressing the country's Catholics, the bishops invited them to be "interested, concerned and have an active participation in the processes that are coming up to, because nothing that involves the dignity of the person can be foreign to believers.

"For this reason, it is necessary to promote in the new fundamental charter the essential Christian values on which the life of our nation has been founded," the bishops wrote.

The prelates closed their statement calling for Our Lady of Carmel, patroness of Chile, to guide over the country so Chileans can continue expressing, "as we did today, the best of ourselves in the search for justice and peace, through fraternity and social friendship".

(1) Inés San Martín is a correspondent with CruxNow.com

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Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277 or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

Letter of the week

No activity is more essential than Mass

Dear Editor, I was dismayed to read that NPHET's reason for their recommendation that public worship should not continue [during level 3 restrictions], accepted by our government, was to decrease contacts in areas that, as a society, are relatively speaking in the context of a pandemic, less important.

As a Catholic, I most strongly disagree that public worship is an area that is less important.

Firstly, of all essential activities, from the beginning of time, no activity is more essential to humanity than participation in the sacrifice of the Mass, the greatest form of Catholic worship, whatever the circumstances.

To agree to the restriction on public worship is surely to rob the Mass of

its very purpose, rendering the Mass not just less important but of little personal importance for those who cannot participate, as without full participation, with some exceptions, the Mass cannot achieve its purpose for the absentees.

Furthermore, considering participation in Mass less important now is to have an identical evaluation of my participation in past Masses and indeed all past and future sacraments (most significantly my Baptism), all of which derive their power from God's same sacrifice. Such an opinion of his sacrifice I think is a most dreadful affront to God.

Online participation/worship is not and never will be sufficient. His physical sacrifice would have

been unnecessary if my spiritual participation was sufficient. I physically need God. To give himself to me in a physical way, he too, with some exceptions, needs me to be physically present.

Secondly, as a human being and also as an Irish citizen, I have a duty (Article 44.1 of our Constitution) and a right (Article 44.2.2) to worship God. Ireland is the only country in Europe [recently Wales reimposed bans on public worship] where the exercise of that right is being denied.

Let us have the freedom to choose to participate in his sacrifice.

Yours etc., Myra O'Regan, Millstreet Town, Co. Cork.



Government has shown 'utter contempt' for Church

Dear Editor, Marie Steen's view looking for a reasoned excuse from Micheál Martin and company is an exercise in wishful thinking [IC 15/10/2020]!

What we have witnessed in recent Dáil debates is a blatant contempt for those of Faith, most especially those who are Catholic. It is time to take back the churches and quite frankly tell the Government where to go and not pander to those who have shown, quite frankly, an utter contempt for everything the Catholic Church has taught and have no wish to be considered a member of the Faithful.

Yours etc., Fr John McCallion CC, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone.

Covid-19 obsession shouldn't overshadow other concerns

Dear Editor, Brexit is still happening and still much hangs in the balance regarding negotiations between the EU and the UK, for that reason it was refreshing to see your paper give it so much prominence on your front page [IC 22/10/2020].

Without a doubt, border communities are still concerned about the outcome of the UK crashing out of the EU and the potential of a hard border and all that it will entail none of it being good.

Covid-19 has been at

the forefront of everyone's minds for so long and receives an enormous amount of news coverage, which is leading people to forget how important Brexit and its repercussions are.

There are thousands of employees worried about their jobs who live and work on both sides of the border, border communities that have family on both sides that they visit regularly and, currently, with ease, businesses that rely on current border provisions and more who will be affected if there

is a hard border or tough custom arrangements, what will happen to all of them? We don't know.

We can't allow Covid-19 to be the only thing the nation and the world think and talk about because it means other serious issues are falling to the wayside, it's an insidious process that will lead to nasty shocks in the future.

In the article, Bishop Larry Duffy and several priests who minister in border communities spoke of the concerns I have raised in

this letter and many others. The Church has been at the forefront of peace talks and defending the Good Friday Agreement, it was good to see this happening once again, with out devoted clergy speaking out. More of this please and less of the singlemindedness around the pandemic, we'll have to live with it for a long time so the world can't perpetually be in a state of Covid-19 obsession.

> Yours etc., Jake O'Leary, Lucan, Co. Dublin.

Only common good solution is for 'ethical vaccine'

Dear Editor, Noting the interesting article in *The Irish Catholic* [IC 15/10/2020] on the bioethics question regarding vaccines by Denis Sadowski, let us zoom in on Fr Austriaco's point on aborted foetal tissue objections and the price for objecting as exceedingly high. That those who object should expect to be prohibited from entering public spaces such as schools, restaurants, etc. Would that extend to churches, one wonders?

While Pope Francis has called out for

a universal vaccine, it is interesting to discover that the Vatican's department for bioethics hasn't declared since 2008 on the aborted foetal content matter, where it permits all for the common good. The British hierarchy, however, recently declared that Catholics may object to aborted foetal tissue based vaccination. The price paid for objecting in Sadowkski's article is exceedingly

To enter the mindset of those who

value life from conception to grave, one recoils in horror before God if forced to receive a mandatory aborted foetal cells-based vaccine. Therefore, the only 'common good' solution is to produce an ethical and universal vaccine for all.

Would the Vatican now in 2020 weigh up this entire area, aborted foetal tissue with clear advice to Catholics?

> Nollaig M. Ni Mhaoileoin, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

acebook community

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

The Government must justify denying 'freedom of choice' to religious believers

Our churches are run safely, and we need to go to Mass.

- Christine O'Brien

We should be able to attend Mass if we wish - the churches are big and clean and they won't be overcrowded. - Eilish **Higgins**

Can't understand how our churches are closed. They really are the cleanest and surely safest place we can be. They're definitely not overcrowded. - Ann Keating

I watch it online every week. No problem. - Michelle Woodworth

The bishops lost their voices long ago when the Church should have been leading the people. The politicians are inept and afraid to take decisive action and the HSF are only afraid of their incompetence being exposed. - Peter Killeen

It doesn't make any sense to me that churches are closed where there is no physical contact and yet football matches can proceed where there is no physical distance observed.

James Corcoran

Complete disparity of treatment between, for example, the GAA and the Catholic Church. I appreciate the contribution the GAA makes to our country being family-orientated and community-based, and for all that the organisation does for young people, both mentally and physically. The Church does all of this and more for the spiritual needs of all believers. What is happening is a disgrace. - Eileen King

Can we set up a campaign to get our Masses back? Even outdoor Mass or drive through Mass via Bluetooth in your car? - Bláithín Ní Ghabhann

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

Making the poor an 'awful lot poorer'

Dear Editor, Dr David Nabarro, the World Health Organisation's Special Envoy on Covid-19 said in an interview with Andrew Neil on Spectator TV's The Week in 60 Minutes: 'We really do appeal to all world leaders, stop using

lockdown as your primary method of control."
He ended the interview by saying, "but remember lockdowns just have one consequence that you must never ever belittle and that is making poor people an awful lot

Why has this vital information from world experts been ignored in Northern Ireland by Arlene Foster and Michelle O'Neill, by Boris Johnson in England, Nicola Sturgeon in Scotland, Mark Drakeford in Wales and Micheál Martin in the

Our politicians tell us they are constantly in touch with medical and scientific experts about Covid-19, so why are they now disregarding the highly experienced advice of the world experts on this very subject?

> Yours etc.. Dr Owen Gallagher, Glenavy, Co. Antrim.

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.

Around the world



USA: Washington Archbishop Wilton Gregory – who four hours earlier had learned Pope Francis had named him a cardinal – celebrates his first Mass as a cardinal-designate at Holy Angels Church in Avenue, Maryland. Photos: CNS



POLAND: Demonstrators protest in front of the Cathedral of Christ the King in Katowice against the ruling by Poland's Constitutional Tribunal that imposes a near-total ban on abortion.



▲ VATICAN: People in St Peter's Square pray as Pope Francis leads the Angelus at the Vatican – the Pope subsequently announced that he will create 13 new cardinals at a November 28 consistory.







