

# The Irish Catholic

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# Parishes unite for besieged Ukraine

Chai Brady

Parishes across the country are rallying to prepare to receive Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russia's bombardment of their homeland.

A week into the invasion, Vladimir Putin's troops are stepping up the campaign despite vows by Ukrainians to fight to the death. Up to five million people – most of them women and children – are expected to flee their homes to seek sanctuary from the attacks.

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore decried Russia's "unlawful and unjustified" war, saying his priests are already coming to him asking how they can offer their collections to assist the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

He added that parish communities stand ready to assist refugees fleeing Ukraine, but warned that the response must be co-ordinated with State assistance.

"It is also the case that any support that parishes give, which of course is part of our Christian duty, there also have to be services for incoming refugees that would have to be available for them in terms of social welfare and medical aid," he insisted.

Bishop Paul Dempsey of Achonry said that at the heart of Church teaching is welcoming and "watching out for people in need".

"With what is happening in Ukraine, the whole country is very shocked. We should reach out to welcome them in any way we can," he said.

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## 'God grant peace to the land...'



Ukrainian Catholics gathered at Our Lady of Consolation Church in Donnycarney, Dublin at the weekend for Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. Eight-year-old Zachary Kushtala prays for peace in his homeland. Photo: John McElroy

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Romania's secret army of women

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# A great evil has been visited upon Ukraine

There are few things that test faith as much as suffering and the presence of evil in the world. The Christian tradition has always recognised the reality of evil as a profound temptation against the Gospel message.

The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by Faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it.

**“God is there too in the heroic priests who are huddling with their people in the subway”**

The last week in Ukraine has beamed pictures in to our homes not seen in Europe since the horrors of the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians who had a job and lived securely ten days ago are now on the move. People who never imagined themselves to be in need are suddenly queuing up at reception centres reliant on the generosity of strangers.

And it is in the generosity of these same strangers that we see the power of God in the face of the profound evil being visited upon the Ukrainian people by Vladimir Putin's war of aggression.

God is there too in the heroic priests who are huddling with their people in the subway or in the bomb shelter offering them the consolation of the sacraments.

The spontaneous outpouring of generosity in the face of such need is a wonder to behold. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have been

that: “If people know of anyone in Ukraine or they know friends who have friends or family in Ukraine, they should definitely reach out and offer that option”.

Meanwhile, Irish bishops used weekend Masses to issue urgent pleas for help for Ukrainians.

Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin said the situation in Ukraine appears to be motivated “by abuse of power and by the desire to control and dominate”.

“Our hearts and our prayers go out to the people of Ukraine who didn't ask for this war, and



Editor's Comment  
Michael Kelly



A truck displays an electronic message while protesters demonstrate outside United Nations headquarters in New York City, as diplomats inside hold an emergency session of the 193-member UN General Assembly on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Photo: CNS.

streaming across the border to neighbouring countries where they have been greeted warmly.

## Alone

But countries like Poland and Romania cannot carry the burden alone. Ireland too must be at the forefront in the huge effort to host refugees from Ukraine. These people are fleeing for their very lives. They don't want to leave, they want to be at home going about their daily business and seeing their children grow up in the land of their birth.

The Church has always taught that it is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity. It would be impossible

not to be moved by the young Ukrainians living in Ireland who have been queuing up in Dublin Airport to board flights to enter a warzone to stand up to Russia.

**“We must pray that God will grant these men a pure heart and that none of them will dishonour their cause”**

Only a maniac delights in war and only someone with a psychiatric illness would cheerfully head off to war. No, in the photographs of those going to fight there is a grim solemnity in their faces and fear

in their eyes. Courage does not rest in being unafraid of evil, it rests in acknowledging what evil is and facing it anyway.

We must pray that God will grant these men a pure heart and that none of them will dishonour their cause. We must also pray for an end to Russian aggression and for wise counsel for our leaders who must face this deepening crisis with fortitude. Above all, we must pray that justice and peace will prevail. *Slava Ukraini!*

**i** To join Friends of The Irish Catholic and support Catholic journalism, please phone the office on 01 6874094 for more information or to make a contribution.

## Parishes unite to aid besieged Ukraine

» Continued from Page 1

Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan said there are currently several groups in the diocese working with the Irish Refugee Council, supporting refugees from Syria and Afghanistan.

“I know they would be very willing to respond to the Ukrainian crisis as well and the diocese will be supportive of that,” Bishop Deenihan told *The Irish Catholic*. “Parishes and the diocese would respond warmly to any requests in relation to refugees from the Ukrainian situation.”

He added that the February 24 invasion of Ukraine by Russia “is an appalling situation whereby individuals are being sacrificed by ideology”.

The Director of the Irish Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Eugene Quinn insisted that parishes “can and should respond generously”.

He said that “every parish and every diocese should be trying to respond and support and welcome refugees.”

“We have to see what is going to happen in the conflict, but we in JRS will be calling on Ireland to take its fair share of responsibility - it shouldn't be just on countries that neighbour the conflict. Those with the resources should make them available.”

A spokesman for the Diocese of Cork and Ross said that “the local faith community will do what it can to support a welcome for Ukrainian refugees and will respond positively to any request from State agencies”.

Helen Vysotska, a Catholic missionary from Ukraine working in Dublin with Pure in Heart, said it was welcome that Ukrainians can now come to Ireland without visas.

She told *The Irish Catholic*

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**i** See Page 4.

# Ireland's neutrality dubbed 'morally disgusting' as Ukraine wracked by war

Chai Brady

An Irish Jesuit academic based in Chicago has said Ireland's policy of neutrality is "morally disgusting" and Ireland should be doing more to support Ukraine.

Fr Séamus Murphy, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University Chicago, told *The Irish Catholic* that the Faithful are called to "defend the weak and the helpless".

He points out that when the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy was offered to be extracted from the country by the US, he said he needed ammunition instead.

"What is the Irish attitude in response to that if he said it to us? Not one bullet. We won't even do what the Germans did a couple of weeks ago, giving them helmets," Fr Murphy said.

"It [Ukraine] has been invaded by a much larger country, it has been invaded without having tried to provoke or attack or do anything nasty to the bigger country. Catholic moral social teaching is clear that the state, or the public authority, has a role to protect the innocent against violence."

The Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24 and has since led to a severe

humanitarian crisis with more than half a million people displaced and hundreds of civilians including children killed so far.

Fr Murphy said the idea of Irish neutrality being a "shining moral example" to the world is "the greatest load of nonsense".

"You have some Christian types, who I'm sure are well intentioned, but they're not thinking, and they're inclined to take the view 'a decision to avoid going to war cannot be wrong, going to war is always a loss for humanity', and therefore they conclude that one should always try and avoid war. They interpret the conditions for a 'just war' so strictly that the conditions can never be met," he said.

Giving the example of some countries not reacting quickly enough to World War II, he said: "It's immoral to be a warmonger... but it can also be a failure of public policy morality on the part of a government to fail to see trouble coming and to fail to deal with it in time. If you don't go to war at the time you should, you may find yourself going to war later, and a much worse war."

Fr Murphy is the author of *War's Ends: Human Rights, International Order, and the Ethics of Peace*, which addresses the idea of a 'just war' and its criteria.

## A better tomorrow



Lia Lopez Blanco (6) and Arwen McMahon (10) with Dublin football star Noelle Healy team up to launch Trócaire's 2022 Lenten appeal to support the people of Zimbabwe who have been severely affected by Covid-19 and climate change.

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# Openness to other faiths in synod, but 'special emphasis' on Baptised Christians

**Ruadhán Jones**

The chair of Ireland's synodal steering committee has said that the synodal pathway will reach out to other denominations, but there is a "special emphasis" on Baptised Christians.

Dr Nicola Brady said that for the purposes of the synodal pathway a "distinction is made between those who are Baptised Christians and those

who are not".

Speaking at a gathering organised by the Association of Catholics Ireland (ACI) February 24, Dr Brady was asked if the synodal parish process is open to other faiths, such as Hindus or Muslims.

Dr Brady stressed that Pope Francis "is very much an advocate of inter-faith relationships".

"But for the purposes of the synodal pathway, there's a special

emphasis on Christians from other denominations being part of the community of Baptised Christians with us," she continued.

"The synodal process has an openness to what those outside the Christian community think of the Church.

"So those encounters are important, but that distinction is made between those who are Baptised Christians and those who are not."

Meanwhile, in the question and

answer session with Dr Brady, a number of ACI members expressed concerns that they hadn't heard anything about the synod in their own parishes.

"People are mad to contribute, but they can't seem to be able to do it," one comment read.

In response, Dr Brady said that the role of the steering group is not to direct what's happening in dioceses or in parishes, adding that it's "not a one size fits all model".

"It may be a case of asking the question [in your parish] and if not, there should be some opportunity at the diocesan level in one way or another but I can't say exactly what that would look like because it depends on the diocese," she said.

"At a later stage we will be creating further opportunities for the national synodal pathway. But that will come after the submissions for the universal synod."

## Ukrainian parish in Ireland feels war woes



**Jason Osborne**

The Ukrainian Catholic parish in Ireland has seen husbands, fathers and sons return to Ukraine in an attempt to defend their homeland a member of the parish has told *The Irish Catholic* newspaper.

Pure in Heart manager from Ukraine Helen Vysotska told this

paper that a number of people have returned to Ukraine to defend the country against Russia's recent invasion, including fathers and their sons that are aged over 18.

"There has been a few people, friends from the Ukrainian parish here, the Greek Catholic community here in Ireland that have gone – the fathers and even their sons, if they're

over 18, have gone," Ms Vysotska said.

At the same time, Ms Vysotska said members of the congregation have welcomed family from Ukraine in recent days, especially elderly family members.

However, she said that they are having difficulty convincing all family members to flee the conflict.

"The younger people are less likely," to leave, Ms Vysotska said, continuing "I'm trying to get my cousins over here and they don't want to leave because they have husbands or boyfriends who are staying there, and they don't want to leave them.

"I've begged my cousins to come but they've said they're not leaving."

## Donegal priest praises new determination of marine minister

**Staff reporter**

A Donegal-based priest has praised Minister Charlie McConalogue's "new determination" and greater understanding of the plight of Irish

fishermen.

Fr John Joe Duffy of Creeslough, Co. Donegal, told *The Irish Catholic* that new proposals and moves from the minister show "he has a better understanding of the plight of Irish fishermen and

new determination" to act for them.

His comments come as the minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine committed to fighting for increased protections for Irish fishing fleets at EU level, by extend-

ing Ireland's six and 12-mile restricted access protection zones.

Fr Duffy said that this "is a step in the right direction", but added that "substantive change is needed to reduce foreign vessels".

"There is a very simple solution to it, there are around 500 foreign boats in the Irish exclusive economic zone – we should be looking for a 50% reduction of that number," Fr Duffy said.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Medical Missionaries of Mary launch new Lenten event

The Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) has created a new event to be launched this spring, 'Steps of Hope'.

The new charity walk encourages the public to participate in walking 400 steps, 4,000 steps or 4km-worth of steps a day during Lent to raise awareness and resources for the MMMs.

"We hope this will be fun and is much more than a fundraiser. It is a way of getting people active and showing support for the healing charisma at work in the world. Covid-19 has shown us how difficult life can be when we feel isolated and alone," said Sr Sheila Campbell, MMM.

#### Director of Nano Nagle heritage centre receives cheque

Sr Lois Greene, director of Nano Nagle Birthplace (NNB), a heritage centre in Ballygriffin, Co. Cork influenced by the works and teachings of the Venerable Nano Nagle – an Irish Catholic educator and founder of the Presentation Sisters, has been the recent recipient of a cheque donated by the EPS Group, an organisation concerned with water sustainability.

The cheque, which amounts to €250, was presented to NNB on February 26 and will go towards a clean water distribution project under the supervision of the Presentation Congregation in the Philippines where a recent typhoon polluted water and made clean water too expensive for those without employment.

# Faith and fatherland have emerged in Ukraine's battle

Many strategic and political experts have described the tragic situation in Ukraine as a watershed in international affairs, and a quantum leap into a new world order. Alignments are changing, neutral countries – even Switzerland – are taking sides, and the European Union has moved swiftly to supply arms to defend Ukraine.

**“In recent decades, patriotism has been an unfashionable notion, sometimes linked with a xenophobic nationalism, or even racism”**

But there are many more lessons and ideas that are emerging too.

There is the lesson of courage, and valour, and why it is that these have been admired virtues even since ancient civilisation. Jaw-jaw may be better than war-war, yet fortitude and courage are necessary to



Mary Kenny

defend what is right. President Volodymyr Zelensky – though his path to leadership was through an unlikely career as a TV comic – has gained the esteem, and support, of so much of the world through his brave stand.

## Lesson of faith

There is the lesson of faith and fatherland. In recent decades, patriotism has been an unfashionable notion, sometimes linked with a xenophobic nationalism, or even racism. But the Ukraine crisis has shown us that patriotism is the natural human condition: people will fight to defend their land, their families and their nation.

‘Liberal democracy’ is a fine concept, but it is an abstract idea: land, family and nation are real. And the traditions of faith are deeply embedded in that sense of patriotism. Even those who do not share in the denominational faith – Volo-

dymyr Zelensky is Jewish, not Ukrainian Orthodox – respect that as an essential element of the national fabric.

**“It’s heart-scorching to see what is happening in Ukraine: but it certainly is a watershed in so many ways”**

When Boris Johnson wanted to show his support for the Ukrainian people, where did he go? To light a candle at the Ukrainian Cathedral of the Holy Family in London.

And the third lesson that emerges is that men and women, in general, have different roles. All are equal in the sight of the Lord (and before the law), but in time of war, the men are needed to stay and defend the territory,



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (left) lights a candle during a visit to the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Holy Family of London.

while the women and the children take refuge away from the conflict.

It’s heart-scorching to see what is happening in Ukraine: but it certainly is a watershed in so many ways.

**“‘Liberal democracy’ is a fine concept, but it is an abstract idea: land, family and nation are real”**

● My indispensable dictionary of saints informs me that St Vladimir, like other Christian converts – Clovis of France, Emperor Constantine – was drawn into the faith by a woman, namely, his grandmother St Olga.

Olga was the widow of Prince Igor of Kiev, and “advanced in age” when she became a Christian in 957. Due to her influence and example, her grandson Prince Vladimir/Volodymyr was baptised in 989. His life had been “brutal, blood-thirsty and dissolute” but after converting to Christianity he became “a beneficent ruler, generous towards the poor” and merciful. He also “promoted close relations” with the western churches.

Reference books use Vladimir, the Russian version of Volodymyr, the saint’s original name (a non-Slavic version is Waldemar). I feel sure they will now revise the spelling to the Ukrainian St Volodymur. And it will be St Olga of Kyiv.

## Rebutting President Higgins...

Shouldn’t the Taoiseach Michéal Martin have a quiet word with President Higgins, and counsel him to cease attacking Catholic education in Northern Ireland? Maybe An Uachtarán doesn’t intend to attack Catholic or any other denominational education – but that’s what it looks like, and in public life, perception matters.

Gillian McGrath, of the Catholic Education Partnership, published a compelling letter in *The Irish Times* earlier this week, firmly but politely rebutting President Higgins’ views on education in the North. (Michael D. had made a speech describing “segregated education” in Northern Ireland as “dangerous

and shameful”.)

Ms McGrath outlined the policies and practice of Catholic schools in the north. The admissions policies do not specify religious or ethnic background: but they do put some stress on locality, community and access for siblings. They seek to serve pupils in areas of economic deprivation, and to be open to immigrants. They also support “the rights of parents to choose the type of school that best suits their children.. Perhaps President Higgins doesn’t understand the Northern Ireland education system when he seeks to criticise the Catholic and other schools that have served the population so well.”

She added: “Language that can be interpreted as disrespectful and unfounded does nothing to help build a peaceful future.”

If we want to build a ‘shared island’, surely it’s vital that the president of this State should not be perceived as using language that is “interpreted as disrespectful and unfounded”.

The Taoiseach has the power to advise, or even restrain, the president if the head of state strays into direct political arenas.

Michael D. is fundamentally a decent man, who has served his office gracefully. But the definition of wisdom is to listen to wise advice.

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-Pope Francis



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# Religious care homes to be considered for HIQA regulation

Jason Osborne

Religious care homes are to be considered for HIQA regulation as part of a review of the nursing home regulatory models.

Following questions from Kerry TDs Brendan Griffin and Michael Healy-Rae regarding HIQA regulation for “certain communities” and “care homes”, Minister for Mental Health and Older People Mary Butler said she will ask her officials to consider religious orders as part of the review.

*The Irish Catholic* understands that con-

cerns have been raised by family members and friends of elderly religious regarding the lack of regulation for religious care homes.

In her response to the questions, Minister Butler said premises in which a majority of the residents are members of a religious order or are priests of any religion are exempted from the provisions of the Health Act 2007, which established the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and provided for a scheme of registration and inspection of nursing homes.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has “identified substantial learning in the context of nursing home services, including the sup-

porting regulatory framework, which requires review,” Minister Butler said.

“Minister Donnelly and I have determined a phased approach to examining the legislation with a view to enhancing the nursing home regulatory model. Phase 1 is bringing forward interim legislative enhancements aimed at making initial improvements to the regulatory framework.

“This work is ongoing in my Department and is the priority focus in terms of regulatory reform. The Government included a Health (Amendment) Bill on its legislative agenda, aimed at legislative amendments to

enhance the oversight and regulation of nursing homes,” she said.

Phase 2 will be a “wider, root-and-branch review” of the nursing home regulatory model which will incorporate best practices and guidance, Minister Butler wrote, adding that her department will undertake a scoping exercise in the second half of 2022 to determine the scope of phase 2 of the review.

“I will ask my officials to consider the issue of religious orders in the context of this scoping work to determine if the issue can be examined in the wider review,” she said.

## Ireland must end dangerous at-home abortions, says Life Institute

Ruadhán Jones

The Life Institute is urging the Minister for Health to end the “dangerous” at-home abortion regime, citing concerns for the safety of women.

### Abortion programme

Their call comes as the English government announced the end of its at-home abortion programme, following “very serious issues” raised by doctors and other commentators.

Niamh Uí Bhriain of the Life

Institute told *The Irish Catholic* that this practice is “dangerous for women”.

“We urge Stephen Donnelly to follow the example that the English department of health have given here and reverse that at-home abortion regime.”

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, both Irish and UK governments temporarily allowed women to take the abortion pill in their own homes.

Ms Uí Bhriain said that the introduction of the regime by then-Minister for Health Simon

Harris “went against the promises and commitments he made during the referendum”.

### Safety

Among the issues raised by doctors in England were “the safety of women taking the pill and with regard to the domestic situation in which those women might have found themselves, such as domestic violence”, Ms Uí Bhriain said.

She criticised the lack of a central reporting system for adverse outcomes for mothers who have taken the abortion pill.

## Downpatrick gears up for nine-day St Patrick novena

Chai Brady

A nine-day novena for St Patrick taking place in Downpatrick, Co. Down will “give thanks for those countless lives of witness and faith” and kicks off on March 8.

Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin will speak at the event and mark the 150th anniversary of St Patrick’s Church, where generations of Catholics have worshipped since 1872. It is the first post-reformation Catholic church to be built in Downpatrick.

The archbishop will celebrate Mass on March 15.

Poor Clares Sr Martina Purdy and Sr Elaine Kelly will help launch the ecumenical novena at the invitation of parish priest Fr John Murray and will share their faith story on March 8, entitled ‘Our Friend Patrick’.

Fr John Murray said the St Patrick’s celebration would remember all the thousands of people who have attended Mass and celebrated the sacraments in the church on St Patrick’s Avenue since its foundation.

“It is an occasion to give thanks for those countless lives of witness and faith and to look forward to the future with confidence and hope in Christ,” he said.

## Dublin diaconate keeps growing



Victor Okafor (centre right) was ordained as the 34th permanent deacon for the Dublin Archdiocese in St Martin de Porres Parish, Tallaght, by Bishop Eamonn Walsh (left) attended by Papal Nuncio Jude Thaddeus Okolo (right), February 26.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 29 allegations of abuse in mother and baby homes in the North

A total of 29 allegations of physical and sexual abuse involving the mother and baby homes and Magdalene laundries have been made to the police in Northern Ireland, *The Irish Times* reports.

The reports were made by people who were adopted from different institutions, as well as by some employees and residents the PSNI said.

All have come forward since a police investigation into the homes was launched last October, and follows the publication of a report which recommended that an inquiry be held to investigate the homes and laundries in the North.

### Winners of Christmas Crossword below:

Winner of the Pilgrimage to Lourdes for two: Theresa Collins, Co. Clare.

Runners up, winning a Holy Land crib: Peggy Gilmore, Co. Galway; Katherine Kelly, Co. Dublin; Eileen O'Neill, Co. Clare.

## Niamh Uí Bhriain

### The View



# Sinn Féin's appalling attitude to being pregnant is a problem beyond politics

Politics, so I'm frequently told, is a rough game, where players have to contend with machiavellian schemes, dirty tricks and all sorts of back-stabbing and unexpected heaves. The usual addendum to that descriptor is "and that's only within your own party".

It's long been held, therefore, that increasing the visibility and participation of women in politics might make interactions less aggressive and more collegial – and certainly more family-friendly.

Reports of the appalling treatment of the Sinn Féin TD for Clare, Violet-Anne Wynne, seem to run directly counter to that narrative.

She told the *Irish Independent* last week that she was made to feel "very alone and very isolated" by the party and that they had subjected her to "psychological warfare". There were details of the level of control that now seems commonplace in Sinn Féin but Ms Wynne's revelation regarding what had been said to her about her sixth pregnancy was downright abusive.

### Mother

The Clare TD, who was mother to five children, said that she was surprised to discover that she was expecting a baby, and that she was "really anxious in relaying the information initially to people, to the party, because I was concerned what the reaction would be".

**“Reports of the appalling treatment of the Sinn Féin TD for Clare, Violet-Anne Wynne, seem to run directly counter to that narrative”**

"When I did mention it to a prominent female member at the time, I was called an 'effin eejit' for getting pregnant in the first place. For me, it didn't help with the anxiety that I was already experienc-



ing and it was quite shocking I suppose," she said. "Although you might be experiencing anxiety, you don't expect that kind of a reaction. I was looking for a bit of support and a bit of, maybe, reassurance I suppose at the time and I felt I didn't receive it," she claimed on RTÉ's *Drivetime*.

It goes without saying that the only reaction that Ms Wynne should have gotten from the prominent female party member was "congratulations", followed by assurances that the lovely, shiny, pro-choice progressives in Sinn Féin would do everything possible to help her navigate the political system through her pregnancy and after the baby was born.

Instead she was called an effin eejit.

**“Cultural forces, from media influences, to movies, fiction and more are increasingly hostile to motherhood”**

### Disgusting

What a disgusting attitude. What, precisely, was Ms Wynne supposed to take from that response? That her child was a nuisance because she had been conceived at an inopportune time for the party? That the desire for political power matters more than a baby?

**“This anti-parenting bias has become part of our laws through legislation such as tax individualisation”**

That, despite all the lip-service in regard to empowerment and 'choice', women are denigrated and abused and talked-down to for

becoming pregnant. No wonder abortion rates are climbing. And of course, you can bet that the prominent female party member was also prominently pro-repeal and made lots of passionate speeches about choice in the referendum.

### Problem

It's not just a problem in Sinn Féin, of course. Cultural forces, from media influences, to movies, fiction and more are increasingly hostile to motherhood, with pregnancy and child-rearing often portrayed as career-ending, miserable or just plain drudgery. When do we ever hear that children are the best thing that will ever happen to you, that being a mother should also be an ambition, and that having a big family is as valid a choice as becoming a CEO?

This anti-parenting bias has become part of our laws through legislation such as tax individualisation, and, it seems, it has seeped into the corridors of Dáil Éireann where a powerful woman can cut another down to size by calling her an "effin eejit" because she is with child.

Ms Wynne should take heart from the fact her baby girl is worth more to the world than any self-promoting Dáil speech or any points gained on opinion polls which are, in any case, entirely at the whim of a wildly fickle electorate. She might already know that declining birth rates are creating uncertainties and a collapse in resources and growth that will make Covid-19 look like a walk in the park. And it's a fact that studies have shown that

women, on average, would have liked to have had more children than they eventually have.

Last month, a speech given by Mary Lou McDonald, gave a glimpse into what the party's view on motherhood is. Describing Ireland as misogynistic and sexist still, the Sinn Féin leader said that women in Ireland had been "confined to domestic chores" and "excluded from the world of work". But parenting and raising children and caring for a home is work. It might be unpaid and, now more than ever, unappreciated by women in power, but motherhood matters.

**“Last month, a speech given by Mary Lou McDonald, gave a glimpse into what the party's view on motherhood is”**

Again, neither Sinn Féin nor Mary-Lou McDonald are alone in this view. It's likely common across the political establishment with some exceptions. The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) rarely mentions mothers, though it has much to say about abortion, and why women are "any person who identifies as a woman".

### Stories

News platforms and popular culture are full of stories of women who regretted having their babies. The film, *The Lost Daughter*, was critically acclaimed for the wonderful performances from Olivia Coleman and others, but its central message – that motherhood is restrictive and awful and women need to break free of it to succeed – has become a strident note across too many of the communications being shouted at women these days.

I don't know Ms Wynne, or anything about her, but I know this: she is not an "effin eejit" for being pregnant with a child. The only eejit, effin or otherwise, is the woman who made that nasty, abusive, demeaning remark to her.

# Towards a new culture of vocations



Bishop Kevin Doran tells **Ruadhán Jones** about the lessons for Ireland from the recent symposium on the priesthood

**H**aving attended the recent three-day Vatican symposium on the theology of the priesthood, Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran believes the conference had much to offer for the Church in Ireland, at a time when vocations have plummeted.

The symposium, which ran from February 17-19, opened with a reflection on the nature of being a priest from Pope Francis, while speakers addressed themes from celibacy to the question of the ordination of women to the diaconate.

However, the overarching theme that Bishop Doran drew from the conference was that “the ministerial priesthood is very much rooted in the person of Jesus. But it is also very much about the faithful.”

“There is this idea that the priest is somehow the meaning of the Church – no, the priest is there to minister pastorally to the faithful,” Bishop Doran told *The Irish Catholic*. “There’s no real meaning in the priesthood apart from the mission of proclaiming the good news to the faithful.”

Bishop Doran praised Pope Francis for “calling a spade, a spade” when he said that “if priests don’t recognise the priority of Baptism, they’ve missed the point and have just become functionaries”.

**“The ministerial priesthood is very much rooted in the person of Jesus. But it is also very much about the faithful”**

When asked if he thought there were any lessons from the conference that could help address the vocations crisis in Ireland, the bishop of Elphin said he believes Ireland needs to build “a new culture of vocation that is rooted in Baptism”.

“When I began working with the European vocation services 20 years ago, one of the things we were strongly encouraged to do and were very anxious to do was to promote an integral vocations ministry,” Bishop Doran reflected. “In a sense it is only through an understanding of our baptismal role that any of us can discover the particular mission that is entrusted to us. That includes religious, priests, married people, parents



Twenty-three priests lie prostrate during their ordination to the priesthood at a Mass at Myongdong Cathedral in Seoul, South Korea, January 28, 2022. Photo: CNS.

– everything flows from our Baptism.

“There was a period maybe ten years ago or so when there seemed to be a push back against that vision. The whole focus was on promoting priesthood almost as though it stood alone. I’m very glad that this conference was returning to what might be called a more integral pastoral care of vocations which is rooted in Baptism.”

