

The Irish Catholic

ACHONRY ORDINATION

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executioner Page 7



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Embrace Pope's vision and highlight positives of Faith – youngest bishop

Chai Brady

To attract back lapsed Catholics, the Church must embrace the vision of Pope Francis and present the Gospel in a way that is positive and uplifting rather than concentrating on negatives, the country's newest bishop has said.

Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey was ordained at the weekend, and at just 49 also becomes Ireland's youngest bishop.

"I think the reality for a lot of people in Ireland today is they have a certain view of what the Church is about and it's quite narrow in certain ways.

"Whereas the Church should be involved in every aspect of life – and that's what the Gospel is about: it's a refreshing, beautiful message and for us the challenge is to be creative and imaginative in trying to present that message with a sense of joy," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

Referring to the need to model evangelisation on Pope Francis, Bishop Dempsey said: "I think people identify with his humanity and also his

message about going back to the basics of what we're about as a Church.

"He [Pope Francis] has said a number of times that we tend to focus on certain moral issues – which are absolutely very important – but there's an awful lot more to the life of the Church than just maybe two or three controversial moral issues – it's how we live our lives, it's how we live the Gospel, it's the joy of the Gospel that we have to try and live and that will attract people," he said.

Impact

He also said that he is concerned about the impact of a lack of faith in contemporary Ireland.

"There's a sense today that many people don't feel that sense of love in their lives or in their hearts, and maybe they go down the line of addiction or whatever it is, whereas we have this precious message that should be delivered at people with a joyous heart... that's the challenge of ministry today: whether we're in the priesthood, the baptised

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All set for school



Arm in arm, mother and daughter Nina and Faith Rowe walk into school for Faith's first day in secondary school in St Cecilia's College in Derry.

DAVID QUINN

Atheism's irrational denial of free will is plain to see [PAGE 10](#)



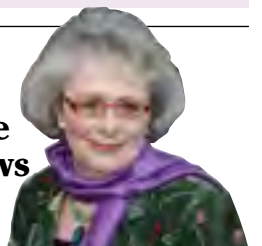
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MARY KENNY

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my grandchildren will ask

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

Faithful must follow Jesus on his terms, not our own – Bishop McKeown

Jason Osborne

Bishop Donal McKeown has asked Catholics to embrace the Faith as God has revealed it, rather than a more sanitised version offered by the world.

In a homily at the weekend, Dr McKeown reminded Massgoers that suffering is part of life. "The Cross is the only road to the Resurrection for Jesus and the only road to holiness for us."

Drawing the eyes of those gathered to Calvary, Dr McK-

eown warned against the trap that Peter fell into; believing suffering and death to fall outside the scope of God's divine plan.

"But even Peter believes that Jesus has made a mistake and insists that Jesus' death cannot be part of the divine plan. And Jesus responds showing just how strong the temptation can be to take an easier way that avoids the Cross. Just as he attributes Peter's profession of faith to God the Father, so he attributes the temptation to Satan," he said.

"In every form of Christianity, there can be the subtle temptation to reduce God's call to something that we can manage, when we can feel right and in charge," he continued.

Humanity

Having established that God does and will ask difficult things of those who purport to follow him, Dr McKeown exhorted the Faithful to see with God's eyes, rather than humanity's, and "to accept that reality of the Cross for Jesus".

"The right thing is rarely the easy thing...our job is not merely to calculate what will make us more popular or secure our future. Our task is to discern where the way of the Cross leads us – because that is the only place where healing for our society will be found," the bishop said.

"It is an invitation to believe in the healing power of the Cross for us when it embraced in love, trusting in one who sees the bigger picture."

Dominicans on the ball with Mass just 90 minutes after Kildare lockdown eases

Staff reporter

As Co. Kildare was unexpectedly freed from lockdown on Monday, the Dominicans at St Eustace Priory in Newbridge moved swiftly to open up for public Mass just 90 minutes after the easing.

Parishioners commented on social media about how impressed they were with the quick thinking friars.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr John Harris O.P of St Eustance Priory told of the speed at which they had to work. "We got the news we were being released," he laughs, "and we had an hour to prepare."

Preparation involved sanitising the church, a task that had been maintained during the regionalised lockdown as it remained open for private prayer.

"It was very important: we were open for private prayer," Fr Harris said.

"We were sanitising every day anyway because of that,

so that wasn't such a problem," he said.

The rapid progression of events ensured there weren't too many attending the Mass, but "some had come on the off chance. People were very happy with it. Not just last night, but this morning as well," Fr Harris said.

"Today, Masses are back for the most part," he continues.

The news of the lockdown's end came as an enormous relief to the citizens of Co. Kildare, who had been labouring under further restrictions due to local outbreaks of Covid-19. Fr Harris summed up the general atmosphere: "It's great to have the Sacraments back."

Married in Laois



Dermot Dunne and Anne Young are married in the Church of the Assumption, the Heath in Portlaoise parish, Co. Laois after their April wedding was postponed due to the pandemic. Msgr John Byrne PP celebrated.

Clarification

● In the August 27 edition of *The Irish Catholic* it was reported that Fr Tom Hayes had been appointed as vicar general of the Diocese of Cork and Ross. The article should have pointed out that Bishop Fintan Gavin had appointed two vicars general, the second being Msgr Aidan O'Driscoll.

Embrace Pope's vision and highlight positives of Faith

» Continued from Page 1

Faithful or whatever it is that's the challenge, that's the mission that we have today.

"I think we just have to be creative and imaginative in that and to try and bring that message in a renewed way to people in Ireland today," he said, insisting that the Church cannot retreat from the public square.

"We need to be out there with people and among people. And when we look at the Gospel, that is what Jesus Christ did," he said.

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Aontú blasts FG 'baby box' stunt

Chai Brady

Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín TD has welcomed Fine Gael's 'baby box' initiative but says that a cute video on social media does little for struggling families.

Deputy Tóibín said: "It's all well and good for a Fine Gael senator to put up a cute, well-choreographed video of himself talking about the struggles of parenthood, but that video, with its catchy background music and cringey humour, did little to help struggling families caught up in a cycle of homelessness."

Mr Tóibín accused Fine Gael senator Neale Richmond of electioneering. "In the video, Senator Richmond actually said 'here's the plan... Fine Gael in Government' will deliver this idea. Does the senator not realise that Fine Gael is in Government? The video was uploaded on Fine Gael's social media accounts, not Government ones. Let's call it what it is – a campaign ad. And how much did it cost? How much did Fine Gael spend on the production, editing and promoting of the video?" Mr Tóibín asked.

Buggies

"At the time of this video's publication, homeless deaths are at record-breaking highs. There are still queues of women with buggies outside the Capuchin Day Centre seeking nappies and baby formula. The 'baby box' idea is a good idea, one which was also discussed at length by ministers under previous Fine Gael governments but never introduced.

"Every year in Ireland mothers give birth homeless. This is a shocking indictment of the policies of the FG government for the last 10 years," he said.

Black Panther Chadwick Boseman's Faith was the real superpower

Jason Osborne

Chadwick Boseman, best known for playing the Marvel superhero *Black Panther*, died late last week after a long struggle with colon cancer.

While best known for his role in film, Mr Boseman is also being remembered for his deep devotion to God and his lifelong faith.

In a tribute to the actor, *Black Panther* director Ryan Coogler said: "After his family released their statement, I realised that he was living with his illness the entire time I knew him," he continued "because he was a caretaker, a leader, and a man of faith, dignity and pride, he shielded his collaborators from his suffering. He lived a beautiful life. And he made great art."

Mr Boseman attributed this "beautiful life" to God, quoting the Bible during a university commencement address in 2018: "God says in Jeremiah 'I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'."

Mr Boseman's engagement with his Faith was stoked by his time as part of the Welfare Baptist Church in Benton, South Carolina.

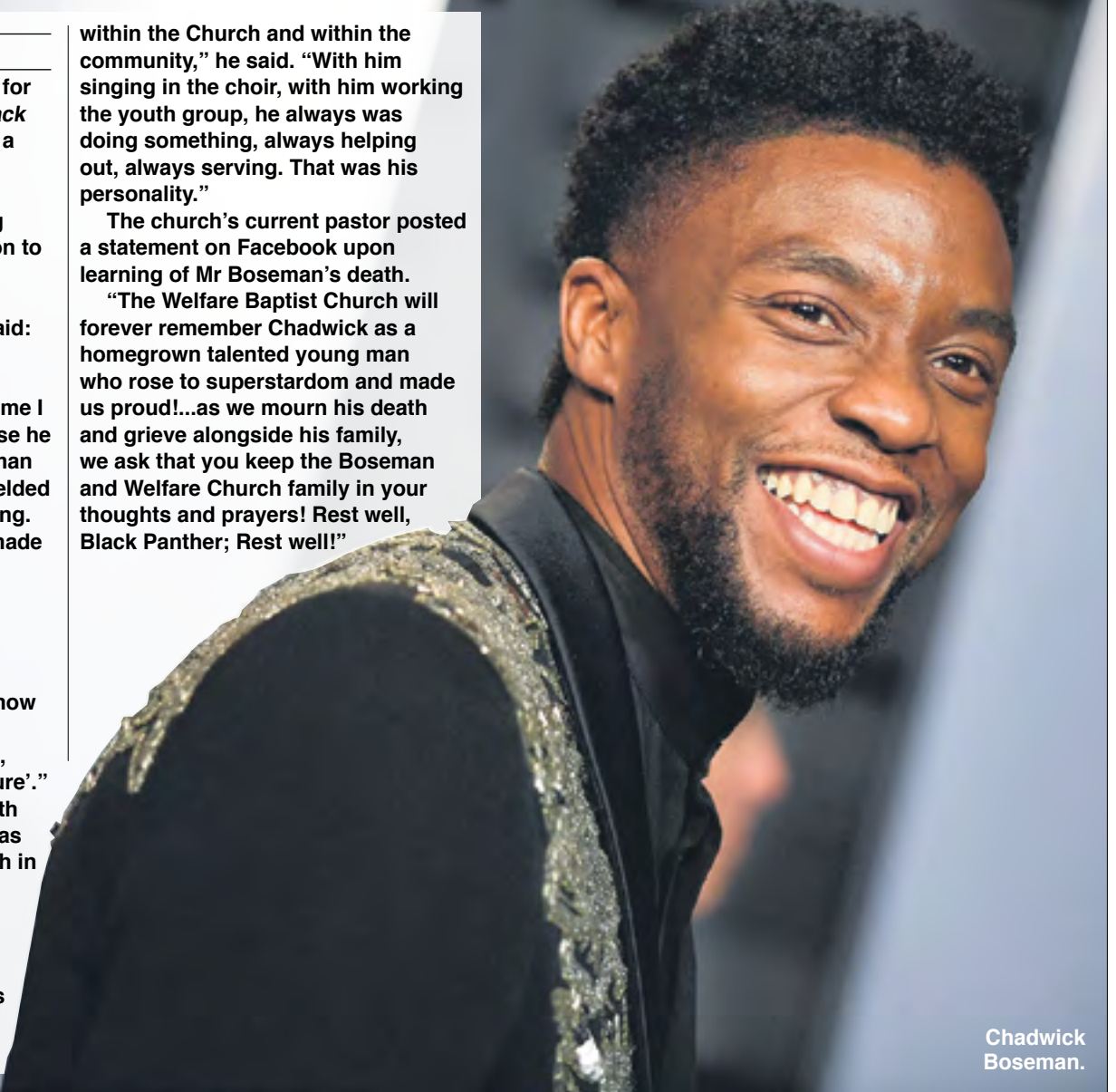
Speaking about Chadwick Boseman before *Black Panther's* premier in 2018, retired Pastor Samuel Neely recalled the actor's early days.

"He did a lot of positive things

within the Church and within the community," he said. "With him singing in the choir, with him working the youth group, he always was doing something, always helping out, always serving. That was his personality."

The church's current pastor posted a statement on Facebook upon learning of Mr Boseman's death.

"The Welfare Baptist Church will forever remember Chadwick as a homegrown talented young man who rose to superstardom and made us proud!...as we mourn his death and grieve alongside his family, we ask that you keep the Boseman and Welfare Church family in your thoughts and prayers! Rest well, Black Panther; Rest well!"



Chadwick Boseman.

What do you think?

Let us know:

Letters to the Editor,
The Irish Catholic,
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Church celebrates commencement of 'Season of Creation'

Staff reporter

The Church is celebrating the commencement of the 2020 'Season of Creation', which began with a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1. In Pope Francis' message for the World Day of Prayer, he invited the Faithful to "remember, return, rest, restore, and rejoice" as they participated in this Jubilee for the Earth.

The season extends from September 1 to October 4 and is intended as a time to "renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together."

More details can be found at seasonofcreation.org.

**"Kevin Barry gave his young life
For the cause of liberty.
But a lad of eighteen summers,
Still there's no one can deny,
As he walked to death that morning,
He proudly held his head on high."**

For Siofra O'Donovan, Kevin Barry was much more than a song played in the local pub. As one of his few descendants, she grew up listening to gripping tales of espionage about her ancestor and cherished details about his life and heroism that is not only celebrated by her family but by a grateful nation.

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Traveller family discrimination claim against bishop dismissed

Staff reporter

A Traveller family's claim of discrimination against the former Bishop of Galway regarding how they were treated at a Communion Mass has been dismissed by the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC).

The family, including six children, said they were harassed at the ceremony and that the women were excluded from the Mass based

on a dress code. They alleged other women were wearing clothing that was not admissible but were not asked to leave.

The WRC ruled that it could not adjudicate on the 10 complaints by members of the Sherlock family as it had no legal authority.

The family said they weren't able to attend the Mass due to the length of their dresses and skirts and their necklines.

Their complaints were

made against Bishop emeritus Martin Drennan after the incident on May 23, 2015.

Allegations

Bishop Drennan rejected the allegations that he discriminated them on the grounds of their gender and race under the Equal Status Act 2000. Representatives of the bishop said that Mass as a religious service was not a service within the meaning of the legislation, which the WRC agreed with.

Detailed evidence was not heard as a result of the bishop's legal team's preliminary challenge. They claimed it wasn't the intention of the Oireachtas for religious services to fall within the jurisdiction of the legislation. The WRC adjudicator said Bishop Drennan has not engaged in prohibited conduct.

The WRC said religious services or sacraments did not come within the ambit of the legislation as otherwise it would be unlawful for churches to refuse the sacrament of matrimony to persons who were divorced or of the same sex, or similarly to only ordain men as priests.

"There seems to be no rea-

son in law or logic to differentiate between these types of religious services and a Holy Communion mass," said Ms Boyle.

"If the Oireachtas had intended to apply the principle of equal status, enshrined in the act, to all of these situations, it would have said so in express terms."

An archbishop's blessing



Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin confirmed pupils from schools in Armagh parish in St Patrick's Cathedral.

Living correction: God is with those who gather in loving concern

We have reached a section of Matthew's Gospel which deals with practical moral issues that occur in our lives. Today's reading (Matthew 18:15-20) is about the delicate matter of how to correct somebody who is going off the rails. Facing another person is one of the toughest parts of loving care. Genuine love includes the difficult task of confronting and correcting. Failing to confront a person may be condoning wrong behaviour. Alcoholics are sometimes surrounded by enablers who cover up, make excuses and passively condone the condition and behaviour.

Similarly, democratic government needs an active opposition party to keep the ruling body more responsible. The liberal atmosphere of today makes it very difficult to correct anybody. Teachers are often at a loss regarding the imposition of discipline. Parents who fail to set standards or correct their children are doing them no favour. It happens that when children are starved of ideals, they rebel in a perverse cry for attention. Confrontation is probably the most difficult aspect of love.

One-to-one

The Gospel suggests different ways of correction. The first way is one-to-one: "Have it out with him alone, between your two selves." It doesn't always have to be an angry confrontation. A word of encouragement will sometimes be the better medicine. I like the story about Cardinal Roncalli of Venice, later St Pope John XXIII. He called in to a priest about whom scandalous rumours were rampant. After a little small-talk



he knelt before the priest and humbly asked him to hear his confession. A confrontational belt of the crozier might have finished off the man's vocation. A gentle reminder of one's dignity and ideals will often work wonders. "He would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smouldering flax."

Two or three

If a one-to-one meeting does not work, the second way involves two or three concerned people coming together. Together, they can confront the erring person from several directions, sealing off a variety of escape routes and excuses. We often hear the words of Jesus: "Where two or three gather together in my name, I shall be there with them." Usually we refer that text to a group of people gathered together to pray, which is all very well. But the original context of the statement is when two or three people get together in a spirit of responsibility to confront or correct somebody who is going off the rails.

I remember an occasion when I had to face a rather delicate confrontation. I asked somebody to go before the Blessed Sacrament in prayer to support me. I left the confrontation with the feeling that I had failed to make any breakthrough. But when I called to thank the person who had gone to pray, she told me that a certain name kept coming into her mind while at prayer. It was the name of the person I had been

meeting. I knew then that the matter would turn out alright. And so it proved.

Straying sheep

God is with the little group who gather in loving concern. The Lord is the Good Shepherd anxious to welcome back the straying sheep. The group who gather in loving concern are the search party available to the shepherd.

May the Holy Spirit guide us with wisdom and courage when we have to correct somebody.

And when we are corrected, may we receive it with humility and gratitude.

Prayers

Where two or three gather in my name, I shall be there with them.

May the Church be the voice of Christ correcting the sins of the world and inspiring us to live in justice, harmony and peace. Lord, hear us.

Whenever we gather together in prayer and charity, may we recognise the presence of Christ in our community. Lord, hear us.

May the Holy Spirit guide us with wisdom and courage when we have to offer correction to somebody. Lord, hear us.

May those who are offered correction take it in a spirit of charity. Lord, hear us.

(Add prayers for any local, personal or topical intention.)

O God, hear the prayers of your people gathered here in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

❶ Extract from Silvester O'Flynn, Gospel Reflections and Prayers, Columba Books.

I hope that,

one day,

my grandchildren

will ask

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Surely the best health news announced recently was that wild polio has now been officially eradicated from Africa. This was an ambition declared by Nelson Mandela in 1996, and it has now been achieved: the 47 countries in the continent of Africa have been certified by the World Health Organisation as “free of polio”.

‘Wild polio’ is the strain of polio virus which afflicted a generation of children in Ireland and Britain in 1956. It really was frightening at the time – parents were terrified to let their children into swimming pools, and libraries, too.

Wise

I have a dear friend of that generation whose right leg has been affected by polio – then known as ‘infantile paralysis’. She has coped magnificently, has children and grandchildren, and is a wise, kind person who has overcome her disability, but it was tough when she was a youngster.

The Anglo-Irish journalist Patrick Cockburn has written a poignant book about his experience

The best of recent news



Mary Kenny

of childhood polio, growing up in Youghal, Co. Cork, *The Broken Boy*. He told me that the nuns at the Bon Secours hospital were skilled medics, but the hospital situation itself was so lonesome for a child in those days. Some

children had to be put into a contraption known as an iron lung.

Hospitals everywhere were austere places in the 1950s and visitors frowned upon – largely because there was so much apprehension

about spreading germs and viruses.

“Proper vaccination is precisely what has eradicated wild polio in Africa”

It’s a blessing that polio is being eradicated world-wide, although there are still some strains of what is called ‘vaccine-induced’ polio in Africa and elsewhere. This

is where a weakened form of the vaccine has been administered, and it mutates into another strain in under-immunised regions.

This could be the source of some ‘anti-vaccines’ movements, whereby the vaccine itself is blamed for the disease.

Although proper vaccination is precisely what has eradicated wild polio in Africa.

I’m not quite ready to put a full stop to the full stop



The full stop is out of favour with a rising generation. That little dot at the end of a sentence, which separates one sentence from another in an orderly way, is now considered to imply sarcasm, discontent or even a micro-aggression. Thus, we are told by the linguists, does language evolve.

I’m not ready to discard the full stop just yet: although I am partial to other forms of punctuation, too, such as the colon. I also like the semi-colon; which can indicate a slight change of register. And I’m fond of parentheses, or brackets.

(They are a useful way of adding an allusive idea, which has little to do with the case.)

I’m keen, too, on the exclamation mark! That’s rather frowned upon by book editors now, who delete some of my prodigal use of the ‘screamer’, as it’s known. But it indicates a mood and a tone like no other. The Spanish like it so much they put it at the beginning as well as the end of a sentence.