COLOMBIA: Colombian indigenous people protest in Bogota. The protesters seek security in their territories, an end to massacres and murders of social leaders.



GERMANY: Students at Martin-Buber-Oberschule secondary school in Berlin wear face masks intended to minimise the spread of the coronavirus as school resumes following the autumn holidays.

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hat's right and what's wrong? We fight a lot over moral issues, often with a self-assured righteousness. And mostly we fall into that same self-righteousness whenever we argue about sin. What constitutes a sin and what makes for a serious sin? Different Christian denominations and different schools of thought within them lean on various kinds of biblical and philosophical reasoning in trying to sort this out, often bitterly disagreeing with each other and provoking more anger than consensus.

Partly that's to be expected since moral questions must take into account the mystery of human freedom, the limitations inherent in human contingency and the bewildering number of existential situations that vary from person to person.

It's not easy in any given situation to tell what's right and what's wrong, and even more difficult to tell what's sinful and what's not.

Intending no offence to how our Churches and moral thinkers have classically approached moral questions, I believe there's a better way to approach them that, more healthily, takes into account human freedom, human limitations and the singular existential situation of every individual.

Approach

The approach isn't my own, but one voiced by the Prophet Isaiah who offers us this question from God: "what kind of house can you build for me?" (Isaiah 66:1). That question should undergird our overall discipleship and all of our

What kind of house can you build for me?



moral choices.

What kind of house can you build for me? Men and women of Faith have generally taken this literally, and so from ancient times to this very day have built magnificent temples, shrines, churches and cathedrals to show their faith in God.

That's wonderful, but the invitation Isaiah voices is, first and foremost, about the kind of house we're meant to build inside ourselves. How do we enshrine the image and likeness of God inside our body, our intellect, our affectivity, our actions? What kind of 'church' or 'cathedral' is our very person? That's the deeper question in terms of moral living.

Beyond a very elementary level, our moral decision-making

should no longer by guided by the question of right or wrong, is this sinful or not? Rather it should be guided and motivated by a higher question: what kind of house can you build for me?

At what level do I want to live out my humanity and my discipleship? Do I want to be more self-serving or more generous? Do I want to be petty or noble? Do I want to be self-pitying or big of heart? Do I want to live out my commitments in a fully honest fidelity or am I comfortable betraying others and myself in hidden ways? Do I want to be a saint or am I okay being mediocre?

At a mature level of discipleship (and human maturity) the question is no longer, is this right or wrong? That's not love's question. Love's

How do we enshrine the image and likeness of God inside our body, our intellect, our affectivity, our actions? What kind of 'church' or 'cathedral' is our very person?

question is rather, how can I go deeper? At what level can I live out love, truth, light and fidelity in my life?

Allow me a simple, earthy example to illustrate this. Consider the issue of sexual chastity: is masturbation wrong and sinful? I once heard a moral professor take a perspective on this which reflects the challenge of Isaiah. Here, in a paraphrase, is how he framed the issue: "I don't believe it's helpful to contextualise this question as did the classical moral theology texts, by saying it's a grave disorder and seriously sinful. Nor do I believe that it's helpful to say what our culture and much of contemporary psychology is saying, that it's morally indifferent.

What kind of person do I want to be? Do I want to be someone who is fully transparent or someone who has hidden goods under the counter? Do I want to live in full sobriety?"

"I believe that a more helpful way to approach this is not to look at it through the prism of right or wrong, sinful or not. Rather, ask yourself this: at what level do I want to live? At what level

do I want to carry my chastity, my fidelity and my honesty? At what point in my life do I want to accept carrying more of the tension that both my discipleship and my humanity ask of me?

"What kind of person do I want to be? Do I want to be someone who is fully transparent or someone who has hidden goods under the counter? Do I want to live in full sobriety?"

What kind of 'temple' do I want to be? What kind of house can I build for God?

Ideal way

This, I believe, is the ideal way we should stand before the moral choices in our lives. Granted, this isn't a spirituality for persons whose moral development is so weak or impaired that they are struggling still with the more fundamental demands of the Ten Commandments. Such persons need remedial and therapeutic help, and that's a different (though needed) task.

And one further point – this moral choice comes to us, as do all the invitations from God, as an invitation, not as a threat.

It's through love and not threat that God invites us into life and discipleship, always gently asking us: what kind of house can you build for me?

Family& Lifestyle The Irish Catholic, October 29, 2020

Personal Profile

Carrying out the maternal mission of Radio Maria



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n infrequent and unofficial "battle" takes place between Christians, Neo Pagans and sometimes New Atheists. It comes to the fore every time we have a major feast in the Church. Easter and Christmas, it is erroneously claimed, originated in pagan festivals which the Catholic Church merely "baptised".

While these are quite spurious claims, the battle for Hallowe'en is rather more nuanced, with arguments for either side. It might seem bizarre to a Christian to even suggest that Hallowe'en is a Catholic holiday, saturated as it has become by images of ghouls, sorcery and pop culture iconography.

Whether of pagan or Catholic origins, Hallowe'en is more than a commercial holiday writes Ruadhán Jones

In Ireland, it's well-known that the Celts celebrated the festival of Samhain to mark the end of the harvest and the beginning of winter. October 31 was a night when the spirits of the dead might roam freely and special bonfires were lit to ward them off. The Romans also celebrated a festival in this time in honour of their goddess Pomona, a patroness of fruits and gardens.

Origins

But then there's the fact of its name. Hallowe'en – the vigil of All Hallows (also known as All Saints) day. Hallowe'en as we know it today is, or was, a largely Christian holiday which incorporated elements of Samhain and similar celebrations.

While we we can find a number of "baptised" customs in Halloween, Catholics can proudly say that Halloween is a Catholic holiday. It's development relates to the that of the solemnity of All Saints, first celebrated in the 7th Century and moving to November 1 in the mid-9th Century.

Scholars still debate whether Pope Gregory IV moved the holiday to deliberately "baptise" a pre-existing pagan holiday or if it was merely a matter of convenience, the harvest time guaranteeing more food for pilgrims. What is certainly true is that a celebration much like our Hallowe'en, with bonfires and feasting on apples and nuts and harvest fruits, was part of pagan worship for centuries.

Whether the Church baptised

these customs or not, "their coincidence shows again how alike men are when they seek God and His ways, give praise, use the language of symbols to express the inexpressible", writes Mary Reed Newland in her excellent book on liturgical history, activities and recipes, *The Year of Our Children* (1956).

Ways to celebrate

Steeled with the knowledge that Hallowe'en's origins bely the simplistic claims of Neo Paganists, what then are the best ways to celebrate? There are a number of choices: you could choose to entirely emphasise the Catholic

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AND EVENTS

EVOLUTION AT WORK? BABIES BORN WITHOUT WISDOM TEETH

More people are being born without wisdom teeth and an extra artery in their arm as a result of rapid evolution, according to scientists in Australia

Dr Teghan Lucas, of Flinders University in Adelaide, has discovered that people are undergoing a micro-evolution which allows evolutionary changes to be observed over a short period of time.

"A lot of people thought humans have stopped evolving. But our study shows we are still evolving - faster than at any point in the past 250 years.

"A lot of people are just being born without wisdom teeth," she said.

Her research also found that some people are being born with additional bones in their arms and legs as well as shorter faces, or with abnormal connections of two or more bones in their feet.

Ms Lucas said the study demonstrates that humans are evolving at a faster rate than at any point in the past 250 years.

HUGE CAT FOUND ETCHED INTO DESERT AMONG NAZCA LINES IN PERU

A 37-metre cat has been discovered amongst the famous Nazca Lines in the dun sands of Southern Peru.

The lines, etched centuries ago, depict a hummingbird, a monkey, an orca and now a cat. The cat is dated to between 200BC and 100BC and emerged during work to improve access to one of the hills that provides a natural vantage point from which many of the designs can be seen.

"The figure was scarcely visible and was about to disappear because it's situated on quite a steep slope that's prone to the effects of natural erosion," Peru's culture ministry said in a statement this week.