## Groundwork

The Church in Ireland has to “lay the groundwork” for this culture by ensuring all the faithful take their Baptism seriously, Dr Doran said. If they do, “it means married couples share their faith with their children... their children in turn will be introduced to the life of the Church and perhaps as young adults will continue to see that as part of their life.”

“And in that context then, if young people are praying, they will discover the invitation from God in different ways based on the gifts that he has given them,” he said. “For some of them that will be priesthood, for some of them it will be marriage, for some of them it will be other things.”

“At the moment I think to some extent the problem is, we’ve lost the connection between Baptism and vocation or mission. People come and bring their babies for Baptism and the next time you might see them is when they bring them for first holy Communion. That’s no way to build a vocational culture.”

When we establish this culture of vocation, it will make it easier to offer specific vocations to young people, Bishop Doran explained, because “you can’t pop the question of priesthood out of thin air”.

“There was this idea in the past that priests almost grew on trees and you could pluck them from the tree and after a period of time in the seminary you were left with a ready-made priest,” he continued. “But I think people who work in the semi-

naries will say the difficulty is even good, young people who do come into the seminary, they’re coming out of a situation where for them to be people of faith is counter cultural. There’s not that much support in their own families and certainly among their own friends.”

## Reflections

Bishop Doran said that a number of speakers offered challenging reflections on questions relating to specific aspects of the priesthood, including one on the ordination of women to the diaconate. It was given by Prof. Michelina Tenace, a professor of dogmatic theology at Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian University, who worked on a 2016 commission which studied the question. A second commission in 2020 was unable to reach a full consensus on whether there was an ordination with the same form and same aim as the ordination of men.

“Her talk was interesting,” Bishop Doran said. “She said that a lot of

people assume that the answer to the question of the ordination of women as deacons is that of course women have the right. But nobody has the right to be ordained.

**“A number of speakers offered challenging reflections on questions relating to specific aspects of the priesthood”**

“The question has to be approached according to what the Church needs. What the Church needs today, she said, may not be the same, probably isn’t the same, as what the Church needed in the first century. It’s about looking at the world today in the light of the Gospel and saying, right, how can Christian men and women be invited to use the gifts that God has given to serve the mission of the Church today?”

While Prof. Tenace didn’t give a specific recommendation on the subject – Bishop Doran believes the professor “was saying that we were asking the wrong question”.

“If it becomes a competition between men and women, we’ve already got the wrong answer. She said the mission of the Church has to involve all of God’s people and it’s not a competition. It’s about recognising the gifts that people have. She was warning us to avoid getting caught up in the wrong question and therefore coming out with the answer that was not consistent with what the Church needs.”

## Underway

Asked if Prof. Tenace’s advice is relevant to the synodal process underway in Ireland and globally in the Church, Bishop Doran said he believes that for most women, the key issue is that their gifts are valued equally.

“If you asked women about being involved in their roles in the Church, I think that mostly they want to know that the gifts they have as baptised people who are women will be recognised and valued on par with the gifts of men.”

“This applies equally to the question of religious sisters – they would sometimes be perceived as holy people who haven’t been ordained. But they are women who have been Baptised, who have made a very specific faith commitment, many of whom have huge expertise and experience and an enormous amount to contribute to the life of the Church today.”

Ultimately, Bishop Doran believes the key element that came from conference is “that the priesthood is essential to the life of the Church, particularly because of the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments – but the Church is not all about the priesthood”.



Bishop Kevin Doran, who attended the recent international conference on priesthood. Photo: CNS.



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**CHILDREN ARE FORCED TO WITNESS THE HORRORS OF WAR AND ARE EXPERIENCING FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY. THEIR CHILDHOOD IS UNDER ATTACK.**

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# Lent prepares us for Easter

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester  
O'Flynn OFM Cap.



**W**hen I take a passage of scripture for reflection, I begin with my pencil to underline words that strike me. For the First Sunday of Lent, we have Luke's account of the temptations of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13). First, I underlined Holy Spirit. Luke is the evangelist of the Holy Spirit so it comes as no surprise to read that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit and was led by the Holy Spirit. Then I underlined the words devil, tempted, wilderness. Next, I underlined 40 days. Actually, there are 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, but do not count the six Sundays of Lent and we arrive at 40. Why omit the Sundays? I suspect the reason is that every Sunday, being the Lord's Day, is a little Easter.

### Preparation

In the Bible, 40 is a number associated with a time of preparation. The exodus from slavery to the promised land lasted 40 years. Elias was fed by an angel and walked for 40 days to meet with God on the holy mountain. Jesus fasted for 40 days in preparation for his ministry. The apostles were prepared for 40 days between the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord. We have this season of 40 days in preparation for the greatest celebration of the liturgical year, the Resurrection of the Lord when we renew our baptismal life by declaring our rejection of Satan and our commitment to Christ.

### Father of lies

In John's Gospel the devil is called a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies. The Greek word for the devil is *is-dia-bolos* which is the opposite of the word for symbol. A symbol unites thoughts whereas the diabolos causes confusion and divisions. "The devil (*dia-bolos*) is the one who 'throws himself across' God's plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, par. 2851.)

A blatant lie is usually spotted, yet with the power of modern media, people are brainwashed by untrue slogans taking over the mind.

An example was the slogan which linked compassion with abortion. We are living in a post-truth society.

The most successful lie is the half-truth. Adam and Eve were misled by the promise of the knowledge of good and evil, meaning the right to disregard God and make my own rules. It was symbolised in the forbidden fruit which looked very attractive. Like a fish taking the tantalising bait, they swallowed the camouflaged hook. Yes, their eyes were opened. Previously they saw only goodness but now they also saw evil.

### Many forms

The temptations of Jesus show the devil with all his wiles, quoting scripture to camouflage his efforts to confuse the mind of Jesus and thus lead him astray from his mission. Jesus had announced that his mission was to set up the kingdom or reign of God. This would involve repentance of sins and belief in the Good News of Jesus' teaching.

The first temptation was about bread. Perhaps Satan had the ability to see into the future when Jesus would multiply bread and fish to feed a multitude. Would Jesus be diverted from his mission about the reign of God by spending his time supplying food to people? What a noble ideal according to the scriptures! Yes, but it was the typical half-truth. Jesus would pass on the mission of feeding the hungry to his followers when he said, "Give them something to eat, yourselves". Yes, bread for the starving is very important, but it is not the only form of bread. Scripture also says that people do not live on bread alone. The mission of Jesus would also provide bread for the searching mind, bread of hope, bread of faith and the bread of eternal life. He would not be misled by the half-truth.

### Lust for power

The second temptation attempts to mislead Jesus through the lust for power. The devil, in a moment, showed him all the kingdoms of the world. "I will give you all the power and glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and

I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours." Satan's claim to own these kingdoms is a typical lie. What are we seeing in Ukraine these weeks? A litany of lies and the lust for power. On a lesser scale, this lust for power causes many people in politics or business to cast conscience out the window. To follow this lust for power is to worship Satan. The abode of the devil is a wilderness. The response of Jesus is to worship the Lord your God and serve him alone.

### Testing God

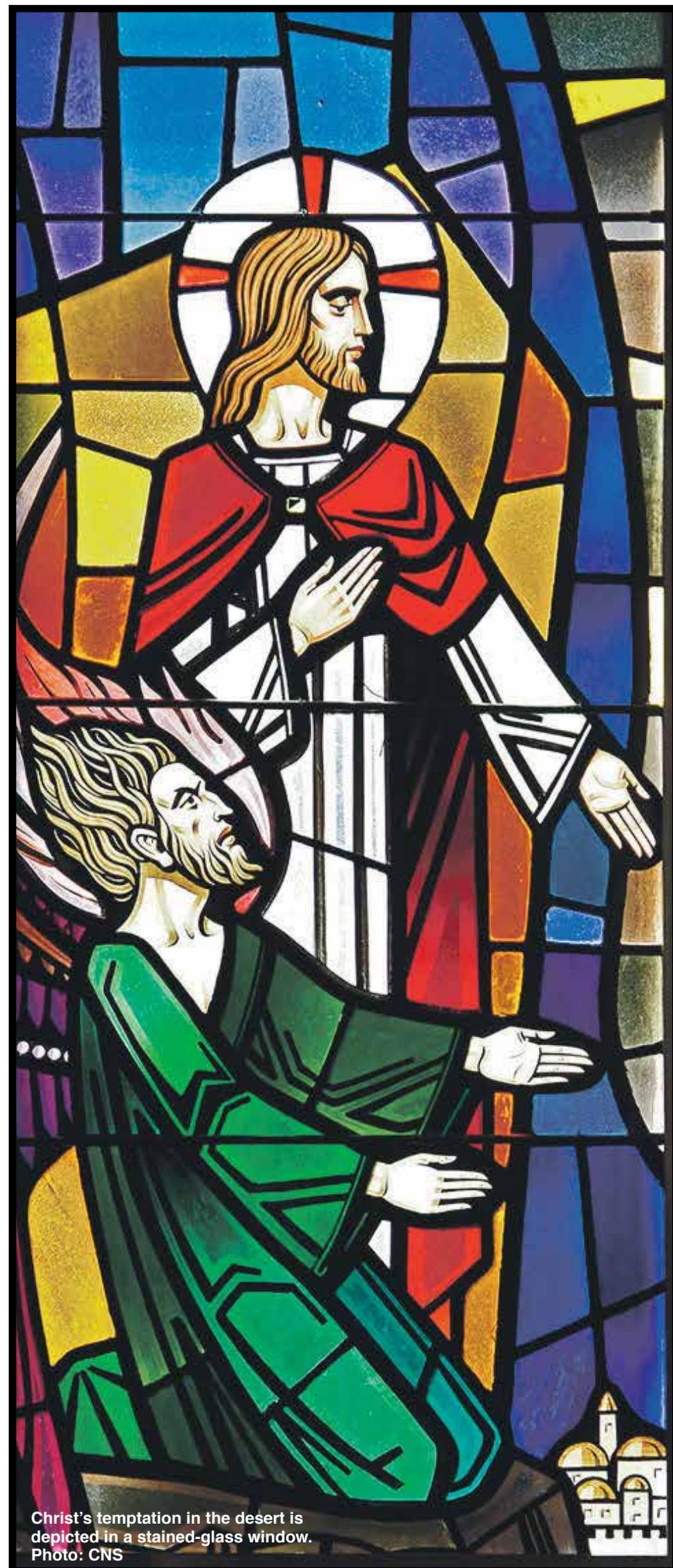
The third temptation is to put God to the test. Once again, the tempter quotes scripture out of context. Throw yourself off the parapet of the Temple and the angels will hold you up on their hands lest you hurt your foot against a stone. Religion is not about doing stunts. "You must not put the Lord your God to the test." Putting God to the test is a lack of trust. Faith is an absolute trust in God through light or darkness, led by a cloud by day and a flame by night.

### Renewed commitment

Satan, the deceiver, was defeated by Jesus, but he has not gone away. Temptations are part of life. For the 40 days of Lent, we are led by the Spirit to link up with Jesus on the Mount of Temptation. The ashes of Wednesday are a reminder that life here on Earth is not forever. Unto dust our bodies shall return. We recall the bigger picture of life, the eternal vista looking forward to sharing in the Resurrection of the Lord. Lent is the 40-day season of preparation for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter. We will be invited to reject Satan with all his wiles and empty promises. Then we will profess our faith in God the Father, Creator of life: in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour; and in the Holy Spirit who is the inspiration of the Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

### Prayer

Our Father in heaven, through the observance of Lent, may the Holy Spirit deliver us from the Evil One and help us to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Christ's temptation in the desert is depicted in a stained-glass window. Photo: CNS

# Northern election: Catholics caught betwixt and between



Recent polling hints at Catholic voters alienated from their traditional political homes, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

**W**ith an election around the corner in the North, opinion polls are causing their usual stir, suggesting that May's assembly election could be quite momentous. In May of this year, the North could for the first time ever vote a nationalist First Minister into power, according to a poll conducted by the Institute of Irish Studies University of Liverpool and *The Irish News*.

While opinion polls have been notoriously unreliable of late, they do provide guidance on voter trajectory. It makes for interesting reading, particularly when considering where the Catholic vote might fit in.

**“The primary vehicles for the nationalist/Catholic vote were the SDLP, founded by John Hume, and Sinn Féin”**

As the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) flounders due to its hardline approach to Brexit and the North's border, Sinn Féin could be the beneficiaries, despite themselves having dropped four percentage points from the last election in 2017. However, the major winners are the centrist Alliance Party, who could become the third largest party for the first time ever. Meanwhile, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) have slipped into fifth, dropping almost two percentage points.

When considering what this might mean for the Catholic vote, two facts that emerge from this poll are important: firstly, the nationalist vote has decreased overall; secondly, the proportion of people suggesting they won't vote at all has increased, while one in five are still undecided.

Due to the nature of the political conflict in the North, a person who was “nationalist” was often likely to be “Catholic” also. The primary vehicles for the nationalist/Catholic vote were the SDLP, founded by



A silhouette of the peace statue 'Hands Across the Divide' is pictured in Derry. Photo: CNS

John Hume, and Sinn Féin.

Ever since the Good Friday Agreement and their efforts to distance themselves from support of violent struggle, Sinn Féin have overtaken the SDLP quite significantly as the nationalist preference. However, at the same time, Sinn Féin's social policies have shifted further and further from Catholic moral teaching. On issues like abortion and gay marriage, Sinn Féin have set themselves in opposition to the Church, while they have shown themselves hostile to Catholic schooling.

## Mystification

Meanwhile, political commentators in the North have expressed their “mystification” at the SDLP's decline in particular. They have, by all accounts, the strongest line-up for a decade, having replaced what *Irish News* columnist Mary Kelly called their “retirement club” with a “vibrant front bench”.

Ms Kelly suggests that it may simply be their failure to distinguish themselves from the likes of the Green Party and Alliance. “What do they offer” the voter, she asks and it's a pertinent question. To relate this back to our subject: what do they offer the Catholic voter?

The answer is, very little. Although they are officially a pro-life party, they do not enforce the whip on the issue and, looking at how their elected representatives vote, the majority are decidedly pro-abortion.

Take another issue that has been cropping up recently, the question of school ethos. In the North, as in the south, the majority of schools are run

with a Catholic or Protestant ethos (Protestant run schools are called controlled schools in the North). There are a small number of state-run schools in the North, called integrated education, amounting to about 7%.

There has been a concerted political push north of the border to prioritise integrated education, with Catholic schools being labelled “segregated”, “apartheid” and “parcels of hate”. Just last week our front page highlighted President Michael D. Higgins' efforts to insert himself into the argument, while a private members bill that seeks to promote integrated education is currently running through the North's assembly, their parliament.

**“Where is the party that will fight for the Catholic corner on this matter, or any other in fact?”**

Catholic schools' bodies, notably the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), expressed concerns about it. Letters sent to parents from Catholic and controlled schools by the schools themselves warn that, “concerningly, if this bill is passed in its current form, the legislation will potentially advantage the integrated sector over all other sectors on a range of educational issues. This bill ignores the diversity of Catholic schools and

assumes diversity is only possible in an integrated school,” the letter read, according to the BBC. Bishop of Derry and member of the council for education Donal McKeown has also expressed his “resentment” that the narrative is Catholic schools are bad, while integrated schools are good.

## Positive change

Where do the main nationalist parties stand? Sinn Féin have nailed their colours firmly to the mast, as MLA Pat Sheehan welcomed the bill's progress, saying it will drive “positive change” for society. Meanwhile, the SDLP's Education Spokesperson Daniel McCrossan indicated his party's position, emphasising their long commitment to integrated education as “one key way in which we can help bring society together”. Only Aontú have spoken up on the matter so far.

Few Catholics in the North disagree with Mr McCrossan's sentiment – it is *one* way. But the fact is it is effectively being promoted as the *only* way, while Catholic and Protestant schools are demeaned by politicians and the media. Where is the party that will fight for the Catholic corner on this matter, or any other in fact?

It leaves Catholic voters who take the Church's moral teachings to heart in a tricky decision at the polling booth. There has been some talk that socially conservative Catholics may be induced to vote for the DUP on the grounds that they are strongly pro-life. But delving further into the poll's statistics, it becomes clear that this is highly unlikely. Just 2.1% of Catholics said they will vote

unionist, although there is a slight increase in the number who say they will vote for the traditionally soft-unionist Alliance party (11%).

**“And who could blame them? As is increasingly the case south of the border, committed Catholics are being left politically homeless”**

The majority of those who identify as Catholic say they will vote for a nationalist party (54%). Another 7% said they would vote “other”. That leaves a further 24% either undecided (14%) or not voting (10%). While this is less than Protestant voters (30%, made up of 23% undecided, 7% not voting), it still means a quarter of the Catholic vote doesn't know what box they will be ticking come May.

And who could blame them? As is increasingly the case south of the border, committed Catholics are being left politically homeless. With 10% already indicating they won't be voting, and given that no major party seems particularly interested in wooing them, could more be heading that way?

*The Institute of Irish Studies University of Liverpool study in conjunction with The Irish News was conducted by Social Market Research Belfast from a sample of 1,002 people between January 25th and February 7th. Margin of error: 3.1 per cent +/-.*



# Out&About

## A sweet reward for hard work



**CORK:** Tessie Buckley, sacristan of St Joseph's Church, in the Parish of Kilmurry, Diocese of Cloyne is pictured with the parish altar society, who provided refreshments and cake to celebrate her reception of the Benemerenti medal.



**DOWN:** Queen's University Catholic Chaplaincy welcomed Oxford-based academic and author, Dr Paul Shrimpton, as their guest-speaker for their annual Newman Dinner. Dr Shrimpton (centre) is pictured with (from left) director of campus ministry Shannon Campbell, director of Dunraven University Centre in Belfast Joseph Flanagan, bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor and Catholic chaplain Fr Dominic McGrattan, February 23.



**DERRY:** The nursery pupils of Holy Family primary school got a special talk from their local patrol crossing lady Siobhan, who explained her job, February 23.

### IN SHORT

#### Overcome our argumentative age with generosity, says Bishop McKeown

Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown warned that we must heed Christ's call to a "spirit of generosity" to overcome our "argumentative age".

In his homily Sunday 20, Bishop McKeown said that Jesus offers us the grace to rise above "the desire for revenge or sectarianism".

He said that Jesus speaks into the culture of the North "where we have known much conflict".

"We cannot choose what might happens to us. But we can choose how to react," Dr McKeown said.

"Jesus speaks into our culture where some think that the best way to run a society is to inspire fear, bring in more laws or build more prisons."

Earlier in his homily, the bishop of Derry warned Christians not to get drawn into the "argumentative age" in which we live.

"There is much confrontation and condemnation of others. In some quarters, anger is seen as a virtue," he added.

He also criticised economic policies that "promote selfishness and meanness", leading to "crippling" food shortages.

To both these modern ills, Bishop McKeown said that we should respond

with "a spirit of generosity" that "brings out the best in people and leads to abundance for all".

#### Respect older people's preferences as restrictions lift, says charity

A charity that supports older people is calling on the public to respect the boundaries and preferences of the elderly as Covid-19 restrictions lift.

The end of mask wearing in public places and transport is especially worrying for this group, Alone said in a statement.

Seán Moynihan, CEO of Alone warned

that "normal rules don't apply to older people and socially or medically vulnerable groups".

"Now is the time to consider how we can best ensure older people's safety as they begin to return to society," Mr Moynihan said.

"Older people need to take extra care and we would encourage friends and family to ask them about their preferences.

"We must listen to their worries and doubts, assess the actions that need to be taken and devise strategies on the best ways to protect these groups."

He continued: "It is up to all of us to support and empower older people to take a full part in our society post-pandemic."

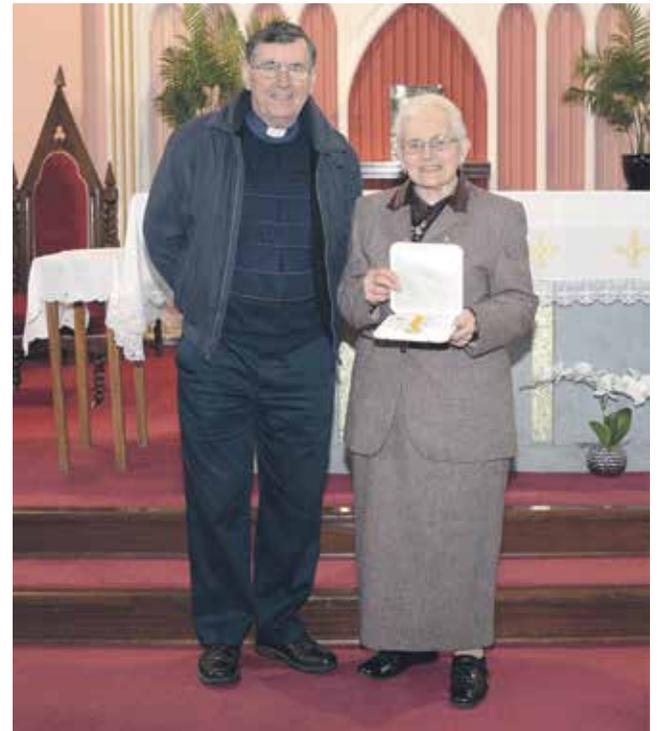
Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**KILDARE:** The steering committee of Ireland's synodal pathway met in person for the first time in Maynooth, February 16.



**CORK:** Tessie Buckley, sacristan of St Joseph's Church, in the Parish of Kilmurry, Diocese of Cloyne, is pictured with Canon Bernard Donovan PP having received the Benemerenti Medal for 50 years of service to the Church.



◀ **WESTMEATH:**

The day of consecrated life was celebrated with vespers in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar. Pictured (from left) are Fr Michael Cahill PP Johnstown, Co. Meath; Sr Camillus and Sr Goretti, Convent of Mercy, Trim, Co. Meath and Fr William Coleman PP Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath.

▼ **DUBLIN:** Fr Tim Mulcahy OP (left) celebrated the remembrance Mass for Garda Reynolds in St Dominic's Church, Tallaght, to mark the 40th anniversary of Mr Reynolds death, February 20.



**LAOIS:** Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty is pictured with Sr Gabrielle, who recently made her first profession with the Presentation Sisters, in Portlaoise Parish, February 20.



**CAVAN:** The Church of Immaculate Conception gets a taste of Christmas in February, as snow created a winter wonderland in Kingscourt parish.

**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.

# A new law that turns children into consumer items



Having a child should not be reduced to a transaction like buying something in a shop, writes **David Quinn**

**“I**’m a 37-year-old single woman and I desperately want to become a mother”, says the letter-writer to the agony aunt at the *Irish Independent*.

She explains that she has more or less given up on finding someone to start a family with, and so is now considering becoming a mother by going down the sperm donation route. But having looked up sperm banks, she worries that buying sperm is too much like buying something in a shop. It feels too transactional.

As she says, it feels as though “I’m browsing a catalogue”.

She confesses that she would like the donor to be “kind and smart”, but that she “can’t help looking for more superficial stuff like ‘tall, dark and handsome’.”

She asks: “Is it morally wrong to choose what some people call ‘designer babies’?”

To cut a long story short, she is told that it is not wrong.

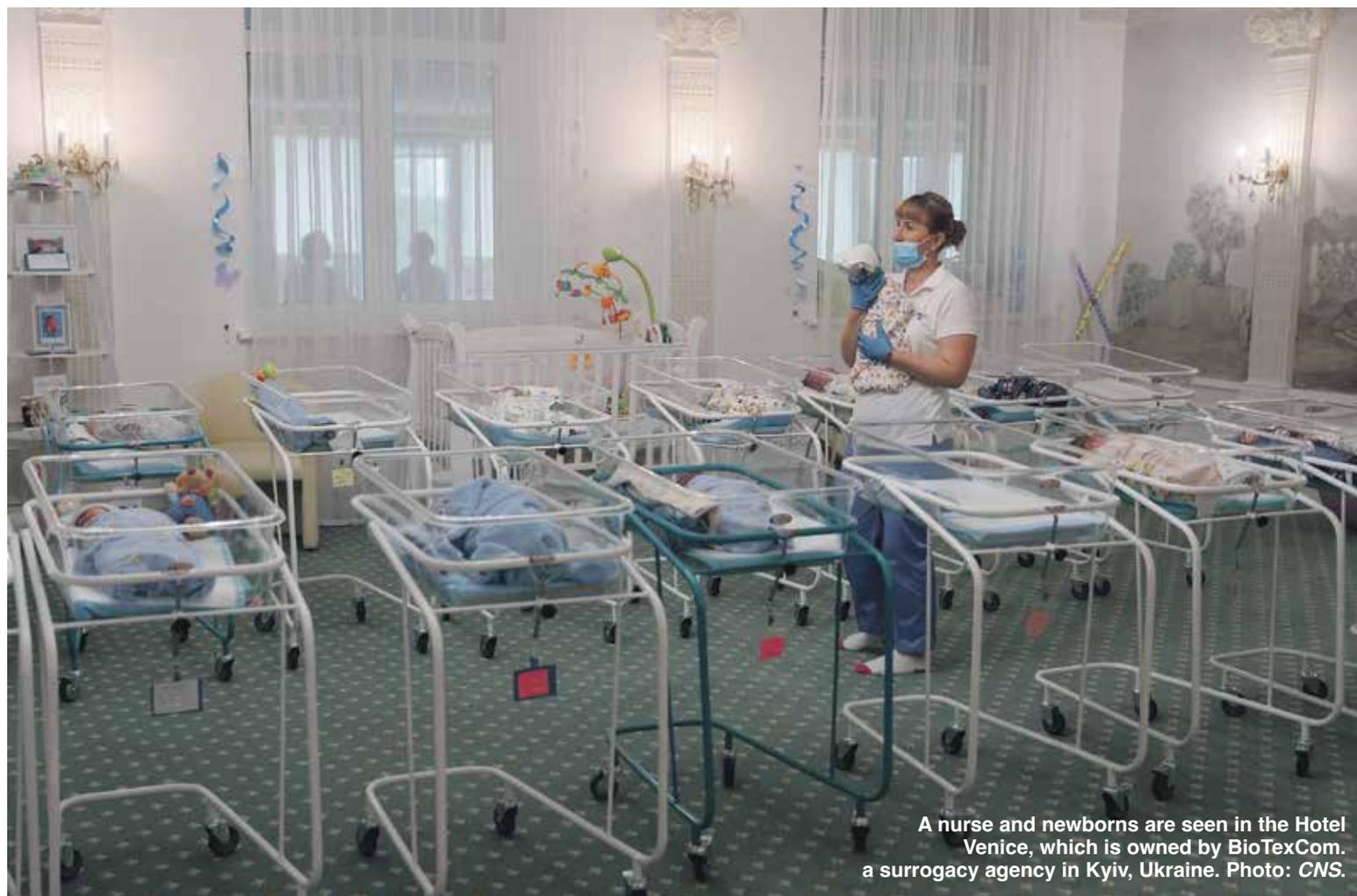
The agony aunt, Katie Byrne, quotes a specialist fertility counsellor with the Waterstone Clinic, who says: “This sense of unease is entirely normal and a common reaction from clients when they first access sperm bank websites”.

**“Commercial surrogacy exploits low-income women because it is almost unheard of for middle class women to carry babies for a living”**

The counsellor concedes that to some extent the whole thing is transactional, but not to worry, because “many of our interactions with others are transactional, but that does not make them worthless or wrong”.

This, of course, is rationalising. Having a child should not be reduced to a transaction like buying something in a shop or online, but this is exactly what happens when you buy sperm (or an egg) from a fertility agency.

You are choosing what you think will be the best sperm or egg based on what you can afford and what



A nurse and newborns are seen in the Hotel Venice, which is owned by BioTexCom, a surrogacy agency in Kyiv, Ukraine. Photo: CNS.

most closely matches your specifications, like you would when buying a car. Look up the website [Cryobankamerica.com](http://Cryobankamerica.com) and then click ‘donor search’ and you will see for yourself.