Ditto with the question mark, which I feel sure is indispensable. Although maybe not for all authors?

Phone-texts and What’sApp are blamed for these new trends in punctuation. And I suppose one area of the ‘new punctuation’ which I have embraced eagerly is the ellipsis...those telling little dots at the end of a sentence which leave the conclusion somewhat open...

Still, these new fads don’t always last. James Joyce dispensed with the use of quotation marks to indicate speech. And yet those quotes still endure for most of us. Perhaps the full stop will also survive!

Missing Clifden

● It’s grand to see that the Clifden Arts Festival is going ahead later in September. It’s the longest-running community festival in Ireland, and over a summer when so many festivals have cancelled, congrats to Clifden for keeping going, no doubt all events suitably arranged in line with health precautions and social distancing – however much ‘distancing’ is alien to Connaught manners.

Wish I could be there to hear David McCullagh speak about his much-praised biography of De Valera, plus Colum McCann and Marita Conlon-McKenna, among many others, reading from their work. There will be tributes to the late Tim Robinson, who wrote so brilliantly about Connemara, and to John Moriarty, the philosopher of spirituality and ecology.

It’s so important, for spirituality and mental health, that events continue throughout these restricted times. I am dismayed by the way that in our local parishes in Kent, all Church events have just stopped. It’s essential the Church understands that Faith also means community, and community means congregating for an event.

Advertorial

Be part of the Miracle | China Church Solidarity

I have been visiting China since 1979 and working systematically there since 2000. In 2014, we were able to open an Augustinian Sisters’ Active contemplative Monastery (pictures below). I unhesitatingly call this a wonder and a miracle in the context of Communist China. The foundation of this monastery can be sourced to many, including the prayers and financial support of many in Ireland and Britain, but in a special way to the extraordinary faith of two people: the Mother Foundress, Sr Mary, who with her family lived through all the oppression of the ‘50’s and ‘60’s in China and the positive response of an elderly bishop despite his suffering during the same period.

I once asked Sr Mary’s Bishop how was it possible for him to say yes when asked to sponsor

this Contemplative Monastery in his diocese in such difficulties for Christians in China. His reply was profound: “When Sister Mary told me her story and the dream of her contemplative vocation, my twenty years in prison, ten of these in solitary confinement, flashed to memory, painful as they were. But in a moment I saw the point of it all. It was a grace that allowed me to recognise and understand her call to initiate a contemplative monastery, as that was the only option available to me while in prison – Contemplation.”

The Monastery was formally opened in 2014. However, permission to open the Monastery was given by the government with a BIG CONDITION, namely, that a Nursing Home for the Aged would be attached to the monastery. This was acceptable

to the sisters and would constitute the “active” part of their mission.

We expect the cost of the nursing home to be about one million, nine hundred thousand US dollars. The Catholics of China have collected \$500,000 to date and now I’m seeking support outside of China to raise another \$1,000,000.

I am most grateful for your generosity to us over the past twenty year which has helped strengthen the Church of China in its mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Please continue to support the mission of the Monastery with your prayers. If you wish to support with a donation, please return the coupon on the lower left or donate via Paypal on our website: www.ccschina.co.uk.



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Nuns feel the pinch as host sales plummeted during lockdown

Jason Osborne

The demand for Eucharistic breads has collapsed since the Covid-19 pandemic forced the country into lockdown leading to a precarious financial situation for the nuns who rely on this income.

Since March, the country has experienced varying levels of restriction, with Masses being curtailed from late March to late June. While many churches remained open for private prayer, parishioners were prevented from attending Mass, with broadcasted streams taking their place.

A consequence of this has been an “absolute decimation” of demand for altar breads, in the words of Sr Fiachra Nutty of St Mary’s Abbey in Co. Waterford.

The abbey in Glencairn is one of Ireland’s primary producers of Eucharistic bread, a monastic activity which provides a source of income to the community of contemplatives living there.

Guillotine

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Sr Fiachra spoke of the dramatic fall in demand since lockdown was imposed and the Faithful were kept from the pews. “The guillotine just dropped,” she said, when the churches closed Mass to the public.

In particular, the closure of the cathedrals impacted the quantity of altar breads they were delivering, as cathedrals would previously have hosted large crowds for public

Masses.

Standard orders for altar breads once stood at “anywhere from 5,000, to 10,000, to 15,000”, but has since dried up to just a handful.

Sr Fiachra estimated that the income they draw from their altar bread production has fallen by “possibly 80%”.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Sr Lucy Conway of the Redemptoristine Monastery of St Alphonsus in Drumcondra.

The largest producer of Eucharistic breads in Ireland, they’ve also seen a severe decrease in demand for the service.

“Annually, we’d produce around 25 million peoples’ hosts a year,” says Sr Lucy.

“We’d fulfil 30 to 40 orders a day,” she said. That was up until mid-March, when lockdown began to descend upon the country.

Schedule

In contrast to the standard order schedule, last week saw just 10 orders of Eucharistic bread leave the monastery.

Whereas orders were regularly being placed for 10,000 – 20,000 breads, recent demand has seen sparse orders placed for 1,000-2,000 instead.

Finding themselves in a similar situation to St Mary’s Abbey, the Redemptoristine sisters have seen the income they source from their altar bread plummet by around 75%, according to Sr Lucy.

There are tentative signs of growth on the horizon, however, as people have cautiously begun to return to



Less demand: nuns preparing altar breads haven’t been as busy because of national and local lockdowns.

Mass in limited numbers.

“The orders of altar breads are beginning to go up again,” Sr Lucy revealed.

Whereas days passed without an order during the depths of the lockdown, there is now a steady order

a day being sent out since the churches re-opened their doors for public Masses, she explained.

This is helping to ease the financial pressure on the monastery.

The sisters employ a team

of six staff for their altar bread production, and the pandemic saw them forced to turn to the Government to subsidise four of them.

However, the difficulties both monasteries face is being met with optimism in both

Dublin and Waterford, with Sr Lucy commenting on the “wonderful, peaceful time” the quiet of the pandemic afforded them, while Sr Fiachra referred to the opportunity to reconnect with others as a “ministry in itself”.

Sisters see new ministry to ‘lonely and isolated’ priests

Staff reporter

While orders for Eucharistic breads dried up, the nuns of Glencairn found themselves helping parishes in a new way by fielding calls from “lonely and isolated” priests who “miss their flock”.

Normally tending to the bread production at St Mary’s Abbey, Sr Fiachra found herself providing much-needed conversation to priests who had been deprived of their congregations.

What she describes as “a large number of priests” have been calling for nothing more than a chat, she said.

Under normal circumstances, these priests would call to place their order of altar breads, but the Covid-19 pandemic has afforded Sr

Fiachra the opportunity to “get to know some of the customers,” she laughs.

Since the outbreak of coronavirus in Ireland in March, the elderly and the vulnerable have been advised to restrict their social contacts through ‘cocooning’. While ensuring the safety of those most susceptible to the coronavirus, some have warned that it is also heightening loneliness and a sense of isolation among those who separate themselves.

Many priests found themselves subject to the advice to cocoon, and so were separated from their parishioners for the duration of the lockdown.

While lockdown has begun to lift around the country, the advice to restrict social contacts remains in place for those with heightened risk.

Galway diocesan appointments announced

Bishop Brendan Kelly of Galway has announced the diocesan appointments for 2020.

Fr Joseph Canon Delaney, chaplain at the Galway Clinic will retire. Fr Martin Canon Glynn PP Mervue and Good Shepherd will be administrator of Ballybane, and co-ordinator of the City East Pastoral Area (Castlegar, Mervue, Renmore, Ballybane, and Good Shepherd parishes) in addition to his current appointments.

Fr John D. Keane PP Ballybane to retire as parish priest of Ballybane and be appointed chaplain to the Galway Clinic in addition to continuing as chaplain of Merlin Park Hospital.

Fr Frank Canon Larkin, AP St James’ Bushypark to retire. Fr Robert McNamara will be CC of Moycullen.

The appointments are effective from 12 noon on Friday September 4.

Rent and eviction freeze ‘must continue for all’

Chai Brady

Focus Ireland have called for a reintroduction of eviction bans and rent freezes due to recent Covid-19 restrictions as new figures show an increase in homelessness from 8699 in June to 8728 in July. The charity warned of a potential bigger increase in the coming months.

Pat Dennigan, Focus Ireland CEO, said: “As children across the country go back to school we need to ensure that some of the most vulnerable children do not return to homelessness.”

“The last six months have proved that one of the best defences against Covid-19 is a stable home. Measures such as the moratorium on evictions and rent freezes have clearly worked as the number of children and adults who are homeless has reduced significantly

in the last five months. Since the lapse of the initial ban on evictions and rent reviews, our services are now meeting tenants who are facing notices of terminations and evictions which is deeply concerning. I am asking the Minister for Housing, Darragh O’Brien to reintroduce this legislation.”

He added that while those who have been financially affected by Covid-19 are still protected from eviction and rent increases on the grounds of rent arrears until January 2021, “our research clearly shows the majority of notices of termination are due to landlords selling their property.”

“There is no measure to prevent an eviction taking place on this ground, including for a person who lost their job due to Covid-19.”

Nuala O’Loan
The View



‘Self-righteous woke’ act as judge, jury and executioner

A man I have known for many years died last week in our parish. He was a genuinely good man – husband and father of four children, very talented, a former vice-principal at our local grammar school, but what marked Declan Martin out was his consistent service to and care of others, and his great faith.

He worked for decades with the St Vincent de Paul, the Order of Malta, and many other organisations. For many years he suffered illness, first cancer which left him with very limited ability to speak, and finally the sickness which took his life. Despite all that I never once knew him to complain, and he was a model of how to suffer well – there surely is such a thing.

I did know that he was endlessly out helping others: quiet, but effective and determined and his gift to all those he encountered was immeasurable. It was the gift of that true love of which St John spoke in his gospel – the love that lives in man when God lives in him and he loves God. We are all called to give as Christ gave, endlessly and without limit. Declan did that and as he returned to the Father who gave him life, he leaves so many people whose lives he touched quietly and with such love. We were blessed by his goodness and his life.

Injustice

Others seek to help their fellow travellers on the journey of life in a thousand different ways. People fight what they perceive as injustice with all the tools they have, yet our world is now facing a strange but not unique phenomenon – the woke! They describe themselves as fighting injustice and racism – something we are all called to do – as Micah said: “This is what the Lord asks of you, that you act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God.”

Yet there is very often great injustice in the actions of those who describe themselves as the ‘woke’. Think about the ‘no platforming’ – the decision,



often by students and other groups, to refuse to allow invited speakers to make their arguments. Rather than listen and respond to those arguments, and where appropriate trying to change the mindset, the thoughts of an invited speaker where they disagreed with them, they simply refused to allow them to speak. It happened in that great centre of learning, Oxford, to *The Irish Catholic* columnist, Breda O’Brien.

“They decide without any process. It is bullying, very often online bullying. A person’s life is inextricably changed”

Where once people were taught to debate and to argue with respect and thoughtfulness, now simply because they disagree with what they think the speaker is going to say, they do not allow them to speak.

This was followed by a process through which people were ‘cancelled’ because of things they said or did. We need only to think of the number of people who have lost their jobs, their livelihood, their way of life because they have been ‘cancelled’ by the world in which they live: people such as actor Laurence Fox, historian and commentator David Starkey, author JK Rowling.

They are the famous ones

– there are many others especially young people excluded from their world by those who set themselves up as prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner, who decide the future of those whom they may not know without thought or consideration.

Righteous, they decide without any process. It is bullying, very often online bullying. A person’s life is inextricably changed, though they have no right to defend themselves because there is no process – just mass hysteria putting commercial and other pressures on employers, publishers, and peer groups.

Then there is the Black Lives Matter movement – of course every life is precious, no matter the race, gender, colour – each of God’s children is equally precious in his eyes.

Black Lives Matter proclaims that it seeks to remedy racial injustice. They have developed a massive commercial entity and have raised huge funds. It seems that nobody dares to speak out against their activities, lest they be perceived as racist or intolerant.

The coverage by much of the media in these islands is supportive, yet there is huge injustice and damage inherent in what they do when they protest. Little of this is reported.

They want to ‘defund’ the police – abolish policing and allow communities to govern themselves. They took over part of Seattle and the mayor ordered the police to withdraw from their station which was

then destroyed, as was the whole area, by the rioters – for that was what they were. This was not peaceful demonstration, non-violent law-breaking. It is not being done as Jesus Christ himself, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Rosa Parkes did – breaking the law but harming no-one. They brought life and hope.

“The rights to life and freedom of speech, thought, religion and conscience are fundamental and must be protected”

Yet in Seattle, Kenosha and other areas in the US people have been murdered by those who have been set free to do so by the absence of policing. Property on a huge scale has been destroyed, cars have been burned, shops destroyed, people intimidated and assaulted because they will not join the BLM – not because they support injustice and racism but rather because they believe that this violence is wrong, and that societal change is necessary but that it is not achieved by rioting, looting and widespread damage.

Often the areas most affected are those occupied by black people themselves.

If people seek to act justly they will not maim, injure, burn and destroy, they will not intimidate and terrify, they will not create anarchy as BLM did in Seattle and other places, causing the civil authorities, belatedly, to reassert themselves.

Peaceful

Protest will be peaceful, just as the civil rights protesters demonstrated in Northern Ireland in the desperate days of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Change may come slowly through peaceful activism, for it requires the support and consent of the wider population. The ‘armed struggle’ which followed those courageous civil rights marches did not bring us

peace. It brought us death – at least 3,700 identified deaths and so many others caused by heartbreak, shock, despair. It caused hundreds of thousands of injuries. People still suffer. It has left a legacy of trauma, addiction, poverty, suicide. It was terrible.

There are lessons to be learned from Northern Ireland: that the rights to life and freedom of speech, thought, religion and conscience are fundamental and must be protected. As a people we have to have the courage to say that every life matters, and to live that conviction we must protect and ensure, as best we can, all the rights of our fellow citizens.

No platforming, cancelling, depriving people of the rights which are theirs in law are simply further examples of injustice and intolerance.

We must speak out and say that people have a right to due process, that their lives should not be destroyed by those who do not know that about which they make decisions. Life is very complex and it is very precious. We are called to recognise and fight injustice. We have no right to do injustice to others. Rather we are called to act justly and to love tenderly as Declan Martin did in Ballymena – one man who quietly made such a difference to so many lives.

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‘Deep concern’ as parishes face an uncertain future



With restrictions ongoing, many parishes are in deep financial trouble, writes **Chai Brady**

While the tired old canard of priests always talking about the need to raise parish funds persists, many clerics are in fact reluctant ever to raise conversations about money.

The fact remains, however, that parishes cannot run on goodwill alone and the precarious situation faced in many dioceses has been greatly heightened by the suspension of public Masses and ongoing restrictions on the size of congregations. Collections are still down with many priests telling *The Irish Catholic* they are “deeply concerned” about future ramifications.

Worries

Priests from across the island report that lockdown has in some cases halved parish income, which has led to worries about paying bills and staff in the coming months especially as state support for employment begins to dry up.

But, it's not an even picture and some parishes report Massgoers upping their contribution to make up for the lost weeks. Geographic location and parish demographics have also been a major factor in a parish's ability to get back on financial track.

Fr John Walsh PP of Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Limerick said their income is down by 50% with attendance still “low”.

“The people that have been faithful to the weekly envelope have been faithful to it. It's still down at least 50%, I'd say. It's still quite significant. In the community I live in the people that are practising are mostly retired and are at the age were a lot of them are still minding themselves but they're the ones that are probably faithful to the envelope collection anyway,” he said.

“We have a good community but of course it's a huge concern and it's affecting everybody and it's affecting every home as well so that has its knock-on effect with us and a lot of them just don't have



it to give. I am concerned about where it's going to be going in the future for the winter.”

* * * * *

Fr Tim Bartlett, Administrator in St Mary's in Belfast said his parish collections are about 65-70% of what they were pre-lockdown, which he says is similar across other parish communities he has asked.

He said: “If that was to remain the pattern for a prolonged period of time it would raise all sorts of issues around sustainability, and as well as that the extra costs that maintaining a church during the pandemic have inevitably brought in terms of cleaning materials, masks, things like that.”

Fr Bartlett said that he noticed when public Masses returned “people, very generously and kindly, gave extra when they first came back”.

While money from church collections is down, he says there is a strong tradition of people from “all over” Belfast and farther afield

lighting candles, as it's a city centre church near shopping areas. “That has remained as strong as it was before lockdown and may reflect the level of need for prayer that people feel at this time.”

“At this stage I'm wondering how I'm going to pay the normal bills next year, it would be more than a concern, it would be a big concern”

In Offaly, Fr Joe Deegan PP of Clara said they suffered the “unfortunate happenstance” of having to go back into a second lockdown after the national lockdown, which has been a big hit.

“Anybody that was coming to church, there was certainly a reduction in the amount of coins in the collection and quite a few more large notes, because people felt they hadn't been to Mass and hadn't got a chance to contribute,

so they were doing their best to catch up and that was great,” Fr Deegan explained.

However, he admitted that: “There's a huge deficit in what we'd be taking in now compared to what we would have been taking in before.”

Due to the generosity of parishioners who returned to public Mass after several months, it has not been more than a 20% reduction compared to normal times.

“Because the numbers were much smaller with the social distancing and the restrictions it was amazing we were given so much from so many people,” Fr Deegan said.

“At this stage I'm wondering how I'm going to pay the normal bills next year, it would be more than a concern, it would be a big concern.”

The parish priest of Priorswood in Dublin, Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap., said that “money is down” but it will be a few weeks before he

knows the full impact.

“We would have concerns, we're not a very big operation but we have two staff and they're paid from parish funds...we want to try and keep paying them, we want to be able to pay them. These staff are essential staff, one is the sacristan/church cleaner, the other is the secretary, we're right down to petrol fumes, we really need these two staff.”

Fr Aquinas Duffy PP in Cabinteely in Dublin said that collections were down by 40% in his parish overall compared to pre-Covid-19.

However, he said: “We're finding that people are responding through online donations and also we have a ‘tap and go’ machine in the church so that's very popular as well for people. People are getting used to just flashing their card in front of it and it gives a €4 donation or whatever, so that builds up.”

“At the moment from the parish point of view our head is above water so that's good, but what's taken a huge hit is the normal Sunday collections.

“I think you can't under-estimate the generosity of people too, I think particularly when we started to re-open and people realised that all the charities, particularly like St Vincent de Paul and the hits they're taking as well, people have been very generous in coming forward and giving a bit extra,” he added.

Fr Charlie McDonnell PP in Westport, Co. Mayo said they are currently at about 80% of what they would normally receive – it was down to 60% at its worst – but that would be down to the fact they're based in a town that is frequented by tourists.

“It seems to be, among our lads [priests] here [Tuam Archdiocese], there would have been a very clear rural-urban divide from the start, where guys could keep the churches open, where people could walk in off the streets, it wasn't too bad, where people were out in the country it was a very different story,” he said.

* * * * *

In Moyvane, Co. Kerry, Fr Kevin McNamara PP said that “from the word go” his parishioners have helped keep the parish afloat and he estimates that the parish is at 85-90% of what they would normally receive. They were involved in initiatives such as having Mass on the church's porch in front of a car park while people attended sitting in their cars. There were collection baskets at the entrance.

It seems unlikely that in the absence of a vaccine we'll be seeing packed churches anytime soon and while it is evident there has been a variety of experiences, there will undoubtedly be financial challenges for the majority of parishes.

“Parish collections are about 65-70% of what they were pre-lockdown, which similar across other parish communities... ‘If that was to remain the pattern for a prolonged period of time it would raise all sorts of issues around sustainability’”

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Atheism's irrational denial of free will is plain to see



Many people who don't believe in God do believe that human behaviour is simply the result of social conditioning, writes **David Quinn**

Atheists often enjoy making sport of religion. They mock us for believing in the 'great sky-fairy' (meaning God), or the virgin birth, or that a man can walk on the water, or rise from the dead, and so on.

Atheists like to think they are defenders of 'rationality' against the 'superstitions' of religion.

In recent years, people like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and the late Christopher Hitchens have made fortunes writing books such as *The God Delusion*, *God is not Great* and *Letters to a Christian Nation*. These men formed a group that became informally known as 'the new atheists'.