"Over the past few years, the use of drones has allowed us to take images of hillsides," said Johny Isla, Peru's chief archaeologist for the lines

Isla said between 80 and 100 new figures had emerged over recent years in the Nazca and Palpa valleys, all of which predated the Nazca culture (AD200-700).

SCIENTISTS STILL UNSURE HERD IMMUNITY CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT A VACCINE

Scientists continue to debate the best approach to tackling the virus as questions are raised over the longevity of immunity and how to achieve it. The Great Barrington Declaration, signed by epidemiologists and public health scientists, was released recently and calls for governments to reach herd immunity without a vaccine by allowing COVID-19 to spread among those at low risk while protecting vulnerable populations.

However, another group published a letter in

However, another group published a letter in The Lancet which argues this approach puts the entire population at risk of significant illness and death.

Scientists can't say how long a person will be protected after they've recovered from an infection, the authors say. If immunity wanes quickly, that sets the stage for recurrent outbreaks unless there's a vaccine.

Meanwhile, a wide ranging study from the University of Glasgow suggests that lockdown had a major impact on the UK's mental health, including increased rates of suicidal thoughts. Researchers say public health measures, like lockdowns, are necessary to protect the general population, but warn they may have a "profound and long-lasting" effect on mental health.



opular aphorisms, proverbs and phrases sometimes pithily summarise good ideas. And sometimes, well, they don't

The enemy of my enemy is my friend

You might figure that 'strong opposition to the government and general programme of Josef Stalin', might seem to be a pretty good indicator of virtue and wisdom. Not, however, if the person possessing that attribute is Adolf Hitler.

In general, though, this attitude is more dangerous when the enemy of the enemy is less obviously bad, where the disagreements don't seem quite as great. It's very tempting to take a tactical alliance and turn it into wholehearted support: before you know it you've adopted positions you'd previously opposed, or you're endorsing actions you'd once have decried.

We need to have a national conversation about this

Normally when people say this they have in mind some definite conclusion to the proposed conversation, the absence of which would render the conversation itself pointless. It would almost always be better just to argue for the conclusion.

A national conversation around alcohol which concluded without new policy proposals being made or new social norms being established would not do any good. In fact, it would probably be counterproductive: vaguely talking about doing something is often an excellent way to ensure nothing is done.

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em

This one isn't often invoked in so many words. But it does

pretty neatly describe a kind of political behaviour. Sometimes when people lose a referendum or a public debate, they'll abandon their previous position and actively work to advance the opposite one.

Proverbs and phrases sometimes pithily summarise good ideas"

It's not that this is always a bad idea: on some administrative matters, it's perfectly fine. But sometimes people behave as though the mere fact of a democratic majority is enough to reverse the polarity of the moral universe. Politicians seem particularly prone to this. Theresa May went from campaigning for a remain vote in the Brexit referendum, crying at the leave result, and telling her closest advisor that "the ones who voted for Brexit will be the ones who suffer the most", to being an enthusiastic Brexit advocate. I'm not saying there isn't some kind of galaxybrained way to make this make sense. But it is very strange. Other, still stranger examples of this phenomenon abound in Leinster House

We have a very sophisticated electorate in this country

Substitute: "The electorate have lately been agreeing with me."

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds

Everyday

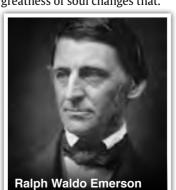
Ben Conroy

philosophy

This phrase of Ralph Waldo Emerson's is generally taken to be warning against letting consistency make you petty, legalistic, and nitpicky. Worry too much about your ideas being consistent with one another, and you'll fail to achieve the freedom of thought and originality that characterises, in Emerson's words, a "great soul".

Nonsense. Intellectual nitpicking is real: the smug 'well, actually' of the pedant is to be avoided. But it has nothing to do with consistency.

If two ideas are inconsistent with one another, that means they cannot both be true at once. If you have two inconsistent beliefs, you have at least one false one. No amount of expansive hand-flapping about greatness of soul changes that.



Emerson himself may have been talking not about believing contradictions, but about being unafraid to change your mind: don't let the fact that you said one thing for years stop you from recognising that you were wrong out of a fear of being labelled inconsistent. But the way his phrase has been taken licenses stupidity in the name of broad-mindedness. The man who believes that two plus two equals five is not a visionary: he's an idiot.

Sometimes people behave as though the mere fact of a democratic majority is enough to reverse the polarity of the moral universe"

Everything happens for a reason

You get a bit of a pass for this if you believe in a strong version of divine providence. But for some reason, the set of people who believe in a strong version of divine providence and the set of people who say 'everything happens for a reason' are almost entirely non-overlapping.

Even when talking about divine providence though, I suspect this way of talking obscures more than it reveals. In a sense, there's a reason for everything that happens, in that there's a reason God didn't prevent it happening. But not everything that happened is actively willed by God: nothing evil is, for instance. Thinking of moral evil as fundamentally unreasonable places us in the right relation to it: one of consistent opposition. This, though, is the one I'm least sure about.

Whatever gets you through the night

Nobody actually believes this.

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elements; you can integrate them with the secular ones; or you can have a Halloween lite.

In my family, we generally took the last approach. Being out in the country, we didn't have anywhere to trick or treat, but we always enjoyed the drama and creative energy that went into fancy dress. Ghosts, cowboys and a healthy dose of kitsch vampires were as far as we went.

In Ireland, it's well-known that the Celts celebrated the festival of Samhain to mark the end of the harvest and the beginning of winter"

It is clearly the case that costumes range from spooky to the extreme, from superheroes and ghosts to witches, sorcerers and gruesome creatures. But this need not be the universal experience. The costumes can also be used to fuel children's imaginations with a more wholesome end in mind.

Wholesome costumes

Here is an example of a costume idea which is cheap, cheerful and wholesome. A popular costume in my house was dressing up as a hobbit from *The Lord of the Rings*. Given the good nature of the creature and the Catholic overtones of the story, this makes it an ideal choice for Hallowe'en. The costume is doubly useful as it can be used for a girl or a boy with just minor adjustments. What you will need are:

- Loose pants or a flowing skirt save up a pair of slightly oversized, old pants, cut them just below the knee and you're halfway to being a hobbit. If it's for adult kids, you may have to be more creative and scout around second-hand shops for the right fit.
- An old white shirt or blouse hobbit shirts are a little loose, so a blouse is best, but whatever you have!
- Hobbit feet are technically a part of the costume, but I would cheat on this and recommend a pair of slightly

oversized shoes. Not too oversized though, they're not clowns!

The last item you will need is a brown, green or red piece of fabric for a cloak – an old curtain is ideal for this. This is the only part which requires much effort. First, hem it all round into a large square or rectangle. The size will depend on the size of the person wearing it, so measure length from the front of the neck, over the shoulder and down to about the same length as the bottom of the cut-off pants, then add on about another 12" for the hood.

Take the material at the top end of the rectangle or square, half it over on itself, and sew together. This will form the hood that you want to sit on the shoulders and top of back of the person wearing the cloak. Use a safety pin to hold the cloak in place around the neck at the front. You can add a special touch here by placing a belt buckle or ornate metal brooch over the top of the safety pin. And there you are, your very own hobbit.

Delicious dishes

With trick or treating likely to be curtailed this year due to you-know-what, our celebrations will largely have to be confined to our homes. But the virtue of Hallowe'en is that it draws on a variety of different traditions from a variety of cultures. Here in Ireland, the predominant cultural reference is of course Samhain. But without realising it,



we draw on traditions from England, America and even Rome.

This Hallowe'en is an opportunity to explore these different traditions and perhaps to revive old one which have gone out of favour. Barmbrack is perhaps the best known of the Irish traditions, but one which I discovered recently is boxty pancakes, a recipe typically associated with St Bridget.