This week, the cabinet approved publication of the *Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Bill 2022* which covers situations such as the above.

The legislation simply assumes that sperm and egg donation are morally licit. In this regard, its only concern is that those who avail of such services can be easily recognised as the legal parents of any resulting children.

## Transaction

Quite aside from the transactional nature of sperm and egg buying that the letter-writer above is worried about, the bill has little to no qualms about the fact that doing so deliberately cuts the natural tie to the biological father, or mother, or both.

This is incredible when we consider how scandalised we are about how adoptions were sometimes conducted in the past, not least that it was often made difficult or impossible for a child to trace its natural parents.

How can we be outraged by that, and not by the same practice when fertility clinics deliberately facilitate it?

Indeed, it is worse in their case. With adoption, a home is being provided to a child who already exists. With sperm and egg donation the intent, before the child is even conceived, is to cut the natural tie to at least one parent.

The bill amounts to a deliberate attack on the primacy of the natural ties.

The authorisation of egg and sperm donation is not the only way in which it is doing this. It also recognises domestic ‘altruistic’ surrogacy.

**“Many of our interactions with others are transactional, but that does not make them worthless or wrong”**

Altruistic surrogacy is when a woman carries a baby for another person but without profiting financially from it, which is the case with commercial surrogacy.

Sometimes the surrogate mother might be carrying the baby for a sister or friend, but often it will be for a stranger.

In countries like Canada, commercial surrogacy is banned in theory, but altruistic surrogates can

be paid expenses running into thousands of Canadian dollars, which makes it commercial surrogacy by the backdoor.

One way or another, surrogacy deliberately splits a child from its birth mother. Non-commercial surrogacy is only somewhat better than the commercial kind.

## Bill ban

Why does the bill ban commercial surrogacy in Ireland? The reason is that doing so would go almost all the way down the road of turning babies into products, commodities, goods to be ordered.

If buying someone’s sperm or egg seems transactional (and it is), then paying someone to carry a baby for you, makes matters worse.

In addition, commercial surrogacy exploits low-income women because it is almost unheard of for middle class women to carry babies for a living.

It is no accident that commercial surrogacy is mainly found in low-income countries like Ukraine (now in the news for all the wrong reasons), or India.

However, while it is intent on banning commercial surrogacy in Ireland, the Government seems keen on recognising it overseas.

This would set up a terrible double-standard whereby we would regard it as wrong to exploit the pov-

erty of women in Ireland by paying them to rent out their wombs, but that it is alright to do so in the case of Ukrainian women. Effectively we would be saying that they have fewer rights than Irish women. The mystery is that Irish feminist groups are almost silent about the matter.

**“The Bill amounts to a deliberate attack on the primacy of the natural ties”**

Aside from attacking the primacy of the natural ties, the bill also endorses eugenics. It does so by permitting pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and other embryo screening techniques.

What this means is that any embryos found to be ‘defective’ (for example, ones with Down Syndrome) will be destroyed.

But this is merely the logical extension of aborting such children. In this case, they are conceived outside the womb and killed before implantation. (The best that can be expected is that they are frozen indefinitely).

Finally, the bill permits posthumous assisted human reproduction, that is, the use of someone’s sperm or egg when that person is deceased. This means a child’s parent is dead even before conception. This was never possible, by definition, before the development of these techniques. It is the deliberate creation of semi-orphans.

This bill will be presented as pro-child. It is nothing of the sort. Instead, it turns children into products and consumer items while taking an axe to the natural ties and presenting it as ‘progress’. Welcome to ‘Brave New Ireland’.

**“How can we be outraged by that, and not by the same practice when fertility clinics deliberately facilitate it?”**

# The army of women who kept Romania's Greek Catholics going



Dr Anca Sincan tells of the women who kept Romania's clandestine Greek Catholic Church going under communist repression, writes Jason Osborne

Catholics have never been under any illusion about persecution as part and parcel of the Faith, but World War II and the surge of Communism in Eastern and Central Europe in the mid-20th Century saw that persecution soar to heinous levels. The Nazis first had little time for anyone who stood for anything other than their perverse ideology, but the Communists that rushed into their place afterwards by occupying the Warsaw Pact countries were little better. Secret police and thuggish supporters of the soviet regimes did all they could to break the spirit of, and ultimately control, any group that remained somewhat independent – religions foremost among them.

**“Dismantling the Church is also taken into consideration because of their connections with the Vatican”**

Such was the scene for Catholics in Romania post-World War II. Falling under Soviet influence, the authorities sought to bring what religion they could under their control as much as possible. However, the story as we know it is often told in one particular way: two equal, but opposite powers – Church and state – struggling against each other in a primal, hierarchical way. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Researcher at the Gheorghe Sincai Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, Dr Anca Sincan, tells a story of a struggle that for a long time has gone entirely unnoticed, and yet it is a struggle to which the Greek Catholic Church owes much.

Her research into the country's secret police archives reveals that



A confiscated photo of a clandestine religious community in Romania. Photo: Hidden Galleries.

a group the authorities never suspected of being capable of subversive activity, women, were actually crucial in the very survival of the Greek Catholic community. But how did this situation come about in the first place? It's a story that really starts after the enforced union of the Greek Catholic Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1948 – a bid by the authorities to bring the main religions in Romania under one, controllable umbrella.

## Comunism

“After 1948 with Communism coming to power – it's a complicated story – they [the Romanian authorities] want everything to be simple, so they want a Church for an ethnicity,” Dr Sinca explains to this paper.

“You have these two Churches. This was one of the processes behind forcing this union. It's not necessarily the most important factor of dismantling this Church, but it's one of the most important factors in uniting them with the Orthodox. Dismantling the Church is also taken

into consideration because of their connections with the Vatican.”

The Greek Catholic Church has a connection to the Vatican by virtue of its existence as an oriental branch of the Catholic Church, Dr Sinca says, with numerous things preserved in this Church that differ from the Roman Catholic Church, such as their vestments, altar and use of the byzantine rite rather than the Latin rite.

“In that period of time, the Vatican is one of the most important anti-Communist forces...mainly because they started to have a lot of Catholics under this iron curtain, so under these communist regimes,” Dr Sinca says.

## Aware

“Basically, because the Vatican is well aware of what is happening with religion in the Soviet Union, so they know what's happening there and they know what's going to happen in these countries. They are an anti-Communist force in that period of time, so this is why Catholics are always put under surveillance, they

are always considered potential enemies of the state.

“So in that respect, forcing this unification with the Orthodox would bring this Church under the Orthodox control, and would allow the state to dismantle it. So, anyone that's left and considered him or herself Catholic, would instantly become – I mean, they could go to jail. Being Catholic became illegal.”

**“They are an anti-Communist force in that period of time, so this is why Catholics are always put under surveillance”**

It's into this setting that the “underground” Church comes into play. With the authorities immediately making moves post-World War II to simplify and control religion in Romania, many Greek Catholics looked to take their faith out of view, that it might go on. However, Dr Sin-

can offers some clarification on what “underground” means precisely.

“Underground, outside Romania, it's a word coming from religious studies and from history. Underground is a word that covers everything. In Romania, we don't call them underground – it doesn't cover this [their activity].

“We usually use the word that was implemented by the secret police, so ‘clandestine’, that's the word that we use. Also, ‘illegal’, because in the legal framework, they did not exist, so they were not covered by the legal framework,” she says.

## Clandestine

Naturally, records on clandestine – extra-legal – Church activities would be hard to come by at the best of times, but particularly in the wake of a Communist regime. As such, it's not a narrative that gains easy traction in the public's imagination, stories of conflict and struggle between two large hierarchies, Church and state, gaining a much better grip. It was a desire to see history from a different angle that compelled Dr Sincan to plumb the depths of the secret police's archives to see if there was another story to be told.

“You have to start thinking about history from another angle to go into a different direction...Mainly, that's why we started looking at history and archives from a different perspective. We didn't want necessarily to talk about bishops and, I mean, we

**“A group the authorities never suspected of being capable of subversive activity, women, were actually crucial in the very survival of the Greek Catholic community”**

recognise their importance. We don't want to say that they're not important – they are, obviously," she clarifies.

"But we wanted to look at something else, something different. It allowed us, by looking at these archives, by looking at these objects in the archives, it allowed us not to avoid the discourse of the archive. Because, one other thing that happens, it's not just about the men, but it's also a history that is constructed by the secret police.

"So you will tell, not necessarily what happened, but what the secret police tells you happened. We looked into something different, into objects, and we took these objects and we put them in the communities they were taken from," she says.

"So, for instance, you have this album of photos that was taken during a house search. We took it back into the community, and we said, 'Look, we found this. What can you tell us about it?' There are people who have never seen a photograph of their parents because it was taken by the secret police and everything disappeared, and then you have a different discourse than, you know, the administration of the Church and the administration of the state fighting each other. So, you have a completely different discourse of what was happening in this period in these religious communities that were illegal."

This is where Dr Sincan's research on women's role in the clandestine Church truly started, as the introduction of elements of the secret police archives into communities stimulated a story that until that point had gone untold.

"This research on women started from there, because I went into a village of Greek Catholics that were forced to become Orthodox and part of them refused, and the men were arrested," Dr Sincan says, continuing, "after that refusal, the men were sent to jail for a year, for a year and a half. Short prison sentences, but still, they were taken from the community.

"What remained were women. You have this underground Church, illegal Church, and that was all these women, trying to make it survive somehow. Trying to have this continuity of religious services, of religious education and so on and so forth, and they realised they can't."

Dr Sincan's research brought her to 94-year-old Anna, a woman who had three young children and whose husband had been imprisoned at the time of the Communist crackdown on religion in Romania.

**“With this, Anna took on an ‘empowered’ role in the life of the Church, Dr Sincan says, in possession of a ‘power that she didn’t have before’”**

"Anna was a young woman whose husband was imprisoned, and she had three children then. And she said, 'I need my kids to know what Church really is and what religion is and what God is, and I'm a woman and I don't know much about it, so I need to do something about this'.

"She went 15 kilometres to the nearby town and entered a Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church was semi-legal, so it was accepted by the state and they had



Dr Anca Sincan.

their own churches and they were able to have services and so on and so forth, but the Roman Catholics in Transylvania were Hungarians, and this lady was Romanian, so she goes to Church – this priest barely speaks Romanian – she tells him the problem and says, 'I need you to come to this village every Sunday and teach this group of children about what the Church is'.

"The guy comes and they start this Sunday school with children, but he doesn't speak Romanian so he can't teach these kids. They don't understand him. Anna says, 'Ok, then you be quiet and I'll teach them what it is, the prayers and who the Virgin Mary is and who Jesus is and everything, but you sit there. If I'm making mistakes, you correct me,'" Dr Sincan says.

### Empowered

With this, Anna took on an "empowered" role in the life of the Church, Dr Sincan says, in possession of a "power that she didn't have before". Because there's no Greek Catholic priest or men about, all having been arrested, she has to teach them the rudiments of religion now, which wasn't the done thing. And she was warned as such.

"Anna says that the mayor of the village came and said that she should be very careful and she should stop doing this and she should keep quiet, because this is illegal and she might get into trouble...It's 1940-something at this stage, you have to think of your great grandparents if you want to imagine if they'd have done that. Would women have done that in that period? And so, it's not that different between eastern and western Europe. They wouldn't have done that," Dr Sincan says.

Dr Sincan's discovery of Anna and her story led her to believe that this must be a pattern that was repeating itself in more places than one, and she was right.



**“Dr Sincan’s discovery of Anna and her story led her to believe that this must be a pattern that was repeating itself in more places than one, and she was right”**

"That started me thinking, alongside a lot of reading, that if this is the case of a village somewhere in no-man's land in Transylvania, that has to happen everywhere, because men are absent not just from this village, but they are absent – priests, clergymen were all in prison – so that has to happen everywhere. I'm going back to the archives to check, to see is it possible to have this."

Until 1952, the secret police weren't all that interested in women, Dr Sincan explains, which she says was a form of "discrimination" against them, in that they didn't think women were capable of such subversive behaviour.

"However, by 1952, suddenly, they discovered in a couple of big trials, they're called 'Trials against the Vatican spies', they discover that all this underground work that is happening in this collection of information, distributing packages, distributing money, going back and forth, is done by women because they are not surveilled."

### Operation

"So they've [the Greek Catholic women] started to run this underground operation with fake IDs and even, in some cases, access to guns. It's almost entirely done by women and it's caught only when they arrest the male leadership, obviously, and it's this big trial, the process of the Vatican spies.

"Not many women are arrested in this process, although almost

entirely this group was made up of women, because still the state is reticent to go against women. If they want to punish them, they put them in remote monasteries, they make them stay in one place, in enforced domicile. They don't really go for putting them in prison, but what they do, is they start investigating, so they start surveillance on this group of women.

**“So what do they do? They sometimes go to the Roman Catholic Church and they go there for prayer”**

"That's the point when they start believing this has to do with women, so we have to take them into account. So, there's a lot of files surfacing from that period, on women underground. On the religious women underground. That's the army of nuns, that's where it comes from."

These groups cropped up in many places throughout Romania, Dr Sincan says, even in networks as big as 20 to 25 people. This many people engaged in clandestine activity would surely pique the authorities' interest if they didn't have regular jobs on the side, so Dr Sincan tells me that many of the women went to work as nurses, which allowed them to slip below the radar at times and in places. A mix of lay women left without husbands and religious turfed out of

their monasteries, the medical setting allowed them to fit back into the social fabric, once again affording them some anonymity in the secret police's sight.

"Some of them had high-school education, so they went to the Red Cross, which was giving these short classes then to become nurses, because it was important after the war. There were a lot of problems in the hospitals, they needed personnel and they were accepting everyone. They went to these Red Cross classes and they all became nurses in the hospital. They become nurses and suddenly, they're ok with the regime – nobody looks at a nurse because they're a nurse, it's nothing."

### Prayer

"So what do they do? They sometimes go to the Roman Catholic Church and they go there for prayer. It escapes the state, because they join, in a way, the regime. They don't collaborate with the regime, but they do the secular life. They integrate themselves into the secular life. So, they go to the Roman Catholic Church. But nuns are nuns, so they start doing prayer exercises and they start talking to young people about Jesus and the Virgin Mary and about prayers and about how it is to lead the life of a good Christian," Dr Sincan says.

"This is coming close to being against the regime, because that's what the regime doesn't want, someone who's actively proselyt-



1985 photo showing three tourists and their smuggled religious items in Romania. Photo: Hidden Galleries.

ising against their own ideology. You want young people to be the new man, the new Communist man that has nothing to do with religion whatsoever, doesn't believe in God, but is serving the state. So that's a different ideology than these women have, and when they start going into these communities that are for sure hungry for this type of teaching that they offer, the state starts to pay attention. 'Who are these women all hired in this hospital and they're all doing this?'

**Networks**

From these hidden positions in society, the women built networks that allowed for the continuation and survival of the Greek Catholic community in Romania.

"These women are starting to create networks for the survival of the Church. So, they start getting interested in where they can find clergy, Greek Catholic clergy that haven't joined the Orthodox Church. We can use them for baptisms, for marriages, for funerals, for prayers, for Sunday services, they figure, so they start to put together some sort of map of people where they could go.

"Then they start getting involved in sending money and packages and care packages to those clergymen, to resist in the underground. So there are Greek Catholic priests, but they have to be in hiding and some of them weren't working because they were Greek Catholics and they refused the union, so they started to put together care packages for these clergymen."

The state picked up on this illegal activity in places, and set about not destroying the networks, but manipulating and controlling them, figuring it is easier to control cells of subversive activity that they knew about than having to seek out and destroy the new ones

that would surely crop up. In the totalitarian reality of Soviet satellite states, "total knowledge and control" were more so the goal than outright destruction.

**“From these hidden positions in society, the women built networks that allowed for the continuation and survival of the Greek Catholic community in Romania”**

With soviet control lasting for decades in Romania, along with much of central and eastern Europe, these clandestine networks had to settle in for the long haul – a much different prospect than the short, bright bursts of open hostilities in times of war. As such, Dr Sinca says this behaviour continued for a long time, with the secret police amassing tomes on the "Catholic problem" in Romania. "This documentary file is over 100 volumes, and the volumes are thick pieces, so it's a lot of material," she says.

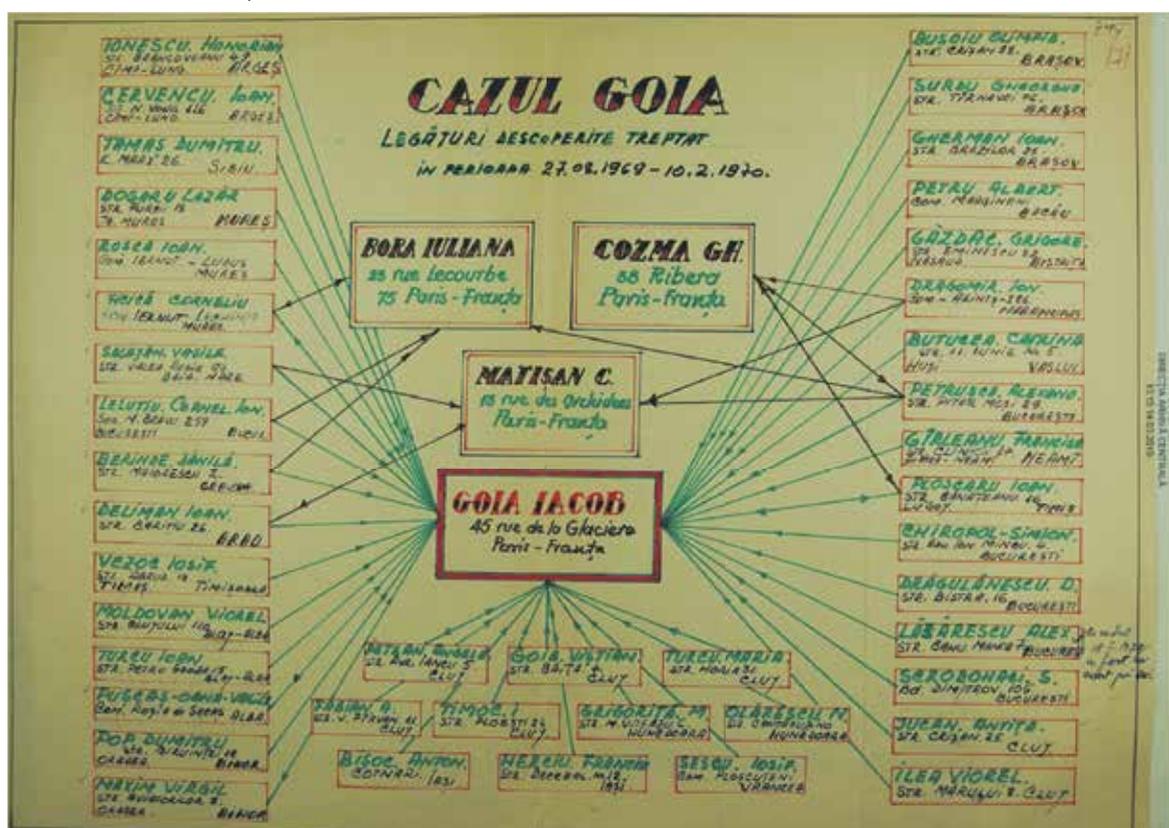
**Toil**

The end result of this long toil, shadowy struggle and persecution? The Greek Catholic Church's survival in Romania.

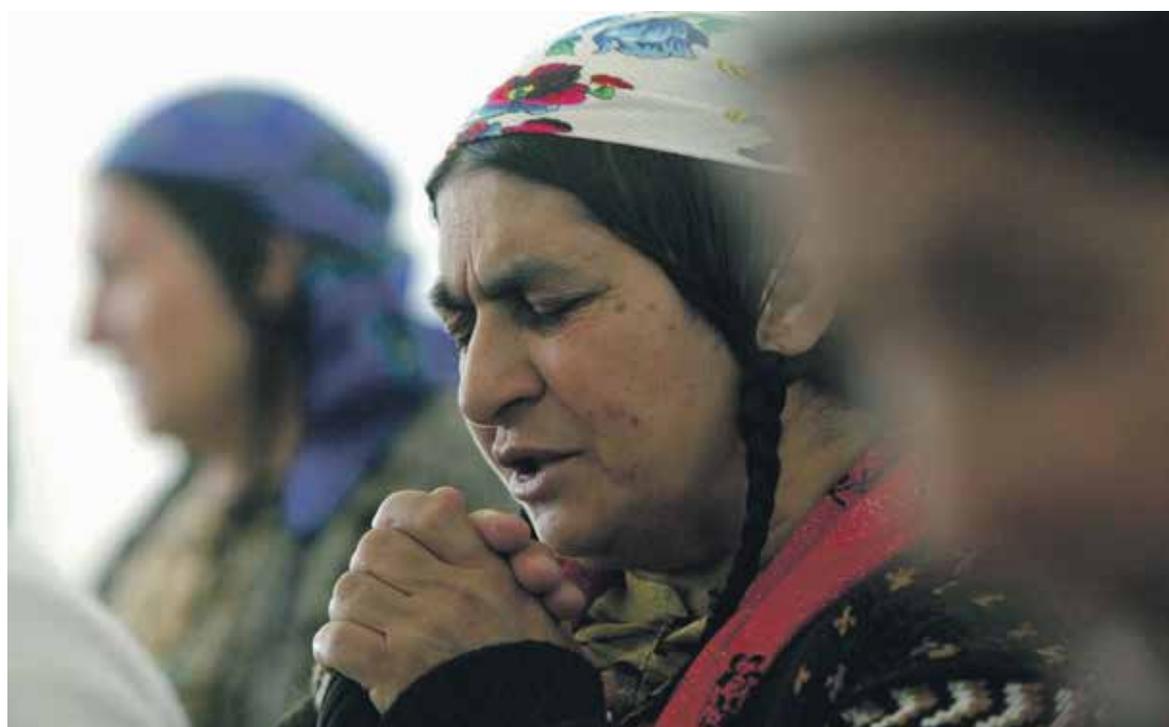
"The point is that the state and the Church and the Orthodox Church realised that by 1964, they are still there, they are still present, there's still a Greek Catholic community. They meet, they form Churches and they behave as Greek Catholics. They are Greek Catholics. Survival, that's what's left out of these networks of the underground," Dr Sinca says.



Crowds gather as Pope Francis and Romanian Orthodox Patriarch Daniel pray at the Romanian Orthodox cathedral in Bucharest, Romania in 2019. Photo: CNS.



A diagram drawn by the secret police of an underground Church financial network. Photo: Hidden Galleries.



A Romanian Roma woman prays in a church in Sibiu some 173 miles northwest of Bucharest, Romania in this 2005 photo. Photo: CNS.

# The shepherds who have gone before



An ambitious project by Maynooth pulls together 350 years' worth of material on Ireland's clergy, **Ruadhán Jones** learns

**W**ould you like to know about the lives of Irish priests under the penal laws? Or catch a glimpse of the new vocations headed to the Irish colleges in Lisbon, Salamanca and Paris in centuries past? Perhaps you would simply like to research a long-forgotten priestly relative?

Then Clericus, a new database established by a team of professors and doctors in St Patrick's College Maynooth might have what you are looking for. Led by Professor Thomas O'Connor at the Maynooth Arts and Humanities Institute, Clericus is a project that aims to develop a database on the Irish clerical population for the early modern and modern periods. However, Clericus is "expanding all the time", says Dr Ciaran Reilly, one of the recent recruits for the task.

"The purpose is to create a digital database of Irish clergy," Dr Reilly explains. "We started in the first instance by looking at the clergy of St Patrick's College Maynooth. But we're expanding that all the time. We've looked at the records of the Irish colleges in Salamanca and Lisbon, Paris as well."

## Abroad

"We're now looking at the Irish clergy abroad, particularly in America and what they've done. Up until 1941, we're restricted because of GDPR as to what we can actually publish. We're holding back some information until such time as it can be included," he explains.



Seminarians pictured at the Irish College in Paris in the early 20th Century.

The team comprises of Stavros Angelis, chief technical officer; Dr Richard Fitzpatrick, research assistant and content manager; Prof. O'Connor; and Dr Reilly. One of the key strengths of the project is that, because it is digital, the team can really draw out the links between people.

**“We started in the first instance by looking at the clergy of St Patrick's College Maynooth. But we're expanding that all the time”**

"Yes, we're providing biographical entries, but also to show the links," Dr Reilly says. "By doing it in a digital platform, we can link people. If you look at some of the class, the ordination pieces, if an individual was named, you can see who was in the class with him during his period of study."

"In that way, we can infer that these people are connected. We see networks of individuals, how peo-

ple interacted with each other, both inside an institution like Maynooth, but outside as well once they had a parish or a destination where they worked."

The period of history that the project covers was quite a tumultuous one for the Church in Ireland. It was in this time that our British rulers forced the Church underground through its restrictive penal laws, which penalised the practice of Catholicism. Clericus' work has revealed the "the whole network of people that were operating" for the Church at the time, Dr Reilly says, particularly the laity.

"In respect of that, the penal laws, what was interesting was the number of lay individuals that were connected with sponsoring a priest," he continues. "They had to make sure that a priest was effectively going to behave himself wherever he went."

"We're seeing that whole network of individuals who sponsored or acted as sureties for a number of people, which informs a little bit more of that period of Irish history that we didn't know about. There was quite a degree of lay involvement."

## Focus

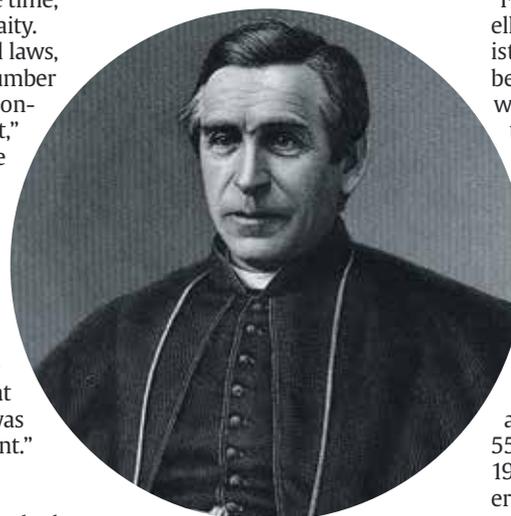
While the initial focus of Clericus had been on where priests studied, they are attempting to branch out and find out where they went after their seminary.

"We've recently started looking at obituaries in a big way," Dr Reilly says. "And that's after revealing, particularly for the 19th century, it's revealing where they went, and you can see that pattern, that network of movements over a period of time. We're hoping to expand on that as we go on."

"Some of those that have gone up recently have had an international element, I think they're all American based because we're turning

our attention to America. But on our Twitter page, we're trying to reach out and interact with people, to let people know in Ireland in particular that we're working on this and to highlight some priests that are interesting."

"We've quite a number of the them involved in politics, the Land League, an awful amount of them. We're finding evidence they were involved in famine relief during the great famine. It was done silently and I suppose forgotten about. But thankfully we're able to resurrect that."



Bishop of Erie, Pennsylvania, Tobias Mullin, one of the many Irish emigrants to America who took up key roles in the Church.

Dr Reilly says that such evidence is a counterpoint to the idea that priests were "living off the fat of the land" during the famine in Ireland while their parishioners starved.

"Certainly that's the belief. It might apply to the Church as an institution maybe, but what we're finding delving into this more and more is that the clergy on an individual basis in the communities that they're located are actively involved in famine relief," Dr Reilly says.