But should atheists be allowed to try and own the term 'rationality'? The answer is, definitely not because when you examine atheism closely, and draw out some of its implications, it will strike the average person as anything but rational.

For example, almost everyone believes in free will. That is, we believe we make decisions and then act out on them based on our own free choices. This is why we are considered morally responsible for most of the things we do. A person who does good things is considered to be a morally good person, while a person who does bad things is considered to be a morally bad person.

Higher forms

We don't think this way about animals, not even the higher forms. If a dog does something bad, we might say "bad dog", but we don't believe that the dog is morally bad. We just think it is need of better training.



Likewise if a dog does something good, we might say "good dog" and encourage more such behaviour. But no-one believes dogs make moral choices as such. They are simply acting on instinct shaped by good or bad training and conditioning.

Amazing as it may seem to you, many leading atheists do not believe in free will. They believe that like other animals, we simply act on our natures and that 'good' and 'bad' behaviour are the result of social conditioning.

The vast majority of atheists are 'materialists', that is, they believe that matter is all that exists. You might have emotions and feelings that are not made of matter *per se*, but they are products of matter nonetheless.

They believe that everything physical is controlled by physical laws. From their point of view, this makes perfect sense. But here is the catch; it means everything thought that comes into your head and everything you do is also controlled by physical processes.

For example, your brain consists of neurons. Those neurons produce thoughts and states of emotion. But your neurons are not controlled

by you, they are controlled by physical laws. If your thoughts are controlled by physical laws, then you lack free will.

If you don't believe me, then let me quote a couple of leading atheists to you starting with the most famous of them all, the aforementioned Richard Dawkins.

“Most people who say they are atheists believe in free will. Let's call them 'naïve atheists', meaning they haven't properly thought through where atheism really leads...”

Asked one time whether he believes in free will or not, he replied: "I have a materialist view of the world. I think that things are determined in a rational way by antecedent events and that commits me to the view that when I think I have free will, when I think I am exercising free choice I am deluding myself. My brain states are determined by physical events."

“Dawkins thinks that belief in God is delusional, but it is clear he thinks the same thing about free will. In fact, maybe the title of his next book should be, *The Free Will Delusion...*”

Read that sentence again: *“When I think I am exercising free choice, I am deluding myself.”*

Dawkins thinks that belief in God is delusional, but it is clear he thinks the same thing about free will. In fact, maybe the title of his next book should be, *The Free Will Delusion*.

* * * * *

Sam Harris doesn't believe in free will either. In fairness to him, he has written an entire book ruling it out.

Prof. Francis Crick, one of the most famous scientists of the 20th Century, said on the matter of free will: "‘You,’ your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules. Who you are is nothing but a pack of neurons."

Most people who say they are atheists believe in free will. Let's call them 'naïve atheists', meaning they haven't properly thought through where atheism really leads. People like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Francis Crick have, which is to say, they accept that if we are purely physical beings, purely our bodies, then we are completely controlled by physical processes, leaving no room for free will.

I put this to Richard Dawkins when I debated him on RTÉ radio

some years back. He tried to duck the issue, but it is too important for that because if we have no free will then we are not morally accountable for anything we do. We are simply well behaved, or badly behaved, like a dog might be.

If we take atheists at their word, then we must change the way we approach all moral debates, almost all of which are based on belief in moral accountability, like the golfgate scandal. We must cease all such talk and stop acting like people make their own choices.

This will, of course, strike the average person as both impossible and vaguely mad. But it is where atheism leads and it is why leading atheists ask us to ditch belief in free will along with belief in God. That means we must also ditch belief in moral responsibility.

Compatible

A belief in God, on the other hand, is much more compatible with belief in free will, because theism holds we are not purely physical beings and therefore we are not totally controlled by the laws of physics.

Which belief seems more rational to you, one that leaves room for free will or one that denies it? Put it like this and religion seems far more rational and compatible with how we understand human nature than atheism.

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Volunteers ready to help out at Knock Basilica.



Archbishop Michael Neary pictured with Nicola Mitchell, Monica Morley and the volunteers at Knock Basilica.



A volunteer helping pilgrims.

Faithful celebrate Knock apparition in line with Covid-19 restrictions



Cairde Mhuire, Our Lady's Volunteers at Knock Shrine.



A volunteer assisting pilgrims.



Schola Cantorum Basilicae who performed a rendition of *Lady of Knock* on the anniversary of the Knock Apparition, August 21. Photos: Sineád Mallee



Pilgrims praying outside the Apparition Chapel.



Massgoers being shown to available seating in the chapel by volunteers.



Fr Richard Gibbons celebrating Mass.

There was limited capacity for pilgrims attending Mass.



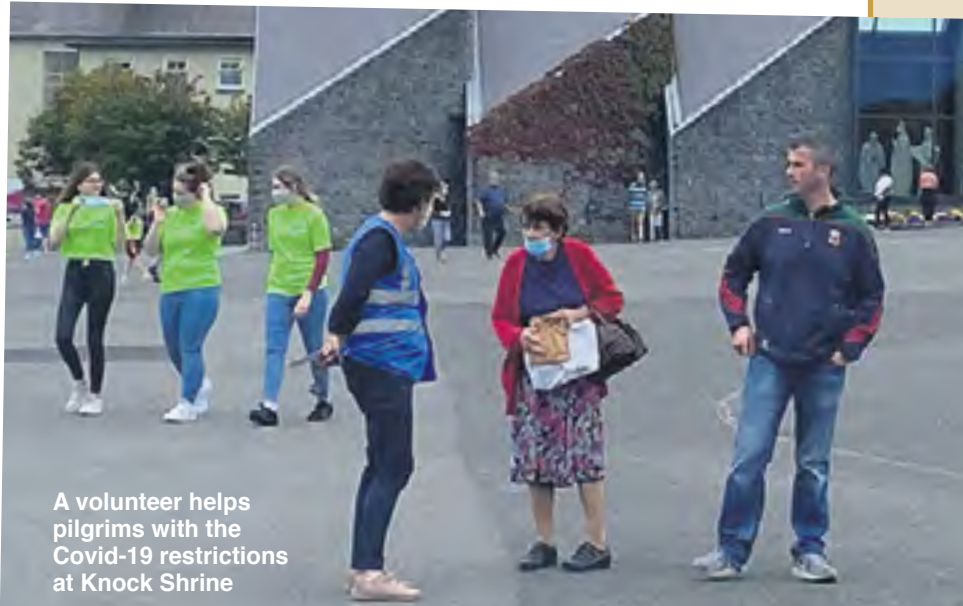
The Forde family from Knock at the Basilica.



Pilgrims are greeted by a volunteer.



VAKS (youth volunteers) at Knock Basilica.



A volunteer helps pilgrims with the Covid-19 restrictions at Knock Shrine

He thought he was a priest – he wasn't even baptised



Fr Matthew Hood.



The case of the mistaken baptism is a reminder of the Sacraments' centrality writes Ruadhán Jones

It's not often that an apparently obscure verdict on a question of Catholic doctrine has especially dramatic effects. When the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) announced that baptisms where the deacon or priest said "we" instead of "I" are now considered invalid, you couldn't be faulted if it passed you by.

But for one priest, and for those he ministered to, it had far-reaching consequences. Fr Matthew Hood of the Archdiocese of Detroit thought he was a priest – it turned out he wasn't even a baptised Catholic.

Ordained, so he thought, in 2017, Fr Hood had been carrying out his priestly responsibilities for three years. This included typical duties

like celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, as well as officiating at Communions, Marriages and Baptisms.

But last month, the CDF released their judgement regarding unorthodox baptismal formulas used by some priests and deacons. These formulas changed the "I baptise you in the name Father..." to "We baptise you..." in an attempt to emphasise community participation.

“The case of Fr Hood and the mistaken baptism is a reminder of the centrality of the sacraments and their importance”

On August 6, the CDF ruled that any baptisms conducted using the second formula are invalid and those baptised using this formula are considered not to have received the sacrament.

When Fr Hood read this release, he remembered a video he'd watched of his own ceremony. The deacon had said, "we baptise you...". His baptism wasn't valid and, consequently,

neither was his ordination. After contacting his archdiocese, it was confirmed that Fr Hood would have to be baptised again.

And so he was. In quick order, he was baptised, confirmed and received the Eucharist. He then made a retreat, was ordained a deacon and, on August 17, three years after his first attempt, finally became a priest.

It didn't end there either. In a guide explaining the unusual situation, the Archdiocese of Detroit advised those whose marriages had been consecrated by Fr Hood to contact their parishes. While it seems likely most marriages will not be affected, the diocese is taking no chances.

Furthermore, the archdiocese added that while those who made confession to Fr Hood "did not walk away without some measure of grace and forgiveness from God," the absolutions were no longer valid.

"If you recall any grave (mortal) sins that you would have confessed to Father Hood before he was validly ordained and you have not yet been to a subsequent confession," the guide continues, "you must bring them to your next confession explaining to any priest what has happened."

"If you cannot remember if you confessed any grave sins, you

should bring that fact to your next confession as well. A subsequent absolution will include those sins and will give you peace of mind."

Fortunately, in one sense, Fr Hood's case is likely to be an isolated one. The Church presumes that a sacrament is valid unless there is some proof to the contrary. As such, Fr Hood would have been considered baptised if not for the video evidence. In another sense, it can make the situation seem more obscure – wasn't this simply an example of legalistic nit-picking?

“When celebrating a Sacrament, the Church in fact functions as the Body that acts inseparably from its Head”

No, it wasn't. In fact it highlights the central importance the Church places on the sacramental form, and why it does so. While the issues seem to have emerged as a result of the CDF's release – and in part it did – the issue would not have come up had pastors not tampered with the liturgy.

The CDF released its ruling in response to questions regarding the validity of "community par-

ticipation" baptisms. Pastors who changed "I" to "we" intended "to avoid the idea of the concentration of a sacred power in the priest to the detriment of the parents and the community", the Vatican said in its release.

What those pastors failed to recognise is that when a minister administers the sacrament of baptism, "it is really Christ Himself who baptizes". When a priest or minister celebrates a sacrament, the words and actions "make it possible to recognise with absolute clarity the gesture of Christ in the ritual action of the Church", the Vatican said.

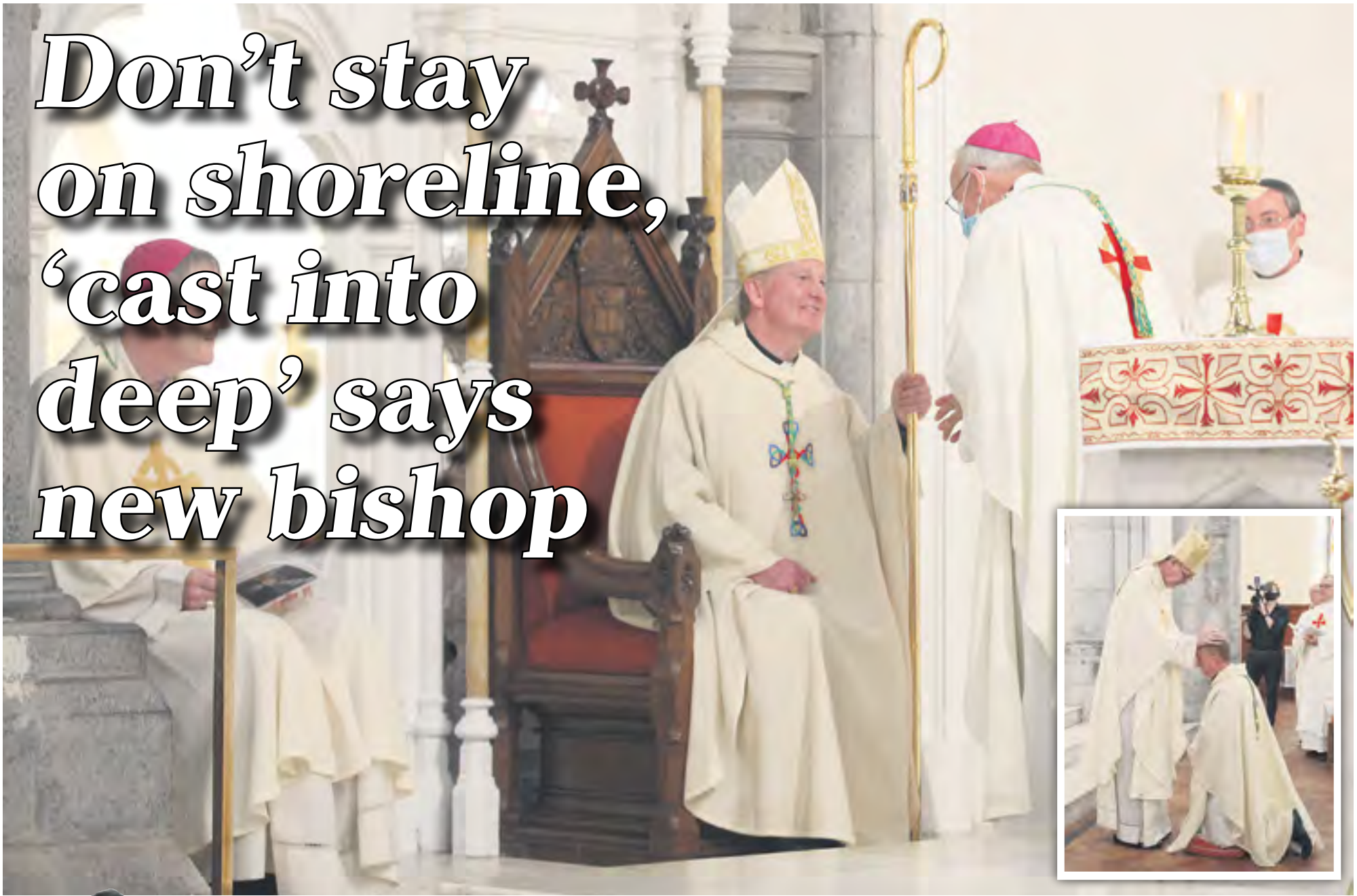
It is for this reason, the CDF ruled, that the Church itself cannot subordinate the sacraments to the actions of the Church. Why would you want to obscure the actions of Christ?

Furthermore, "when celebrating a Sacrament, the Church in fact functions as the Body that acts inseparably from its Head," the Vatican noted. You can imagine how meaningful the actions of a body would be without its head – aimless and disjointed. "It is therefore understandable that in the course of the centuries the Church has safeguarded the form of the celebration of the Sacraments," the Vatican said.

The case of Fr Hood and the mistaken baptism is a reminder of the centrality of the sacraments and their importance. They preserve objectively the actions of Christ in the world and should be treated with due care.

“Fr Hood's case is likely to be an isolated one. The Church presumes that a sacrament is valid unless there is some proof to the contrary.

Don't stay on shoreline, 'cast into deep' says new bishop



Chai Brady

The new bishop of Achonry, ordained on Sunday, called on the faithful to "go out to where Christ is calling us".

Bishop Paul Dempsey's episcopal ordination took place in the Cathedral of The Annunciation and St Nathy, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. The principal consecrator was Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam, assisted by Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Papal Nuncio to Ireland and Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare and Leighlin – Bishop Dempsey's native diocese.

In his address at the end of the ceremony, Bishop Dempsey spoke of why he chose the motto *Duc in Altum*, meaning 'put out into the deep', which is taken from Luke 5:4.

He said: "In that passage, Peter and the disciples were wearisome, fed up, tired..."

» Continued on Page17



Archbishop Neary placing the mitre on the head of Bishop Dempsey (above) and handing him pastoral staff (below) during the ceremony.





Bishop Dempsey greeting family members after the ceremony on Sunday.



Bishop Paul Dempsey before the ceremony with Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Bishop Denis Nulty Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and Archbishop Michael Neary Archbishop of Tuam.



Bishop Dempsey greeting people after his ordination.



Fr Paul Dempsey greeting friends before the ceremony.



Frs Tommy Johnston and John Doherty attended the ceremony.



A priest preparing for the ceremony.



Bishop Dempsey greeting Rev. Canon Andrea Wills from the Church of Ireland after the ceremony.



Bishop Dempsey greeting his aunts Margaret Butterly and Kathleen Lenehan as they admire his episcopal ring.



Nigel and Sinead Hughes attended the ceremony on Sunday.

» Continued from Page 15

perhaps a bit like ourselves at this time. But it is in that very moment Jesus appears to them on the shore. He sees things differently. He sees an opportunity in the moment. He invites them, challenges them to: 'Put out into the deep water...'

"We're all familiar with the story and what happens, but we must be careful not to reduce this to Jesus simply asking them to try again! He wasn't telling them to try again, he was inviting them, asking them, challenging them to go farther out into uncharted waters.

"He wanted them to go beyond what was familiar and safe to a place they had never gone before! Not only that, dropping their nets in that deep place involved more work, more energy, more effort than staying by the safe shoreline.

Bishop Dempsey continued: "Surely this must resonate with us in the Church today. Perhaps we have become satisfied with the shoreline, the place that is familiar and safe? Or do we hear that call of Christ in a renewed way today to the Church; 'Go out, go out into the deep...'

“Jesus wasn't telling them to try again, he was inviting them, asking them, challenging them to go farther out into uncharted waters”

"We can all agree that this is not an easy task, we too like the disciples can find ourselves wearisome, fearful, tired. But it was in the midst of all these struggles, that very moment that Jesus appeared and called his disciples. He doesn't stand at the shoreline calling to us from a distance, he has climbed into the boat with us!"

He added that his vision for the diocese is that the faithful listen to the call of Christ "in a renewed way today" and asked that we not be "prisoners of mediocrity, but agents of hope".

Responsibility

Introducing the celebration, Archbishop Michael Neary said that in keeping with his name, Paul, Bishop Dempsey "will invest his ministry with responsibility, love, service and self-giving".

"In a spirit of thanksgiving, recognising the way in which God continues to care for and bless us we turn to him now in our Eucharist and ask him to bless Fr Paul and all those to whom he will minister as a bishop. We ask God's forgiveness for times when we have been guilty of ingratitude towards the Lord and towards one another."



Bishop Dempsey greeting Scott and Melissa Lyons with their children Keagan and Sophie after the ceremony.



Fr Paul Dempsey before his Episcopal Ordination with his aunt Kathleen Lenehan and Sandra Newcombe.



Deacon Kevin Flynn with Papal Nuncio to Ireland Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo chatting before the ceremony.



Some of the bishops and priests prepare for the procession into the cathedral on Sunday.

‘We must resist the temptation to retreat – the Church must be out there meeting people’



Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey.



Despite the challenges, rumours of the Church's demise are greatly exaggerated Bishop Paul Dempsey tells Michael Kelly

When the parish priest of Newbridge Fr Paul Dempsey got a call from the Pope's ambassador in Dublin in mid-December requesting a meeting he quickly made arrangements to go to the capital. The Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Okolo told him that Pope Francis had appointed him the new Bishop of Achonry. It was a different world and while there were vague rumblings from China about a mysterious new virus, little could anyone predict the devastating loss of life

and curtailment to daily life that Covid-19 would bring when it reached our shores.

Bishop Dempsey – who was finally consecrated Bishop of Achonry on Sunday after an earlier ceremony scheduled for April had to be postponed – is keenly aware of the effects of coronavirus from his ministry in Kildare, a county which remains in a partial lockdown.

When his appointment to replace Bishop Brendan Kelly was announced on January 27, the Cathedral of the Annunciation and St Nathy in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon the mother church of the diocese was filled with students celebrating Catholic Schools Week. Sunday's ordination, in contrast, saw just 50 people and many of Bishop Dempsey's friends and family were unable to travel.

"It's an extraordinary time alright, and no sign of it abating for quite a while either," he tells *The Irish Catholic*.

Ordination

The postponement of the episcopal ordination had very practical consequences for a new bishop keen to familiarise himself with the pastoral challenges of his diocese. Bishop Dempsey (49) says that "moving into a new situation – a new place that I'm not awfully familiar with, and doing that in the middle of a world pandemic has been quite a personal journey".

The lockdown has prevented Bishop Dempsey meeting the priests of the diocese and getting to know the parishioners.

However, that hasn't stopped the outpouring of goodwill. "I've been overwhelmed by the support and the letters, the emails and the texts. I don't think I ever realised what a priest might mean in the parish until something like this happens and that gives me great hope," he says.

I put it to the bishop that moving from Newbridge – a town with a population of almost 23,000 people – to Achonry where there are fewer than 40,000 people in the entire diocese will be quite a difference.