While we we can find a number of "baptised" customs in Halloween, Catholics can proudly say that Halloween is a Catholic holiday"

Boxty pancakes are essentially potato pancakes and in texture are close to American style pancakes, though not in taste. They are simple to make and very filling, with a creamy taste and texture.

The ingredients are:

- 225g freshly cooked potatoes
- 225g peeled raw potatoes
- 270g white flour
- 1/2 teaspoon or 1/4 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 235-350ml buttermilk
- pinch of salt (optional)
- butter for frying

The recipe is as follows:

- 1. Peel the cooked potatoes while still hot and mash in a bowl.
- 2. Grate the raw potatoes and add to the mash with the sieved flour and soda. Add salt if desired.
- 3. Mix well and add enough buttermilk to make a stiff batter.
- 4. Heat a frying-pan, grease with butter and cook large or small pancakes in the usual way.
- Eat the pancakes straight from the pan with butter, crispy rashers or pure Irish honey.

Whatever way you choose to celebrate, I hope you have a wholesome, happy Hallowe'en!

Faith JIN THE family



Bairbre Cahill

had checked the readings for the Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time and it was the psalm which caught my attention. It was beautiful and I decided it would be a good basis for writing. Then today, as I sat down to write, I realised that we won't have those readings because it is in fact the Feast of All Saints this coming Sunday. That psalm is still echoing in my heart however and so, I've decided I need to share it with you anyway. Here it is in full:

O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor haughty my eyes. I have not gone after things too great nor marvels beyond me.
Truly I have set my soul in silence and peace.
A weaned child on its mother's breast, even so is

my soul.
O Israel, hope in the Lord both now and forever. (Psalm 130)

Read that through a couple of times, slowly. Is there a word or a line, maybe an image which stands out for you? For me, it is that image of setting my soul in silence and peace, a weaned child on my mother's breast. I remember when ours were babies, when my life seemed to revolve around breastfeeding them. I remember the little cross-eyed, drunk with contentment, sleepy smile on their wee faces after a good feed and how wonderful it felt to hold them while they drifted off into sleep. That remembering leads me into prayer.

At a time when yet again we are living in lockdown I find it very powerful and nurturing to imagine entrusting myself to God in this way. I am aware of a deep need for silence and peace. And I'm even more aware that I can't create these for myself, I need that sense of hoping in God, entrusting myself to God.

As Catholics we are nourished by the Eucharist but we can also be nourished by scripture. Indeed this is something which Bishop Mario Grech, new secretary to the synod of bishops talked about in a recent interview. He points out that during this pandemic, there is an opportunity for renewal. Instead of focusing on the ways we cannot currently worship we need to explore what we can do. He suggests: "We have forgotten the richness

and variety of experiences that help us to contemplate the face of Christ. Some have even said that the life of the Church has been interrupted! And this is truly incredible. In the situation that prevented the celebration of the sacraments, we did not realise that there were other ways in which to experience God."



Bishop Grech suggests "the family should be an environment where faith can be celebrated, meditated upon and lived. It is the duty of the parish community to help the family to be a school of catechesis and a liturgical space where bread can be broken on the kitchen table". Indeed many parishes and dioceses could do with reflecting honestly on the question: "To what extent have we empowered families to live their faith vibrantly?" The creation of a dependency culture within the Church has become all too clear over these months.

Bishop Grech invites us to bring the Gospel back centre stage, to pray with scripture, to reflect on how we are living love within our own families and communities, how we are bringing the Gospel to life. I think Bishop Grech is right when he suggests that the more clerically focused the Church became the more we lost sight of the domestic Church, However if faith is not alive in families how can it be alive in the wider Church? As he says: "The domestic Church is the key that opens horizons of hope!'

So yes, it is challenging and painful that we are unable to gather to celebrate the Eucharist but we need to reflect and act upon what is possible and reawakening the domestic Church is vital.

Praying with the daily or Sunday readings draws us into the Liturgy of the Word. Let the Word of God be a lens through which to reflect on life. Let the Holy Spirit animate your domestic Church.

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Carrying out the maternal mission of Radio Maria



Jason Osborne

ith Ireland having entered a second period of full restriction, making an effort to communicate is more important than ever, and Fr Eamonn McCarthy finds himself at the forefront of those efforts through his work with Radio Maria.

The Dublin-based priest is wellknown on Irish airwaves, helming Radio Maria's mission in Ireland with an able team at his side. Speaking to The Irish Catholic, he revealed that not only was his radio career no clearcut thing, but his priestly vocation too.

My vocation came through the Legion of Mary and all the work that I'd been doing with them"

"I was a late start. My brother was ordained ahead of me. My brother is younger than me, but senior to me by ordination, so that would have been an influence. Now, I graduated in '85 with a civil engineering degree in the middle of a recession and emigrated to London and spent seven years over there and another six years studying to become a chartered quantity surveyor, so I have a whole bunch of qualifications."

Legion of Mary

For Fr Eamonn, for many years, life in the world was mingled with service in the Legion of Mary:

"Well, all I would tell the kids at school when I was teaching as a



priest afterwards was, 'I made my first million...That's obviously not true, but, yeah, I just lived the life of a single guy in London City and made some great friends over there and really progressed in terms of a career. Really, I would say the seed of the vocation started there because I was very involved in the Legion of Mary in London. I had been involved here at home before leaving and just picked up the pieces.

The thread that would lead to his current settings was laid here, Fr Eamonn being "steeped and absolutely immersed in the mind

of the Legion.'

Priesthood

His work with the Legion compelled him on to take a chance on the priesthood, "on the rebound from my brother's ordination", Fr Eamonn says. He embarked on the path to priesthood on little more than a wing and a prayer.

"I said, 'Look, if this thing doesn't work out, I'll fall back on the career and the job that I'd left,' you know? It was that loose. There was no conviction, you know, that I was going to come out the other side," he tells.

Seminary

He made his way through seminary without difficulty, however, and had his choice of vocation and his future direction confirmed by a member of the congregation following his first Mass.

"At my first Mass, and probably where the media seed was sown, there was a lady in the congregation who worked for RTÉ, who came up for the first blessing after Mass and she said, 'Do you know, Fr Eamonn, you've a great voice for the radio. Would you consider it?' And I looked at her and scratched my head and thought, 'Well look, I've left one career behind and now you're telling me this," he laughs.
"I met her recently to thank

her because she sowed a seed in that statement. Just gave me a bit of confidence to approach media questions when the time came. you know, not to be afraid of these things."

Radio

And come the questions did. Encouraged by these words, Fr Eamonn took to voicing his opinions in letters to newspapers, which led to his first radio opportunity.

'A key moment was 2010, this is 10 years ago now, when the HPV vaccine debate was just beginning and I had written a letter to the paper in frustration because the school that I was chaplain in were just not listening to the dangers of this thing and the immorality of it anyway for the girls in the secondary school. So, I went to the paper and that, kind of, put my head above the parapet and immediately got a phonecall from Newstalk and RTÉ. And just, I was a bit afraid of it, and what came out of that was interesting – I got a series of programmes, lunchtime slots, on Newstalk," he recalls.

From here, he trekked through a number of stations and shows, before being approached by a member of Radio Maria in 2011. It is here that he feels he's found the platform from which to do God's, through Mary's, work.

Asked about the spirituality guiding the station, he responds, 'It's a no-brainer because it's a Marian radio station. The maternity of Our Blessed Lady, her maternal approach to souls, and so I'm steeped in that with the Legion of Mary because part of my story is that I spent three vears from 2003 to 2006 fulltime in Dublin, working out of the Morning Star Hostel on Frank Duff's cause for canonisation, because my vocation had come through the Legion."

I said, 'Look, if this thing doesn't work out, I'll fall back on the career and the job that I'd left,' you know?"

Impact

He emphasises the impact the Legion of Mary has had on his own life, and those he's known throughout the years, with six of the men, himself included, from his Legion group in London being ordained to the priesthood within 12 months of each other. He's in no doubt that that's where God planted the seed of priesthood.

"My vocation came through the Legion of Mary and all the work that I'd been doing with them.'