Delving into obituaries has also allowed the project to become more personal, telling the stories of priests that have been forgotten. One example Dr Reilly gives is Fr Jack Hanlon, a priest and pioneering Irish painter. As a short biography of Fr Hanlon on Clericus.ie explains, he was ordained in 1939, and prior to that his work had been exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) in 1934 and then at the New York World Fair in 1939.

## Ordination

"Following his ordination, he travelled to Paris to study under the Cubist painter André Lhote – probably because of the influence of Jellett, who had studies under Lhote during the 1920s. It was during this period that his traditional style came increasingly under the influence of Modernism; a fact reflected in his role in 1943, alongside Jellett and several other Irish artists, as a founding member of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art (IELA)," his biography reads.

He continued to work as a painter over the following decades until his death at the age of 55 in 1968. At the same time, "from 1945, Hanlon served as curate for several Wicklow parishes, a position that permitted him to focus more time and energy on his art".

This is just one of the many examples available on the Clericus website and Dr Reilly is confident that the opportunities for the project are endless: "We're looking towards missionary priests now. On the American end of things, we're looking at obituaries as our main source to find evidence of where they were, how their careers unfolded. It's endless really what we can do there when we branch out and look at the involvement of the clergy in schools, churches, community institutions that they were involved in throughout their careers."



A drawing of Maynooth University circa 1855.

# COLUMBA SUPER SALE

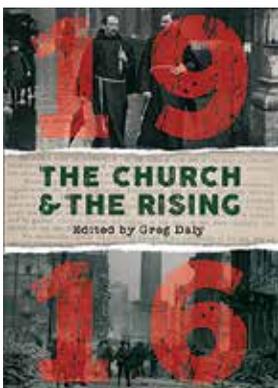
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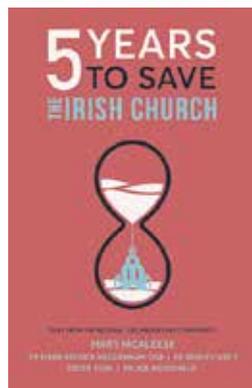
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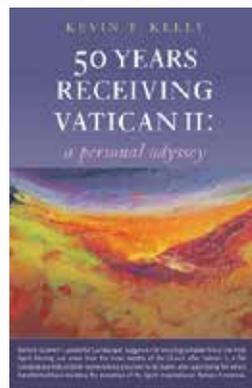
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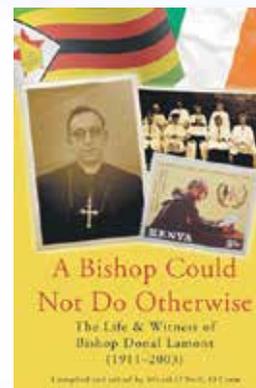
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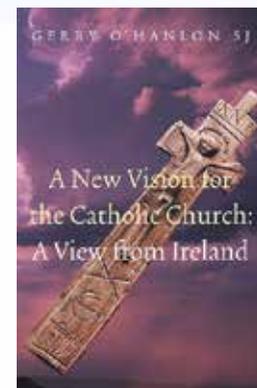
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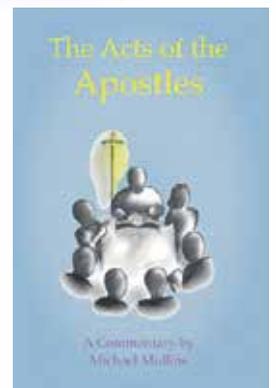
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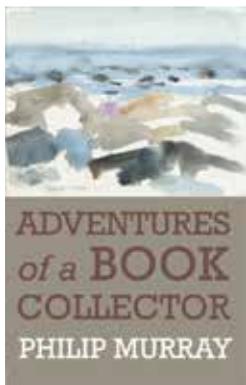
**A Bishop Could Do Not Do Otherwise**  
Ed Mícheál O'Neill



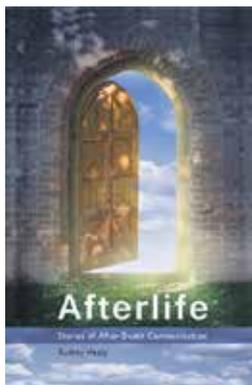
**A New Vision for the Catholic Church**  
Gerry O'Hanlon SJ



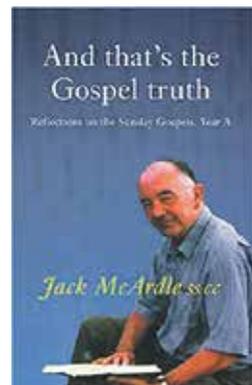
**Acts of the Apostles**  
Michael Mullins



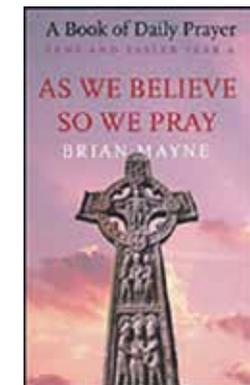
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Philip Murray



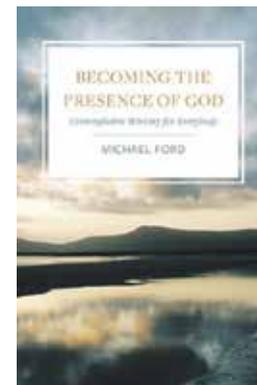
**Afterlife**  
Audrey Healy



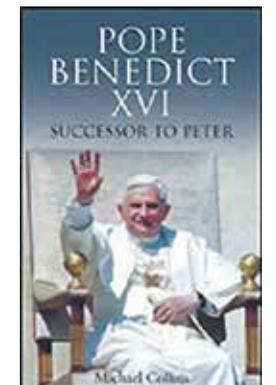
**And that's the Gospel Truth Year A**  
Jack McArdle ss cc



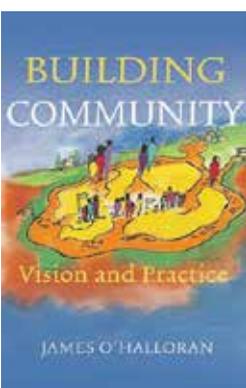
**As We Believe so We Pray: Year A**  
Brian Mayne



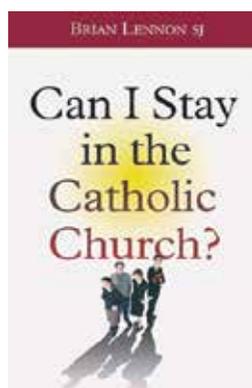
**Becoming the Presence of God**  
Michael Ford



**Pope Benedict XVI: Successor to Peter**  
Michael Collins



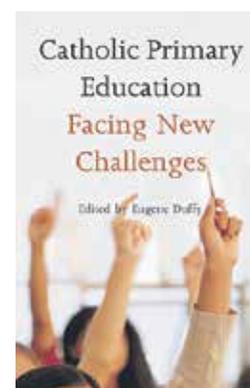
**Building Community, Vision and Practice**  
James O'Halloran



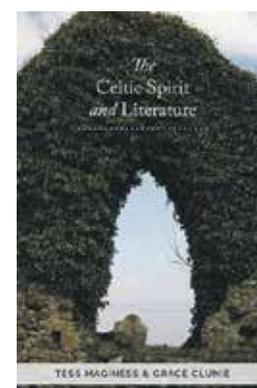
**Can I stay in the Catholic Church**  
Brian Lennon SJ



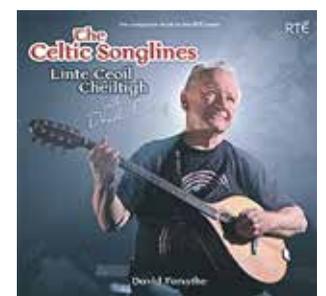
**Cancer Prayer & Survival**  
Mary McDonnell



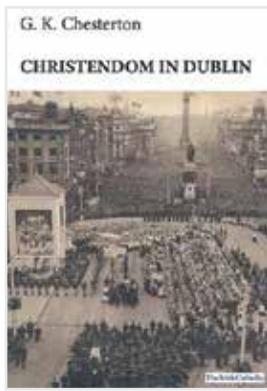
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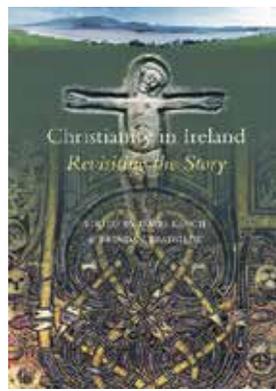
**Celtic Spirit and Literature**  
Grace Clunie and Tess Maginess



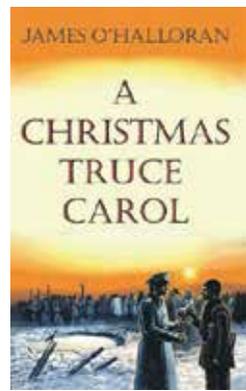
**The Celtic Songlines**  
David Forsythe



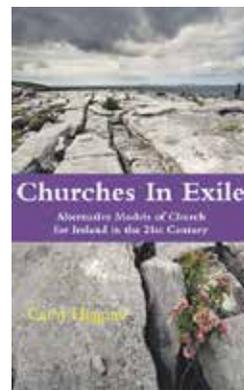
**Christendom in Dublin**  
G.K. Chesterton



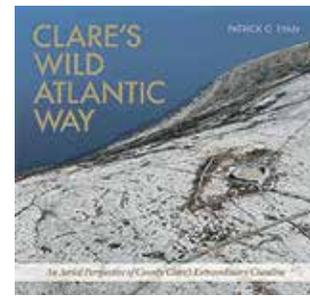
**Christianity in Ireland**  
Eds Brendan Bradshaw and Dáire Keogh



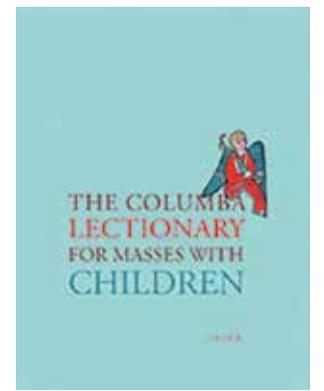
**Christmas Truce Carol**  
James O'Halloran



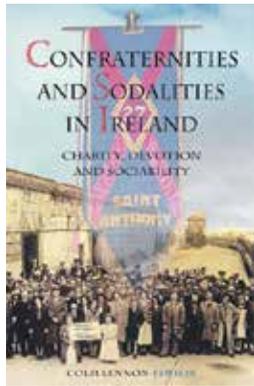
**Churches in Exile**  
Cathy Higgins



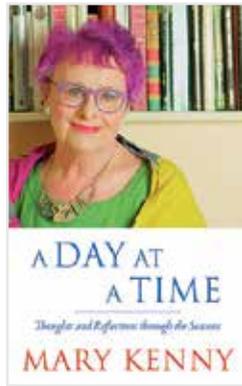
**Clare's Wild Atlantic Way**  
Patrick G. Ryan



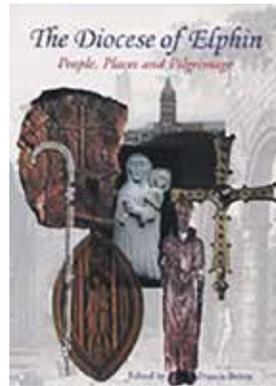
**Columba Lectionary Masses with Children Year B**  
Eds Sean McEntee and Michael Breen



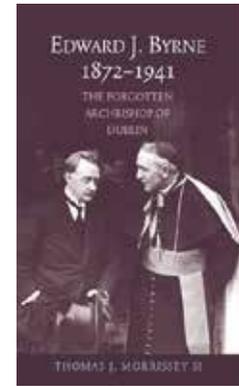
**Confraternities and Sodalities**  
Ed Colm Lennon



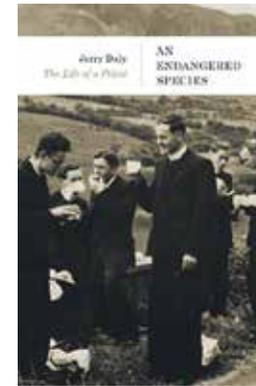
**A Day at a Time**  
Mary Kenny



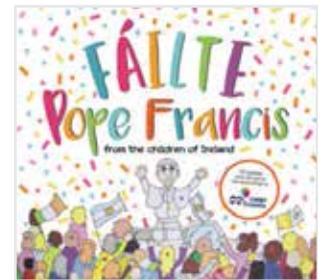
**The Diocese of Elphin**  
Francis M. Beirne



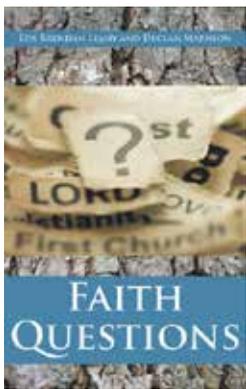
**Edward J Byrne**  
Thomas J. Morrissey SJ



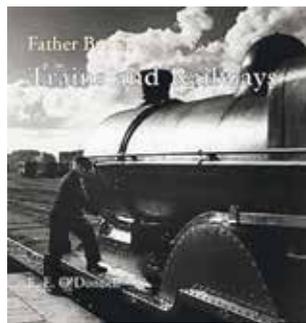
**An Endangered Species**  
Fr Jerry Daly



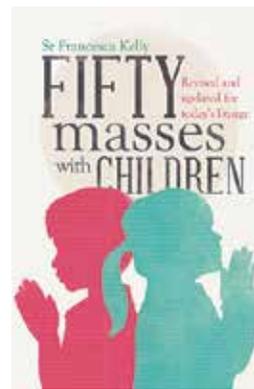
**Fáilte Pope Francis**  
Children of Ireland



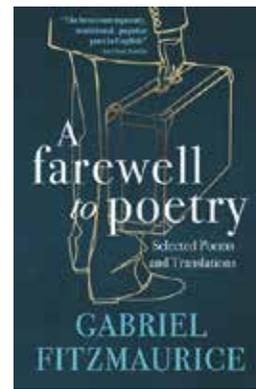
**Faith Questions**  
Eds Brendan Leahy and Declan Marimion



**Father Browne's Trains and Railways**  
E. E. O'Donnell



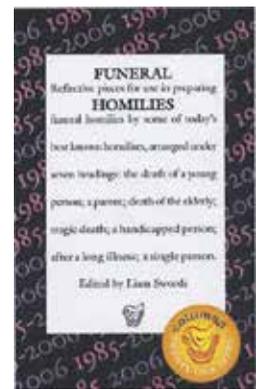
**Fifty Masses with Children**  
Sr Francesca Kelly



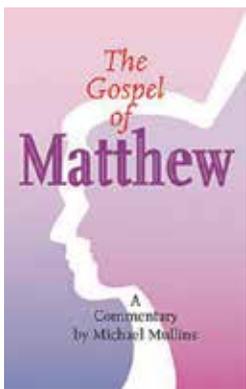
**A Farewell to Poetry**  
Gabriel Fitzmaurice



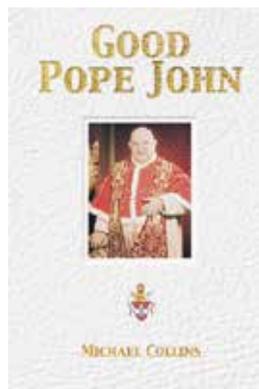
**Food, Feast, Fast**  
P. Fintan Lyons OSB



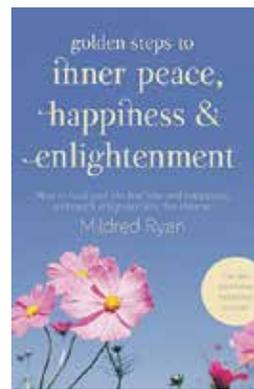
**Funeral Homilies**  
Liam Swords



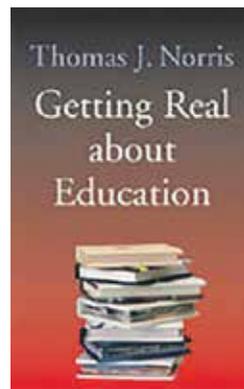
**The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary**  
Michael Mullins



**Good Pope John**  
Michael Collins



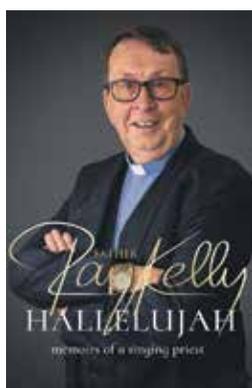
**Golden Steps to Inner Peace & Enlightenment**  
Mildred Ryan



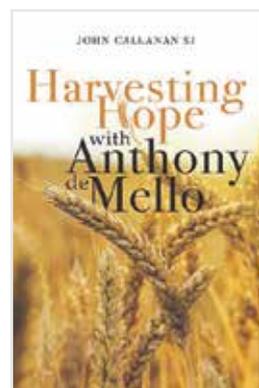
**Getting Real about Education**  
Thomas J. Norris



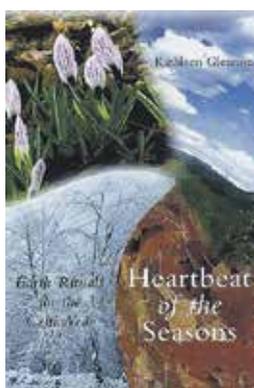
**The Francis Effect DVD**  
Salt & Light Catholic Media Foundation



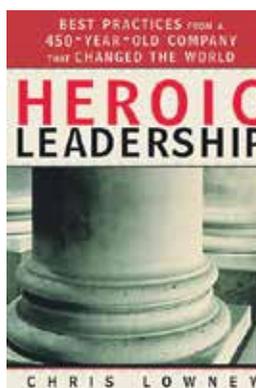
**Hallelujah: Memoirs of a Singing Priest**  
Fr Ray Kelly



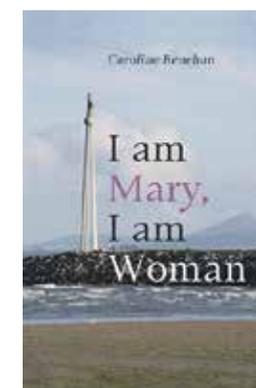
**Harvesting Hope with Anthony de Mello**  
John Callanan SJ



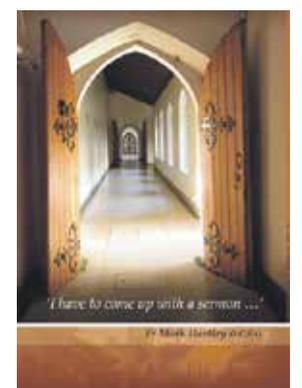
**Heartbeat of the Seasons**  
Kathleen Glennon



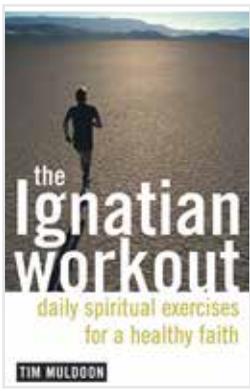
**Heroic Leadership**  
Chris Lowney



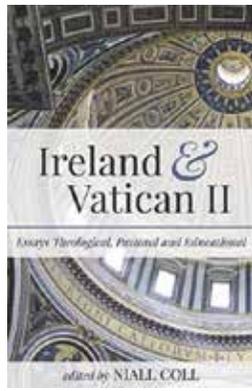
**I am Mary, I am Woman**  
Caroline Renehan



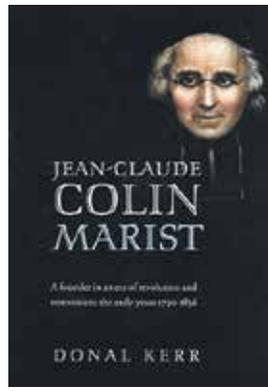
**I have got to come up with a sermon Year A**  
Fr Mark Hartley OCSO



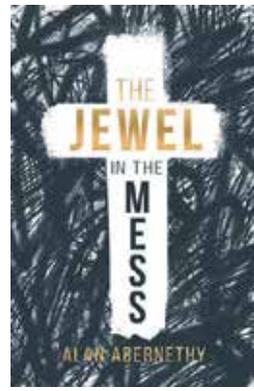
**The Ignatian Workout**  
Tim Muldoon



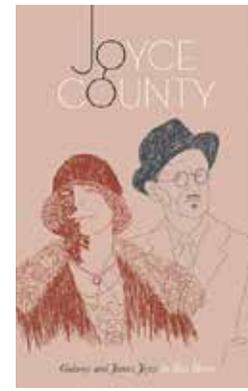
**Ireland and Vatican II**  
Ed Niall Coll



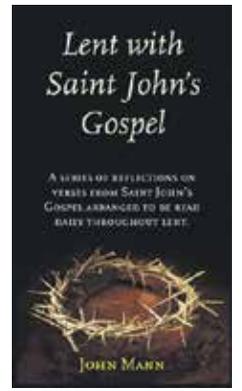
**Jean Claude Colin Marist**  
Donal Kerr



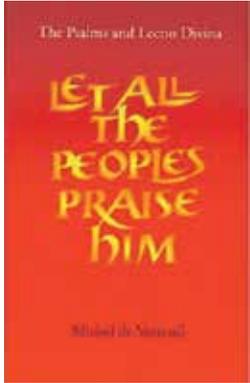
**The Jewel in the Mess**  
Alan Abernethy



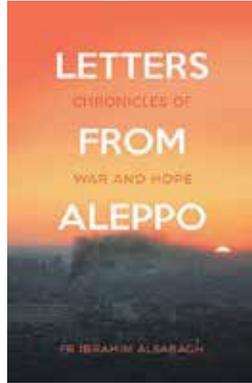
**Joyce County**  
Ray Burke



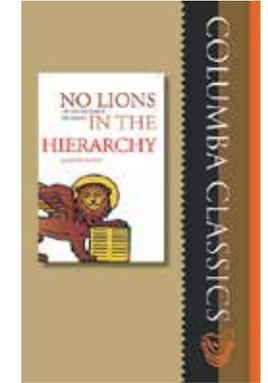
**Lent with St John's Gospel**  
John Mann



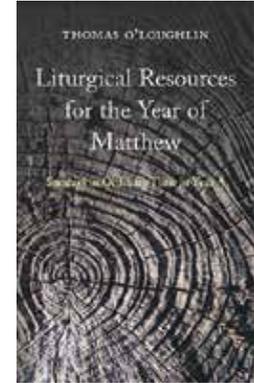
**Let All the People Praise Him**  
Michel de Verteuil



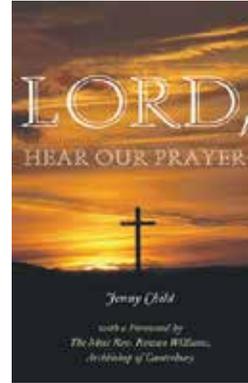
**Letters from Aleppo**  
Fr Ibrahim Alsabagh



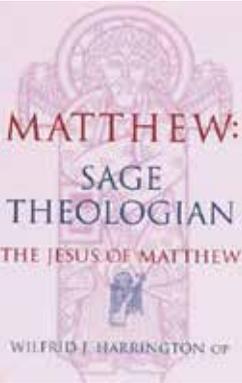
**No Lions in the Hierarchy**  
Joseph Dunn



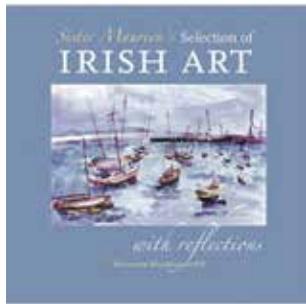
**Liturgical Resources  
Matthew's Year**  
Thomas O'Loughlin



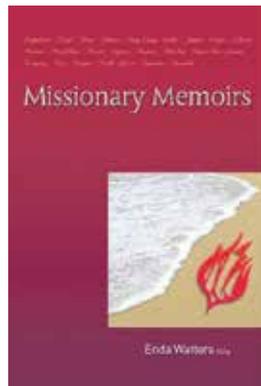
**Lord, Hear Our Prayer**  
Jenny Child



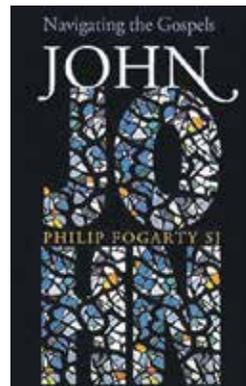
**Matthew Sage Theologian**  
Wilfrid Harrington OP



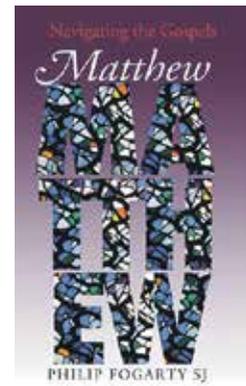
**Sr Maureen's Selection of Irish Art**  
Maureen MacMahon OP



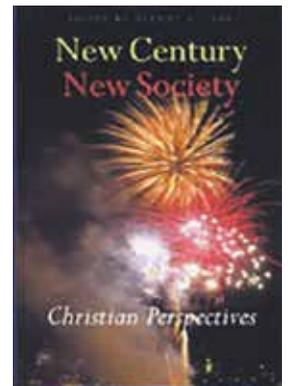
**Missionary Memoirs**  
Enda Watters CSSp



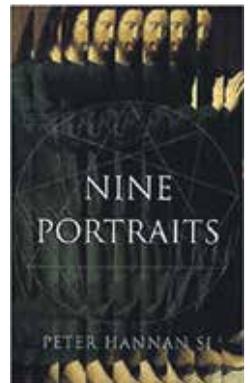
**Navigating the Gospels:  
John**  
Philip Fogarty SJ



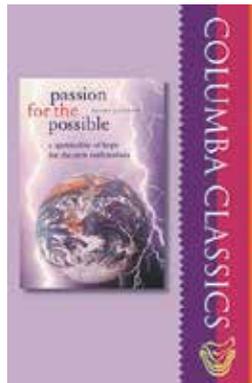
**Navigating the Gospels,  
Matthew**  
Philip Fogarty SJ



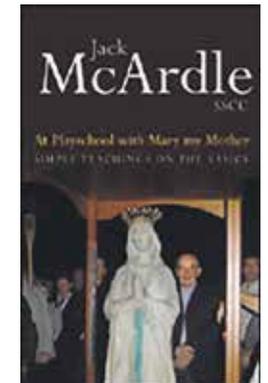
**New Century, New Society**  
Dermot Lane



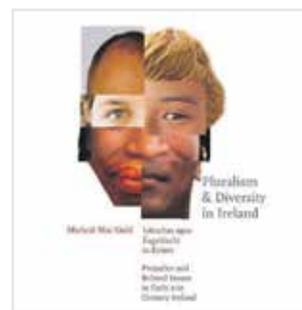
**Nine Portraits of Jesus**  
Peter Hannan SJ



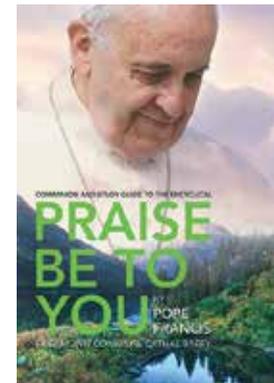
**Passion for the Possible**  
Daniel O'Leary



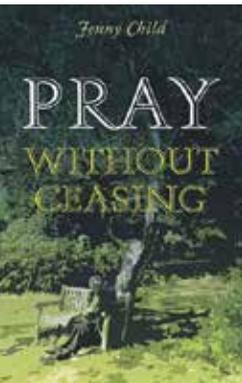
**At Playschool with Mary  
my Mother**  
Jack McArdle



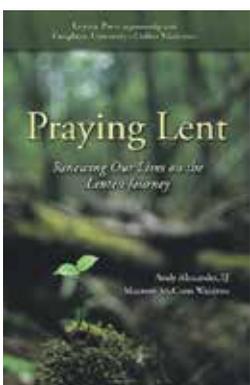
**Pluralism & Diversity  
in Ireland**  
Micheál Mac Gréil