"Of course they're very different places – but people are people, no matter whether they're living in Newbridge or Clane or any of the places I've been, or whether they're here in the Diocese of Achonry".

Bishop Dempsey sees relationships as being at the heart of pastoral ministry. "And that's what I need to build on now – relationships with priests and people here in Achonry, just as I tried to build relationships in the parishes I've worked in... even though the context is somewhat different, people are there and it's a matter of trying to build that relationship with people in a different context. As I say, relationship is what is really

important at the end of the day," he says.

Ordained a priest in 1997, Bishop Dempsey joins the hierarchy as the group's youngest member and a man who chose to accept the challenge of priesthood at a time when the Church was in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. He traces his own vocational journey to a time when he was around eleven years of age.

“Remaining rooted in a sense of priestly identity has always been very important for Bishop Dempsey”

"I remember being at Mass, and up to that point I think I wanted to be a garda in my innocence as a child, but I remember being at Mass and looking at the priest and something just touched my heart to say that there's something in what he is doing that maybe I want to pursue".

He says that it is a sense that has never left him and has guided him through the ups and downs of formation and subsequent ministry.

He spent most of his seminary

days in Carlow and remembers it fondly. "It was a very good formation system there that helped me, and guided me along the way to say 'yes' to the call of priesthood. And the last 23 years as a priest – despite all of the challenges that have been out there – it has been a very, very happy time...I've loved every moment of the last 23 years and, please God, I look forward to that continuing in the years ahead".

Bishop Dempsey believes that the challenges and scandals in the Church have helped to strengthen his faith.

Difficult time

"We've come through a very, very difficult time in the life of the Church as I was in my formation and at the time of my ordination [in 1997] and indeed my years in ministry".

Accompanying people has been a central theme in the Petrine

“We’ve come through a very, very difficult time in the life of the Church as I was in my formation and at the time of my ordination [in 1997] and indeed my years in ministry”



Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Okolo at the Mass announcing the Pope's choice as Bishop of Achonry as the then Bishop-elect Dempsey looks on.



Bishop Dempsey is welcomed to the diocese by local students.

ministry of Pope Francis and the new bishop sees this as the essence of priesthood. "It's such a privilege to be able to journey with people in the very great joys of life - also in the huge sorrows that people experience. "It's a huge privilege as a priest to be able to walk with people in their homes and experience how people welcome you into their lives - in a matter of a moment, you're there with them: and that's what the experience of priesthood has been for me, even with the difficulties and the challenges and the changes that have happened in

the last couple of decades," he says. Remaining rooted in a sense of priestly identity has always been very important for Bishop Dempsey and while reluctant to offer advice to others he is clear that: "Once you keep focused on what your call is - and Christ has called us as priests to be with people, to be in solidarity with people, to walk with people - that's helped me to keep focused on what is important in ministry, and what's important in life". As a seminarian, Bishop Dempsey had an early experience with personal grief and dealing with

bereavement. When he was 22, his mother died of cancer and just 12 days later his father also died. **Changing** "It was obviously a huge life-changing moment, and I was very lucky to have a wider circle of family and friends that supported me and guided me through that time and they continue to guide me at this time. But it was a very difficult time, maybe not to sound too pious about it, but it also helped me to focus on my relationship with Christ as well... It's a little bit like at this moment

in time, coronavirus has thrown us all: we don't know what the future holds. It's a life-changing thing. Now it's not quite the same as losing both parents in a short succession of time, but perhaps these moments of huge and radical change in our lives bring the bigger questions to the fore. "I remember the image that I had at that time when I lost my parents, was almost the tangible sense of the Lord holding me by the hand and guiding me through this difficult time: and that's something that has stayed with me," he recalls. While a devastating personal experience, the death of both parents at such a young age was to prove a difficult early lesson in one of the most important pastoral duties of a priest: comforting the bereaved. "One of the huge parts of a priest's life is the whole bereavement ministry and working with families who are grieving and are working through grief...I think my own experience, having gone through a very heavy experience of grief myself, certainly helped me to understand how people experience grief...I would have heard other younger priests who wouldn't have had the experience of grief or bereavement in their life doing funerals, but they never really knew what it was actually like to lose somebody," he recalls. **Consecration** Bishop Dempsey's consecration was heralded by one of the national secular newspapers with a report claiming that there would be fewer priestly ordinations in Ireland this year than episcopal ones. It wasn't quite accurate and omitted some ordinations, but the

figures remain stark. As we speak, Fr Shane Costello has just been ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Tuam. That same diocese buried seven priests over the last year and a further four retired. One doesn't need to be John Nash to know that those figures only point in one direction. As a former vocations director for Kildare and Leighlin, it is a situation close to Bishop Dempsey's heart and it will be an important part of his ministry. "I think it has to be wider than that as well - it's not either/or: it's both. I think working to develop the vocation of laypeople must be a crucial part of the ministry of a bishop. "We have to try and continue to encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life, but in tandem with that we have to try and encourage and develop the whole area of lay ministry within the Church which is something I've been very much involved with down through the years," he says. While not underestimating the difficulties presented by the vocations crisis, he thinks it can present a moment for lay ministry to flourish in a way that it hasn't yet. **“It is a sense that has never left him and has guided him through the ups and downs of formation and subsequent ministry”**

"We have to create a culture where people who are not committed to priesthood or religious life can, through their baptism, contribute in a huge way to the life and ministry of the Church". It's clear that Bishop Dempsey is a shepherd in the mould of Pope Francis replete with the smell of the sheep. He also sees remaining hopeful and joyful in the midst of challenges as vital in sustaining a healthy pastoral ministry. "Maybe some people might think I'm naive, but I actually think that this is a very critical time and a very exciting time in the life of the Church to realise the vision of Vatican II [of co-responsibility]. "If you read the Vatican II documents - they are still so alive, still so visionary, and that must be template for the Church of today. That's still there for us to grasp, and obviously it's a very different cultural situation today but I believe that the Vatican Council speaks so aptly to the situation of today and I think we need to reflect on that in a very serious way as we go forward as a Church in Ireland today," Bishop Dempsey believes. He thinks that Pope Francis and his constant proclamation of the joy of the Gospel is helping people who have negative stereotypes about the Church to look again. "I think people identify with his humanity and also his message about going back to the basics of what we're about as a Church. He has said a number of times that we tend to focus on certain moral issues - which are absolutely very important - but there's an awful lot more to the life of the Church than just maybe two or three

“I think we just have to be creative and imaginative in that and to try and bring that message in a renewed way to people in Ireland today”

controversial moral issues – it's how we live our lives, it's how we live the Gospel, it's the joy of the Gospel that we have to try and live and that will attract people.

Pope Francis

“Pope Francis has lived that himself and is witness to that joy of the Gospel – and I think that's what attracts people to him and to his message,” he says.

One only needs to listen to a discussion about faith on radio or television in Ireland to know that the transmission of the faith is hindered by a sense of negative experiences amongst some people when it comes to the Church.

“I think the reality for a lot of people in Ireland today is they have a certain view of what the Church is about and it's quite narrow in certain ways. Whereas the Church should be involved in every aspect of life – and that's what the Gospel is about: it's a refreshing, beautiful message and for us the challenge is to be creative and imaginative in trying to present that message with a sense of joy. It's so important that we're joyful people – of course there are all sorts of difficulties in life, but the Gospel offers us that real hope that things can be better and that every single one of us is loved in a very profound and real way,” he insists.

“It's clear that Bishop Dempsey is a shepherd in the mould of Pope Francis replete with the smell of the sheep”

At the same time, Bishop Dempsey is acutely aware from his ministry that there are almost two Churches in Ireland. “There's that kind of public-face of the Church that's in the media, that maybe there's a lot of negativity around it, but on the ground, there's a strong Church there that's very positive and is there in a very real way too,” he recalls quoting an observation from the former Bishop of Killaloe Bishop Willie Walshe.

Bishop Dempsey believes that the absence of the sense of unconditional love is evident in modern culture. “There's a sense today that many people don't feel that sense of love in their lives or in their hearts, and maybe they go down the line of addiction or whatever it is, whereas we have this precious message that should be delivered to people with a joyous heart...that's the challenge of ministry today: whether we're in the priesthood, the baptised faithful or whatever it is that's the challenge, that's the mission that we have today.

“I think we just have to be creative and imaginative in that and to try and bring that message in a renewed way to people in Ireland today,” he says with evident enthusiasm.

I asked to Bishop Dempsey whether retreating from the world is not an option for the Church? “Absolutely: and that's been a very important part of my own ministry – that we need to be out there with people and among people. And when we look at the Gospel, that is what Jesus Christ did. He was out there with the people and most of them were imperfect but he was out there with them and he met them where they were and maybe he wanted to bring them to a place that was better for them. But, what other example can we use except that of the Lord himself and how he ministered to people in his own life? If we could continue to connect with that and be inspired by that example, I think we leave the rest of the Lord as the prayer associated with St Oscar Romero says: ‘we're messengers, we're not Messiahs.

“All we can do is just sow a few little seeds, try do our best with that, and then leave it to the Lord then maybe to do the growing after that,” he says.

Youth

As a priest, Bishop Dempsey was also hugely involved in youth ministry including leading groups to World Youth Day. At a time when people can be cynical about young people, he has been impressed by the youngsters that he has met and believes that the Church must keep them front and central.

“I think there's fantastic young people out there today, and I think they're longing for some hope-filled message: they're longing for something more in their lives and I think the Church has something very precious to offer to those young people.

“I think it's a huge challenge in how we communicate with young people. Do young people see the Church as being old-fashioned or out of touch? I think we need to challenge young people as well,” he believes. And key to that challenge for Bishop Dempsey is helping them see that values like safeguarding creation and looking out for the vulnerable are Gospel imperatives.

“Pope Francis was way ahead of the posse on the whole issue of the environment and has been for years. So, I think Pope Francis has shown great leadership on that and I think we can connect with young people in those areas, so I would be very hope-filled around that,” he says.

Often hope – or perhaps more correctly optimism – can be in short supply in the Church in Ireland. Bishop Dempsey sees hope



Bishop Dempsey (above and below) greets local parishioners in Ballaghaderreen.

in the response of many parishes and communities to Covid-19.

“We're at a very critical time in the midst of the coronavirus situation at the moment and obviously people are somewhat wearisome with it, and we're not too sure where we're going with it. But so much good has happened: neighbours looking out for one another, young people helping their neighbours and elderly people...I've heard so many stories of goodness and kindness, and it has opened up my eyes to see that this very critical time – even though it's very difficult – has opened a way to so many positives as well. And I think that's hopeful,” he says.

“All we can do is just sow a few little seeds, try do our best with that, and then leave it to the Lord then maybe to do the growing after that”

Bishop Dempsey keeps coming back to the theme of keeping one's eyes on Christ and calibrating everything we do by the light of the Gospel.

“It's not easy, it's challenging, but I think if we remain focused on the heart of the message and where Pope Francis is leading us: to keep focused on the Gospel on the person of Jesus Christ, because if we lose sight of him we're in trouble.

“So we must keep focused on Christ, on his message, and renew



that connection with Christ. I think that will give us the hope we need to keep going and keep going forward,” he says.

One gets from Bishop Dempsey the impression of a distinct desire to hit the ground running, almost an impatience to get to know the people of Achonry.

“My plans, please God, over the next month is to get around to every parish and just to visit for

morning Mass and say ‘hello’ to the people who are there and visit the priest and the parish just to get to know the place and get to visit the people and the priests of the diocese.

“And then after that, we'll have to sit down and reflect a little bit on where we're at and where we might want to go as a diocese and we'll have to put the shoulder to the wheel,” he says.

GAA club offer pitch for big Derry Mass

Chai Brady

A unique Sunday Vigil Mass was celebrated at Eoghan Rua GAA grounds in Portsteward, Co. Derry with about a 100-person strong congregation.

It took place in mid-August on the club pitch. Attendees included Matthew who recently received his First Holy Communion and several parishioners who had been cocooning from the coronavirus who were attending Mass for the first time in five months.

Fr Austin McGirr PP remembered Hugh McWilliams, Derry GAA sponsor and supporter, and Michael McQuillan a former club member who died recently, as well as the victims of the Omagh bomb on the 22nd anniversary of the atrocity.

He also thanked the Eoghan Rua club and all the volunteers who made the event possible, describing it as a wonderful example of partnership in the parish in these difficult times.



Fr Austin McGirr and Fr Raymond McCullagh concelebrating Mass



Social distancing being observed during the Mass



Matthew and his family



Fr Austin McGirr and Matthew



Congregation gathered on Eoghan Rua GAA pitch



Out&About

Students Confirmed in Clonmel



TIPPERARY: Pupils from St Mary's CBS, Clonmel celebrate their Confirmation in St Mary's Church Irishtown, Clonmel.



CAVAN: Kit and Philomena Finnegan of Turners Hill, Kingscourt celebrate their golden jubilee of marriage.



CAVAN: St Joseph's NS were nominated by the Kingscourt Community of World Day of Prayer this year to receive a donation of €500. Daphne Rowntree, Jean, Kenny Audrey Frazer and Ena McGinley presented the cheque to principal Mairéad Corbally. It will be used for music therapy and sensory therapy for Cairde pupils.

IN SHORT

One million pregnant girls could be blocked from school return

A report released by international aid agency World Vision said as many as one million schoolgirls could be blocked from re-entry to school because they have become pregnant during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report, called 'Aftershocks – Access Denied', warned that girls who have become pregnant, many because of sexual violence, child marriage and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, will now lose out on future opportunities because policies and practices in some countries across sub-Saharan Africa do not allow pregnant girls or young mothers to continue their education. Covid-19 has forced school closures in 194 countries, affecting nearly

1.6 billion learners – over 90% of the world's school-going population.

"As millions of families across the globe are getting ready to bring their children back into school, up to one million girls across sub-Saharan Africa may not get that chance," said Fiona O'Malley, Director of Communications and Fundraising for World Vision Ireland.

"Prolonged school closures during a humanitarian crisis can mean an increased violation of human rights, increased child marriage, sexual violence, and early pregnancy. Unfortunately, many countries don't allow teenage girls to re-enrol if they become pregnant. In the developing world, a denial of education can lead to a denial of other basic human rights. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to more out-of-school children than any other region in the world. It also has the highest teenage pregnancy rates globally."

Studies conducted during the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone showed that girls and young women were twice as likely to become pregnant than before. More than 14,000 teenage girls became pregnant during that time, including 11,000 who were in school prior to the outbreak and met with country-wide bans when they tried to return. Policies vary across the region – from outright expulsion of pregnant girls to strategies that support the continued education of adolescent mothers.

"Denying girls their right to attend school means we are faced with a further crisis in girls' education, unless governments and partners act now.

"We saw the decision to ban pregnant girls from returning to school after Ebola in Sierra Leone had grave consequences as these girls and their children faced fewer opportunities, greater health and well-

being risks, and increased poverty and insecurity," added Isabel Gomes, World Vision's Global Director for Humanitarian Operations.

Sierra Leone lifted its ban on pregnant schoolgirls in March 2020 and is promoting measures that will help ensure girls' education after the Covid-19 crisis.

World Vision warns that with school closures related to Covid-19 threatening to lead to an increase in teenage pregnancy, governments must take Sierra Leone's lead and act now.

"A child robbed of education is not only devastating to mothers and their children, it also negatively impacts the economy," Fiona O'Malley said. "Education enables social mobility, breaks poverty traps and empowers the youth. It is a great liberator and the ultimate equaliser, particularly in the developing world."

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



TIPPERARY: The celebration of Confirmations that took place in St Mary's Church, Irishtown, Clonmel of the pupils from the Gaelscoil Clonmel.



TIPPERARY: The celebration of Confirmations that took place in St Mary's Church, Irishtown, Clonmel of the pupils from the Gaelscoil Clonmel.



TIPPERARY: Pupils from St Mary's CBS, Clonmel celebrate their Confirmation in St Mary's Church Irishtown, Clonmel.



LIMERICK: Fifth class pupils from Doon CBS who were confirmed by Fr Jimmy Donnelly PP at St Patrick's Church, Doon.



LIMERICK: Niall Riordan is pictured with the principal of Doon CBS, Joanne O'Connell, after the Confirmation ceremony at St Patrick's Parish church, Doon.



LIMERICK: Fionn Roche pictured with his family after the Confirmation ceremony in St Patrick's Church, Doon.

Events

● In the current Covid-19 crisis, it is clear that most 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.

Send us your First Holy Communion or Confirmation photos!

Parishes are catching up with special events so please share those moments with *The Irish Catholic* readers – send your photos (in jpeg or png form if possible) to: chai@irishcatholic.ie

Please include the name of the event and the names of everyone in the photo!



World Report

IN BRIEF

Argentine bishop warns priests to distribute Holy Communion in the hand

● The Bishop of San Rafael, Argentina, warned last week that he will impose canonical sanctions on priests who distribute Communion on the tongue during the coronavirus pandemic, in defiance of a diocesan directive permitting the distribution of Communion only in the hand.

Bishop Eduardo Taussig announced on June 13 that the Eucharist in his diocese was to be distributed only in the hand, until the pandemic concluded.

A number of priests in the diocese continued to distribute the Eucharist on the tongue after Bishop Taussig's decree was issued.

In his August 20 message, Bishop Taussig warned that those who had acted with "disobedience have caused scandal and division".

He said his message constituted a formal canonical warning that any priest who continued to disobey his directive would face canonical sanctions.

Chalice shot at by ISIS militants to be displayed in Spanish churches

● As part of an effort to remember and pray for persecuted Christians, several churches in the Diocese of Málaga, Spain are displaying a chalice that was shot by the Islamic State.

The chalice was rescued from a Syrian Catholic church in the town of Qaraqosh on the Nineveh plain in Iraq. It was brought to the Málaga diocese by the papal

charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) to be displayed during Masses offered for persecuted Christians. "This chalice was used by the jihadists for target practice," explained Ana María Aldea, an ACN delegate in Málaga. "What they did not imagine is that it would be re-consecrated and taken to many parts of the world to hold Mass in its presence."

Polish bishops: respect all people, but don't accept LGBT+ views uncritically

● Catholics have a duty to respect people who identify as LGBT+ but are not obliged to accept their views uncritically, Poland's bishops said. The bishops made that comment in a 27-page document released on August 28, which condemned verbal and physical violence against people associated with the LGBT+ movement.

"The obligation to respect people connected with the LGBT+ movement does not mean to accept their views uncritically. On the contrary, it means analysing them carefully and considering them in the light of the objective truth about human sexuality and the principles of the common good," the bishops said.

The text is the bishops' contribution to a raging debate about LGBT+ rights in Poland. The issue featured prominently in the run-up to July's presidential election, narrowly won by the incumbent Andrzej Duda.

Italian bishops' newspaper faces pushback after letter supports abortion law

● The newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference is facing criticism after it published a letter on Wednesday of last week arguing that Catholics can support legal abortion in the country.

In a "letter to the director" of *Avvenire*, Angelo Moretti, coordinator of Caritas in the Diocese of Benevento, wrote that "to terminate an embryo is to terminate a life" and "continuing to argue that an embryo is not a life is really an ideological residue that should fail in honest intellectual debates".

"But Law 194 is not an anti-life law and can be accepted by Catholics," he added.

Commentators in Italy criticized *Avvenire*'s decision to publish the letter.

"Abortion remains a *crimen nefandum*. And no law can ever make an abominable crime just," the lawyer Gianfranco Amato wrote.

Bishop Barron defends Junipero Serra: evangelisation is not 'cultural aggression'

Internet star Bishop Robert Barron this week delivered a homily in support of St Junipero Serra, an 18th-Century Franciscan missionary whose legacy has drawn renewed scrutiny in recent months from some who consider him a symbol of an oppressive colonial system.

"We are gathered here today in defence of the statue," Bishop Barron said in a homily at Mission Santa Inés.

"The Church understands the very legitimate concerns of some of the protestors. Yes, we are concerned about racism, oppression, righting social wrongs," the bishop said, as well as amplifying voices that might otherwise go unheard.

"What I don't understand is besmirching the reputation and memory of this great saint, represented by this statue," he added, to applause from the congregation, which included Franciscan friars, members of the religious order to which Serra belonged.

"People are laying at the feet of Junipero Serra everything that bugs them about 18th-Century Spanish colonialism. And let's be honest—there was plenty wrong with 18th-Century Spanish colonialism," Dr Barron said.