Satisfied that the work he did in the Legion is continued in another form at Radio Maria, he's pleased that they've gone from strength to strength during the lockdown.

"This year has seen the radio go from three staff to eight staff. We're just inundated with phone calls, texts, emails, just communication of all sorts. If anything, things have grown exponentially in that we're able to involve a lot more listeners. We have priests who are more available to participate on the radio." he shares.

"People aren't chasing their tails like they used to be, and now they have time to tune into the things

temper tantrums

An only child, my seven-year-old daughter is already acting like a teenager, losing her temper over the smallest thing, shouting at me, banging doors and telling me she hates me. Her emotions are out of control and my husband and I don't know how to help her.

is likely that a combination of factors are behind your daughter's behaviour. She might not have the tools to manage her emotions or learned the coping skills for dealing with situations she doesn't like, or perhaps tantrums have worked in the past.

Tantrums over little things should be a thing of the past by now, but if they are happening often over small things, it could be a red flag that some of her needs are not being met. Children store up their feelings and then wait to let them loose.

Remember: having empathy with the emotion doesn't mean agreement.

What triggers precede the events? What is happening around them? Research shows that children who don't feel strong connections with their parents struggle with their emotions, social interaction and even schoolwork. The key here is your relationship with your child, so consider how to build your relationship with your daughter. Start taking note of what is happening when emotions take over

There could be very obvious things like tiredness or hunger or more complex problems like trouble at school. Then look at the time you are spending together - how much is quality time where you have fun and chat, and how much is doing jobs, or correcting her?

Although it's hard, don't try to calm her down. What happens when you lose your cool? If your spouse tells you to 'calm down honey' when you're angry it probably makes things worse. What you probably want is a chance to be understood, especially over why you are upset in the first place. Children are not that different, though the underlying reasons might not be as complex

Once she has calmed down, ask why she is upset and then work on a solution together.

Your daughter is still just learning to handle her emotions - when her emotions go out of control, it's your chance to get down to her level, so you are physically there, eye to eye, and can, rather than

correct her, ask her what is wrong. Staying calm is especially important when it's just an "I'm not getting what I want" tantrum. Your attention should be positive attention. The louder your child gets the softer you should speak - they'll match your volume and tone. Your

challenge is to stay calm. This is your chance to help her learn how to handle these negative emotions, which is a really important life skill. In your daughter's case you need to

figure out what she is feeling at this time and accept those feelings, while helping her understand that the feelings are okay but the behaviour is not. After you have identified, empathised and helped your daughter to understand the emotion, then deal with the bad behaviour. Then talk together about a solution.

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TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Francesco stirs things up as intrepretations fly

ardly a week goes by without some sort of a religious controversy blowing up. And the pattern is often the same - exaggerated headlines, soundbites and one-liners, with pre-reflective rushes to the ramparts.

And so it was last week when Pope Francis was reported to have said, in a new documentary, that he supported civil unions for gay people.

On the Nine O'Clock News (RTÉ One, Wednesday), Jackie Fox's report referred to the Pope's comments, seven years earlier, about not being judgemental of gay people who sought God with good will, while also, as Fox said, "reaffirming the Church's position that homosexual acts were sinful but homosexual orientation was not". Ursula Halligan of We Are Church thought this had "huge implications" for Catholic teaching and called for a new encyclical. Fox ended her report by saying that Church doctrine stays the same.

On Thursday's News at One (RTÉ Radio One), Bryan Dobson spoke of the Pope using "some of the clear-est language", though if that was the case there would hardly have been the same wide range of interpretations. Former president Mary McAleese thought it was "in complete contradiction" to Church teaching, overstated I



Evgeny Afineevsky, director of the documentary about Pope Francis titled Francesco.

thought, but she hit the nail on the head when she said "Popes don't make new rules through documentaries".

By contrast I thought she understated considerably when she said that "he doesn't appear to be saying he supports civil marriage".

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was interviewed separately. He said our attitude had to change, that there were homophobic tendencies even in Church leaders, and curiously that people being frustrated with their gay identity leads them to be homophobic in ways. He said there was a clear distinction between the man-woman relationship in marriage and civil rights being addressed properly. When he said something similar previously he said he'd got a headline saying he was in favour of gay marriage, which he wasn't.

He said the challenge was how to recognise the special relationship of man and woman without giving the impression that anyone outside that was second class: "both are right, there's space for both". That begs a few

On Sunday Sequence (BBC Radio Ulster), The Irish Cath-olic editor Michael Kelly saw reaction depending where you are on the church spectrum, where lines are drawn. Pope Francis, he explained, was building on things he had said previously in Argentina relating to distinctions between Church and State.

He had taken a pastoral approach, informed by his work with young gay people thrown out of their families in the macho culture of that country. His words would have impact in countries where gay people were oppressed – effectively he was saying that people shouldn't use the Faith or its sacred texts as "a pretext to discriminate".

People, especially Catholics and journalists, need to be way better informed..."

The Pope was walking a tightrope as he also maintained the Church's traditional understanding of human sexuality.

Theologian Tina Beattie was also interested in the varying reactions. She pointed out that in between the affirmative language another phrase had been edited out, where Pope Francis said "I can in no way approve of homosexual acts". She realised it wasn't changing the teaching, but thought there was an element of "fudge" – not enough

PICK OF THE WEEK

J.R.R. TOLKIEN – AN UNEXPECTED FRIEND EWTN, Saturday, October 31, 9.30pm

The Lord of the Rings is much more than a hit novel and blockbuster movie. Tolkien's masterpiece is a Christian parable filled with important spiritual messages and symbolism.

EUROVISION MASS

RTÉ One, Sunday, November 1, 11am

A Eurovision broadcast from St Martin's Church in Sneek in the Netherlands. The celebrant is Fr Van der Weide, a priest, singer and organist. Commentary and translation is by Fr Thomas McCarthy OP.

EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND

Channel 4, Thursday, November 5, 8.35am

The Angry Family: The whole family meet the local priest to explore what - and who - is to blame for the constant

in it for people "ambiguously on the margins".

Bernard Lynch, a gay activist who was ordained a Catholic priest and now has a same-sex partner to whom he is civilly married, thought the Pope's words were "wonderful" but "not a seismic shift". I thought he was very unjust to the previous Popes, accusing them of "hatred" for gay people.

Presenter Audrey Carville seemed to think it noteworthy that here we had a Pope "no longer afraid to talk openly and in a positive way, about human sexuality" – has she not read John Paul II's talks on Theology of the Body, or Benedict XVI's encyclical on love?

Considering the whole debate, I think that the Church needs to be clear and consistent in its teaching, needs to find new ways of expressing it that will resonate today, especially with young people, needs to choose words carefully, and show that love is the driver.

More broadly, people, especially Catholics and journalists, need to be way better informed as to the nature of different church teachings and documents, more educated as to what teachings can and can't change and clearer on the difference between a teaching and the words with which it is expressed. That would help.

boregan@hotmail.com, @boreganmedia



Pat O'Kelly

Eric Sweeney's minimalist style built on musical genius

ment in 2018 as organist of Christ Church Cathedral Waterford, Dean Maria Jansson described Eric Sweeney as "a man of deep faith for whom music is his language with God".

Eric Sweeney's final service coincided with the ordination to the Church of Ireland priesthood of former leader of the Green Party, Trevor Sargent. Following the ceremony, Sweeney said he planned to devote his time to composition. However, his untimely death on July 21 this year means his plans may not have been fully realised.

One of the first Irish composers to embrace a minimalist style, Eric Sweeney was born in Dublin on July

15, 1948 and, like his younger brother Peter, attended Sandford Parish Primary School. Secondary education had the brothers at St Patrick's Cathedral School and taking organ lessons from the revered incumbent, Sydney Grieg.

Eric continued his organ studies abroad with the eminent Flor Peeters in Belgium and the equally renowned Fernando Germani in Italy.