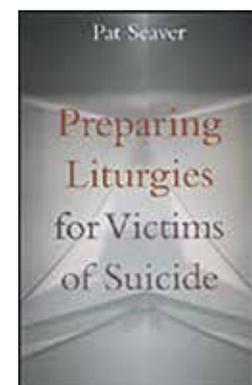
**Praise Be To You**  
Eamonn Conway and  
Cathal Barry



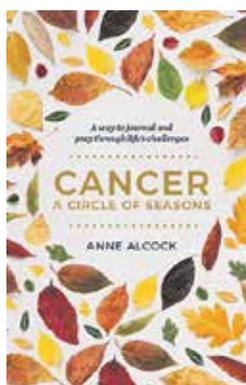
**Pray without Ceasing**  
Jenny Child



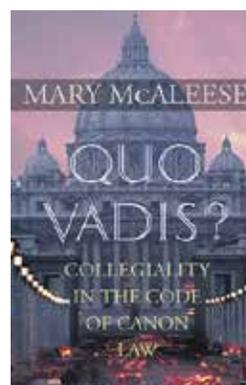
**Praying Lent**  
Andy Alexander SJ and  
Maureen McCann Waldron



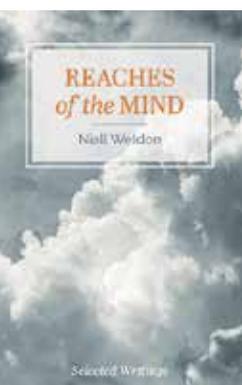
**Preparing Liturgies for  
Victims of Suicide**  
Pat Seaver



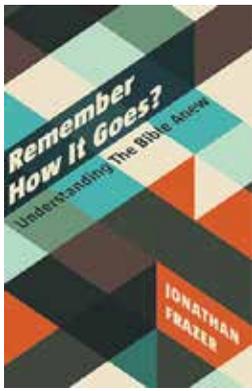
**Cancer: A Circle of  
Seasons**  
Anne Alcock



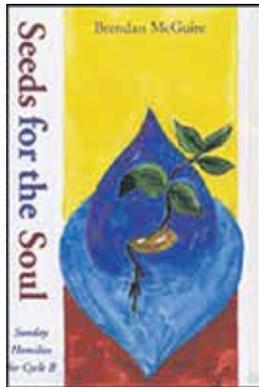
**Quo Vadis?**  
Mary McAleese



**Reaches of the Mind**  
Niall Weldon



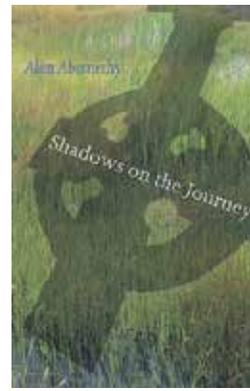
**Remember How It Goes**  
Jonathan Frazer



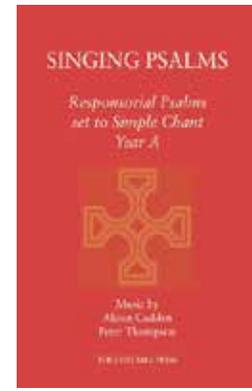
**Seeds for the Soul: Cycle B**  
Brendan McGuire



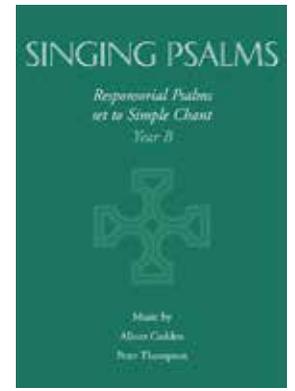
**Seeds for the Soul: Cycle C**  
Brendan McGuire



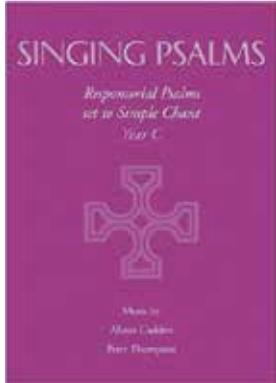
**Shadows on the Journey**  
Alan Abernethy



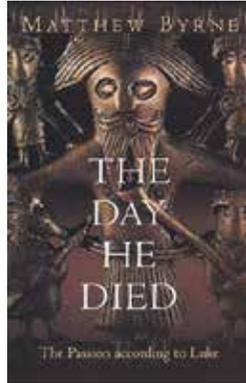
**Singing Psalms Year A**  
Alison Cadden and Peter Thompson



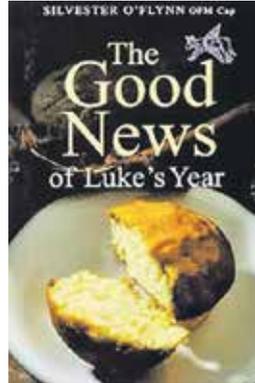
**Singing Psalms Year B**  
Alison Cadden and Peter Thompson



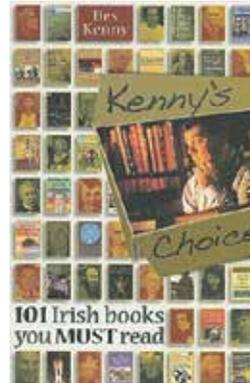
**Singing Psalms Year C**  
Alison Cadden and Peter Thompson



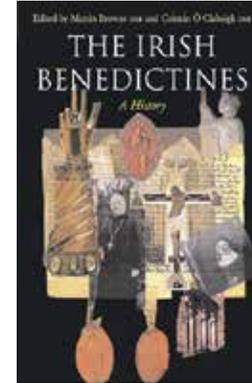
**The Day He Died –  
Passion According to Luke**  
Mathew Byrne



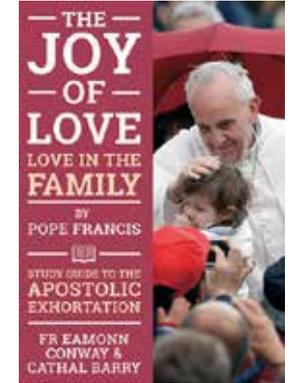
**The Good News of  
Luke's Year**  
Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap



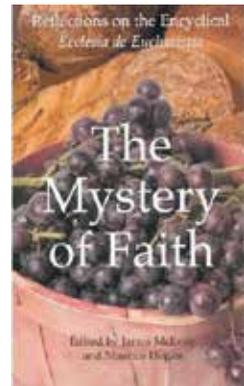
**Kenny's Choice**  
Des Kenny



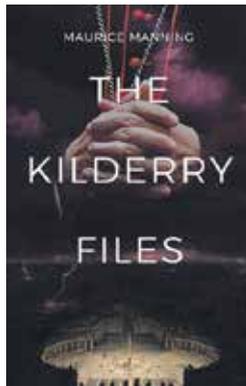
**The Irish Benedictines**  
Martin Browne OSB



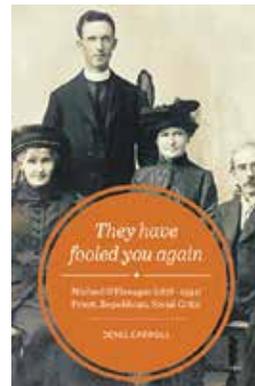
**The Joy of Love**  
Eamonn Conway and Cathal Barry



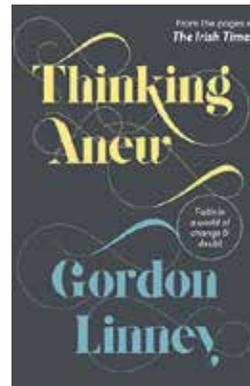
**The Mystery of Faith**  
Eds James McEvoy and Maurice Hogan SSC



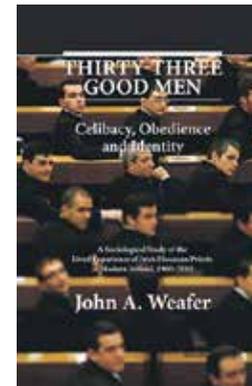
**The Kilderry Files**  
Maurice Manning



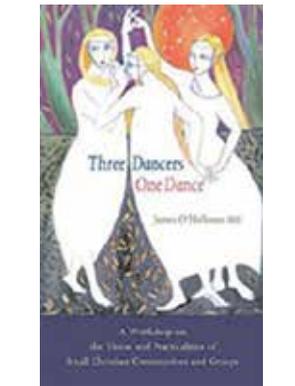
**They have fooled you again**  
Denis Carroll



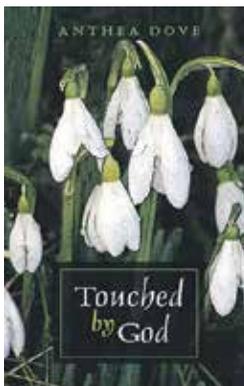
**Thinking Anew**  
Gordon Linney



**Thirty Three Good Men**  
John A. Weafer



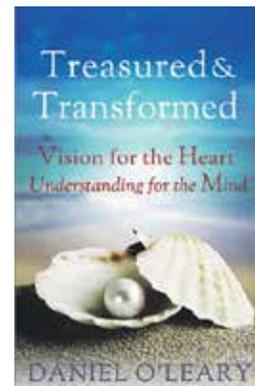
**Three Dancers, One  
Dance**  
James O' Halloran SDB



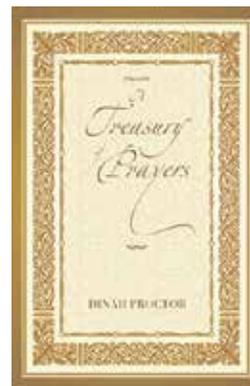
**Touched by God**  
Anthea Dove



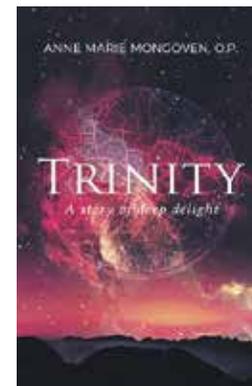
**Toward Mutual Ground**  
Eds Gareth Byrne and Patricia Kieran



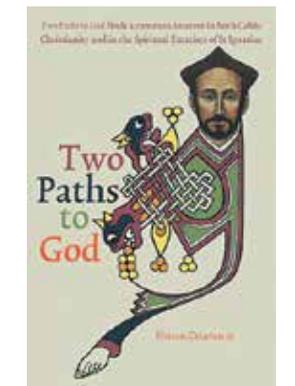
**Treasured & Transformed**  
Daniel O'Leary



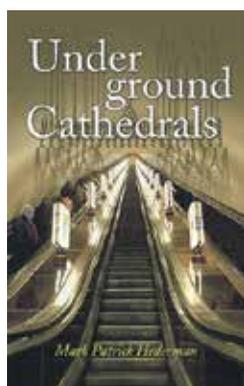
**Treasury of Prayers**  
Dinah Proctor



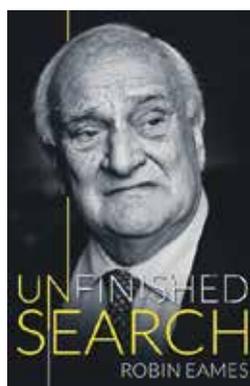
**Trinity a Story of Deep  
Delight**  
Anne Marie Mongoven OP



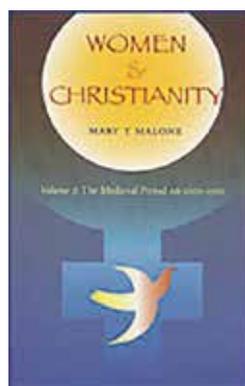
**Two Paths to God**  
Fintan Creaven SJ



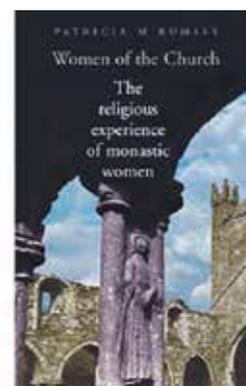
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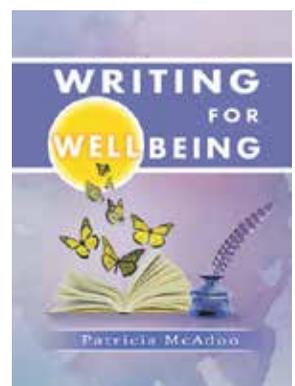
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# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Spanish bishops announce clerical abuse investigation

● In an about-face, the Spanish bishops' conference announced that it has hired a law firm to conduct a yearlong investigation into clerical sexual abuse in the country.

At a news conference in Madrid February 24, Cardinal Juan José Omella of Barcelona, president of the Spanish bishops' conference, said the conference hired the law offices of Cremades and Calvo-Sotelo "to carry out an independent investigation that will audit" the Church's handling of abuse cases.

Previously Cardinal Omella said individual dioceses would have their own independent commissions so that survivors can easily report to their local diocese.

### Arson blamed for fire at Ohio Catholic school

● A fire that caused \$1 million in damage to a Catholic school in suburban Cleveland February 19 was deliberately set, fire investigators said.

The blaze at St Anthony of Padua School in Parma, Ohio, destroyed the basement and damaged first-floor classrooms.

Smoke and water damage was prevalent

through much of the rest of the building, including the gym, the Parma Fire Department said. No one was in the building at the time.

The school is located on a large property that includes a parish church and rectory and is shared with Padua Franciscan High School and its athletic facilities, all of which were undamaged.

### Abortion access extended to 14 weeks in France

● The French National Assembly voted last Wednesday to extend the legal limit for abortion from 12 to 14 weeks.

The bill received 135 votes in favour and 47 votes against, with nine abstentions, on February 23.

Abortion on demand was legalised in France up to 10 weeks in 1975. The time limit was extended to 12 weeks in

2001.

The bill also extends the practice of surgical abortion to midwives, who have already been allowed to prescribe abortion pills since 2016.

The bill's authors argued that the time limit needed to be extended by a further two weeks because thousands of French women travel abroad for abortions after their 12th week of pregnancy.

### Case of designer who objects to gay marriage to be heard

● The US Supreme Court agreed last Tuesday to hear the case of a Colorado web designer who fears prosecution under state anti-discrimination law for stating her faith-based objections to providing services that promote same-sex marriage.

The court agreed February 22 to consider "Whether applying a public-accommodation law to compel an artist to speak or stay silent violates the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment".

It will not take up the question of whether Colorado's anti-discrimination law violates the designer's free exercise of religion. The case, 303 Creative LLC v. Elenis, will be heard during the court's next term, which begins in October.

### Pope's itinerary for Malta tour released

● Pope Francis' April visit to Malta, while brief, will include stops at three cities and an island, as well as meetings with authorities, local Catholics and migrants.

The Vatican February 25 released the Pope's schedule for the April 2-3 trip, which also includes a visit to the grotto where St Paul stayed when he

and his companions were shipwrecked.

Malta is a Mediterranean archipelago made up of three main islands, and more than 90% of the country's 460,000 people profess to be Catholic.

Upon his arrival in Malta, the Pope will meet with Maltese President George Vella and Prime Minister Robert Abela.

## Pope Francis appeals for end to 'tragic' Ukraine conflict

Pope Francis appealed on Sunday for an end to the Ukraine conflict.

In his first direct public comments since the Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, the Pope called for humanitarian corridors to be opened to allow Ukrainians to flee the intense fighting.

"In recent days we have been shaken by something tragic: war. Time and again we have prayed that this road would not be taken. And let us not stop talking; indeed, let us pray to God more intensely," he said after reciting the Angelus on February 27.

He continued: "Those who wage war forget humanity. They do not start from the people, they do not look at the real life of people, but place partisan interests and power before all else. They trust in the diabolical and perverse logic of weapons, which is the furthest from the logic of God. And they distance themselves from ordinary people, who want peace, and who – the ordinary people – are the real victims in every conflict, who pay for the follies of war with their own skin."

In his live-streamed address, the Pope said that he was thinking of "the elderly, of those who seek refuge in these times, of mothers fleeing with their children... They are brothers and sisters for whom it is urgent to open



The national flags of Ukraine and Poland are held by nuns in St Peter's Square as Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking the square at the Vatican February 27, 2022. Photo: CNS

humanitarian corridors, and who must be welcomed".

As pilgrims in St Peter's Square held up large Ukrainian flags, the 85-year-old Pope said that his heart was "broken" by the scenes in Ukraine. He urged people not to forget ongoing conflicts in other countries, such as Yemen, Syria, and Ethiopia.

"I repeat: put down your weapons! God is with the peacemakers, not with those who use violence. Because those who love peace, as the Italian Constitution states, 'repudiate war as an instrument of offence against the

liberty of other peoples and as a means for settling international disputes'."

Since the launch of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Pope has engaged in behind-the-scenes efforts to help end the conflict.

On February 25, he visited the Russian Embassy to the Holy See, located on the Via della Conciliazione near the Vatican. The Catholic author George Weigel told *Catholic World Report* that the Pope spoke with Putin via a secure telephone line during the visit. The Holy See press office said that the Pope went to the

embassy "to show his concern for the war," but did not mention a phone call to the Russian president.

On the same day, Pope Francis called Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the leader of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, who is based in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv. The Pope promised to do everything he can to help end the war.

On February 26, Pope Francis expressed his sorrow at the situation in Ukraine in a phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

## Colombian president condemn decriminalisation of abortion

The president of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, rejected February 22 the Constitutional Court's decision to depenalise abortion up to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

"We are facing a decision that concerns the entire Colombian society and five people cannot propose something as atrocious to a nation as allowing a life to be interrupted up to six months of gestation," the president told Colombian media February 22.

On February 21, the Constitutional Court of Colombia ruled 5-4 that abor-

tion "will only be punishable when performed after the twenty-fourth (24) week of pregnancy and, in any case, this time limit will not apply to the three grounds established in ruling C-355 of 2006".

The court ruling asks congress and the national government to implement a comprehensive public policy that, among other things, eliminates "any obstacle to the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights that are recognised in this ruling".

Mr Duque also told the media that he

is "a pro-life person, I have always been a pro-life person. I believe, as the Constitutional Court itself also stated a long time ago, that life begins with conception."

The Colombian bishops also decried the ruling February 22, say that "to hold that the rights to life and to receive the protection of the state, protected by the constitution, aren't protected from the moment of conception, is an affront to human dignity."

## Estimated 5.2 million children orphaned during pandemic

An estimated 5.2 million children in 21 countries, including the United States, lost at least one parent, a custodial grandparent or a primary caregiver to Covid-19 during the first 20 months of the pandemic, social researchers and child well-being advocates said in

a new study.

Notably, the researchers estimated that the number of children orphaned because of the pandemic nearly doubled during the six-month period ending October 31, 2021, a period corresponding largely with the surge in the delta vari-

ant of the coronavirus.

The total number of orphaned children during the study period parallels the roughly 5 million Covid-19-caused deaths during the same time frame, the study said.

"This finding means that, globally, for every one

reported Covid-19 death, at least one child experienced orphanhood or caregiver death", the researchers concluded.

The study was published online February 24 by the British medical journal *The Lancet*.



Edited by Jason Osborne  
jason@irishcatholic.ie

## A smouldering flame



Firefighters extinguish a smouldering fire after a building was struck during shelling in Kyiv, Ukraine, February 26, 2022.

# Iran squeezing Christians out of the Middle East, researcher says

A researcher with the Philos Project told journalists last Tuesday that Iran is using incremental strategies to squeeze non-Muslims out of the country and in nearby states such as Iraq and Syria, and that the plight of Christians in the Middle East is “truly misunderstood” by most in the West.

Senior Research Fellow Dr Farhad Rezaei, an Iranian Kurd, is a Christian convert who fled Iran and now teaches at York University in Canada. The Philos Project is a non-profit group that educates about and advocates for Christians in the Near East.

Dr Rezaei said during a February 22 briefing that the narrative that only jihadists have contributed to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East is “too simplistic”, and ignores the influence of Iran-backed militias in countries like Iraq.

A native Iranian, Dr Rezaei noted that since the country's 1979 revolution, Islamic leaders in Iran have described adherents to minority religions such as Christianity and Judaism as “pollution”, and have taken steps to shrink the size of the Christian and Jewish communities by pushing them out of the country.

In Iraq, Dr Rezaei noted, Iran-backed Shiite militias have carried out numerous abductions, killings, and sexual assaults in recent years. They have also seized large areas of land belonging to Christians, especially in the Nineveh Plain.

In total, at least 20,000 acres of farmland have been burned, and the militias have carried out at least 75 attacks on places of worship, with at least nine instances of using a church as a military base.

However, many of these crimes have been attributed to Sunni jihadist groups such as the Islamic State, rather than

to Iran, Dr Rezaei asserted. In Northern Iraq, it's not widely known that Iranian forces are occupying large areas, he said, with Shiite forces squeezing the native Christians out by seizing property.

When asked what the global Christian community can do in the face of this persecution, Dr Rezaei said resources have to be poured in to rebuild Christian communities in areas where Shiite militias have tried to drive them out. In addition, he asserted, the Iranian regime has to be condemned for their actions, and leaders must be sanctioned.

# Biden announces Supreme Court nominee

President Joe Biden announced federal appeals court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson as his first nominee to the Supreme Court on Friday.

In a tweet announcing the news, Biden called Jackson “one of our nation's brightest legal minds” and said that she will be “an exceptional Justice”.

If confirmed, Judge Jackson would be the first black woman to sit on the bench of the nation's highest court.

The 51-year-old judge once clerked for

Justice Stephen Breyer, whose seat she would fill at the Supreme Court. Justice Breyer formally announced his upcoming retirement in January, and plans to leave once the court enters summer recess.

Kelly Shackelford, president of First Liberty Institute, a legal organisation that defends religious freedom, commented that “In nominating Ketanji Brown Jackson, President Biden is selecting a judicial activist for the Supreme Court.

“Her record from the beginning of her

career shows hostility to religious liberty, free speech, and other constitutional rights. The American people do not want a liberal extremist on the Supreme Court. If confirmed, Judge Jackson's judicial activism will place the constitutional rights of all Americans in jeopardy.”

Born in Washington, DC, Judge Jackson grew up in Miami. She earned both her undergraduate degree and law degree at Harvard, before working as a federal public defender.

## Vatican roundup

### Pope warns against digital media addiction in Lenten message

● The Vatican released Pope Francis' Lenten message last Thursday in which the Pope recommended that Lent 2022 can be a time to put down the smartphone and encounter those in need face to face.

“Let us not grow tired of fighting against concupiscence, that weakness which induces to selfishness and all evil, and finds in the course of history a variety of ways to lure men and women into sin,” Pope Francis said in the message published February 24.

“One of these is addiction to the digital media, which impoverishes human relationships. Lent is a propitious time to resist these temptations and to cultivate instead a more integral form of human communication made up of ‘authentic encounters,’ face to face and in person.”

The liturgical season of Lent begins on March 2 with Ash Wednesday.

“Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil from our lives. May the corporal fasting to which Lent calls us fortify our spirit for the battle against sin,” Pope Francis said.

“Let us not grow tired of asking for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, knowing that God never tires of forgiving.”

### Vatican astronomers' part of new discoveries in space

● Two Jesuit astronomers from the Vatican Observatory were part of two recent discoveries: one finding a new member of the solar system and another finding evidence for a long-lost galaxy “eaten up” by the Milky Way.

Jesuit Fr Richard Boyle discovered the existence of a new object, named “2021 XD7”, in the outer solar system past Neptune, and Jesuit Fr Richard D'Souza co-authored a new study identifying a previously unknown dwarf galaxy, named Pontus, that merged with Earth's home galaxy of the Milky Way.

The Vatican Observatory made the first announcement February 2, saying Fr Boyle

discovered the new object in early December after his observations were analysed by Kazimieras Cernis, a Lithuanian astronomer and astrophysicist.

Peter Vereš, who works at the International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Centre, computed the object's orbit, it said.

Fr Boyle, who specialises in observational astronomy, made the discovery using the Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope on Mount Graham in Arizona.

“2021 XD7” is a “trans-Neptunian object”, which is any minor or dwarf planet in the solar system whose orbit is outside the orbit of Neptune, the system's outermost planet.

### Pope Francis cancels trip due to knee pain

● The Vatican announced Friday that Pope Francis was no longer to attend an international meeting of bishops and mayors in Florence, Italy, on Sunday, due to doctor-ordered rest for knee pain.

The Pope was also not be able to participate in the customary procession on Rome's Aventine Hill and Mass at the Basilica of Santa Sabina for Ash Wednesday on March 2, according to the Vatican.

“Due to acute gonalgia, for which his doctor has prescribed a period of more rest for his leg, Pope Francis will not be able to travel to Florence on Sunday, February 27, or preside over Ash Wednesday celebrations on March 2,” the Holy See press office said in a short statement on February 25.

The Vatican also announced the program of Pope Francis' two-day visit to Malta on Friday. The trip is scheduled for April 2-3.

Pope Francis has canceled public appearances in the past for what the Vatican said was a flare-up of sciatic pain. In July 2021, Francis also spent 10 days in a Rome hospital after undergoing surgery on his colon for diverticulitis.



# Letter from Rome



Cindy Wooden

## All-star line-up: Why a canonisation in 1622 still draws attention

The Vatican has hosted many massive and moving canonisation ceremonies over the centuries, but a rite held in 1622 continues to be commemorated by devotees and studied by scholars.

At a ceremony in St Peter's Basilica on March 12, 1622, Pope Gregory XV formally recognised the holiness of Sts Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, Isidore of Madrid (also known as Isidore the Farmer), Francis Xavier and Philip Neri.

Pope Francis will mark the 400th anniversary of the canonisations with a Mass at the Jesuit's Church of the Gesù in Rome, and the Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office is reproducing a 17th-century painting of the five saints for its 2022 aerogram.

The canonisations were a boon to what were then new religious orders: the Discalced Carmelites founded by St Teresa; the Jesuits founded by St Ignatius with St Francis Xavier as one of his first companions; and the Oratorians founded by St Philip Neri.

**“The 1622 five, Prof. Ditchfield said, were the first saints to be beatified before being canonised, an intermediate step that is now standard”**

But the four religious were late additions to the ceremony, which was prepared for the canonisation of St Isidore, who would be the patron saint of Spain's new capital, Madrid.