"But I refuse to accept the



Fr Miguel Rodriguez sets a relic on the tomb of St Junipero Serra during Mass at the Carmel Mission Basilica in Carmel, California on September 23, 2016, the day the Spanish missionary and founder of the California mission system was canonised by Pope Francis in Washington.

characterisation of evangelisation as a kind of cultural aggression."

Barron's homily, which he delivered while celebrating Mass outdoors at the mission, came against a backdrop of opposing groups of protestors.

A group of 20 or so people turned out to express opposi-

tion to Serra, and to call for the removal of the saint's statue from the mission grounds. Catholic counter-protestors, including Knights of Columbus members, also were present that day to defend Serra, block protestors from disrupting the Mass, and to pray the rosary.

During the 18th Century,

Fr Serra, a Spaniard, founded nine Catholic missions, from San Diego to San Francisco, in the area that would later become California. Serra helped to convert thousands of native Californians to Christianity and taught them new agricultural technologies.

Santa Inés mission is located in Solvang, California, about an hour northwest of Santa Barbara. Although that mission was not founded by Serra himself, it owes its existence to Serra's legacy.

Abuses

While some activists today associate Serra with the many abuses that the Native Americans suffered after contact with Europeans, biographies and historical records suggest that Serra actually advocated on behalf of the Natives against the Spanish military and against encroaching European settlement.

Widespread comparisons by some activists of Serra to Adolph Hitler, or assertions that Serra himself was 'genocidal', are simply false, he said.

Dr Barron pointed out that Serra himself viewed the sharing of his Catholic Faith as the sharing of "a precious gift" – a gift that he dedicated his life, selflessly, to giving to others.

Abortions rise in Scotland to second-highest level on record

Scotland has reported its second-highest annual abortion figure on record.

Public Health Scotland announced on August 25 that 13,583 abortions were performed in 2019, with a termination rate of 13.2 per 1,000 women aged between 15 and 44. Last year's figure is the highest since 2008 and represents an increase of 297 from 2018 when there were 13,286 abortions.

More than half of women undergoing abortions in 2019 were in their 20s. Abortion rates in the 40-plus

age group have risen steadily from 256 in 1985 to 581 terminations in 2019 – the highest ever level.

Almost half of medical abortions in 2019 involved the self-administration of the drug misoprostol at home.

Guidelines

Robinson said that Scotland's abortion figure was likely to be even higher in 2020.

"A change of guidelines in 2018, which allows women to take the second set of abortion pills involved in a medical abortion out of clinical

settings accounted for nearly 50% of medical abortions in 2019. This is up from nearly 30% in 2018, but is likely to further increase next year when 2020 statistics are published due to a change in guidance allowing 'DIY' home abortions in response to the coronavirus pandemic," she said.

In its annual report, Public Health Scotland said that there continued to be a "strong association" between deprivation and abortion rates in Scotland, which has a population of around 5.5 million.

Mother Teresa birthday celebrations cancelled due to Covid-19

The Missionaries of Charity cancelled their customary birthday celebrations for their founder, Mother Teresa, this year after nine religious sisters tested positive for Covid-19. Wednesday marked the 110th birthday of Saint

Mother Teresa, who died in 1997.

Among other celebrations, the Motherhouse of the Missionaries of Charity, which houses the saint's tomb, was forced to call off a public nine-day novena, Mass and

children musical event.

Sunil Lucas, a Missionaries of Charity volunteer, said the sisters have been going out to visit the poor and ill even after the headquarters restricted visitors and gatherings in mid-March due to the

coronavirus pandemic.

Mother Teresa's birthday normally draws thousands of visiting pilgrims and sisters. Instead of the usual celebrations, a private Mass was held this year at the saint's tomb on the morning of August 26.



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

Laura's deadly legacy



Plumes of smoke in Lake Charles, Louisiana rise into the sky from a chemical plant fire on August 27 after Hurricane Laura passed through the area. Photo: CNS

Catholic speakers address Republican National Convention

Abby Johnson, former director of Planned Parenthood and convert to Catholicism, addressed the Republican National Convention in a video message that emphasized President Donald Trump's actions for the pro-life cause.

The outspoken pro-life advocate said: "For most people who consider themselves pro-life, abortion is abstract. They can't even conceive of the barbarity...but for me, abortion is very real."

Another convention speaker was Nicholas Sandmann, who was in the public spotlight a year and a half ago when he was a junior at Covington Catholic High School in Park Hills, Kentucky. A video of him with other students interacting with Native American protesters went viral accusing the students, wearing "Make America

Great Again" caps, of bigotry.

Sandmann's family has subsequently settled defamation lawsuits against *The Washington Post* and CNN.

In his taped convention speech, he said that incident made him feel the "full war machine of the mainstream media".

"I learned that what was happening to me had a name. It was called being cancelled. Cancelled is what's happening to people around this country who refuse to be silenced by the far left. Many are being fired, humiliated, or even threatened."

Sr Deirdre Byrne, a sister of the Little Workers of the Sacred Heart and a surgeon who joined religious life while serving in the US Army, addressed the convention on August 26.

"As followers of Christ, we are

called to stand up for life against the politically correct or fashionable of today. We must fight against a legislative agenda that supports and even celebrates destroying life in the womb," she said.

"President Trump will stand up against Biden-Harris, who are the most anti-life presidential ticket ever, even supporting the horrors of late-term abortion and infanticide," she said of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris.

Biden has not explicitly expressed support for late-term abortions. The former vice president has said he wants to see the Supreme Court's Roe vs Wade decision codified in law and supports federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

Australian and English bishops discuss morality of vaccine

More bishops are pleading with their governments to give priority to ethically developed coronavirus vaccines, but many also are telling Catholics that not getting vaccinated is a more serious moral problem than using the problematic vaccines.

Australia is among many governments trying to secure

access to a Covid-19 vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University. It is one of five possible vaccines that are nearing the advanced stage of clinical trials, but it was developed using tissue from a cell line cultivated from the remains of a female fetus voluntarily aborted in the early 1970s.

Promoting the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine is unnecessarily divisive, said Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney. In a column in the *Catholic Weekly*, the archbishop wrote: "I, for one, don't think it would be unethical to use this vaccine if there is no alternative available."

"To do so would not be

to cooperate in any abortion occurring in the past or the future.

"But I am deeply troubled by it."

But, he said, others "will draw a straight line from the ending of a human life in abortion, through to the cultivation of the cell-line, to the manufacture of this vaccine."

Vatican roundup

John Paul I Foundation names scientific committee

● The newly-formed Vatican John Paul I Foundation released a statement on Wednesday which states that on the 42nd anniversary of Pope John Paul I's pontificate, they are pleased to communicate the members of the Foundation's Scientific Committee.

These persons were appointed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State and President of the new Foundation, during a meeting of the Administrative Board that took place on July 3.

The people who make up this Scientific Committee will serve for a five-year period.

Dr Stefania Falasca, Vice President of the Foundation, will coordinate the new Scientific Committee which is made up of: Prof. Carlo Ossola, Philology Professor, Collège de France, Paris; Prof. Dario Vitali, Director of the Department of Dogmatic Theology, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome; Msgr Gilfredo Marengo, Vice President of Rome's Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences; Prof. Mauro Velati, collaborator of the John XXIII Foundation for Religious Sciences and the cause of canonisation of John Paul I relating to the Venetian years; Fr Diego Sartorelli, Director of the Library and Historical Archive of the Patriarchate of Venice; Dr Loris Serafini, Archivist, Director of the Albino Luciani Museum in Canale d'Agordo.

Pope Francis makes surprise visit to Church of St Augustine in central Rome

● Pope Francis has made a special and unexpected visit to the Church of St Augustine in Rome.

The Pontiff did so after having remembered the day before during his Wednesday General Audience "two great saints", namely holy, patient mother, St Monica, and her son, St Augustine, whose liturgical feasts are August 27 and August 28 respectively.

The Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, released the following declaration announcing the visit.

"This afternoon, August 27, the Feast Day of Santa

Monica," he recalled, "Pope Francis visited the Basilica of Sant'Agostino in Campo Marzio."

The Pontiff, the Vatican spokesman said, "stopped to pray in the Chapel of Santa Monica, mother of the saint to whom the church is dedicated, whose tomb is kept there".

During the August 26 General Audience, addressing the elderly, the young, the sick and the newlyweds, the Argentine Pope said the mother and son were "united on Earth by family ties and in Heaven by the same destiny of glory".

Vatican confirms World Mission Day will be observed on October 18

● The Catholic Church's World Mission Day 2020 will be observed as usual on October 18, the Vatican said on Friday. "In response to some requests about the celebration of World Mission Day 2020, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples confirms that it will be celebrated this year at the universal level on Sunday, October 18, with no change in the calendar," the Congregation said in a press release.

Several worldwide observances of the Catholic Church have been postponed and rescheduled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In many countries and regions, Holy Masses and liturgies are being streamed live or are celebrated in keeping with health protocols.

"In many dioceses," the Congregation noted, "the preparation for World Mission Day has been underway for some time and the missionary animation of the People of God remains pre-eminent."

"Faith, in fact, by its very nature, is missionary and the celebration of World Mission Day serves to keep this essential dimension of the Christian faith alive in all the Faithful."



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen

Robert Merton, a famous American sociologist, was, by all accounts, a smart guy. Among other things, he popularised the expression “law of unintended consequences” to refer to situations when a person does something for one reason, but he or she finds that it produces all sorts of other unexpected results.

Right now, Fr Matthew Hood of the Archdiocese of Detroit is living proof of Merton's dictum.

As is well documented, Fr Hood saw a note from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released August 6 stating that baptisms performed using the formula “we baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” are invalid, and that anyone baptised using “we” instead of “I” needs to be baptised again.

That triggered a memory for Fr Hood, who in April had watched a family video of his own baptism at St Anastasia Parish in Troy, Michigan, 30 years ago. It showed that Deacon Mark Springer had indeed used the formula “we baptise you”, thus rendering Fr Hood's baptism – not to mention his ordination to the priesthood and all the sacraments he's celebrated since that happened in 2017 – invalid.

What followed for Fr Hood has been a whirlwind. He was baptised, confirmed and received the Eucharist on August 9, then ordained a transitional deacon on August 15 and a priest on August 17. In other words, for him, life is more or less back to normal.

Initiation

It's not quite the same for all those who received the sacraments from Fr Hood over the last three years, while he's been serving as an associate pastor at St. Lawrence Parish in Utica, Michigan, and before that at Divine Child in Dearborn.

For instance, there are people whom Fr Hood attempted to confirm after they'd completed RCIA, which is the Church's programme of initiation for adult converts to the faith, who now have to make other arrangements to complete the sacraments. The Archdiocese of Detroit has created a web page informing anyone confirmed by Fr Hood that it wasn't that valid, that his confessions didn't provide sacramental absolution, that the marriages he presided over may be invalid, and that any anointings of the sick he performed weren't valid either. Further, those baptised by Rev. Springer who went on to receive



Archbishop Allen Vigneron of Detroit lays his hands on Fr Matthew Hood to ordain him to the priesthood on August 17 at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Fr Hood, a graduate of Sacred Heart Major Seminary, was originally ordained in 2017. Photo: CNS

Priest baptism story offers memo for reformers: look before you leap

other sacraments will need to receive them again in order for them to be valid.

Ironically enough, those whom Fr Hood baptised actually are okay, since Church law says that anyone, not just a priest, can administer that Sacrament, and he always used the correct formula.

One might imagine Fr Hood would be ticked at the Vatican for turning his world upside down, but that's not the case.

“All of this might give the impression of an administrative act, but it's something that needs to be taken seriously because the sacraments are so serious,” he said. “The sacraments come from Christ and they're entrusted to the Church. It's important to celebrate the sacraments according to the

precepts of the Church.”

How is this situation an illustration of the law of unintended consequences?

“Passion is what keeps the Church alive, and whatever one's cause, we would all be poorer if they didn't advocate and press and make their case”

Well, although Deacon Springer himself hasn't spoken out since the news broke, it's reasonable to assume that he used the ‘we’ formula with good intentions.

In its statement on the case, the archdiocese said that Springer, who's now retired and no longer in active ministry, was told to stop using “we” in 1999 and abided by the decision.

In general, people who want to substitute ‘we’ for ‘I’ in the baptism rite generally do so because they're concerned about clericalism, wanting to emphasise the role of the community, especially the family, in what it means to incorporate an infant into the Church.

In that August 6 doctrinal note, the Vatican said it was responding to cases in which a baptism was carried out with the language: “In the name of the father and of the mother, of the godfather and of the godmother, of the grandparents, of

the family members, of the friends, in the name of the community we baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Obviously, that's an attempt to be inclusive, to recognise the role of all those parties in a child's faith journey, which are certainly noble concerns.

Yet in this case, Rev. Springer almost literally destroyed the village in order to save it.

Perhaps all this suggests a lesson for would-be reformers in the Church. It's among the glories of the Catholic Church that people feel so passionately about it, that they're willing to spill their heart's blood pushing it to become the best version of itself as they see it.

That passion is what keeps the Church alive, and whatever one's cause, we would all be poorer if they didn't advocate and press and make their case.

However, in doing so, beware of the law of unintended consequences. Don't take steps in the name of ‘the people’ that will actually bring pain, confusion and unnecessary headaches to the very people would-be reformers are claiming to serve.

In other words, the moral of the story is look before you leap. An old idea, perhaps, but one that never really goes out of fashion.

1 John L. Allen is editor of Crux.com

Transgender woman's role at Mass stirs controversy in Argentina



Inés San Martín

Marking an historical first in Pope Francis' home country, the Diocese of San Luis in northern Argentina invited a transgender woman to read one of the prayer intentions at a public Mass celebrated by the local bishop.

The invitation was issued to Francia López by civil officials to recognize the work she does among the city's poorer, daily feeding 400 people from a soup kitchen she runs. It came without the advance knowledge of the new bishop, Gabriel Barba, who took over the diocese on July 11, and who chose a small village outside of the diocesan metropolitan area to celebrate his first Mass.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions as well as the small size of the town, there were only a few souls in attendance in that first liturgy: on a good day, no more than 100 people live in San José del Morro.

At the end of Tuesday's Mass, López told the media she saw the invitation as a "historic moment" and regarded it as "very hopeful, because it will allow us to build a Church as human beings, where the life options of diverse families have always encountered many obstacles to living their spiritual life".

"The bishop's message was so pastoral, with his gaze fixed on the poor," López emphasized, adding that this constitutes "true hope".

"We need to be able to baptise our children, to count on the word of the shepherds in the face of death and not continue to make children pay for decisions of which they are not part," said López, a professor of Legal and Accounting Sciences who is a school director, and a conductor of a radio program in a local station.

López praised the bishop, saying that her role during the Mass allowed her to "value" the Church to the which she belongs "by family mandate" as a "place of inclusion and love of neighbour".

Credit

Though Bishop Barba took much of the credit – and the heat – for having a transgender woman read an intention, Sr Monica Astorga, a friend of Pope Francis who for decades has ministered to transgender women in southern Argentina, told *Crux* that he actually didn't know about it beforehand.

"I talk a lot with the bishop there, so when I saw the news, I sent him a note saying 'great'," she said last Thursday by telephone.



A man wearing a scarf as a protective measure against Covid-19 walks past a mural depicting Pope Francis in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Church is facing new challenges in the South America country. Photo: CNS

When Dr Barba was the bishop of his previous diocese, Sr Astorga said, she put him in touch with a local family that has a transgender girl, and the bishop "accompanied them a lot".

“Once Bishop Barba learned of the invitation, Sr Astorga said, he didn't object, and he might have issued one himself”

The sister said the bishop didn't know Lopez is transgendered before the Mass, and his gut reaction was that it was too early in his term in San Luis for such a controversial gesture. The diocese is known as being one of the most conservative in Argentina, where even including a guitar

accompanying the choir at the Mass and allowing for applause at the end of the ceremony were considered sensitive.

Once Bishop Barba learned of the invitation, Sr Astorga said, he didn't object, and he might have issued one himself eventually. He was concerned that including a transgender woman would be seen as too big a step, too soon, she said, but Sr Astorga said she reassured him. "I told him that perhaps all this internal Church fighting, all these criticisms, are something superficial," she said, adding that the question is "how it's impacted the trans community."

* * * * *

The news of Lopez reading at Mass spread was shared in several social media groups that Sr Astorga monitors.



Francia López (with the blue facemask on left) was invited to speak as the new Bishop of San Luis in Argentina celebrated his first Mass there.

"The news generated a lot of joy," she said. "I told the bishop he should see it as something God allowed. Now the trans community of San Luis, at least, know that they can go into the cathedral church and pray, because someone who's like them was allowed to read during such an important Mass."

Fr James Martin, editor at large of *America Magazine* and known for his outreach towards LGBTQ Catholics in the US, applauded the news of Dr Bishop Barba inviting López.

“Pope Francis sent a letter in which he expressed his closeness to the diocese, written before news of López's participation in the Mass”

"It's essential to include all the Faithful in the Prayers of the Faithful, and that includes LGBTQ people," he said. "That means we pray for their needs and we also invite them to pray. Bishop Barba was acting as a true pastor in welcoming a transgender woman to pray in the cathedral."

Fr Martin, who last year met with Pope Francis in the Vatican, when the pope reportedly encouraged him to continue with his ministry, said López is "a child of God, a baptised Catholic, and a full member of the church."

"And for anyone who doubts this: it is surely not a sin simply to

be a transgender person."

Yet not everyone saw the news as positive. A well-known conservative Catholic outlet, *InfoCatolica*, published an article that's drawn more than 50 comments, most negative, attacking the bishop, blaming the pope and condemning López.

"We are all sinners, but sin must not be defended and propagated," one commenter wrote. "It is quite regrettable and painful that the priest" can bless "mortal sin in the person of monstrous and unhappy transsexuals."

Another user, who identified herself as 'Lourdes', wrote that perversion comes from the devil and all those who sin against God and take Holy Communion "eat their own condemnation".

Several called the bishop and others in attendance "heretics," "apostates" and "blasphemers".

Pope Francis sent a letter in which he expressed his closeness to the diocese, written before news of López' participation in the Mass.

"The festivities are a meeting between the holy faithful people of God, the bishop and the patron saint," Pope Francis wrote. "All come together on this day to meet the Lord, in a feast of prayer and joy, of peace and hope. I bless you and all the holy Faithful people of God who will celebrate the patron saint festivities, and I ask the Virgin and St Louis the king, pilgrim, to take care of you during your path."

i Inés San Martín is a reporter with *Crux.com*

Letters

Letter of the week

Respect for 'sanctity of life' must come with Covid-19 recovery

Dear Editor, Covid-19 has become part of many of the themes associated with Catholic teaching in recent months. This 'collateral damage' of biblical proportions has sent shockwaves through society as we know it. I need not reference the impacts at this moment in time, as these are well known and quite frankly many people are tired of being reminded of what has happened since the outbreak.

Pope Francis and many trustworthy Catholic sources have been quite vocal on the connection between the impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak on society, particularly in the spiritual, moral and theological realms.

They have suggested that the lockdown could recalibrate man's perspective on the more serious problems, offering him an alternative approach to the world rather than one

of indifference. The Holy Father urged people not to be so distracted by the lockdown measures that they forget the faces of real suffering, including hungry children and forced migrants fleeing famine and war.

Much can be said of the individualism that fuels this indifference that the Holy Father has sought to address. It is the very same individualism that has fuelled advocacy in favour of abortion.

This individualism, which is rooted in various atheist philosophies, is something that is completely incompatible with Catholic thought. Church teaching is imbued with a more personalist, communitarian worldview. Each and every person has intrinsic dignity and worth, since we are all made in the image of God Himself. We can reach our full

potential as human persons within communities – from the family, to the office, to the village and to the global community as a whole.

Covid-19 undoubtedly gave us food for thought, but it hasn't changed the characteristics in man's outlook all that much. The 'recovery' is built on the same basis that drove many of the problems in our society that we as Catholics passionately reject. As Catholics, we believe in promoting the dignity of the person and the sanctity of life and we also know that looking out for others is a prerequisite for this. I personally would like to call on the Holy Father to begin working on a new encyclical as soon as possible.

Yours etc.,

Tadgh Quill-Manley,
Kerry Pike, Co. Cork.