Marriage

Back in Dublin, Eric Sweeney lectured at the College of Music and his alma mater. TCD. In 1978 he became choral director in RTÉ, working closely with the station's Singers until 1981. That year he and his family - he had married Sally Johnston in 1972 - moved to the music department of Waterford's Institute of Technology where he remained until 2010. By then, it might be said, Eric Sweeney had become music patriarch of the South East.

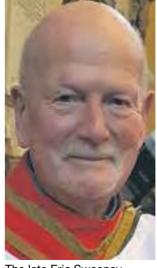
Besides his work in WIT and the city's Cathedral, Eric Sweeney found time for composition. His extensive output covers a large corpus of chamber, organ and choral music and a considerable legacy of large-scale works including several commissions from home and abroad.

Appointed a member of Aosdana, Eric Sweeney served on the board of the Arts Council, was composerin-residence to the Newport Rhode Island Festival, visiting scholar of composition at the University of Illinois, visiting lecturer at Indiana State University and composer-in- residence at Memorial University in St John's Newfoundland.

More recently he was composer-in-residence at Waterford University Hospital for which he wrote one of his final pieces, Hospital Voices. With its text devised by Waterford poet Edward Denniston, the work has been termed 'unusual and thoughtprovoking'.

Performance

The cantata Deirdre for RTÉ was premièred at the National Concert Hall while his Dance Music, commissioned by London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, also had its first performance at



The late Eric Sweeney.

the NCH by the visiting RPO. Among Sweeney's other compositions are two symphonies and five concert: trumpet, saxophone, guitar, four violins and solo violin.

There are also three chamber operas – *The Invader*, *The* Green One, both with libretti by English poet Mark Roper, and Ulysses with its text adapted by Joycean expert Andrew Basquille.

Excerpts from the latter were performed at various Dublin venues on Bloomsday 2016.

The inventive Sweeney also provided music for a number of classic silent films including The Phantom of the Opera, Dracula, Nosferatu and The Cabinet of Dr Caligari.

A man of many talents used with imaginative diversity, may Eric Sweeney's soul rest in peace.



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God's inscrutability



BookReviews Peter

Peter Costello



A Small Pslater

by Padriag J. Daly (Scotus Press, €12.00; available from www.scotuspress.com)

John F. Deane

his new collection from Pádraig J. Daly has been eagerly waited for. Daly is a priest currently working in Dublin and he has published many collections of his poetry.

The poems gathered here are excitingly new and move from an early traditional Christian and Catholic faith to a finely aware contemporary view; he moves from Augustine of Hippo, 5th Century, to Ilia Delio, an American Franciscan nun and theologian of the 21st Century. The growth and transition are hugely welcome to Daly's many followers

The poetry moves from "that original bleb/that formed in bubbling sludge the Godhead blessed" to humanity in thrall to an Omega God of the future, to the Christ. Notice how, even in these lines, Daly's skill with word-sounds and patterns is evident.

Limitations

From the historical limitations of early Catholic thinking, through the rumpus on the notion of evolution, to an awareness of the cosmic dimensions of our being, this 'small psalter', this book of experience. thought and prayer, outlines a richly productive career in priesthood and in poetry.

All the while, attention to the fine minutiae of our daily living is undiminished, a quality most distinctly obvious in Daly's care and concern for all of humanity through all his work: "The rain I listen to on leaves...", "In shabby churches out along the city,/Old men lead the old in prayer"...one could quote so many delicately observed instances of awareness and precise language.

The theme of Daly's work continues to be our place in creation and the watchful, loving eye of the divinity over us; nor is there failure to note the suffering we undergo, the apparent injustices in our living, the

Securities

He writes "the old certainties are gone" and "secure securities are but shakily secure". Faith life in our time demands personal and conscious commitment of the will, rather than the easy and faulty obedience to sets of rules we once tried to live by. How, then, are we to live:

"Is there reason in any scripture Why the lie should not triumph And the liar be feted everywhere?"

This clear and hurting reference to certain political leaders in our

time must be asked. The answer is, of course, a question of will and decision.

Thankfully, Daly does not offer simplistic answers.

There are many, almost cinematic, pieces, precisely and sparely presented, leaving indelible images in the reader's mind with their calm empathy"

Country and city both hold the attention of this exquisite poetry, and both are shot through with a loving and caring view. There are memories of his early years in Waterford, of life in the Dublin Liberties; there is a Franciscan and Augustinian awareness of the great and the everyday wonders of creation. Echoes of Merton and many of the Fathers of the Church are gently contained, providing a bourdon of music to the poems:

"Sealight Shivering all morning On the walls of the room: walk outside to still the ecstasy."

There are many, almost cine-

empathy, the quiet effectiveness of the music and the language.

There are vignettes of individual people he meets in his daily work, from the youngest to the oldest, from locals to refugees and it is here, with the lost and lonely, that Daly's empathy shines most truly forth. 'Rosie' for instance: "I pass her in the late evening,/Standing where she stands,/Bright as a kingfisher,// Waiting, she says,/For men to make a pig of her."

Integrity

Here is integrity and honest directness: we must "resign ourselves to unanswered prayer". But the prayers must be spoken.

In his introduction to the book,

matic, pieces, precisely and sparely presented, leaving indelible images in the reader's mind with their calm

The costs of loneliness are high, paid for by the individual in poor physical and mental health and by society in political extremism, both left and right.

Bookshops

Her book belongs to genre of 'management books'. You see them stacked high in airport bookshops. Thick, junky, volumes their theme of how you can become a better person (that is, a better paid manger) by making the world a better place (that is, your company more profitable) is played out across a range of topics.

Some years ago, it was marketing, then human resources, today it is



Feeling alone in a teeming world

The Lonely Century. Coming together in a world that's pulling apart

by Noreena Hertz (Sceptre, £20.00)

Frank Litton

It is no surprise that soap operas are a staple of television.

After all, we make sense of where we are and where we might go with the 'story' of our lives. We find ourselves cast into roles daughter, mother, father, son, teacher, plumber - whose scripts we improvise as we plot our course.

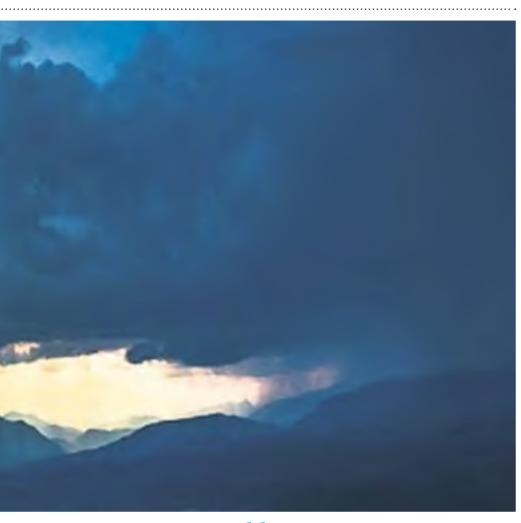
The drama on the screen with its twists and turns and high emotions may bear little resemblance to our slow-paced, humdrum

dramas, but it does reflect the same reality.

We live in a web of relationships that both enable and constrain us. We need others as we pursue our goals and we need to meet their expectations, sometimes at the cost of attaining those goals. Those who can help can also hinder. We need both to belong and to be free.

To belong without freedom is bad, as much of modern Irish literature attests with its stories of oppression and escape. To be free without belonging is just as bad. Noreena Hertz reports that this is the plight of increasing numbers across the world who live lonely lives disconnected from family, work, and

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.



Jack Hare writes: "There is no longer a handbook to explain how a whole swathe of people think, no simplification, no readymade fit for all."

The title poem of the collection, 'A Small Psalter', examines with precision this truth. The sequence, rich and varied, with a mixture of faith and doubt, of praise and pleading, echoes in form and in development one of Daly's greatest earlier poems, 'Augustine: Letter to God'. The sequence is tantalizing in its zig-zag forward impetus, the growth in thought and language is rich and intense.

Awe remains, but love is all the more prevalent. "I still myself for prayer...Bringing before You the broken of the world...You who make

They are poems that hold the reader spellbound in thought, rhythms, imagery and language"

in us an emptiness/That You alone suffice."