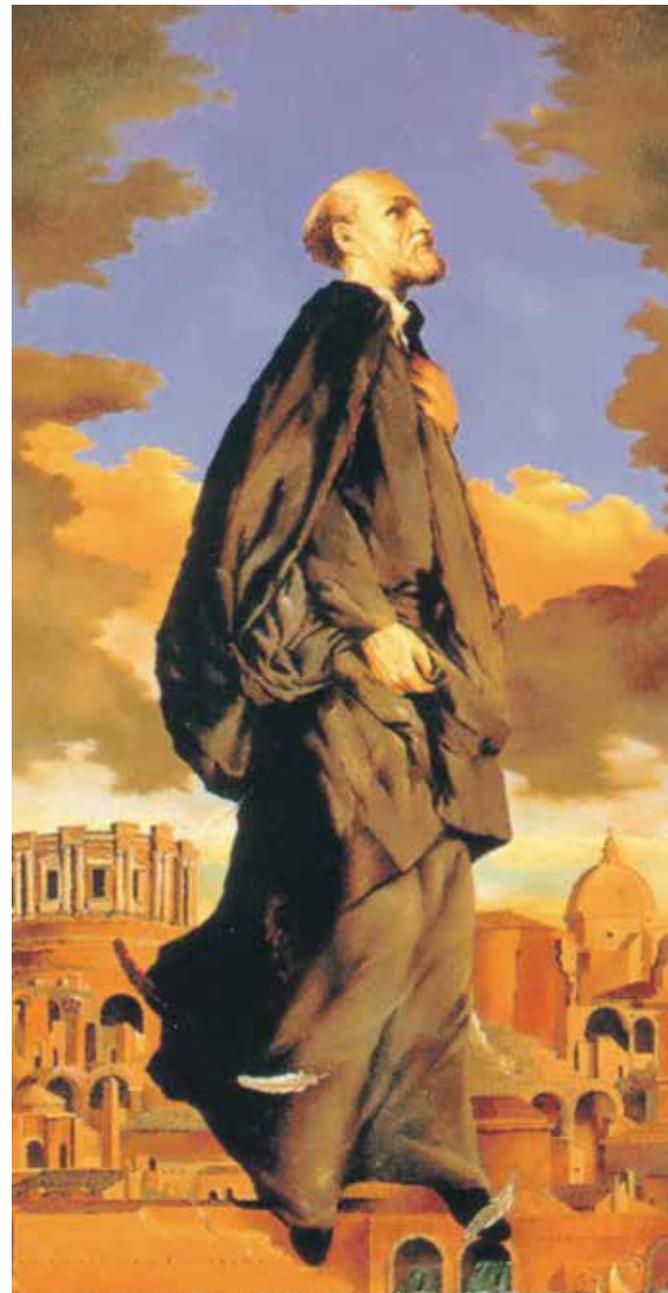
King Philip IV of Spain had paid for the canonisation *teatro* - a structure erected in St Peter's Basilica and decorated with scenes from the life of St Isidore and illustrations of miracles attributed to his intercession - “so the others were, technically, piggy-backed onto this ceremony” with a banner for each hanging in the transept, Simon Ditchfield, a professor of history at the University of York, England, who has written extensively on the 1622 ceremony, told *Catholic News Service*.

### Study

For historians, art historians and theologians, the 1622 canonisations are a case study in the ‘modern’ sainthood process, the consolidation of papal power, the missionary expansion of the Catholic Church and the use of art to support that outreach.



A statue of St Isidore of Madrid is pictured. Pope Francis and the Vatican are preparing to mark the 400th anniversary of the joint canonisation ceremony of Sts Isidore, Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier and Philip Neri. Photo: CNS.



An image of St Philip Neri by Salvo Russo is seen in the book, *The Catholic Priest - Image of Christ through Fifteen Centuries of Art*. Photo: CNS.

“This was the most explicit and theatrical example of papal power and universal papal relevance,” Prof. Ditchfield said.

While previous Popes had attempted to regulate the recognition of saints, he said, it was a slow process with many holy men and women being proclaimed and venerated simply as a result of the devotion of the local Catholic faithful.

On the heels of the Protestant Reformation and to bring order and investigative rigor to the Church's process for declaring saints, Pope Sixtus V in 1588 set up the office that would become the Congregation for Saints' Causes. Over the next three decades, though, only nine people were canonised and none of them at the same ceremony.

### The first

The 1622 five, Prof. Ditchfield said, were the first saints to be beatified

before being canonised, an intermediate step that is now standard.

The ceremony also “was groundbreaking in being the first-ever canonisation of multiple holy people on the same day. That meant that there were more decorations in St Peter's, five canonisation bulls rather than just one, and an unprecedentedly large body of documentation,” Pamela M. Jones, a professor emerita of art history at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, told CNS.

The bulls, or decrees of canonisation, and the banners and other art used to decorate St Peter's, she said, “underscored their distinctive contributions and similar virtues. The saints' celebrations also show that they were perceived useful to the Roman Catholic Church as defenders of the faith against ‘heretics’ and ‘infidels’ and as disseminators of the Catholic faith in a turbulent era of world expansion.”

The consolidation of the sainthood process also served to underscore in a very practical way the authority of the Pope affirmed by the Council of Trent, Prof. Jones wrote in *A Companion to Early Modern Rome, 1492-1692*, a book she co-edited with Prof. Ditchfield and Barbara Wisch.

**“Pope Sixtus V in 1588 set up the office that would become the Congregation for Saints' Causes”**

“Because saints' cults were universal, the Pope, whose jurisdiction was universal, had the exclusive right to canonise,” Prof. Jones wrote.

But the festivities marking the canonisations, even those of 1622, were global, she said. After the can-

onisation rite, Rome was the site of processions, fireworks, concerts and plays. Similar events took place around the world: in Madrid to celebrate St Isidore's canonisation, but even further afield to honour the new religious-order saints across Europe, in Asia and in the Americas where Discalced Carmelites or Jesuits ministered.

### Process

Prof. Ditchfield said the whole process, first completed for the five saints in the 17th Century, was a mechanism that emphasised the Church as both local and universal: then and now it begins with an investigation in the diocese where the sainthood candidate lived and died, then it is verified at the Vatican, beatification and canonisation are proclaimed by the Pope and his decision is celebrated again on a local level.

# With war in Ukraine, the global religious landscape is destined to shift even further



John L. Allen Jr

**W**ars always have wildly unforeseen consequences, eviscerating a status quo and violently shaping new realities. While most pundits are pondering the geopolitical, diplomatic and military fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Putin's war also seems destined to have important consequences on the religious scene.

Right now what those consequences may be seems impossible to describe, but it's certainly worth contemplating the possibilities.

To begin with, there are at least three clearly religious dimensions to this conflict that, so far, have largely been overlooked in most analysis.

First, the war may affect relationships among the world's Orthodox churches.

There are almost 300 million Orthodox Christians in the world, divided among 15 autocephalous churches and a variety of other branches, with roughly 100 million in Russia and 40 million in Ukraine. The Russian Orthodox Church regards Ukraine as the cradle of its faith and its "canonical territory", but on the ground Orthodox believers in Ukraine are divided into three separate churches, with only one being directly dependent on Moscow.

One effect of the war thus could be to produce a new sense of common cause among the Orthodox in Ukraine, weakening Moscow's hold and producing a strong new counterpoint in the Orthodox world. At the beginning of the war, the Moscow branch of the Orthodox church in Ukraine issued strong statements condemning the invasion, though that content has since been scrubbed from its website.

**“In general, Constantinople has the stronger claim to preeminence, rooted in the traditional conception of Constantinople as the ‘first among equals’”**

In addition, a contest has been unfolding for some time for leadership in the Orthodox world between Moscow and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, led by Patriarch Bartholomew I. Broadly speaking, Constantinople is considered the more progressive and pro-Western point of reference – Bartholomew, for instance, is an ecumenical figure who's engaged in multiple partnerships with Pope Francis – while Moscow is seen as more conservative and confrontational.



People take shelter in the basement of the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Resurrection in Kyiv, Ukraine, February 25, 2022, after Russia launched a massive military operation against Ukraine.

In general, Constantinople has the stronger claim to preeminence, rooted in the traditional conception of Constantinople as the “first among equals” in the Orthodox tradition. Moscow, however, has the numbers, the money and the backing of the Russian state.

## Opinion

Should Orthodox opinion around the world sour on the Russians, one net effect could be to strengthen Constantinople's hand.

Religious historian Diana Butler Bass puts it this way:

“The conflict in Ukraine is all about religion and what kind of Orthodoxy will shape Eastern Europe and other Orthodox communities around the world (especially in Africa),” she writes. “This is a crusade, recapturing the Holy Land of Russian Orthodoxy and defeating the westernised (and decadent) heretics who do not bend the knee to Moscow's spiritual authority.”

“If you don't get that, you don't get it. Who is going to control the geographical home, the ‘Jerusalem’, of the Russian church? Moscow? Or Constantinople? And, what does claiming that territory mean for Orthodoxy around the world? Will global Orthodoxy lean toward a more pluralistic

and open future, or will it be part of an authoritarian neo-Christendom triumvirate?”

Second, the war in Ukraine may also have important consequences for Catholic-Orthodox relations, especially as it concerns the fate of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, the largest of the world's 23 eastern churches in communion with Rome.

The Greek Catholics in Ukraine have long played an outsized role in national affairs, producing generations of scholars and activists working toward the goal of a unified and independent Christian community in the country. Greek Catholics are generally strongly pro-Western and resistant to Moscow, playing important roles in Ukraine's various pro-independence uprisings, and for precisely this reason are likely to be at great risk as the Russian offensive continues to roll out.

## Paul VI

Stretching back to Paul VI, the Vatican's broad policy vis-à-vis Russian Orthodoxy has been détente, going to great lengths to avoid confrontation. The soft glove approach was confirmed under Pope John Paul II and his long-cherished dream of a Christianity that would “breathe with both lungs”, East and West. The Polish pope was a relentless opponent of Commu-

nism and helped trigger the collapse of the Soviet empire, but he tended to deference and tact when it came to the Russian Orthodox.

All that was frustrating for many Catholics during the Cold War, and it remains so today, given that Pope Francis still has not even publicly named Russia as the aggressor, nor has he condemned Putin's actions like many other global leaders have done.

**“The soft glove approach was confirmed under Pope John Paul II and his long-cherished dream of a Christianity that would ‘breathe with both lungs’”**

The current conflict may have the potential to change that calculus. Granted, Friday's virtually unprecedented drop-in at Russia's Embassy to the Holy See wasn't accompanied by any public criticism of Moscow, but let's face it – a Pope doesn't go storming down the *Via della Conciliazione* to a foreign embassy because he's happy.

Perhaps the fallout from the war will be to shape a new Vatican brand of ecumenism, one that's a bit more robust in its capacity to push back.

Third, the current crisis could also impact conservative Catholic and Christian circles in the west, who have come to see Putin as an ally in the struggle against Islamic radicalism, especially in terms of protecting persecuted Christians in the Middle East, and in favour of promoting traditional Christian values as a bulwark against secularism.

## Quest

If some of those conservative Catholics and Christians sour on Putin, it could trigger a quest for other ways to advance their aims.

It's also worth noting, by the way, that Putin's pretence of being a great Defender of the Faith on the global scene isn't entirely bluster. At critical moments in the Middle East, Putin has used Russian power in ways that actually have benefited Christian populations, most notably in the struggle against ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

Under the law of unintended consequences, a weakened and distracted Putin could end up exposing those Christians to greater danger, a possibility that forward-thinking Western leaders would do well to anticipate, because otherwise, Putin would be free to propagandise about their failure.

In sum: On the other side of the war, the global religious landscape is destined to look different. What those differences will be, however, will be determined by the choices religious leaders make right now.

**“One effect of the war thus could be to produce a new sense of common cause among the Orthodox in Ukraine”**

# Letters

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

### Outrageous Women's Council receives vast sums from taxpayer

**Dear Editor,** It was good to read Michael Kelly's article [*The Irish Catholic* – February 17, 2022] on the Women's Council of Ireland and his pointing out that it is a long time since the Women's Council – which claims a fortune of taxpayer's money to lobby on behalf of women – has even pretended to work on behalf of all women.

Indeed, it is, and I remember the late great Nora Bennis who did such trojan work lobbying for support for women in the home who wished to stay at home and rear their own children, confirming that the council has no interest whatsoever in the issue, nor in many other issues of vital importance to women. How ironic now to see the Government's dismay, despite its paying

vast sums to this organisation, at their exclusion from the rally to mark International Women's Day.

It really is outrageous that this council is benefitting from vast sums of tax payer's money while only representing the elite and those who share their so-called 'liberal' views. It should be pointed out that, while this council is being so lavishly funded, no money whatsoever is allocated to those who support women in crisis pregnancies with life-giving options and not just the killing of their babies. All such support is being provided by pro-life groups depending on voluntary subscriptions.

I hope note is taken of the fact that

Ireland has an extraordinary 32,841 NGOs (non-governmental organisations) who are funded out of the public purse to the tune of almost six billion euro annually.

What account is given of how these vast sums are spent? Why the silence on this and so many other important issues in Ireland? When will we see courageous men and women speak out and continue to do so until a satisfactory explanation is given? We need more people with courage to speak up for the weak and vulnerable and seek accountability for the many failures in our society.

Yours etc.,  
**Mary Stewart,**  
Ardeskin, Donegal

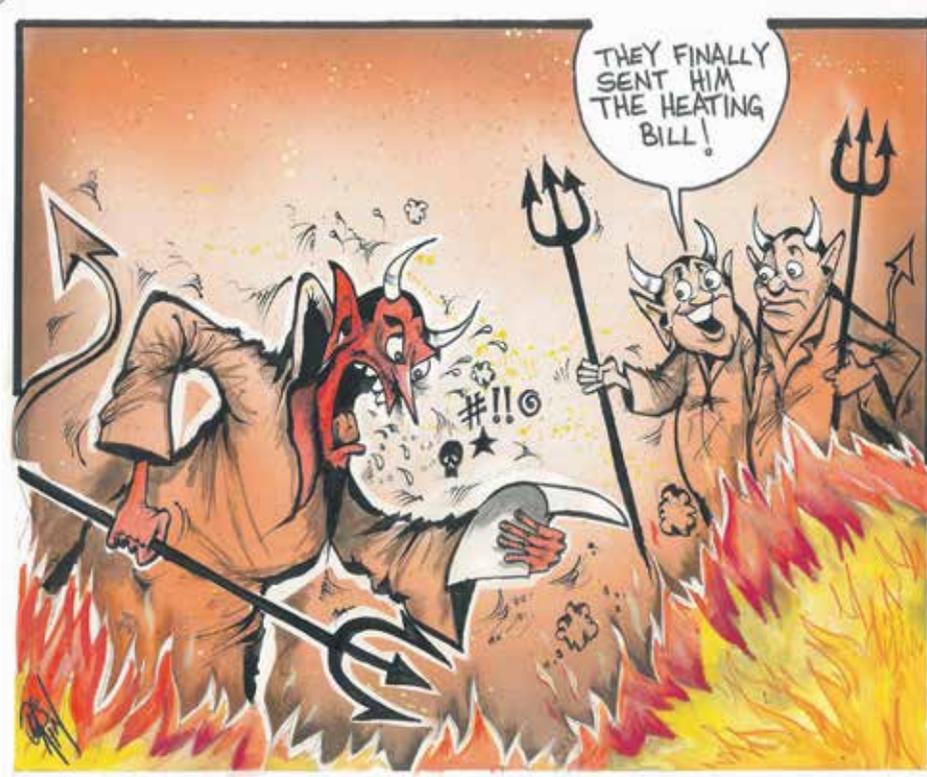
## Ants caught up in the struggle for power

**Dear Editor,** The Monroe principle which the US goes by is that no foreign power can have a base on its borders, hence the Cuban missile crisis. In the same way Russia will never accept a foreign power on its borders, which Ukraine joining NATO would bring about. "What is good for the goose is good for the gander."

To add to the complexity of the Ukrainian situation is that 22% of Ukrainians are Russians. But the main bone of contention is the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, this is what this war is about. Gas isn't it?

Sadly the Ukrainians are the "piggy in the middle" caught between US and Russian interests.

The US does not want Europe



to be dependent on Russia for energy which the Nord Stream Pipeline would bring about.

We as citizens of the world are but ants caught up in the struggle for power

and the interests of the big powers like China, US and Russian.

We listen to the noise but don't see the real players of the big game. But are these powers

really interested in climate change and the devastation war brings to the planet? I don't think so.

Yours etc.,  
**Nuala Nolan**  
Bowling Green, Galway

## We must accept there is a hierarchy of truths

**Dear Editor,** Do I believe "that any teaching decreed by the Church, past, present and to come amounts to nothing more than a temporary little arrangement"? That is Neil Bray's challenge to me ['A more forthcoming assertion needed on Church teaching', *The Irish Catholic* February 24, 2022].

No.

It does not follow that if Vatican II reversed St Augustine of Hippo's teaching of 416 (that state power can be used to compel religious assent) then everything the Church has ever taught becomes reversible. This all-or-nothing approach to Church teaching was as much of an obstacle to inter-Church dialogue in 1964 as it now is to Pope Francis's invitation to synodality.

The solution in 1964 is the solution now: to accept that there exists a 'hierarchy of truths'.

"When comparing doctrines with one another, they [theologians] should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith." (*Unitatis Redintegratio* (1964) – the Vatican II document on dialogue between separated Christians.)

This same document then briefly points to the core of that faith – the mystery of the Trinity and the everlasting life and gift of Jesus.

Even this dialogue via letters to the editor would be impossible if there was not some shared founda-

tional and creedal belief that synodal dialogue could rediscover, joyously. We cannot become missionary until we have recovered together, for today's confused and hurting people, that foundational and easily portable creedal faith.

In the end, as St Paul insists – and as Jesus himself tells us in his emphasis on the Great Commandments – love is more important than knowledge, because the latter can 'puff up' while mutual caring 'builds up' (1 Cor 8: 1). We need to discover together, synodally, how to rebuild.

Yours etc.,  
**Sean O'Connell**  
Coleraine, Co. Derry

## facebook community

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

### Schools 'resent' president's attack on parents' education choice

Fair play, the President is supposed to stay clear of politics and he is well aware of that. That was always the case until Mary Robinson used the office for virtue signalling. Michael D. was quick on the bandwagon as well. This is different though, he is in another jurisdiction, where the utmost tact and caution is needed. Shame on him, he was due to stay just the one term in office, thankfully this is his last. – **Gearóid Ó Broin**

### It's Saints that offer the secret to successful synodality

Someone like St Peter Damian is desperately needed today. – **William Broderick**

Or St Catherine of Siena who spoke her truth to power. – **Lorna Downey**

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

## Deeply grieved after death of Veronica Duffy

**Dear Editor,** Like thousands of Irish pilgrims, I am deeply grieved to learn of Veronica Duffy's death. Twenty-two years ago, Veronica and Lauri introduced me to Fatima and I have been on 58 pilgrimages since.

I will miss Veronica's lovely talks on the angels and her devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, together with the three children.

My sympathy to Lauri and family.  
Long rest Veronica's soul.

Yours etc.,  
**Michael Francis O'Garra**  
Boyle, Co. Roscommon

## Please desist from portraying Jesus in cartoons

**Dear Editor,** Could I respectfully ask that you desist portraying our blessed Lord in cartoons, as appeared in *The Irish Catholic* of February 2 last.

Thank God I have a sense of humour myself, but when it comes to the sacred image of Jesus, who suffered and died for us, I think we should show a bit more respect and not set a bad example for others.

Yours etc.,  
**Edward McCarthy**  
Tralee, Co. Kerry

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

# Around the world



▲ ITALY: People protest against the war in Ukraine in Piazza della Signoria in Florence, February 27. Photos: CNS.

◀ ITALY: People protest against the war in Ukraine in Piazza della Signoria in Florence, February 27.



USA: An asylum-seeking migrant girl from Guatemala stands wrapped in an emergency blanket as she waits to board a Customs and Border Protection bus after crossing the Rio Grande into the United States from Mexico in Peñitas, Texas, February 24.



VATICAN: People holds Ukrainian flags in St Peter's Square as Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking the square at the Vatican February 27.



RUSSIA: A person holds up a banner during an anti-war protest in Moscow February 24, after Russia launched a massive military operation against Ukraine. The banner reads "No war. Freedom for political prisoners."



UKRAINE: Ukrainian servicemen warm by a fire at fighting positions at the military base near Vasylykiv, February 26.

# Trying not to make God look bad



For 15 years, I taught a course entitled *The Theology of God*. The students in that course were predominately seminarians preparing for ministry, along with a number of lay students who were preparing to serve as ministers in various capacities in their churches. I would always teach what the curriculum called for: the key biblical revelations about the nature of God and God's actions in history, some salient perspectives from the Patristics on God's nature and actions, the historical development of the dogmatic definitions about God, plus some speculative notions on the trinity, ranging from St Augustine to Karl Rahner to Catherine Lacugna.

**“Any preaching in God's name that isn't good news for the poor is not the gospel”**

But my overriding emphasis, like a leit motif, was always this. I would tell the students: “Whatever else you do in your pastoral practice and preaching, try not to make God look stupid!”

Nothing is as important in our teaching, preaching, and pastoral activities as is the notion we convey of the God who underwrites it all. Every homily we preach, every catechetical or sacramental teaching we give, and every pastoral practice we engage in reflects the God who undergirds it. If our teaching is narrow and petty, we make God look narrow and petty. If our pastoral practice lacks understanding



## Fr Rolheiser

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

and compassion, we make God lack understanding and compassion. If we are legalistic, we make God legalistic. If we are tribal, nationalistic, or racist, we make God tribal, nationalistic, and racist. If we do things that befuddle common sense, we make God the enemy of common sense. Crassly stated, when we do stupid things in our ministry, we make God look stupid. In all of our preaching, teaching, and pastoral practice we need to work at rescuing God from arbitrariness, narrowness, legalism, rigidity, racism, tribalism, nationalism, and everything that's narrow, legalistic, and petty that, through us, gets associated with God. Anything we do in the name of God reflects God.

### Atheism

It's no accident that atheism, anticlericalism, and most of the negativity leveled against the Church and religion today can always point to

some bad theology or Church practice on which to base itself. Atheism is always a parasite, feeding off bad religion. So too is most of the negativity towards the Churches which is prevalent today. Anti-Church attitudes feed on bad religion and thus we who preach, teach, and minister in the name of God need to scrutinise ourselves in the light of those criticisms.

### Rigidity

As well, we need the honesty to admit that we have seriously hurt many persons by the rigidity of some of our pastoral practices that do not reflect a God of understanding, compassion, and intelligence, but instead suggest that God is arbitrary, legalistic, and not very intelligent.

I say this in sympathy. It's not easy to reflect God adequately, but we must try, try to reflect better the God that Jesus incarnated. What are the marks of that God?

First, that God has no favourites. No one person, race, gender, or nation is more favoured than others by that God. All are privileged. That God is also clear that it's not only those who profess God and religion explicitly who are persons of faith, but also those, irrespective of their explicit faith or church practice, who do the will of God on earth.

**“We need the honesty to admit that we have seriously hurt many persons by the rigidity of some of our pastoral practices that do not reflect a God of understanding”**

Next, that God is scandalously understanding and compassionate, especially towards the weak and towards sinners. That God is willing to sit down with sinners without first asking them to clean up their lives. Moreover, that God asks us to be compassionate in the same way to both sinners and saints and to love them both equally. That God

does not have preferential love for the virtuous.

In addition, that God is critical of those who, whatever their sincerity, try to block access to him. That God is never defensive, but surrenders himself to death rather than defend himself, never meets hatred with hatred, and dies loving and forgiving those who are killing him.

### Preaching

Finally, and centrally, that God is first of all good news for the poor. Any preaching in God's name that isn't good news for the poor is not the Gospel.

Those are the attributes of the God who Jesus incarnated and we need to keep that God in mind in all of our preaching, teaching, and pastoral practices, even as we are sensitive to proper boundaries and the demands of orthodox teaching.

Complex pastoral questions will always be with us and this is not suggesting that these issues be resolved simplistically. The truth sets us free and the demands of discipleship are, by Jesus' own admission, harsh. However, with that being admitted, the compassion, mercy, and intelligence of God need always still to be reflected in every pastoral action we do. Otherwise, God looks arbitrary, tribal, cruel, and antithetical to love.

Christianity, as Marilynne Robinson says, is too great a narrative to be underwritten by any lesser tale and that should forbid especially its being subordinated to narrowness, legalism, lack of compassion, and lack of common sense.

**“Nothing is as important in our teaching, preaching, and pastoral activities as is the notion we convey of the God who underwrites it all”**

# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, March 3, 2022

## Personal Profile

Encouraging others to go and preach the Gospel

Page 34



## How to develop discipline



**L**ent has begun, and our spiritual resolutions are hopefully made. As discussed last week in this column, Lent is the perfect opportunity to refocus on the goal of life: God. Unfortunately for us, however, it's one thing to make resolutions, it's another thing to keep them. If you're anything like me, you can talk a good game, even convincing yourself that your behaviour is going to change with a click of your fingers. Rarely is it that easy.

So, how does one maximise their chances of a successful Lenten campaign? How do we stay as faithful to the Lord as we know we ought? Discipline, discipline and more discipline. This isn't to discount the fact that when it comes to all things spiritual, it's God's action first that



**Willpower is a major fuel in the spiritual life, and it will come in handy during Lent, writes Jason Osborne**

saves us, rather than our own. But a good, grounded faith knows that a serious effort is required, and it's willpower and discipline help us to make that effort.

Whether it's getting up as soon as the early-morning alarm goes off, sticking to our prayer routine, or maintaining our Lenten fast, discipline is an essential element in all of these aspirations. Right at the beginning of Lent as we are, it'll be beneficial to us to consider ways in which we might bolster

our will, that we can keep making a good effort throughout the next 40 days.

### Identify our traits

Before fighting a war, it's very important to have good intelligence. If you don't, your enemy will run rings around you while you flounder in the darkness of confusion. We're not fighting a physical war, thankfully, but the same principle applies in the spiritual life.

As humans who've inherited original sin, we're prone to weakness and failure. Whether it's junk food, too much tv, social media, laziness or otherwise, we find our unhealthy addictions enormously difficult to overcome. These weaknesses aren't just the fruit of a lack of self-control, either, it must be said. When we're not particularly gifted in a certain area, for example, we often find it easier to ignore or neglect it.

A pertinent example of this in my own life is all of the admin that comes with basic human existence – insurance, certificates and whatever other paperwork we accrue over the course of our lives. I have no time or patience for dealing with these 'boring' tasks, so I often let them slide and slide until they can slide no more. The key to overcoming these per-

sistent limits is to develop self-awareness, which is humbling in and of itself (making it well suited to Lent). You can't overcome your weakness and shortcomings until you know them and acknowledge them, which allows you to work on them.

### A supportive environment

You've made a resolution to get up early, at the same time every day, throughout Lent. However, the morning comes and bed is too cosy to be left behind, so you give in, switch off the alarm, and return to sleep's warm embrace. It feels good at the time, but you generally regret it afterwards.

The best way to combat these subtle temptations that gradually

» Continued on Page 33

## Family News



## AND EVENTS

### CHILDREN AGED 12-15 TO BE OFFERED COVID BOOSTER DOSE

Children aged 12 to 15 are to be offered a booster dose of Covid-19 vaccine in a bid to reduce infection rates among this age group.

The move follows a recommendation by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (Niac), which has been accepted by Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly.

The go-ahead was given by Niac, although the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has yet to authorise booster doses for this age group.

The EMA is currently assessing an application by Pfizer/BioNTech for use of its booster vaccine for children from 12 upwards.

Because off-licence use is being allowed in Ireland, Mr Donnelly said special attention would be paid to the provision of support and guidance information as part of the informed consent process for children and young people and their parents. Some 70% of 12-15 year-olds are fully vaccinated.

Niac has said a booster dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine should be given at an interval of six months or longer after completion of the primary vaccine series.

### FOSSIL OF LARGEST JURASSIC PTEROSAUR FOUND ON SKYE

The world's largest Jurassic pterosaur – a 170-million-year-old winged reptile – has been found protruding from the rocks of the Isle of Skye in the UK.

PhD student Amelia Penny spotted its sharp-toothed jaw in a layer of ancient limestone on Skye's coast, according to the BBC

That initial discovery, in 2017, has now been followed up with detailed examination of the fossil skeleton.

Those studies, published in the journal *Current Biology*, show the flying lizard had a 2.5m (8ft) wingspan.

The research, led by PhD student Natalia Jagielska, also revealed the creature was a species new to science.

It has now been given the Scots Gaelic name Dearn sgiathanach (pronounced Jark Ski-an-Ach), in honour of the Isle of Skye.

"Dearn is a fantastic example of why palaeontology will never cease to be astounding," Ms Jagielska said.

"Pterosaur fossils as complete as this are very rare. As flying animals, their bones are really light, just like today's birds."