Religious oaths needless in legal system

Dear Editor, Recently there's been considerable debate about taking religious oaths out of the legal system and replacing them with a truth statement. One factor in favour of this comes from

Jesus' teaching in Matt 5:34-37: "But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool... All you need say is 'Yes' if you

mean yes, 'No' if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

This teaching from Jesus is all the more important given that our modern age doesn't really appreciate

the spiritual gravity of committing perjury: calling on the God of all holiness and truth to witness to a lie.

Yours etc.,

Maureen Reilly,
Kenmare, Co. Kerry.

US Democrats are 'seriously sinful'

Dear Editor, The headline on Breda O'Brien's article on the American election [IC 20/08/20] 'American Catholics are faced with a terrible choice in the election' is utter nonsense. The Democrats promote abortion, they do not speak out about the restrictions on freedom of religion around the world, especially in China.

Democrats do not condemn persecution of Christians and other religions. Democrats cannot even use the word 'Christian', they prefer the term 'Easter worshippers'. For a Catholic to vote Democrat is to condone the Democrats anti-life, anti-religious policies. This is surely seriously sinful. In comparison, Donald Trump's sins are venial.

Yours etc.,

Patrick Slevin,
Waterford City, Co. Waterford.



'No way' Catholics can vote for Biden

Dear Editor, That was a very misleading heading on Breda O'Brien's article on the American election [IC 20/08/2020] 'American Catholics are faced with a terrible choice in the election'. Regarding the policies of Joe Biden that she outlines, no Catholic is free in conscience to vote for him. Her criticism of President Trump is rather harsh.

No one is claiming he is perfect but it is important to emphasise his actions to date rather than some of his comments. After all, actions always speak louder than words. Mrs O'Brien referred to Mr Biden approving of violating the consciences of the Little Sisters of the Poor (and he has confirmed that

he will continue doing so if elected president). On the other hand, President Trump has come to their rescue, as he had promised he would. He has also made strenuous efforts to stop funding to International Planned Parenthood but is continually thwarted at every turn by the Democrats.

He is not only 'publicly pro-life' but in doing so is supporting women who are damaged by abortion and many more baby girls are aborted than boys. He has also passed legislation supporting religious freedom, not only in the US but is trying to do so worldwide.

We cannot forget either that he actually acknowledges Christmas and

has been known to refer to God and to prayer – something sadly lacking in our own country.

So, I see no way that a Catholic can consider voting for Joe Biden and, if they do, they are complicit in all the abortions carried out in America. If President Trump is not elected there is no way that any lessening of abortion worldwide can be achieved. Serious thought and prayer is needed to halt the slaughter of the innocents when every country is coming under great pressure to promote abortion.

Yours etc.,

Mary Stewart,
Ardeskin, Co. Donegal.

Good to be cautious with canonisation

Dear Editor, There has always been a fascination with the process of canonisation, the culmination of a lengthy and exhaustive process of investigation of the credentials of candidates for recognition as saints. The description of this process in the Letter from Rome by Junno Arocho Esteves in *The Irish Catholic* [IC 30/07/2020] is timely, particularly in the context of the great increase in the number of canonisations since the papacy of Pope John Paul II.

That must have put the process under greater pressure and Junno Arocho Esteves has drawn attention to several cases which were shelved on the basis of accusations, inappropriate writings or suspicions of sexual abuse.

In this regard Cardinal Becciu of the Congregation for Saint's causes has stressed that every sainthood cause is taken seriously.

There is also a reference to the cause of St Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, the founder of Opus Dei. This is stated to have involved the testimony of persons not in the same congregation, which is correct procedure.

I believe however that many people wondered about the adequacy of that process, mainly on the basis of St Josemaria Escriva's position as the head of an organisation, some of whose members participated actively in the political sphere in General Franco's Spain.

Cardinal Becciu has said that there is always room for improvement in the process and his suggestion that there might be a longer waiting period before the opening of a cause seems eminently sensible, particularly when his office is under ongoing pressure to assess substantial numbers of cases.

Yours etc.,

Michael Walsh,
Clontarf,
Co. Dublin.

'All authority has been given to Christ'

Dear Editor, Frank Brown's *apologia* on Islam is correct only up to a point [IC 20/08/2020]. The Muslim prayer life, especially fasting puts Catholics to shame, who wouldn't even bless themselves for fear of causing offence!

Equally Islamic medical and scientific scholarship were a highlight of the Middle Ages. However, since all authority has been given to Christ (Matt 28:17-20), there the comparison ends! Let us not forget that one of the first acts of Pope Francis, in 2013, was to canonise 800 citizens of the town of Otranto, Italy who endured martyrdom rather than apostasy at the hands of Islamic invaders in 1480.

Faced by such a choice, I wonder if Mr Browne would have the courage to do likewise? May the Holy Martyrs of Otranto intercede for us!

Yours etc.,

Fr John McCallion,
Clonoe,
Co. Tyrone.

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



▲ **ROME:** John-Paul Legare, a seminarian from the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Andrew Fyall from the Diocese of Austin, Texas, Matthew Pohlman from the Archdiocese of Omaha and Stephen Jones from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City arrive at the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

◀ **USA:** Demonstrators in Washington gather at the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool for the 'Get Your Knee Off Our Necks' march. The event marked the 57th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr's 'I Have a Dream' speech.



VATICAN: Italian Bishop Claudio Maniago of Castellana, president of the Italian bishops' liturgy commission, and Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, conference president, give Pope Francis the first copy of the new edition of the *Roman Missal* in Italian on August 28 during a meeting in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican. Photos: CNS



BELARUS: A priest approaches women forming a human chain in front of Ss Simon and Helena Church in Minsk during a protest against presidential election results.



USA: A man in Sulphur, Louisiana passes fallen telephone lines after Hurricane Laura had passed through the region, causing a huge amount of damage.



USA: Parents and kindergarten students at St Clare of Montefalco Catholic School in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, attend class orientation with social distancing.



The last temptation, the greatest treason

*The last temptation is the greatest treason:
To do the right deed for the wrong reason.*

TS. Eliot [pictured] wrote those words to describe how difficult it is to purge our motivation of selfish concerns, to do things for reasons that are not ultimately about ourselves. In Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, his main character is Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is martyred for his Faith. From every outward appearance, Becket is a saint, unselfish, motivated by faith and love. But as Eliot teases out in *Murder in the Cathedral*, the outward narrative doesn't tell the deeper story, doesn't show what's more radically at issue.

It's not that Thomas Becket wasn't a saint or wasn't honest in his motivation for doing good works; rather there's still a "last temptation" that he needed to overcome on the road to becoming a full saint. Beneath the surface narrative there's always a deeper, more-subtle, invisible, moral battle going on, a "last temptation" that must be overcome. What's that temptation?

It's a temptation that comes disguised as a grace and tempts



Fr Rolheiser



us in this way: be unselfish, be faithful, do good things, never compromise the truth, be about others, carry your solitude at a high level, be above the mediocrity of the crowd, be that exceptional moral person, accept martyrdom if it is asked of you. But why? For what reason?

There are many motives for why we want to be good, but the one that disguises itself as a grace and is really a negative temptation is this one: be good because of the respect, admiration and permanent good name it will win you, for the genuine glory that this brings. This is the temptation faced by a good person. Wanting a good name is

not a bad thing, but in the end it's still about ourselves.

In my more reflective moments, I'm haunted by this and left with self-doubts. Am I really doing what I am doing for Jesus, for others, for the world, or am I doing it for my own good name and how I can then feel good about that? Am I doing it so that others might lead fuller, less fearful, lives or am I doing it for the respect it garners for me? When I'm teaching is my real motivation to make others fall in love with Jesus or to have them admire me for my insights? When I write books and articles, am I really trying to dispense wisdom or am I trying to show how wise I am? Is this about God or about me?

Perhaps we can never really answer these questions since our motivation is always mixed and it's impossible to sort this out exactly. But still, we owe it to others and to

ourselves to scrutinise ourselves over this in prayer, in conscience, in spiritual direction and in discussion with others.

“Our faults display themselves publicly and crassly when we're immature, but the hard fact is that they generally don't disappear when we are mature. They simply take on more-subtle forms...”

How do we overcome that 'last temptation', to do the right things and not make it about ourselves?

The struggle to overcome selfishness and motivate ourselves by a clear, honest altruism can be an impossible battle to win.

Classically the Churches have told us there are seven deadly sins (pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, sloth) that are tied to our very nature and with which we will struggle our whole lives. And the problem is that the more we seem to overcome them, the more they manage to simply disguise themselves in more subtle forms in our lives.

For example, take Jesus' counsel to not be proud and take the most

prestigious place at table and then be embarrassed by being asked to move to a lower place, but rather humbly taking the lowest seat so as to be invited to move higher. That's sound practical advice, no doubt, but it can also be a recipe for a pride we can really be proud of.

Once we have displayed our humility and been publicly recognised for it, then we can feel a truly superior pride in how humble we've been! It's the same for all of the deadly sins. As we succeed in not giving in to crasser temptations, they re-root themselves in subtler forms within us.

Our faults display themselves publicly and crassly when we're immature, but the hard fact is that they generally don't disappear when we are mature. They simply take on more-subtle forms. For instance, when I'm immature and wrapped-up in my own life and ambitions, I might not give much thought to helping the poor.

Then, when I'm older, more mature and more theologically schooled, I will write articles publicly confessing that we all should be doing more for the poor. Well, challenging myself and others to be more attentive to the poor is in fact a good thing...and while that might not help the poor very much, it will certainly help me to feel better about myself.

How do we ever get beyond this, this last temptation, to do the right thing for the wrong reason?

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, September 3, 2020

Personal Profile

Carolyn O'Meara:
Putting the care
in Gianna Care

Page 34



Back-to-School supports for your child's wellbeing



It's difficult to gauge the impact Covid-19 has had on young people, but the likelihood is that it will not be positive. While the physical threat the virus poses children is slim, the effects on mental health and wellbeing are significant.

What is certain, however, is that the return to school will benefit children. Dr Noel McDermott, a psychotherapist with over 25 years' experience in health, social care, and education, says that schools are "absolutely essential" to help children combat the strain Covid-19 places on them.

"Schools do so much more than force-feed a curriculum into children," he says. "They prepare



Despite the challenges, returning to the classroom is the right thing for children writes Ruadhán Jones

a child to move into complex social interactions central to success in life, [and] they mitigate against harm caused in other areas of the child's life.

"All these areas, more than at any other time in our collective history, are absolutely essential for our children and crucial in understanding why we need

to re-open schools and get our children back into them."

So how do schools help children cope with Covid-19? And what are the challenges facing parents and children in transitioning back to the school? Here are a few tips to help you make the return as smooth as possible.

Fostering resilience

While one of the central roles of schools is study and learning, this is not their only role, Noel McDermott argues. Instead, he describes schools as one of the most important potential resilience sources for children.

"Schools offer a resilience fostering environment," Dr McDermott says, "and resilience in these times is desperately needed – it psychologically helps us cope with life's knocks, offering positive development despite adversity."

The reasons schools are such key centres for fostering resilience are manifold, but here are two key ones. The first is that

they are a safe environment for children to experiment in.

Schools allow children to experience social challenge and diversity in a safe and supportive environment, emphasising positive relationships based on trust. Central to this is the presence of empathetic adults – teachers – who provide a buffer to the negative impact of adversity. All this contributes to the emotional and psychological health of children by promoting neurological growth.

Fostering relationships

The second, closely related reason is that they are a key location for

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Family News

AND EVENTS

ALWAYS TIME TO GO AND MAKE SOME SCARECROWS

This scarecrow making workshop in Dublin is expected to be fun for all the family and results in the creation of your very own scarecrow created from upcycled materials.

All that's needed is a bit of creativity and the Rediscovery Centre will provide all of the material that is needed. At the end of the workshop attendees will be able to take their scarecrow home to proudly display it in your garden.

All children must be accompanied by an adult and the €20 ticket includes entry for two adults and three children.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions organisers have several guidelines in place, they say: "In order to protect visitors and staff, it is mandatory that adults wear a face mask during their visit. If visitors arrive without a mask there will be some available to purchase in our Ecostore. Adults will not be able to join a tour/workshop until they are wearing a face mask. If you have any queries in relation to face masks please email our team on info@rediscoverycentre.ie"

The event takes place on October 24, more info can be found at: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/make-your-own-scarecrow-workshop-tickets-116290324491?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

EATING DISORDERS WORSENING DUE TO PANDEMIC

During the first few months of the pandemic, many individuals with anorexia reported restricting their eating more according to a US study published last month in the International Journal of Eating Disorders.

People with bulimia and binge-eating disorder reported their conditions worsening. Respondents also noted increased anxiety and concern about Covid-19's impact on their mental health. More than one third of the 1,021 participants said their eating disorder had worsened—and they attributed this change to issues such as a lack of structure, a triggering environment, the absence of social support and an inability to obtain foods that fit their meal plans.

The paper's senior author Cynthia M. Bulik of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) notes that anxiety and depression are on the rise for many because of the pandemic—and this increase can present specific triggers to those with eating disorders.

CONTACT LENSES COULD SLOW MYOPIA IN CHILDREN

Children wearing multifocal contact lenses had slower progression of their myopia, according to results from a clinical trial funded by the National Eye Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health. The findings support an option for controlling the condition, also called nearsightedness, which increases the risk of cataracts, glaucoma and retinal detachment later in life. Investigators of the Bifocal Lenses In Nearsighted Kids (BLINK) Study published in Jama.

"It is especially good news to know that children as young as seven achieved optimal visual acuity and got used to wearing multifocal lenses much the way they would a single vision contact lens. It's not a problem to fit younger kids in contact lenses. It's a safe practice," said BLINK study chair, Dr Jeffrey Walline associate dean for research at the Ohio State University College of Optometry.

Questions must be grounded in 'quest for answers'

The Unitarian Church on St Stephen's Green used to have an eye-catching poster: it said something like: "We ask the big questions: we don't preach answers."

They're not the first to claim that as a badge of honour. Being more comfortable with questions than with answers is, for many, a mark of intellectual sophistication, of open-mindedness and subtlety of thought. The ambiguities of life don't always lead themselves to straightforward answers: better to spend time pondering questions.

"If you sincerely ask a question like 'what's the meaning of life?', 'is there a God?', 'what is the nature of beauty?', you're still looking for an answer"

You'll find this kind of thinking everywhere from motivational posters to the minds of philosophy graduates. I used to be favourably disposed to this way of thinking myself: I thought of myself as more of a question-ponderer than an answer man. I now look back at this attitude with something between bafflement and mild horror. Why? Because answers are the point of questions. To be more interested in questions than answers is like being more interested in cooking than in making tasty or healthy food. It's not clear whether a person saying this could be properly interested in questions at all.

Question

When I ask a basic question like "what's your favourite colour?", "who is the president of Paraguay?", or "when will we



Everyday philosophy

Ben Conroy

have dinner?", what I'm doing is looking for an answer. If you were to respond to the first question with "my favourite colour is red" and I replied "oh, I'm more interested in questions than in answers", you'd look at me like I had two heads. That's not even a matter of your particular desires: the very nature of questions like these is to seek an answer.

Feature

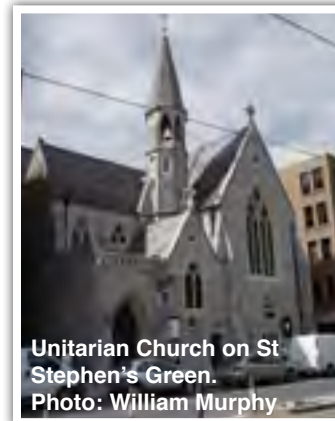
My claim is that this basic feature is maintained across almost all types of questions, no matter how deep or sophisticated. If you sincerely ask a question like "what's the meaning of life?", "is there a God?", "what is the nature of beauty?", you're still looking for an answer. The answer might be vastly more complicated or harder to discover, but to seriously consider these questions is to seek out their answers.

Sure, there are some questions that aren't meant to be answered: rhetorical questions like "is the Pope Catholic?" or nonsense questions meant to provoke a laugh (I would volunteer "what's the difference between a duck?" as an example, but for the fact that that actually does have an answer: "one of its legs are both the same"). But these aren't the kinds of questions that questions-not-answers people are thinking about. The questions they want to spend time considering aren't posed flippantly: they're deadly serious. But asking a question without hoping to find its answer is fundamentally unserious. It's at best a kind of parlour game, at

worst a complete waste of time. It's not genuine inquiry, and it's not philosophy. An intellectually curious person is concerned with finding the truth, not indulging a penchant for cool-sounding questions that they have no intention of trying to answer.

Charitable

Now, to be charitable to the unitarians, motivational poster-makers, and my own past self, I think that what people may mean by 'questions are better than answers' talk is that we should resist moving too quickly or easily to answers to deep questions. There is a real danger of treating fundamental questions like threats, to be neutralised as quickly as possible with a neat textbook



Unitarian Church on St Stephen's Green.
Photo: William Murphy

answer that leaves your treasured pre-existing beliefs unbothered.

A version of this kind of thinking is unfortunately common among the traditionally religious. G.K. Chesterton wrote that "an open-mind is like an

open mouth, made to close again on something solid". That's not wrong, but there are wrong ways to read it. It's not that 'questioning' is some kind of brief transitional phase to be moved through before you settle down with your nice solid answers – a sort of adolescence of the mind. Gaining knowledge always involves posing new questions and almost always involves re-pondering ones you've already thought about. A person who stops asking questions is intellectually dead.

"The ambiguities of life don't always lead themselves to straightforward answers: better to spend time pondering questions"

But the problem here is ultimately that answers that are too pat, too trite, or too simple are bad answers to the questions they are attempting to resolve. What makes deep questions meaningful and challenging, with the potential to upend your worldview and shatter your certainties, is that their answers are important. To defend the value of searching and challenging questioning by abandoning the search for answers is not to defend it at all.

The answers, of course, may not be easy to find. The fact that a question hasn't yet yielded a universally accepted answer (or even an answer at all) is not a reason to abandon it. We may think we have an answer only to learn something new that forces us to abandon it. In this world, the necessity of asking questions will never come to an end: but it's a necessity grounded in our quest for answers.

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children's social interactions. The social learning aspects are crucial in child development both in the sense that learning takes place socially and that children learn important social connection skills. Through interaction with peers and adults in the school children grow emotionally, cognitively and psychologically.

Equally, children who faced difficulties in the home environment can find those deficits reduced by schools especially when the attachment relationships are looked at closely. Attachment is a strong, warm bond between a child and adult that encourages safety and growth.

It's for these reasons that Dr McDermott believes going back to school is so essential.

“It's not just children who will be affected by the uncertainty and fears of returning to school”

“We cannot hope that our mental health services will cope with the developmental and other trauma that children are and will be experiencing due to not being in school and due to growing up in a pandemic,” he says. “A significant portion of the damage the pandemic is doing psychologically to our children can be mitigated simply by going back to school.”

Easing the transition

However important going back to school is, that doesn't invalidate the concerns and fears of parents and children. The two main effects that Dr McDermott identifies are the fears associated with the virus and the psychological effect of separation after a significant period of time spent together.

With regard to fear of the virus, Dr McDermott highlights the importance of getting good information on the likelihood of children being infected. There is plenty of evidence which suggests that children don't suffer severe symptoms from becoming infected and that they are less likely than adults to spread the virus.

In order to address the physical concerns, however, good infection control practices are encouraged. For children, proper hand washing should be practiced and, if they are old enough, social distancing also. As parents, it is important to follow school guidelines for interactions

such as dropping kids off: socially distance, face masks, don't enter the building, etc.

In order to reassure yourself and your child, contacting your school and talking through the different scenarios with them can be helpful. No plan can cover all contingencies, but knowing what is in place can at least provide clarity where uncertainty otherwise reigns.

Separation anxiety

While the physical fears are given a lot of attention, Dr McDermott believes that separation anxiety will be one of the primary difficulties facing parents and children. Given the extended break spent together and the added strain of Covid-19, this can exacerbate the difficulty of separating, especially for young children.

Signs of such anxiety in children will most often be physical. In younger ones, watch out for the following: regression into developmentally earlier behaviours such as thumb sucking, needing a special toy or comforter; emotional dysregulation and temper issues; and, in some cases bed wetting.