In age, in doubt in grief, there is no shirking experience and truth.

This book is arguably the most valuable collection of accessible and great poetry that this age is in need of; they are poems that hold the reader spellbound in thought, rhythms, imagery and language, and hold our awareness up to cosmic dimensions and to the little things that matter in our everyday living.

Like Pádraig J. Daly we remain certain that at least humanity will "Surrender, kicking,/To the Inscrutable."

1 John F. Deane's recent book is The Outlaw Christ (Currach Books).

leadership. Like a good sermon they bring the general down to earth with personal witness and apt illustration.

She does place the disturbing particulars in a bigger picture and indicts Neoliberalism and its economics as a source of the problem"

I do not want to disparage Hertz; her theme is important, loneliness blights many lives.

Her intent to make the

world a better place is genuine.

Her extensive research delivers illustrations that stick in the mind: stories of elderly Japanese widows who steal from shops to get arrested and into prison where they enjoy the care and company they cannot find elsewhere; the 'buddy' service that provides, for a price, a friendly presence with whom to shop and drink coffee (available in Dublin); the surveillance techniques that keeps workers at the job and away from companionship; the emotional connections lonely people make with digital devices and robots - a route out of loneliness that deepens alienation.

She does place the

disturbing particulars in a bigger picture and indicts Neo-liberalism and its economics as a source of the problem.

Respect

She calls for a more humane capitalism where the logic of the market is balanced by regard for our need for recognition and respect.

She, however, does not tell us how this might be achieved or where the intellectual resources to sustain the move could be found.

A good sermon depends on a good 'theology' and this she does not have. You can find it in *Fratelli Tutti*.

Francis is truly the Pope for our time.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Thoughts in a time of (another) lockdown

nce again, thanks largely it seems to a very human impatience to be done, once and for all, with the pandemic, lockdown restrictions have returned because so many, especially in Dublin and Kildare, could not wait as calmly as we should for 'normal life to return'.

But as a result of the rising infections and deaths we are facing into serious levels of restriction. During the last season of constraint, these pages suggested some relevant books, old and new, to read that seemed appropriate to the moment. This we will do again.

But first of all, this time, however, we would like to suggest something else, a proposal that will help us concentrate on how we feel ourselves, and what we feel about those around us, and perhaps even about life in general, and what it feels like when one's 'interior castle' is under siege. But this time not by reading, but by writing.

Now is the time to begin 'a journal of the plague year'.

That of course was the title of a famous work by Daniel Defoe published in 1772 (about which more will be said on another occasion).

What I am suggesting here is a simpler thing. That every day one records a small number of lines, perhaps half a page, certainly no more than two, moments in the days as they go by that strike upon one's imagination or memory or affect one's feelings. But how to go about this?

First it needs to be written by hand, whether on sheets of paper or in a note book, or school copy. It should not be composed on a word processor. There are good reasons for this.

Pen and paper

Many writers find that using pen and paper provides great control and yet greater freedom in writing. On the screen what one types looks all too finished, too like a book or article already to be printed, merely at the push of a button. Writing by hand provides different psychological connections between brain, spirit, purpose and result, something more akin to the sketches that an artist would make of what he sees around him in city and country: a random grab at moments of an ever changing reality.

The best way to this is simply to make

notes of personal impressions and feeling. Do not strive in any way to be arty, or literary, or cultural, or scientific, or psychological. Just be yourself, and admit to yourself what you feel.

Do not let this little record become, however, in any way a burden. See perhaps as making a record for yourself when each day of lockdown seems later to have melded into another.

Remember every day, like every person, is different, so make a record of it.

Don't bother with celebrities or politicians... keep to your own little cohort, to your street, your neighbourhood, your park, your shops, your local school. And above all, your home"

Perhaps clippings from papers or magazines, could be pasted into the pages too. But don't bother with celebrities or politicians, or even your opinions about them. Keep to your own little cohort, to your street, your neighbourhood, your park, your shops, your local school. And above all, your home.

It might be too that everyone in a family can keep their own record. Later on they can be shared around. 'Was that really what it felt like' the grandchildren, your grandchildren to come in another era, will ask.

But a warning. If you want to keep a 'secret diary' and more deeply personal one, by all mean do so, the sort of diaries kept by Boswell or Pepys, kept in code or under lock and key. No, I have in mind something more akin to Parson Woodforde or the Rev. Mr Kilvert. These would not be secret pages, but pages to go back over and to share with others.

In such a diary there is room too for spiritual thoughts. These too in later years you may find especially valuable. You will then say to yourself: "Well, what faith I had that carried me through it all."

So add to the days shopping a few note books or copies, a box of pencils and do not forget a pencil sharpener – that will keep you to the point in the weeks to come.



38 | Classifieds The Irish Catholic, October 29, 2020

Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.

To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact eve.kerton@focusireland.ie or phone 1850 204 205



The Miracle **Prayer**

Dear Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for a

special one. (mention here) Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days

S.M.

The Miracle **Prayer**

Dear Heart of Jesus, In the past I have asked for many favours.

This time I ask for a special one. (mention here) Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days

B.D.



Reverend Mother Bridget of the Poor Clares smiles alongside Sheila Corless who had just been given a Benemerenti medal.

The medal is awarded by the Pope to members of the clergy and laity for service to the Catholic Church.



Please remember GOAL in your Will

42 years on we continue to deliver lifesaving support to the most vulnerable people in our world. Leaving a gift in your Will is priceless.

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'NET helped me make my faith SO much stronger than it's ever been, and it's really helped me improve as a man of God.' - Michael (19), Dublin

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€1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or info@bothar.ie

The Gift Of A Lifetime

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Clare Martin at clare.martin@hospicefoundation.ie or call 01 679 3188



www.hospicefoundation.ie

By remembering World Missions Ireland in your Will you are leaving a gift of hope for all God's children

> World Missions Ireland is the Church's official charity for overseas mission Please help your Church to survive & flourish

To learn how, call Eimear on 01 497 2035 WORLD MISSIONS OF email eimear@wmi.ie



Classified ads

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PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN NEVER KNOWN TO FAIL

OH MOST BEAUTIFUL FLOWER OF ST CARMEL, Fruitful

Vine, Splendour of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of the Sea help me and show me that wherein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succour me in my necessity [make request]. There are none which can withstand your power.

Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. [Repeat Three Times]

Say this prayer for three consecutive days, you must publish it and it will be granted. P.G.

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	No. of insertions:	weeks
	Miracle Prayer €40	

Phone: 01 687 4094

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€29.52 €34.44			

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I andline Mobile	Expiry Date:Signature

Gordius 479

Your heart for the homeless



Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering

erchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email emma.murphy@mqi.ie

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

- Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork. Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmissions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Classifieds: 01 687 4094

Leisure time

Crossword Junior Gordius 356

Across

- 1 'Mary, Mary, quite
- 7 Ketchup (5)
- 8 A person travelling around on holiday (7)
- 9 Shouts (5)
- 12 You cook them in an omelet (4)
- 14 Catch fish in it, or hang it behind a goal (3)
- 15 The eighth month of the year (6)
- 16 Not at home (4)
- 18 People named Robert are sometimes called this for
- 19 Say "Yes" to (5)
- 20 Stockholm is the capital of this EU country (6)
- 21 In the nursery rhyme, it ran away with the spoon (4)

Down

- 1 Officer in charge of a ship
- 2 You might find leaves and pictures of creatures on this piece of classroom furniture
- 3 Taking part in a speed competition (6)
- 4 Metal becomes this when it is left out in the rain (5)
- 5 You don't want these plants in your garden! (5)
- 6 Tug or drag (4)
- 10 Promised in marriage (7)
- 11 Pays attention to what someone is saying (7)
- 13 Speak (3)
- 17 Pain (4)
- 18 It might be a doubledecker (3)