### TAKE A FREE WALKING TOUR OF DUBLIN

The award-winning free tour of Dublin is underway again, offering daily walking tours of the city's key cultural sites.

Professional local guides will "take you through Dublin's fascinating sites, history, stories and curious oddities", with each tour lasting two and a half hours.

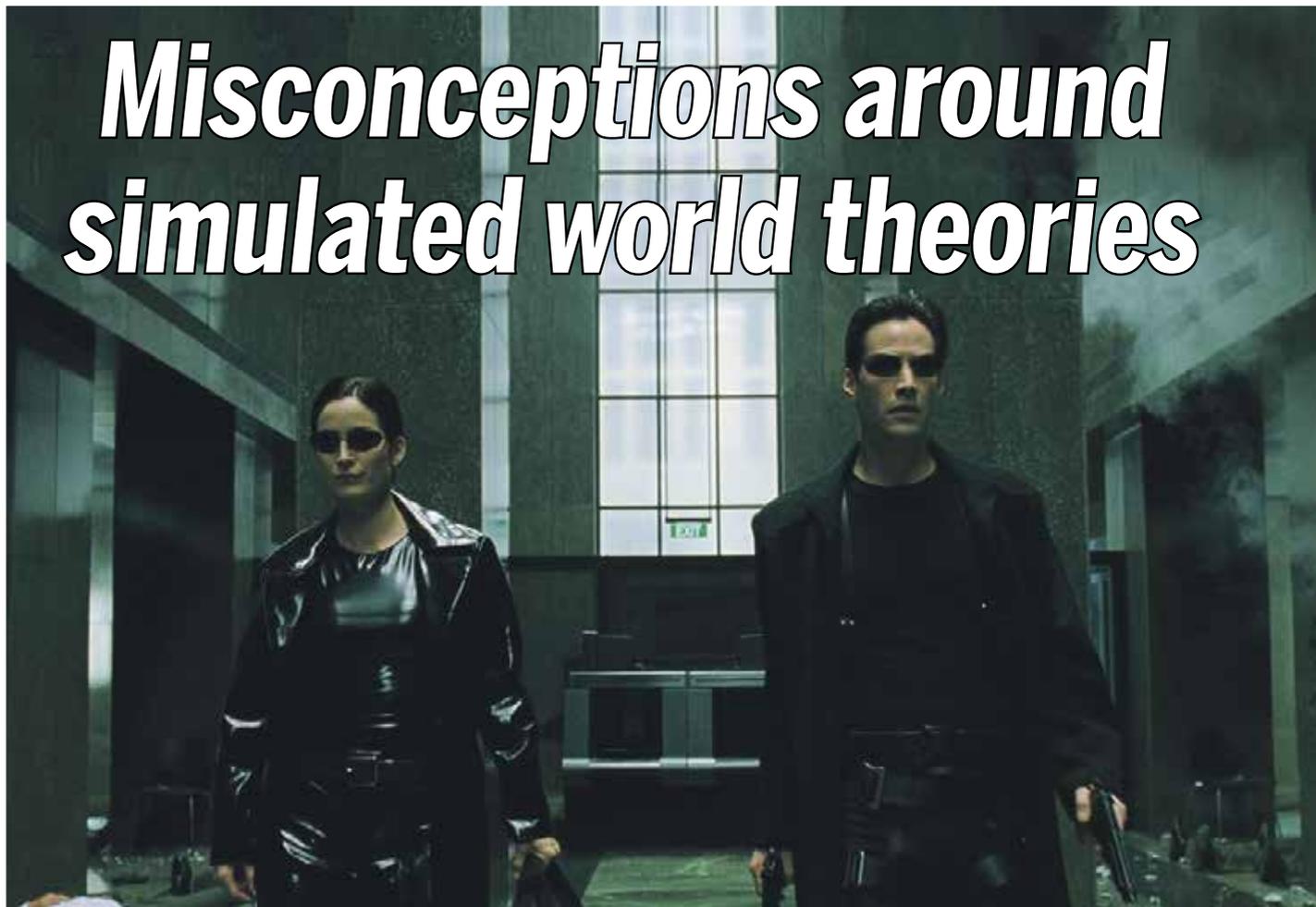
Beginning at The Old Storehouse bar, 3 Crown Alley, Temple Bar, Dublin, the tours cover topics and sites including Dublin Castle, Viking and Medieval Dublin, Christchurch Cathedral, the Temple Bar quarter, risings and rebellions, folklore and mythology, Dublin literary greats, Irish music royalty, street art, "as well as Dublin's 'alternative' side and unique local insider tips".

The guides are Fáilte Ireland approved and credited, and include writers, artists, actors and musicians.

There is no base price for the tour and those taking part can pay what they like.

For more information and to book tickets, visit [www.eventbrite.ie/e/free-dublin-walking-tour-tickets-169089586505?aff=ebdssbdestsearch&k\\_eep\\_tld=1](http://www.eventbrite.ie/e/free-dublin-walking-tour-tickets-169089586505?aff=ebdssbdestsearch&k_eep_tld=1).

# Misconceptions around simulated world theories



**D**o we live in a simulation? No, of course not. Would it matter if we did? Of course it would.

The great philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein had a particular view of what philosophy was really about. He saw it as a kind of therapy for confusion. Rather than seeking to answer deep questions about the fundamental nature of reality, the job of a philosopher is to solve confusions caused by the misuse of language. I don't agree with Wittgenstein that this is what all good philosophy amounts to. But sometimes a little therapy is just what's needed.

**“Religious people often use the metaphor of the body or brain as hardware and the soul or mind as software”**

Simulation theory, the idea that we are all in some giant video game or Matrix-esque virtual world, seems to be gaining popularity. Once the preserve of wingnuts, the theory has been getting increasingly sympathetic write-ups in mainstream journals and newspapers. Elon Musk is a believer. The most recent burst of interest, though, comes from the new book by David Chalmers – an influential philosopher of mind admired by this columnist. Chalmers's book *Reality+*, argues not necessarily that we actually live in a simulation, but for two related claims. The first is that 'simulated minds' are at least possible, and the second is that if we did all live in a simulation it would make no difference.



## Everyday philosophy Ben Conroy

Chalmers's book is over 500 pages long, and I presume his arguments are subtle and well-thought-out. But simulation theory and related ideas seem to rest on a number of fundamental mistakes.

Perhaps the most fundamental of these is the computational theory of the brain. This is the idea that the brain is a sort of organic computer running some kind 'code' which allows us to think. It's not just hardcore materialists who use this sort of language. Religious people often use the metaphor of the body or brain as hardware and the soul or mind as software.

### Metaphor

I like sci-fi as much as the next guy (perhaps a little more than the next guy), and as metaphor, all this sort of talk about hardware and software is fine. But when people start actually thinking of it as a real description of what brains are like, we're right into one of Wittgenstein's linguistic confusions.

Brains in fact don't work like computers at all. Sure, the idea seems intuitive to us. But even when it comes to the most computer-like things brains do – like mathematical operations or storing information – there's no scientific evidence to suggest that the physical processes that underlie these operations in brains are even vaguely like the processes going on in computer chips. As for the idea that brains run on 'code', this too is mostly

a misconception. Yes, our brains send information using electricity. But the idea that their operation is governed by a rule-based code of any sort is just one of many competing theories of mind: for my money, a bad one.

Coded computers, after all, cannot do most of what brains do. A computer has never yet,



for instance, formed an intention or performed an intentional action. Nor is there any reason to think that one could even in principle. Any goals we set for the computer would be our ends, not the computer's, and any method we gave it of finding means to those ends could not replicate the open-ended reasoning we employ when acting. This is to say nothing about genuine consciousness.

If we let go of the idea that the brain works at all like a computer,

the idea of a 'simulated mind' should lose most of its appeal. If minds really were software running on organic hardware, then perhaps someone could be running similar software in a less fleshy medium. But minds are not software, and so there's little reason to think that a truly simulated mind is so much as possible. We could of course still have bodies but be plugged into the Matrix. But that's the kind of belief you don't entertain without very, very good evidence. Some people think that various signs of apparent design in physics constitute such evidence. I don't have an opinion on the physics, but any such design suggests a rather simpler explanation.

**“And the right thing to do with the Matrix is unplug yourself from it and get back to reality”**

Would it matter if we were in a virtual world? Chalmers is right that if everyone else we know was a real mind and present in the same world, our interactions could still be meaningful. But they would be in a fundamental way illusory. If the idea of a 'simulated mind', a being for whom virtual reality would be all there is, is a fantasy, we're back to the Matrix. And the right thing to do with the Matrix is unplug yourself from it and get back to reality. Fortunately, we're almost certainly already there.

» Continued from Page 31



lead us away from our Lenten discipline is to create a supportive environment. Once we've identified our strengths and weaknesses, we have to construct our setting around them. Take the early morning example – you know this, so act upon it by putting your alarm out of arm's reach, so that you have to get out of bed to go and turn it off.

**“If you aim small, you miss small, as they say. It's better to miss 10 minutes every so often than never to pray at all”**

If you struggle with unhealthy food, throw it out for the duration of Lent. If procrastination is your vice, consider limiting unnecessary internet usage or deactivating your social media for a while. It's as the saying goes: “Out of sight, out of mind”.

**Have clear goals**

It's generally not enough to leave bad behaviours behind; we need good behaviours to move towards, too. As such, if our Lenten resolutions and practices are too nebulous, like “praying more”, we're unlikely to follow through on them.

While Lent has already started, it's not too late to refine our goals, so that they're more easily followed in favour of the vices and temptations we're seeking to leave behind. If you've said you'd like to pray more this Lent, try instead, “I'll read the Gospel each morning and spend 10 minutes in prayer afterwards,” or “I'm going to pray the rosary every day this Lent”.

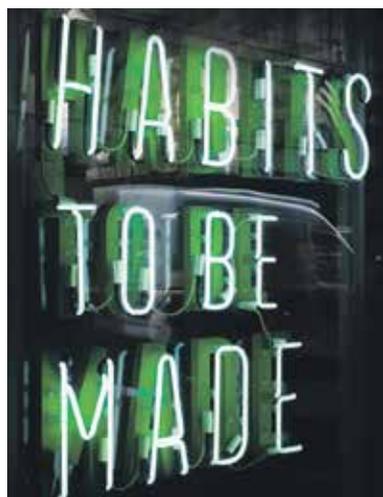
If you aim small, you miss small, as they say. It's better to miss 10 minutes every so often than never to pray at all.

**Create new habits**

This point ties into the idea of creating a supportive environment, but is a little more proactive, rather than reactive. Habit is when a behaviour becomes automatic, and how much easier would it be for us to have disciplined behaviour ingrained into us like that?

If you're trying to get into better shape this Lent but don't know where to start, try building a simple habit. It's better this way than to sporadically make big bursts of effort. A 20 minute walk every day creates a regular space for a healthy endeavour in your life, which can be increased as your capacity for exercise develops.

Similarly, if you're trying to get a better sleep throughout Lent so as to be better prepared for the challenges of the days, try getting ready for, and getting into, bed a couple of minutes



earlier every night. Our behaviour stacks up, and after a short while, you've got yourself a healthy habit. Lent is in fact the perfect time to form positive behavioural patterns that can long outlast this ascetic season.

**How to handle defeat**

Any pursuit of discipline is bound to involve defeat. I'm all too aware of this, struggling as I am to get myself into a truly Lenten mindset. However, too much guilt or defensiveness actually makes us more likely to give up. It's easy to adopt the view that “I'll never manage anyway, so I may as well give up now”.

**“Every time you fall or fail to measure up to the standard you've set yourself, take it to God and ask his forgiveness”**

This is toxic in our pursuit of a better life, and is precisely what our Lord came to save us from. Becoming a saint is a matter of falling upwards, I've heard it said, and we need to come to embrace this view. It's in weakness that God makes his strength known.

Every time you fall or fail to measure up to the standard you've set yourself, take it to God and ask his forgiveness. He's waiting with open arms and more grace than we know what to do with.

**Faith**  
— IN THE —  
**family**



Christina Malone

**“I**wish it was Tuesday already. Can we please skip the days in between?”

It is my daughter's birthday next week and while her excitement is nearly too much for her to handle, hearing those words nearly creates a knot in my stomach. Skipping a day or two, even a year or two brings back memories about trying to grow up quicker. My granny (now 98) looked at me very seriously and said “never wish the time away. Make the most of each day. There will be a time in your life when you look back and wonder where has all that time gone?”

Here it is, 25 years later I still hear my granny saying those words. I wish I had listened better. Everyone that knows me is aware that I love birthdays, especially my own. I don't mind getting older I am excited about what lies ahead and I am grateful for what I have, however, what I don't like is the time in between. How can we talk about lent today – when it feels like we only celebrated Christmas last week? It seems like only yesterday we talked about advent and Jesus' birth. Even my children are feeling “the pressure” of the liturgical calendar.

We were talking about lent. What we were giving up and more importantly to me, what they are taking on. To my delight, brushing teeth (without a reminder), making the bed, made appearances on their-to-take-on list. What happened after lent was explained very quickly, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday – all covered in 60 seconds. “He was just born and now we talk about him dying!”

My youngest said. Why would we celebrate the dead just after being born? None of my explanation made sense to him. While trying my best by staying calm and making sense, I found myself reflecting:

It is the beginning of March. About ten weeks after Christmas, nine weeks into the new year, 60 days of 2022 just gone. In the blink of an eye. In the past. All those birthdays already celebrated won't return for another twelve months. All those missed opportunities. I couldn't stop thinking about my granny and said to my children: “What has been your highlight of 2022

so far?”

Surprise, surprise. They could tell me about the walk in the mountains when we got lost (it wasn't fun at that time, but looking back it was).

They mentioned the family visiting. They remembered the sleepover with their granny. My youngest talked about his rugby game and the try he scored.

Things like girl's night, getting hot chocolates with marshmallows and dance off in the kitchen have been the highlights for 2022 so far. Hearing those made me feel better. I had nearly forgotten about all those. We did not ‘waste’ any time or wished it away.

Between Christmas and Lent, so much life has taken place. Memories have been created, indeed many new lives have joined our earth while others, we pray, are with God. And so the journey of 2022 continues. The liturgical calendar says: Lent is here.

Maybe you are like me – it feels like Christmas was only celebrated last week or you are like my youngest trying to get from birth to death in the space of nine weeks. Either ways, lent is here. God is giving us a new opportunity, to pause, to reflect, to pray or like it says in Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

- a time to be born and a time to die,
- a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- a time to kill and a time to heal,
- a time to tear down and a time to build,
- a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
- a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- a time to search and a time to give up,
- a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- a time to tear and a time to mend,
- a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- a time to love and a time to hate,
- a time for war and a time for peace.”



# Encouraging others to go and preach the Gospel

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

**F**r John Harris OP was set on the path to the priesthood from the age of seven, and hasn't looked back since. Elected last year as the provincial for the Dominicans in Ireland, he sees his task as being to encourage his brethren to preach the Gospel.

"My vocation story is very boring," he jokes. "Some people ask me, did you ever think of not being a priest? I can honestly say I never thought of not being a priest, ever. It was something that came to me quite early and just stuck."

**“We had to learn how to build community in some sense, to get out into the world and find a job”**

Fr John traces his interest in the priesthood back to the age of seven, when he became an altar boy in his local Dominican church in Limerick. It was there that his family worshipped and it was through "the community, being with the faithful and the worshipping community" that he received his vocation.

"There was never a time when I drifted," Fr John says. "When I left school at the age of 17, I joined the order immediately. Now what was



interesting was in those days, we had a pre-novitiate house in Dublin, where those of us who were straight from school had to go and find work in Dublin.

"We had to learn how to build community in some sense, to get out into the world and find a job. We didn't go straight from the home into the novitiate. My job got me around Dublin, because I had to do a lot of deliveries. And this may come as a surprise, but in my memory I was a quiet fellow. But when I got to Dublin I started talking to people and going around the different shops while doing deliveries and different things. I came out of myself a little.

"That was the first time I had left Limerick for a long period. I left

home and had to grow up in that sense of getting into the world. It got you out of the house and into Dublin and I have to say I fell in love with the place," Fr John says.

### Pre-novitiate

After his pre-novitiate, Fr John was sent to Cork for his novitiate year and then to Tallaght for his studies. Then in 1988, immediately following his ordination, he was sent to Rome to finish off his theology studies.

"Then I did a license in dogmatic theology in the Angelicum in Rome. It was great in those days. John Paul was still running around doing things, it was still a very active time. You felt the Church was alive in that sense," Fr John remembers.

After his time in Rome, Fr John was

sent to Drogheda, where he spent three formative years. A particular influence on him was an enclosed order of Dominican nuns there.

"That was very formative for me, the nuns, the prayer, the contemplative life. As a young priest, I had to realise very quickly that contemplative life and a prayer life had to be intermingled with an active pastoral life, and that the nuns were wonderful teachers to me in the ways of contemplation, even though that was there for me in our Dominican studies and way of life. But really I suppose I had the factual reality of pastoral life and the reality of the enclosed nuns, so if you like the theory had to be lived."

**“After his time in Drogheda, Fr John spent the next almost thirty years teaching on and off in Tallaght, from 1995-99 and St Dominic Street, from 2004 to 2016”**

Drogheda had been an unexpected posting Fr John explains, but he adds that "the people of Drogheda taught me how to be a priest".

"I suppose part of my whole understanding is that in profession, you give your life into the hands of the Lord through the order. I very much allowed the order to tell me what I should be doing. I didn't come in with my own life plan of how I was going to do it or how I should do it. But I would hope that in obedience when the order asks you to do something, somewhere the Lord is in the midst of that, so you do it.

"Say initially when I did my

license in Rome, I would have expected to come back teaching. But I was sent to Drogheda to work in our church. That was a bit of a surprise to me, but it was a wonderful experience as a young priest, getting into the pastoral work in Drogheda. It was excellent."

After his time in Drogheda, Fr John spent the next almost thirty years teaching on and off in Tallaght, from 1995-99 and St Dominic Street, from 2004 to 2016. For his last eight years there, he was regent of studies. He says that teaching young students "brings new life to your own vocation".

"In those years we had a vocation increase in the Dominicans. You had all sorts of backgrounds, professional, non-professional, younger, older, different levels of theology. In that sense it was a wonderful, lively atmosphere in which to teach theology. At that time also, I was the spiritual director of Youth 2000 in Ireland.

"Those 10 years were really blessed for me personally. They were the years of the awful crisis in the Church, with the sexual abuse. But I had this community of young people in Youth 2000 who were enthusiastic, alive, believing and they were for me a wonderful source of encouragement and strength."

Now that he has received a leadership role in the Dominican order, Fr John hopes he can continue the steady growth the order has been experiencing.

"Again, it's obedience, seeing what the Lord has up his sleeve," Fr John says. "I suppose my main function I would like to think is to encourage the brethren to preach the Gospel. To try and keep the structures of the life alive and to remember the mission is to preach the Gospel and to prepare our students as best we can, theologically, spiritually and humanly for that mission."

Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to [ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie)

## Love Notes



Marta Osborne

## Teaming up to tackle Lent as a couple

**D**o you have any suggestions for approaching lent with your spouse? I think we'd be more successful if we tried to go through it together.

Lent is difficult at the best of times, but it can be especially so if we try to go it alone. As married couples, we're blessed to have a partner in life, one with whom we share all of life's joys and challenges. Rather than going our separate ways this Lent with totally different resolutions and commitments, why not team up with our spouse and tackle this difficult season together this year? Not only will you be more successful together than apart – you might just grow in your love for one another and for God by undergoing it together.

Here are a couple of suggestions for attitudes and activities to take into this Lent

with your spouse:

- **Fast from negativity:** While you can't control how you feel, you can control your tongue. Most of us are guilty of a little too much complaining or a little too much criticising from time to time. It'd be unreasonable to think it can be given up overnight, but you can certainly take steps in that direction with your spouse this Lent. Act as each other's accountability partners this year, urging each other towards more edifying comments and conversation.
- **Be active together:** It can be easy to slip into a rut in marriage, when you and your spouse are comfortable with each other and where you're at. It's easier to watch more Netflix than it is to participate in good, wholesome conversation for example. But Lent is a time for giving up the easy in favour of the good. This



Lent, maybe try to become more active in your relationship, by substituting in a walk and talk for TV, or a cooked meal together at home over a rushed takeaway. They take more effort, but your life together will grow.

- **Pay more compliments:** As mentioned, it can be easy to slip into a rut in marriage, and nowhere is this easier than in compliment-giving. A kind, appreciative word goes a long way, especially when least expected. Try and get back to exchanging compliments as you no doubt did when you first met.

- **Pursue God together:** Of course, the goal of Lent is to grow closer to God, and Lent is the perfect time to recommit to that together. Pray together in the mornings and before bed. Listen to a spiritual talk or video together as you bustle about the house in the morning or evening. All will contribute to getting you on the same page spiritually.

My husband and I will be trying these things this year, in the hope that we'll be closer to each other and God than ever before.

# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## The devastating impact of war for all to see

I thought Vladimir Putin might have been happy for now to annex the two breakaway republics in Ukraine and hope to get away with it as with Crimea. Tuning in to early news bulletins last Thursday I found I was wrong. It seems he wants the whole of Ukraine, and is prepared to see widespread bloodshed to achieve this.

At the end of **Newstalk Breakfast** that day Cormac Smith, former advisor to the Ukrainian government, said "the fog of war has descended" – and that about summed it up. It was a shocking 'war in Europe' moment in a way that didn't apply to other conflicts and skirmishes since World War II. The media coverage has been intensive but with verification and propaganda detection issues. On RTÉ's **News** that night we saw young Ukrainian adults in tears – many of them would never have known the cold war days; the older, more stoic Ukrainians fearing for their children; the Ukrainians living in Ireland worrying about their relatives back home. **Natasha Devon** (LBC Radio, Saturday) started with an interview with journalist John Sweeney who was in Kyiv – he seemed almost giddy in total disbelief that we'd be having this kind of war in Europe in the 21st Century. This was followed by a useful question and



A man holds a peace flag as people protest against the war in Ukraine in *Piazza della Signoria* in Florence, Italy at the weekend. Photo: CNS.

answer session about the history of Russia-Ukraine relations. The presenter wondered if the UK should follow Ireland's example of lifting visa restrictions for those fleeing the conflict. The show ended with an impassioned plea for refugees from a former Afghan refugee who was now an NHS doctor.

### Children

On Saturday night RTÉ **News** it was saddening how many children were caught up, inevitably, in the war, with so many fleeing with their mothers – a 'human tide' as

described by reporter Tony Connolly. There were protests and prayers of solidarity outside the Ukrainian Embassy in Dublin. On the **Midnight News** (BBC Radio Four) that night Fergal Keane had a gripping report on the scenes of refugees fleeing – 'an extraordinary tragic scene', he said.

On **Sunday Sequence** (BBC Radio Ulster) we heard from Matthew Carter of DePaul (a non-denominational charity inspired by the spirit of St Vincent de Paul). I hadn't realised that they were already involved in human-

itarian work in Ukraine. Ukrainians were speaking to him about their dreams and the dreams of their children being taken away from them. On **Sunday Morning** (BBC One) journalist Fraser Nelson spoke of the "moral imperative" to help those fleeing from the violence, while Ukrainian government advisor Svitlana Zalischuk looked distressed and worn out, smiling only when she admired the leadership shown by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. She was afraid to go to her own home – "I'm blacklisted in Russia". Presenter Sophie Raworth again referenced Ireland's lifting of restrictions on immigrants while Labour MP David Lammy was critical of the UK government's requiring prospective immigrants to jump through too many bureaucratic hoops. His description of Putin's 'alarming language' was something we could relate to.

### Coverage

I thought I'd check on the news coverage of the Kremlin-controlled RT TV channel before it was banned from all Western airwaves, and it almost felt like they were describing a different war, with heavy emphasis on Ukraine's alleged assaults on the separatist areas in the east. It was hard to tell news from propaganda – some reporting made an attempt

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### LENT – A SEASON OF GRACE

EWTN Sunday March 6, 9am, also Thursday March 10, 10.30pm

The first week of Lent invites us to go deeper into our faith. Like Jesus, we journey to the desert and experience conversion: movement towards God.

#### THE SIMPSONS

Channel 4 Wednesday March 9, 6pm

A cool priest (guest star Liam Neeson) convinces Bart and Homer to become Catholics.

#### LILIES OF THE FIELD

BBC Four Thursday March 10, 10.50pm

Travelling handyman Homer Smith (Sidney Poitier in an Oscar winning performance) helps out five German-speaking nuns on their small Arizona farm.

at neutrality, but one segment on Saturday night had all sorts of background mood music which suggested emotional manipulation (more mainstream channels are quite capable of that too). That channel has been removed from many platforms, but I'd still prefer to have it there to see what they're saying, but no way to have it as one's main news source.

News and updates are changing rapidly – on **Alexis Conran** (Times Radio, Sunday) it was worrying to hear breaking news of Mr Putin getting his nuclear deterrence forces on high alert – something really scary that has probably been making Western powers hesitate before interfering too directly.

It's hard to assess the accuracy of some unverified news reports – for example those huge losses of Russian troops reported by Ukrainian sources are hard to believe. On the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk, Monday) Ukrainian investigative reporter Tanya Kozyreva was audibly upset about the "devastating situation" – apart from human casualties she reported from Lviv about cultural attacks, for example on Ukrainian museums.

Increasing protests within Russia and the prospects of peace talks are welcome, but it's hard to be optimistic. I hope I'm wrong.

[boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com),  
[@boreganmedia](https://www.boreganmedia.com)

# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Dystopian tale of whistle blowers and naysayers

Denial, as they say, isn't just a river in Egypt.

A comet is heading for Earth that's due to blow us all to smithereens in six months. Two low level astronauts are aware of it. But nobody in the corridors of power wants to know. They think it's Trumpian "fake news."

The "boy who cried wolf" theme is enshrined at the centre of science fiction films. It gets a fresh twist in the futuristic romp *Don't Look Up* (Netflix) when the people denying the imminent Armageddon don't believe them. When the penny drops they decide to exploit the comet for its mineral wealth and go, "Let it come".

Who would think in this Midas-like way? Donald

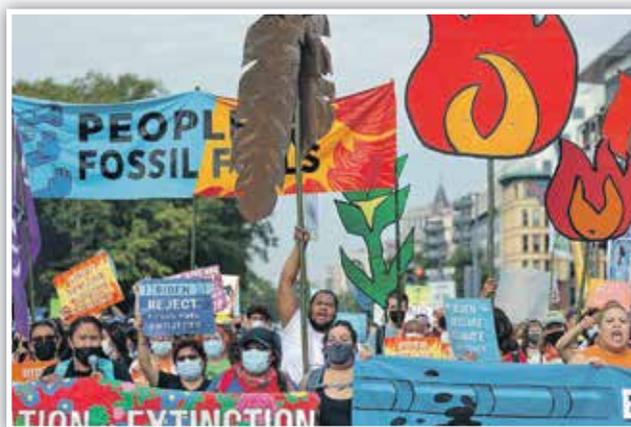
Trump? Indeed. For it is he who's being sent up in this self-congratulatory black comedy.

Is the comet a metaphor for his indifference to global warming? Or even Covid? Hmm. Too obvious. Social media and the cell phone culture also get leathered.

### Graduate

Jennifer Lawrence is the outraged university graduate of the piece. Leonardo DiCaprio is her Xanax-gobbling professor. Meryl Streep is a panto villain, the chain-smoking president of Earth. This is the Streep we know from *The Devil Wears Prada*. She's Miranda Priestly multiplied by a thousand, fiddling while Washington burns.