In older children, the manifestations may be the following: poor sleep; changes to eating habits or appetite issues; problems with energy levels, too much or too little; irritability; and becoming withdrawn.

How to respond

Although the circumstances seem extreme, having anxieties about returning to school is normal. As such, our responses will largely be tried and trusted. Try and remember how you have dealt with your kids being anxious or unhappy before – ask yourself what worked then?

Dr Noel McDermott believes that the best approach to this is to imagine this not as 'going back to school' but as starting at school. What were your kids like when they first started school, what worked with them at that point?



It's useful to frame it in this way as it has been a long time away from school and upon return many of the processes will have changed (bubbling, queuing, parents having restricted access, no hugging, masks, hand washing, etc). It's a whole new ball game and the strangeness of it is likely to produce feelings of significant loss and anxiety.

“In order to reassure yourself and your child, contacting your school and talking through the different scenarios with them can be helpful”

In general, what works with helping kids deal with their anxieties is to increase those behaviours that provide comfort and support prior to starting back and for the first few weeks after going back are:

- More cuddles.
- More one to one time.
- Lots of time to talk about things.
- Normalisation techniques (“of course you are feeling worried darling, we all feel that way when starting school/seeing friend's after a long time etc”).
- Encouraging self-soothing through special toys for example.

Mind your own wellbeing

It's not just children who will be affected by the uncertainty and fears of returning to school. While your kids going back to school is the right thing, don't be surprised to feel unsettled as a parent.

You need to take care of yourself to be able to mind your children. Be compassionate with yourself, we are all experiencing them and it's normal to have concerns. Talk with your partner, if possible, and ensure you are on the same page in terms of parenting decisions.

This will help clarify the situation as well as putting your fears to the test – are they real concerns or imagined? By subjecting them to the 'reality test', you can identify which scenarios are likely and make plans accordingly.

Keeping in contact with your school, as well as other parents, can turn the unknown into the known. We can't control the unknown, but the known we can at least plan for. Share your fears to ground yourself and remember to be patient – this is going to be a difficult time for many of us.

Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

There is a clematis in flower along our fence, big, rich, flouncy purple flowers. The sepals are feathery with a darker purple rib running the length of them. At the heart of the flower are stamens, purple merging to an almost lime green. Next to it is a hydrangea. Lilac-fading-to-white florets surround a head of tiny purple, lavender and lilac flower beads in a beautiful shape which I'm told is a lace-cap. The palette of purples draws my eye every time. Maybe if I was a decent gardener, I could claim to have planned this but in reality, I am not and the juxtaposition is entirely accidental.

And it is not simply that these are beautiful. They are also involved in wondrous processes as my home-grown scientists explained to me. With every breath we expel carbon dioxide and the plants draw this from the air. Then taking water from the earth through their roots and using light from the sun they split the water atoms into protons and electrons creating glucose energy for growth and releasing oxygen back into the atmosphere. We are caught up in a wonderful circle of life with the plants in our garden!

“So much of our modern lifestyle creates a disconnect between us and the rest of creation”

These plants are beautiful and their beauty does not depend on me being here to gaze on them. If this hydrangea was to grow in the middle of a forest, unseen by anyone it would still be beautiful, still amazing, still a testament to the wonder of God the creator. How often I underestimate this when I casually think, “Ah sure it's a grand flower”.

So much of our modern lifestyle creates a disconnect between us and the rest of creation. Too often the purpose of life is constructed in terms of what we possess, what our money can buy. As a result we can look upon the natural world as simply something which is there for our use and consumption. We lose our sense of wonder and reverence. As Pope Francis says, we become disenchanted with the

universe. When that happens, it reinforces a flat, functional, consumerist attitude towards the Earth's resources. Such an attitude can even extend to how we treat other people – there for our use, disposable, – and even our capacity for faith. When we lose our capacity for wonder and awe we become disconnected from the Spirit.



The Season of Creation is celebrated in the Christian Churches and beyond from 1st September to 4th October, the Feast Day of St Francis. Surely this is a time to reawaken in ourselves and our children that sense of wonder which sees creation as a tapestry of revelation woven by Spirit.

One way is simply to take time to contemplate the natural world – whether that is the spider's web on a gate or the simple beauty and complexity of a flower. Then of course there is also science and remember, Pope Francis was a scientist before he was a priest. Rather than being an obstacle to faith, science can be a wonderful way of engaging with the natural world. The more we understand the more we realise there is to explore. As with faith, glimpses of knowing invite us deeper into the riches of our unknowing. How does a flower grow? How does this swallow find its way here from the plains of Africa? How does that caterpillar know it needs to cocoon to become a butterfly? That sense of curiosity can help us rediscover the universe as a place of wonder – a place that speaks to us of the creative energy of God.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* makes it clear that if we are to address the challenges of climate crisis we need to rediscover a deep reverence for the natural world and for each other. Ultimately we need to realise that we are an integral part of that community of creation.

Carolyn O'Meara: Putting the care in Gianna Care

Personal Profile



Jason Osborne

The battle for life in Ireland is a vicious one, but there are those out there looking to soften the hard edges it's being fought with. Carolyn O'Meara is one of them, and she's seeking to do so through her work with Gianna Care, an organisation that seeks to aid women experiencing crisis pregnancies while also caring for those who've experienced abortion, whether directly or tangentially.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Carolyn talked about where these convictions came from: "The minute I heard what abortion was and understood, I just immediately felt very, very passionate about it - about how wrong it was."

Coming from a background of Faith, she said: "I didn't really stick to it for my teenage years, but I always was very, very pro-life, and that never wavered at all."

“Carolyn, and Gianna Care under her direction, don't limit themselves to crisis pregnancy care”

While her Faith may have been slow to blossom, blossom it did during the World Youth Day in Rome in 2000.

Rome

"I had the opportunity to go to the World Youth Day in Rome with John Paul II. I really went because I just had never been to Italy and I just wanted to go. I didn't have a massive interest in the World Youth Day part, but I attended everything and I went everywhere, and it was really at John Paul II's Mass that everything - I can't even really explain it,



but I definitely experienced the love of God in a very real way," she says.

Reflecting on her experiences, she said, "I came back different, definitely. Everything made sense after that, and everything of the truth was very to the forefront of my mind - that this was the truth."

While her pro-life beliefs had never dimmed, the renewal of her Faith bolstered what was already there. "It gave me a lot of courage which I wasn't really expecting. I remember feeling much more courageous and much more alive when I came back. I just felt different, all in a positive way."

Weathering a tough Leaving Cert year during which she also lost her mother, Carolyn progressed to university, where her involvement in the pro-life movement deepened. She helped to re-establish the university pro-life society, which kept her busy.

"Lots of pro-life activity all during my college years. Loads, like weekly, at least."

Husband

The pro-life work didn't stop upon attaining her degree, but it continued as she took up her job in psychiatric nursing. It was during this time that she met her future husband.

"During that time when I was working, I met my husband through the pro-life movement. We both met doing pro-life work, and yeah, so it was a great foundation of course, to be on the same level and he had always had Faith."

It was through her engagement with these various pro-life initiatives that Carolyn came to envision Gianna Care.

"It started off with really providing a safe environment in a humble room, giving people that opportunity to be able to just to safely speak and be listened to. But it has grown from "safe environment" to offering professional counselling with qualified counselling psychotherapists to ultrasound scanning, material support in every way you can possibly think of, financial

support. We have the birth partners, we've been companions for hospital visits, we do interview prep and CVs - you know, helping women to continue on getting jobs or applications for colleges, courses. We've been godparents."

She continues, "Pre-Covid, we did have a monthly mother and baby support group. So, after women had their babies they could come once a month in to the office, just to meet up, talk about being mothers and the challenges and successes, and sharing all the knowledge that they have. Hospital bags, maternity wear. Basically, anything and everything you can possibly think of that can support a mother through this. And it doesn't end. It really ends when the mother feels that she's gotten the support that she needs and that she can move on."

Under her guidance, the group has gone from strength to strength.

"In 2018, we opened in Galway, and in April 2020 we opened in Tralee, Co. Kerry. And just recently

then, we opened in Offaly - it's more just for practical support."

Origins

Looking back on their humble origins, and tracing the path to where she stands today, Carolyn finds herself overwhelmed. "I find it very hard to take it in, to be honest, Jason. Because I found photographs the other day, of when we first got the office, and I took pictures. It was this horrible, old brown carpet and two desks that were wrecked."

"I just think it's a miracle. That's all I can think of. Because we had no money, we'd nothing really to go on, and it all just came together. Very hard to take it in, to be honest."

“The pro-life work didn't stop upon attaining her degree, but it continued as she took up her job in psychiatric nursing”

Carolyn, and Gianna Care under her direction, don't limit themselves to crisis pregnancy care - they make themselves available to those who've suffered the consequences of abortion, too.

"When we started Gianna Care, I remember the few of us that were there saying no matter what, we have to do something for post-abortion women. So, very soon into Gianna Care, we started a monthly post-abortion support group, and that was the first one of its type in Ireland," she remembers.

"There was nothing as far as we researched that was allowing women, and men, to come together to hear that they weren't the only ones - again, safe environment. It wasn't group therapy, but it was more like peer-support," she says. "We're very, very passionate about post-abortive healing," she adds.

With pro-lifers often being accused of seeking births, while ignoring the life that comes afterwards, Carolyn O'Meara seeks to put the "care" in Gianna Care.

Managing money during the pandemic

We are really struggling with managing our finances especially since our income has been affected during the Covid-19 pandemic. What advice do you have to help us to get back on track?

The first thing to do is to sit down and budget. This requires an open communication with your spouse so you can both decide what things are absolute priorities and what you can live without. You need to spend the time analysing exactly what you are spending your money on and if there are small and big ways that you can cut back. There are lots of free budgeting apps such as The Money Doctor App which allow you to track your spending so you can see exactly where your money is going. Do you really need to buy 5 lattes a week, or are you actually using your movies subscription? After a month a pattern will become clear as to what elements of your spending need to be revised. Then you need to look at other ways to save, have you got loyalty cards for all the places you shop? You can store them in one handy location

with the StoCard app, you will be surprised at how quickly points convert to money. What monthly outgoings such as phones and the internet are up for renewal? It's amazing how many people don't shop around each year. By spending time making some phone calls you can save hundreds of euros. Be sure to put all your renewal dates in your calendar so when they do arise you can make those calls. Trust me, It is always worth spending the time shopping around.

Then look at your day to day spending, and then your regular monthly payments. Setting up additional accounts is really easy online and can be really helpful in budgeting. When looking at your regular monthly or quarterly payments such as gas, electricity, car insurance, house insurance (I know the list can be endless) figure out what the annual cost is and divide by 12, and then set aside at the

start of the month that amount into a separate utility bills account, next, you need to set up an account for irregular expenses that might occur, you can avoid the stress of unexpected expenditure such as needing emergency plumbing by setting aside a small amount each month, then when it comes to that unexpected car repair, money will have accrued and you won't need to dip into your day to day cash flow.

Then you need to work out what your day to day spending is, ie: after all your monthly bills are paid, what are you spending on things like fuel, leisure, shopping, whatever it is, just leave that amount in your account. If anything is left over put it into your irregular bills or savings account. You will be amazed at how making small changes like having one take away a month instead of two, changing providers on utilities and being aware of what you are spending can actually go a long way into saving you hundreds of euro.



Wendy Grace

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Mercy just one of the virtues being cancelled

What with the #Golfgate row, the thirst for punishments and polarising conflicts worldwide you'd wonder if Covid-19 wasn't infecting brains and temperaments. There has been much honest grappling with challenging issues but also much casting of first stones.

On *Thought for the Day* (BBC Radio 4) last Wednesday morning, Anglican Bishop Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani took a measured view. She reckoned we'd have to learn to live alongside the virus. She reminded us that most faith traditions taught that "each life was precious and valued", that the Judeo-Christian view was that every individual was cherished by God in whose image we are made. We needed to take health warnings seriously, to value physical safety but not exclusively. If we were gripped by fear of illness and death we could lose sight of other virtues like compassion, kindness and community.

These virtues got short shrift from some callers on last Friday's *Liveline* (RTÉ Radio 1). Bishop Emeritus of Killaloe Dr Willie Walsh tried to calm the waters. He was concerned that as a society we were becoming very harsh and unforgiving. He accepted that #Golfgate involved a "serious error of judgement" but was uneasy with



Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani delivered the *Thought for the Day* on BBC Radio 4 on Wednesday of last week.

demands for "heavy punishment". It struck me that forgiveness and due punishment aren't mutually exclusive, and I'd like to have heard more on the concept of mercy. I was reminded of the words of Mary Gauthier's song: "We all could use a little mercy now."

Fearful

Bishop Walsh was fearful of absolute statements and thought the Church had erred in that area, though I'd like to have had greater clarity on when absolutes are appropriate and when not. Can we believe in some absolutes without being absolutist?

After his line suddenly went dead there followed

a head-wrecking conflict among callers with contributions varying from painfully strident to reasonably calm. One woman was very unfair to the bishop, saying he wasn't in any position to "dictate" to anyone. Dictating was the last thing the bishop was doing and later he was defended on that score by Fr Iggy O'Donovan who also suggested we were in danger of losing the societal solidarity evident at the time of the original lockdown. I think that's a justified fear at the moment.

He also suggested that the "new morality" could be just as oppressive as what we've left behind.

I did, however, enjoy all the colourful metaphors – we can get angry, but we don't lose our penchant for the poetic. One caller sarcastically accused another – "you should be canonised!"; Fr O'Donovan said he was seldom seen as a "spear bearer for the bishops"; there was talk of "slave labour" in meat factories but presenter Katie Hannon put a stop to that – the kind of language, she said, that could land them in the High Court.

Alcohol was described as "Covid's biggest friend"; an angry caller accused the Clifden 81 of "spitting in our faces", a particularly apt if repulsive image; a "social bomb" was mentioned; being kind was said to be going out the window; and in relation to Phil Hogan's somewhat forced resignation from the European Commission, there were references to cutting off noses to spite faces.



Cllr Mannix Flynn.

PICK OF THE WEEK

POVEDA

EWTN, Sunday, September 6, 9pm

(2016) The story of Fr Pedro Poveda: saint, martyr and innovative educator.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

RTÉ One, Sunday, September 6, 10.30pm

Joe Duffy takes over as host. The first guest is performer Blindboy Boatclub.

MY HEART IS NOT AFRAID

EWTN, Monday, September 7, 9.30pm also Friday, September 11, 9am

The martyrdom of Alojzija Grozde, a young Slovenian student and member of Catholic Action who was killed after Yugoslav Partisans discovered him carrying religious books during World War II.

One caller used the Mannix Flynn documentary *Land Without God* (RTÉ One, Thursday) as a weapon against Bishop Walsh. And sure enough, it was a grim reminder of harsher times with children being put away in institutions.

It was a very personal, sometimes poetic but harrowing story of what happened to several generations of the Flynn family, in and out of reformatories and prisons, with stories of "harsh punishment of petty offences".

It was insightful and disturbing but could have done with more historical context, verification and sharper editing and direction. There was a general and understandable bitterness towards the Catholic Church that might have been better focused more on specific institutions

(Daingean and Letterfrack got a pasting).

The bitterness sometimes clouded judgement – one contributor said no one went to jail for the abuse but also that when they did go to jail they were well treated. There was reference to being baptised "with a sledge hammer" and a cheap shot at "the Little Sisters of the Rich". Flynn reckoned the system was "designed to annihilate us all".

I'm just glad we've largely moved on from those times, but as a society we need to be careful not to create other abuses that future generations will lambaste us for.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
boreganmedia



Pat O'Kelly

Music

Beethoven's hard years of string quartets and chamber pots

Writing about Beethoven's Quartets last time, I got as far as his three *Op 59s*. Now I'll go on a little further.

Early in 1809, Princes Franz Lobkowitz and Ferdinand Kinsky together with Archduke Rudolph combined to grant the composer an annuity of 4,000 florins. As a result Beethoven considered marriage but his subsequent rejection by Thérèse Malfatti (1792-1851), for whom he probably wrote his piano bagatelle *Für Elise*, devastated him.

Then in May 1809 the French re-entered Vienna, this time holding the city for five months. During the occupation a French music lover, Louis de Vienny, called on the composer and left the following description of his

chambers: "His lodgings consisted of two rooms. Blotches of moisture covered the ceilings; an oldish grand piano on which the dust disputed the place with various pieces of engraved and manuscript music; under the piano (I do not exaggerate) an unemptied *pot de nuit*; a quantity of pens encrusted with ink. The chairs were covered with plates, bearing the remains of last night's supper, and wearing apparel."

However, the conditions didn't impair Beethoven writing his *Op 74 E flat Harp Quartet*, dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz. The title comes from a *pizzicato* motif in the opening movement.

Beethoven himself gave his *F minor Op 95 Quartet*

the designation *Serioso*. The composer's life was difficult at the time of its composition around 1810. His increasing deafness, precarious general health, financial insecurity, frustration in love and difficulties within his immediate family all militated against him.

He wrote to a friend from his Bonn days, Dr Franz Wegele (1765-1848), who was then living in Vienna: "If I had not read somewhere that no one should quit life voluntarily while he could still do something worthwhile, I would have been dead long ago and certainly by my own hand. Oh, life is so beautiful, but for me it is poisoned forever."

Commenting on his *Op 95*



Ludwig van Beethoven.

Quartet to Sir George Smart (1776-1867), the English conductor and one of founders of London's Philharmonic Society, Beethoven stated: "The quartet is written for a small circle of connoisseurs and is never to be performed in public."

The *Serioso* is the shortest and most concentrated of Beethoven's quartets. He dedicated it to Nikolaus Zmeskall (1759-1833), an official in the Hungarian Chancellery in Vienna and another long-standing friend. The dedication is considered significant in that Zmeskall was 'middle class' and not a noble patron.

Awards

Diverting temporarily from Beethoven, it is good to learn

Covid-19 has not interfered with Top Security's 2020 Frank Maher Classical Music Awards. Set up in 2001 in memory of Castleknock College Vincentian Fr Frank Maher, the competition is open to sixth-year post primary students of strings, woodwind, brass and piano. The winner may use the €5,000 bursary to attend a recognised place of tuition, a course of study in Ireland or abroad or a purchase necessary for the development of his/her talent.

Entry forms are available from the awards website with applications closing on Friday, September 11. Competition finals are scheduled for Dublin's Royal College of Physicians on Friday, October 2.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

Sacred Space: The Prayerbook 2021

(Messenger Publications, €12.95/£15.49)

The cover of the new edition of this always popular book shows a lighthouse at dusk, and out at sea a barely visible sailing ship in the distance. There came into my mind at once those lines from Newman, "lead, kindly light, amidst th'encircling gloom..." which is surely one of the Christian world's all-time favourite poems (and later, hymn). It was written while Newman, sick with anxiety to get home, was long becalmed in dangerous straits off the coast of Corsica in 1833. Since then it has moved countless millions of all faiths, or indeed none, as an expression of hope in times of affliction.

If the cover of the book is in keeping with the times were are so painfully living through, the prayers themselves and the readings and reflections give profound expression to the hopes of faith. Newman overcame so many obstacles in his life, and learned to live with those he could not change. Over the next liturgical year, beginning in November, this book will help many to do the same.



Culture and Politics Yesterday and Today / Culture et Politique Hier et Aujourd'hui

by Enzo Farinella (Edizioni GrafiSer, €20.00)

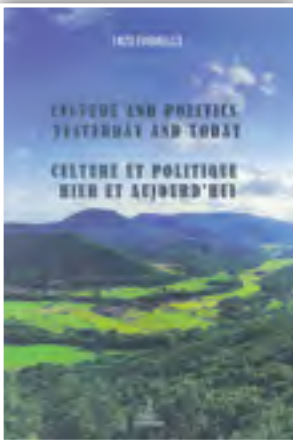
The charming and ebullient Enzo Farinella has long been a familiar figure in the cultural affairs of Dublin, his adopted city. For 20 years he was the director of the Italian Cultural Institution, and now runs the Casa Italia Cultural Centre (at 56 Greenfield Park, Dublin 24).

For decades he has been exploring assiduously the travels and adventures of the monks of Early Christian Ireland across the length of Europe, through France, Germany, Austria, Italy and other countries, in a series of bilingual books. He is not only a devotee of European cultures, but a teacher who believes we can all learn valuable lessons from the future of our continent from the experiences of these extraordinary figures from the past: the men who "saved Europe for civilisation".