SOLUTIONS, OCTOBER 22

GORDIUS NO. 478

Across - 1 Lea 3 Beefburgers 8 Eclair 9 Neglects 10 Ennis 11 Sheaf 13 Saint Cecilia 16 Absolve 20 Kenya 21 Rouge 23 Crypt 24 Last gasp 25 Docile 26 Butter knife 27 Dot

Down - 1 Lie detector 2 Atlantic 3 Bliss 4 Fan mail 5 Rules 6 Etched 7 SOS 12 Fleet Street 13 Spick and span 14 Tibia 17 Ladybird 19 Russet 22 Eagle 23 Chose 24 Lab

CHILDREN'S No. 355

Across - 1 Photograph 7 Referee 8 Feast 9 Circus 12 Tigers 15 Ulster 17 Insect 18 Eleven 21 Eden 22 States

Down - 1 Parachute 2 Offer 3 Oar 4 Reef 5 Palace 6 Votes 10 Cut 11 Strings 13 Gospel 14 Rocket 16 See 19 Lit 20 Vet

Across

- 1 Type of rowboat, or a concert
- 3 Sounds like an especially dark, nocturnal chessman! (5,6)

Crossword

- 8 The innings is finished by a Capone with a hooligan (3,3) 9 Opening musical piece (8)
- 10 Himalayan country annexed by China (5)
- 11 & 18d Ulster lapped up this tasty treat (5,7)
- 13 Whatever floats your boat. Noah! (5)
- 15 Canine found in the middle of a dart-board? (7)
- 16 African-American spiritual often sung around campfires
- 20 Part of the gout remedy is over-the-top (5)
- 21 Of tender years (5)
- 23 Plant originally from Mexico
- 24 Part of a bicycle or policeman of the mire? (8)
- 25 What Italians call Naples (6) 26 Not signifying more or
- equals? That's irrelevant!
- 27 A period of egg or noodle starters (3) Down

1 Was Joseph of Arimathea an

- early visitor to this British location to be in time for the music festival? (11) 2 It's hit around a links (4,4)
- 3 Actress Emily's not so sharp, it seems (5)
- 4 Piece of toasted bread in some soups (7)
- 5 The Lady of the Manor? (5) 6 Irascible Disney dwarf (6)
- 7 Golf peg (3)
- 12 Will the act of getting aboard make the disorientated beatnik roam? (11)
- 13 Bilbo's nephew, hero of 'The Lord of the Rings' (5) 14 Type of fruit you can
- hoodwink? That's about right 17 One acted strangely in the
- story (8) 18 See 11 across
- 19 Area characterised by frozen soil (6)
- 22 Architect of the Sagrada Familia basilica in Barcelona
- 23 Poet you'd expect anyone to select first (5)
- 24 Say nothing when you keep

Sudoku Corner

3 9 2 5 3 6 1 2 8 9 3 6 7 4 3 1 8 4 2 9 4 8 1 4 6 5 2 7 8 1 3

Hard

Last week's Easy 355

Last week's Hard 355 5 8 9 3 1 2 4 7 6

8 9 6 1 2 7 3 4 5 4 3 7 5 6 9 2 8 1

40 | Comment

Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough

How never to be lost in a desert of our own making

AT THE VERY END of Pope Francis' recent encyclical, Fratelli *Tutti*, a name appears, perhaps unfamiliar to many Catholics here in Ireland: Blessed Charles de Foucauld [pictured]. The Pope describes this desert-hermit as "the universal brother", who had surrendered himself entirely to God in order to become "a brother to ever human being".

But who was he, and how did he end up living deep in the Sahara?

Charles was born into a very wealthy French family, with an ancestry full of military heroes.

The idyll of his early childhood was brought to an abrupt end by the deaths of his parents when he was six years old. Cared for by relatives, he grew to be a charmingly cheeky boy, and continued to pray as his mother had taught him. As a teenager, though, he found himself drifting from God. During his young adulthood, as he later explained, he "spent years denying nothing and believing nothing".

Apathy

In this state of spiritual apathy he drifted into the French military, with little ambition



for anything other than sensual pleasure. He had a string of sexual relationships, and brought to new levels the French capacity for gastronomic delight. One of his colleagues in the officers' training college wrote of young Charles: "If you have not seen Foucauld in his room, clad in his white flannel pyjamas buttoned with frogs, sprawled leisurely on his divan, enjoying foie gras and washing it down with a choice champagne, then you have never see a man really enjoying himself."

But Foucauld wasn't really enjoying himself. The wilder the parties got, the more he felt empty when he returned to reality.

What changed things for him was a map-making trip to Morocco, shortly after he left the army. During his 11 months of travel, Charles was deeply moved by the example of the local Muslims. Seeing them pray woke him from his spiritual slumber, and made him realise, as he later explained, that "there is something greater and more real than the pleasures of this world".

In the wide open spaces of the desert at night, Charles had the strong sense that "all of creation bows down humbly before its Creator". He was ready to give himself to the search for God.

There in the desert, until his death in 1916, he celebrated Mass daily"

On return to Paris he went to visit a priest, well known as a spiritual director. Charles was hoping for long conversations with the priest about the truth, or otherwise, of the Catholic Faith, but the priest, recognising Charles' spiritual openness, simply invited him to make his confession and to receive communion. Charles had returned to the Lord's brotherhood.

He had a great desire, though, to go further, to give himself completely to the Lord, to abandon himself entirely to him. First he entered the Cistercian life, then he worked for seven years as a handyman for the Poor Clares in Nazareth, imitating the hidden life of Jesus. Finally, he was ordained priest and became a missionary in the Sahara, with a new vision of Christian mission, based on the hiddenness of Jesus. Charles lived in a tiny oasis, hundreds of miles from anywhere, in the presence of a few dozen families (all Muslim).

There in the desert, until his death in 1916, he celebrated Mass daily, he adored the Lord in the Eucharist, and he loved his neighbours with a universal, brotherly love.

Journey

We in Ireland don't need to journey to the Sahara to find those who do not know the love of Jesus. As secularisation continues. we find ourselves in a rapidly expanding spiritual desert. This unsettles us, and we sometimes feel unsure how to react. Blessed Charles is a radiant reminder that, whatever we face, whatever battles we must fight, there is one thing necessary: to seek the Lord's face, to sit at his feet in prayer, to receive the gift of his brotherhood.

A prayer of **Blessed Charles** de Foucauld

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will.

Whatever you may do, I thank I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my

soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your

hands. without reserve. and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father.



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(Block letters please)

PLEASE HELP TO RE-HOUSE FAMILIES MADE HOMELESS BY THE MONSOON IN PAKISTAN

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are working to help rehouse families whose homes were damaged by a monsoon

The Little Way Association receives many requests to help the homeless. Fr Basharat Exupear from the emergency department of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Pakistan writes: "Sad news to share with you that during the months of

August and September 2020 monsoon rains fell for two to three weeks and water damaged the walls and roofs of our people's mud houses. Almost 300 poor people's homes have been destroyed in St Mary's parish, Derikabad. At present the people are forced to live under the hot sun and in tents which are insufficient to keep the households and to stay inside with eight to nine family members. They cannot sleep outside because it is a desert land and at night insects, wild animals or snakes can attack. "The Oblates have distributed food, medicine and other necessities for one month among the most affected families. We urgently request your esteemed organisation to help us rebuild as many of these families' houses.

The sum of €1,756 will rebuild one house

"We have prepared the budget for one house for one family which is €1,756. This sum will provide the burnt bricks, cement bags, sand, windows, doors and roofing for one house. Please Little Way help us. Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary."

All your contributions to our homelessness fund will go intact to this and similar projects which provide shelter for victims of natural and man-made disasters. Please give whatever you can. Thank you.



"I will spend my heaven doing good on earth. I will let fall a shower of roses.

- St Therese

YOUR NOVEMBER **MASS IN THE** MISSIONS FOR THE **HOLY SOULS**

Remember the Holy Souls in November. We will be pleased to send your Mass intentions to missionaries. By helping poor priests in this way you are aiding the work of the Church in mission lands.

We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass.

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

> Can you help provide a well?