A doll-like Cate Blanchett (who did the make-up?) is the



Environmental activists march to the US Capitol during a climate change protest in Washington October 15, 2021. Photo: CNS.

host of a Fox-style morning show. She's more interested in tabloid fodder than the cosmic scare Leo and Jenny are waving forlornly in her face.

Jonah Hill is Meryl's oleaginous Chief of Staff son, a low rent Jared Kushner with a handbag, belching acidic bromides from his dim brain. Oh

brave new world that has such people in it.

### Satire

McKay plays the satire broadly. Only Lawrence is straight, at least until she turns into Yelling Lady. Leo becomes Yelling Man later in a Howard (Network) Beale moment. But by the Last Supper scene near the end they've reverted back to straightness.

You can't have it both ways. We needed someone like Paul Thomas Anderson or the Coen Brothers to take this to the next level. If you have panto villains you should have a panto hero and heroine as well.

McKay should have gone for broke. Then we could have subtitled in "How to Stop Worrying and Love

the Comet", a la *Dr Strangelove*. Stanley Kubrick thou should'st be living at this hour. His world ended on a silent mushroom cloud rather than a po-mo bang like here. There are even post-credit shocks.

*Don't Look Up* isn't a bad film but it's not as good as it thinks. Satire is better when it's subtle. It should have whispered instead of screaming. If you want to send a message, as the man said, go to Western Union.

McKay is becoming too fond of his status as agitprop Saviour of the Free World. He needs more oblique targets and a more original approach. You don't have to use a sledgehammer to crack a walnut. Or even a Trump.



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

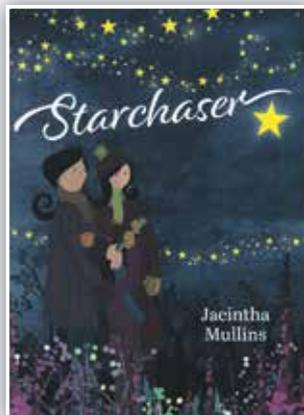
### Starchaser

by Jacintha Mullins  
(Veritas, €12.99/£10.99)

This is a book very much of the moment, but with a long life before it. Jacinta teaches in a primary school, the Mid-west School for the Deaf in Limerick. This book arose out of the experience of the school losing two pupils.

Her moving and effective pages were written and illustrated to let children focus and process their grief at such a loss. Though written from a Christian perspective, it is not written in the traditional language of such books, but in images more appealing to a wider range of young readers such as schools have in Ireland today.

The book shows death, and what follows death, are a part of nature, just as love helps all loss take on meaning and allow life and the great hopes we all have to last. A fine little book.



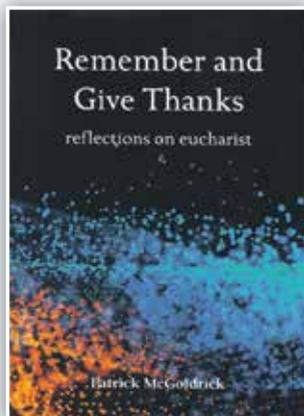
### Remember and Give Thanks: Reflections on Eucharist

by Patrick McGoldrick  
(Veritas, €17.99/£14.99)

The last few years have been very hard for everyone, and have brought many especially those with a religious role in society to reflect on life and things they might once have taken for granted.

These essays are the product of the last months of the author's life, but into them are packed the thoughts and insights of a lifetime as a liturgist at Maynooth and as a curate in Co. Donegal. He opens with a reflection of Thomas Merton on the day that Germany invaded Poland in 1939, and the thoughts arising from the call at High Mass that day to be "always and everywhere thankful".

On the morning I write this, these reflections seem very much to the point and of the moment. All derived from a Eucharistic faith for Christians to "remember and give thanks". His friends and associates have brought these pages into print out of their love for the author, and in doing so have brought to light a gift that many readers will cherish.



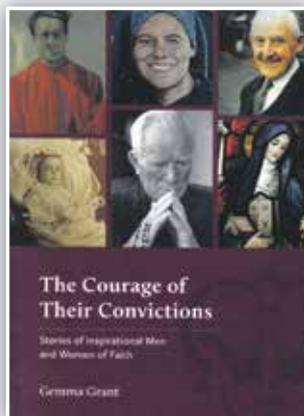
### The Courage of their Convictions: Stories of Inspirational Men and Women of Faith

by Gemma Grant  
(Veritas, €14.99/£12.99)

Gemma Grant is a Belfast woman now married and living in Dublin. Her book contains some 28 brief lives of saintly Catholics, some religious, some lay. They are all of people many will have heard of, such as Fr Peyton, for instance, but about whom little is often said. So these portraits will interest a great many readers; but her choice is personal: no room here for such a hero of faith as Oscar Romero.

But there is Dorothy Day, "one of the most remarkable American women and social reformers of the last century". This is very true; but when an attempt was made to get her movement going in Dublin, and to open 'a house of hospitality' to provide free meals, shelter for the homeless, and assistance it failed.

Irish Catholics had little or no time for Dorothy Day, potential saint or not. This was not a rejection by 'agnostic materialists', but by 'ordinary Catholics'. A sad debacle worth pondering.



## The Crosbies of Ireland, a high

### Writer

Fifteen-year-old James Crosbie joined the paper's staff in the following year. He was a skilful writer and enterprising newspaperman and was soon in the editor's chair. Having launched the *Evening Echo* in 1892 and the *Cork Weekly Examiner* in 1896, he died in 1899 leaving a thriving newspaper-business to his son George.

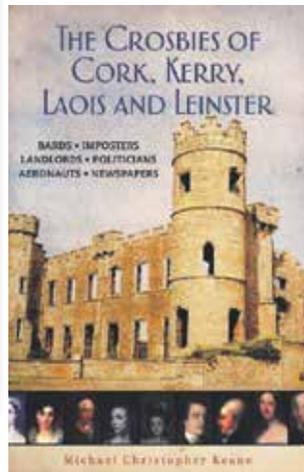
George's stewardship coincided with a period of intensive socio-political change. The initial response of the *Cork Examiner* to the Easter Rising was disbelief, based on limited and faulty information. Subsequently, however, the editor cautioned the authorities not to adopt harsh measures against the rebels.

“The famous balloonist Richard Crosbie (1756-1800) was a member of the Wicklow branch of the family”

He was impartial in condemning the violence perpetrated by both sides in the War of Independence. The paper backed the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Free State and was aghast at the death of Michael Collins. The Crosbies remained at the helm of the *Cork Examiner* until it was sold to The Irish Times Ltd in October 2019.

Some lesser-known members of the Crosbies settled in counties Carlow and Wicklow. In 1798 Sir Edward Crosbie was resident in Viemont House, outside Carlow Town. In May of that year 1,200 rebels rallied on his lawn before attacking the town. The rebels were defeated and in the subsequent round-up Edward Crosbie, even though he had refused to accompany or aid the rebels, was court-martialled and hanged.

The famous balloonist Richard Crosbie (1756-1800)



### The Crosbies of Cork, Kerry, Laois and Leinster

by Michael Christopher Keane  
(Beechgrove, Ovens; ISBN: 9781527297418; €20.00/£18.00)

### J Anthony Gaughan

The author, Michael Christopher Keane, is a practised hand at research and writing, having already written extensively about the Crosbie family.

In *From Laois to Kerry* (2016) he recorded the life and times of Patrick Crosbie (c. 1550-1610) and his brother John, Protestant bishop of Ardfert, as well as the transplantation by the Crosbies of the Seven Septs of the O'Moore county to North Kerry. In this tranche of family history he provides comprehensive profiles of a variety of other members of the family this very extended and convoluted family.

“Fifteen-year-old James Crosbie joined the paper's staff in the following year”

Mention of the Crosbies brings to mind the *Cork Examiner* (now *The Irish Examiner*) with which the family was associated for so many years. The newspaper was founded in 1841 (much earlier than *The Irish Times* or the *Irish Independent*) by John Francis Maguire, MP, a constitutional nationalist.

“The paper backed the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Free State and was aghast at the death of Michael Collins”



was a member of the Wicklow branch of the family. While in the army he developed an interest in hot-air and hydrogen balloons and announced his intention to fly across the Irish Sea in one. The hot air and the gas balloon were

invented in 1783 in France, and the notion of manned flight was sweeping the world.

### Balloons

Initially Crosbie sent up animals in balloons. Then in January 1785 from the Ranelagh gardens in Dublin (now a public park), he successfully ascended in a hydrogen gas balloon in front of more than 30,000 people to land safely at Clontarf. When Crosbie did attempt to fly across the Irish Sea he was safely rescued when he came down in mid-channel.

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.

## flying clan



Richard Crosbie statue  
Ranelagh Gardens (Dublin).  
Photo: William Murphy.

(A curious monument of a small boy with a windmill now stands in the park to commemorate this achievement of the first Irishman rising to new heights, as the locals say.)

Among the other profiles is that of the unsung but genuine patriot Lindsay Talbot Crosbie. He took over Ardfert Abbey in 1899 and soon developed a reputation as a reconciler between the strong opposing factions in the country at that time. He is best remembered for his role in initiating the movement that led to the Wyndham

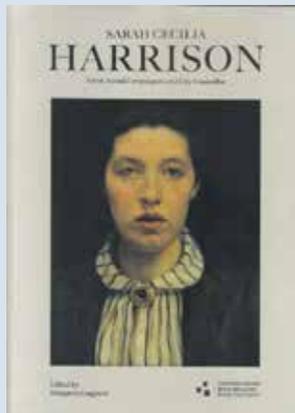
Act of 1903 which enabled tenants to purchase their land and thereby fundamentally changed the fabric of Irish society. He was also an active member of the Irish Volunteers; campaigned for Irish self-government and to that end set up the Irish Reform Association.

Michael Christopher Keane is a master-storyteller. His stories are the products of meticulous research and he is ever most generous in acknowledging the contribution of other chroniclers to ensuring their accuracy.

## The World of Books

By the books editor

# Councillor Harrison: a remarkable woman for her own or any time



**Sarah Cecilia Harrison: Artist, Social Campaigner, and City Councillor**  
edited by Margarita Cappock  
(Four Courts Press for Dublin City Council,  
€27.95/£25.00; paperback  
€22.95/£20.00)

Years ago when I was researching the interaction of the Irish cultural revival with other Irish national movements, the name of Miss S.C. Harrison was one I came across continually, but could not learn anything substantial about.

She was not only a political figure in Dublin city, she was a remarkable painter, who painted a portrait of George Moore, which proudly hung in his apartment in Ebury Street. It was Moore's trilogy *Hail and Farewell* which gave imaginative shape to the literary revival in a way no other writer, not even Yeats and Joyce, did or could.

### Disliked

Naturally he was disliked by many for making free with their private lives in what purported to be an historical record.

But of his portrayer in paint there was little to be learned of from others. Miss Harrison, perhaps because of the spread of her activities has been successfully 'unpersoned' as they used to say in Stalin's Russia by others with far less talent or humanity.

Now at last there appears a book on her as an artist, activist and social reformer,

**“He was disliked by many for making free with their private lives in what purported to be an historical record”**

Ulster-born, English-trained, Dublin-based, and it is most welcome.

Especially welcome is an attempt at a catalogue of her paintings, some 223 of them (and this is far from the full count). These images reveal the scope of her achievement, not so much its range, but the nature of her settled, absorbed style which they all have. In achieving this record Jim Gorry of the Gorry Gallery played a significant part.

The book contains four long essays, beginning with an overview of her life by the editor, followed by an account of her time at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, where she trained, by Hannah Baker; an exploration of her activities as suffragist and other political involvements, by Senia Paseta. These are closed off with an account of her time as a Dublin city councillor by Ciarán Wallace, where one aspect of her political work was revealed.

**“She was not only a political figure in Dublin city, she was a remarkable painter”**

All of these are crammed with information, but they are really only preliminary studies to a full length biography. However it is to be hoped that this will be written by someone with the widest of interests, and that it is not too narrowly focused only one aspect of her many faceted life. There will be many people who will look forward this.

The focus of our interest in this decade of remembrance has been too much on the merely political and military, to the neglect of the general cultural revival, which is perhaps of much more lasting influence. We really need to get a wide view of what the cultural revival was: how it involved so many aspects of Irish life and society, which seem to have narrowed down to nationalist versus Unionist.

As a result we are tending to know more and more about less and less. When will someone write a book about a sense of humour as an Irish characteristic, or on the Irish perspective on the salvation of souls, from the point of view of all our creeds and cults. Perhaps someday.

### Detail

These pages do not have room for fine detail in places. For instance, as it affects a matter in which I am greatly interested, I was disappointed that Ciarán Wallace makes no mention of her forthright opposition to the scheme to allow the artist James Ward, the headmaster of the Municipal College of Art, to decorate the inside of the dome of the Dublin City Hall rotunda.

These, I have always thought, were intended as a sort of counterbalance to the frescoes inside the Four Courts which showed scenes in the development of law. Law in Ireland often had a sternness unknown in England. So the City Hall, which belonged to the citizens in a more direct way, were to show 12 scenes from the mythical and legendary past of the city. They have in them a hidden nationalist agenda that is not immediately apparent; the 'crowing' of Perkin Warbeck in Dublin cannot be anything but a satirical comment on loyalism in Ireland!

Harrison was quite opposed to this scheme which had the support of the influential Alderman Tom Kelly: she wanted to retain the original state of the building as conceived by Thomas Cooley. Historic buildings were to be preserved, she thought, not 're-imagined' as we say now.

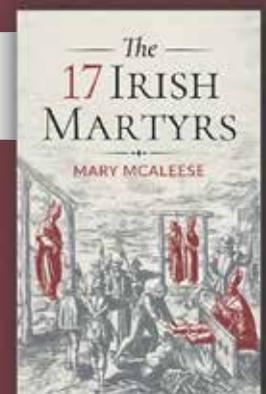
**“The focus of our interest in this decade of remembrance has been too much on the merely political and military”**

It was only a small point. But her point of view was a sound one, which many would now agree with. But it revealed the determination with which she held her views, which applied across the board. She insisted the right thing should be done in all matters.

When she died in 1941 the stone erected over her grave in Mount Jerome was engraved 'artist and friend of the poor'. An apt epitome of her life; but there was so much more. While we wait for the full length biography, the present book is a revelation which ought to be widely appreciated by anyone at all interested in the Irish cultural revival.

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# Leisure time

## The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Anna Sadlier at [anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie) or call 01 679 3188



[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)



## Your heart for the homeless

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

**To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering**

Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email [emma.murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:emma.murphy@mqi.ie)

Please pray for the beatification of

## Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

## Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork. Tel: 021-4545704 Email: [info@mscmisions.ie](mailto:info@mscmisions.ie)

[www.mscmissions.ie](http://www.mscmissions.ie)

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

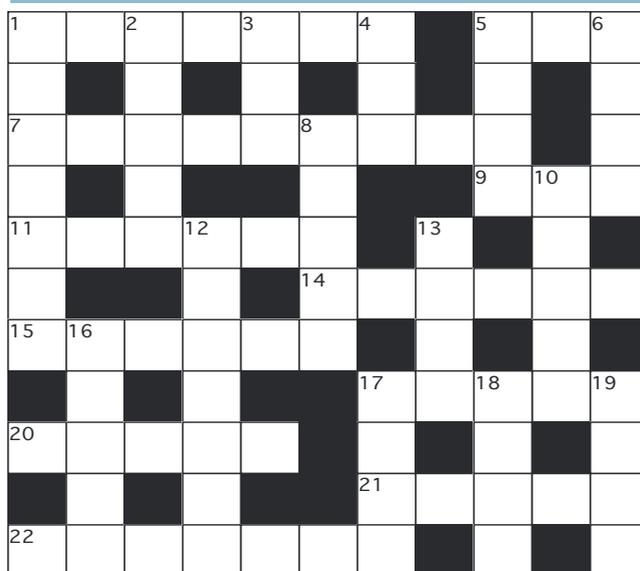


It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 422



### Across

- 1 Cute baby dogs (7)
- 5 Part of the mouth (3)
- 7 They point out directions to places for people on the road (9)
- 9 Secret agent (3)
- 11 Creepy-crawly (6)
- 14 You use it to rub things out (6)
- 15 Stringed instrument (6)
- 17 Person who makes bread and cakes (5)
- 20 Bun (5)
- 21 Musical instrument with five strings (5)
- 22 A hundred years (7)

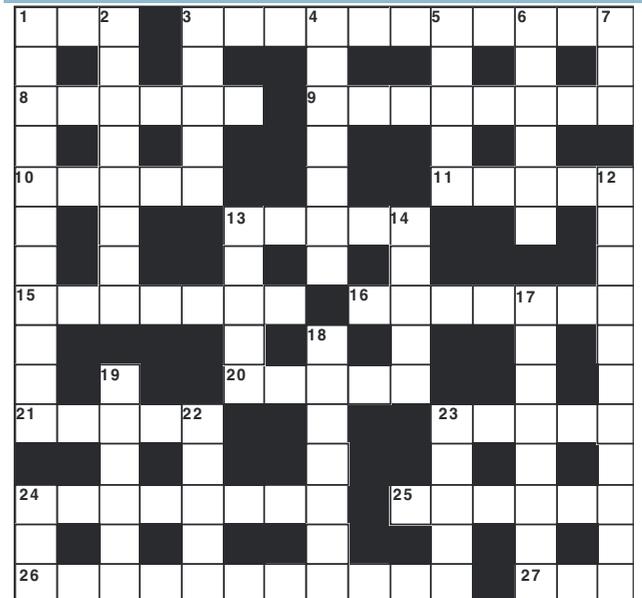
### Down

- 1 Shoving (7)

- 2 Turn these when you read a book (5)
- 3 Little devil (3)
- 4 These letters mean someone is in trouble! (111)
- 5 Not as much (4)
- 6 Small horse (4)
- 8 This animal lives in and near a river (5)
- 10 Bit, section (5)
- 12 Completely finished off, like the dodo (7)
- 13 This pours out of a volcano (4)
- 16 The brother of your mother or father (5)
- 17 Infant (4)
- 18 Ruler (4)
- 19 The very top of a house (4)

## Crossword

Gordius 548



### Across

- 1 Friend (3)
- 3 Ambushed by an Australian outlaw (11)
- 8 Mr Hemmingway or Mr Shackleton, perhaps (6)
- 9 Facility producing aeolian-sourced energy (4,4)
- 10, 16a & 18d It's a traditional song with a Christian subtext, though serene growers get upset (5,4,3,6,1)
- 11 Send-up (5)
- 13 Domesticated, brought to heel (5)
- 15 The forecast is, it will not have an 'in' appearance (7)
- 16 See 10 across
- 20 Hunting dog (5)
- 21 Polar direction (5)
- 23 Concentration camp from the old USSR (5)
- 24 Noise can be dispelled to create a new saint (8)
- 25 See 22 down
- 26 Customary, historic (11)
- 27 Drink made with wine and cassis (3)

### Down

- 1 & 13d Proposed mar-

- riage, making a plodder get honest, strangely enough (7,4,5)
- 2 Famous knight from the court of King Arthur (8)
- 3 American buffalo (5)
- 4 Redirected the cow home? Why? (3,4)
- 5 Confidential assistants (5)
- 6 Horn that sends a warning signal (6)
- 7 Indistinct (3)
- 12 Sack boxer; make heroic worker (11)
- 13 See 1 down
- 14 Ventured (5)
- 17 A symptom of traffic congestion (8)
- 18 See 10 across
- 19 Pre-decimal sum of money, value £1.05 (6)
- 22 & 25a He established the Red Cross by disrupting a Hunt dinner (5,6)
- 23 Thin oatmeal (5)
- 24 Sever (3)

## SOLUTIONS, FEBRUARY 24

GORDIUS NO. 547

**Across** — 1 Bad 3 Pony Express 8 Layman 9 Ruled out 10 Egypt 11 Sound 13 Beret 15 Royalty 16 Ostrich 20 Holly 21 Flora 23 Drake 24 Soul food 25 Sprint 26 Non-existent 27 Guy

**Down** — 1 Bullet-proof 2 Day by day 3 Plant 4 Yardarm 5 Peers 6 Exodus 7 Set 12 Dishonestly 13 Batch 14 Testy 17 Inhaling 18 Plaudit 19 Column 22 Affix 23 Depot 24 Sen

CHILDREN'S No. 421

**Across** — 1 Snowplough 6 Victory 8 Adult 9 Neat 11 Reached 14 Wade 15 Ate 16 Sit 17 Lamb 21 Fossil 22 Editor

**Down** — 1 Seven dwarfs 2 Orchard 3 Pool 4 Ground 5 Witch 7 Yacht 10 Tees 12 Cattle 13 Eel 18 Aunt 19 Beer 20 Ass

## Sudoku Corner

422

### Easy

2			5					1
				3	7			
		8	4	6	1	3		
	4	3		2		8		5
	6	1	8		3	4	7	
8		5		4		1	6	
		2	9	7	4	5		
			3	1				
4					5			7

### Hard

5			7					1
7		8						
	4				6			8
	9		5	8		1		
			6		2			
		5		9	3			6
	8		2					4
						7		6
1					9			3

### Last week's Easy 421

1	9	5	6	3	4	2	8	7
6	2	4	8	7	5	3	1	9
8	7	3	2	9	1	6	4	5
3	4	1	9	8	7	5	2	6
2	8	9	5	6	3	4	7	1
5	6	7	1	4	2	8	9	3
7	3	2	4	5	9	1	6	8
9	1	6	3	2	8	7	5	4
4	5	8	7	1	6	9	3	2

### Last week's Hard 421

4	3	2	5	9	7	8	1	6
7	5	8	6	2	1	4	3	9
1	6	9	4	3	8	5	2	7
3	9	6	1	8	5	2	7	4
5	8	7	2	4	6	1	9	3
2	4	1	3	7	9	6	8	5
8	1	3	7	6	4	9	5	2
9	7	4	8	5	2	3	6	1
6	2	5	9	1	3	7	4	8

Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



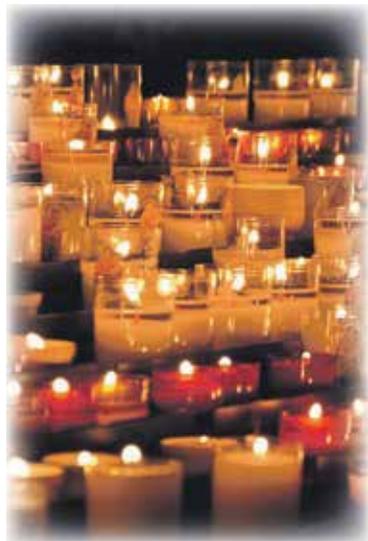
# Can pastoral ministry be continued by non-priests?

**THIS SUMMER WILL** mark my 10th anniversary as the priest in Newcestown. This longevity in the parish is a gift. Now, when I celebrate a funeral Mass, more likely than not I will know the person whose funeral I am celebrating.

It's not that I eulogise the dead, but it helps to have known them. I will also now know the grieving family, and what to say/what not to say (and who is related to the deceased etc.) This store of pastoral knowledge is a true gift for me, the fruit of nothing but time.

**Freely**

People also speak to me more freely now. It's not that they make formal appointments to come and seek my counsel, of course; Irish country people don't do that, unless things are very bad. Instead weather-related chats at the church door or on the roadside can often turn deeper, once I make it clear that I have plenty of time to talk. Truly, pastoral ministry is a gift from God, particularly when the pastor has the chance to get to know those with whom he ministers.



All of the above makes me wonder what the future holds for this kind of ministry. Every diocese has its own way of coping with reducing availability of priests. Some places cluster parishes, others create pastoral areas or families of parishes. The end result is the same: fewer priests serving people more remotely. The rural perspective offered by Independent TD Michael Healy-Rea contains a grain of truth: once a parish

loses its resident priest, as his local parish of Kilgarvan did, the Church loses its "hold" on the parish. A vital link is broken.

And the pastoral priest suffers too. He deserves (and needs) to be part of a community: being part of several communities is not the same thing.

**Ministry**

I wonder if this pastoral ministry could be continued by non-priests, if people like me are no longer available? I am not just thinking of permanent deacons and married priests, but I wonder if lay people could be formed in pastoral ministry and given a status in a parish to provide some of this care also. Priests are evidently a declining commodity. We have prayed for vocations to this form of ministry and have

not received a positive answer: so maybe has God other plans for his parishes?

Some dioceses provide an opportunity for priests from other countries to minister here, but this is not without complications. For one thing, those foreign dioceses need their own priests there, their needs being far greater than ours. For another, there are vast cultural chasms that are sometimes hard to cross. Some succeed, for others the result is frustration on both sides.

Irish Catholic priests provide a unique service to those parishes in which they serve; they get to know their flock and their flock get to know them too. In the future, when this close relationship is no longer available, will other relationships supplant it? Surely God has more surprises?

**Bishops undertaking two dioceses**

I learned a lot of what I know about episcopal paraphernalia in national school days at home in Dunmanway in West Cork. I learned that the bishop wears a mitre to emphasise the headship of Christ. His crozier (or pastoral staff) reminds us that he is the shepherd. And the bishop wears a ring to symbolise the close bond with his diocese, like a marital relationship. Now we hear of bishops undertaking this kind of relationship with two different dioceses simultaneously. Will this bishop wear two rings, or has a new theology evolved to remove the whiff of episcopal bigamy?

**A maniple resurgence**

Most sacristies have a set of antique vestments somewhere, probably at the back of a press. These were commonly worn when the 'old Mass' was celebrated. The slighter 'fiddle-back' chasubles were part of the set, with matching stole and another vestment, which looked like a stole a child might wear. This was the 'maniple', worn over the left arm. It may have evolved from a cloth the priest used to wipe his face, akin to a handkerchief. I am surprised maniples have not experienced a resurgence – as perfect receptacles for a mask or other face covering in Covid times!



Little Way Sisters providing refugees with food, medicines and accommodation, and bringing them the love, care and compassion of Christ.



## PLEASE HELP TYPHOON VICTIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Montfort Missionaries have written to The Little Way Association appealing for urgent help for the victims of typhoon Odette which hit the Philippines in December 2021.

The Fathers have been sheltering homeless victims, and urgently need funds to continue feeding the homeless families, to repair the community's own properties and to build the people new houses.

Fr Norwyn Baydo SMM writes: "The typhoon made landfall in different provinces. Our community in Minglanilla have opened their house to twenty families, though our own building was itself damaged by the typhoon. On Kinatarcan island, our house was used as an evacuation site for 10 families. The community members are all safe and are serving the people in providing shelter and for their needs.

"I'm asking on behalf of the victims for financial help to support our relief operation and also for the rebuilding of their houses. Please help us to continue our relief work. God bless you."

**Funds sent to The Little Way Association for the homeless are conveyed to religious such as the Montfort Missionaries without deduction of any kind. Please be generous and particularly remember the families with small children.**

**Typhoon Odette left families in the Philippines homeless and destitute. You can enable missionaries to help rebuild the victims' lives.**



*"It is love alone that matters."*  
- St Therese

**MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS**

The Little Way Association regularly receives appeals from bishops and religious superiors on the Missions for Mass stipends and intentions for their poor priests. Such payments help them to meet basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

Also, the poor and deprived people, whom the clergy serve so faithfully, often turn to their priests for assistance. Thus, your stipends are gratefully received and your intentions are faithfully honoured at Holy Mass.

**We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass. Our benefactors will be glad to know that a Mass is offered each day for their intentions.**

**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?**

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

**THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION**  
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR  
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

- I enclose €..... to be allocated to:
- €..... PHILIPPINES TYPHOON APPEAL
- €..... HUNGRY, SICK & DEPRIVED
- €..... WELLS AND CLEAN WATER
- €..... MASS OFFERINGS (Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)
- €..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to [www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**