It was a rough path for many of them, especially in the Alps. In this book, mainly devoted to their activities in France, is a typical example of the series. The books are intended for a popular readership, to help the countries of Europe make friends.

Perhaps, with Brexit coming up, Enzo Farinella could devote his next book to what has afflicted Britain to make her 'leave Europe' – as if that would ever be possible in reality. Bearing in mind that these are for a wide readership they achieve his intention with enthusiasm and a variety of insights: there are always new and fascinating things to read and remember in all of them.

● Copies of all Enzo Farinella's many books can be purchased directly from International Books, 18 South Frederick Street, Dublin 2; tel. (01) 679 9375, or online.



Newman's challenge re-reading Newman's

As an occasional continuation of our series 'Lockdown Reading'. This week we are publishing an appreciation of an important book once very well known, but now neglected...



Realizations: Newman's own selections of his sermons

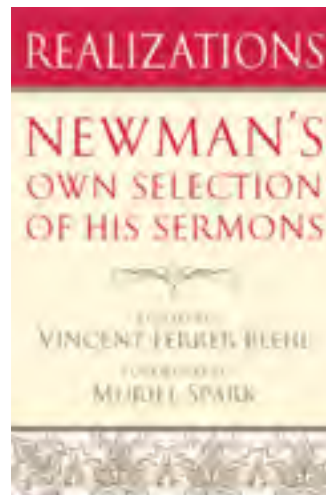
edited by Vincent Ferrer Blehl, with a preface by Muriel Spark (Liturgical Press, 2009 [originally published 1964])

Teresa Whittington

These 13 sermons from Newman's Anglican period were selected by Vincent Ferrer Blehl SJ, an outstanding Newman scholar of his day, who worked over many years with Fr Charles Dessain, and was eventually postulator of the saint's cause. With *The Essential Newman* (1963), which he also edited, this choice of sermons was called an "outstanding anthology".

His choice was made on the basis of a list in one of Newman's letters. In January 1846, during the period that followed his reception into the Catholic church, Newman wrote to his closest friend and fellow Oratorian Ambrose St John. In his letter, he chose these 13 texts from the six volumes of his Parochial and Plain Sermons, saying they could "profitably be used by the faithful".

Introducing the selection he had made, Fr Blehl explains its historical context: the "inauthentic and formalistic Christianity" which characterised much 19th-Century religious practice. He links Newman with the Danish religious thinker and proto-existentialist Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55). Kierkegaard attacked Christianity when and where



it was practised simply out of social conformity.

Like Kierkegaard, Newman offered an alternative to such inauthenticity. His sermons clarify all that is involved in developing and maintaining a sincere Christian faith.

To all of us then, Newman throws down the gauntlet; challenging us to see with him what faith is, how it can be deepened, the ways in which it is betrayed.

He inspires while thoroughly humbling us.

Sermons

Newman's source for each sermon – in the well-established Anglican model for sermons – is a biblical quotation. He takes this theme, and develops a psychologically penetrating sequence of variations on it.

In the 13 sermons included by Fr Blehl, Newman explores subjects such as the law of Christ, obedience, charity and love,

the saints, sincerity, the hidden presence of Christ in the world, the meaning of human life, and the deep peace Faith can give.

He speaks to each one of us individually now, just as he sought out in his preaching every member of his 19th-Century congregation. He aimed to affect that inner self where each of us, in Christ's presence, is required to choose our religious beliefs and moral values. Choice can then form the basis for commitment.

“It is not an easy thing to learn that new language which Christ has brought us. He has interpreted all things for us in a new way”

As Newman writes in the sermon 'Unreal Words' (which he preached in Advent on a text from Isaiah 33:17), the "solemn truths" of Christian salvation "must be laid up in the heart... made our own inwardly". Newman then asks us to prove our choice of Christ, to realise it daily in the lives we lead with others.

But Newman also gives us time in which to do this. In his moral vision, religious development is a process; dynamic and life-long.

To quote again from the sermon 'Unreal Words', Newman says that "absolute belief is the work of long time", and that "...it takes a long time really

to feel and understand things as they are; we learn to do so only gradually".

Newman continues with a metaphor: that of learning a language. "It is not an easy thing to learn that new language which Christ has brought us. He has interpreted all things for us in a new way; he has brought us a

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.

to believers: sermons



Newman the year he became a Catholic, painted in 1845 by Sir William Ross.

religion which sheds a new light on all that happens. Do not get it by rote, or speak it as a thing of course. Try to understand what you say."

Newman's own language perfectly serves the "new language of Christ".

His biographer Brian Martin praises Newman's style for

its directness, simplicity and logic of expression.

Novelist Muriel Spark, who provided the introduction to the anthology, herself a convert, confirms the impact on her of Newman's persuasive "simplicity of intellect and speech".

As we can appreciate from

this selection of sermons, Newman seamlessly integrated word and idea, literary style and religious truth.

In doing so he created a unique and lasting poetry of Faith.

i Dr Teresa Whittington is the librarian at the Central Catholic Library in Dublin.

The false view of the world that shapes our lives today

We Built Reality: How social sciences infiltrated culture, politics and power
by Jason Blakely
(Oxford University Press,
£64.00pb/\$99.00hb/
€23.00pb)

Frank Litton

In a world of uncertainty one thing is certain: Ireland has changed significantly over the last 50 years.

The way to describe, or evaluate, that change is less certain. Jason Blakely's well-informed and accessible account provides compelling answers to both questions.

He writes of the US and how the social sciences have descended from their ivory towers to infiltrate culture, shaping the frame of reference in which Americans identify problems and seek solutions.

What he finds in the US can be found here. Most would agree that one change has been the dilution, if not the disappearance, of all distinctively Irish elements in our culture. We have been 'liberated', set free in the modern world, which is, of course, the Anglo-American world.

So we can learn from Blakely. From the 1950s onwards economics has played and increasingly important role in policy-making; a fact universally welcomed, with good reason.

National narrative

Its voice grew louder as those urging versions of the national narrative grew weaker. Moral concerns dropped down, or out of the agenda displaced by scientific enquiries into social questions.

For instance, the journal *Christus Rex* that had been devoted to the application of Catholic social teachings ceased publication in 1971, when it was incorporated in *Social Studies: Irish Journal of Sociology*.

Of all the social sciences, economics has the strongest scientific credentials. Like all sciences, it advances



Jason Blakely.

by abstracting well-defined problems that are amenable to rigorous enquiry from the mysterious flux of reality. In its case the mystery is that of human agency and the competing and conflicting motives that move us and the constraints that shape them and the abstraction is that rational decision-maker, 'economic man'. He knows his preferences and their ranking and how they might be satisfied.

Answerable questions follow: how should he proceed to optimise their satisfaction given his scarce resources? What arrangements best facilitate his optimising?

“Questions of justification are once again cancelled and interdependence is once more reduced to questions of power”

Models are built to supply the answers to these and subsequent questions. These provide serviceable maps to policy-makers as they plot routes through dangerous terrains.

Problems start, Blakely argues, when this abstraction departs the economists' study and enters the everyday world bearing the authority of science. Its perspective has no place for discussion of what our preferences should be. These

express our values and values are beyond dispute. It is well suited to a world of consumers, allowing us say what we want and asserting our right to it. It makes competitors of us all and reduces interdependence to questions of power.

The discussions that would identify interdependence in shared understandings of human flourishing and allow us to be producers of a common world are ruled out.

While sociologists dispute with economists and do bring values into question, they treat them as facts about people; not as ideas of what is good and worthwhile that can be the subject of argument. They ask who holds what values and how they change. Answers are sought in social conditions.

Interesting, certainly and maybe useful, but questions of justification are once again cancelled and interdependence is once more reduced to questions of power.

Humanities

The humanities where ideas of the good that we might hope to attain and the complexity of our relationships are explored, are discounted because they lack the basis in science that economics and sociology can claim.

That claim is false. While it holds for them as disciplines, programmes of research, the image of ourselves and our society that they deliver to culture has no scientific basis.

It has no more claim to be scientific than the far richer images that we find in the humanities that are far better grounded.

Blakely reminds us that the way we imagine society has consequences for the distribution of power. The diminished image that the social sciences produce clearly empowers the 'experts' in those disciplines.

At a more general level, it protects and advances the interests of those that benefit most from capitalism's globalising project.

Classifieds

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Then, in his merciful eyes,
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Say this prayer for three days.

T M

The Irish Catholic

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— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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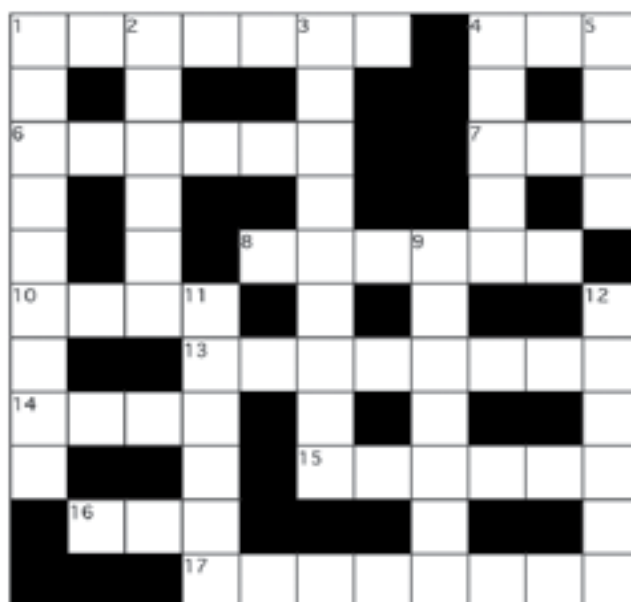
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Crossword Junior

Gordius 348



Across

- 1 You have to climb up to sleep in the top one (4,3)
- 4 Friend (3)
- 6 Computer you can carry around easily (6)
- 7 Pull it up to close an anorak (3)
- 8 American money - a 'buck' (6)
- 10 Uses oars to move a boat (4)
- 13 Boys and girls (8)
- 14 Close to (4)
- 15 You use it when sewing (6)
- 16 Spinning toy (3)
- 17 Use them to cut paper, for example (8)

Down

- 1 She might dance in 'Swan Lake' (9)
- 2 The brother of a niece (6)
- 3 Bomb blast (9)
- 4 You can have different toppings on this Italian food (5)
- 5 Parts of the mouth (4)
- 9 Snakes and _____ is a popular game (7)
- 11 Leftover bits (6)
- 12 Goes in (6)

SOLUTIONS, AUGUST 27

GORDIUS No. 470

Across — 1 Eft 3 Fundraising 8 Beetle 9 Shopping spree 10 Lapis lazuli 11 Shear 13 Motto 15 Sisters of Mercy 20 Lager 23 Greed 24 Abseiled 26 Protagonist 27 Hug

Down — 1 Embellishes 2 Trespass 3 Fells 4 Despite 5 Impis 6 Irises 7 Gag 12 Ruby wedding 13 Mural 14 Offer 17 Rose bush 18 Ugandan 19 Fresco 22 Erica 23 Grant 24 App

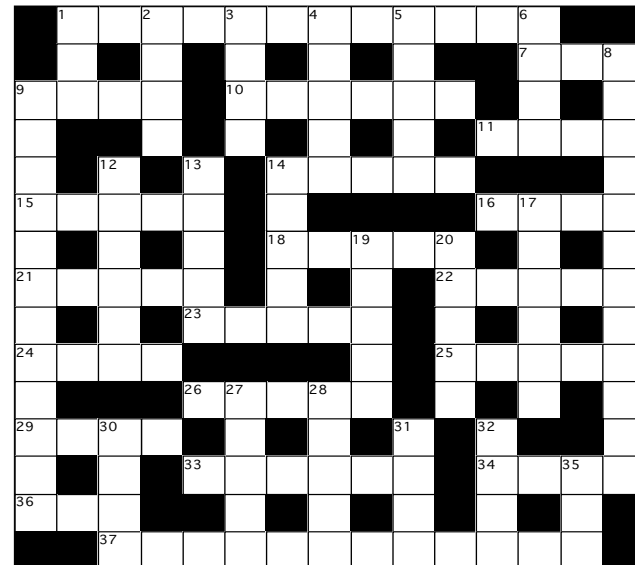
CHILDREN'S No. 347

Across — 1 Tea towel 6 Dew 7 Lion cub 8 Rowling 9 Tests 12 Camera 15 Potato 16 Mirror 17 Grave 18 Tusks

Down — 1 Talent 2 Acorns 3 Oscars 4 Elbow 5 Swing 6 Decide 10 Enough 11 Tea bag 12 Comet 13 Mares 14 Rooms

Crossword

Gordius 471



Across

- 1 This hymn seems extraordinary to Rainier's princess (7,5)
- 7 Type of flatfish (3)
- 9 & 17d Sad dairy product? (4,6)
- 10 Train Y re-routed? Put it here, with other matters to be dealt with (2-4)
- 11 Cowshed (4)
- 14 Angst may be caused by having such insects around (5)
- 15 Girl's name - the Italian word for 'Woman' (5)
- 16 Usually, they're the best cards (4)
- 18 See 1 down
- 21 Cross enough to make a buccaneer lose the head! (5)
- 22 They can be seen growing - in the centre, especially (5)
- 23 Female relative (5)
- 24 & 31d Whether this is a zone for the elderly is unclear (4,4)
- 25 Skinflint (5)
- 26 Pile up objects, one on top of another (5)
- 29 Love New York? Kiss this stone (4)
- 33 Strangely, will the imp err with the undercoat? (6)
- 34 At which one stands when throwing darts (4)
- 36 No score (3)
- 37 Oriental food for a

crustacean to pull at Christmas? (5,7)

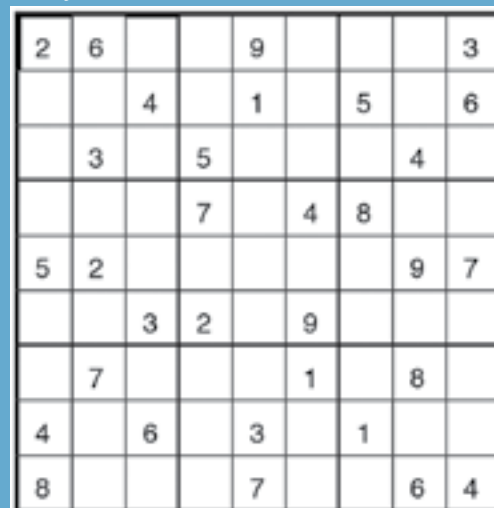
Down

- 1 & 18a Totally disorientated - on land? Not a bit of it! (3,2,3)
- 2 The last word of a prayer (4)
- 3 Part of the eye essential to a satirist (4)
- 4 Climb aboard and live harmoniously (3,2)
- 5 & 32d Rook parts can make a splendid meaty offering! (5,4)
- 6 Agitated, controversial (4)
- 8 Thus, part of the chicken will get on swimmingly (6,6)
- 9 Interim finance required for Pontoon? (8,4)
- 12 Emotionally troubled (6)
- 13 One may glean he was a pioneer of medicine (5)
- 14 Final resting-place (5)
- 17 See 9 across
- 19 Make a statement at the southern summit (5)
- 20 Submolecular particles (5)
- 27 Cast, fling (5)
- 28 Children's humorous magazine (5)
- 30 Bark of pain yorkies (especially) loathe producing at first (4)
- 31 See 24 across
- 32 See 5 down
- 35 Another ending that is not his (3)

Sudoku Corner

348

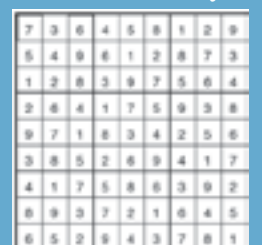
Easy



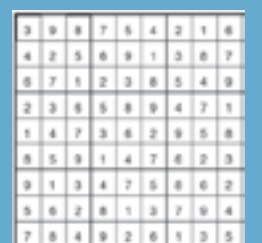
Hard



Last week's Easy 347



Last week's Hard 347



Our promised glory is blooming all around us

ONE OF THE GREAT surprises of the lockdown, for me at least, was just how many in Ireland are keen gardeners. People simply couldn't wait for gardening centres to re-open, and when they did, on May 18, there were enormous queues of people desperate to buy seeds, pots and compost.

My own lockdown gardening efforts were more modest – I'm currently struggling to keep alive a scraggly avocado sapling in a pint-glass of water – but I certainly did take more time to enjoy the garden here in St Saviour's. I'd often seen our prior hard at work there, but rarely spent time simply at rest in the garden, taking time to take in each colour and scent and to listen to the birds who make their home there.

Creation

Symbolically speaking, the garden is, of course, central to our Faith. The creation of our first parents is described in Genesis as taking place in a garden full of fruits and growing plants and “every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food”.

This garden is where the Fall occurs too, where death enters the human story, so it's fitting that



Cyclamen.

God's final answer to sin and death – the Resurrection of Christ – takes place in a garden too. How do we know this? Because when the risen Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, “she supposes him to be the gardener” (Jn 20:15). We can imagine, then, that this final defeat of death took place in a garden brimming with life, a place of growth, and colour, and song.

The Fall and the inauguration of the New Creation: both scenes involve a man and a woman, and both take place in gardens. If you're a keen reader of the Old Testament, this parallel might make you think of another garden scene involving a man and a woman: the Song of Songs. There the lover and the beloved romance each other in a place where

● One of the many unique features of Ethiopian Christianity is the delightful custom of maintaining miniature forests around rural churches. Every Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection, worshippers find themselves passing from the dry and dusty outside world to the cool, pleasant world of growing things, through the aroma of jasmine and juniper, through dappled light, until they arrive at the heart of the wood where they meet in the Eucharist the Risen Lord, the Divine Gardener, the Way to Paradise.

flowers are growing, turtledoves are singing, where “the fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom” (Sg 2:12-13), a place scented with “nard and saffron calamus and cinnamon, with all the trees of frankincense”, and flowing with “a garden fountain, a well of living water” (Sg 4:14-15). The Hebrew word used in the Song of Songs to name this garden should sound familiar to our ears: *pardes*, a borrowing from Persian, yielding ‘Paradise’ in our language. When Christ was dying on the

Cross, pinned to dead wood, he took up this word again in the promise made to the good thief: “Today you will be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43). In that brief phrase Jesus was promising him life in place of death, growth in place of decay, he was promising pleasure, delight, love, peace, bliss, glory.

As we cultivate our own gardens, however humble they be, we can sense this promised glory in the little glories of tree, shrub and flower. Maybe that's why the garden centres were so busy on May 18...

● Our community's gardening friar pointed out to me this week the blooming *cyclamen* in our garden, and told me that, traditionally, this flower's bowing head is associated with Our Lady at the Annunciation. In fact, many flowers are linked by Christian

tradition with Mary: marigolds were originally ‘Mary's Gold’, sea-pink was called ‘Our Lady's Cushion’, and the French call foxglove ‘*gants de Notre Dame*’ (‘Our Lady's Gloves’). But the rose, of course, is the most Marian flower. The Rosary, after all, takes

its name from the Latin *rosarium*, meaning ‘rose garden’. I often think of this connection when I sit in the rose garden at the Lourdes Grotto outside the Claddagh Church in Galway. These roses were maintained lovingly over many years by the late, great Bro. Christy

O'Flaherty, a member of the Dominican community there and an immensely talented gardener. Wherever he was posted here below he cultivated little paradises; God willing, he's at rest now in a Paradise whose colour beats them all.



Patients in the waiting room of the Spiritan Health Care Centre, Borana, Ethiopia, whom you can help by funding medicines and other supplies.



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The Little Way Association has been asked to help support a clinic in Ethiopia. Fr Kenneth Iwunna CSSp of the Spiritan Health Care Centre, Borana, writes: “When the religious sisters who were running our clinic had to leave in 2015, our bishop agreed to pay the staff's salaries. However, I am asking your kind supporters to provide funds for the medicine and supplies that we need to keep the clinic functional.” The centre helps the Dhadim people, who are poor farmers. They suffer from Aids, tuberculosis and other diseases. Fr Iwunna adds: “Most of them cannot afford to pay for their hospital bills, so many times, we give them free medical treatment and those who can afford to pay, they pay little. The clinic is the only one in this vicinity.”

The covid crisis is making matters worse for people in already-deprived areas, so projects like the Spiritan Health Care Centre need our help more than ever.

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